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(Sample) Overview of Competencies

**What are Competencies?**
Competencies, in the most general terms, are “things” that an individual must demonstrate to be effective in a job, role, function, task, or duty. These “things” include job-relevant behavior (what a person says or does that results in good or poor performance), motivation (how a person feels about a job, organization, or geographic location), and technical knowledge/skills (what a person knows/demonstrates regarding facts, technologies, a profession, procedures, a job, an organization, etc.). Competencies are identified through the study of jobs and roles.

**Competencies and Performance Development/Management**
Over the years performance management has progressed from personality- and outcomes-based approaches that provided no constructive developmental focus on behaviors-to approaches that recognize the need to provide individuals with feedback on job responsibilities/objectives as well as competencies—or behaviors. At the individual level this focus on competencies enables people to take a proactive role in their own development by providing guidance in behavior change efforts. At the organizational level the focus on competencies in performance development/management enables us to align individual performance with values and strategy while maximizing individual performance in the pursuit of specific work-related objectives and behaviors.

Performance can be measured against competencies. These measurements then are used to make hiring, promotion, and succession decisions and to guide training and development efforts. The use of competencies has been a key success for many universities and organizations undergoing rapid and dramatic changes.

**What do I do with all these competencies?**
As you review the competencies, please remember that competencies help to describe “how” work gets accomplished (by engaging knowledge, skills, and abilities). They represent one [important] dimension of work. They do not describe “what” gets accomplished in terms of results, responsibilities, deliverables, or specific project objectives. Competencies are used to plan, guide, and develop behavior/performance.

Your goal in using this guide is **not** to pick as many competencies as possible that may apply to your job. The key is to focus on the top 8-10 (there is no magic number) most critical competencies as a competency framework/model, then narrow those down to the top 3-5 for use in performance development/management. When choosing those 3-5 competencies, a good practice is to pick a few competencies that are important strengths (based on your goals), to continue to build upon. In addition, pick a few competencies that may be developmental. This provides balance between strengths and developmental needs.
Building a Successful Team

Using appropriate methods and a flexible interpersonal style to help build a cohesive team; facilitating the completion of team goals.

Key Actions

- **Develops direction**—Ensures that the purpose and importance of the team are clarified (e.g., team has a clear charter or mission statement); guides the setting of specific and measurable team goals and objectives.

- **Develops structure**—Helps to clarify roles and responsibilities of team members; helps ensure that necessary steering, review, or support functions are in place.

- **Facilitates goal accomplishment**—Makes procedural or process suggestions for achieving team goals or performing team functions; provides necessary resources or helps to remove obstacles to team accomplishments.

- **Involves others**—Listens to and fully involves others in team decisions and actions; values and uses individual differences and talents.

- **Informs others on team**—Shares important or relevant information with the team.

- **Models commitment**—Adheres to the team’s expectations and guidelines; fulfills team responsibilities; demonstrates personal commitment to the team.

Sample Job Activities

- Communicate purpose and importance of team through a clear charter or mission statement.
- Set specific and measurable team goals and objectives.
- Work collaboratively with the team.
- Monitor team activities to ensure that roles and responsibilities of team members are clear.
- Review support functions and ensure that they are in place.
- Offer suggestions for achieving team goals or performing team functions.
- Value and use individual differences and talents to ensure that the team’s work is done effectively.
- Regularly share information with the team.
- Contribute to the fulfillment of team responsibilities.
- Display personal commitment to the team.
- Do not speak badly of the team to others.
- Contribute freely to team discussions.
- Quickly familiarize new team members with the team’s purpose and expectations for team member behavior.

**Notes**

Much of team development takes place in team meetings. Meeting facilitation behaviors in team meetings relate to the competencies Meeting Leadership or Meeting Participation as opposed to Building a Successful Team. Building a Successful Team includes the activities outside of formal meetings and the content of team meetings.

**Do not use Building a Successful Team and Contributing to Team Success together.**

Building a Successful Team is closely related to Contributing to Team Success; they share a number of key actions. One does not need to be a formal leader for Building a Successful Team to be the more appropriate competency, but Contributing to Team Success is more commonly used with non-leader positions because it does not contain the leadership behaviors of developing team direction and developing team structure.
**Decision Making**

*Identifying and understanding issues, problems, and opportunities; comparing data from different sources to draw conclusions; using effective approaches for choosing a course of action or developing appropriate solutions; taking action that is consistent with available facts, constraints, and probable consequences.*

**Key Actions**

- **Identifies issues, problems, and opportunities**—Recognizes issues, problems, or opportunities and determines whether action is needed.

- **Gathers information**—Identifies the need for and collects information to better understand issues, problems, and opportunities.

- **Interprets information**—Integrates information from a variety of sources; detects trends, associations, and cause-effect relationships.

- **Generates alternatives**—Creates relevant options for addressing problems/opportunities and achieving desired outcomes.

- **Chooses appropriate action**—Formulates clear decision criteria; evaluates options by considering implications and consequences; chooses an effective option.

- **Commits to action**—Makes decisions within a reasonable time.

- **Involves others**—Includes others in the decision-making process as warranted to obtain good information, make the most appropriate decisions, and ensure buy-in and understanding of the resulting decisions.

**Sample Job Activities**

- Select new products, materials, vendors, or consultants.
- Make decisions about customers’ complaints.
- Make decisions not directly covered by organizational policies or procedures.
- Inform manager/supervisor/team leader of important issues or problems.
- Inform manager/supervisor/team leader or others in the organization of decisions.
- Anticipate the consequences of decisions.
- Take action or generate alternative solutions to resolve problems or situations.
Consider multiple factors (e.g., customers’ needs, feasibility, due dates, costs, etc.) when making decisions.
- Consider the impact of decisions on other departments or areas.
- Recommend changes in policies, processes, procedures, or operations.
- Determine the true cause of an issue/problem before applying a solution.
- Gather information from several sources to understand problems, trends, or opportunities.
- Interpret financial information from sources such as balance sheets, profit and loss statements, etc.

Notes

This competency can be divided into two parts called Analysis and Judgment (or Problem Assessment and Problem Solution). Analysis (Problem Assessment) comprises the first three key actions of Decision Making; Judgment (Problem Solution) comprises the last four key actions.

Decision Making can be very interconnected with Technical/Professional Knowledge and Skills competencies in some professional and technical positions. The quality of someone’s decision-making skills can be difficult to evaluate unless the assessor has an expert background in the kind of work the person does, especially for technically complex situations.

Interacting with others at work involves making many small decisions, but few of these interpersonal judgments are good examples of Decision Making. Decision Making should be used only to classify a complex process in decision-making. For example, someone might say, “She used bad judgment by asking the group to vote.” This isn’t Decision Making. It’s a behavior that would be more appropriately classified under the competency Meeting Leadership.
Developing Others

Planning and supporting the development of individuals’ skills and abilities so that they can fulfill current or future job/role responsibilities more effectively.

Key Actions

- **Collaboratively establishes development goals**—Works with individuals to identify areas for development, understand need for improvement, and set specific development goals.

- **Collaboratively establishes development plans**—Works with individuals to identify options for meeting development goals; explores environmental supports and barriers to development; jointly determines appropriate developmental activities.

- **Creates a learning environment**—Secures resources required to support development efforts; ensures that opportunities for development are available; offers assistance to help individuals overcome obstacles to learning.

- **Monitors progress**—Gives individuals specific feedback on their performance related to established goals; highlights key positive and negative performance issues; adjusts plans to ensure development.

Sample Job Activities

- Involve others in determining developmental goals and actions.
- Help and encourage others to determine and develop the skills necessary for current and future jobs.
- Design a formal plan for career development of others.
- Consider others’ motivations, interests, and current situations in planning long-range developmental activities.
- Assign tasks to help others meet career development plans.
- Design or locate appropriate developmental projects or training programs for others.
- Create opportunities for on-the-job application of new skills.
- Cross-train others to broaden experience and develop potential.
- Diagnose and provide feedback on developmental progress.
- Design or locate appropriate training programs for others.
Notes

Do not use Developing Others and Aligning Performance for Success together.

In Developing Others the focus is on planning and supporting effective development activities related to current or future job responsibilities. Aligning Performance for Success shares key actions with Developing Others. The difference is that Aligning Performance for Success focuses on implementing a formal performance management system that includes setting specific and measurable objectives and evaluating performance of direct reports. Developing Others is less formal and typically more appropriate outside of the formal manager/direct report relationship.
Planning and Organizing

_Establishing courses of action for self and others to ensure that work is completed efficiently._

Key Actions

- **Prioritizes**—Identifies more critical and less critical activities and assignments; adjusts priorities when appropriate.

- **Determines tasks and resources**—Determines project/assignment requirements by breaking them down into tasks; identifying equipment, materials, and people needed; and coordinating with internal and external partners.

- **Schedules**—Allocates appropriate amounts of time for completing own and others’ work; avoids scheduling conflicts; develops timelines and milestones.

- **Leverages resources**—Takes advantage of available resources (individuals, processes, departments, and tools) to complete work efficiently.

- **Stays focused**—Uses time effectively and prevents irrelevant issues or distractions from interfering with work completion.

Sample Job Activities

- Plan use of own time to accomplish a variety of tasks.
- Schedule own work so that the most important work gets done.
- Use a calendar or tickler file to schedule meetings, work, etc.
- Schedule work with other departments or areas.
- Prepare plans for projects or major assignments (including tasks, resources, and time frames).
- Develop timetables or milestone charts for projects.
- Schedule meetings with peers, employees, internal/external customers, vendors, or others.
- Prepare materials for projects or presentations.
- Adjust schedule based on priority situations that occur throughout the week.
- Advise others and coordinate their schedules to address priority customer issues.
- Coordinate own time and priorities with the needs of customers and others.
- Know and rely on the "experts" in various departments who can solve and address special problems.
- Plan own work schedule with little or no supervision or guidance.
- Prioritize time and financial (corporate) resources.
- Put together and execute project plans.

Notes

Do not use Planning and Organizing and Managing Work (Includes Time Management) together.

Planning and Organizing is closely related to Managing Work (Includes Time Management); they share a number of key actions. Use Planning and Organizing when the job/role requires incumbents to plan their own and others’ time and activities.

Merely maintaining a written schedule or arranging meetings for others does not qualify as planning others’ time and activities. Additional planning and organizing behaviors must be present within a job/role to justify using the Planning and Organizing competency.