COMPETENCY MAPPING FOR MARKETING AGENTS

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ABSTRACT

Quoting Warren Bennis, "Nothing gives me more satisfaction than learning something new". In the present study I came across 13 organisations and met approximately about 25 hardcore process owners in different organisation in the field of competency management. As Theodore Levitt rightly puts it that in these days organisations are customer created and customer satisfying organisms and winning at market place is giving customers enough reasons to choose. An effective competency management system provides increased clarity about performance and learning expectations of knowledge, skill and abilities, improved consistency of standards, provide a shared language and enhance the ability to track skills with in an organisation.The recommended competency directory takes care of every aspects of capability building of an individual to face the challenges of 21st century.

Index Terms- *Competency management system, competency directory*

INTRODUCTION
Importance of Competency and Competency mapping

Before defining competency mapping one must understand the meaning of competency. Competency is an underlying characteristic of an individual related to effective and superior job performance. These characteristics include knowledge, skills, aspects of self-image, social motives, traits, thought patterns, mind-sets, and ways of thinking, feeling, and acting.

The following definitions of the above characteristics may be given :

- **Motive :** The underlying need or thought pattern that drives, directs and selects an individual's behaviour ; ex. The need of achievement.
- **Trait :** General disposition to behave or respond in a certain way ; for instance with self confidence, self control, stress resistance.
- **Self-concept:** (abilities or values) measured by respondent tests that ask people what they value, what they think they do or are interested in doing.
- **Content Knowledge:** Knowledge of facts or procedures either technical (how to trouble shoot a defective computer) or interpersonal (techniques of effective feedback) as measured by respondents tests. Most findings show that content knowledge by itself rarely distinguishes superior from average performers.
- **Skills :** Cognitive or behavioural skills ex. Deductive or inductive reasoning or observable that is listening skills.
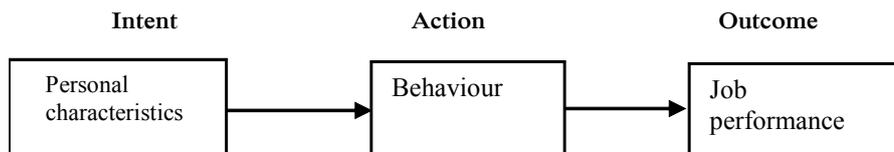
Competency Models

A *competency model* is a written description of the competencies required for fully successful or exemplary performance in a job category, work team, department, division, or organization. Competency identification and modeling can be a beginning point for strategic development plans linked to organizational and individual needs.

As you might expect, organizations express competency models in somewhat different ways. These variations reflect their different constraints, preferences, practices, values, business objectives, and reasons for using competencies. Competency models may also vary by type. Many organizations do not distinguish among competency models that underscore the differences between exemplary and fully successful performers, those that identify minimum requirements for job success, or so-called derailment studies that indicate the likely causes of failure. In general, then, the structure of a competency model, the way in which it is communicated to workers, and the manner of its use reflect the values of the organization's decision makers and leaders.

Research on the characteristics included in competency models is of much interest today. In one study with 300 respondents conducted by Arthur Andersen, Schoonover, and SHRM, the following categories were reported as included in competency models: technical skills, knowledge areas, performance behaviors, personal attributes, metrics/results, and key experiences (Schoonover, Schoonover, Nemerov, & Ehly, 2000, p. 7).

Competency can be related to performance in a simple causal flow model that indicates that motive, traits, self-concept knowledge competencies aroused by a situation predict skill behaviours which in turn predict performance. Competencies include intention, action and outcome.

Intent	Action	Outcome
Personal characteristics	Behaviour	Job performance

- Motive
- Trait
- Self-concept
- Knowledge
- Skill

It is more cost-effective to hire people with the right stuff and train them in the knowledge and skills needed to do specific job.

> **Recruitment and selection**
  Competency-based recruiting systems usually focus on screening methods that can be used to select a small number of strong candidates from a large group of applicants quickly and efficiently.

> **Placement and succession planning.**
  Competency-based placement and succession planning systems are best focused on identifying the top candidates for an organisation's most important value-added jobs. Assessment of candidates can involve a variety of methods: behavioural event interviews, tests, assessment centre simulations, review of performance appraisal reports, and superior, peer and subordinate ratings.

> **Training and Development**
  The competency requirements for career pathing and development jobs or groups of jobs define a template for development. Employees who are appraised as lacking in a particular competency can be directed to a specific development activity designed to teach them the missing competency in order to improve their performance in their existing jobs, or to prepare them to advance to other assignments in t he future.

> **Pay for Skills**
  Effective performance appraisal depends on the proper use of each type of data, given the objectives of the system and the degree of control employees have over their performance on the variables assessed. Performance results data are usually used for decisions about rewards (for instance, merit bonuses based on sales or production quotas). If, however, employees have little individual control over the final results (say, in a team production setting), rewards based solely on these results can demotivate superior performers.

The Major HR Management Subsystems in Organizations Today

There are several ways to conceptualize the structure and means for organizing the HR system in an organization.

The first, and perhaps most familiar, is the *functional method* (Rothwell, Prescott, & Taylor, 1998). In this approach, HR management is organized into units such as employee relations, training, compensation and benefits, and payroll. Each is considered a function because it bears specific responsibilities for the organization's total HR system.

A second way of structuring HR management is the *point of contact method.* With this approach, which is much rarer than the functional approach, HR is organized around meeting the needs of its clients, stakeholders, and community. There are separate functions for worker input (such as recruitment, placement, and orientation), maintaining workers (such as payroll, training, compensation, and employee relations), and output (such as decruitment and retirement).

A third way to think about HR management has become popular in recent years. This method divides those who do the work of the HR function into two groups. One group handles transactions, such as processing payroll, making name changes on benefit forms, and updating employee records. A second group extends the people management expertise of the HR function to line management groups, offering on-the-spot, real-time consulting advice to managers and workers who may be dealing with "people challenges."

There are, of course, other ways of organizing the HR function. Basically, the HR subsystems of most organizations include recruitment, selection, performance management, job analysis and evaluation, compensation, payroll, development and improvement, and career and succession planning. But regardless of whether you are an HR specialist or generalist in one of today's organizations, you should be aware of how competency-based HR management differs from traditional workbased HR management. Figure 6 summarizes the differences in the two approaches. Competency-based HR management focuses attention on the people who do the work rather than on the work done by those people.

	Traditional HR Management	Competency-Based HR Management
Foundation	Work analysis and job descriptions form the foundation of traditional HR management. Work analysis becomes the basis for recruiting, selecting, orienting, training, rewarding, appraising, and developing people. The job description delineates work activities. It does not state expected work results in measurable or observable terms.	Competencies are the traits that individuals use for successful and exemplary performance. The identification, modeling, and assessment of competencies form the foundation of competency-based HR management. The HR function seeks to discover worker traits that lead to fully successful and exemplary performance and configures HR activities around cultivating them.
Chief reasons for using the approach	The approach is a known quantity and is geared toward achieving compliance. It categorizes individuals on organizational charts so they can be assigned identifiable tasks for which they are held accountable. U.S. college textbooks on HR management are devoted exclusively to traditional HR management.	The approach stimulates productivity and uses human talent to the best competitive advantage. It recognizes differences in individual abilities to achieve work results. Exemplary performers are significantly more productive than their fully successful counterparts. If the organization finds or develops exemplary performers, it could be more productive with the same size workforce.
Major challenges	• Work changes rapidly, and job descriptions quickly become outdated. • The approach is rarely successful in providing leader ship on using human talent to greatest advantage.	• The meaning of the term *competency* is not clearly and consistently understood. • Identifying the competencies that distinguish exemplary from fully successful performers is laborintensive and can be expensive and time-consuming. • Much inexpert competency work is being done in today's organizations.
Role of HR function	• Ensures compliance with laws, rules, regulations, and organizational policies and procedures.	• Takes the lead in achieving breakthrough competitive advantage by selecting and developing more people who can achieve at the measurable productivity levels of exemplary performers. • Continues to fulfill its compliance responsibilities in a competency-based environment.
HR planning subsystem	• Concentrates on head count and HR expenses. • Makes forecasts based on the assumption that the future will be like the past and that the same number of people are needed to achieve predictable, measurable work results. • Favors quantitative methods for workforce planning.	• Concentrates on talent and the value HR brings to the organization. • Does not assume that the future will be like the past or that the same head count is needed to achieve predictable results. • Favors the use of qualitative planning methods.
Employee recruitment and selection	• Consults the usual external and internal sources. • Finds candidates to match the qualifications outlined in job specifications. • Assumes that education, experience, and other qualifications are equivalent to the ability to perform assigned work activities.	• Tries to identify patterns that indicate past sources of exemplary performers and recruits through those or similar sources. • Makes selection decisions based on demonstrated ability to perform or evidence of results. • Compares applicants' talents to competency models that define the traits of fully successful or exemplary performers in their work areas.

Employee training subsystem	• Distinguishes training needs from management needs. • Builds employee knowledge, skill, and attitude to conform with the organization's expectations.	• Focuses attention on roadblocks to individual productivity that are created by the organization and management's responsibility to eliminate those obstacles. • Builds individual competencies in line with measurable fully successful or exemplary performance.
Performance management subsystem	• Keeps costs at a minimum while providing performance feedback to individuals. • Makes decisions about pay raises, promotions, and related issues.	• Periodically assesses individuals against competency models for their current work and their aspirations. • Provides feedback to individuals to help them move toward exemplary performance.
Employee reward processes subsystem	• Attracts and retains people who perform the work of the organization.	• Attracts and retains people whose measurable contributions demonstrate their ability to perform at an exemplary level.
Employee development subsystem	• Process is either vague or ambiguous.	• Process is designed to help individuals to discover their own competencies, help the organization to identify the talent it has available, and cultivate talent as work is being accomplished. • Recognizes that 98% of all efforts to build competencies occurs through work experiences. • Places equal emphasis on work results and on the work process as a means of building bench strength by exposing individuals to new experiences.

Figure 1: Comparison of Traditional and Competency-Based HR Management

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A study has been made of 7 stages. It is a process to derive a set of competencies.

Stage - I
Business Analysis
o**Discussion with Top Management to –**
oGenerate understanding on this study
oRequesting to –
▪ Generate scenario and segments where the company would like to play in the next 3-5 years.
▪ Find out the unique organizational capabilities that would help the company reach those segments better than the competitors.

Stage –II
Analyzing the unique delivery model of marketing function
o**Discussion with top HR & Marketing Executives separately to explore -**
▪ What unique things to do or how to do the existing things differently so that Marketing function could contribute effectively to the new scenarios and segments identified by Top Management. i.e Scouting New Customers, New Channel Innovation, Creative Brand Management etc.
▪ To perform the above unique/ different things finding out competencies; both core and unique

• Screen out least desired competencies from a set of 30-40 competencies chosen randomly by brainstorming.
• After the above screening find out the most desirable 6-7 competencies that are core to the business and shall be common across all functions.
• Apart from above find out additional competencies that are unique to Marketing function.

Stage –III
Working out the competencies
o**Discussion with top HR & Marketing Executives jointly -**
▪ To find out the reason behind their agreement and disagreements and help them to find a logical ground in working out the competencies that are core and competencies that are unique to Marketing.

Stage – IV
Identification of optimal or suboptimal behavior on each competency
o**Discussion with some marketing Executives who have a direct interface with customers.**
▪ Asking them to tell a situation on each of the identified competency in which they were at their level best and the delivery was beyond expectation. Try to explore factors and reasons behind it.

▪ Equally ask them to tell a situation on each of the identified competency, in which their delivery was below than average. Try to explore the factors and reasons behind it.

Stage –V
- ▪ **Identification of behavioural descriptors and development plan for each competency as shown in the sample sheet enclosed.**
- o Discussion with top HR & Marketing Executives jointly -
  - ▪ Brief the key points documented from Stage I – Stage IV
  - ▪ Brainstorm and workout the level wise behavioral descriptors and development plan as shown the sample sheet enclosed herewith.

Stage – VI
Taking approval of Top Management
o **Discussion with top Management in the presence of HR & Marketing Executives**
  - ▪ Explaining the draft prepared in stage – V and seeking value added opinions

Stage –VII
Finalizing the competency directory and change management initiative for implementation
o **Discussion with top marketing and HR Executives to-**
  - ▪ Incorporate the changes suggested by Top Management and prepare the final draft.
  - ▪ Prepare a roll out plan including identification of key drivers for implementation.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY
OBJECTIVE :
The main objective of my summer training project is:
- ▪ Competency mapping for the marketing agents.

The sub objective is:
To prescribe competency of marketing agents for Vester-gaard Frandsen (a premier organization in pharmaceutical sector).After having a detail study of familiar marketing professional both in and outside the pharmaceuticals sectors.

4. RESULTS
Competencies - The CORE 6
1. A Master Thinker
2. An Energetic Leader who Initiate, Execute, Influence and Inspire
3. A Great Communicator and a Skilled Builder of Relationships and Networks
4. A Wonderful Team player
5. A Live Example to Deciding, Acting, Delivering and Staying Fast
6. A Lifelong Learner for High Technical Expertise

(Related to concerned discipline)

1.   A Master Thinker
Thinks strategically and Thinks out-of-box. Imagine opportunities by connecting missing links which are hidden in plain sight.

Level 1
- o Challenge the status-quo and ask incisive questions that open minds and incite the imagination.
- o With zero gravity thinking, create an open source approach to searching for opportunities.

Level 2 (In addition to level 1)
- o Engage everyone shopping for ideas.
- o Picking up early warning signals of issues that are just emergent or gaining traction.

Level 3 (In addition to level 1 and level 2)
- o Envision the future by imagining ennobling possibilities.
- o Have the personal imagination to construct patterns from emerging disparate trends.
- o Always search for the missing links and missing ingredients.
- o Develops methodologies for anticipating and detecting breaks in the continuity of the external landscape to pinpoint "WHAT IS NEXT"

2.   An Energetic Leader who Initiate, Execute, Influence and Inspire
Masters the art of modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others act and encouraging the heart.

Level 1
- o He is the first to trust.
- o He is a cheer leader who adds fun to everyone's work, personalize recognitions and make every celebration memorable.
- o Has the energy and drive to take things to the next level.
- o Always goes the extra mile to seize the opportunity for challenging and bigger assignments.
- o Able to prioritize among four criteria – what is important, what is urgent, what is long term versus short term, what is realistic versus visionary?
- o Is able to take a judicious decision in the absence of clear picture, precedents and guidelines.

Level 2 (In addition to level 1)
- o Enlarge people's sphere of influence and strengthen others by sharing power and discretion.
- o Make it safe for others to experiment.
- o Provides challenging and value added stretched assignments for all of his direct reports.
- o Create a climate for learning and always encourage reverse mentoring.
- o Maintains a disciplined follow-through.
- o Have the courage to give honest feedback so that his direct reports could learn and grow.
- o Able to spot talent and uncover the gifted abilities of other individual.

Level 3 (In addition to level 1 and level 2)
- o With high accuracy can detect and construct the DNA of a person and valuation of a business.
- o Has the ability to position or reposition a business.
- o Give life to a vision and appeal to shared aspirations.
- o Is able to confront and resolve uncertainties and pinpoint external change.

3.   A Great Communicator and a Skilled Builder of Relationships and Networks

Understand the dynamics of communications and relationships at workplace and master the art of a customized delivery in one-to-one setting to one-to-many setting.

Level 1
- o Create places and opportunities for informal interaction.
- o Remember others names.

o   Encourage others to vent their emotions.
o   Respond to the feelings, then the facts not the reverse.
o   Own his statements.
o   Substitute "we" with "you and I
o   Judge people's content not their delivery.
o   Recognize the body language of resistance and the implication of what is not said
o   Provide a better and best option.
o   Avoid - stepping on other's sentence, overloading information to the point of distortion, ending every statement with a question, overlooking good advice because of packaging, giving premature feedback or advice.
o   Support, explain or reject only one idea at a time.
o   Criticize the view point or behavior not the person.

Level 2 (In addition to level 1)
o   Quickly relate well to people of diverse backgrounds and integrity.
o   Know when small talk is appropriate.
o   Knows how to probe with open ended questions and how to ask closed questions to gain agreement.
o   Knows how to use "why" questions with care.
o   Knows how to give others a graceful exit and a face saving comeback.
o   Recall alteast three ways to say a "NO" and make a conscious choice.
o   Do not ask questions too broad to answer.
o   Tactfully rejects questions that are too personal.
o   Summarize frequently.
o   Rehearse criticism and select the appropriate emotional timing to criticize in private.

Level 3 (In addition to level 1 and level 2)
o   Organise ideas for greatest impact.
o   Has a rich archive of best selling words.
o   Lead the person to do a self critique.
o   Move people from emotional level to analytical level.
o   Disagree without being disagreeable.
o   Strip ownership from views.
o   Listen to the counters to the proposal rather than planning for rebuttal.
o   Before giving the answer consider the costs and opportunities.
o   Recognize when enough is enough.
o   In a conflict knows when to accommodate, compromise, overpower or collaborate.
o   Mention the "don'ts" in such a way they do not dictate the "dos".
o   Treat every relationship as if it will last for a life time.

4. A Wonderful Team player
Definition:
Has comprehensive knowledge and experience on team dynamics to build and sustain a high performance team.

Level 1
o   Knows how to subordinate individual priorities to the group's purpose goals.
o   Willing to accept experience, knowledge and learning from others.
o   Recognize personal sensitivities, group discipline.
o   Does not pass blame on to others and accept responsibility for outcomes.
o   Make personal sacrifices to meet larger group goal.

o   Constructively argue and discuss not for consensus but to seek the best logical answer.

Level 2 (In addition to level 1)
Has clarity and expertise regarding –
o   Which performance challenges are best accomplished by individual assignments and which require team effort.
o   How to constitute a team based on complementary skills not position.
o   How to share and do equivalent amounts of real work.
o   How to articulate and communicate the expected team behaviors and get the team to commit to them.
o   How to surface and resolve team conflicts, considering personal sensitivities but without making poor compromises on position and power.
o   When electronic interactions are best than formal get together.

Level 3 (In addition to level 1 and level 2)
Has clarity and expertise regarding–
o   How to use shared leadership depending on the issue at hand and relative to the skills required.
o   How to breakdown the hierarchical pattern of interaction and assign work based on skill rather than position.
o   How to identify and apply both the team discipline and single leader discipline as the respective performance goal dictate.
o   How to go for small and big wins together.
o   When to modify the membership to include others down the line to enhance the collective ability to achieve particular goals.
o   How to reconfigure the group into sub teams more appropriate to specific issues, opportunities or problems identified.
o   When to dissolve and establish a new team.

5.A Live Example to Deciding, Acting, Delivering and Staying Fast
Builds shorter processes that use less paper and connects people digitally for faster delivery of goods and services.

Level 1
o   Constantly upgrades the IT quotient to adopt the web life style since IT these days is the common denominator across all functions.
o   Actively facilitates in converting paper processes to digital processes.
o   Use digital tools so that he could spend more time on analyzing information rather than collecting it.

Level 2 (In addition to level 1)
o   Is an active domain leader / contributor to the digital repository system where the organization preserve and augment its accumulated knowledge.
o   Is a master of using portable devices and wireless networks for faster communication and data sharing.
o   Effectively reevaluate / redesign the work processes around him to simplify and reduce the length of a process at least once in every year.

Level 3 (In addition to level 1 and level 2)
o   Facilitate in architecting and deploying the digital nervous system in his function for faster turnaround.
o   Reward worthy failure – experimentation.
o   Digitally link virtual teams from separate departments and geographies.

6.A Lifelong Learner for High Technical Expertise (Related to concerned discipline)
Technical expertise in Marketing

Level 1
- o Convincingly present features and benefits to customers.
- o Making sure that customer orders are filled correctly and delivered on time.
- o Checking that customers have received proper instructions, training, and technical assistance in the use of the product.
- o Seize every opportunity to stay in touch with customers after the sale to ensure that they are satisfied.

Level 2 (In addition to level 1)
- o Mapping customer perceptions, preferences, and requirements.
- o Communicating customer wants and expectations to product designers.
- o Gathering customer ideas for product and service improvements and conveying them to the appropriate departments.
- o Innovate and establish new channels for effective delivery of products and services.

Level 3 (In addition to level 1 and level 2)
- o Give accurate leads on what to innovate and where to position a product.
- o Architect the introduction of a new product or services with benchmark speed to market.
- o Map and Target Prospects with high accuracy.
- o Constantly builds cross functional expertise in managing People, Finance and IT applications to assume higher responsibilities.

5. CONCLUSION

During the survey it was found that in majority of cases the competency management concept after an initial fanfare is not properly followed in he organisation, rather in most cases this has become a fad to get elevated in the rating game like " great place to work for" , "best employer" etc.. In most of the cases, competencies have not been defined level wise so that employees are not able to differentiate how the competency is demonstrated at different levels of competence.

This execution problem could be corrected if the competency management does not become the sole property of HR department. Competency management is the core asset which gives direction to the competitive dimension in an organisation. Hence to grow this core asset, the HR department should arrange at least one day workshop for every employee under a skilled facilitator who could create awareness on the competency frame work.

Any competency management concept is not a one time fix that will magically solve all of your problem for ever. Hence always treat an organisation as an unfinished prototype and keep trying, evolving, upgrading better competency frame work that is difficult to imitate and will give you a competititive advantage

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