

Applying Competencies to the World of Work



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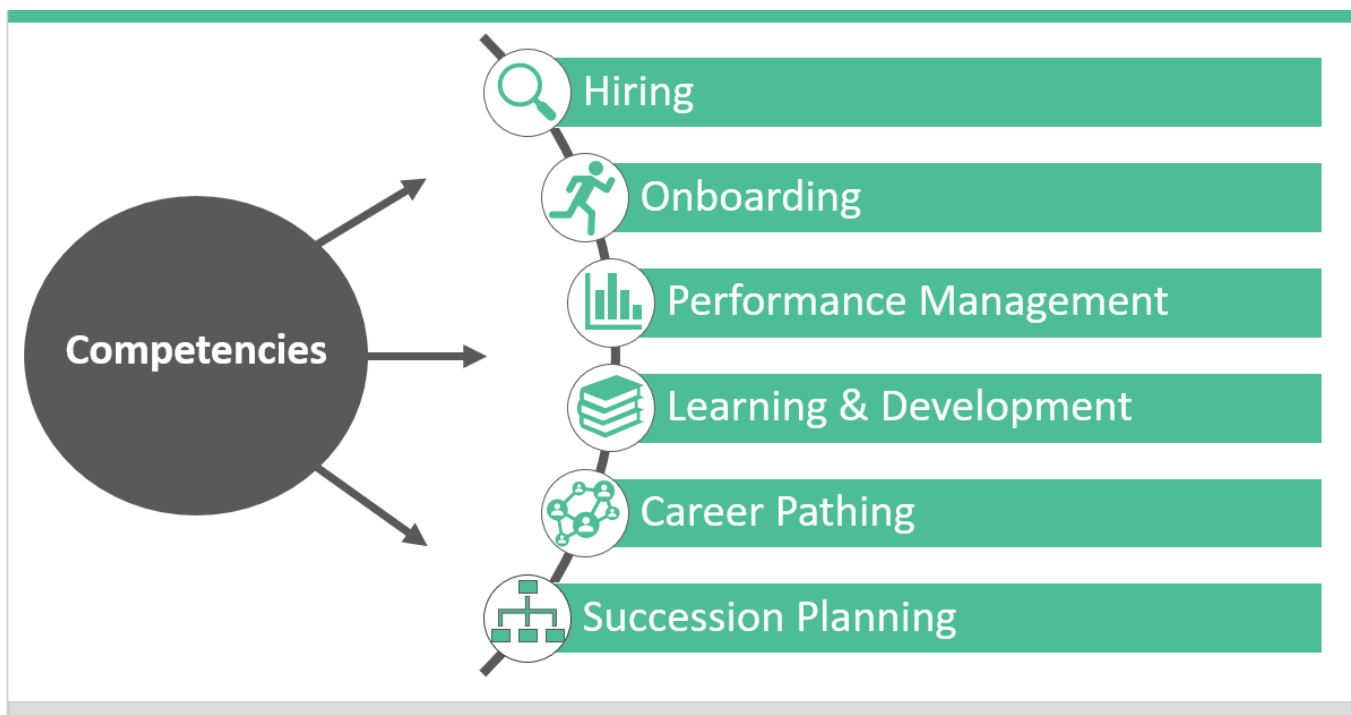
OVERVIEW

Why Competencies?

Competencies provide a common language that help to define what a person must be able to know and do to be successful in their job. Competencies describe observable behaviours and should answer the question, “how do I know it when I see it?”

Competencies refer to a cluster of related knowledge, skills, abilities, or other characteristics defined in terms of the observable behaviours needed for success.

Describing jobs in a measurable and observable way helps everyone to have a clear picture of what success looks like. Competencies can then be used to help hire the best people, onboard them, manage their performance, and help them to learn and to grow, while navigating their own career paths.



HIRING

One of the most important decisions an organization can make is who to hire.

You have probably heard of hiring managers who have decided to hire someone because they have “a good feeling about them” or they “have a strong handshake” or because they “made great eye-contact during the interview.” The problem with considering these types of factors is that you are likely to miss out on quality candidates.

The solution is defining the key requirements and competencies for a job.

How Competencies Can Help

- Define what needs to be assessed.
- Encourage people with the skills and competencies that match the job to apply (e.g., add them to job ads and job descriptions).
- Develop and use tools like interview questions to measure how well someone’s skills fit the job.
- Ensure consistent evaluation of candidates.
- Determine if someone is able to demonstrate those behaviours that fit with the organization’s vision and values (e.g., creativity, self-awareness, etc.).



ONBOARDING

“Onboarding involves getting new hires up to speed in terms of the requirements of their new role and the culture of the organization.”

Why is Onboarding Important?

- Helps the new employee to develop a positive impression of the organization.
- Sets the employee up for success.
- Increases the new employee’s confidence, commitment, satisfaction, and intentions to stay.
- Allows the new employee to understand their role and what is being asked of them.
- Allows the new employee to feel more connected to the people and the organization.

How Competencies Can Help

Competencies help to provide:

- **Role Clarity:** allow people to understand their role and the requirements for successful performance.
- **Learning:** allow people to learn new tasks of the job and develop confidence in their ability to perform.
- **Culture:** introduce new employees to the organization’s culture (e.g., the organization’s values expressed in core competencies or behaviours).



PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

If you cannot measure it, you cannot learn and grow. Too often performance management is linked only to meeting a specific target (e.g., units sold, number of errors, financial target, etc.) or the “what” someone does. People who meet these targets are good performers, people who exceed targets are all stars, and people who fall short of these targets are often considered poor performers. The “what” someone is expected to achieve in their job is important but the “how” they go about achieving these results or the competencies/behaviours are just as important for success.



For example, an employee may meet their sales target but if they do so by providing the customer with the wrong information or taking customers from their teammates then they should not be considered good performers as they are not demonstrating the competencies of customer centric and teamwork.

How Competencies Can Help

- Describe the behaviours needed to achieve work goals.
- Define the behaviours needed for successful performance.
- Allow people to track their performance against a common standard.
- Allow employees and their managers to share a common understanding of what success looks like and support performance discussions and the sharing of feedback.
- Allow the organization to track how well people are doing across departments and teams.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



Employees tend to stay with employers who provide opportunities for continued learning, development, and growth. Learning activities, such as job rotations, projects and assignments, job shadowing, coaching and mentoring, classroom and e-learning can all be mapped to competencies. After competencies have been defined for a role, an employee can assess themselves against these key behaviours to identify what their strengths are and what areas they may need to develop. They can then develop learning goals and identify learning activities tied to competencies that they may wish to work on.

How Competencies Can Help

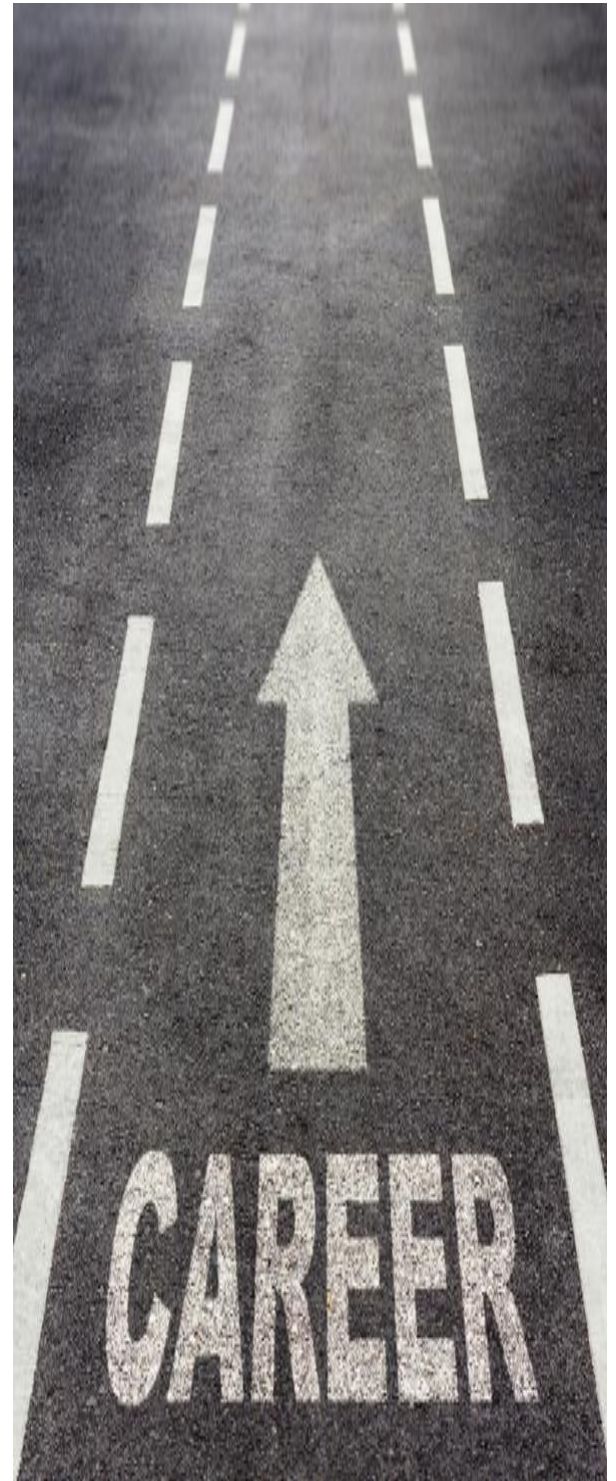
- Help people to assess how well their own skills or competencies fit with their current role.
- Encourage people to identify their strengths and areas they may need to develop.
- Support people as they set specific learning goals and track their progress.
- Help people to identify learning activities tied to specific competencies.
- Allow people to share more specific performance feedback with one another.
- Promote a culture of learning.
- Allow organizations to use learning resources more efficiently and effectively.

CAREER PATHING

Career Pathing allows employees to explore and pursue career goals, and ultimately take charge of their careers. Defining the key requirements and competencies for all jobs allows employees to gain a clear understanding of the expectations for their current role as well as any roles they may wish to move into. A clear map of all roles within an organization, including the required knowledge, skills, experience, and competencies for each role is often provided. Once an employee has identified a career path, they can determine how well their knowledge, experience, and competencies fit the requirements of the role. The employee can then develop an individual learning and development plan to address any gaps.

How Competencies Can Help

- Help people to feel engaged in their roles.
- Help people to find roles that fit their interests, needs, and skills.
- Provide a program to help people develop skills and navigate their careers.
- Support the transfer of knowledge across the organization.
- Promote a culture of learning.
- Help to attract and retain the best people.



SUCCESSION PLANNING

Understanding a workforce's skillset makes filling key positions and planning for succession and promotion easy. By using competencies, you can begin to identify and grow existing employees to take over critical positions and higher-level roles. Through assessments and individual employee career goals, you can better identify which employees display the capacity to perform successfully and create organizational and individual succession plans.



How Competencies Can Help

- Describe the requirements and behaviours required for mission critical and higher-level roles.
- Help people identify how they measure up to the requirements for these positions.
- Allow the organization to plan for and identify their talent needs.
- Help to identify any skill or competency gaps across the organization.
- Support the transfer of knowledge across the organization.

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