

Competency based selection the background



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To understand the process of competency based selection it is essential to know the basic terms and terminologies that form the basis for this framework. Competencies can be defined as “ The behaviourally defined characteristics which underpin effective and/or superior performance across a range of tasks. How the person should behave in order to achieve the objectives” (Acas, 2002)

Competency based recruitment and selection focuses on identifying those candidates who possess those behaviourally defined characteristics that would result in higher performance in the role that is to be filled. In recruiting and selecting staff, relying on diverse areas of information rather than one, will most often allow for a better and clearer picture of a candidate’s suitability for a position an organisation and this forms the underlying principle for competency based selection process. (Acas, 2002)

Competency frameworks can be used for many purposes in human resource management and can help organisations plan their strategic objectives. Every job in the company can be described in terms of key competencies. This means that competencies can be used for all forms of assessment, including appraisals, training needs analysis and, of course, selection. Some examples of competencies are: communication, decision making and planning. (Roberts, 1997)The competencies are organised around general skills or organisational goals which form the competency framework. Essentially the concept of competency framework provides an structures approach to design a human resources management project, and helps in selection of the most suitable process from the available alternatives. For example, Heike could design a competency framework for the selection of

supervisors at Korts. Once the framework is developed, he could alter the selection parameters of the process to shortlist candidates with skills closest to that of the role requirements.(Campbell, 2007)

Elements of the Competency based selection process

The purpose of the selection process is to match people with work. The selection process is critical to any organisation as it is not possible to optimise the human resources, by any method, if there are fundamental deficiencies with the selection process (Roberts, 1997)

In the context of Korts, the process is planned to be used for effective selection of supervisors. The key differentiating factor between the supervisory roles and the general staff roles is the added responsibilities and leadership skills that need to be demonstrated by the supervisors. The role needs qualities such as personal qualities, setting direction and delivering the service in the role. According to Carroll (1998), wide ranges of competencies are essential when the selection is based on roles that require the candidates to develop within the organisation and eventually achieve leadership positions. The role of supervisor in the retail company such as Korts, would require the following competencies (based on the information available in the case study)

Functional competencies

These are required for a specialized role such as supervisor in retail, customer service representative and roles in project management. Functional competencies form the repository of knowledge used and

developed by many and can be used to achieve excellent results for a particular role, if it is well elaborated and described.(Patterson, 2008)

Leadership and Management competencies

These are essential competencies that are required in the supervisory role, as it would be helpful for succession planning and building the next leaders within the organisation, in the long term. (Klett, 2010)

Team competencies

Team competencies are quintessential to the supervisory roles in retail. The role requires engaging with the team members for planning and executing the business idea for the organisation. In the retail sector, as demonstrated in the case of Tesco's (largest retailer in the UK) one of the main criterions for selection of supervisory roles is the ability to function in a team environment. (Tesco, 2010)

Figure 1: Competency based selection Building blocks Source: Roberts(1997)

As shown in figure 1, Roberts (1997) has linked the identification of competencies to the entire range of factors that are involved in the recruitment and selection process. The human resources planning identifies the requirement of a particular skill set, which leads to the initiation of the recruitment

Supporting arguments for the competency based selection process; Alfredo (2007) has shown that the application of the competency approach can greatly improve the human resources management function in supervisory roles. According to the research by Alfredo(2007), the supervisory roles are

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important and identifying the suitable personnel for the competencies of these roles is essential as it has great effect on the operational capabilities of the organisation. Also the supervisory role being the primary leadership role can be very useful in providing future leadership for organisations. In case of Korts, the case study reveals the growing size of the company with an upcoming international expansion.

In case of a fast growing organisation such as Korts, the essential components of the competency based selection could be guided by the principles of,

- Efficient - cost effective in the process of recruitment as it is vitally important for Tina and Abdul to justify the cost of the recruitment process as well as Korts is a growing organisation, so financial resource allocation is also important for it.
- Effective - Since the supervisory role would be a formative stage for producing effective leadership for an fast growing company, it is vitally important for the process to be effective. The
- Fair - ensuring that right through the process decisions are made on merit alone. (Rico, 2010)

The proposed selection process for Korts

Figure 2: The competency based selection process for Korts. (Source: Roberts, 1997)

This section discusses a model process based on competency based selection that could be implemented at Kortes. The process is based on <https://assignbuster.com/competency-based-selection-the-background/>

review of literature on competency based selection, and analysis of secondary data, such as understanding the hiring process at retail companies. The process is divided into three main stages, which include, finding the right candidates for the required role, assessing the candidates, and finally evaluating and establishing the veracity of information provided by the candidates. As shown in figure 2, each stage is designed to carry forward the candidates with matching skills and provides various tools for differentiating between the successful and unsuccessful candidates. The assessment process outlined below offers a broad description of methods available for competency based selection and recruitment.

Stage 1

Attracting the Talent

Recruitment advertising can be very expensive therefore it is important that the advertisement is well designed, targeted at the applicants with the required competencies and able to reach the required pool of applicants.

Advertising can be placed through the print medium in local, regional and national newspapers. Advertising on the web is becoming increasingly popular as more and more applicants use this method to search for jobs.

Web advertising is also less costly as compared to print advertising.

(Campbell, 2007) It can be particularly effective if used in conjunction with a small, signpost advertisement in the press pointing to a specific website where the full details of the job can be displayed. A clear description of the roles and skills of the supervisory roles would be included in the advertisements, as shown in task 1. The online method of advertising is recommended in case of Korts as it would provide a cost effective method

and also it could be used to screen the applicants after they enter the necessary details at this stage. The process would involve creating a web based application, which would guide the applicants about the description of the role, and an online application form would be able to receive the applicant's information and CV. The web based portal would also allow the applicants to register with Korts and upload their CV's for consideration in future. (Allen, 2004)

Stage 2

Screening the applicants /Selecting Candidates / Assessing competencies in the recruitment process

Various options available for assessing the candidates for further stage would include, short listing based on CV, Interviews and the quality of references, along with the work sample. (Picton, 2002)

Assessment method

Candidate information being assessed

CV

Previous experience, qualifications

References

Previous history, perceptions of others

Interview

Previous experience, knowledge, attitudes, and aspirations

Work sample

Job tasks, performance standards

Table 1: Different assessment methods. Source: Picton, 2002

Preliminary Screening

Screening the candidates based on the competencies is one of the most important aspects of the entire process. There are various examples in the industry literature such as Carroll (1998), Klett (2010) who have described that the process is often subjective, inconsistent when deployed to screen large number of applications and improperly designed. Therefore in addition to above preliminary screening, many companies also use the services of recruitment consultants to shortlist the candidates with required skill sets. Recruitment consultants provide pre screened applicants which would also save resources that are required to screen applicants. In order to overcome the above mentioned challenges the process at Korts could use the match between the skills and competencies required by the supervisory roles with that of the applicants. This would reduce the subjectivity and inconsistency that is associated with this stage of the process. Using a well constructed application form where candidates are asked consistently for appropriate information will make short listing much easier and help to maintain fairness. (Campbell, 2007)

Assessment Stage:

During the previous attempt at running the assessment program during the recruitment drive, Heike was unable to achieve the desired result of short listing candidates with supervisory experience. The possible reasons to

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screen out the applicants who fail to meet the selection requirements. The various tools that are available for assessment are Interviewing, psychometric testing and online test for logic and quantitative skills. The competency based selection process for Korts could have a double layered approach for assessment. In the first layers, applicants who are passed to the next stage could be subjected to online test for skills that are required in the supervisory roles.

Interview Stage

The figure 3 below describes the method of structuring the interviews in the recruitment and selection process, which could be implemented for assessment at Korts.

Figure 3: Guiding principles for conducting the interviews (Campbell, 2007)

Need for Assessment Centre/Tests

According to Taylor (2007) the problem with methods such as interviews is that, recruiters can only observe a narrow range of behaviours in an artificial situation. It also is inadequate to understand the internal state factors such as values, beliefs, feelings and motives.

Taylor (2007) recommends the use of assessment centres to improve the predictability of selection processes when they are well planned and designed. However, they can be expensive and require a significant input in terms of people's time. Notwithstanding this, assessment centres can provide a range of useful information and can give a strong indication of the most suitable applicant. A successful assessment centre relies on careful planning and organising, and a slick operation on the day to ensure that all

candidates are in the right place at the right time along with any equipment they may need such as flip charts, lap tops, projectors, paper and pens etc. In the case of Kortés, assessment centre would definitely add value to the competency based selection process.

Stage 3: Pre employment Checks

This stage would consist of checking the qualifications of the educations and previous employment experience. One of the mandatory checks is the health check, so it would be an essential part of the selection process at Kortés.

(Campbell, 2007) The last part of the process would include the reference checks, as it is recommended that references are taken up on all potential employees to check factual information such as dates of employment, qualifications gained and previous jobs held.

Information supplied in a reference can be more reliable and valid if the questions are based on job analysis. Identification of the key skills for the role and asking specific questions about these criteria in the reference request, could further contribute towards the success of the process at Kortés. This is obviously important as it is stated in the case study that previously Heike had managed to hire employees who did not possess any supervisory experience. This stage would reconfirm the veracity of the information supplied by the candidates and assist in making the final decision of selection.

Appraisal and performance measurement

The annual performance appraisal is usually done in two steps. In the first step, the manager and the employee complete the performance appraisal

form. Secondly, you and your manager participate in a formal performance appraisal interview. The appraisal form, used in the first step, consists of performance standards and criteria that are used to evaluate the performance. The items that are described in the job description are usually the performance standards that are used in the appraisal. The performance standards are derived from a job analysis, which is a detailed list of all of the skills involved in performing a task. Once the appraisal is complete, score is averaged and the proportional merit raise (if applicable) is determined from the final score. (CIPD, 2010B) It can be observed from the case study that a similar system is being practised at Korts. The evidence to support this estimation is provided when there is a significant data available that is to be processed by Tina, and analyze the impact on retention and other performance metrics.

The case study reveals that, there are significant shortcomings in the existing process at Korts. The appraisal process that is supposed to be interactive between the store managers and the employees is not upto the required standards. This is explained by the “ managers marked oddly with one giving everyone a middle ranking and another showing blatant favouritism which was almost as bad as the South London store where the manager had ranked the worst employee highest ...”. There is even an consideration of forced ratings to generate the data that is required for analysis, and to complete the appraisal process. All these issues point towards the lack of “ fairness” in the existing performance appraisal process at Korts.

The performance appraisal process is a process that evaluates employee performance. The parameters that are compared include; quality, quantity, cost, and time. The performance and assessment process also help in achieving the following goals for the organisation

Establishing the performance standards

Communication of standards, expectations and the results of progress(so far) with employees

Assist in taking corrective action; in case of if performance is below expectation.

Set up a system that measures actual performance(CIPD, 2010B)

Figure 4: Holistic view on the performance management process in an organization Source: Klett(2010)

According to Klett(2010) “ Performance management represents a holistic process that brings together all processes that effectively support and enlighten organizational goals, evaluate employee’s performance and recognize employees credibly. Integrated performance management is an innovative process that provides both, a strategy and a process for building up human talent.” It also is associated with aspects of business and people management for both, individuals and teams.

Performance management is related to the establishment of a culture that allows individuals to continuously advance business processes and their own competencies. A well designed and implemented performance and talent

management can improve the employee's self-confidence and overall productivity. (Klett 2010)

Creative Remuneration System

Designing an appropriate Wage-Benefit Proportion (e. g. high proportion of variable pay) and flexible bonuses allocation (e. g. Joining bonus) to perspective employees are the most powerful strategies adoptions. Performance management is often linked with performance-related pay (PRP). PRP is an important element in many performance management schemes because it is believed to motivate; it is said to deliver the message that performance and competence are important, and it is thought to be fair to reward people according to their performance, contribution or competence.(Cuneen, 2006) The supporting factors for the implementation of PRP system include the frustration of Tina, when she is unable to find people for training at Korts, unless it is related to money. Critics of this theory though, believe that other factors are more important than PRP in motivation; that it is usually based on subjective assessments of performance, that it inhibits teamwork because of its individualistic nature, and that it leads to ' short-termism'. (CIPD, 2010)

A new remuneration scheme may be designed based on performance related pay at Korts that provides benefits to senior staff members, (for example Tina, who is with the company from inception) relative to length of service and length. The end result would be a workforce that is highly collaborative and that wants to stay with the company for the long haul. The annual bonuses of associates should reflect support for colleagues and contribution to Korts reputation.

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360 degrees feedback for performance appraisal

Greenberg (1986) in his extensive study of fairness and performance review described that the knowledge of the performance of managers and supervisors along with other co-workers has higher impact on the performance of an employee. In order to make the appraisal process fairer at Korts, one of the methods that can be used is the 360 degrees feedback method for performance appraisal. The system of 360 feedback (sometimes called 360 degree feedback) provides information on an individual from a number of sources.(Rogers, 2002) The proponents of this theory state that it gives managers and individuals better information about skills and performance, and working relationships. This method could be recommended at Korts as it would remove the biased decision making in performance measurement and help Korts in measuring the performance. (Greenberg, 1986)

If implemented properly, 360 feedback would challenge the recipient's perceptions of their skills and performance, and provide the motivation to change. It can challenge perceptions in three ways:

The feedback on an aspect of behaviour is the opposite of what the recipient expects.

An aspect of behaviour is shown to be more (or less) important as an explanation of their performance than the recipient thought.

The results highlight relationships between aspects of behaviour.(360 Feedback, 2010)

Measure Performance

Korts should use competency modelling that should involve a strict rating process which would help to assess how employees are performing against potential. Korts is a growing company so it offers a greater career development opportunity which makes performance management very important. A fairer performance management system would provide an effective tool that will give important insights about high performers and their aspirations, Consider a case where Korts has a high performer in a store with lower sales, to retain him he will have to be moved to a bigger store with better more responsibilities.(Cuneen, 2006)

STRATEGIC EVALUATION AND REVIEW

There is no one solution for all ills, even as the organization adopts a strategy, guiding executives must ensure that this does not become inflexible (Mintzberg, 2009). The strategy needs to be continuously mutating to keep pace with the changing environment. The following measures ensures that the strategy is evaluated regularly and is recommended to be practised at Korts,

Involve stakeholders in evaluation and review of performance and appraisal processes

Measure the performance and review strategic objectives every year

Develop action plans to maintain progress against the key performance results (Service standards, HR program output) and/or take corrective action where performance is below expected levels