Multiple Methods For Building Employee Competencies



Building employee competencies is of course important to organizational success. Your employees come into the organization with individual abilities, qualifications, characteristics, temperaments, skills and more but rarely, if ever, do they come with all the competencies they will ever need. As a result you need to make decisions about how you are going to develop the competencies your organization needs to succeed.

Ensuring you have the competencies you seek will require a combination of identifying organizational competencies and identifying individual employee competencies. In some cases you will want many if not all of your employees to develop certain core competencies. Keep in mind, however, that it is important to ensure your organization includes the diversity that comes from hiring individuals with different strengths, perspectives and competencies.

Selecting competencies to focus on is not an easy task in most cases. Take the time to carefully assess your needs before you select competencies that fit your organization well.

4 Steps in Competency Development

1. **Identify the competencies you need:** The first step in ensuring your employees have the competencies you need includes identifying the competencies you need. This can take time and a lot of effort as you seek to identify and define each competency. However, the exercise of identifying your organizations core competencies (including needs based on departments and roles) can help the organization in a myriad of ways not the least of which is getting everyone on a similar page.It takes time to identify and build competencies. There is a wide range of core competencies to choose from. A recent article in Workforce online identified 31 core competencies and within each a number of sub competencies. While there are many competencies it can be useful to focus on 5-10 core organizational ones and then identify another 5-10 per department or role. Consider the different types of competencies that include a) Knowledge competencies, b) Skills and Abilities c) Behavior and personality traits
2. **Identify the Competencies you have**: The second step includes identifying the competencies your employees have and at what levels. It is important to identify the competencies your employees have that match the competencies you have

identified in step one and identify additional core competencies that your employees are bringing to the table. Understanding a range of your employee's competencies can be leveraged for many purposes.

3. **Select your Focus:** The third step involves identifying the areas for organizational and individual competency development. Some organizations choose to focus all or most employees on the development of common core competencies on an ongoing basis in addition to supporting the development of individual competencies. As an organization or if focussed on an individual employee a narrow focus on 1 or 2 competencies at a time is the best way to go forward. Competencies take time to develop and focussing on too many at once may mean that none are well developed.
4. **Determine ways to Develop Competencies:** The fourth step requires determining how you will enable the competencies your organization requires. This step includes several options that you can consider and employ that can help develop employee competencies.

5 Methods of Developing Employee Competencies

1) *Formal External or Internal Training*

One of the most common ways to bring new or further develop employee competencies is for your employee's to participate in formal training courses and educational opportunities. This method can involve encouraging and/or supporting your employee's access to training courses offered at college, through professional associations or through private training providers. Additionally you may have in-house staff who can lead training in some areas of competency development.

2) *External Secondments*

Secondments, including sending employees to another organization or department can be an excellent way to help that employee develop competencies that can in-turn be brought back to the organization for others to learn from.

3) Hiring In

If you need to bring in new competencies quickly you can always consider hiring, including temporary or contract workers. These workers can be employed to deploy a certain competency and then act as a teacher, guide or role model for developing the competency in other employees.

4) Mentorships

The benefit of assessing your employee's competencies is that you can see who has the competencies you want others to emulate. Providing employees with mentors can be an effective and inexpensive way to provide guidance in building competencies.

5) Coaching

Providing specific coaching to individual employees can be one of the most effective ways of building and sustaining competencies. Combined with any of the other methods coaching can be used to support the ongoing development of competencies once the training, secondment and mentorships have ended.

Each of these methods has their pros and cons. Training and coaching can have the most cost associated with them, whereas secondments can have the most disruptive impact. Mentorships can be the least expensive but they are based on one-to-one relationships and can be time consuming for your best employees. Ideally a combination of options can offer flexibility and enough variety to capture what may

work for your employees.

Competencies can change overtime. Reviewing organizational and/or role competencies on an annual basis can be useful in workforce planning.

Resources

31 Core Competencies Explained