Drive Sustained Performance Improvement with Competencies

Many competency systems cannot effectively assess performance or lead to effective succession plans. Why? Because many of these systems are designed from a training perspective rather than an organisation/job analysis and evaluation perspective.

Why is it important to approach competencies from an organisation/job analysis and evaluation perspective?

Because this approach identifies the actual complexity level of the work that is to be performed. So an individual's performance can be assessed at the appropriate level within the organisation concerned. For example, leadership competencies are more complex for middle management positions than for first line supervisor positions. This is because first line supervision is day-to-day, face-to-face interaction. By contrast, middle management leadership occurs through a number of section heads (first line supervisors) and there is a longer time span involved – these factors add complexity to the leadership competencies

What is the problem with the curriculum method of developing competencies?

Competencies development in many organisations is driven by *learning curriculum* rather than organisation and work complexity requirements.

So, for example, the competencies developed for leadership focus on a large number of training activities which are disconnected from the real complexity level of the work that must be performed. Line managers cannot use these competencies and the hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on these programmes is essentially wasted!

Role Competencies Frameworks (RCF) – What are they?

Role Competencies Frameworks summarise the complexity levels of work for a given role family. An extract of the Generic Scientific Affairs (Regulatory) RCF is attached to illustrate the methodology.

The RCF provides the basis for:

- Recruiting people at the appropriate complexity level of work

- Determining market remuneration for a given complexity level of work within a role family

- Assessing performance at the appropriate complexity level of work

- Determining the training and development required at the appropriate complexity level of work

- Determining the current level of development attained and estimating future development (potential) within a succession planning context

How to use Role Competency Frameworks (RCF's) for Performance Assessment and Succession Planning

Performance Assessment – Case Study

A client had significant concerns about the performance of two purchasing officers. However there was no direct evidence to show where, and how significant, the performance deficits were.

We used the *Logistics* role family Role Competencies Framework to discuss with management the level of complexity of the purchasing roles. We then conducted a 360-degree performance feedback exercise using the *Logistics* RCF to obtain information about the performance of the purchasing officers concerned.

The methodology highlighted significant gaps in performance. Moreover the performance deficits were identified and targeted to the actual complexity level of the work. This outcome led to the purchasing officers themselves realizing and accepting that their performance was not at the required level.

Both people concerned found more suitable positions with other companies.

The client was able to avoid unfair dismissal action being taken against the company.

Succession Planning – Case Study

A client needed to quickly change and broaden the work of scientists in the scientific regulatory field. We assisted the client to develop a Role Competency Framework for the group. We built the new functions into the RCF. We achieved this through running a couple of workshops with the manager and the group concerned.

The next step involved an assessment of the current performance of the scientists compared with how, and at what complexity level of work, they need to perform over the next three years.

The manager identified a number of significant gaps. There were too many scientists at the Competent professional level and insufficient numbers at the Specialist, Expert and Authoritative levels.

The next step involved determining how many of the scientists at the Competent level could benefit from appropriate performance development and how long it would take to develop the people concerned.

The outcome of these considerations led the manager to commence performance development programmes specifically aimed at increasing the number of scientists who could perform at the Specialist, Expert and Authoritative levels.

The manager also found that a number of the Competent professional level scientists would probably not develop sufficiently quickly to fill the gaps at the higher levels within the required time period.

The manager realised he needed to recruit at least one scientist from overseas to quickly fill a significant performance gap at the Expert level.

Summary

Many of the competency systems implemented in organisations cannot achieve the results illustrated in the above two case studies. Our methodology is particularly useful in the areas of performance assessment, succession planning, career development, remuneration, training and recruitment. Call (02) 99573511 or email dallasb@peopleadvantage.com.au for more information.