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## A Competency Based approach to Career Development

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### ABSTRACT:

*This article discusses the implications of competency based approach in career development. This article provides a framework of career competencies that integrates with different perspective from literature. Competency development is discussed from organization and its employee's perspective. This paper throws light on building a competency architecture which is the planning stage for career development. The competency architecture shows the career paths with in the job families and the levels of proficiency required in each competency. From individual perspective a blueprint framework for competency building is explained. The Australian Blueprint Framework identifies the eleven competencies required for career management.*

**Key words:** Career Development, Competency, Blueprint, Competency Architecture.

### INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the year 2017 started with bombarding news of layoffs and downsizing going rounds on newspapers, magazines and social media. The reasons for this condition could be many such as stricter work permit regimes in many of the foreign countries, economy slowdown, cost cutting etc..However, this does not mean that it is all doom and gloom. The demand for talented lot is still growing and promises a further growth in coming years. The fact that learning never ends throws light on the opportunities available in the present situation of employment gloom. It is time for professional in industry to re-skill themselves and update with latest technologies and aim for more challenging and promising responsibilities. As said by Rituparna Chakraborty, TeamLease Services Executive Vice-President and co-founder." It's a situation where in the available talent haven't kept up with the pace at which the industry was evolving and hence, many of them find themselves redundant,"

In present situation career development is not seen as the individual goal, but the companies also shoulder the responsibility of developing the careers of its employees. This is in contrast to earlier condition where the people were hired based on the skill and knowledge requirement of the job alone. And it is very much important for the mutual existence and growth of both employee and organization.

### COMPETENCY BUILDING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT FROM ORGANIZATION PERSPECTIVE

The competency based analysis of human requirement needs is much more superior and result oriented than the traditional job analytical method. Organizations have to focus on planning Competency Architecture for a clear understanding of the competencies required for sustenance and growth of the organization. For an effective competency based career planning Competency Architecture is very much important.

Competency Architecture refers to a set of rules for guiding the selection of competencies and proficiency levels required for every job profile in the organization. Competency architecture ensures:

**Alignment.** Every job profile aligns with organizational goals, departmental or job-family priorities, and the requirements of the job.

**Fairness.** Employees can see that the same rules apply to profile development at every level.

**Continuity.** Consistent architecture ensures continuity and cohesion for HR activities across the organization

### A sample Competency Architecture model by Human Resource Systems Group Ltd.



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The above model explained by Human Resource Systems Group Ltd. analyses the competencies required in each level corresponding to different roles in the organization. The competencies are classified as core competencies, job family competencies and job specific competencies. The competencies specified within the job family provides the path for achieving the higher positions, they provide the foundation for potential career path for the employees which provides for sustainable growth both for organizations and individual. The levels in the architecture represent the level of proficiency in that competency. These levels show the stages in the advancement. Different roles within the job family are challenging and provide wider scope for learning and development.

### Organization's Career Development Plan

Organizations can build a individual employee career development plan by conducting discussions and performance appraisal which help them to understand the gap between the acquired competency and the needed competencies to follow a career path. Typically a career plan include

- Areas of development ,
- Development goals:
- Action steps
- Expected completion date
- Obstacles and solutions
- Evaluation criteria

Building an effective competency framework also help employees to grow and makes it feasible to link individual objective with the objective of the organization. It gives a professional pathway to success by supporting professional development. Competency framework must include identifying the competencies required in each level of achievement and encouraging employees to adopt the learning process.

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## **CAREER DEVELOPMENT FROM INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE**

Competency based career development does not restrict itself to the responsibilities of the organization but the effort of employee individually matters more for the achievement. Career management skills are necessary for every employee to grow and sustain. Career Management skills include the process of learning and development, it focuses on acquiring and improving competencies required to meet the challenges of the role played in the organization.

The “Blueprint” framework approach is widely accepted and practiced approach for career development. The career management refers to skills, knowledge, attributes and attitudes analysis. The Blueprint framework suggests a set of learning outcomes which can be focused upon at different times during a life journey and development process. It comprises of three core elements such as career learning areas, the learning model and the levels. The career learning areas refers to technical skills, soft skills and other specific skills necessary in the career, the learning model refers to the process adopted for effective learning such as management coaching, training, self introspection- learning etc., levels refer to the degree of proficiency attained in the particular competency.

### **Brief history of Blueprint approach**

The Blueprint has its origins in the USA, as the National Career Development Guidelines (National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, 1989). Jarvis and Keeley (2003, p. 8) relate how the development of these guidelines began in the USA in the late 1980s, resulting in publication in 1989. The guidelines were later broadened in 2003 to align with the ‘No Child Left Behind’ policy initiative (incorporated in a US Federal Act in 2001) and then revised in further minor ways in 2004 and 2007.

### **Australian Blueprint for Career Development**

The Australian Blueprint for Career Development is framework which can be used to design, implement and evaluate career development for individuals. It identifies the skills, knowledge and attributes that individual’s need for making effective career choice and manage it.

The development of a framework for career development in Australia was first commissioned by the Transition from School Taskforce of the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in 2002. The need for a unifying national framework was identified by the then Prime Minister’s Youth Action Plan Taskforce in its report Footprints to the Future (2001).

The career development needs differ from person to person and from role to role, based on the requirement the framework can be implemented according to the circumstances. Every aspect of the blueprint has to be understood clearly to make it flexible according to the career choices.

The Blueprint identifies eleven Career Management Competencies which are grouped into three areas.

### **AREA A: PERSONAL MANAGEMENT**

1. Build and maintain a positive self-concept
2. Interact positively and effectively with others
3. Change and grow throughout life

### **AREA B: LEARNING AND WORK EXPLORATION**

4. Participate in lifelong learning supportive of career goals
5. Locate and effectively use career information
6. Understand the relationship between work, society and the economy

### **AREA C: CAREER BUILDING**

7. Secure/create and maintain work
8. Make career-enhancing decisions
9. Maintain balanced life and work roles

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10. Understand the changing nature of life and work roles

11. Understand, engage in and manage the career-building process

Each of the above mentioned competencies have to be analyzed and is achieved in developmental phases and it depends on individual capability, culture, family, social circumstances and opportunities available for learning.

## CONCLUSION

The Competency Architecture and the Blueprint framework both provide a reliable and result oriented approach for Career Development. The eleven Career Management competencies identified and endorsed by many career professional associations in many countries. These approaches denote the knowledge, skills and attitudes to manage life. Career development is a ongoing process and it is also a lifetime process of interaction with this ever changing and challenging environment. These competencies help individual to adapt to any situation and attain the proficiency in their interested fields.

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