Importance of Competency Mapping in Human Resource Management

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ABSTRACT

A competency is a combination of knowledge, skills and behaviours that staff members or members of a specific category need to demonstrate in order to carry out their task and responsibilities successfully. Competencies are basic to effective performance in any job or position. A competency profile can include core competencies, which identify those core values that all staff members should demonstrate, managerial competencies, relevant for management positions and functional/ technical competencies that are specific to functional areas. Competency is the ability of an individual to perform a job properly.The present scenario is the world of competitive business. The human capital has become the most important resource. Thus it is the necessity for every organization to understand the various tools of proper management of human resource. Human resource management is a process of bringing people and organizations together so that the goals of each other are met. An organization can not show good financial or operating result unless personnel relations are in order. In the recent years highly skilled and knowledge based jobs are increasing while low skilled jobs are decreasing. This calls for future skill mapping through proper HRM initiatives. There is a need for multi skill development

KEYWORDS   HRM, competency mapping

Introduction

The research conducted by Industrial and Organizational psychologists emphasize that effectiveness of a person to carry out a job depends not on a single factor alone but on a "set of different factors". Such set of factors that help the possessor to be proficient in a particular job is termed as Competency for that particular job. Competency Mapping is a process of identifying key competencies for an organization, the job and functions within it. Every well-managed firm should have well defined roles and list of competencies required to perform each role effectively.

The modern world is full of complexity, which is characterized by scarcity of resources therefore it has become the prime objective of every manager to use the available resources efficiently. The resources which are the necessity of every organization are men, material, machinery and money. To maximize returns and minimize wastage, all these resources must be properly synchronized. Manpower, whether it is technical or managerial is the most important resource of an organization. Its mismatch with any other factor will give rise to wastage of time, money and efforts, leading to inefficiency. Thus, it is necessary to use this resource effectively. It is practically difficult to manage this resource because no two persons are similar; they are different in their qualities, skills, motives, attitudes, knowledge etc.

Competency is a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform a job effectively and efficiently. A Competency is something that describes how a job can be done excellently. Core competency is something which cannot be copied and it is the pillar upon which the strength of the individual rest. In the present times competency mapping is considered as one of the best HR tool, which leads in most adequate recruitment and selection process.

Competency mapping identifies employees' strengths and weaknesses in order to help them better understand themselves and to show them where career development efforts need to be directed. Competency mapping is not only done for confirmed employees of an organization rather it can also be done for contract workers or for those seeking employment to emphasize the specific skills which would make them valuable to a potential employer. These kinds of skills can be

determined, when one is ready to do the work. Competency mapping is one of the most accurate means of identifying the job and behavioural competencies of an individual in an organization.

Thus, the present paper is an attempt to study the literature findings and importance of competency mapping for an organization as well as for the employees.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
- Understanding Competency Mapping
- To comprehend how Competency Mapping is linked to various HR Practices

IMPORTANCE OF COMPETENCY MAPPING
Competency mapping helps to identify the talent and skill level of the employees. The success of any organization lies in the efficiency of its human resources. Thus the competency of the human resources should be measured and identified in order to develop the organization and enable the employees to develop the talent and skills in the required area.

HUMAN RESOURCE
The term HR can be defined as 'the total knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talent and aptitudes of an organization's workforce, as well as the values attitudes and beliefs of the individuals involved'. HRM is the process of bringing employee and organization together so that the goals of each other can be met successfully.

MEANING COMPETENCY
Competence is about tuning knowledge into action. Competence is a combination of skills, attributes and behaviours that are directly related to successful performance of the job. A competency is an underlying characteristic of an individual that is related to effective performance in a job or a situation. Some researchers see "competence" as a combination of knowledge, skills & behaviours used to enhance performance; or as the quality of the well qualified having the ability to perform a specific role. Regardless of training, competency grows through experience and the extent to which an individual learn and adapt. A competency is a combination of knowledge, skills and behaviours that staff members or members of a specific category need to demonstrate in order to carry out

their task and responsibilities successfully. Competencies act as a basis for effective performance in any job or position.

MEANING COMPETENCY MAPPING

"The competency framework serves as the bedrock for all HR applications. As a result of competency mapping, all the HR processes like talent induction, management development, appraisal and training yields much better results", states well known HR consultant Ullhas Pagey.

Competency mapping is a process of identifying key competencies for a company or an organization and the jobs & functions within it. Competency mapping analyzes the individual's strengths and weaknesses to improve his career growth and develop his knowledge. Regardless of training, competitiveness would grow through experience & the ability of an individual to learn and adapt.

The movement of competency finds its origin in mid 1950's and early 1970's. Johan Flanagan (1954) was the person who initiated the concept of competency, he established a critical incident technique- it is a set of procedures for systematically identifying behaviours that contribute to success or failures of an individual or an organization in specific situation. Later David McClelland (1975) discovered and developed the term competency which implies job performance. Boyatzis (1982) determined the characteristics of managers that enable them to be effective and efficient in various managerial positions, based on a study which was conducted on two thousands managers holding forty one different positions in twelve organizations.

APPLICATIONS OF COMPETENCY MAPPING

Competency mapping is excessively used in the organization to determine the crucial elements and activities. The basic reasons due to which the mapping of the competency is done are as follows:

- After determination of competencies, proper training can be provided to the individuals to work more efficiently and effectively.
- Key performance areas can be improved by understanding the fields where there is a gap between the actual and the desired results.
- Competency mapping helps the individual in preparing himself for the next set of responsibilities.
- Individual can alter the style of work to bridge the gap with the help of competency mapping.
- Competency based approach can lead the individual to derive much efficient results as compared to work in a non competency derived situation.
- It helps the employees to determine the areas where the development is required and thus help the individual to develop a self development plan.
- Competency mapping leads the individual to understand the actual position and the gap from the desired status of work.
- Competency plays a crucial role in career planning of the individual in the organization.

Thus competency mapping provides much needed objectivity to HR practices and HR linked activities. These days assessment role of HRM has changed from support function to core function. With the competency based HR systems and programmes, the HR function can directly contribute to organizational effectiveness. By mapping the competencies, following functions can be performed effectively and efficiently.

(i) CANDIDATE APPRAISAL FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECRUITMENT

As discussed earlier, manpower, both technical as well as managerial, is the most important resource of an organization. Every other factor is directly related to and influenced by the manpower. Hence it is necessary and indispensable to select the right candidate i.e. the right employee. A wrong selection leads to wastage of effort, time and money in terms of recruitment and training costs. Thus, competency mapping solves the problem of correct recruitment of employees. It helps the HR process by providing various skills and qualities (competencies) required to be held by a candidate to perform the job efficiently.

Based on the competencies recruitment of the candidate can be done. The competencies of candidate and competencies required for the job are compared and matched. This helps the HR department to determine and find out who is more suitable to the job. In this way competency mapping helps HRM in right recruitment of manpower.

At the same time it also enables the individual candidate to determine which jobs are more suitable to him. His assessment for the required competencies will allow him to decide the job in which he is interested and in which he can work efficiently. Thus, competency mapping helps not only the organizations but also individuals by guiding them on to which job is suitable for them and it helps the organization by guiding them on how to select the candidates.

(ii) POTENTIALS APPRAISAL FOR PROMOTION AND FUNCTIONAL SHIFT

No job is congruent to each other. In other words, each and every job demands different skills. A person having competencies to do a particular job may not be able to do other jobs, i.e. a person performing outstandingly in a particular job may not perform equally efficiently in another job. Similarly, an excellent performer in junior position may not necessarily perform to the expectations when promoted to the senior position. Alternatively an average performer in a junior position may turn into super performer when promoted to senior position. Similarly, a successful person in one department may turn out to be unsatisfactory in another department and also a not so competent person in one department may give excellent results in other department. The main reason underlying this is the competencies of the particular job and the particular person. A person outstands in a job if he possesses the competencies required for doing the job and vice-versa. In the course of time, a person may develop competencies other than what he initially possessed, these competencies could be used to do other higher-level jobs, and hence he will outperform in the higher jobs. For instance, an assistant doctor, after some period, i.e…. after gaining some experience and perfection, becomes a practitioner. Also a Finance Manager after gaining knowledge of all functions of management can become a General Manager. Thus, competency mapping can be applied in promoting the candidate form one level to the other based on their competencies. Similarly, they can be transferred from one department to the other.

(iii) IDENTIFICATION OF EMPLOYEE TRAINING NEED

Competency mapping not only helps in the recruitment process. Its functions are not confined to matching the competencies of individuals with that of the Job. It also provides means to benchmark the candidate's competencies with the set targets. In simple words, candidate's weaknesses with respect to the required competencies discovered in the assessment, shows opportunity for the development of the candidate. In order to find out the weaknesses the employee competency assessment can be carried out periodically, preferably along with performance appraisal, to identify development needs of every employee. Thus, this provides direction for the development of the employee. In a periodic assessment, if a candidate is found to be lacking in some competencies, then these competencies can be developed by means of training and other development tools. The effectiveness of training can also be found out by the assessment of employee competencies and performance appraisal. Generally, core competencies are used for training need identification.

(iv) EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE DIAGNOSTICS

An employee may not perform well or there could be sudden fall in his performance level due to some problems. The problems could be uncontrollable or not answerable like personal

problems, health etc… However, the performance may even fall due to lack of required competencies. In case of fall in performance due to lack of competencies, a detailed assessment must be made for core as well as support competencies and any observed inadequacy should be carefully studied to understand its effect before taking any remedial measures. In this way competency mapping technique can be applied for diagnosing the problems in performance level of a candidate and improve that in case of any inadequacy.

(v) EMPLOYEE SELF DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The mapping of competencies is not only beneficial to the organization, but it proves useful even to the employees. The competency map and the behavioural indicators help the individual to understand the direction of their self development. They can very easily identify the gaps and work on the inadequacies. This allows them to understand their weakness and try to improve upon them. It acts as feedback for the skills (competencies). Performance appraisal with traditional methods can assess the performance with respect to set targets, but these appraisals do not guide the improvements of the performance. Using the job descriptions and the performance appraisal process as a foundation, Human Resource Department can provide coaching to the individuals based on their unique developmental needs. For example, if a sales representative is interested in a position as Sales Manager, a Human Resources professional can counsel this person about current strengths and areas for improvement and point out the competency levels required for the higher-level position. Then the employee and the HR person can jointly map out a plan for the employee's development (courses, workshops, mentoring, etc.)

(vi) RETENTION STRATEGIES

Competency mapping not only helps in recruitment of proper employee, training need of the employee but it also helps in retaining the employees. It can play a significant role in retaining people as it gives a more accurate analysis of the job requirements, the candidate's capability, of the difference between the two, and the development and training needs to bridge the gaps. Once the organization gives an employee the perspective of what is required from him to reach a particular position, it drives him to develop the competencies for the same.

It is also possible to retain the employee because of following benefits of the Competency Mapping :

- Helps identify the success criteria (i.e. behavioural standards of performance excellence) required for individuals to be successful in their roles.
- Support specific and objective assessment of their strengths, and specify targeted areas for professional development.
- Provides development tools and methods for enhancing skills.
- Provide the basis for a more objective dialogue with their manager or team about performance, development, and career-related issues.

Therefore, competency mapping can be applied for building retention strategies.

CONCLUSION

To conclude it can be said that competency mapping can be applied in diverse HR activities like recruitment, selection, training, development retention and even remuneration. Competency Mapping is definitely a new area in the field of HRM. It promises economical use of the most important resource viz. human capital, by ensuring the most suitable job to the person. It provides ground for individual's growth and development. An individual can map his or her competencies and find the job which suits him the most. In a nutshell it can be concluded that competency mapping enable the organizations not only in selecting round pegs for round holes but also makes smaller round into larger one. In simple words it not only ensures that the best person is recruited and placed in the most suitable job for the person, but also through training and appraisal it makes the less competent person into more proficient one.

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