



# Client Case Study



## The DXL Group

### Using competencies to support great customer experiences

When a new store concept gave DXL the opportunity to take their retail workforce to the next level, HRSG's competencies helped them create a path to success.



## Challenge

In addition to undergoing a rapid expansion, The DXL Group was evolving its small-footprint stores into one-stop destination stores designed to attract a broader audience with a bigger selection of merchandise, a great atmosphere, and an outstanding guest experience.

As well as to enabling DXL to earn greater market share, the new store concept meant that the company could deepen its retail workforce and encourage promotion from within to attract a different caliber of talent.

"Now we had this career path where there wasn't one before," explains Tracey Piper, DXL's Director of Human Resources – Talent Management. "And we realized, okay: now we need to focus on using it to attract, recognize and support our retail employees."

### ABOUT THE DXL GROUP

The DXL Group is the largest multi-channel specialty retailer serving the "big and tall" niche market for men. In addition to online stores, the chain has more than 353 retail brick-and-mortar stores serving 1.4 million active customers in the US, Canada, and in London, England. DXL is publicly traded on the NASDAQ under DXLG.



If DXL could get the right HR supports in place, the potential for positive organizational change was significant. The company's in-store staff and regional management represent 80 percent of their 2,500 employees and are the brand ambassadors and stewards of the customer experience.

Piper knew the project was important, but she also knew it needed to fit into her existing workload. With limited time, a tight budget, and

*“We needed to focus on the behaviors or competencies needed to promote and support the career path.”*

only one part-time staff member to support her, she needed a process that was compact and streamlined.



## Solution

After exploring various options, DXL decided that a competency-based approach was best suited to their goals.

“We saw that we needed to focus on the behaviors or competencies needed to promote and support this career path and find a formal way of looking at the behaviors and competencies that we need to hire into our organization,” says Piper.

To define the career path for their retail employees, DXL needed to identify the competencies shared by every job across the organization, including in the retail job family. But because competency-based talent

management was a new approach for them, they decided to start at the beginning and define the organization's core competencies—those success behaviors shared by everyone in the organization. With the core competencies in place, DXL could then confidently move on to the job-family level of their competency architecture.

The **HRSB Core Competency Package** gave them everything they needed to identify, customize, and validate DXL's core competencies, including the competency content, validation software, and the support of a competency specialist who helped Piper and

her team move the project forward and gain organizational support. The specialist led them through a step-by-step process designed to help them learn quickly and move forward confidently despite their lack of experience.

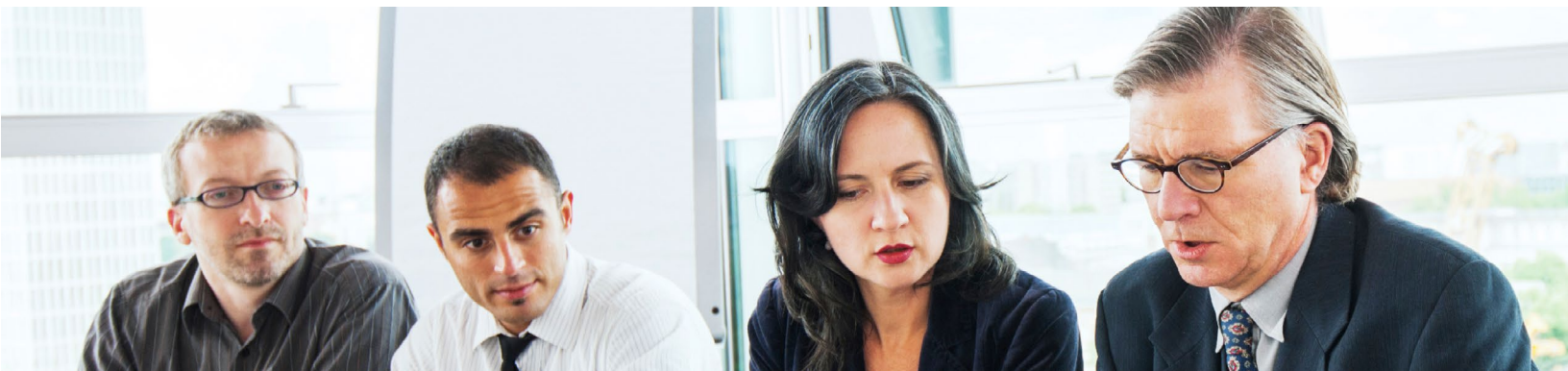
*“With competencies, there’s a specific set of behaviors that make it clear... It makes it very easy.”*

“HRSG did a fantastic job of facilitating those initial calls with the leadership and the experts in each individual department,” says Piper. “They were able to really drive home the importance of competencies and get people committed and interested.”

Using CompetencyCore, HRSG’s cloud-based survey tool, Piper and her team gathered everyone’s input on the shortlist of competencies. Those survey results were reviewed with focus groups comprising the leadership team, who were then tasked with making the final selections and setting the core competencies for the entire organization.

Piper says the consistently enthusiastic reaction to the competency selection process was a welcome surprise.

“There was plenty of discussion, which was refreshing. People were really engaged. They seemed to really see the value in coming up with these competencies.”



## Result

HRSG’s guided process helped DXL develop a set of core competencies that articulates the behaviors that make their company—and their employees—unique. And the process brought the whole organization together—field employees, corporate staff, and the leadership team.

“What resulted from the process was a team building experience for the individual departments,” says Piper. “For any organization, it can be a struggle to get senior leaders engaged, but at DXL they were very actively involved in the discussion. It was a very rewarding experience for those of us in HR to see that they took it so seriously, and that

they were all very grateful. Like, 'Thank you so much—this is a great exercise!'"

And because HRSG's competency packages are designed to help organizations acquire the skills and knowledge they need to manage self-directed competency-based initiatives, Piper and her team came out of the experience with the confidence and expertise they needed to take the lead for phase two of the process.

"It was a great learning experience for us," she says, noting that her team has since followed HRSG's process to develop the job-family competencies that will act as a roadmap for the new retail-staff career pathway.

To date, DXL's two-person team has used HRSG's method to efficiently gather and

process survey data from 408 people and counting—all while continuing to perform their regular HR tasks. As they continue to build their competency architecture, they are helping the organization as a whole—and each individual employee—understand the behaviors that lead to success.

"With competencies, there's a specific set of behaviors that make it clear. We can create interview questions around these competencies, and we can talk to people about where they need to be in their own job, or what they need to do to move to the next proficiency level for the next job. It's all right before them. It makes it very easy."

For a closer look at HRSG's competency dictionaries, or to learn more about our range of product and services, please call 1-866-574-7041 ext. 600 or email [info@hrsg.ca](mailto:info@hrsg.ca).

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## Organizational excellence through competency-based talent management

Since 1989, HRSG has focused on competency-based talent management using best-practice, multi-level competency content. We provide a complete range of competency tools, including 550+ multi-level competencies, CompetencyCore software, consulting, training, and fast-track support packages that help organizations develop and deploy competencies in a fraction of the time.

To discuss your competency initiative and see the HRSG multi-level competencies in action, call us at 1-866-574-7041 or email [info@hrsg.ca](mailto:info@hrsg.ca).

