

## Competence Development at the Workplace: a conceptual framework

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### ABSTRACT

*Due to increasingly unpredictable challenges in the competitive environment HR professionals are supposed to engage in redefining its mission and strategies to maximize the workforce's productivity. Organizations are reorganizing the value of the workforce that is not only highly skilled and technically proficient, but more importantly, a workforce that can discover quickly, facilitate change, communicate effectively, and extend interpersonal relationships. The current disposition of HRM is largely associated with the drastic expansion of businesses, globally, technological innovations and fierce competition that characterizes the environment in which businesses operate today. The present study tries to explore competencies at work essential for organizational employees and allow them to absorb these competencies to predict and handle the situations in view of that area. The workplace competencies like communication, decision-making, problem solving, creativity and innovation, teamwork, leadership, and interpersonal relations are competencies considered to deal with organizational expectations within challenging framework.*

**Key Words:** Competencies, problem - solving, leadership, creativity and innovation.

### INTRODUCTION

Competency is a blend of relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes that influences one's job, and can be measured against well-defined and accepted standards in the organization, and that can be improved by training and development. Competency is a combination of tacit and explicit knowledge, behaviour and skills that gives someone the potential for effectiveness in task performance. HR professionals are required to think over traditional strategic analysis to modern trends in strategic management. These strategies have to be aligned with the vision and mission of the organization and to efficiently and effectively engage the employees within an organization in a determined set of actions aimed at facilitating the accomplishment of that organization's goals and objectives. The professionals have to ensure that the set of action plans must be fulfilled by the competent people in the organization and should possess relevant work place competencies as well. These workplace competencies are relating to resource utilization, interpersonal skills, leadership, communication (written and oral), information, creativity and innovation, problem solving, planning and organizing, teamwork, technical expertise etc. and required to be blend with foundation skills of the individuals. Competencies are to be enhanced through training and development, potential appraisal and job rotation time to time in the organization. The study tries to throw light on the some major work place competencies and their importance to the organizations.

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A workplace competency is a depiction of a relevant skill, attribute or behaviour for a specific job used to determine an individual's effectiveness. Competencies are set into a framework that brings together a number of job responsibilities and the required competence that the job holder must possess or acquire in order to perform his job effectively. Workplace competencies are especially popular in large organizations. The principles also enable small businesses to focus on key management and operational performance.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Various researchers and authors have written articles on number of competencies such as behavioural, personal, technical, and work and also examined their analysis, evaluation and development. In addition, commonly referenced competencies include: integrity / honesty, communication, technical competence, diversity consciousness, developing others, results-orientation, change management, interpersonal skills, problem-solving, decision making, political savvy, strategic/visionary thinking, customer focus, business skills, team leadership, influence skills, conflict management, more recently emotional intelligence, social and environmental responsibility, depending on the culture of the organization even humour and innovation (Trinka, 2004; cited in Thach et al., 2007; Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Employer's Organization, 2004; Guggenheimer and Szule, 1998; Breckenridge Consulting Group, 2004; OPM, 1992; Laszlo, 2003; Goleman, McKee and Boyatzis, 2002; Thompson, 1985).

Today's organizations are more concerned about their human competency base and its development (Ozcelik and Ferman, 2006) so competency studies have gained more and more interest and attention (Xuejun Qiao and Wang, 2009). Spencer and Spencer (1993) viewed competency as "an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation. Ulrich ET al's (1995) model combines various aspects of competence into three primary elements: knowledge of the business, HR functional expertise and management of change. The idea that competency weightings change according to job role or level is also supported by Boyatzis (Yeung 1996) Today, Competency based Human Resource Management is being increasingly recognized as an effective way of talent management over the previously adopted Job-description related approach. Today, organizations are using competencies in virtually every human resource domain. The competency movement has been in use in business through the groundbreaking work of McClelland (1973), Boyatzis (1982), Spencer and Spencer (1993), and many others in the field (Ozcelik and Ferman, 2006). Competency is a combination of tacit and explicit knowledge, behavior and skills that gives someone the potential for effectiveness in task performance (Draganidis and Mentzas, 2006). Competencies are the common link among the majority of human resource subsystems (Byham).

## UNDERSTANDING WORKPLACE COMPETENCIES

Many companies are attempting to gain competitive advantage using a competency-based approach. By involving human resources processes to desired competencies, organizations can figure out the capabilities of its workforce and realize better results (Donzelli et al., 2006) and it may be possible for an organization to build ongoing outcomes based on overall knowledge capital and skills portfolio of its workforce. Competency-based practices are popular among large and mid-sized companies as an integral tool for talent selection, retention, and development. Competencies

describe the skills, knowledge, behaviours, personal characteristics, and motivations associated with success in a job. There are two broad classes of competencies are technical and behavioural. Each occupation integrates several of each. Behavioural competencies of a team leader may include the ability to work confidentially, inspire others and submit monthly reports on time, while corresponding technical competencies may be knowledge of procedures, communication skills, and capability to resolve disagreement. Each competency must be measurable on the basis of standards established by organization so the job holder realize what level of achievement he / she must attain in order to meet the requirements of the competency.

Workplace competencies are Skills and abilities that allow individuals to function in an organizational setting and also frequently referred to as work readiness competencies. Resource allocation and utilization, teamwork, interpersonal skills, leadership, communication (written and oral), creativity and innovation, problem solving, planning and organizing, , technical expertise etc are the majorly accepted workplace competencies to attain the organizational goals efficiently and effectively. HR professionals are required to fit the individual with the assigned work after the proper diagnose of the individual competencies and the work itself. Competences may be enhanced by training and development and job rotation. Workplace competencies are described as:

- Resource allocation and utilization competency is consisting of allocating and utilization of time, money, methods, material, manpower and facility resources 3are the essential workplace skill. This competence includes properly identifying and securing the resources needed and make sure them are used wisely.
- Demonstrating competence relating to teamwork includes contribute to work necessary to complete a project; encouraging team members by listening and responding appropriately to their contributions; building on team members' strengths; resolving disparity for the benefit of the team; taking responsibility for accomplishing goals; and responsibly challenging existing procedures, policies, or authorities.
- Interpersonal competency is teaching and helping others to apply related concepts. Here the superior requires acting as a mentor and guiding to subordinate for shaping and directing their careers by promoting professional and personal development. He may also determines learning need of the others and plan training programme.
- According to Bennis (1987, 2007) there are a few leadership competencies mandatory for effective leadership. These are the competency bunch of vision and goal-setting, interpersonal skills, self-knowledge and technical competence regarding the specifics of the business in which the leader works.
- Communication skill competency includes effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
- Creativity and innovation is a complex process that put into action of several competencies such as idea generation, perception, generation and evaluation of alternatives, design of action plans, communication, risk evaluation, fostering maintaining creative environment in the organization etc.
- Problem solving competency requires thinking and actions in circumstances for which no routine course of action is available. The problem solver has a defined goal, but does not

immediately know how to reach it. The understanding of the problem situation and its step-by-step alteration based on planning and reasoning, constitute the process of problem solving.

Each competency requires number of layers of knowledge to integrate with the identified work assigned to the individual in the organization. Workplace competencies are needed in the knowledge economy on which knowledge workers rely on workplace 4competencies. Communication skills, problem-solving skills, creativity and innovation the ability to work in teams, leadership skills are becoming important and complementary to basic core or foundation skills even more than other workers.

## **DEVELOPING COMPETENCIES AT WORKPLACE**

As implied by the study that organizations needs number of competencies for the different job perspective. It is clear that competency does not show in the individual qualification. To explore and assessment of individual competency HR professionals are bound to assess time to time individual potential in the organization. Competence development may start from the recruitment, selection, potential appraisal, performance review, career planning personal mobility (internal and external), training and development of the personnel, planned change in the organization with the help of measures such as job rotation, job enrichment, teamwork, and performance management. The starting way to determine appropriate activities to build or develop HR competencies is to be clear about what the organization needs from the HR department. A number of plans have been identified to develop competencies of professionals, including: encouraging existing work assignments, projects and initiatives as learning opportunities, particularly after action reviews; encouraging meetings to introduce current contents facilitated by subject matter experts within the organization; utilizing short articles and blogs to facilitate discussion and learning in functional and team meetings; developing in- house skill workshops on topics such as accountability, customer service, being an HR ambassador, ethical dilemmas, coaching and facilitation skills for HR professionals; encouraging employees on current and emerging HR trends for the application in existing job; utilizing in-house training providers for technical skills, such as IT applications and services.

As number of studies indicated that competence is a blend of external and internal forces that ultimately determine the individual skill or ability to perform the task efficiently and effectively. The organization is responsible to facilitate the environment at the workplace to explore individual competence and encourage the HR professionals to identify and utilize the potential of the individual in the organization by HR practices such as training and development, potential appraisal, career planning, performance review, and job rotation. Simultaneously, it is also important to keep an eye on the strategic moves of the global competitors to sustain the competitive advantages of the organization. There are number of mediums are available to develop the competence at work, but surely it depends on the nature and type of the organization, which can further be analyzed by the SWOT analysis of the individual, group and organization itself.

## **CONCLUSION**

Over the past decades, human resources as a profession have undergone tremendous change as a consequence of numerous external as well as internal issues. Human resource professionals have

been forced to consider how to cope up organizational expectations within challenging frameworks. As HR professionals, they must pay attention to required competencies to meet organizational expectations not just for today, but also for coming years. In defining HR competencies, Ulrich and Boyatzis (1993,1982) like many others, argue that it is necessary to consider the specific job roles of HR practitioners in order to differentiate between possible variations in requirements. There are a large number of elements that make up the set of skills and knowledge required to carry out the HR role. These can be divided into personal and workplace competencies. The workplace competencies include elements of communication, decision-making, problem solving, creativity and innovation, teamwork, leadership, and interpersonal relations. There is clearly a need to continue the research in this area in order to build on the work already completed, and to clarify in greater depth the findings of this particular phase of the workplace competencies.

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