

Competency Assessment – An Approach

Competency models

The aim of defining and mapping competencies to roles is to use it for various HR processes. Competency models are typically used for recruitment, appraisals, promotions, career movements, and training & development.

Most organizations have competency models developed to varying levels of detail. In some cases, the model is an aggregation of definitions, in others it is defined as multiple levels of proficiency, and in yet others it is defined not only as multiple levels of proficiency but also illustrated with many examples.

One reason for the difference in interpretation of the competency model is due to the difference in the extent of detail. If it is not detailed enough, it could be differently interpreted.

Effective assessment of employees for their role based competencies helps, to both set expectations, as well as benchmark proficiency levels, and consequently plan appropriate training.

Assessment options

There is a range of assessment options:

Objective Tests - to understand the level of knowledge related to the competency

Certifications - could be objective tests and/or a set of assignments to be completed

360 Degree Assessment - a 360- degree instrument is designed based on a set of competencies and administered. Respondents can be trained on how to respond for each item with illustrative examples for different levels (typically 1-5 scale)

Psychometric Tests - to assess for personality types. This is typically used to screen during selection. For instance, if you are looking for someone in sales, a certain personality may be preferred, similarly for quality function, etc.

Manager's Assessment - Competencies are defined with proficiency levels and illustrative examples. In addition, managers are taught how to assess using these, based on their observation in a certain period (3months/6months/1year)

Independent Panel Assessment - A panel assesses members on competencies based on a set of artifacts: a write-up based on the competencies being assessed and a 1-2 hour interview to assess on these competencies. The panel will need to be trained so that there is both objectivity as well as consistency.

Assessment Center - where participants are required to go through a battery of exercises and they are assessed based on how they perform. Participants are continuously observed when they perform these exercises.

The following matrix gives an idea of the Pros and Cons of each of these approaches:

Assessment Mechanism	Consistency	Consistency	Reliability	Cost**	
Objective Tests	High	High	Knowledge competencies & at low levels of Proficiency	High	Low
			Knowledge competencies & higher levels of proficiency	Low	
			Managerial / Behavioral skills	Low	
Certifications	High	High	Knowledge competencies & higher levels of proficiency	Medium	Medium
			Managerial / Behavioral skills	Medium	High
360 degree	Low	Medium	Knowledge competencies	Low	Low
			Managerial / Behavioral skills	Medium	
Psychometric tests	High	High	Personality	Medium	Low to Medium
Manager's assessment	Medium	Low	All	Medium	Low
Independent panel assessment	Medium	Medium	All	Medium	Medium
Assessment Centers	High	High	Managerial / Behavioral skills	High	High

*** Cost includes ease of deployment*

The process for knowledge competencies at lower levels of proficiency may warrant an objective test, whereas, at a higher level of proficiency may warrant certifications or independent panel evaluation.

For managerial skills, either a manager's assessment (with due illustrative support and training) or a 360-degree assessment may prove to be most effective.

To assess leaders on various competencies, an assessment center may be an option since the numbers are likely to be small.

An organization needs to pick and choose between the options presented and arrive at the right mix for their context.



Address

Competency Catalysts
C-303, Adarsh Residency
47th Cross, 8th Block, Jayanagar
Bangalore - 560082
Ph: 984407461

Contact us

www.competencycatalysts.com
syegnesh@gmail.com