

Competency Mapping - A successful business strategy in the Global Scenario

Neha Wasalwar

Introduction

In the modern competitive world it has become an essential requirement for each and every organization to have one or the other core business strategy to excel. When it comes to excellence, there is a saying- “charity begins at home” which means One’s own family (or country, etc.) comes before any other responsibilities and in terms of organization it means that the internal customers i.e. the employees of the organization come before the external one. And to achieve excellence it is important to have an outstanding staff which would take the organization towards Excellency.

In today’s scenario a new concept Competency Mapping has gained a lot of significance among HR professionals as a tool for improvement in recruitment and selection, performance management, training and development, succession planning, organizational development analysis, etc..

History

The competency mapping has originated from the Arthshastra and Gita, the classical books. The Arthshastra is an ancient Indian script/ book on Political Science and Administration which was written by Chankya (also known as Mr. Kautilya and Mr. Vishnu Gupt) some 3000 years ago . It is the towering book in which the basics and applications of Management Sciences, Chemistry, Physics, Military and War techniques, Basic Engineering and Technologies, Ethics, Legal and Judiciary and Fiduciary system, Values, Psychology, and Anthropology, Organization Behavior, Human Resource Management are found. In fact major basics of all Marketing Management, Human Resource Management, basics of Management Models, are been directly lifted with some modification from this book. The Gita is a classical script on spirituality.

Objectives of the study

- To understand the concept of Competency Mapping
- To study the process of competency mapping
- To know the different models for competency mapping

- To find how competency mapping helps in the recruitment and selection, training and development and performance management.

Findings

Competency is the ability of an individual to perform a job properly.

“competence” is a combination of knowledge, skills and behaviour which is used to improve performance; or as the state or quality of being adequately or well qualified, having the ability to perform a specific role.

Competencies can be classified into 3 broad categories:-

1) Managerial

Competencies which are considered essential for staff with managerial or supervisory responsibility in any service or program area, including directors and senior posts.

Some examples of managerial competencies are decision-making, team leadership, change management, etc.

2) Generic

Competencies which are considered essential for all staff, regardless of their function or level. Example- communication, program execution, processing tools, linguistic, etc.

3) Technical/functional

Specific competencies which are considered essential to perform any job in the Organization within a defined technical or functional area of work.

Example- environmental management, industrial process sectors, investment management, finance and administration, human resource management, etc.

Competency Mapping

Competency Mapping can be defined as a process through which one assesses and determines one's strengths as an individual worker and in some cases, as part of an organisation. Its a combination of 3 key areas called KSA, K - Knowledge, S - Skills, A - Attitude. Competency Based Framework Helps an Organization to Build Up competencies for the employees and develop a competency based culture. It is the process of identification of the competencies required to perform successfully a given job or role or a set of tasks, at a given point of time. It consists of breaking a given role or job into its constituent task or activities and identifying the competencies (technical, managerial, behavioural, conceptual knowledge, an attitude, skills, etc.) needed to perform the same successfully. Different organisations adopt different process of Competency Mapping according to their requirements.

But in general the process of Competency mapping consists of the following steps:-

- a) A job analysis is conducted by taking incumbents to complete a Position Information Questionnaire (PIQ). This can be provided to incumbents to complete or use it as a basis for conducting one-on-one interviews. The primary goal of this is to gather information from incumbents about what they feel should be the key behaviour necessary to perform their respective jobs.
- b) Using the results of job analysis, a competency based job description is developed.

Human Resource Management

- c) With a competency based job description, mapping the competencies can be done. The competencies of the respective job description become factor for assessment on the performance evaluation. Using competencies will help to perform more objective evaluations and better recruitment and selection.
- d) Taking the competency mapping one step further, one can use the results of one's evaluation to identify in what competencies individuals need additional development or training. This will help in focusing on training needs required to achieve the goals of the position and company and help the employees develop toward the ultimate success of the organization.

It is not easy to identify all the competencies required to fulfill the job requisite. However, a number of methods and approaches have been developed for mapping Competencies. These methods have helped managers to a large extent, to identify and reinforce and/or develop these competencies both for the growth of the individual and the growth of our organization.

Following are the various methods of Mapping Competencies:-

- A. Assessment Center.
- B. Critical Incidents Technique
- C. Interview Techniques
- D. Questionnaires
- E. Psychometric Test
- F. Repertory Grid

A. Assessment Centre

Assessment center is a mechanism to identify the potential for growth. It is a procedure (not location) that uses a variety of techniques to evaluate employees for manpower purpose and decisions. The techniques used must be validated to assess the dimensions of skills and abilities. An essential feature of the assessment centre is the use of situational test to observe specific job behaviour. The behavioural observations must be classified into some meaningful and relevant categories of attributes, skills and abilities, etc. Since it is with reference to a job, elements related to the job are simulated through a variety of tests. Multiple assessors must be used for each assess and the assessors must be thoroughly trained. The assessors observe the behaviour and make independent evaluation of what they have observed in a systematic format and prepare a report on it. The report helps in identifying strengths and weaknesses of the attributes being studied.

The assessment center comprises a number of exercises or simulation which are designed to replicate the task and demands of the jobs and to assess the strength and weakness & potential of the employees.

1.) Group Discussion : In this candidates are brought together as a committee or Project team with one or a number of items to make a recommendation on. Candidates may be assigned a specific roles to play in the group or it may be structured in such a way that all the candidates have the same basic information. Group discussions allow them to exchange information and ideas and give them the experience of working in a team. In the work place, discussions enable management to draw on the ideas and expertise of staff, and to acknowledge the staff as valued members of a team.

A useful strategy for developing an effective group discussion is to identify task and maintenance roles that members can take up. Following roles, and dialogue that might accompany them in a group discussion have been identified.

- a) Positive Task Roles

b) Positive Maintenance Roles

2. In Tray : This type of exercise are normally undertaken by the candidates individually. The materials comprise of a bundle of correspondence and the candidate is placed in the role of somebody, generally, which assumed a new position or replaced their predecessor at short notice and has been asked to deal with their accumulated correspondence
3. Interview Simulation / Role Plays : In these exercise candidates meet individually with a role player or resource person. Their brief is either to gather information to form a view and make a decision, or alternatively to engage in a discussion with the resource person to come to a resolution on an aspect or issue of dispute. Generally time is given to prepare for such a meeting and a short, general brief on the conduct of the meeting itself and consideration to preparatory notes are also given.
4. Case Studies / Analysis Exercises : In this type of exercise the candidate is presented with the task of making decision about a particular business case. They are provided with a large amount of factual information which is generally ambiguous and , in some cases contradictory. Candidates generally work independently on such an exercise and their recommendation or decision is usually to be communicated in the form of brief written report and / or a presentation made to the assessors.

B. Critical Incidents Technique

It is difficult to define critical incident except to say that it can contribute to growth and decay of a system. Despite numerous variations in procedures for gathering and analyzing critical incidents, researchers and practitioners agree that critical incidents techniques can be described as a set of procedures for systematically identifying the behaviour that contribute success or failure of individual or organization in specific situation. First of all, a list of good and bad for the job behaviour is prepared for each job. A few judges are asked to rate how good and how bad is good and bad behaviour for the job, respectively. Based on these rating a check-list of good and bad behaviour is prepared.

The next task is to train the supervisor in taking notes on critical incidents or outstanding examples of success or failure of the subordinates in meeting the job requirements. The incidents are to be immediately noted down by the supervisor. Very often the employee concerned is also involved in discussion with his supervisor before the incidents are recorded, particularly when an unfavorable incidents is being recorded, thus facilitating the employee to come out with his side of the story.

The objective of immediately recording the critical incidents is to improve the supervisor's ability as an observer and also to reduce the common tendency to rely on recall and hence resulting into distortions in the incidents. Thus a balance sheet for each employee is generated which can be used at the end of the year to see how well the employee has performed. Besides this a definite objective of this technique is that it identifies areas where counseling may be useful.

C. Interview Techniques

The interview consists of interaction between interviewer and applicant. It is a very powerful technique in achieving accurate information and getting access to material otherwise unavailable. Biasness and restriction or distortion of flow of information must be avoided while interviewing.

Followings careful steps should be taken during and after the interview:

- a) Before the actual interview begins, the critical areas in which the questions are to be asked must be identified for judging ability and skills. It is advisable to write down these critical areas, define them with examples and form a scale to rate the responses
- b) The second step taken is to scrutinize the information provided to identify skills, incidents and experiences in the career of the candidate, which may answer questions raised around the

critical areas. This procedure will make interview less detached from reality and the applicant will be more comfortable because the discussion will focus on his experiences.

- c) An interview is a face-to-face situation. The applicant is “on guard” and must be careful to present the best face possible. At the same time he is tense, nervous and possibly frightened. Therefore during the interview tact and sensitivity can be very useful. The interviewer can get a better response if he creates a sense of ease and informality and hence uncover clues to interviewee’s motivation, attitudes, feeling, temperament, etc., which are otherwise difficult to comprehend.
- d) The fundamental step taken is establishing rapport, putting the interviewee at ease conveying the impression that the interview is the conversation between two friends, and not a confrontation between employer and employee. One way to achieve this is by initially asking questions not directly related to job, that is, chatting casually about the weather, journey and so on.
- e) Once the interviewee is put at ease the interviewer starts asking questions or seeking information related to job. Here again it is extremely important to lead up to complex questions gradually.
- f) Showing surprise or disapproval of speech, clothes or answer to question can also hold back the candidate. The interviewee is over-sensitive to such reactions. Hence, an effort to try and understand the interviewee’s point of view can go a long way in getting to know him.
- g) Leading questions should be avoided as they give the impression that the interviewer is seeking certain kind of answers. This may create a conflict in the interviewee, if he has a strong view on the subject.

D. Questionnaires

Questionnaires are written list of questions that users fill and return back. The method starts by formulating questions based on the type of information which is required to be known. Usually, a questionnaire consists of a number of questions that the respondent has to answer in a set format. A distinction is made between open-ended and closed-ended questions. An open-ended question asks the respondent to formulate his own answer, whereas a closed-ended question has the respondent pick an answer from a given number of options. The response options for a closed-ended question should be exhaustive and mutually exclusive.

E. Psychometric Test

Psychometric tests aim to measure attributes like intelligence, aptitude and personality. They provide a potential employer with an insight into how well an applicant work with other people, how well he handle stress, and whether he will be able to cope with the intellectual demands of the job. Psychometric tests fall into two main categories. Personality questionnaires, which try to measure aspects of one’s personality, and aptitude tests which try to measure one’s intellectual and reasoning abilities.

A psychometric test must be:

- Objective: The score must not affected by the testers’ beliefs or values
- Standardized: It must be administered under controlled conditions
- Reliable: It must minimize and quantify any intrinsic errors
- Predictive: It must make an accurate prediction of performance
- Non Discriminatory: It must not disadvantage any group on the basis of gender, culture, ethnicity, etc.

F. Repertory Grid

The repertory grid is a technique for identifying the ways that a person construes (interprets/ gives meaning to) his or her experience. It provides information from which inferences about personality can be made, but it is not a personality test in the conventional sense. A grid consists of four parts:

1. A Topic: it is about some part of the person's experience
2. A set of Elements, which are examples or instances of the Topic. the Grid has been used in much wider settings (educational, occupational, organisational) and so any well-defined set of words, phrases, or even brief behavioural vignettes can be used as elements.
3. A set of Constructs. These are the basic terms that one uses to make sense of the elements, and are always expressed as a contrast. Thus the meaning of 'Good' depends on whether one intend to say 'Good versus Poor', as if he is construing a dramatic performance, or 'Good versus Evil', as if he is construing the moral of some more fundamental experience.
4. A set of ratings of Elements on Constructs. Each element is positioned between the two extremes of the construct using a 5- or 7-point rating scale system; this is done repeatedly for all the constructs that apply; and thus its meaning to the client is captured, and statistical analysis varying from simple counting, to more complex multivariate analysis of meaning, is made possible.

Constructs are regarded as personal to the person, who is psychologically similar to other people depending on the extent to which she/he would tend to use similar constructs, and similar ratings, in relating to a particular set of elements. And it is the way that the constructs are identified that makes a Repertory Grid unique.

The person is asked to consider the elements three at a time, and to identify a way in which two of the elements might be seen as alike, but distinct from the third. For example, in considering a set of people as part of a topic dealing with personal relationships, a person might say that the element 'my father' and the element 'my boss' are similar because they are both fairly tense individuals, whereas the element 'my wife' is different because she is 'relaxed'. And so we identify one construct that the individual uses his thinking about people: whether they are 'Tense as distinct from Relaxed'. (in practice, good grid interview technique would delve a little deeper and identify some more behaviourally explicit description of 'Tense versus Relaxed'. All the elements are rated on the construct, further triads of elements compared and further constructs elicited, and the interview would continue until no further constructs are obtained.

Competency Model

A job competency model is a description of those competencies possessed by the top performers in a specific job or job family. In effect, a competency model is a "blueprint for outstanding performance". As an Individual, one can use job competency models to guide own career development. Coupled with an accurate assessment of own competencies, one will be able to identify competencies needing development and/or identify other jobs or careers that make better use of the competencies one possess. A competency model is a valid, observable, and measurable list of the knowledge, skills, and attributes demonstrated through behaviour that results in outstanding performance in a particular work context. Competency modeling begins the process of building tools to link employee performance to the mission and goals of the organization.

Integrating the competency model throughout the HRM system

To be most effective, the organization should integrate the same competencies identified for a specific

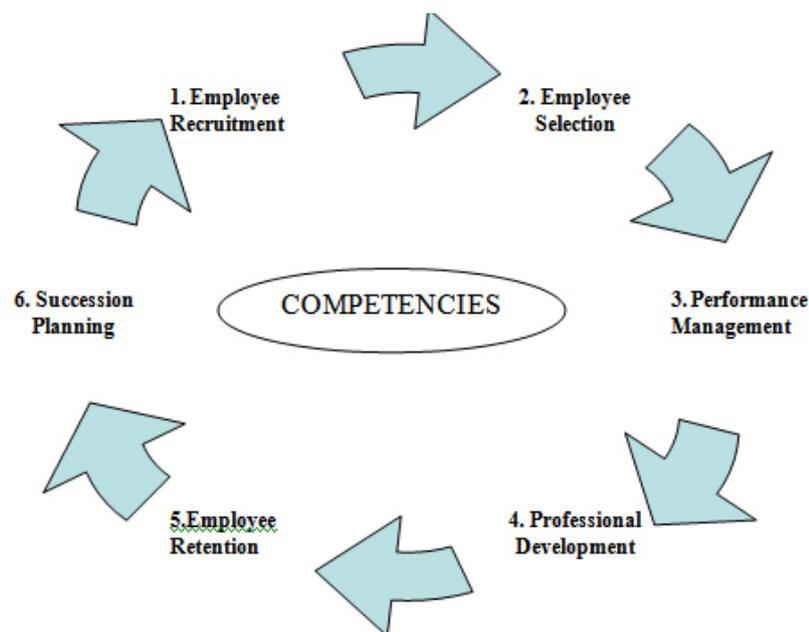
Human Resource Management

classification throughout all aspects of the HR program, including recruitment and selection, performance management and professional development.

For example, once identified the competencies which is most critical to job performance in targeted classification, one should design the selection process to recruit and hire people who possess those competencies. Once hired, employees should be given performance feedback on how well they demonstrate those competencies, and their professional development plans should focus on further improvement in the critical competency areas.

The figure below illustrates how a classification's competencies are integrated into an organization's entire Human Resources Management system.

Integrated Competency Model



In implementing the Competency Model, consistency is critical. To use one set of competencies for the selection process and another for performance management invites confusion and dilutes the effectiveness of the Competency Model.

In addition, the Competency Model will be most effective when everyone in the targeted classification understands which competencies the agency considers critical to successful job performance. When consistently used, the language of the Competency Model will become interwoven into the fabric of the organization, and integrated into employee performance.

In some organizations it is most practical to introduce the Competency Model into all of the agency's HR systems simultaneously. In others, it will be better to phase the Competency Model into HR systems on a gradual basis. Although there are real benefits in introducing a fully integrated system all at once, unless your organization has the capacity to do it well, it is better to phase it in gradually.

When phasing in the Competency Model, it is best to introduce it into the selection process first. Typically there is less resistance to changing a selection process than a performance management process because it directly affects fewer employees. Most agencies also find it best to introduce the Competency Model into the performance management process at the beginning of a performance evaluation cycle. This will prevent one from selecting employees under one set of competencies and evaluating them under another.

Integrating a Competency Model throughout the Organization

The integrated competency-based HR model should be used throughout the organization. Doing so simplifies the administration of HR services and increases everyone's perception of the importance of the competency-based approach. Integrating the model throughout the organization has a number of advantages:

To focus the Competency Model only on one or two classifications will diminish the potential success that can be achieved by introducing the integrated Competency Model throughout the agency.

The competencies generally vital in HRM are as follows:-

1. Business Management Competencies- It comprises of Business Process Reengineering, Change Management, Contract Management ,Cost-Benefit Analysis , Customer Relations , Financial Management , Marketing ,Negotiating ,Organizational Awareness, Organizational Needs Assessment ,Outcome Measures and Evaluation ,Project Management ,Strategic Human Resource Practices ,,Strategic Planning.
2. Professional Competencies- It comprises of Coaching and Mentoring, Communication ,Conflict Management , Decision-making , Ethics , Facilitation ,Interpersonal Relations ,Problem-Solving , Self Management ,Teamwork ,Technology Application ,Technical.
3. HR Competencies- It comprises of Appeals,Grievances, and Litigation , Attendance and Leave, Benefits ,Career Development , Compensation ,Discipline and Adverse Action ,Employee Assistance, Equal Employment Opportunity , Human Resource Management Fundamentals ,Instructional Systems Development ,Instructional Technology ,Job Analysis ,Labour Management Relations ,Organizational Development ,Organization and Position Design ,Pay Administration ,Performance Management ,Personnel Assessment , Personnel Systems Management , Position Classification , Reduction-in-Force ,Rewards and Recognition, Staffing and Recruiting , Succession Planning.

All employees understand which competencies they need for the successful performance of their current jobs, and also for higher-level jobs to which they might aspire.

One can use a Competency Model as an important tool for shaping an organizational culture around the competencies needed for the agency's overall success. After the methods and Competency model comes the Assessment.

Job Competency Assessment

Competency assessment involves the measurement of an individual's competencies.

It is a breakdown of general job functions into specific activities essential to successful performance. Each activity is analyzed to determine the human behaviours or personal characteristics that determine successful completion of that activity. Job competency assessment provides valuable information for a variety of human resource functions, including recruitment, selection, placement, performance appraisal, training and development, and succession planning.

Analysis

Once the Competency Assessment is done it aids in the HR functions in the following ways:-

Competency Based Recruitment

Competency based interviews reduce the risk of making a costly hiring mistake and increase the likeli-

Human Resource Management

hood of identifying and selecting the right person for the right job

Competency Based Performance Appraisal

Competencies Enable-

- Establishment of clear high performance standards.
- Collection and proper analysis of factual data against the set standards.
- Conduct of objective feedback meetings.
- Direction with regard to specific areas of improvement

Competency Based Training

Competency based appraisal process leads to effective identification of training needs.

Opportunity to identify/ develop specific training programmes - Focused training investment.

Focused Training enabling improvement in specific technical and managerial competencies

Competency Based Development

Competencies contribute to the understanding of what development really mean, giving the individual the tools to take responsibility for their own development.

Competencies give the line managers a tool to empower them to develop people.

Conclusion

In this fast developing modern scenario it is most vital to have a strong HR department in any organization. Today Competencies and competency-based human resources management (CBHRM) are in common practice in many organisations. To survive in a turbulent and dynamic business environment organisations have to adopt competency based human resource management practices, which are essential for productivity and performance excellence. Human Resource Management in the organisation have to give keen importance to these process since competency determine the organisation effort to compete with quality. Employees in the organisation are more concerned about their advancement in their career. In addition to the competency consideration employee career should also be considered by the Human Resource managers in the individual planning level. Career-based and competency-based approaches of Human Resource Management will have fruitful result in the productivity and business surplus in many organisations. Thus to conclude the Human Resource Management have to look more in the area of CCHRM (Career Competency – Based HRM) as a solution to productivity and quality assurance in the wake of acute business competition.

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