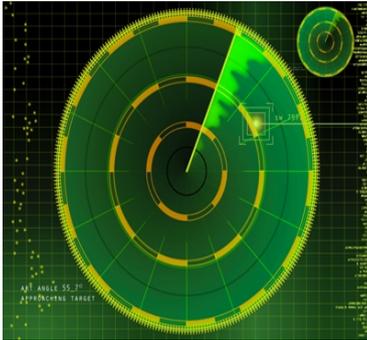


Spotting Competency in the 'Business Radar'

Written by Nidhi Arora
Monday, 07 June 2010 05:30



Competencies are the characteristics of a manager that lead to the demonstration of skills and abilities, which result in effective performance within an occupational area. Competency also embodies the capacity to transfer skills and abilities from one area to another.

There are various competency groups such as:

- Technical or functional: Dealing with the technology or know-how associated with the function, role and task
- Managerial or organisational: Dealing with managerial aspects, organising, planning, mobilising resources, monitoring and systems use
- Human or behavioral: Including competencies that are personal, interpersonal and team related
- Conceptual or theoretical: Including competencies like visualisation and model building.

How many competencies must an organisation have?

Since each organisation has its own distinctive style of business which it holds prime, it stands to reason that each organisation should require specific competencies for its people to be successful in that organisation. These competencies may need to change from time to time as the organization evolves.

What is competency mapping?

Competency mapping 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.

This involves breaking a given role or job into its constituent tasks or activities and identifying the competencies (technical, managerial, behavioral, conceptual knowledge, an attitude, skills, etc.) needed to perform the same successfully.

Five reasons why competency mapping is essential for companies.

1. Companies need a clearly defined organisational structure to function effectively.
2. It is important to have well defined roles in terms of the KRAs or activities associated with each role.
3. It is useful for companies to map the competencies required for each role.
4. Generic competencies should be identified for each set of roles or levels of management.
5. These should be used in recruitment, performance management, promotion and training.

Competency mapping methods:

- Interviews: Questionnaire
- Group work: Job descriptions
- Task forces: Appraisal formats
- Task analysis workshop: KRAs and attributes

Classification of competencies

1. Central and Surface Competencies:

Competencies exist at both the surface as also at the core personality level. The surface level competencies of knowledge and skills are visible in one's behavior or performance and can be developed with appropriate training & development.

The core motives and trait competencies reside deep within us and are difficult to understand measure and develop. Self-concept lies somewhere between surface and core competencies.

The competencies lying deep within can be developed over a longer period of time by appropriate job placement of the employee which will offer him/her opportunities to develop these competencies for future senior roles.

One's best performance is driven by core competencies rather than task-related skills and knowledge, which goes to show that selection on the basis of qualifications or skills alone, will not ensure a candidate's best performance.

2. Threshold and differentiating competencies

Threshold competencies: The characteristics required by a job holder to perform a job effectively are called threshold competencies.

Differentiating competencies: The characteristics which differentiate superior performers from average performers come under this category; such characteristics are not found in average performers.

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The Competency modeling cannot be one-time affair as competency requirements change in consonance with a change in requirements on jobs. Even the motivational aspects and resultant behavior may change with time. The competency model has considerable value and can be utilised for various purposes like selection, performance appraisal, succession planning, training & human resource development where the selector can identify differentiator competencies among av. & star performers.