Functional Competencies of Human Resources Training Professional - A Conceptual Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to study on functional competency of Human Resources Training Professional of competencies used by trainers by examining the importance and frequency of use of training competencies applied to various organizations from different industries. There is a lack of studies done on assessment of approach to identify competency which revealed that trainer's competencies, according to trainers, are determined by their personal traits and skills acquired during the development process. It was found that studies recognized the difficulties inherent in preparing an all-time suitable competency framework. In particular, those associated with the variety, complexity and universality of the skills, attitude and knowledge which executives require within a changing environment. It becomes essential to study trainer's competencies and competency management as a topic of research, so that appropriate training programs for management staff get a basis to develop effective professional development programs. A focused recruitment and performance management tool may be developed with the help of competency clarity. The paper serves as a collection of basic concepts of competency and provides with a structured body of the competency management phenomenon.

Keywords: Competency, Human Resource Training Professional , Learning Culture, Learning Priorities , Provision Of Continuing Development Opportunities , Learning And Development Program Implementation, Learning And Development Priorities Evaluation , Mentoring And Coaching

I. Introduction

People often use the term "training and development" to refer to the work of people who develop learning programs for the Professionals workplace. Training refers to a planned process to build skills and knowledge through specific learning experiences. Training is designed to ensure learners can meet specific learning objectives that support identified performance outcomes on tasks people do on the job. Because training typically occurs through structured learning experiences in the workplace, most people who participate in training and development are adults.

1.1.1. The essential Competencies for Training and Development Professionals

- To Design or define responsibilities for a job or position as a training and development professional,
- Manage a team of training and development professionals, assign work to them and assess their work performance
- Assess trainer's own performance to identify specific opportunities to strengthen the skills and ensure trainer provides a competent level of service to internal or external clients

Managing talent in an organization is a deliberate process that requires focused planning and a means for integrating all related activities. The goal is to make sure that the right people are doing the right things to accomplish the right outcomes. More organizations are finding that using competencies as the backbone of a human resource management system creates a structured, defensible and rigorous process for recruiting and developing a highly productive work force well suited to carry out required business strategies. Organizations benefit from working with competencies because it gives them a better, more sophisticated way to manage, measure and improve the job performance of their employees. It also helps in reinforcing values and encouraging common culture and behaviour. A competency is "an underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and/or superior performance of the job." It includes any attribute, knowledge, skill, ability or other quality that contributes to successful job performance. Put simply, competencies are the "how" side of job performance.

Establishing a competency based human resource management system helps a company hire people who have high potential to succeed, ensure that they receive the training and development necessary to realize that potential, and provide an appraisal system that gives the feedback and coaching employees need to perform well.

2. Review of Related Literature

Competency is used as an umbrella term to cover almost anything that might directly or indirectly affect job performance (Woodruffe, 1992)[1]. Nordhaug & Gronhaug (1994)[2] commented, "The competence concept remains one of the most diffuse terms that have been discussed in the organizational and occupational literature".

The introduction of competency based approaches to the corporate and academic environment initiated around 1970 and their development and use since then has been rapid (Horton, 2000)[3]. McClelland (1973)[4] is credited with introducing the idea of "competency" into the human resource management literature through his efforts to assist the 'United States Information Agency' to improve its selection procedures. After the term 'competency' was coined by Lundberg (1972)[5] and McClelland's (1973) article, as 'Testing for Competence Rather than for Intelligence', more attention was paid to product quality and differentiated customer demand.

Consequently, separate training departments in firms became a ritual. McClelland's (1973)[6] concept of competency proved to be a key driver of the competency movement and competency based education. McClelland (1973) defined "competency" from a psychological point of view. He argued that traditional intelligence tests, as well as proxies such as scholastic grades, do add to the individual persona of an aspirant but fails to predict job performance in reality. The growing dissatisfaction with intelligence testing and the traditional job analytic approaches to personnel selection was the reason to accept the proposal to test for competency.

McClelland (1973)[7] in his research found that competencies such as interpersonal sensitivity, cross-cultural positive regards and management skills differentiated superior from average Information Officers (Dubois, 1993)[8]. This could be moreover understood as an advantage of competency management approach over the traditional Intelligence Quotient assessment procedures. Competency Management differs from the more traditional job analysis as it focuses more on "how" work is accomplished instead of on "what" is accomplished (Kurz and Bartram, 2002; Schippmann et al., 2000)[9]

Boyatzis (1982)[10] described competencies as underlying characteristics of an individual, which are, causally related to effective job performance. These underlying characteristics of a manager are observable, demonstrable and inferred/extrapolated and must lead to effective performance, i.e. there should be difference between the performances of a person with competency and without competency; and that, they cannot be restricted to a single job alone, but the person must be able to carry them along (Sanghi, 2004)[11], Hogg, 1989)[12].

Prahalad and Hamel (1990)[13] provided another thrust to the concept of competency. By the end of the 1990s, the concept made way to be regarded as learnable and teachable attributes that indicate aptitude to perform various human activities such as work, learning, and coping with change when organizations use competency profiles extensively to address a wide range of human resource management (HRM) issues, the approach is typically referred to as competency management (or competency-based management) (Greengard, 1999)[14]

As 'competency' is seen as an 'underlying characteristic' which causally relates to superior job performance (McClelland, 1971; Boyatzis, 1982)[15] , a concept of input and output approach was given by Tate (1995)[16] and Hoffman (1999)[17] where in the need of range of qualities of personal effectiveness was said to be required to get a job done successfully (Boam and Sparrow, 1992;[18] Silver, 1991;[19] Ashworth and Saxton, 1990;[20] Burgoyne, 1989[21]).

Before the competency management concept gained acceptance, the knowledge, skills and abilities phenomenon was believed and practiced. There is a distinction between competencies and knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). Competency has a level above than KSAs as it also covers the motives, traits and self-concept of employees (Spencer and Spencer, 1993).[22] While KSAs may underlie competencies just as personal traits may underlie competencies, the KSAs are not the exact competencies (Kravetz, 1988)[23]. In brief, each competency consists of several KSAs.

Functional Competencies

This study deals with the functional competencies of human resources training professional are

- Learning culture
- Learning priorities
- Provision of continuing development opportunities
- Learning and development program implementation
- Learning and development priorities evaluation
- Mentoring and coaching

2.1.1. Learning Culture

A learning culture is a collection of organizational conventions, values, practices and processes. These conventions encourage employees and organizations develop knowledge and competence.

An organization with a learning culture encourages continuous learning and believes that systems influence each other. Since constant learning elevates an individual as a worker and as a person, it opens opportunities for the establishment to transform continuously for the better.

2.1.2. Advantages of a Learning Culture

There are many benefits of a cultivated learning culture in an organization. These include, but are not limited to:

- Increased efficiency, productivity and profit
- Increased employee satisfaction and decreased turnover
- An improvement mindset among employees

- A developed sense of ownership and accountability
- Ease in succession/transition
- A culture of knowledge inquiry and sharing
- An enhanced ability for workers to adapt to change

For learning to be effective in an organization, the knowledge that is encouraged must be related to the business. More so, individuals in an organization should be working together rather than learning individually. Shared learning enables companies to increase their staff quicker and solve problems more efficiently.

2.1.3. The essential competencies HR training Professional are

- Identify opportunities for learning that occur as part of everyday work activities.
- Encourage employees to seek out learning opportunities beyond formalized instruction Encourage learning that enhances individual, team, and organizational effectiveness.
- Identify potential strategies to embed learning and development into the culture of the organization.
- Assess the merits of alternative strategies to create an organizational learning culture.
- Implement initiatives to develop a learning culture to enhance the organization's effectiveness.

2.1.4. Learning Priorities

Effective professional learning focuses on developing the core attributes of an effective trainer. It enhances trainers' understanding of the content they train and equips them with a range of strategies that enable their participants to learn that content. It is directed towards providing trainers with the skills to teach and assess for deep understanding and to develop participants' Meta cognitive skills.

A well-trained, engaged workforce will drive a company's success, while an unmotivated, underperforming group will slow down production and potentially cause a company to fail. It's also well understood that training is essential in creating a positive, productive workforce. However, this concept of training is often nebulous and unfocused. Rather than piece together ad hoc training programs, organizations should focus their efforts on four key categories. The first, and arguably the most important, is improving productivity. Employee skill sets and talent must be continuously monitored and gauged to optimize efficiency and increase profit margins. The second most important priority for training is maintaining quality and bolstering innovation. These are both extremely important factors in the growth of an organization, and must be fostered for long-term sustainability. The third priority for training has to do with interpersonal skills—specifically fostering interaction and cooperation between individuals and departments. Lastly, it's important to enable employees to participate in autonomous learning and take command of their career development.

2.1.5. The essential competencies HR training Professional in learning priorities is

- Consult key stakeholders in the development of organizational learning priorities.
- Identify potential organizational learning priorities that are aligned with organizational strategy.
- Analyze the return on investment of alternative organizational learning priorities.
- Select organizational learning priorities to maximize return on investment and alignment with business strategy.

2.1.6. Provision of Continuing Development Opportunities

The literature depicted continuing development opportunities as keeping up-to-date with knowledge skills and attitudes managerially and professionally and saw it as being highly instrumental in coping with change at whatever level that occurs in managerial, technological, and professional and so on. continuing development opportunities described as "aspirational", it was also be considered as being owned by the individual and not "run by any agency" Despite this, continuing development opportunities was defined in operational terms as consisting of attendance at conferences and workshops at internal, local and national levels..

2.1.7. The essential competencies HR training Professional in Provision of Continuing Development Opportunities is

- Assess the potential of employees to develop competencies aligned with organizational strategy.
- Develop learning opportunities for employees that enable them to contribute effectively to organizational objectives.
- Develop learning objectives that maximize the growth potential of employees.

2.1.8. Learning and Development Program Implementation

Training is any planned activity to transfer or modify knowledge, skills, and attitudes through learning experiences. Personnel may require training for a variety of reasons, including the need to maintain levels of competence and respond to the demands of changing circumstances and new approaches and technologies. Training by itself cannot solve structural, organizational, or policy problems within an organization, although supportive supervision and the use of motivational strategies can help sustain performance improvement derived from training. The first step in the design of training involves an assessment of training needs. The assessment comprises

- Observing workers performing normal duties
- Interviewing workers and others

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- Studying routine reports or performance reviews, along with job descriptions
- Identifying performance problems

The second step involves defining the training program's learning objectives. The learning objectives, which are derived from the needs assessment, specify the observable, measurable actions that each learner will be able to demonstrate as a result of participating in the training activities. The third step is the creation and implementation of a training program to improve performance, taking into account the experience and educational levels of the personnel and the time and resources available for training.

Options range from short courses to long-term placements in academic institutions in the country, in the region, or overseas, and non–classroom-based interventions, such as on-the-job training, coaching, and mentoring. All options must be weighed against the immediate operational needs of the program or institution, because facilities may not have enough personnel to operate when staff members go for training.

The learning outcomes that must be achieved, along with the training environment, audience characteristics, and the experience of the trainer, all determine the mix of learning methods and media that will achieve maximum effectiveness. Methods and media may include lecture, discussion, case study, role-playing, group exercise, simulation games, brainstorming, and demonstration. If no published training materials—including audiovisual aids—are available, the trainer must develop them. Development of the training program also includes design of the training evaluation, which is carried out during the course as well as at its conclusion. During the course, trainers monitor learner progress and satisfaction to identify where they may need to make adjustments to the training program. At the end of the course, trainers should collect data on how well the learners achieved the course objectives and how satisfied they were with the training experience.

Whenever possible, the trainer should follow up with participants after they return to their work situations to assess the impact of training on performance. Data collected during follow-up can help identify the need for additional training or reinforcement of newly acquired skills, as well as inform review and revision of the training materials.

Training should be put into a context of continuous performance improvement. Changing and improving practices require an environment conducive to work, the appropriate learning resources, and the continuous use of motivational strategies. Training should be based on competencies: the abilities required to do work to the standards expected. Therefore, training should result in changes in work behaviour that lead to an improved, efficiently functioning pharmaceutical management system. At the same time, training alone is unlikely to change overall supply system performance unless the environment and supervisory systems support change and unless individuals are encouraged to maintain changes

Learning requires active involvement. People prefer to learn in different ways—through visual stimuli, verbal interactions, and learning by doing. Therefore, offering a variety of training opportunities and training techniques is usually more effective than using only one approach.

2.1.9. The essential competencies HR training Professional in learning and development program implementation are
- Maintain knowledge of current literature in the field of adult learning.
- Apply established theories of adult learning to the development of learning and development programs.
- Implement learning and development programs that are relevant and effective.

2.1.10. Learning and Development Priorities Evaluation
Monitoring and evaluation to assess the performance and progress of the participants is one of the trainer's key roles. These assessments should be done as formative evaluations while the course is in progress (for midcourse adjustments and fine-tuning), as summative evaluations at the end of the course (to make the course better in the future), and as periodic follow-ups after the training is over to monitor outcomes and assess the continuing performance of the trainees. The training outcomes should be measurable, performance-based, and directly related to the objectives of the training program. In training, formative assessment is important, because the aim of the course is to improve performance, not to grade the participants. The trainer can help them learn more quickly and more completely by providing them with constructive criticism during the course. The trainer can also use the feedback from evaluations to adjust the content and methods of the training to better meet participants' needs.

2.1.11. The essential competencies HR training Professional in learning and development priorities evaluation are
- Establish outcome measures for learning and development programs that are aligned with organizational objectives.
- Maintain knowledge of sound measurement principles accepted in the HR field.
- Assess progress towards learning and development goals using sound measurement principles.
- Document progress towards learning and development goals.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of learning and development programs.
- Evaluate the likelihood that learning and development priorities will align with progress towards

organizational objectives.

2.1.12. Mentoring and Coaching

The competence skills of mentor and coach overlap to some extent. Both mentors and coaches are 'critical friends' although they might use different methods. A coach is more likely to use direct feedback, while a mentor relies more heavily on the questioning process. A coach is a specialist who works with the protégé on specific goals and objectives – the professional equivalent of a fitness trainer. A mentor is likely to have followed a similar career to the one their protégé is starting, and will pass on their expertise.

2.1.13 Mentoring or coaching might be appropriate for

- Senior managers who are unlikely to benefit from conventional training courses
- Managers who need the space to develop or improve new or existing skills
- Those on a 'fast track' career programme
- Staff who need to focus more on their career paths
- Managers who have reached a career plateau and want to progress, but do not know how to
- Anybody developing a new career
- Staff or managers who want to change career direction
- Employees returning to work after a career break
- Staff wanting to improve their skills and abilities
- Individuals who respond better to alternative learning methods
- Mentors and coaches themselves
- Staff or managers working through difficult issues.

2.1.14. Mentoring can bring the following in the individuals:

- Increase individual and team commitment to an organisation and its goals
- Help improve communication within the organisation
- Help to change organisational culture for the better
- Allow individuals to gain a greater insight into the organisation's workings
- Give individuals the chance to meet different people within the organisation, and to network
- Improve levels of professional success.

2.1.15. The essential competencies HR training Professional in learning and development program implementation are

- Maintain knowledge of current mentoring and coaching principles.
- Educate leaders on the merits of mentoring and coaching employees.
- Keep leaders informed about the learning and development priorities of employees.
- Develop learning programs to build mentoring and coaching skills in leaders.
- Deliver mentoring and coaching training to leaders

3. Conclusion

One of the challenges of developing a competency model for the HR training profession is the wide variety of roles performed by HR training professionals and the wide variety of contexts in which HR professionals practise their profession. It is not expected that all professionals will be required to demonstrate all competencies in their work or even throughout their career. The Human Resources Professional Competency Framework applies to the broad HR Training profession and not just too specific roles or career levels, industries, regions, or organization sizes. All competencies are relevant to all levels within the HR training profession, although the manner in which any given competency may be expressed will differ depending on the level, role, industry, and organization size.

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