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## Research Paper

# TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT (TNA) THROUGH MAPPING OF EMPLOYEE COMPETENCY: A REVIEW OF RESEARCH

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## ABSTRACT

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*At the heart of any successful activity lies a competence or a skill. In today's competitive world it is becoming particularly important to build on the competitive activities of business. Over the years, highly skilled and knowledge based jobs are increasing while low skilled jobs are decreasing. Competency Mapping is a process of identifying key competencies for an organization, the jobs and functions within it. So, every well managed organization should have well defined roles and list of competencies required to perform each role effectively. Competency mapping analyses individual's SWOT for better understanding and this helps to improve his career growth and to generate the most successful things and the maximum quality work. This identifies the gap for improving knowledge to develop. The large organizations often employ some kind of competency mapping to understand how to most competently employ the competencies of workers. Competency mapping has been used for job-evaluation, recruitment, training and development, performance management, succession planning etc. The purpose of this article is to identify the importance of employee competency mapping and the benefits of Training need assessment.*

**KEY WORDS:** TNA, Training needs assessment, competency mapping, competence, and skills.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the major objectives of every company is to improve its performance every year and set new standards and norms. For every operation and machine there is a human being and it is the quality of the man behind the machine or process which determines the performance of the company. In view of this, the performance of the company depends not on the human assets but the human asset having right match of competencies and their levels for performance requirements. If the right match of competencies is available with the employees, and then it is their motivation, work environment and incentives which help them to give their best performance. In **InfoTech**,

a PCMM Level 5 company has a successful competency-based HR system. Recruitment, training, job rotation, succession planning and promotions-all are defined by competency mapping. Dr. Devendra Nath, executive vice-president of the company, who had initiated the PCMM process in the parent company (L&T) in 1997, said, "Nearly all our HR interventions are linked to competency. Competencies are enhanced through training and job rotation." He adds that all People who have gone through job rotation undergo a transformation and get a broader perspective of the company. For Instance, a person lacking in negotiation skills might be put in the sales or purchase department for a year to hone his skills in the area.



## II. WHAT IS COMPETENCY MAPPING?

The idea of testing the competencies, required for efficient performance at a position, was proposed by **David McClelland** in the early 1970's. The term competency has been interpreted by various authors/researchers with their unique way of giving meaning to it. Some of the definitions are given below

**Boyatzis (1982)** described competencies as underlying characteristic of an individual, which are causally (change in one variable cause change in another) related to effective job performance.

**Albanese (1989)** Competencies are personal characteristic that contribute to effective managerial performance

Competency Mapping is a process of identifying key Competencies for a company or institution and the jobs and functions within it. To make it even clearer, we could say that competency is a behavior (i.e. communication, leadership) rather than a skill or ability although it sometimes includes skills and abilities. Clear? I thought not! Perhaps if we were to look at the steps involved in the process:

### First:

A job analysis is carried out by asking employees to fill in a questionnaire that asks them to describe what they are doing, and what skills, attitudes and abilities they need to have to perform it well. There would be a bit that requests them to list down attributes needed to make it up to the next level, thus making it behavioral as well as skill-based.

### Second:

Having discovered the similarities in the questionnaires, a competency-based job description is crafted and presented to the personnel department for their agreement and additions if any.

### Third:

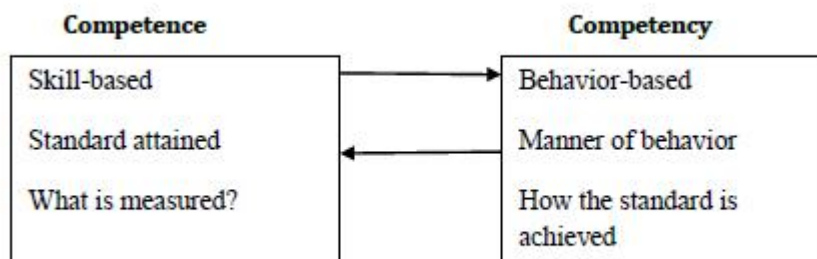
Having agreed on the job requirements and the skills and attitudes needed to progress within it and become more productive; one starts mapping the capability of the employees to the Benchmarks

There are several index points. Within the responsibility level, an almost (but not quite) arbitrary level of attainment is noted against each benchmark indicating the areas where the assessee is in terms of personal development and achievement.

These give an adept HR manager a fairly good picture of the employee to see whether he (or she) needs to perform better or to move up a notch on the scale. Once the employee 'tops' every indicator at his level, he moves on to the next and begins there at the bottom - in short, he is promoted. It helps in determining the training and development needs and importantly it helps to encourage the best and develop the rest. A win-win situation for everyone.

## III. IS COMPETENCE AND THE COMPETENCY THE SAME?

Some dictionaries may present them interchangeably, however, as shown in the figure given below; 'competence' means a skill and the standard of performance reached. While 'competency' refers to the behavior by which it is achieved.



The Interface between competence and competency

### Competency mapping helps the HR system to ensure:

1.	Selection systems	All interviews are looking for the same set of abilities and characteristics
2.	Training and development	It provides a list of behaviors and skills that must be developed to maintain satisfactory levels of performance
3.	Succession planning	It focuses on the same set of attributes and skills relevant to success on the positions under consideration.
4.	Performance management	It clarifies what is expected from the individuals.
5.	Appraisal System	It focuses on specific behavior, offering a road map for recognition, reward and possible advancement
Further, a competency mapping helps in ensuring that consistent standards are applied worldwide in a global company.		

#### IV. IMPORTANCE OF COMPETENCIES

Indian industry is passing through the toughest phase of cutthroat competition. In the present context, tapping on the competencies and enhancing them for the industries does not remain just an issue for effectiveness rather is a necessity for their survival. With the competitive business environment, the work force competencies are constantly changing. To sustain the competition for efficiency and growth of the organization

it has become necessary to understand, evaluate and update/ refurbish the current competency levels, as competencies influence all aspects of individual and organizational functioning. Identifying competencies on an organizational basis provides a means for pinpointing the most critical competencies for organizational success. They are the main factors that determine whether an employee will be able to perform well. Competencies are demonstrated in a job context and, as such, are influenced by an organization's culture, business goals and objectives and work environment.

#### V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

S. No.	Reference	Constructs used in study	Sector	Country
1	George Book (2001)	Competencies, Retail Leadership	Retailing Company	UK
2	Judith G. Calhoun (2005)	Competency Mapping, Training Initiatives	Public Health	Michigan
3	T.V. Rao & Mohit (2007)	Competency Assessment, 360 Degree feedback	organization	Ahmedabad
4	Vathsala (2008)	Gender, Age, Marital Status, Managerial competency needs	Sri Lankan Telecommunications firm	Srilanka
5	Rakesh Sharma (2009)	Talent Management, Competency development, Retain Employees	Pharmaceutical Organization	
6	Randy Mazurat (2009)	Electronic Curriculum Mapping, Competency based Dental Education	Medical College	UK
7	Jauhari, V. (2006)	Competencies, Career	Hospitality Industry	India
8	Musselwhite, (2006)	Workforce planning & education, Mapping competencies	Center for Mental Health	England
9	Male, S.A., Bush, M.B., and Chapman, E.S. (2011),	Generic Competencies & Engineers	Oil & gas exploration and Mining Sector	Australia
10	Awang, Mariah., Hakim Mohammed, A. (2012),	Facility Management, Technical Institutions	Technical Education Sector	Srilanka
11	Suguna, P. <i>et al</i> (2013)	Competency Mapping, Training Initiatives	Garment Export Organization	Tirupur
12	Saxena, P <i>et al</i> (2014)	Managerial Competencies, Management education	Educational sector	India

#### VI. USES OF COMPETENCY MAPPING

Identifying competencies on an organizational basis provides a means for pinpointing the most critical competencies for organizational success. These core competencies are those that are embodied across the organization and between job types. There are several competencies for each position. If the individual competencies in the workforce are not in accord with those needed by the organization, competency mapping will point out these gaps. This set of competencies provides management and staff with a common understanding of the skills and behaviors that are

important to the organization. Therefore, it plays a key role in decisions for selection and recruitment of new employees, succession planning, career development, job rotation and transfer, project specific team development; performance measurement and training need assessment.

#### VII. COMPETENCY MAPPING AND TRAINING NEED ASSESSMENT (TNA)

One of the most systematic and scientific methods of TNA is through competency mapping, wherein, the starting point is to understand the job

requirements. Thereafter, measuring the competency levels of the employees, the gaps can be identified between the competencies desired and current state of competencies. While designing training courses, designers first need to ask, "What do employees need to be competent at, to do this job?" Having the competency database the designer precisely knows what desired behaviors are needed. This makes it very easy to determine what the course content should be. If the training department knows the competency levels of the workforce, competencies can be rank-ordered from those in greatest need of development to those in least need of development, thus, determining the training priorities. With the competency data, it can be ensured that only needed competencies are being built. This saves and optimizes organizational resources. While this sounds simple and systematic, that an organization should build the competencies that it needs and not build the competencies that it doesn't, majority of organizations to our knowledge are not doing this, and there by leading to an effective training competency based program. The overall objective of the competency-based training program is to provide trainers and instructional designers with a step-by-step guide for developing competency-based training. The training manual is intended to give instructors the ability to create a competency-based course based on instructional design principles.

- Assess training needs and develop a training plan;
- Design and present training programs that meet those needs;

### What Is Needs Assessment?

A Needs Assessment is the process of collecting information about an expressed or implied organizational need that could be met by conducting training. The need can be a desire to improve current performance or to correct a deficiency. A *deficiency* is a performance that does not meet the current standard. It means that there is a prescribed or best way of doing a task and that variance from it is creating a problem. The needs assessment process helps the trainer and the person requesting training to specify the training need or performance deficiency.

Assessments can be formal (using survey and interview techniques) or informal (asking some questions of those involved).

In this book, the term *needs assessment* is a general term for a three-phase process to collect information, analyze it, and create a training plan. Different types of assessments are called *needs analysis*,

such as performance analysis, job/task analysis, target population analysis, and so forth. Needs assessment often involves the use of more than one type of analysis.

### Why Conduct a Needs Assessment?

The purpose of a needs assessment is to answer some familiar questions: why, who, how, what, and when. Following the definitions of each type of needs assessment is the common needs analysis term.

1. **Why conduct the training:** to tie the performance deficiency to a business need and be sure the benefits of conducting the training are greater than the problems being caused by the performance deficiency. Conduct two types of analysis to answer this question: (1) *needs versus wants analysis* and (2) *feasibility analysis*.
2. **Who is involved in the training:** involve appropriate parties to solve the deficiency. Conduct a *target population analysis* to learn as much as possible about those involved in the deficiency and how to customize a training program to capture their interest.
3. **How can the performance deficiency be fixed:** training can fix the performance deficiency or suggest other remediation if training is not appropriate. Conduct a *performance analysis* to identify what skill deficiency is to be fixed by a training remedy.
4. **What is the best way to perform:** there is a better or preferred way to do a task to get the best results. Are job performance standards set by the organization, such as standard operating procedures (SOPs)? Are there governmental regulations to consider when completing the task in a required manner? Conduct a *task analysis* to identify the best way to perform.
5. **When will training take place:** the best timing to deliver training because attendance at training can be impacted by business cycles, holidays, and so forth. Conduct a *contextual analysis* to answer logistics questions.

### Why Are Needs Assessments Valuable to an Organization?

Conducting a needs assessment protects the assets of an organization and assures that resources set aside to address training issues are conserved and used only for that purpose. A needs assessment can help determine whether training is the appropriate solution to a performance deficiency. If increasing an employee's knowledge and skills will not help resolve a deficiency, then training is not appropriate. Conducting training without assuring there is a training need is a waste of time and resources.



## How Are Training Needs Assessments Done?

A training needs assessment is a three-phase process. Decide *how* to complete each type of analysis using these three phases.

1. **Gather information:** Any analysis involves gathering information to help make appropriate decisions. Gathering information can be the process of collecting existing information or developing new information.
2. **Analyze information:** After gathering information, analyze it, interpret it, and draw conclusions from the information. It is rarely appropriate or helpful if the trainer who gathers needs analysis information *independently* analyzes and interprets information and suggests conclusions. This phase of the needs assessment is most effective as a collaborative process that includes all stakeholders.
3. **Create a training plan:** After analyzing and interpreting information and offering conclusions, the information becomes the basis for a training plan which proposes how to resolve the performance deficiency.

## What is in a Ten-Part Training Plan?

Following the completion of one or more needs analyses, a training plan is usually written to report the results of the analyses and to meet projected training needs for a group of employees (for example, first-line supervisors, customer service representatives) or for a period of time, such as for the coming year. Here are the ten parts of a training plan, along with references to which type of analysis would develop each type of information. To get buy-in from management, link the outcome or symptom from each analysis to a business need.

### 1. Issue Definition

Define the issues that are related to a business need that training can address. For example, for either of the following issues it would be appropriate to develop a training plan:

- How can we successfully open ten new stores with the current skills of the assistant store managers who would be promoted to store manager?
- Middle managers have no advanced training beyond what they received when they became supervisors. Often the issues are identified by completing a *performance analysis*. Remember to offer non-training recommendations where appropriate.

### 2. Need Identification (vs. Wants)

Some organizations get trapped into putting on training programs because they are popular or requested, without regard for linking training to a business need. Often a request for time management, stress management, or communication skills indicates “needs” that ought to be sorted out from “wants.” Identify how widespread the “need” or “want” is and whether or not it is related to job performance. A *needs versus wants analysis* develops this type of information.

### 3. Contract with Supervisors

How will supervisors or managers of those attending training be included in the planning and follow-up for improved performance? Define the role of the supervisor or manager of the participants and identify how to prepare them to support, enable, and reinforce the training.

### 4. Identify/Establish Performance Standards

Often training is requested to improve performance. Is there a performance standard to use as the goal for a minimum level of acceptable performance? The operational area, not training, has to establish job performance standards. It becomes difficult to train if vague or no standards exist. (“Just make them more professional” is an example of a request that may or may not have an agreed-on standard of acceptable job performance.) Information related to performance standards is developed *from job/task analysis, performance analysis, and goal analysis*.

### 5. Trainee Identification

Who is to be trained? What job classifications do they hold and how many people need training? *Target population analysis* develops this type of information.

### 6. Establish Training Objectives and Training

Evaluation Criteria and Results Identify how you will know the training is successful. How will learning and new skills be evaluated? How will you tie training to bottom-line results and back to the business need that dictates the training? This information is developed by conducting a *performance analysis* and *needs versus wants analysis*.

### 7. Cost of Training

What are the costs to assess the need for training, design the training, develop learner and instructor materials, and present the training and evaluate the training? Are the costs worth the benefit? A *feasibility analysis* develops this type of information.

## 8. Select/Develop the Training Program

Decide whether you will present an existing program or buy a packaged training program.

Decide whether you will use internal subject-matter experts as developers/trainers or hire an external consultant, designer, or trainer. No needs analysis tool is used to answer this question completely. Perhaps a *contextual analysis* can answer some of the issues around program selection.

## 9. Scheduling

What time of the day, week, month, quarter, or year is best for this type of training? What are the consequences of training "on the clock" or on the employee's own time in your organization?

*Contextual analysis* develops this type of information.

## 10. Evaluate the Results

Apply the criteria using these four levels and objectives from number 6 above.

- Participant reaction
- Learning
- Job performance
- Results

## VIII. CONCLUSION

A Competency is something that describes how a job might be done excellently; a Competence only describes what has to be done, not how. Very often it is observed that when things get tough, the training budget is one of the first things to face the axe, perhaps since it is viewed as a non-productive overhead. This is true in view of the fact that many have failed to prove that training is essential for any organization to meet its business goals and to ensure a good return on investment in it. In order to ensure desired changes in the organizational mindset, training must be driven by the training needs of the organization.

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