BEI CONSULTING
PERFORMANCE SYSTEMS SPECIALISTS

I M P A C T

Your Performance Improvement Resource from BEI

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Performance Perspectives

Competency Models: A Competitive Edge

Today's economics have forced us all to "tighten our belts." As we look for cost cutting measures, including the reduction of our workforces, we must also maintain and/or improve our productivity, effectiveness, and competitive advantage. This requires a sharp focus on our human capital and related management practices.

Think about your organization as you consider the following questions regarding the employees in your organization:

- What kind of person do we want in our organization? Who should we keep?
- Are the right people in the right jobs? Do all employees bring value to the organization?
- Does everyone understand what they are expected to accomplish, and how their accomplishments tie into the overall business objectives?
- What kinds of competencies do our employees need to have in order to be effective members of our organization?

If you were able to answer these questions, then your company has probably developed and deployed competency models throughout your organization. If you are not able to easily answer these questions, then your company should strongly consider identifying competencies, building competency models, and linking them to your human capital management practices.

What are Competencies and Competency Models?

Competencies are the demonstrable attributes that make an employee valuable to the organization. They are the core characteristics an individual possesses and uses which leads to successful performance.

COMPETENCY EXAMPLE

Customer Service - Manages difficult or emotional customer situations; responds promptly to customer needs; solicits customer feedback to improve service; responds to requests for service and assistance; meets commitments; is empathetic.

BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES FOR EMPATHETIC LISTENING

Supervisor – Is aware and sensitive to the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of others; Provides appropriate feedback and encouragement; Probes for more information in a non-threatening manner.

Subordinate – Accepts what has been said and how the person feels; Gives feedback containing perception of how the person feels and why s/he feels that way; Does not challenge feelings and emotions.

Competencies are typically broken down into the following categories:

- Knowledge
- Skill
- Ability (Traits)
- Personality (Values, Motives)

A competency model is a descriptive tool that links competencies together by organization (core competencies), business unit or position. The model provides the competencies and the associated behaviors needed to perform effectively in the organization, and helps the organization meet its strategic goals and objectives. Certain competencies may be generic, like communication skills and problem-solving skills, and appear in several models. However, the behaviors relating to those competencies can vary widely from one business unit to another, or one role or job or level in a company to another.

What are the Benefits of Competency Models to Your Organization?

Competency models:

- Help ensure that your investment in human capital supports the achievement of strategic goals
- Align internal behaviors and skills with your future direction (vision)
- Clarify and communicate what is required for effective performance
- Help ensure that your employees are doing the right thing
- Lead to higher retention rates, and improved job satisfaction
- Reinforce what your company values
- Provide a common language that supports employee performance and development
- Help influence the culture to support your organization's needs for the future
- Are the cornerstone for key management activities and practices

What Management Practices should be Aligned with Your Competency Models?

Management practices are the processes and methods your managers use that affect how people think, behave, and do the work. It is critical to the successful implementation of competency models within your organization, that the models you create are integrated into these practices. The practices can be organized into three categories:

Creating - Recruiting, Interviewing, Selection, Development, Training, Workforce Planning

Fortifying - Performance Management, Coaching and Counseling, Rewards and Recognition, Compensation, Assessment Centers

Sustaining - Career Paths, Succession Planning, Organization Design, Promotion, Communication
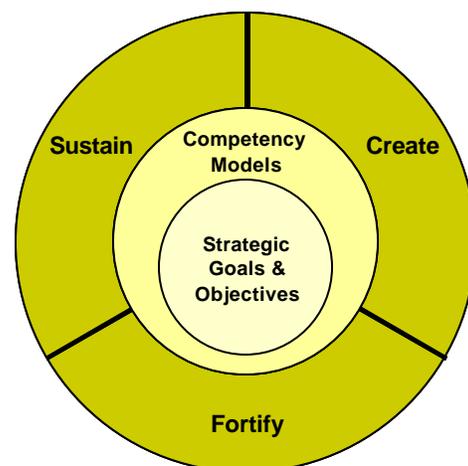
Alignment of the competency models to these practices provides for a common and consistent message and approach across your organization, and ensures that the "actions you take" match with the "words you speak" when it comes to human capital.

The Advantage

The competencies of our employees define the organizations within which we work, and the viability of our organizations in the future. Those of us that focus on our human capital by defining performance expectations through competency models, and insisting on meeting and sustaining that performance through carefully aligned management practices will be positioned well now and into the future. Our employees bring unique personal competencies to our organizations, and our organizations can more effectively compete when we have more competencies than our competition – *the competitive edge*.

Contact **BEI** at 248.625.8100 to learn how we can help your organization define competency models and align them to your business goals and objectives and your management practices.

Lessons Learned

Topic: Developing E-lessons

Here are some lessons that we learned from designing and developing online lessons and courses for clients:

- Be creative and varied in your choices for interactions; don't use just mouse over interactions
- Utilize storyboards to communicate e-lesson design to the programmers; use detailed notes to communicate your intent
- Provide consistency in page layouts; don't make the participant search
- Verify links to outside web site; keep URL at the highest possible level (i.e., home page) while still maintaining relevance
- Be conscious of minimum platform requirements when choosing interactions
- Provide enough interaction to easily engage participants without overdoing it; don't add in interactions just for interaction's sake
- Match interactions to your design strategy and to content
- Utilize formatted templates to develop your storyboard
- Pay attention to font size and the amount of text on a page; think in terms of a larger font and less text
- Provide appropriate level of participant control
- Use photographs instead of clip art for topics that deal with sensitive or personal content (i.e. diversity)
- Keep in mind that the level of effort for design and development of e-lessons is greater then what is required for typical instructor-led courses
- Provide relevant "take aways" (i.e., job aids, checklists) to reinforce learning
- Establish standards for punctuation, format, and word usage
- Provide clear transitions between different topics and lessons
- Make sure reading level is appropriate for target audience; you won't have a second chance to explain it later (like in a classroom environment)

Marketplace

NEW! Web Based Courses

BEI will launch a series of web-based courses this September. These interactive and innovative courses can replace and/or supplement your existing instructor led training. Courses can be

easily implemented by uploading them to your learning management system or by accessing them through BEI's learning management system.

Unique course features include:

- The option for the learner to build a personal and confidential *Teachable Point of View* while progressing through the course. This tool helps the learner communicate the ideas, knowledge, and information gained from the course to others in the organization.

- The option for organizations to post their own policies and/or practices within the compliance courses. This feature allows the learner to become more familiar with their company's policies, procedures, and guidelines.

Courses include:

Sexual Harassment Awareness
Builds awareness among all employees about the impact of sexual harassment on workplace productivity, and provides steps that can be taken to avoid and report sexual harassment incidents. Knowledge checks are included to provide employees with an opportunity to assess their learning and resources are included for additional information on how to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

Sexual Harassment Awareness for Managers
Managers have specific responsibilities regarding sexual harassment that go above and beyond the employees' responsibilities. This course builds upon the above course, and in addition addresses steps involved in filing a compliant and investigating sexual harassment incidents, offers suggestions for how managers can support their organization's sexual harassment policies and procedures, and covers prevention steps and strategies.

American Disabilities Act (ADA) Awareness
Presents an overview of the ADA and how it can help to promote the integration of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream workforce. Specifically, the course presents an overview of Title 1 of the ADA (employment). Also included are resources to support both the employer and employee's ability to comply with ADA regulations.

Managing Risk and Security
Teaches all employees about the importance of safety and security practices in the work environment. Specific areas covered include human capital, physical assets, intellectual capital, and electronic data. The course addresses the impact of a safe and secure work environment on both the employee and the organization.

Basic Ergonomic Principles
Applying Ergonomics in the workplace can maximize productivity, increase quality, and ensure long-term worker health and safety. This course teaches a practical approach for identifying, analyzing, and correcting jobs that may be designed poorly from an ergonomics standpoint. This course offers employees a basic understanding of how to identify ergonomic risk factors and solve ergonomic problems in the workplace.

Workforce Diversity
Defines for all employees what diversity is and what it is not. The course also builds the business case for diversity and examines potential negative consequences as a result of not valuing diversity. Through the development of their personal *Teachable Point of View*, employees are empowered to leverage their new knowledge of diversity by increasing the awareness of others and impacting their organization.

Workforce Diversity for Managers

Building upon the course above, this course teaches managers how to align diversity efforts with their organization's mission statement, and how to capitalize on and reinforce the value of diversity within their own departments.

Contact **BEI** at 248.625.8100 or info@beinc-online.com to learn more about these exciting new courses.

Worthy Web Sites

http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~mryder/itc_data/idmodels.html *Hungry for Instructional Design Models?* Then this University of Colorado School of Education site is for you. It provides a hefty menu of links to various design models including definitions, explanations, and example.

http://www.elearningpost.com/ *Overwhelmed by the vast amount of online e-learning sources out there?* This site offers a multitude of quality links, providing an efficient way to keep current on such topics as Corporate Learning, Community Building, Instructional Design, and Knowledge Management.

http://refdesk.com/ *A great source of information at your fingertips.* Searching online for information can be extremely time consuming if you don't know exactly where to go to find something. This site is like having your own personal librarian. Non-commercial, intuitive navigation, and help is even provided for beginners.

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