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Brief Overview of competency models

What is a Competency Model?
A competency is the ability to use a set of relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform “critical work functions” or tasks, in a defined work setting.

A competency model (or competency framework) is a set of competencies – a blueprint for success. It may apply to:

- all staff in the organization
- a level of leadership
- a job role
- a business function
- a professional discipline
- a particular job task

Why have a competency model?
The purpose of a competency model is three-fold.

- It communicates what is expected of staff, how they should do their job.
- It is used as a benchmark to ensure people have the skills they need for success.
- It is used to organise and provide access to individual development resources.

Competency models are used across all people management practices including:

- Align workforce and strategy
- Shape culture
- Recruitment and selection, onboarding
- Performance management – productivity improvement
- Develop Capability
- Career development
- Talent pool development
- Succession and workforce planning
- Project staffing
They are also a tool to improve compliance and quality and reduce the risk of human error.

**Competency Types**

Competency models differ by Competency Type, as does their method of development. They fall into 3 main types –

- Values Based Competencies
- Core & Leadership Competencies
- Occupational Competencies

There are different approached to developing models for each type.

### Competency Types & Primary Usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Communicate expectations</th>
<th>Improve performance</th>
<th>Ensure compliance</th>
<th>Minimise risk QA</th>
<th>Develop capability</th>
<th>Career, Staffing &amp; Succession</th>
<th>Certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values based behaviours</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Core &amp; Citizenship</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Performance management

Values based competencies
Competencies that align with the organisational mission and purpose. For example, in healthcare “Compassion” is a common competency. For service organisations ‘Customer Service’ is a key organisational competency.

These competencies play a role in shaping behaviour because they are communicated as expectations and used as part of performance assessment.

Core & Citizenship (collaborative) Competencies
These are competencies that outline expectations of how people will work both individually and collaboratively. Examples of individual core competencies may include Decision Making, collaborative competencies almost always include Teamwork. As for values-based competencies, they play a role in shaping behaviour.

Leadership competencies
Sometimes core leadership competencies such as Performance Management and Integrity are included in performance appraisal. When this is the case, they signal expected leadership style and behaviours.

Recruitment
Competencies are observable on job behaviours. Therefore, when competencies are used in recruitment typically only the headings are used. (Unless the recruitment process includes task-based assessment where direct observation can be made.)

Capability Development

Leadership Competencies
More extensive leadership competency models are used for development. Since different levels of leadership have different responsibilities competency models may differ by leadership tier – or they may include a number of levels reflecting leadership seniority.

Occupational competencies
Most organisations will have multiple occupational competency models. While it is possible to standardise the format and structure across the organisation, it is more flexible to allow each area to set up the models that best suit the way they assess and develop their staff. Of these there will be a subset of competencies used for certifications and compliance purposes.
Developing a competency model

Competency models depend on the competency type and purpose. There should be a competency model or framework for each set of competencies. One for the core values, another for core competencies, a leadership competency model and multiple competency models for job specific competencies.

Step 1 - A clear purpose

How the competency model is going to be used determines how it is developed. Essentially competency models may be used to;

- communicate expectations
- assess performance
- ensure compliance
- minimise risk
- develop capability
- award certification

Step 2 - Put together a team

In order to ensure validity of the model input and feedback is needed from those who will use the competencies.

- For Values based competencies from strategic leadership down through the organisation.
- For Core Competencies again cross organization input and feedback is needed.
- For job or occupation specific competencies input from subject matter experts

Usually there is a steering committee with input from staff and subject matter experts.

The teams need to provide input and feedback on;

- The Competency list with high level definition
- The hierarchy of the competencies if any
- Levels of competence/proficiency – if required
- The statements that will represent the competency
- How the competency will be assessed
Step 3 – First Considerations

Model Structure Options

You need to provide for 4 levels in competency frameworks to cover all possibilities.
Complexity of competency models varies

Core and leadership competency models are theories of what comprises for example "leadership". As with all theories your aim is to distil it to the most accurate and simple definition of "leadership" in the context of your organization and its operations.

Theoretically the list of possibilities for your list is huge. You need to boil it down the fewest possible relevant competencies, subheadings and statements.

For these kinds of competency models a list of maximum 6-8 competencies with no subheadings and a maximum of 4-6 statements/behaviours each is sufficient. Any more than this will overload observers so that responses are not properly considered.

The structure will be competency + behaviours

Core and Core Leadership Competencies
The structure of the competency model will depend on the way it is to be used. The purpose of the competency model is to provide information for decision-making by comparing people against the model. How those comparisons are to be done is a key factor in deciding model structure.

In performance reviews/appraisals or in developmental 360-degree feedback for observers complete a survey.
Values based competencies

The same structure as above -or just a competency with a description of behaviours and no separately rated behaviour list

Multi-Level Leadership Competencies

Leadership competency frameworks can be complex. They may have competency headings and subheadings. They may have statements at different levels reflecting different leadership requirements according to seniority or leadership role type.

Alternatively, the simpler format of competency plus statements can be used to make a competency set for each leadership level.

Occupational Competencies

For Occupational Competencies that will be assessed on the job the scope is quite different. Since there is a direct relationship to the job role the competency model is less theoretical, and more complex.

The complexity is not an issue because the competencies are not assessed all at once as a snapshot, but as a continuing exercise or in subsections as an audit.

Use job analysis of relevant positions to identify the key responsibilities, their relative importance, and the context in which they are carried out.
This analysis will identify what should be the main competency headings and any relevant subheadings.

The analysis will also indicate whether just one competence level is appropriate or whether competence levels differ between roles. These levels will vary in nature by role type.

As an example, for tradespeople competence levels might be:

- Entry Level (apprentice)
- Foundation (qualified tradesman)
- Expert (master craftsman)

A category may be used to differentiate competency models.

For example; Core or General, Core leadership, Supervisory, Operational, Executive, Strategic Leadership. Technical Competencies by function with subcategories if needed.

Organising by category makes it easy to find things in your overall competency library.
Terminology

The terminology should be whatever your organization is used to. Precision in terminology is desirable so that the proper meaning is conveyed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generic Term</th>
<th>Terminology examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Heading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, if your competency model is about core and leadership competencies that are like personality traits then the terminology set ‘domain/attribute/behaviour’ would be appropriate.

If it is for a technical competency then ‘Capability/Competency/Indicator’ may be appropriate.

If the model is to support certification then ‘topic/unit standard/outcomes’ might be selected.

Step 4 – Compile Competency List & definitions

Values Based behaviours

Support the published mission and values of your organization, if any. Translate this into a small set of Values behaviours that are right for your industry and your organisation. Look at websites of organizations similar to yours for ideas.

For example, in healthcare ‘Compassion’ is a common competency. For service organisations ‘Customer Service’ is a key organizational competency.

Often the values will take the form of an acrostic – this makes the expectations more likely to ‘stick’ in the minds of staff.

H onesty
E xcellence
A ccountability
R espect
T eamwork
Proprietary Competency Libraries

There are proprietary competency libraries such as Lominger that include core and leadership competencies. Another is Dave Bartram’s ‘Great 8’ competencies that have correlations to the Big 5 personality factors – shown below in italics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8 Competency Factors</th>
<th>20 Competency Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 LEADING &amp; DECIDING</td>
<td>1.1 Deciding &amp; Initiating Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Power &amp; Control</td>
<td>1.2 Providing Leadership &amp; Supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 SUPPORTING &amp; CO-OPERATING</td>
<td>2.1 Team Working &amp; Supporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>2.2 Serving Customers &amp; Clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 INTERACTING &amp; PRESENTING</td>
<td>3.1 Relating &amp; Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>3.2 Persuading &amp; Influencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 ANALYSING &amp; INTERPRETING</td>
<td>3.3 Communicating &amp; Presenting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘g’</td>
<td>4.1 Writing &amp; Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2 Applying Expertise &amp; Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3 Problem Solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 CREATING &amp; CONCEPTUALISING</td>
<td>5.1 Learning &amp; Researching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>5.2 Creating &amp; Innovating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.3 Forging Strategies &amp; Concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 ORGANISING &amp; EXECUTING</td>
<td>6.1 Planning &amp; Organising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>6.2 Delivering Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.3 Complying &amp; Persevering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ADAPTING &amp; COPING</td>
<td>7.1 Adapting &amp; Responding to Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Stability</td>
<td>7.2 Coping with Pressures &amp; Setbacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 ENTERPRISING &amp; PERFORMING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.1 Achieving Results &amp; Developing Career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.2 Enterprising &amp; Commercial Thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These can be used as a starting point and adapted to suit your organization.

A more thorough approach is to review the independent research literature and start to compile a list that way. In all cases the team needs to agree on which competencies are relevant. Two rankings may be used to narrow the field – relevance and importance – to your organization.

Core Competencies

Formulate the competency headings – with a description

First decide on the scope of the competency model. Is it going to cover competencies that are primarily individual in nature and/or those that apply to working with others?

The starting point should be the literature on the topics of interest. Human performance for individual core competencies and Citizenship Behaviors for collaborative ones.

Individual core competencies that predict individual job success fall into various categories;

Cognitive;

- Thinking ability – gathering and categorising information, problem solving, judgement
- Openness (to information, learning, thinking outside the square)
- Recognising own limitations and when to seek help
**Work style attributes**
- Attention to detail
- Persistence and follow through
- Systematic, Organised, Time Management
- Business Acumen

**Motivational attributes**
- Need for achievement
- Focus on results

**Collaborative competencies**

While logically it is to be expected that these commonly used competencies will contribute to organizational success, no direct connection has yet been established scientifically.

- Communication
- Interpersonal Skills
- Teamwork and Collaboration
- Service
- Supporting the Organisation
- Compliance

They are however associated with higher supervisor performance ratings and higher job satisfaction and commitment.

Another approach is to look for factors that are definitely counterproductive and develop a corresponding positive competency.

This framework introduced by Gordon DuPont called the “Dirty Dozen” lists key failure factors for High Reliability Organisations and thereby gives a clue to core competencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dirty Dozen</th>
<th>Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lack of communication</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complacency</td>
<td>Drive for Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lack of knowledge</td>
<td>Openness to Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Distraction</td>
<td>Focus – attention to detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lack of teamwork</td>
<td>Team working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fatigue</td>
<td>Recognise limitations – seek help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lack of resources</td>
<td>Assertiveness – speaking up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Pressure</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Lack of assertiveness</td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Stress</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Lack of awareness</td>
<td>Focus – attention to detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Norms</td>
<td>Thinking outside the square</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As does the research literature on ‘counterproductive work behaviours’ which includes the following;

Tardiness, workplace bullying, absenteeism, withdrawal, substance abuse, workplace aggression, abuse of others, sexual harassment, sabotage, theft, fraud.

Leadership Competencies

The best place to start is with the literature on leadership theory. This has evolved over time from personality-based approaches to current theories on transformational leadership and leadership for complexity. The models overlap. Different approaches suit different organizational types and work situations. Most leadership competency models draw from several theories.

The Great Man Approach

The early view. Leaders are born not made. A personality-based theory. Competencies include assertiveness, directiveness, charisma.

A theory not supported by research. Later morphed into trait-based leadership theory which advocates traits of intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability. These are associated with success (as is being taller than average!)

The behavioral approach

Initially identified 3 leadership styles and associated behaviors. Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez Faire. Each has its place.

For example, the military has Autocratic leadership because safety and survival depend on people following commands without question.
Associated competencies are **decisiveness, accountability, maintaining control, driving performance.**

**Democratic style leadership** involves competencies such as *delegation, consulting, guiding and developing staff.*

**Laissez Faire leadership** – a hands off approach may be appropriate for expert teams – associated competencies include *empowering staff, encouraging innovation.*

**Servant Leadership**
Emphasis is on helping staff with qualities such as *patience, kindness, humility, respectfulness, honesty, and personal commitment*.

**Scientific Management**
Dates from the industrial revolution and the search for efficiency and effectiveness in the mass production of physical goods.

Emphasis on **Planning, Organizing, and Controlling**. The formulation of rules and procedures and their oversight.

**Transactional Leadership**
Follows many of the principles of scientific management. It is suitable for stable operating environments. Systematic leadership approach with emphasis on systems, structures, rules and procedures. The use of ‘carrots and sticks’ to drive performance. Management by Objectives.

Competency examples - *Execution, Operational Excellence, Project Management, Goal Management, Performance Improvement, Managing People.*

**Situational Leadership**
This is a common-sense theory about adapting leadership style depending on the maturity and expertise of team members.

With new staff a more autocratic approach. As staff become more familiar with their role the approach is one of *Coaching* and guidance. For the competent employee the leader will become an *Influencer* and for the expert staff the competencies of Delegation, Resource Provision and Oversight will apply.
Transformational Leadership

As its name implies this style of leadership is about leading an organisation through change. This theory has become popular as the global business environment becomes more volatile and competitive and many organizations must adapt to survive.

Associated competencies; Thinking outside the square, Long term Vision, Strategic Planning, Resource Acquisition, Inspirational Communicator, Promoting innovation, Building Trust, Building Relationships.

Leadership in Complexity

Prompted by the increase in knowledge intensive and service-based organisations. Leadership is seen as a process - leading for adaptability, knowledge and learning. It has 3 components;

- Adaptive leadership – collaborative interactions between staff as they encounter and creatively solve problems. Alliances of people, ideas, technologies, cooperative efforts.

- Administrative leadership – the bureaucratic structure that strategizes, plans, structures work, allocates resources, manages crises and conflicts.

- Enabling leadership - sets up the conditions for adaptive leadership; networks, interdependencies and challenges. Minimises its conflict with the bureaucracy, ensures the flow of knowledge and innovation.
These theories and competencies can be applied to levels of leadership in competency models. For example:

- The Individual Contributor – adaptive leadership
- Tactical Leadership – day to day operations Leadership style, Situational Leadership, Transactional Leadership
- Strategic Leadership - transformational leadership

Some leadership competencies apply to any level for example Initiative, Accountability, Influencing, Integrity, Relationship Building

**Occupational Competencies**

Occupational competencies are the most important competency category. Research into the use of Core and Leadership competencies has yet to establish clear positive effects on organizational performance. In contrast six plus decades of research have established a clear link between occupational competencies and job and organizational success.

While it may be a challenging process to develop these competency models there are multiple benefits including better engagement from staff with visibility into career paths and development opportunities.

An occupation denotes a group of jobs involving a common set of responsibilities and tasks with similar objectives, methods, systems, and worker characteristics.

The occupation may be found in multiple organizations, but competencies will vary within each industry, organization and job role due to unique products, services and work environments. Examples are Human Resources, Engineering of various kinds, the various Healthcare disciplines.

Occupational competency frameworks are developed by teams of subject matter experts. The first step is to describe the work involved in terms of areas of accountability, which become the competency headings.
For example, in manufacturing and service operations Quality Assurance is an area of accountability. If this is a broad area it may have subheadings. These subheadings may vary according to industry and the organizations activities. For example:

- Quality standards
- Quality auditing
- Program evaluation
- Quality Improvement

If further levels of detail are required than Quality would become a category and each of the above a competency with subheadings. Quality Improvement may have subheadings of:

- Research best practices
- Analysis of failures
- Improve clinical guidelines and protocols

Formulate competencies with a general description.

Example – **Relationship Building** - Identifies and initiates working relationships, develops and maintains them for mutual benefit in support of our organization.

**Job profiles**

**NOT the approach of slicing and dicing generic core and leadership competencies around different job roles.**

Job role profiles should relate to occupational competency requirements. Listing functional, technical, professional or clinical competencies, and required competence levels (if any).

Job Profiles can be arranged in career pathways with links to developmental resources so that staff can easily see and prepare themselves for future opportunities.
Step 5 – Develop Competency standards

Core and Leadership Competencies

The statement list will usually be rated in a survey format. It will consist of behaviors that are assumed to contribute to the competency. Again, the literature or proprietary competency libraries is a good starting point.

There are multiple possibilities – use the team to pick out those that are most relevant and important for your organization. Choose a maximum of 6 statements, ideally less, per competency.

Key points to ensure when developing behavioral statements:

- The behavior is easily observable by respondents. *(Thinking and understanding are not observable)*

- Avoid personality traits – e.g. ‘motivated’

- Minimize the number of words. Keep statements clear, simple, unambiguous

- The statement contains an action verb relating to ONE, not multiple behaviors

- The wording is specific. Avoid ambiguous terms like good, appropriate effective that require interpretation. They will be interpreted differently by different people so assessment will not be consistent.

- Spell out exactly what you mean by standards. Example not ‘prompt’, but ‘within 1 hour’ or ‘one business day’.

- Include some statements of negative behaviors, scored in reverse. *(Makes respondents consider their responses more carefully -stops tendency to tick the same rating point for all statements)*
Occupational Competencies

Statements are derived from task analysis. A task is an important activity, or step in a process, needed to deliver on an area of responsibility.

A good starting point is existing documentation such as job descriptions. This should be supplemented by observation and interviews with those doing the job, and their managers.

From this information the team of subject matter experts agree on the important tasks, and any important tasks that are missing from the documentation.

Along with the tasks should be notes on relevant knowledge and skill levels.

**Knowing what** – using facts and information
*Example: factsheets on a piece of equipment.*

**Knowing Why** – underlying theories, principles
*Example: selecting information and methods according to one’s theoretical perspective – for example in mental health the medical approach for anxiety is medication, the psychological approach is behavior therapy.*

**Knowing How** - methods, techniques, procedures and their application.
*Example the procedural steps for setting up an MRI scan*

**Knowing when** – experience and practice, recognising problems, when to take action, managing conflicting information, making timely judgments. Experience builds expertise.
*Example: triage work in healthcare*

Tasks are reformulated in terms of competency indicators - knowledge – what is known, and skills – actions taken. The standard is an observable, valuable outcome.

*Example Task – Troubleshoots equipment problems*

⇒ Derived Competency indicator – Troubleshoots equipment problems, identifying cause and solution.*
Assign Degrees of Difficulty - Competence Levels
Tasks and derived competency standards can be assigned a difficulty level.

Entry level – some specialized knowledge required but most tasks are simple and routine.

Foundation level – moderate levels of expertise and judgment required, operates under supervision following guidelines and standards

Advanced level – operates autonomously. High levels of expertise and judgment and discretion. Uses general guidelines with discretion.


Step 6 – Decide Scoring Rubric - Rating Scales
Values, Core and Leadership Competencies

When developing competencies, it is important to bear in mind the mode of assessment. Most core and leadership competencies are assessed using the survey method where observers provide an observation of a person against each statement, or against the collection of statements as a whole. The assessment response is usually a rating per statement and for the overall competency with an optional comment.
The observation should generate a fair, accurate, and repeatable quantitative score and a comment with useful insights.

The extent to which this is achievable is heavily dependent on;

- the mode of observation - direct/indirect
- quality of the statement; wording, specificity, observability and relevance
- the construction of the rating scale
- Response scoring
- The observer – ideally trained

Core and Leadership competencies are not assessed by direct observation hence the rating scale is not a yes/no option.

To emphasize - accuracy of assessment is only possible when statements are unambiguous, specific and describe observable behaviors or outcomes.

Ideally observers receive training in how to observe objectively and avoid the many sources of bias.

**Common mistakes with rating scales and scoring**

Rating scales typically have a number of points with descriptive tags. Each point will have an assigned score.

**Rating scale too short**
The most commonly used rating scales have 5 points. But respondents almost always avoid the top and bottom points. In practice this means the 3rd and 4th points are used almost exclusively. The scale is not sensitive enough to identify real differences in competency.

Minimum scale length should be 7 points. Continuous rating scales – a slider with no distinct points can also be used.

**Scale has a neutral mid-point**
Agreement scales are often used for core and leadership competencies. Example: from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree. Scores 1 – 5. The mid point is labelled ‘neither agree nor disagree’ or sometimes ‘neutral’ and it has a score of 3.

The problem is that this score is not an accurate reflection of competency level. The respondent has no opinion or does not know. There should be no score. Better to have a rating option that is ‘Not observed’ with no score.
Occupational Competencies

Occupational Competency Models usually have a Pass/Fail Rating Scale at the statement level because observation is specific to and done on the job, and the competency indicator is an observable standard.

For the Competency as a whole there is usually a criterion as to what constitutes a Pass or a Fail in terms of % of standards passed.

The rating of the overall competency may be Competent or not competent or it could be a descriptive scale such as Not Competent, Competent with Guidance, Fully Competent.

Rules need to be set for what percentage of standards are required to be passed for each rating point on the Overall Competency.

Where the competency model has multiple levels of competence, the rating of the overall competency is framed in terms of these levels with rules as to what constitutes attainment of each level.

Validity

Competency models are a tool that is used to make decisions about people – whether they are hired, promoted, get a pay increase, have training, get appointed to a project and so on.

When decisions affecting people and their futures are made using competency models it is critical that the models have validity.

This is particularly a problem for Values, Core and Leadership competency models. It is a key function of the competency team to get this right.

What we are interested in is;

(a) the relevance of the competency model to the work environment – Construct validity

Because many competency constructs are intangible e.g. “professionalism” this construct must be linked with observable actions or attributes – becoming in effect a theory of the construct of professionalism.
(b) Whether high levels of these competencies are associated with successful outcomes in that work environment. Note this is a correlational not causative link.

Key questions for the competency model team

- Does the model accurately represent what is required for success?
- Are the competencies those that are critical for success in your organization?
- Do the selected behaviors and standards accurately represent that competency?

There should be rigorous checks on wording, relevance, specificity and observability of competency descriptions and behaviors.

It is critical that competency lists do not overlap. Each competency must be measuring a unique factor. The same applies to the statements that are attached to the competency.

If there is overlap there are likely to be conflicting assessments, threatening the validity of the competency model.

Since the whole purpose of core and leadership competency models is to improve organizational performance, the team should set up a means to monitor predictive validity – how use of the model affects predetermined goals.

Examples: cultural fit of staff, quality of hire, cross team collaboration, staff engagement, overall organizational success.

Remember that correlation does not mean causation. To demonstrate cause and effect introduce the use of competency models in a staged process, one division/dept at a time. This controls for other variables. If you see an improvement each time the competency model is introduced you can reasonably assume a direct effect.
The impact of the competency model on staffing decisions such as promotion, training involvement, project assignment should be monitored – is the information adequate? Is it being used without bias?

Validity is less of an issue in occupational competency models because they are direct observations of on job actions, and often each competency indicator/standard is about one particular action. Since the knowledge and actions are part of the job the competencies are necessarily predictive of job success.

**Validation**

Validation is about collecting evidence to support those decisions; to make the decision defensible.

We need this into account when developing a competency model.

For occupational competencies where yes/no checklists are used it is useful to also have a form of validation for assessment responses. An indication of how the observer knows the standard was met.

**Validation methods include;**

- Knowledge Test
- Document or records review,
- Verbal report from expert (testimony)
- Task simulation
- Scenario based evaluation
- Formal Skills demonstration
- Direct on job observation

Select those that apply for each competency as a whole and then the specific validation methods per standard.

Observers can indicate which of these was used in making their judgement.

Ideally evidence can be attached to their responses in file form.

Examples would be detailed observation forms used for scenario based evaluations, skills demonstrations or on job observation. Knowledge test transcripts. Notes or emails on verbal report input.
Competency Models are dynamic

Competency models need to change as your business environment changes.

Core values are reviewed and updated from time to time. Core and Leadership competency models need to be continually developed and improved in use. You are not going to get everything right first time.

Occupational competency models change constantly as products and services evolve and equipment and procedures change.

When developing competency models it is vital to have competency library management tools that facilitate and track changes with minimal administrative time.

The Centranum competency platform covers all these needs and more.

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We hope you have found this information helpful

Contact us for more information
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for information on our competency management platform go to
www.centranum.com/competency-management-software
or
www.centranum.com/clinical-competency-management-software