

## Competency Framework Development

Many companies use competency models or capability frameworks to provide a strategic "roadmap" for human resource initiatives and services. These include initiatives and services from recruitment, training and development to succession planning and career development activities. Initial thinking about this approach such as Boyatzis, McClelland and Spencer and Spencer saw competencies as a way to organise thinking about various "success factors" which might be required for organisational success in a particular industry or within a particular company or particular job role.

Thus competencies have become an important factor in structuring human resource activities. More recently, competencies or competency frameworks have attracted the interest of academics, particularly psychologists who have become concerned about the lack of definitional accuracy and the extent to which competencies possess psychometric properties. This leads to some interesting discussion and debate about whether such competencies can be useful in structuring strategic thinking about human resource activities. Or, whether they should possess psychometric properties to be useful, or if competency frameworks should be used in human resource planning approaches at all. Without wishing to enter into this debate, Psych Press psychologists are often involved with competencies – either in competency modelling activities, designed competency frameworks, or in implementing development programs around existing competency matrices. Quite frequently, we are asked to actually develop measurement approaches for previously developed competency models, and validate these in industry specific settings.

Recently a client involved with customer service and logistical operations asked us to do just this, providing us with 21 initial competencies which were part of their capability framework. We were able to clarify the definition and measurement of these competencies in a qualitative manner, and thereafter score 92 managers on each of these competencies. The self-reported measures of these 21 competencies were self-assessed by each manager then compared with manager ratings of perceived managerial effectiveness.

Of the 21 competencies, five were found to be correlated with peer assessments of managerial effectiveness. The assessment of managerial potential within the organisation can now be assisted by such self-report measures. The organisation is hoping that such measures will prove to be a useful adjunct to more traditional approaches such as performance appraisal, performance management and more subjective assessments of managerial potential. It is also hoped to accelerate the recognition of such potential, and perhaps counterbalance potential or occasional internal bias in identifying and developing managerial potential. Overall this is seen as a quite modest and supplementary source of information.

For any clients who were embarking on a similar process, or might find some value in it for their own organisations, the competencies which proved to be correlated with assessment of managerial effectiveness by peers were: Self-Discipline, Influencing Others, Thinking Ahead, Team Leadership, and Ambition.

If any readers are interested in actually using the resulting web based questionnaire for their own purposes, or would like to extend it to incorporate their own competency model or framework, please contact us via [info@psychpress.com.au](mailto:info@psychpress.com.au), or ring Dr Gavin Didsbury on + 61 3 9670 0590.