



CORE COMPETENCIES

4-STEPS FOR TRANSLATING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S
VALUES INTO CORE COMPETENCIES



www.perennialtalent.com

info@ptconsulting.io



PUT YOUR ORGANIZATION'S VALUES TO WORK

A recent study by MIT Sloan Management Review found that there is no relationship between an organization's values and how well people actually live up to these values. There seems to be a disconnect between what organizations say they value, and what their culture actually shows they value.

This is not entirely surprising given how values are often written – in a vague and ambiguous way. For example, take the value of “Customer First,” what does this value look like in action? How does an employee know they are behaving in a way that puts the customer first? If people don't know what these values look like, how can they be expected to live up to them?

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES AND CORE COMPETENCIES

Does this Sound Like You?

- ✓ Do you find it hard to define what your organization's values actually mean?
- ✓ Do you find it hard to reinforce your organization's values?
- ✓ Do you find it hard to link your organization's values to employee performance?
- ✓ Do you find it hard to describe exactly what your organization's values mean and what it would look like to behave in ways that represent these values?
- ✓ Do you find it hard to assess job candidates against these values when making hiring decisions?

If any of the above sounds like you, then you need core competencies. Core competencies can make your organization's values more meaningful and make them observable and measurable. Here are 4-steps you can take to bring your organization's values to life by using core competencies.

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

Core Competencies refer to competencies that apply to every job within the organization.



Step 1: Create a Short List of Core Competencies

The first step involves creating a short list of potential competencies mapped to your organization's values. It helps to narrow down the list of potential core competencies to a manageable number of about 6-8 competencies. The short list for core competencies can be created by reviewing your organization's mission, vision, and values. You can also talk to senior leaders about what behaviours they feel are important if the organization is going to not only reach its goals but maintain its amazing culture.



We recommend using core competencies that describe successful performance using multiple stages or levels of proficiency. Multi-stage/level competencies allow you to describe what successful performance looks like at various stages of learning, from someone still learning the skill or ability to someone with vast expertise in the skill or ability. Here is an example of what a core competency might look like.

1. Name		2. Definition		
Continuous Learning: Shows a commitment to learning and developing knowledge, skills, and abilities				
Key Areas	Stages			
	Developing	Intermediate	Advanced	Mastery
Reflects on capabilities 3. Key Areas	Identifies own strengths and areas in need of development.	Gathers feedback from others regularly to clarify learning needs.	Analyses successes and failures on a continuous basis to identify areas to improve.	Measures current skills and knowledge against requirements needed to meet long-term goals.
Sets learning goals	Creates challenging and realistic learning goals.	Monitors progress towards meeting learning goals, updating approach as required.	Sets challenging long-term goals that are outside of area of expertise.	Provides guidance to others on how to set realistic and challenging goals.
Identifies learning opportunities	Identifies own learning style and preferences for learning.	Identifies as variety of learning activities needed to enhance capabilities.	Seeks out challenging and unfamiliar learning opportunities.	Pursues development activities needed to meet future and emerging industry trends.
Applies learning	Stays up to date on new trends or best practices relevant to own area.	Tries new ways of doing things, adjusting approach based on lessons learned.	Shares knowledge and resources with others to facilitate continuous improvement.	Seeks new tools and techniques to facilitate continuous learning.



Step 2: Identify Core Competencies

The next step is to engage senior leadership to pick the 2-4 most critical core competencies from the short list. The senior leaders you consult should have a deep understanding of the organization and they should be a representative sample that fully covers all aspects of the organization (e.g., geography, function).

There are different methods you can use to get people to select which core competencies they think are most critical. For example, you can:

- Send out a survey asking senior management to select the most critical core competencies.
- Hold a focus group with senior management where they can come to a consensus concerning the most critical core competencies.
- Hold one-on-one discussion with senior management.
- Use a combination of any of the above (e.g., use a survey and discuss the results in a focus group).

When speaking with senior leaders, it can be helpful to ask them a few questions to guide their selection. Questions can include:

- What core competencies will help us achieve our mission and goals?
- What future challenges might we face, and what competencies will help us to overcome them?
- What core competencies will set us apart from our competition?
- What core competencies fit with our unique culture and where we want to go?

After you have identified the final 2-4 core competencies, you can work with senior leaders to tailor the language within the competencies to ensure that the language resonates with employees. Because if these competencies do not resonate and speak to your culture then no one will want to use them, and they may end up being saved somewhere where no one ever looks at them again.

Step 3: Create Competency Profiles

The next step is to include the core competencies in your competency profiles. Competency profiles describe the critical competencies and stage/level of the competency needed for successful performance for a role. Because core competencies apply to every role across your organization, you will want to map the required stage of each competency to each job. For example, an entry level worker might be required to perform at stage 1 (developing), whereas someone in senior management might be required to perform at stage 4 (mastery) of a core competency.

The simplest method involves assigning stages based on a pre-existing framework for grouping jobs (e.g., job levels, job codes, job bands, grade codes). For example, every position at a job level 1-2 could be assigned stage 1 of development (i.e., Developing), whereas every position at a job level 8-10 could be assigned a stage 4 of development (i.e., Mastery) for each core competency.

Core Competency	Admin (JL1)	VP (JL9)
Customer Centric	Stage 1 – Developing	Stage 4 – Mastery
Continuous Learning	Stage 1 – Developing	Stage 4 – Mastery
Integrity	Stage 1 – Developing	Stage 4 – Mastery

This method typically works well for core competencies because employees at a higher organizational level tend to require a higher stage of competence. For example, when it comes to continuous learning, someone in an admin. role may be required to identify their own strengths and set learning goals (stage 1), while someone in a VP role may be required to provide goal setting guidance to others and learn about emerging trends in their field (stage 4).

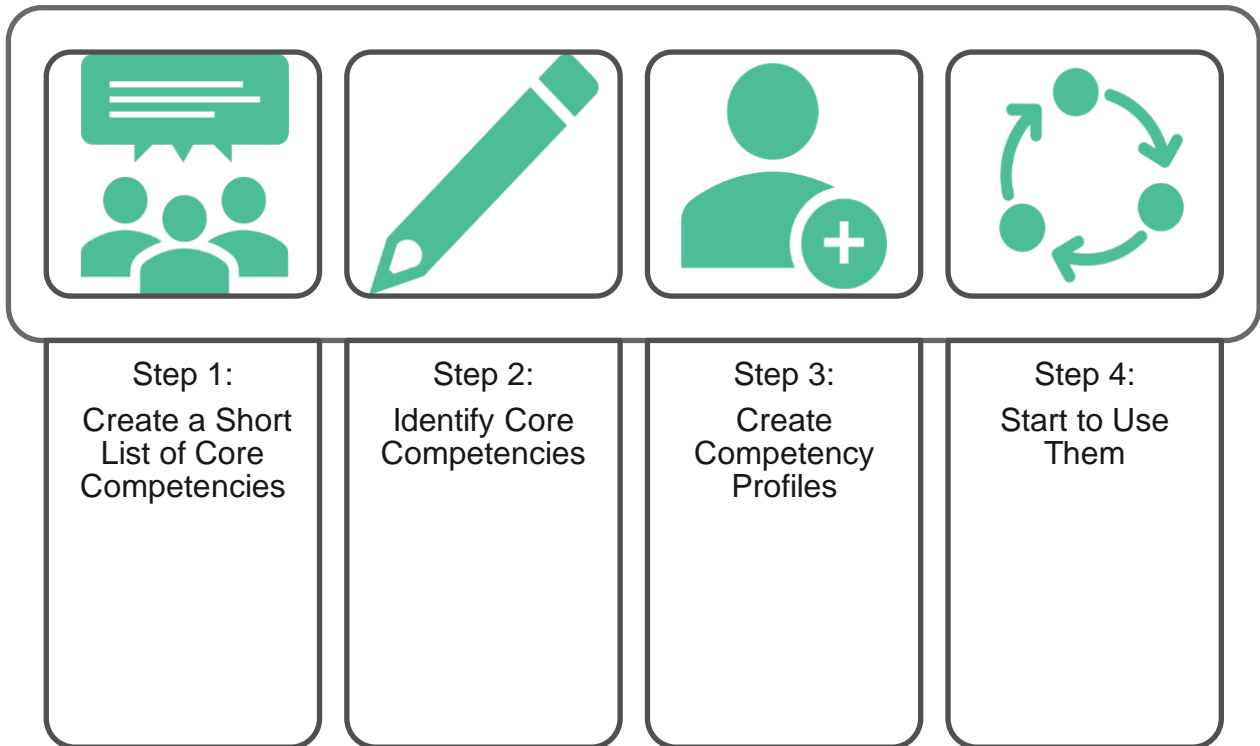
Step 4: Start to Use Them

After your core competencies are defined, and the required stage of each competency is mapped to the roles across your organization, you can start applying your core competencies to all your talent management practices. Core competencies can be used during hiring, onboarding, performance management, learning and development, career pathing, succession planning, or all the above!

For example, you can assess job applicants against the core competencies to ensure that applicants can demonstrate the critical behaviours that align with the organization’s vision and values. You can also assess current employees against the core competencies to ensure that they possess the skills or competencies that help to define your company’s unique culture as well as those skills that help to differentiate your company from all the rest.

The Key to Action is Results

By following these 4-steps you can make sure that your core values and core competencies are delivering the results you are looking for.



For more information on how to use core competencies contact: info@ptconsulting.io