Acumens of Competency Mapping

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Abstract

The term "Competency Mapping", has gained its attention in the management profession in recent times. With global economy and the world becoming a global village firms have become more aware of the need for having competent employees and developing distinguished competencies for every organization. Competence is a standardized requirement for an individual to properly perform a specific job. It encompasses a combination of knowledge, skills and behavior utilized to improve performance. More generally, competence is the state or quality of being adequately or well qualified, having the ability to perform a specific role. Competency mapping is a process through which one assesses and determines one's strengths as an individual worker and in some cases, as part of an organization. It generally examines two areas: emotional intelligence or emotional quotient (EQ), and strengths of the individual in areas like team structure, leadership, and decision-making. Large organizations frequently employ some form of competency mapping to understand how to most effectively employ the competencies of strengths of workers. This paper examines theoretical aspects the application of the concept of "Competency Mapping". Various perspectives of "Competency Mapping in the radiance of HRM brings out its importance and scope for effective HRM system of an Organization.

Key words: Competency Mapping, Global economy, Global village, Emotiona intelligence, Decision-making

Introduction

Competency mapping is the process of identifying key competencies for a particular position in an organization. Once this process is complete, the map becomes an input for several other HR processes such as job-evaluation; recruitment; training and development; performance management; and succession planning. Competency mapping is a process through which one assesses and determines one's strengths as an individual worker and in some cases, as part of an organization. It generally examines two areas: emotional intelligence or emotional quotient (EQ), and strengths of the individual in areas like team structure, leadership, and decision-making. Large organizations frequently employ some form of competency mapping to understand how to most effectively employ the competencies of strengths of workers. They may also use competency mapping to analyze the combination of strengths in different workers to produce the most effective teams and the highest quality work. The mapping process starts from as macro an endeavour as understanding the vision and mission of the organization and how that translates into specific, time-bound business goals. It then goes on to delineating the organization structure clearly, and identifying the various levels and positions, as well as the reporting relationships obtaining within that.

Competency & competency mapping

Competencies comprise the knowledge, skills, values and attributes demonstrated through behaviour that results in competent and superior performance. Competency describes what superior performers actually do on a job that produces superior results. Armed with this information, selection, retention, training, succession planning and performance management systems can be integrated and designed to attract, develop and retain top performers.

McClelland (1973, 1976), who is often credited with coining the term competency, defined it as a characteristic that underlies successful performance. Over the years, many writers, including key thinkers and leaders in the field, have defined and refined the word competency and related terms.

Zemke (1982) set out to ascertain the precise attributes of a competency and conducted a number of interviews with experts in the field. He determined from the interviews that there is no complete and total agreement on what is and is not a competency:

Classification of Competencies

Competencies can broadly be classified into two categories – Basic and Professional Competencies. Basic competencies are inherent in all individuals. Only their degree of existence would be differing. For example, problem solving is a competency that exists in every individual but in varying degrees. Professional competencies are over and above the basic competencies, and are job related. For example, handling a sales call effectively is a competency that sales personnel possess in addition to the basic competency. It has been proved by various scholars that all individuals have competencies. Only the combination and degree of these competencies differ from individual to individual. Hence, organizations have to identify the critical basic competencies required for individual employees to deliver their best in their organization. The importance of mapping the competencies proves critical for organizational success.

Competency Measurement Methods adopted by HR Departments

A competency may be demonstrated in many ways. One method of identifying the typical ways that competencies are demonstrated is to identify the behaviors or tangible results (outcomes) produced by their use in the context of the work performed. A behavior is an observable action that is taken to achieve results or that contributes to an accomplishment. Green (1999) defined behavior as an action that can be observed, described, and verified. Competencies could be measured by using behavioral indicators. A behavioral indicator is a statement of an action, or set of actions, that one would expect to observe when a person successfully uses a competency to perform work.

Competency Mapping Process

Knowledge, skills and behavioural attributes required at all levels and job positions are identified they are grouped in asset of competencies. A clear and simple measurement scale is established. All associates and mangers are mapped against the pre-determined set of competencies by a panel of trained people.

Steps involved in competency mapping

1) Conduct a job analysis by asking incumbents to complete a position information questionnaire (PIQ). This can be provided for incumbents to complete, or one-on-one interviews can be conducted using the PIQ as a guide. The primary goal is to gather from incumbents what they feel are the key behaviours necessary to perform their respective jobs.

2) Using the results of the job analysis, one is ready to develop a competency based job description. This can be developed after carefully analysing the input from the represented group of incumbents and converting it to standard competencies.

3) With a competency based job description, one is on his way to begin mapping the competencies throughout the human resources processes. The competencies of the respective job description become the factors for assessment on the performance evaluation. Using competencies helps to guide one to perform more objective evaluations based on displayed or not displayed behaviours.

4) Taking the competency mapping one step further, one can use the results of the evaluation to identify in what competencies individuals need additional development or training. This will help him to focus the training needs on the goals of the position and company and help the employees develop towards the ultimate success of the organization

Methods of competency mapping

"*Assessment Centre*" is one of the mechanisms to identify the potential for growth. It is a procedure (not location) that uses a variety of techniques to evaluate employees for manpower purpose and decisions. It was initiated by American Telephone and Telegraph Company in 1960 for line personnel being considered for promotion to supervisory positions. An essential feature of the assessment center is the use of situational test to observe specific job behavior. Assessment Centre comprises a number of exercises or simulations which have been designed to replicate the tasks and demands of the job. These exercises or simulations will have been designed in such a way that candidates can undertake them both singly and together and they will be observed by assessors while they are doing the exercises. The main types of exercises are presented below. Most organizations use a combination of them to assess the strengths, weaknesses and potential of employees.

The advantages of competency mapping for the companies or organizations are as follows:

*Establishes expectations for performance excellence

*Improved job satisfaction and better employee retention

*Increase in the effectiveness of training and professional development programs because of their link to success criteria.

*Provides a common understanding of scope and requirements of a specific role

*Provides a common, organization wide standard for career levels that enable employee's tomove across business boundaries.

*Help companies "raise the bar" of performance expectations

*Help teams and individuals align their behaviors with key organizational strategies

The competency mapping provides following advantages to the managers:

• Identify performance criteria to improve the accuracy and ease of the selection process

• Easier communication of performance expectations

• Provide a clear foundation for dialogue to occur between the managers and employees performance, development and career-oriented issues

The employees in an organization get the following advantages by competency mapping:

• Identify the behavioral standards of performance excellence

•Provide a more specific and objective assessment of their strengths and the tools required to enhance their skills

• Enhances clarity on career related issues

• Helps each understand how to achieve expectations

Competency mapping under the HR radiance

There is always a need to have the best quality manpower. More and more companies are using competency mapping tools to screen and hire people with specific competencies. There might be a need for a person with excellent writing skills or an excellent creative mind. When individuals must seek new jobs, knowing one's competencies can give one a competitive edge in the market."Various tests and tools developed based on Competency mapping helps to place the right man at right jobs at right time. "These competencybased HR tests assess a person on the basis of Aptitude, Domain Skills, Communication Skills and Personality and Psychometric fit."This involves making crucial decisions as to place which employee in which project, identify core competency area of employees etc. These tools also help organisations to plan their training requirements in the long run,"

Comprehensive career management which is one of the prime role of HR department formulate appropriate framework in all most all organizations that helps employees map their growth paths, lateral or vertical. Each role has a defined set of competencies aligned to it. "Employees are expected to first acquire the competencies defined for the current role and then focus on the competencies for a growth role before they are considered eligible for movement. Future promotions based on transparent Internal Job Posting (IJP) process enable employees to get a complete picture of the opportunities available within the company. With this information, employees are better equipped to make informed career decisions and equip themselves with the knowledge and skills they require to move up the career ladder."

Person joining the new jobs are matched against the expected competency mapping scale by HR department and existing employees are also periodically reviewed with the help of assessment tools. Based on the gap analysis HR /Training Department can impart necessary training and development to hone the requisite competency. The action plans for the competency development outcome based on such assessments are finalized and the entire initiative is institutionalized to achieve the desired results in an organization. Competency mapping not only helps to identify the competencies of the individuals but also to pin point the weak areas which can be worked upon for change. Besides increasing employee morale and enhancing productivity, it induces fresh thinking, fosters innovation and thereby aims to provide an enriching job experience.

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Conclusion

Competency mapping is a strategic HR framework for monitoring the performance and development of human assets in organizations. Competency based HR management can improve both productivity and performance by identifying key characteristics of top performers and how those traits differ from average employees. These characteristics in turn can filter in a set of core competency profile that consistently leads to successful workforce. The impact of competency mapping on recruitment, interviewing, selection, placement, performance and reward management, training and development, career and succession planning which plays a major role in effective management of Human Resources Competency Mapping thus serves as a tool for motivating employees, directing systems and processes and guiding the business towards common goals that allow the *organization*s to increase its value. Competencies mapping is a common language and method that can integrate all the major HR functions and services. The field of competency development is growing in popularity with administrative management in businesses and agencies worldwide. One important reason to collect data and build competency models is that they are powerful decision-making tools.   As   global business competition shifts from efficiency to innovation and from enlargement of scale to creation of value, management needs to be oriented towards the strategic use of human resources which can be achieved through competency mapping.In the radiance of Human Resources management it is the need of the hour to correlate performance result with competency mapping.

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