

Research Article

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Competency Mapping – A Strategic Approach in Talent Management

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Abstract:

Human Resource Management is undergoing a major transformation in today's organizations. The present globalization of economy necessitates innovative approaches in managing the talent in an organization through competency based HR practices. Talent management is a modern and effective way of implementing the personnel policy enabling the organization to achieve strategic goals through the proper usage of the potential inherent in human resources. Competency mapping is a strategic HR framework for monitoring the performance and development of human assets in organizations. Competency based talent management can improve both productivity and performance by identifying key characteristics of top performers and how those traits differ from average employees.

Competency based Human Resource Management is being increasingly recognized as an effective way of talent management over the previously adopted job-description related approach. It involves a transition from the traditional way of managing human resources based on what people have (e.g. Skills and abilities) to what people can do (performance). The aim of this paper is to provide a critical review of the academic literature on talent management in search of alternative perspectives. This study examines how competency mapping leads to talent management which in turn enhances the organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: Competency, Competency Mapping, Talent management

INTRODUCTION:

Human resource management is a process of bringing people and organizations together so that the goals of each other are met. Nowadays it is not possible to show a good financial or operating report unless your personnel relations are in order. Over the years, highly skilled and knowledge based jobs are increasing while low skilled jobs are decreasing. This calls for future skill mapping through proper HRM initiatives. 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 and role of HRM becomes more important. Successful organizations proactively and systematically take action to ensure that they have the human resource capability to meet their current and future business requirements. These organizations have made talent management a critical force in their drive for excellence. Although there are a variety of approaches to talent management, research studies indicates that the underlying model used by high-performing organizations consists of three linked elements: a creed, a strategy, and a system.

Competency Mapping is a process of identifying key competencies for a company or an organization and the jobs and functions within it. 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. This identifies the gap for improving knowledge to develop.

Every industry in the present scenario is trying to achieve high efficiency and effectiveness in order to survive in this cutthroat competition. Industry is basically classified into production and service sector. They try desperately to improve the efficiency of their system. All the methods and approaches for improving the performance and efficiency of their operations points to a basis key factor – "Skill and Competency". Skills and competency, therefore, becomes a focal point of companies, which aims at improving their performance. With increased importance to operational efficiency, cost-reduction, higher productivity norms and managing with fewer employees than before by corporate,

brings competency as the most important yardstick for all Human Resource related decisions like selection, assimilation, development, growth charting and promotion, etc.

The competence approach focuses on linking business strategies to individual performance efforts. It also encourages employees to develop competencies which can be used in diverse work situations rather than being boxed into the job. Development of employees focuses on enhancing their competencies rather than preparing them for moving to jobs. In this way they can develop capabilities useful throughout the organization as it changes and evolves.

Chankya's Arthashastra, is probably the first book on Competency Mapping. It is perhaps the oldest management book which is still proving to be an excellent leader for management professionals and practitioners. The book contains competency mapping models, the thesis and theories of human aptitude, intelligence quotient and emotional quotient. In general, it has everything related to human behavior regarding work, logic and emotions. Competency is "an underlying characteristic of a person that may be a motive, trait or skill aspect of one's self – image or social role or body of knowledge." - Boyatzis (1982). Competency may take the form of Knowledge, Attitude, Skill and Values. Besides these, it may also include characteristics of an individual, motives and self-conception. Kantz in a classic article published in Harvard business review in 1994, grouped competencies into 3 categories which were later extended to four including:

1. Technical i.e. relating to technology/ know-how. It is associated with function, role or task and hence, termed as functional category.
2. Managerial/ Organizational- It deals with managerial aspects including planning, resource mobilizing, organizing, monitoring etc.
3. Human/ Behavioral- These competencies deals with personal, inter personal and group matters.
4. Conceptual- They include visualization, model building and so on.

Competency Mapping is a process of identification of competencies required to successfully perform a particular job or role or a set of tasks at a given point of time. It consists of breaking the given job into constituent tasks and identifying the competencies needed to perform the job successfully. It is a way of assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the employees or organization. It's about identifying a person's job skills and strengths in areas like teamwork, leadership, and decision-making. (Solomon, 2013) For building strong working relationship within the organization, competency of the people has to be continuously monitored and enhanced in congruence with

the business plan. Accordingly, Competency Mapping rates the employee skills and helps them to improve the competence which is important for their career development. In view of the recent developments of liberalization and globalization, every organization has to achieve excellence to become global. Competence Development will play a pivotal role in this regard.

Considering the significance of Competency Mapping for individual and organizational growth, the present study was undertaken. In this study, efforts have been made to elaborate the various competencies with minute parameters and to correlate them with the managerial competence level.

Need for the Study:

There are some useful benefits of using competency model for the company, managers, and employees as well.

FOR THE COMPANY:

- ❖ Support corporate Objective, Strategy, Vision, Mission and Culture.
- ❖ Establish performance appraisal by a systematic approach for career growth which results in improved job satisfaction and better employee retention
- ❖ Increase the effectiveness of training and professional development programs by linking them to the success criteria.
- ❖ Provides clear two way communication process.
- ❖ Better understanding of Roles and responsibilities
- ❖ Provide Common standards and same kind of work at equal levels that enable employees to move and work at different parts of the organization

FOR MANAGERS:

- ❖ Identify performance levels to improve the accuracy of selection process.
- ❖ Provide more objective performance standards.
- ❖ Provide good communication
- ❖ Develops Employer Employee relationship
- ❖ Reduces Career related issues.

FOR EMPLOYEES:

- ❖ Identify the critical Skill to perform in the organization.
- ❖ Targets, Roles & Responsibilities are very clear.
- ❖ Identify the gap for improvement.
- ❖ Provide a systematic approach to improve the skill level.
- ❖ Improved Job Satisfaction.

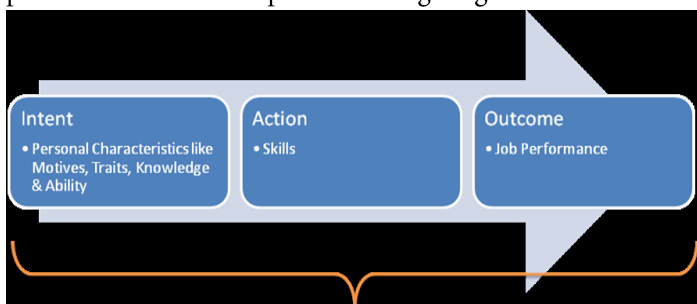
Significance of The Study:

Competency Mapping is excessively used in the organization to determine the crucial elements and activities. The basic reasons due to which the mapping of the competencies is done are as follows:

- ❖ Once the competencies are determined, proper training can be provided to the individuals to work more efficiently on the processes.
- ❖ Key performance areas can be improved by understanding the fields where there is a gap between the actual and the desired results.
- ❖ If the competencies are determined for the given job, then the person whose career planning phase is taking place can consider those competencies and can be ready for the same.
- ❖ Through competency mapping, the individual is preparing himself for the next set of responsibilities.
- ❖ With the help of the competency mapping the individual can alter the style of work where the gap exists.
- ❖ By overcoming the differences in the desired level and the actual status of performance the individual can feel the increase in the self-confidence and the motivation level.
- ❖ Competency based approach can lead the individual to derive much efficient results (with more accuracy) as compared to work in a non-competency derived situation.
- ❖ Helps the individual to determine the areas where the development is required and thus leads the individual to develop a self-development plan.
- ❖ Competency mapping leads the individual to understand the actual position and the gap from the desired status of work.
- ❖ Competency mapping plays a crucial role in career planning of the individual in the organization.

Competency Development Process:

Every organization that wants to achieve its goals in terms of productivity, quality, profitability, stability and growth and increase organizational effectiveness, it must pay attention to the enhancement of competencies of its human resources in a systematic and planned manner. Human Resource Department is responsible for the development of the employee's competencies, dynamism, motivation and effectiveness in a systematic and planned manner. The competency development is a process which can be presented with the help of following diagram.



The study is based on the following “Competency Model” It is a framework which defines a set of competencies for a

specific position and level in the organization, if possessed by employees, is likely to produce desired results. The objective of Competency Model is to:-

- To Translate Company’s Vision, Values & Goals into expected employee behavior.
- To Provide input for Recruitment & Staffing
- To design Competency based Training Programs
- To implement Performance Evaluation & Developmental Plans
- To focus on Talent Management & Succession Planning
- To Improve Employee Engagement and Retention



The following are 10 talent management strategies every organization should consider:

- 1. Identify your top important functions.** Dig deep within your organization to identify the most critical functions. This doesn't just include your leaders, but also key roles that affect the bottom line.
- 2. “Backfill” doesn't equal recruiting.** Use your corporate growth objectives to define your talent requirements. Those requirements and subsequent “talent gap” derived from existing skill inventories should drive your recruiting strategy. Build a talent pool that's as dynamic as your company.
- 3. Understand what motivates your team.** Reach out to understand how they can be more effective in their roles, or how your organization can help them address their work-life balance challenges.
- 4. Give them the keys.** A new workforce is demanding ownership in creating a career path that suits their individual preferences. Give this new team a “learning management system” that gives them controls over their development plans. Provide on-demand content to feed their desire to improve. Create an internal job marketplace within your organization to provide advancement opportunities.
- 5. Socialize HR now.** They participate in social networks. They share job leads and information about employers with each other and the world through their online social presence. If you don't have a major social presence, get one. If you haven't monitored and enhanced your organization's social standing and branding, do it now.

6. Deliver the numbers. Take four steps toward developing a clear reporting plan.

- Understand the metrics your organization needs to improve.
- Determine a source system to record the data required to support the metrics.
- Select an analytics platform to analyze the data collected.
- Share the numbers, and allow your organization's leaders to take action.

7. Provide a reason to stay. If you want your company to be the best, you need your people to be the best. If you recruit the best, you need to have a solid development plan in place. Allow your employees to build their own individual brands. Help them be an expert within their specialization.

8. Recognize your star leaders and invest accordingly. The cost of employee turnover can be 150 to 300 percent of an employee's annual compensation. The effectiveness of internal leaders occurs faster than inserting an external candidate into the position.

9. Integrate. Modern technology will be a key enabler for realizing your talent management strategy.

10. Embrace your uniqueness instead of one-size-fits all. Work to create a talent management strategy that centers on recognizing the unique drivers and needs of each group within your organization.

10 Steps Involved In Competency Mapping:

The **STEPS** involved in competency mapping to identify the key competencies for an organization and the job within the function:

- Identify the department for mapping.
- Identify the Structure of the organization and select the grades & levels.
- Job Description from individuals and departments.
- Conducting Semi-Structured interviews.
- Collecting interview data's.
- Classify the required Skill list.
- Identify the skill levels.
- Evaluate identified competencies and skill levels with immediate superiors and other heads of concerned departments.
- Preparation of Competency calendar.
- Mapping of Competencies.

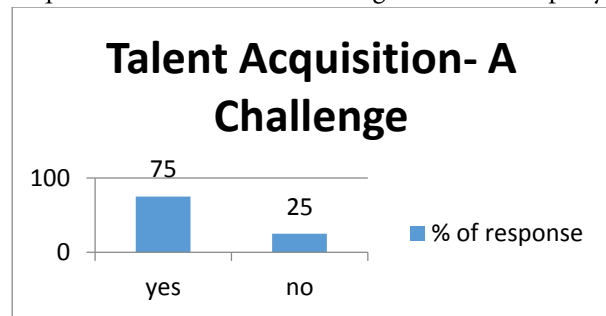
Talent Acquisition and Retention | Key Findings

The J.P. Morgan Chase Executive Advisory Board is a select group of more than 2,000 Commercial Banking clients who participate in periodic surveys to help us gain insight on relevant topics impacting today's businesses. In June 2013, board members were asked to share their perspectives on talent acquisition and retention. The key findings detailed below provide a snapshot of the views of business executives around this topic.

TALENT ACQUISITION

Is talent acquisition a current challenge at your company?

- More than three fourths of respondents feel that talent acquisition is a current challenge at their company.

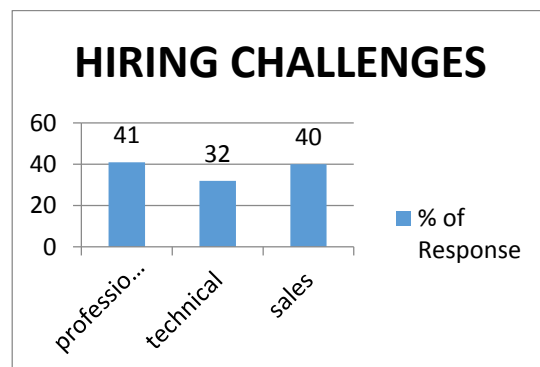


HIRING CHALLENGES

Which of the following positions present the greatest challenge for hiring?

Note: Results above are gathered from a follow-up question to respondents who cited talent acquisition as a challenge.

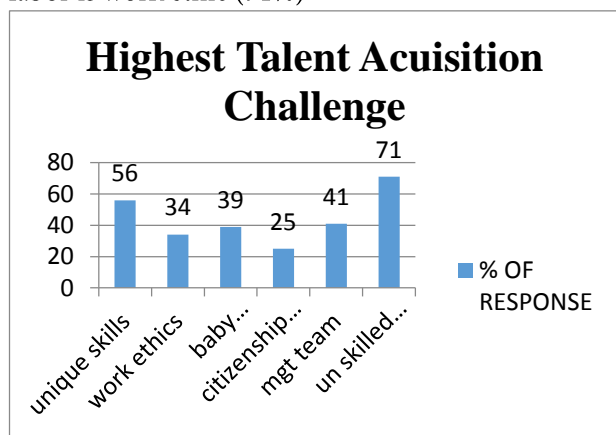
- Of the respondents that find talent acquisition to be a challenge, nearly one third cited professional positions as the position with the greatest challenge for hiring.
- Respondents in the Northeast are more likely than other regions to cite this position as a challenge (41%).
- Technical/trade positions present the greatest challenge for companies in the South (32%).
- Over 40% of answers cited in the 'other' category were for sales positions.



Why does the position present you the greatest hiring challenge?

- Of those respondents who find professional positions as a challenge for hiring, over two thirds cited unique skills needed, 41% cited work ethic and 15% of respondents felt their company cannot accommodate talent requirements as it relates to professional positions.
- Aging workforce/baby boomers retiring is the primary challenge for respondents who have difficulty hiring for technical/trade positions (39%).
- Nearly a quarter of respondents cited immigration laws and citizenship status as a reason for the challenge.

- Respondents cited the management team as a challenge for hiring frequently cited unique skills needed (56%) and work ethic (34%) as reasons for this challenge.
- The most frequently cited challenge to hiring unskilled labor is work ethic (71%)

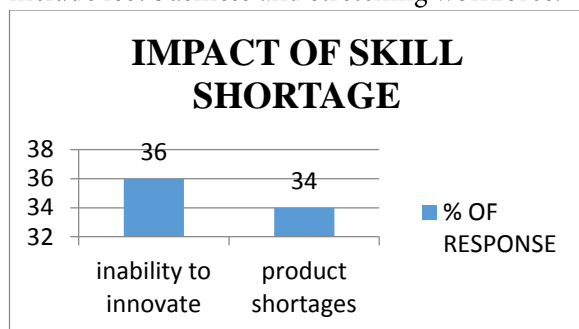


IMPACTS OF SKILLS SHORTAGE

What are the impacts of the skills shortage your company has experienced?

Respondents most cited having to pay more for employees as an impact of the skills shortage.

- Inability to innovate and service/product shortages closely followed at 36% and 34%, respectively—the Midwest was most likely to cite these impacts. ‘Other’ impacts cited include lost business and stretching workforce.

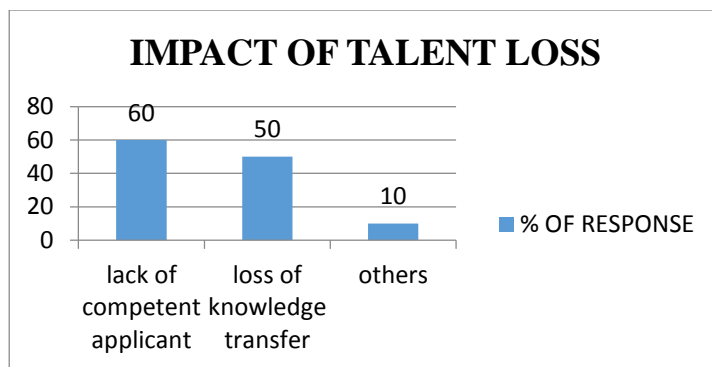


IMPACT OF TALENT LOSS

Which of the following difficulties has your company experienced related to talent loss?

Nearly 60% of respondents have experienced difficulty recruiting competent job applicants as it relates to talent loss—respondents in the Midwest were more likely than other regions to cite this difficulty (34%).

- Almost 50% of respondents cite loss of knowledge transfer from experienced to less experienced employees as a difficulty
- Only one in five respondents has not experienced any difficulties as it relates to talent loss.

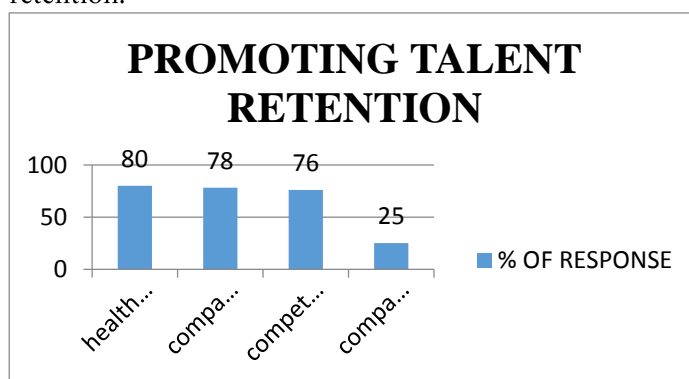


TALENT RETENTION

How does your company promote employee retention?

Providing healthcare (80%), maintaining a positive company reputation (78%) and providing competitive benefits (76%) are the most popular methods for retaining employees.

- One fourth of respondents that selected ‘other’ cited promoting company culture as a strategy for employee retention.



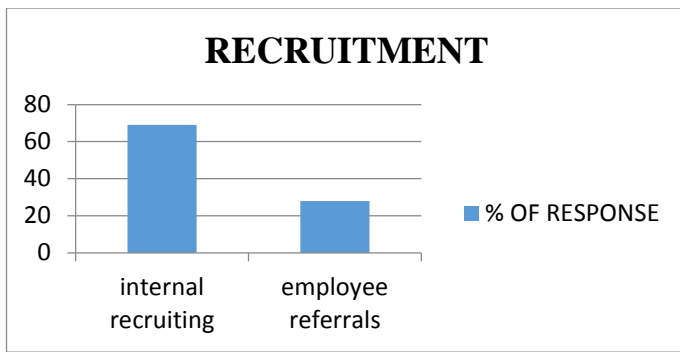
RECRUITING

How does your company recruit for employees?

- Respondents utilize internal recruiting (69%) and employee referrals (69%) most for recruiting efforts.
- ‘Other’ recruiting methods include attempt to hire those who exceed at internships.

What tactic or strategy has your company found to be most successful in Talent Acquisition and Retention efforts?

- The most frequently cited tactic or strategy is using referrals (28%)—members feel that the highest retention rates come through these referrals.
- Respondents also expressed concern regarding the talent pool shrinking—reasons cited include higher compensation expectations, lacking skill set and low work ethic



India: Fighting Off the Competition:

In India, there is an abundance of skilled manpower – including Generation Y workers but manufactures faces stiff competition from services and IT industries in attracting and retaining the white-collar workforce. Many skilled technicians also migrate to the Middle East for better pay. This affects manufacturing industries such as cement, steel, and chemicals.

Furthermore, the technical talent in India often needs significant training on best practices to better serve global manufacturers. Managerial talent in India needs international exposure and an understanding of global business issues.

Competency mapping vs. Managing Talent

While studying about the role that competency mapping can play across different HR processes an interesting thought that arises is: Are we really managing 'talent'? Are talent and competence one and the same thing? Are we aware of our talents? Are we hired for the talent we have or the competencies required for doing a particular job?

Talent is defined as an innate capability, aptitude, natural endowment, genius and gift. Competence, on the other hand, is defined as an amalgamation of knowledge, skill, ability, attitude, values, trait, motives and self-concept.

Thus, a person may be talented but not competent and vice versa. However, 'a person who is competent will be better able to identify and develop his talent'. Competency mapping system increases the probability of recruiting the right person for the right job, assists the employees in identifying their strengths, weaknesses and talent, besides developing and retaining the high performers.

Talent management challenges:

The complexities wrought by globalization pose new challenges for talent management. Customer-driven cost pressures, access to alternate sources of supply, consolidation of buying power, and low inflation are hitting manufacturers hard. In response to these pressures, companies are establishing global operations to access new markets, develop customized products, and realize cost efficiencies. This, however, creates fresh challenges:

- Ensuring coordination among a globally dispersed workforce.

- Managing a global workforce with varied demographic profiles, skill sets, and expectations.
- Understanding the impact of changing demographics and skill sets in different locations and planning accordingly.

Competency Mapping Techniques:

1) Behavioral event interview

A behavioral interview is a structured interview that is used to collect information about past behavior. Because past performance is a predictor of future behavior, a behavioral interview attempts to uncover your past performance by asking open-ended questions.

2) Repertory grid

The repertory grid is a technique for identifying the ways that a person considers his or her experience. It provides information from which inferences about personality can be made, but it is not a personality test in the conventional sense.

3) Critical incident technique

The CIT is a method for getting a subjective report while minimizing interference from stereotypical reactions or received opinions. The user is asked to focus on one or more critical incidents which they experienced personally in the field of activity being analyzed. A critical incident is defined as one which had an important effect on the final outcome. Critical incidents can only be recognized retrospectively.

They include:

- _ Multiple-choice tests, either computer-based or paper and pencil
- _ Structured interviews
- _ Bio-data questionnaires
- _ Job-knowledge tests
- _ Social skills inventories
- _ Executive assessment centers
- _ Language-learning ability tests
- _ Physical performance tests
- _ Professional examinations for managers and executives

4) Assessment Center Exercises

An Assessment Center can be defined as "a variety of testing techniques designed to allow candidates to demonstrate, under standardized conditions, the skills and abilities that are most essential for success in a given job" (Coleman, 1987). The term "assessment center" is really a catch-all term that can consist of some or all of a variety of exercises. Assessment centers usually have some sort of in-basket exercise which contains contents similar to those which are found in the in-basket for the job which is being tested. Other possibilities include oral exercises, counseling simulations, problem analysis exercises, interview simulations, role play exercises, written report/analysis exercises, and leaderless group exercises

Assessment centers allow candidates to demonstrate more of their skills through a number of job relevant situations.

5) 360 Degree Feedback

In human resources or industrial/organizational psychology, **360-degree feedback**, also known as 'multi-rater feedback', 'outsourcing feedback', or 'outsourcing assessment', is employee development feedback that comes from all around the employee. "360" refers to the 360 degrees in a circle. The feedback would come from subordinates, peers, and managers in the organizational hierarchy, as well as self-assessment, and in some cases external sources such as customers and suppliers or other interested stakeholders. It may be contrasted with upward feedback, where managers are given feedback by their direct reports, or a traditional performance appraisal, where the employees are most often reviewed only by their manager.

The results from 360-degree feedback are often used by the person receiving the feedback to plan their training and development. The results are also used by some organizations for making promotional or pay decisions, which are sometimes called "360-degree review."

Implementation of Competency Mapping Technique:

❖ Identify the positions to be studied:

The first step in competency mapping is to identify the job positions to be studied and while doing competency mapping we need to keep in mind that it is done for job positions and not for persons holding job position.

❖ Job analysis:

The next step is to conduct the job analysis of the selected job position through observation, questionnaire, interview method, diary method, log record, critical incident method or with the help of panel of experts.

❖ Prepare job description and job specification to identify the KRA's and KPA's:

Based on the information taken through the job analysis, prepare competency based job description and job specification and also identify the KRA's and KPA's for each job position.

❖ Identify the required competencies:

Based on identifying the KRA's and the KPA's for each job position identify 6-7 most crucial competencies required to do a job.

❖ Preparing a competency dictionary:

Once the competencies are identified the next step is to prepare a competency dictionary. For this, the competency has to be defined first and then using the behaviorally anchored rating scales the competencies need to be classified into 3-level or 5-level rating scale.

❖ Preparing a competency matrix:

Once the dictionary is prepared and the classification is done for each competency the next step is to prepare

competency matrix clearly showing the level of competency required for each job position against each competency. The level required for each job position may be decided either by a brainstorming session with the HR and the management or through 360 degree feedback depending upon the suitability of the organization.

❖ Measuring the gaps:

Once the matrix is designed the next step is to check the deviation between the required level of competency and the actual level of competency possessed by the employee holding a particular job position. The ratings may be given either by the brainstorming session or through 360 degree feedback depending upon the suitability of organisation. Thus, these are the steps of competency mapping process and once the gaps are found in the performance training can be given to employees to fill the gap; it can be used for performance appraisal. Competency mapping can also be used for coaching and succession planning, and finally if HR knows exactly the right kind of skills for a particular job position it can acquire as well as make just the right kind of talent.

Talent management for the twenty first century:

Failures in talent management are an ongoing source of pain for executives in modern organizations. Over the past generation, talent management practices, especially in the United States, have by and large been dysfunctional, leading corporations to lurch from surpluses of talent to shortfalls to surpluses and back again.

At its heart, talent management is simply a matter of anticipating the need for human capital and then setting out a plan to meet it. Current responses to this challenge largely fall into two distinct—and equally ineffective—camps. The first, and by far the most common, is to do nothing: anticipate no needs at all; make no plans for addressing them (rendering the term "talent management" meaningless). This reactive approach relies overwhelmingly on outside hiring and has faltered now that the surplus of management talent has eroded. The second, common only among large, older companies, relies on complex and bureaucratic models from the 1950s for forecasting and succession planning—legacy systems that grew up in an era when business was highly predictable and that fail now because they are inaccurate and costly in a more volatile environment.

It's time for a fundamentally new approach to talent management that takes into account the great uncertainty businesses face today. Fortunately, companies already have such a model, one that has been well honed over decades to anticipate and meet demand in uncertain environments—supply chain management. By borrowing lessons from operations and supply chain research, firms can forge a new model of talent management better suited to today's

realities. Before getting into the details, let's look at the context in which talent management has evolved over the past few decades and its current state.

Talent Management as a Tool for Successful Businesses:

The role of human resources within the corporate structure has changed dramatically over the years. HR departments focused solely on personnel functions like hiring, payroll, and benefits until changes to corporate culture in the 1980s introduced the concept of strategic HR. Human resources departments then became involved in overall business strategy like organizational development through training, leading corporate communications, and developing total compensation systems. While HR departments continue to focus on these strategic goals, there has been a recent shift toward "talent management." Talent management introduces new strategic goals to streamline hiring and leadership succession processes using the employee lifecycle model. Using the employee lifecycle model, HR guides employees through each stage of their career with the company from competency-based recruitment to career development, through termination/transition. During each phase, HR strives to measure and manage employee performance through training, feedback, and support. Talent management is a key component to business success in the current economy as it allows companies to retain top talent while increasing productivity.

CONCLUSION:

Competency Management encompasses all methods and instruments used in a company to systematically assess current and future competencies required for the work to be performed, as well as to assess available competencies of the HR.

A lot of resources are being spent and consultants are invited to do the job of competency mapping. Increased manpower costs, need for ensuring that competent people man critical positions, the need to be competitive and recognition of the strategic advantages of having good human resources have compelled firms to be more competency driven.

Competency Management improved the conception and realization of the business vision and strategy by providing a crucial link that leads to improved alignment of staffing resources to the mission, vision, strategy, and goals of the organization. Properly implemented, competency management led to improved workforce development, performance, opportunities, motivation, and commitment. Finally, this discipline further supports organizational performance through bundling of resources into capabilities that provide key business value.

Competency Management is seen as the future of management because it enables organizations to succeed in a variety of environments and contexts. It is seen as the

most critical business systems component over which the organization has control. The care and feeding of the workforce must be paid attention to, or else organizations risk losing their key performers and expertise to their competitors. Enabling components and disciplines include stakeholder analysis, requirements development, strategic sourcing, novel organizational forms, innovative IT, and improved compensation schemes. Competency mapping can ultimately serve the individual who decides to seek employment in an environment where he or she perhaps can learn new things and be more intellectually challenged. Basically, it is not only done for Confirmed employees of an organization and it can also be done for contract workers or for those seeking employment to emphasize the specific skills which would make them valuable to a potential employer.

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