Core Competency Examples

We are often asked what should be included as core competencies in a competency framework. There must be a reason for selecting a core competency. That reason is that it will improve the organizations performance. Alternatively the competency may reflect the values of the organization.

Research shows that there are 5 high level competencies which can positively impact work group and organizational performance.

We provide some examples of each of these below

Research shows that at the individual level it is the competencies derived from cognitive ability and the high level personality trait of Conscientiousness that are likely to improve individual performance. We discuss examples of competencies derived from the cognitive sphere in a separate post. Those derived from the personality construct of Conscientiousness are covered below.

Define core competencies simply so that the description itself is not a source of bias. That means ensuring each behaviour covers only one factor.

Make sure it is observable. Actions are observable. What people are able to do, what they think, feel or are willing to do is not directly observable.

Competencies that contribute to Work group & Organizational Performance

Teamwork
Helping and supporting others, communicating well, working collaboratively, sharing information, passing on knowledge and skills, being courteous.

Communication
- Demonstrates effective listening skills; paying attention and acknowledging
- Speaks clearly and simply without jargon.
- Appropriately matches forms of communication to purpose and audience
- Ensures proper spelling and grammar in written communications

Collaboration
- Shares information with other team members
- Consults others before taking actions that will affect them
- Actively participates in team meetings; providing constructive suggestions and feedback.
- Contributes effectively to team objectives
- Steps in to prevent and resolve conflicts between team members

Support
- Steps in to help colleagues under pressure
- Helps others if they get behind or have problems in their work
- Assists others by passing on knowledge and teaching important skills
- Encourages others when things are tough

Courtesy
- Displays courtesy and tact in dealing with others
- Shows consideration to others including sensitivity to differences in customs
- Avoids creating problems for and with co-workers.
- Respects the rights and privileges of others

Service
Meeting the needs and expectations of customers – internal and external

Empathy

- Understands and focuses on the customer's perspective
- Makes efforts to identify and understand customer needs and expectations.
- Displays sensitivity to cultural differences amongst customers and relates to them appropriately
- Shows genuine concern when customers raise problems and complaints.
- Reads and responds appropriately to political situations

Responsiveness

- Makes customers the priority at all times.
- Responds quickly and enthusiastically to requests
- Ensures the customer feels important
- Interacts appropriately with individuals

Dependability

- Does what they say they will do
- Avoids making promises that cannot be met
- Reliably completes quality work
- Arrives on time for work, meetings and customer appointments

Professionalism

- Articulates knowledge and expertise clearly
- Provides relevant, current and appropriate advice
- Acknowledges limits of own expertise, consulting others as needed.
- Accepts and uses feedback from others for personal improvement

Conscientiousness

Applying oneself to complete tasks and achieve goals within time frames and with excellence. Taking initiative, continuing to develop own knowledge and skills.

Persistence

- Takes care to follow through and complete tasks
- Avoids putting things into the too hard basket
- Puts in extra time when needed

Excellence
- Is energetic and action oriented in day to day work activity
- Sets and achieves high standards of work
- Uses time and resources effectively
- Meets agreed personal objectives and productivity targets
- Completes work within tight deadlines

Initiative
- Does what needs to be done without direction
- Responds quickly to urgent demands and problem situations.
- Thinks outside the square, identifies and proposes new ways of working
- Willing to take on extra responsibility if needed

Personal Development

- Seeks opportunities to learn from colleagues
- Keeps abreast of latest practice, research and developments in own and associated areas of expertise
- Engages in learning through team, formal and self-directed development activities
- Proactively maintains and develops the technical skills and knowledge required for the role.

Supporting the Organisation

Promoting the organisation and its values, complying with policies and procedures, speaking up and suggesting improvements

Advocacy

- Publicly endorses the organisation's mission values and purpose.
- Promotes the organisation and its products/services
- Defends the organisation if criticised.
- Recommends the organisation as a good place to work.

Flexibility and Voice

- Is flexible, willing to adapt to new challenges and change
- Provides constructive suggestions about how to improve effectiveness.
- Speaks out when something is wrong
- Avoids blaming, fault finding and complaining
- Remains positive in times of difficulty

Compliance

- Demonstrates awareness and compliance with organisational policies and procedures.
- Actively complies with regulatory requirements
- Recognises breeches of compliance and takes immediate and appropriate action

Business Acumen

- Can explain the organization's purpose and key factors in its operating environment
- Able to list main competitors, including substitute products and services.
- Describes the different functional areas of the organisation and how actions in one area impact the others.
- Contributes ideas for new revenue generation opportunities
- Identifies ways to reduce waste and improve efficiency

Core competencies that are associated with better Individual performance are derived from the Cognitive (thinking) domain. We cover these in our article Meta Strategies for Improving Individual Performance