

Competency Modelling

https://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/GetStarted/userguide_competency.aspx
Employment and Training Administration>

What is a competency?

A competency is the capability to apply a set of related knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform functions or tasks in a defined work setting. Competencies often serve as the basis for skill standards that specify the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for success, as well as potential measurement criteria for assessing competency attainment.

What is a competency model?

A competency model is a collection of competencies that together define successful performance in a particular work setting. Competency models are the foundation for important human resource functions such as recruitment and hiring, training and development, and performance management. Competency models can be developed for specific jobs, job groups, organizations, occupations, or industries.

Step 1. Gather background information.

The development of an industry competency model is based on an analysis and synthesis of existing national and state skills standards, technical curriculum, and certifications in the industry sector. This step should be undertaken in collaboration with industry or subject matter experts (SMEs) familiar with the terminology, processes, and skills required in the industry.

The process of gathering information involves:

- cataloging existing resources,
- organizing the resources,
- comparing the contents to the building blocks framework, and
- analyzing the contents to determine commonalities for an industry model.

Step 2. Develop a draft competency model framework

The Building Blocks and validated industry models serve as content resources that ensure that the draft industry framework is comprehensive. Using these tools, a model developer should:

- identify themes and patterns existent in the information,
- relate the information to the content areas,
- organize the information using the selected industry framework, and
- develop a draft competency model.

Step 3. Gather feedback from subject matter experts (SMEs)

Gather feedback from the focus group members either in person or through a series of telephone and electronic communications. Focus groups members should be selected based on their familiarity with the competency requirements of the industry. It is useful if these SMEs represent diverse viewpoints. It is also useful to select members across geographic and industry sub-sectors. When interacting with SMEs, a model developer should:

summarize the purpose and process of the competency model development,
review draft model,

discuss each competency in turn, and

consider the following questions:

does the framework reflect the major competency groups in the industry (personal effectiveness, academic, workplace, cross-industry, and industry sector)?

are there any missing competencies that should be included?

are any terminology changes needed to the names or the details of the competencies?

Step 4. Refine the competency model framework

The development of a competency model is an iterative process. During the refinement phase of the process, the model developer should:

analyze the information gathered through the feedback process;

edit the competency names, definitions, and behaviors to reflect the input gathered; and
add or delete competencies from the model as appropriate.

Repeat Steps 3 and 4 until the SMEs on the development team agree that the model is a comprehensive representation of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed in the target occupation or industry.

Step 5. Validate the competency model framework

Validating the model is an essential step to ensure acceptance by the target community of users. The validation process is similar to the development process, except that the audience of experts has been expanded to include potential users who have not helped develop the draft.

To validate the model:

distribute the draft model to potential users,

gather input and comments, and

reach consensus that the content is complete.

<https://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/BuildaModel/user-login.aspx>

build your own competency model tool

<https://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/BuildaModel/Demo/build-model-demo.aspx>

demo video for competency model tool

<https://www.shrm.org/learningandcareer/competency-model/pages/competency-faqs.aspx>

What is a competency?

A competency is a knowledge, skill, ability or other characteristic (e.g., trait, mindset, attitude), commonly referred to as a KSAO, or a group of characteristics, which, when applied in the appropriate roles, help achieve desired results. Competencies contribute to individual exemplary performance that increases the likelihood of a positive impact on organizational outcomes.^{1,2} Competencies help simplify the process of tying concrete examples of performance expectations to organizational or professional mission and goals.

An example of a competency for human resource (HR) professionals is business acumen, or the ability to understand and apply information to contribute to the organization's strategic plan. Competencies, such as business acumen, distinguish high-performing HR professionals from their less effective counterparts.

¹Campion, M.A., Fink, A.A., Ruggeberg, B.J., Carr, L., Phillips, G.M., & Odman, R.B. (2011). Doing competencies well: Best practices in competency modeling. *Personnel Psychology*, 64, 225-262.

²Shippmann, J.S., Ash, R.A., Battista, M., Carr, L., Eyde, L.D., Hesketh, B., Keyhoe, J., Pearlman, K., Prien, E.P., & Sanchez, J.I. (2000). The practice of competency modeling. *Personnel Psychology*, 53, 703-740.

What is a competency model?

A competency model refers to a collection of competencies that are needed for effective job performance. The individual KSAOs or combinations of KSAOs are the competencies, and the set of competencies is typically referred to as the competency model.

Developers of competency models often organize competencies by various criteria, such as whether the competencies apply to all jobs (i.e., core competencies) in an organization or profession, or whether they are specific to particular jobs or roles (i.e., technical competencies). In addition, competency models typically include detailed information, such as key behaviors and standards of proficiency that apply to different levels of job experience or expertise.^{3,4}

In the field of HR, competency models play an important role in the selection, training and appraisal of HR and other professionals. Individually, HR professionals can use competency

models for career management and development purposes by guiding the choice of job assignments and in making other career decisions.

Organizations can use competency models to help structure themselves and their teams to align what is needed for successful performance with organizational strategy. Organizations can also use well-designed competency models to build performance assessments for existing employees, create behavioral interviews for hiring new employees and determine selection criteria for succession planning.

Developing a robust, tiered competency model for the HR profession has allowed SHRM to identify how best to serve members at each stage of their careers. Where possible, SHRM aligns its products, conference sessions, publications and other resources to the SHRM Competency Model.


3Campion et al. (2011). 4Shippmann et al. (2000).

SHRM COMPETENCY MODEL:

- Business Acumen
- Communication
- Consultation
- Critical Evaluation
- Global & Cultural Effectiveness
- HR Expertise
- Leadership & Navigation
- Relationship Management
- Ethical Practice

<https://blog.degreed.com/when-the-competency-model-breaks-down-map-skills-roles/>

Instead of communicating in terms of lofty goals, your organization can break down each competency into several skills— almost like the building blocks of competencies. Then these specific skills can be tracked and developed for each individual across any role.



The problem with competency maps is they evolve so quickly they're often outdated before being approved and published.

1. Start with Why

This is the fundamental business reason you're measuring skills. For most organizations, the main driver is **growth**, whether that is in size, in new markets, or in new products and services to future-proof your organization.

Don't stop there, though. Remember that you have to get this data from people. And to get the most accurate data, it's best to avoid those highly-pressurized moments we talked about earlier. Another best practice is to identify a "why" for each individual, which is often a version of **career progression**, especially if it occurs within the organization (think [internal mobility](#)).

2. Focus on a Few Roles to Start

Remember that one of the reasons competency models don't work is their complexity. They're both layered and wordy, so let's not repeat that mistake. When crafting your solution, focus on a few critical roles to start. Maybe you start with growth roles or high-performing departments — even a horizontal role, like a manager or business analyst. Or perhaps you focus on important skills for new hires, like going back to the basics.

Let's be clear, you should **measure skills as broadly as possible**. The more data, the better. This is where your skills should be multiplying. My favorite skills stories are those of unintended insights, such as our own insight that years of experience don't correlate to expertise. So while you're focused on a few roles to map, make sure that you encourage your entire organization to identify and measure their skills.

3. Map Skills to Roles

After selecting a handful of crucial roles, it's time to map skills to them. Sounds easy, right? It *can* be but there are a few common challenges:

Too Many: Recall where we went off the road with competencies and avoid doing too much. While you'll have the ability to identify and add lots of skills for each role, the outcome of that approach is that you'll have lots of data to sift through. This makes it challenging to hit the goal identified in step one. In other words, it will make it difficult to glean immediate insights.

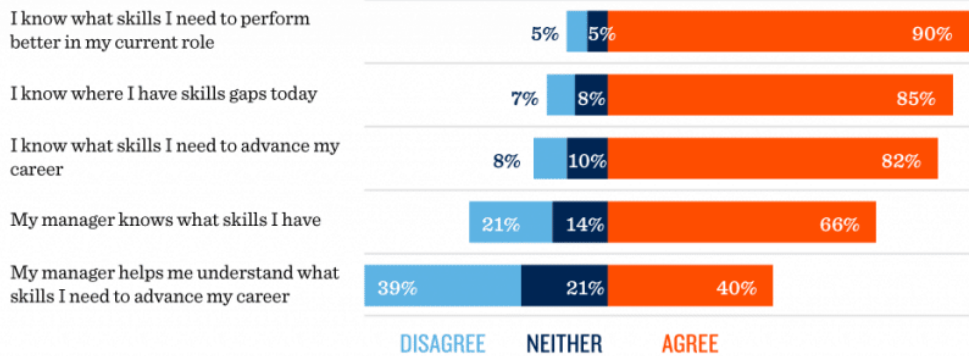
Non-Critical: Related to the "too many" dilemma, I often see organizations trying to be overly inclusive in their skills mapping. The reality is that every one of us is a complex system of skills. Some of these skills help us to be successful in our current role, others may be completely unrelated to the current role, and some are supporting — but maybe not critical. It's the last group that organizations might include when they really aren't necessary. You can safely assume that anyone in a customer-facing role needs communication skills but there's no need to list that on your map unless you truly see a need for upskilling for that skill in these roles (in which case we're likely in need of a completely different conversation).

Top-Down: Our recent research with *Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning* on [How the Workforce Learns](#) shows that our employees know their skills and skills gaps. So why aren't we asking them? You'll get better input along with better output to meet your goal.

THE WORKFORCE KNOWS *what's in it for them*



Q: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Degreed + Harvard Business Publishing, *How the Workforce Learns*, 2019

4. Measure, Monitor, Modify

You need to measure, but also monitor often and modify based on what you're seeing. Say you're looking at project management, and noticing that everyone's level is the same. You measured and monitored, but in order to get insight, you need to *modify*. Perhaps project management isn't the skill that distinguishes great performance (and great performance is what you need to meet your goal). So remove it and [find the skills](#) that are driving your business forward.

5. Share Your Insights

This one may seem obvious but too often we stop at the measuring stage, so we don't fully realize the impact of our insights. How many of you are still sharing metrics that look like percent completions, attendance, learning hours, or satisfaction? How about adding skill insights, and more importantly, what you can do about it? Remember that insight we found regarding years of experience? It can lead to changes in job requirements and the opening of talent pools. That

can lead to more growth! Find those connections in your data and share them, far and wide.