COMPETENCY MAPPING: A TOOL FOR ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Gayatri Kulkarni
Assistant Professor, Indira Institute of Management, Pune, India
Email: gayatrimanojkulkarni@gmail.com

Dr. Tripathy L.K.
Director & Dean, Dr. D. Y. Patil Vidyapeeth Pune, India
Email: drlktripathy@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Competency mapping is a current movement seen across various organizations. Competency is a combination of knowledge, skill and attributes which lead to successful performance. Identification of competencies which lead to successful performance helps the organisation grow along with the development of people associated with it. There are various approaches to follow the competency mapping process like the bottom up and top approach, each one leading to organizational effectiveness. Competency mapping has found its uses in various functions of HRM and HRD like Selection, Performance Management, Career planning and Succession planning, leadership development etc. Hence an endeavour has been made to understand the use of competency mapping process in various organizations. Majority of the organizations have made use of competency mapping for development of employees specially leadership pipeline.

Keywords: Competency; Competency Mapping; Usage of Competency Mapping; HRM Functions

INTRODUCTION

"I believe the real difference between success and failure in a corporation can be very often traced to the question of how well the organization brings out the great energies and talents of its people."

Thomas J. Watson, Jr. A Business and its Beliefs (1963)

Organizations grow with the growth of its people. In order to have a competitive advantage, organizations need to have a distinct quality that differentiates from other which is usually gained through people competence. Competence and Competency movement has gained momentum in the last few years in this regard. Organizations are considering both the competence at individual level and at the organizational level. Special efforts are embarked to identify the talent in employees and develop them to help achieve the organizational goals. Competency mapping process helps to identify those essential behaviours required for successful performance

History of competence can be traced back to as old as Chanakya’s Arthashastra which discusses about the use of assessment of specific skills while recruiting. David McClelland is been credited for the competency movement across the globe. In 1973 McClelland published a research paper tilled “Testing for competence rather than for Intelligence”, which has been credited for launching the competency movement in psychology. He also developed the Behaviour Event Interviewing as one the methodology to identify the essential competencies. McClelland went on to argue that the best predictors of outstanding on-the-job performance were underlying, enduring personal characteristics
that he called competencies.

**Definition of competency**

Various scholars have defined competency in various ways. Few of them are: Boyatzis in 1982 defined competencies as a capacity that exists in a person that leads to behaviour that meets the job demands within the parameters of organizational environment and that in turn brings about the desired results.

Hayes has defined competencies as generic knowledge, motive, trait, social role or a skill of a person linked to superior performance on the job.

Albanese considered competencies as personal characteristics which contribute to effective managerial performance.

In 1991, Woodruffe considered competency as a person related concept that refers to the dimension of behaviour lying behind competent performer while competence is a work related concept that refers to the area of work at which the person is competent.

ANSFIELD (1997): Underlying Characteristics of a person that results in a effective superior performance. National Institute of Health (NIH), (the primary Federal agency for conducting and supporting medical research) developed an organization-wide competency model for its entire workforce. NIH defines competencies as "...the combination of knowledge, skills and abilities that contribute to individual and organizational performance."

According to UNIDO (2002): A Competency is a set of Skills, related knowledge and attributes that allow an individual to successfully perform a task or an activity within a specific function or a job.

According to RANKIN (2002): "Competencies are definition of skills and behaviors that organization expects their staff to practice in work".

A competency is not a behaviour or performance itself but it is repertoire of capabilities, activities, processes and responses available that enable a range of work demands to be met more effectively by some people than by others.

Competency is then a construct which represents constellation of characteristics of the person that results in effective performance of his or her job (Shermon, 2004)

**Approaches to competency mapping**

There are various different approaches of competency mapping. Top down approach and bottom up approaches are the most commonly viewed.

In top down approach, the mapping is done across various positions in the organizations and observing the job behaviour. Organization mission, vision and strategic goals are studied. Based on this, the competencies essential to achieve these goals are mapped. The competencies essential for superior performance are identified.

In bottom-up approach, Key positions to be mapped are identified. Various methods of data collection are utilized to map the competency for that position. Individual competencies are consolidated into job families or functional /departmental level. In the final stage, the competencies are then merged at the organizational level.
Along with this, many organizations prefer to use generalised available models of competency after through validation and establishing their appropriateness. The competency models are adopted from same industry.

A paradox is observed where standardization is increasing in competency models through a top down approach while Prahalad and Hamel in 1990 have described competencies as distinctive, value creating inimitable assets for the organization. (Kandula)

Further few approaches have been added in the competency mapping approach. One is the Universalist approach while the second is situation list approach. Some of the approaches are classified as deductive or rationalist approach, like the Spencer & Spencer method which is a bottom up approach where competencies are brought about by taking in depth interviews following the critical incident technique (Planagan, 1954).

In many of the managerial practice, Universalist approach is used in deductive sense (Sandberg, 2000): i.e. competency mapping is done by top down approach by the use of standard competency dictionary available and then it is fit into various context and work situation.

The situation list perspective says that the person being competent is related to the social context in which the competencies are activated and developed. (Guido Capaldo, 2006)

**Competency mapping process**

Competency mapping is a process about identifying preferred behaviors and personal skills which distinguish excellent and outstanding performance from the average.

Techniques used to map Competencies include Critical Incident Analysis and Repertory Grid Analysis

Businesses use competency mapping to match the capabilities and talent of personnel with specific job tasks and organizational needs. The technique involves conducting a job analysis to identify core skills and behaviors required to perform the role, drafting a job description based on the key competencies and aligning resources to best fulfil competency needs.

**Critical Incidence Technique**

Respondents are asked to relate specific incidents, which highlighted exemplary behaviors in critical situations. This is based on the assumption that the best and the worst of a person surfaces in a crisis.

**Repertory Grid Analysis**

- identify important attributes
- for each attributes, establish a bipolar scale with differentiable characteristics and their opposites

**Steps in Competency mapping analysis**

The competency mapping process consists of following steps:

**Specification Determination:** Specific positions to be mapped are identified. This involves appropriate communication plans and actives to be charted out for development of competency map. The position to be mapped considers the mission, vision and strategic goals of the organization.

**Information Collection / Data collection:** Data is collected by various methods to identify the attributes and competencies for each position. Data is collected to determine the skills, abilities required for success in the position being mapped. This data can be collected through methods like interview with experts and interview with job incumbent and their managers

**Development of competency:** The above data is analysed and competencies are identified for each of the position to be mapped. Behaviour indicators are added to each of these. Also, some competencies essential according to organizational values or requirements are added to this set.
Validation: The validation of competencies is done by the group of experts before finalizing. This competency sheet or map is reviewed so that it ensures meeting the future needs of organization as well.

Implementation and Rollout: The competency plan is rolled out to the teams with the action plan. The maps are revised at regular intervals and any gap in the competencies is addressed.

Significance of competency mapping process

The current changes in the economy calls for various innovations which includes the innovation in managing the human resources and also developing them. Indian organizations are also witnessing a change in systems, management cultures and philosophy due to the global alignment of Indian organizations. There is a need for multi skill development. Competency Mapping is a process of identifying key competencies for an organization, the jobs and functions within it. Having a competency map makes it easier for firms to identify qualified candidates, assess performance, focus training efforts and enhance overall productivity.


- Recruitment and Selection: Competency framework can be used as a template for hiring. The new recruits can be judged on the basis of competencies that they possess and thus reduces the cost of training the candidate. This also ensures job fit of the candidate and the organizational fit along with effective performance.

- Training and Development: Competency mapping helps to identify the gap in performance due to absence or lack of certain competencies. Thus identifying the competency gap and delivering training on those particular competencies help the organisation to achieve its goals.

- Career and Succession planning: Competency map helps to identify potential employees and help in succession planning. On the other hand, employees themselves can aid in career plotting with the help of competencies.

- Performance Management System: Competency mapping helps to manage performance. This aids in development of individual and not just rewarding the best performer.

- Rewards and Recognition: Rewards can be linked with competency. Competency linked benefits include enhancement in competency done by the employee.
This tool can be used by employees to
- Focus on their skills
- Design their own career plan
- Guide for selecting their training program to improve efficiency at workplace.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER
1. To understand the concept of competency and competency mapping.
2. To understand the use of competency mapping in various HRM functions.
3. To appreciate the organizations use of competency mapping process in various HR functions.

The research is exploratory in nature and based on secondary data available through books and internet. The data is collected by visiting the sites of various organizations and data thereby shared by them.

1) **Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.** plans various interventions at various stages of employee lifecycle to identify and address the skill gap or the competency gaps. This helps to provide the development inputs to the employees. Systematic role-based learning maps have been defined on the basis of which various programs related to product, process, skill, competency, behavioral, and leadership are designed and mapped to respective individuals. Structured on-the-job training starts with induction and Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd also has tie-ups with various external institutions and renowned Indian and Global B-Schools where several customized training programs aligned to their competency framework are conducted to upskill the talent in various skill sets. Along with the help of structured interventions, the leaders and managers in the organization groom the team members informally for newer responsibilities and new roles. Leadership development is based on the leadership progression plan which identifies and charts the progression of employees with focus on developing understanding, skills, and behaviors in line with their growth in the leadership chain.

2) **L&T Technology Services:** The Talent Development & Employee Engagement is a unique function in Human Resource Management in L&T Technology Services, which provides powerful framework to determine the organization’s talent needs and plan people management interventions that will meet those needs. The function has a robust and sustainable model that drives employee engagement in a way that ensures employees are committed to the organization’s goals and values, motivated to contribute to organizational success, and are able to enhance their own sense of well-being. The model uses various interventions like alignment, diagnostic and assessment, opportunities and development, recognition and motivation, communication; alignment and assessment intervention uses competency mapping exercise.

Alignment is an organizational development intervention which helps to get everyone in the business moving in the same direction to achieve the stated goal of the organization. The alignment framework in L&T Technology Services serves as the link between individual performance and business growth by helping people to achieve their career goals by aligning to the business goals. Competency mapping is one of the process used in alignment.

Competency Mapping – Competency mapping aims to identify key competencies required to perform any job role in the organization. Competency mapping defines each role in the organization. It also identifies an individual’s strengths and scopes of improvement in order to help them better understand themselves and to show them where career development efforts need to be directed.
Organizational Diagnosis is an effective way to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the current organizational performance by conducting an org-wide analysis of the people. Diagnostics at L&T Technology Services is conducted by implementing various assessment tools like I expresss way, psychometric assessment, 360 feedback and development centers to assess performance abilities of individuals and teams and identify development potential. Psychometric test help individual to identify skill gap along with values, interest, motivation and personality which help in developing the individual.

Development Centers – Development centers aim to identify, develop, and groom talent to take on higher responsibilities. The development center uses simulated activities to enable participants to obtain a balanced assessment of their performance on a pre-determined set of competencies, consider options for building on their strengths and working on their developmental needs and create a basis to draw up professional and personal action plans.

3) Atlas Copco India: Atlas Copco India Academy provides a platform for employees to continuously upgrade their skills and develop their competencies by choosing their own developmental areas in concurrence with their managers in order to meet organizational objectives (short and long term). The training provides employees with new skills and knowledge, empowering them to set and achieve ever-higher productivity goals for themselves and their organizations. Atlas Copco has two competence centers: one in India and the other in South Africa. The Academy encourages leadership development so as to ascertain the growth of future managers to provide world class services to all our stakeholders.

Global Competence Development Program (GCDP) The program aims to develop and train selected participants from focus growth regions that have the potential for strong development and show a high level of company loyalty, commitment and willingness to walk the extra mile so that they are prepared for more responsibility in their home company or region when the program is completed. The GCDP program works with focus on growth regions such as Asia, Africa, Middle East, Russia, and South America. With every new start of the GCDP a focus growth region is selected. Participants work on project or job related to their positions in the home country and provides building stones for more responsibility in the home company. This program is aimed at employees who have completed 5 years in Atlas Copco product company or customer centres. And have a University degree in marketing, engineering, sourcing, manufacturing or finance is required. Employees need to have a high level of company loyalty, commitment and willingness to walk the extra mile. The Academy drives the employee training process by identifying knowledge or competency gaps and designing programs to close them.

4) Wockhardt: Wockhardt believes that good associates are an enabling force that helps to aim and achieve higher as an organisation. Hence it is important to align the aspirations of people with the strategic objectives of Wockhardt. Hence Wockhardt has a series of interventions that are aimed at developing people and leadership capabilities at different levels in the organisation, based on the proprietary competency model – Wockhardt Holistic Excellence Enhancement Lever (WHEEL). Development At Wockhardt Wockhardt has a series of interventions that are aimed at developing people and leadership capabilities at different levels in the organisation, based on the proprietary competency model – Wockhardt Holistic Excellence Enhancement Lever (WHEEL).
5) Aditya Birla Group (ABG) Competency framework comprises Behavioural and Functional Competencies. These serve as the common yardstick for identifying the strengths and the areas for development, both for current and future roles.

According to the article published in the Economic times, Aditya Birla Group is intending to build a database of skill sets of its 1.2 lakh employees, which, apart from their service history, will include expertise such as work done in mergers and acquisitions, new projects and product launches, to improve decision making and enhance deployment of talent.

The Aditya Birla Group will roll out the plan in phases and the first lot to be mapped will be high-potential employees followed by specialists.

Skill mapping is part of the conglomerate’s five-year strategy to bring in more technology in its HR (Human Resource) processes at both the group level and across its businesses, which include metals, cement, chemicals, telecom and retailing. This will help the conglomerate to gauge employees better through analytics. The conglomerate has rolled out a series of changes in its people policies in the past year. It brought in a ‘2x2x2’ policy to assign plum roles to a select few who have worked in at least two geographies, across two functions and two businesses. The objective was to ensure the right talent pipeline gets built from within. In January 2016, the group froze hiring for senior managerial posts from outside and asked all group companies to such positions from within.

6) Tata Steel: People development for business continuity is managed in Tata Steel through its patented EDGE (‘Ensuring Development & Growth of Employees’) initiative for Officers. This includes a Talent Review system for identification of competencies for 100 per cent of its executives for current and potential positions.

Gaps identified are then bridged through Learning and Development programmes so that right skills, competency and values prepare its people to perform even more efficiently and meaningfully.

The overall learning and development needs of the officers is addressed through a well established 70:20:10 framework, which ensures holistic learning where 70 per cent of the development happens through on the job assignments, 20 per cent through coaching & mentoring and 10 per cent through classroom training. New programmes - aligned to stated managerial competencies –are developed and Management Development programmes incorporating Tata Values are integrated with them.
For workers and supervisions, the 4Q model is followed for need identification accompanied by Training Need Surveys for job clusters and identification of Job specific customer requirements. Based on the gap between the desired skill level and the existing skill level of employees, training needs are met through Cluster Training, Positional Training and Right Skilling.

To reskill and retrain its unskilled workers in 2011-12 the Company adopted a new approach to Training & Development. While it continued with the more generic “man to level / cluster mapping” approach in its existing units, the urgent need to meet specific job related skills for the new 2.9 MTPA units led to a radical shift in the approach for manning them. The new approach of “man to position mapping” was introduced, based on the existing skill gaps and requirements specified by internal customers.

These right skilling initiatives ensured that the Company achieved its goal of reducing the number of unskilled employees by 50 per cent over the base of 2009-10. An improvement has been seen in the skilled workforce from 88% to 94%. The significant upward trend in the number of programmes led to a perceptible rise in officers and non-officers trained. Capability and Capacity building were given priority across all functions, thereby building expertise in functional and managerial areas. As a result, the skill mix of Tata Steel’s employees has improved company wide, particularly at the Steel Works. Employee productivity has seen a spurt with a rise in the number of officers and non-officers trained.

7) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited: The specific training needs of individual employees are identified through Competency Mapping Exercises. The Training Department interacts with all Business Units / functions to identify and design training programs to cater to these needs. These programs enable employees to enhance their skills and realize their full potential.

The Training Policy at HPCL provides broad directions to guide the learning solutions and initiatives. For the Management Staff, Samavesh is the induction training while the supervisory level employees are given function specific inputs and job related technical skills. Leadership development is done through the project titled “Project Akshay”. Non-management staff focuses on skill related to the job requirement.

Training needs are identified majorly through the performance appraisal while training programs are developed through the consultation with department heads. Individual development plans are obtained from the competency mapping exercise.

8) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited follows a structured process for determining organisational goals and objectives and the plans to achieve them. The process begins with a five year dream plan that is further broken down into annual plans. The organisation then prepares business plans to achieve the objectives. These goals and objectives are tabulated in the form of Balanced Score Cards (BSC) and are monitored from time to time.

Training needs are identified and earmarked and goals are set to promote career growth. 'ASCEND' is a program developed to provide multi-rater assessment, multiple level personnel review, integrated feedback and individual plans for employee engagement and skill development at Bharat Petroleum. This was linked to develop detailed career plans along with determining promotions and use for appraisals.

Bharat Petroleum launched the project 'CALIBER', which was aimed at creating an organised means to assess, identify and develop existing talent in the organisation. Following this initiative, middle and senior level managers underwent a complete, all inclusive assessment process which was followed by a detailed review, integrated feedback and enrichment plans. The project was then scaled to include all members of the BPCL family.

This was, in turn, also linked to other HR processes to develop detailed career plans along with determining appraisals and promotions. This created a clear, cohesive and transparent system by which the employees could clearly see their progress and allowed better definition of employee goals in line with organisational growth. The ‘ASCEND’ model at Bharat Petroleum uses three main parameters to assess individual performance - ability, aspiration and performance engagement. This detailed process...
is in place for middle and senior level professionals in the organisational tree. For junior levels there are additional distinctive assessment tools known as the Growth Factor Index (GFI).

In an interview with People Matters, Dr. S. Mohan, Director (HR), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) while sharing his thoughts on people practices discussed the role of competency mapping in leadership identification.

Every employee above the level of Deputy General Manager was profiled for competencies and leadership styles based on 360 degree feedback. This created a repository of strength, weaknesses, potential and leadership style across the organization which was useful in identifying the right roles and job profiles for employees so as to achieve their full potential. This also helped BPCL to create leaders within the organization.

9) **NTPC** has well established talent management systems in place to ensure that the company delivers on its promise of providing exponential growth and challenge to all employees.

NTPC has a standardised and formalised performance management system. A KPA based system is designed to assess functional, managerial and potential competence in an objective and transparent manner. The system is designed to accomplish the overall organisational vision and mission by linking individual performance to the company’s objectives and strike a balance between performance and competence to help individuals excel in their fields.

Potential employees are assessed for leadership competence and groomed to occupy these positions. The leadership competence is measures against identified set of leadership competence Based on this individual development plans are charted out for the potential leaders.

10) **Philips Healthcare Education** has developed various learning modules to develop knowledge, skills and attitude to provide safe and effective healthcare. All the modules are powered by Philips Private Learning Platform. This competency based program lead to improved staff satisfaction and higher quality patient care.

11) **Sandvik** has identified certain values essential to succeed at work. The leadership development program is called as Sandvik Leadership Model. This model sets up clear expectation and behaviours associated with those competencies. This model is useful for hiring, reviewing as well as dismissing leaders, if required.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

Organizations, today have realised the importance of developing their human resource to gain competitive advantage. Identifying competencies and developing them is one of the way followed by these organizations. Competency mapping has various different approaches like the top down or the bottom up approach which are utilized by the companies. Competency mapping is used in various functions of HR like Recruitment and selection, career planning, succession planning, training and development, potential and performance management. Linking of employee performance objectives to organisation objectives helps to yield good results and competency mapping helps as a catalyst in this process.

Many of the organization use competency mapping for training and development processes, majorly to help identify training need and the performance gap. Common competencies or the generalised competencies along with the values are incorporated in the induction training itself so the new employee is aware of the competencies essential across the organization. Tata Steel has identified essential competencies for both the officer grade and the non-managerial grade and the training have been imparted thus increasing the skilled workforce to more than 90% Few companies like L & T Infotech and BPCL have woven competencies as a part of career development plan itself. It has been observed that most of the companies have their own Leadership model with identified set of competencies. The employees are assessed against these set of competencies and groomed further to
develop a leadership pipeline. Competency mapping has found to be most used for leadership identification and development across the organizations.

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