



# **Achieving Impact:** **The Definitive Guide to Optimizing your Competency Framework**

# Table of Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Part 1: Competency Basics</b>	<b>5</b>
Competencies and Competency Profiles	5
Laying the Foundation to Build a Winning Team	6
<b>Part 2: Competency-Driven Talent Management</b>	<b>9</b>
What is Competency-Driven Talent Management?	9
Benefits of Competency-Driven Management	9
The Research	10
<b>Part 3: What Does Optimized Look Like?</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Part 4: Determining if Your Competency Framework is Working</b>	<b>14</b>
What to Measure	14
<b>Part 5: Addressing Short-Falls</b>	<b>17</b>
Common Short-Falls and Potential Solutions	17
<b>Part 6: Tools to Accelerate Optimization</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Part 7: Continuing on Your Path to Optimization</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>25</b>

## Foreword

Today's organizations, regardless of industry, face enormous challenges. Skilled talent is at a premium while retaining top talent continues to be a losing game for most. Organizations are struggling to understand the complexities of five-generation workforces and the nuances of each generation. Predictive HR analytics is beginning to play a much more central role in shaping talent decisions and actions. Efficient and enterprise-wide talent strategies rely on automation. And, employee expectations to engage in a holistic work experience require keen insight into existing and requisite employee capability.

A central element amping up employee capability is learning and development that yields a highly capable and agile workforce that can flex with changing business goals. Development solutions must:

- Align with organizational business goals.
- Drive experience-building opportunities.
- Be linked to other talent processes.
- Be tightly aligned with mission critical competencies – those that drive achievement of business goals.

Competency management, therefore, is the pulse of performance improvement – at the individual and organizational levels – and a central tenet of workforce planning, learning and development, and talent management.

But how we plan and manage competencies is critically important. Competencies are no longer endpoints on a journey to rounding out an employee but rather to accelerate the meeting of a business objective. It is now about designing competencies by starting with the needs of the business and working backward in assessing how many people within an organization have these competencies and to what degree they have been developed. In this way, an organization can be laser sharp about what competencies to develop and not lose time in developing mismatched or irrelevant competencies.



– Claude Werder  
VP/Research Operations and Principal HCM Analyst  
for Brandon Hall Group



## Preface

There are numerous reasons why most successful companies incorporate strategic competencies as a key component of their talent management initiatives. The primary motivator is the proven competitive edge gained by understanding how top performers behave, and subsequently replicating this behavior and culture throughout an organization.

When properly designed and implemented, competency-driven talent management translates an organization's strategic vision and goals into behaviors that employees must exemplify in order to succeed.

When competencies are not incorporated into organizational talent management or are too general or improperly executed, organizations experience poor results, often leading to a loss of trust between senior leaders, managers, and employees, and employee turnover, undermining years of hard work.

To address the challenges associated with overly general and improperly delivered competencies, HRSG strategically develops competencies specifically designed to accurately distinguish between average and superior performers. These competencies are then implemented as the basis for assessment programs, designed to determine competency gaps for the average performers.

By virtue of targeted development and coaching programs, these average performing individuals are empowered to mirror the desired behaviors associated with superior performers. Over time, entire teams and departments become more engaged and collaborative, and, very importantly, more productive.

Needless to say, HRSG is here to assist you in avoiding all the common pitfalls surrounding competency-driven talent management.

This eBook demonstrates how to optimize a competency framework, beginning with the basics of competency-driven talent management, and covers such topics as:

- What does an optimized competency framework look like?
- How to determine if your competencies are effective
- Implementing tools to enhance optimization

Please read on to begin your journey towards successful talent management!



— Suzanne Simpson  
Founder and Chief Executive Officer

**HRSG**



## Part 1: Competency Basics

Talent management and its deployment have evolved considerably and will continue to do so. Gone are the days of corporate-driven development and rigid organizational structures. Today, employees demand more clarity surrounding expectations and goals, whereas leaders are impelled to build agile teams that can quickly respond to fast-changing business needs and market pressures. The implementation of an optimized competency framework empowers organizations to address these new and ever-changing industry expectations and demands.

Before we delve into more detail, let's review the key components of a **Competency Framework** and how to deploy them as a proven approach to managing talent.

### Competencies and Competency Profiles

**Competencies** represent the building blocks that define abilities, skills, knowledge, motivations, and traits and other attributes that differentiate top from mediocre or poor performers.

Competencies describe how excellent performers achieve great outcomes and are always defined in terms of behaviors that can be observed and therefore measured.

**Competency Profiles** represent sets of competencies, complete with the levels of proficiency required for success, in a particular job or role.

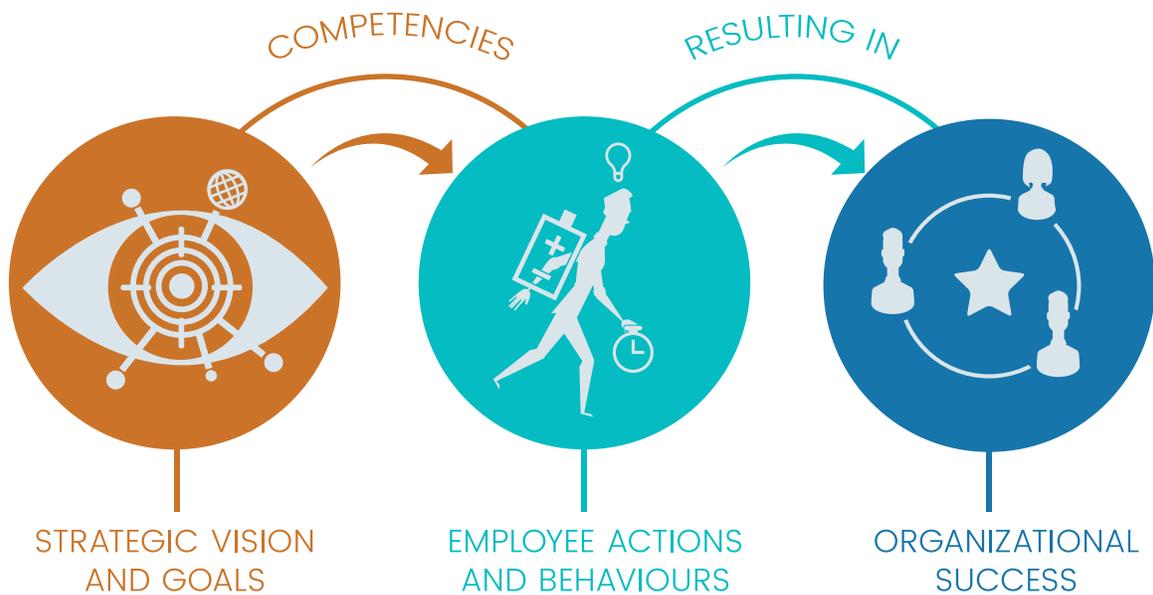
Each competency is articulated in terms of progressively higher **proficiency levels**. Some jobs require only a basic demonstration of a competency, while others require more complex levels.

Need a refresher on the basics?  
[Read HRSG's 'Multi-Level Competencies' eBook.](#)



### Laying the Foundation to Build a Winning Team

One of the greatest advantages of competencies is providing leaders the ability to define what it means to be successful in their organization, in a consistent and standardized manner. Competencies translate strategic vision and goals into employee behaviors that drive competitive advantage, resulting in organizational success.



To help understand which competencies employees require in order to achieve an organizational vision, we recommend a first step of detailing a **Competency Architecture**. This architecture provides the rulebook for all types of competencies to be implemented and how they will be applied.

A competency architecture can be a difficult concept to grasp, even for seasoned HR professionals, so let's examine the following concept in the world of team sports.

The below graphic represents the competency architecture concerned.



Regardless of which sport you play, there are some competencies that will be common across all sports, such as **Achievement Orientation**, **Initiative** and **Teamwork**. These represent the **Core Competencies**, regardless of the sport you play.

If you play soccer (football for our non-North American readers), you may find that all players need **Fostering Communication** to play effectively as a team, and **Managing Conflict** to avoid getting too many red cards. As a comparison, in baseball, players require **Attention to Detail** to ensure accuracy in batting, throwing and catching, and **Resilience** to continue to play effectively over nine innings.

These are examples of **Job Family Competencies**. To extrapolate this example into the business world, the various sports are the equivalent of different organizational departments, such as Marketing, Sales or Finance, each with their own set of unique competencies.

In the case of individual player levels, there are specific competencies that drive successful performance in key positions. For example, in hockey the skills required of goalies are very different to those expected of a right-wing offence player. In business, this equates to differentiating between a Marketing Manager and a Media Relations Specialist. These positions are similar in terms of soft skills, but very different in terms of each job's specific know-how.

Across all sports there are **Leadership Competencies** that are essential for coaches, managers, team captains, and any other team members in a leadership role. HRSG's leadership competencies capture the essence of powerful, transformational, and effective leaders and translates this into tangible and observable behaviors. Competencies such as **Exemplifying Integrity, Inspiring Others, and Leading Change** are all examples of behaviors as exhibited by successful leaders, regardless of organization.

Establishing rules for organizational competencies within each competency profile ensures consistency in all profiles across an entire organization. Additionally, this proven solution streamlines the development process as well as ensuring that those key behaviors that drive a business' competitive advantage are reflected in every job throughout an organization.

“A competency architecture provides a common set of rules that create consistency and continuity across every job in your organization. If you omit this critical step and begin selecting job competencies without those rules in place, you are likely to end up with profiles that are different from one department to the next, and are less effective at supporting the goals of your competency initiative.

— Lorraine McKay  
Co-Founder & Chief Marketing Officer, HRSG





## Part 2: Competency-Driven Talent Management

### What is Competency-Driven Talent Management?

Competency-driven talent management is a strategic approach for career planning and development, incorporating competencies as a key tool for hiring, developing, promoting, engaging, retaining and managing employees.

Competencies provide the foundation for integrating all aspects of the Talent Management life cycle, starting with Recruitment and Selection and extending to Learning and Development, Performance Evaluation and Feedback, Career Pathing, Succession Planning, and broad-scale Workforce Planning.



### Benefits of Competency-Driven Management

Competencies increase consistency, standardization and coordination within the entire talent lifecycle. Once the competencies have been identified for every job, these competencies become the foundation of every HR activity. By executing talent management initiatives, driven by clearly defined competencies, HR professionals ensure that every activity contributes to the organization's progression.

Competencies provide a clear link between the organization's vision and goals, and the behaviors employees are expected to display in the workplace. When employees know the behaviors that define success, they naturally feel more empowered to drive forward their careers. The tangible results of an empowered employee range from increased employee productivity, to operational effectiveness, to long-term retention.

When hiring, adopting a competency-driven approach provides a structured and transparent interview process that focuses on the highest potential for strong performance. When only those candidates who best match a job's competencies are hired, there is a shortened learning curve for employee onboarding with employees now able to reach optimal levels of performance more quickly.

While it takes effort and time to determine the necessary competencies for an organization in the short term, the long-term rewards are most certainly worth it. Mitigate time spent dealing with HR issues and devote more time to the organization's operational mandate.

## The Research

In a recent Brandon Hall Group (BHG) Survey, more than 49% of organizations stated that they had a system in place to address competency management within their organization<sup>1</sup>. In the same survey, more than 50% of organizations felt that formal competency assessments were very useful in identifying employee development goals.

Brandon Hall Group identified items that organizations often overlook when implementing competencies into talent management:

- 31% of organizations don't define essential leadership competencies for leaders at all levels<sup>2</sup>.
- Employee development is often prioritized for compliance purposes only, yet 72% of organizations cite that the most important factor in deciding whether to stay with or join an organization is the opportunity for leadership and technical skill building<sup>3</sup>.
- Without a proper assessment strategy, the likelihood of identifying critical competencies is only 15.3%<sup>4</sup>.
- While 74% of organizations say that defining critical competencies is essential to the business, only 0.7% currently have the means to predict the required skills.

The approach to designing and implementing a competency management framework can make or break a successful talent management strategy. Brandon Hall Group suggests devising a strategy that includes more than just theory and structure, including dynamic maintenance models, actual use cases, and cultural alignment<sup>5</sup>. These measures increase the likelihood of experiencing an improvement in the quality of talent, decreased turnover, improved internal fill rate of key roles, and increased engagement.

This research corroborates that effective and automated competency management creates a real-time and predictive inventory of any workforce's capabilities. The BHG study also reinforces the importance of revising competency models to ensure alignment with fast-changing business goals, recommending conducting reviews on an annual basis.

<sup>1</sup> BHG, Employee Development and Performance

<sup>2</sup> BHG, Competency Management: The Essentials for Better Business Results

<sup>3</sup> BHG, Competency Management: The Essentials for Better Business Results

<sup>4</sup> BHG, Competency Management: The Essentials for Better Business Results

<sup>5</sup> BHG, Tools to Use: Analyst Insights on Competency Management



## Part 3: What Does Optimized Look Like?

At HRSG, we define a **Competency Framework** as a competency system implemented within an organization, consisting of the goals of the system, the competency architecture, the competencies and competency profiles, the overall plan for the competency initiative, including the standards and processes for determining an initiative's success.

If you have experience in designing and implementing a competency framework, you are probably aware that there are numerous different approaches and tools at your disposal. As we look back over the last three decades of working with clients and implementing successful competency-driven initiatives, we have identified a short list of **nine critical elements** that are proven to effectively determine whether or not your competency framework is truly optimized.



### 1. Defined Goals

The first step in optimizing a competency-driven talent management framework is to determine the initiative's goals, such as improving retention by way of leadership training. It is essential to establish clear goals to avoid playing catch-up in pursuing organizational objectives.

Organizational goals and objectives must act as the north star, guiding all development activities, including competency architecture, competencies, profiles, implementation strategy, etc.



## 2. Short and Long Term Vision

In addition to designing a framework to support business goals, it is important to consider all the HR applications in order of priority. Understanding how to specifically implement competencies, both in the short and long term, provides a sequential development and implementation to efficiently manage and control delivery.

Invariably, continuous evolution and improvement of process delivery provides additional outcomes as the project unfolds.



## 3. Communication and Change Management Plan

When utilized correctly, competencies have an enormously positive impact on a business' operations. However, if stakeholders are unaware of this, or how to use the system and tools effectively, the competency framework has no real chance of full optimization.

Organizations often invest 80% of their project resources in identifying competencies, and no more than 20% in communicating the project rationale, goals, and outcomes to employees and other stakeholders. From 30 years of experience, HRSG recommends that this division of resources be closer to 50/50.



## 4. Evaluation of Success

Evaluate refers to reviewing the outcomes of an initiative whereas audit focuses on reviewing the actual processes implemented to achieve said outcomes. When evaluating success, it is important to measure the competency-driven management outcomes against the goals of the program itself.

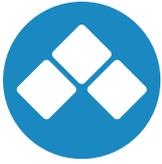
Establish all goal and target baselines prior to deploying any competency initiative. These baselines will ultimately render accurate measurements of success that will satiate any management or organizational queries such as a sales revenue comparison, pre and post-competency implementation.



## 5. Competency Architecture

As detailed above in Part 1, competency architecture defines the common rules that guide the development of competency profiles. The architecture defines how the profiles will be designed for your entire organization, including the format and the content for the profile (i.e. the types and number of competencies). Additionally, and importantly, this architecture defines how profiles align with job functions.

This step is especially critical as it ensures that profiles for every job in an organization are consistent, and can be effectively relied upon to support achievement of business goals.



## 6. Multi-Level Competencies

The most valuable competencies are those that articulate multiple, progressive levels of proficiency and skill, from basic to more advanced levels. Multi-level competencies provide greater simplicity; instead of applying three single-level competencies to three different jobs, simply assign different levels of the same competency.

These multi-level competencies foster enhanced communication by dividing a competency into progressive levels, thus providing heightened accuracy and a shared language for discussing performance. Multi-level competencies are well structured and defined, successfully aligning jobs at every level, ultimately rendering accurate evaluation of talent needs.



## 7. Competency Dictionary

A well-designed Competency Dictionary will include the depth and breadth of the competencies required to address an organization's goals and needs. To qualify as fully optimized, the competencies included in the dictionary must be multi-level to effectively articulate relationships across jobs for career and succession management purposes.

The final component is to define clear and observable behaviors within all competency proficiency levels, detailing the performance expectancy at all job levels.



## 8. Competency Profiles

A competency profile specifies the competencies and levels of proficiency that are required for successful job performance for each job in an organization. The different layers and types of competencies incorporated within the Job Competency Profile is dictated by the competency architecture. To ensure that competency profiles are easy to implement, best practice organizations limit the number of competencies in each profile to between ten to twelve competencies.



## 9. Tools to Support and Accelerate Implementation

Competencies aren't effective when used independently. It is imperative that the correct tools are in place to support and enhance competency implementation across the entire talent lifecycle, both in the short and long term.

Part 6 of this eBook examines some of the different tools implemented to accelerate optimization of your competency framework.

**Want to test your competency framework? Take our [three minute survey to determine how you measure up!](#)**



## Part 4: Determining if Your Competency Framework is Working

### What to Measure

Now that we understand what ‘optimized’ means in context, what then is the best way to determine whether your competency framework is meeting necessary criteria?

Consider the below three measures that, when incorporated correctly, provide a robust competency framework:

1. Are your competencies relevant and well-articulated?
2. Are your competencies delivering the desired impact?
3. Do you have the proper tools and training in place to successfully use competencies?

### 1. ARE YOUR COMPETENCIES RELEVANT AND WELL-ARTICULATED?

Competencies are a very powerful and proven tool in identifying requirements for success and translating those requirements into observable behaviors for each job. However, their effectiveness is dependent upon defining the most relevant competencies that differentiate between top and mediocre performance. Should competencies not correctly detail a job’s critical knowledge, skills, and abilities, an organization is less likely to meet its goals due to employees not performing at optimal levels.

HRSG’s competency structure provides a wide variety of clearly defined multi-level competencies, allowing clear targeting and that differentiates successful performance. However, it is important to review your competencies as your business goals and workforce perpetually evolve. Observing little to no change in employee skill levels or behaviors is a good indicator that it’s probably time to update required competencies.

The competencies chosen today won’t last forever, but any required changes in competency definitions proves that the organization is growing!



**Some key questions to address:**

- Do your competencies reflect changing business needs?
- Are your competencies defined in detailed and observable ways?
- Do the competencies reflect the critical skills, knowledge, and abilities for all jobs?

**2. ARE YOUR COMPETENCIES DELIVERING THE DESIRED IMPACT?**

Ultimately, competency-driven talent management supports business goals such as profitability, competitiveness, market share growth, efficiency, quick turnaround times, and increasing customer satisfaction. Identifying organizational goals and key benchmarks at the start of a competency initiative, drives the accurate measurement of success.

Measurement of competency applications is similar in approaches adopted by other HR applications; from feedback surveys to quantifying organizational performance and business results. Measuring performance involves observable improvements through actual performance indicators such as output per person, reduction in turnover, or reduction in errors.

The challenge is to clearly understand how exactly competencies tangibly affect outcomes. Turnover, as an example, can be affected by salary, but also by management behaviors such as respect and trust.

Identifying the impact of a competency initiative needn't be complex. Establishing the goals of your competency initiative and assigning benchmarks at the start of an initiative provides the foundation for easily accessible and measurable metrics. These accurately measured results of a competency initiative clearly demonstrate the value and Return on Investment (ROI) of competency-driven talent management.



**Some key questions to address:**

- What were the goals of your competency-based program prior to implementation?
- Do you have measures in place to assess achievement of goals and Return on Investment (ROI)?
- Are you attaining the results you anticipated?

### 3. DO YOU HAVE THE CORRECT TOOLS AND TRAINING IN PLACE TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT COMPETENCIES?

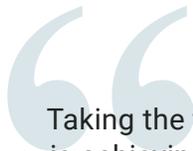
Having the best competency framework in the world is wonderful, however, if employees don't know how to, or opt not to, use it, it's a reasonable assumption that the initiative will fail. One particular area where we often see this is in performance management. Without the correct training, it's not difficult to devalue an entire competency initiative. There is no point whatsoever in managers not having the knowledge and training to effectively leverage competencies to engage employees regarding their performance.

It is advised that you survey managers and employees to ascertain how aware they are of the competency initiative and that they know how to use the available tools. This simple survey will readily showcase how ready an organization is in becoming fully optimized.

#### Some key questions to address:



- Are employees and managers aware of the competency initiative?
- Do you have the tools in place to best leverage the competencies in your talent management initiative?
- Have employees and managers been trained in using competencies for different HR activities?



Taking the time to step back and reflect on whether or not your competency initiative is achieving the desired impact is a very valuable and worthwhile exercise. There are a number of ways to do this, ranging from a survey to interviews, or a combination of the two. Our team can even support you in making this happen!

— Christine Lamothe  
Vice President Competency-based Management Solutions





## Part 5: Addressing Short-Falls

### Common Short-Falls and Potential Solutions

By virtue of some recent audits, we have discovered that some basic design and implementation issues are often the culprits in not producing expected results. These issues are specifically related to the measurement areas addressed in the preceding, Part 4: 'Determining if Your Competency Framework is Working' section.

The below represents some typical problems, complete with our solutions:

#### 1. ARE YOUR COMPETENCIES RELEVANT, VIABLE AND WELL-ARTICULATED?

Problem:	Solution:
<p><b>The competencies are often too broad and lack clarity and relevancy.</b></p> <p><i>Why is this a problem?</i></p> <p>Vague or often generic competencies do not provide enough information about the expected behaviors required to achieve success.</p>	<p>Well-designed competencies must model and describe the behaviors that result in success, empowering individuals to excel in their jobs, work within the dynamics of an organization, and to professionally develop.</p> <p>Competencies must focus on observable behaviors, thus mitigating potential for subjective interpretation and individual bias.</p> <p>Competencies must also be flexible enough to address different functional jobs requiring the same competency/competencies.</p>

Problem:	Solution:
<p><b>Too many competencies in a job description.</b></p> <p><i>Why is this a problem?</i></p> <p>Incorporation of too many competencies run the risk of losing focus of the critical behaviors driving success.</p>	<p>A competency profile should include no more than 8 to 12 competencies.</p> <p>Best practice suggests that fewer competencies yield a larger return on investment.</p> <p>This solution simplifies talent management processes and focuses on the key contributors to success.</p>

## 2. ARE YOUR COMPETENCIES HAVING THE DESIRED IMPACT?

Problem:	Solution:
<p><b>Lack of clarity related to the problem or issue to be addressed.</b></p> <p><i>Why is this a problem?</i></p> <p>If you don't have a clear understanding of what you want to achieve, it will be more challenging to target solutions that will address the critical issues.</p>	<p>Ask how competencies will be used in the short and long term in relation to the issues at hand.</p> <p>A staged approach focuses first upon the more critical issues.</p> <p>Organizations that plan for long-term sustainability from the outset are nearly twice as likely to be successful in implementing competencies as those who do not.</p>
<p><b>Unable to differentiate between excellent and mediocre performance within and between job levels.</b></p> <p><i>Why is this a problem?</i></p> <p>Competencies must clearly describe how excellence is achieved and how to develop from one job level to the next.</p>	<p>Define what excellence actually looks like in order to develop people to this standard.</p> <p>Clear behaviors are essential in describing the essence of excellence, and in defining a clear progression from novice to expert, and expert to leader.</p>

### 3. COMMUNICATION – DO YOU HAVE THE PROPER TOOLS AND TRAINING IN PLACE TO EFFECTIVELY USE COMPETENCIES?

Problem:	Solution:
<p><b>Lack of buy-in by key stakeholders.</b></p> <p><i>Why is this a problem?</i></p> <p>Stakeholder support is essential in implementing an organization-wide competency initiative.</p>	<p>Devise communications targeted to each stakeholder group, clearly establishing the specific value of the competencies for each group, from leadership levels to front-line employees.</p> <p>Demonstrate how these competencies will be incorporated into talent management and describe the expected results from each group’s perspective.</p> <p>Ensure to communicate the initiative’s simplicity and highlight all personal benefits.</p>
<p><b>No software in place.</b></p> <p><i>Why is this a problem?</i></p> <p>Competency software streamlines and automates the process of managing and successfully using competencies within your organization.</p>	<p>Competency software empowers building of a customized, multi-level competency framework with minimal administrative effort.</p> <p>Gain access to a central repository of competency content, with applications to build job profiles, conduct interviews, assess performance, track development, plan career paths, and understand employee strengths and skill gaps!</p> <p>HRSG’s CompetencyCore™ connects and integrates all facets of a competency initiative, ensuring nothing is overlooked or left to chance.</p>



## Part 6: Tools to Accelerate Optimization

Optimizing your competency framework is reliant upon incorporating competencies both efficiently and effectively.

Historically, organizations have failed to maximize their competency-driven talent management as the required tools were unavailable. However, this is no longer the case with the availability of a variety of tools, often catering to the key components of talent acquisition, management and learning management systems, on the market.

Here are some tools that empower you to get the most out of your competency initiatives.

### Interview Questions

Competencies are a proven and powerful tool for defining an ideal candidate. Competency-driven interview questions provide a structured approach that enhances the ability to predict the best hire.

Get started quickly by acquiring a bank of interview questions linked to your competencies. Not only will this improve hiring successes, but will also save time and money in the long run by providing repeatable, standardized and scalable processes.



Learn how [CompetencyCore™](#) can help you generate interview questions in minutes.

## Competency Assessments

Whether assessing employees for development or performance feedback purposes, competency assessments provide an enhanced understanding of employee strengths and gaps.

Easily transform each of the behavioral indicators in competency profiles into assessment questions that assess employees against the target competency levels for their jobs. Leverage these tools to understand and improve performance, build and nurture a talent pipeline and make informed, evidence-based decisions.



Learn how [CompetencyCore™](#) allows you to take your competency profiles and automatically create assessments.

## Learning Resources and Plans

Linking banks of learning resources directly to specific proficiency levels of competencies is a powerful measure to assist employees in addressing gaps. Building targeted learning plans is the conduit to a clearly defined approach.

Mapping learning programs to competencies maximizes the benefits of both training time and investment. As a result, benefit from focused development plans, less effort required for research, and better use of training time and dollars.



Use [CompetencyCore™](#) software to identify learning resources needed to address competency deficiencies and to build targeted learning plans.

## Personal Competency Inventories

Assessments, amongst other tools, assist employees in building an inventory of their competency strengths and gaps. This information can then be leveraged for succession planning, career pathing, and career development.

Employees are empowered to plan their individual career development, as they are now equipped with the necessary directive by which to identify paths for progressive and/or lateral growth.



Use [CompetencyCore™](#) software to enable employees to build their personal profile of competencies and other job requirements to facilitate job matching and career pathing.



### **Competency Audit**

Determine how to improve aspects of competency-driven processes by performing a competency audit.

This audit should ideally present criteria, surveys and reporting that contribute to recommendations on how to improve a competency framework and processes.

---

Contact us to [set up an audit](#) to optimize your competencies and how they are used to improve organizational performance.

### **Competency Training**

Whether learning how to use competencies for the first time, ensuring the sustainability of a new competency initiative, or adding to existing competency expertise, HRSG's training programs offer a market-leading and focused solution.

This training ensures the success and sustainability of a project by way of tactical coaching and knowledge transfer.

---

Contact us to [learn about our available training programs](#) to help you develop your team and optimize your competency-driven talent processes.



## Part 7: Continuing on Your Path to Optimization

Congratulations! You've now completed this eBook and are ready to determine whether or not your organization's competency framework is optimized; if not, you now know the necessary steps required to attain an optimized competency framework.

Implementing an optimized framework benefits organizations in several ways, including, establishing clear alignment between your organization's goals and employee behaviors, improved recruitment results, and targeted development based on accurate skill gaps.

To summarize, an optimized competency framework includes several key components:

- The goals and problems to be addressed by implementing competencies must be clearly defined.
- Competencies should model and describe those observable behaviors that deliver success.
- Competency profiles should be simple and easy to interpret, including no more than 8 to 12 competencies that focus on key contributors to success.
- Leverage the tools that make the adoption of talent management competencies both quicker and easier.
- Buy-in by key stakeholders is essential to successfully incorporating competency-driven initiatives.
- Take advantage of competency software to build a customized and multi-level competency framework that aligns all facets of a competency initiative.
- Incorporate strategic benchmarks prior to, throughout, and after framework design and implementation, to accurately measure success and ROI against goals, solutions and targets.

Should you find that you lack any of the above competency framework components, take a step back and objectively review the reasons as to why. Oftentimes, design and implementation issues are the main culprits in an initiative not delivering positive results.

Once having implemented a competency initiative, it is now time to examine just how optimized and effective the initiative was. The longer you wait, the more difficult it becomes to improve an underperforming framework, running the risk of losing buy-in from employees, managers, etc. Even if your framework is performing well, there are always additional strategies and solutions to achieve even higher levels of success.

If this seems overwhelming, not to worry! An HRSG competency audit can help you identify any underperforming elements of your competency initiative. Our competency consultants examine your organizational objectives, analyze your framework, and strategically analyze how organizations leverage competencies. Our audit provides a succinct set of recommendations and a strategic optimization roadmap.

### **Take the First Step**

Drive your organization to achieving its goals by ensuring that you have the correct and optimized competency framework in place. Contact HRSG at 1 (866) 574-7041 or by email at [info@hrsg.ca](mailto:info@hrsg.ca).

### **Competency Audit**

Not seeing the results you expected from your competencies? HRSG's Competency Audit service will identify the underperforming elements of your initiative.

**Talk to us today** to learn more!

### **Tools to Accelerate**

Leverage HRSG's competency tools to get the most out of your investment. Our software, tools and training will help you see results faster and generate ROI sooner!

**Contact us** to find the best tool for you!



## Glossary

**Behavioral Competencies:** Behavioral Competencies describe an individual's observable, successful behaviors. These competencies are of a non-technical nature, for example, Analytical Thinking; Attention to Detail; Teamwork; Fostering Communication.

**Behavioral Indicator:** An observable and measurable statement that illustrates the specific actions and/or behaviors of a competency at a specific proficiency level.

**Competencies:** Observable abilities, skills, knowledge, motivations or traits defined in terms of the behaviors needed for successful job performance.

**Competency Architecture:** The structural design that details how competencies align with jobs. This structure specifically defines the designated occupational groups, elements of a competency, types of competencies, number of competencies included, and proficiency levels.

**Competency-Driven Management:** A strategic approach for career planning and development incorporating competencies as a key tool for hiring, developing, promoting, engaging, retaining and managing employees.

**Competency Dictionary:** Compiles all the critical competencies required for job success.

**Competency Framework:** A competency system implemented within an organization, consisting of the goals of the system, the competency architecture, the competencies and competency profiles, the overall plan for the competency initiative, including the standards and processes for determining an initiative's success.

**Competency Profile/Model:** A competency profile is the set of competencies, complete with the levels of proficiency required for success in a particular job or role.

**Core Competencies:** Core Competencies include those competencies that all employees must possess in order to enable the organization to achieve its mandate and vision. These competencies describe, in behavioral terms, the key values of the organization and represent competencies that are organizational strengths or help the organization differentiate itself from its competitors.

**Job Family Competencies:** Job Family competencies are those competencies that are common to a group of jobs within the same functional group. These competencies often include General competencies (e.g., Analytical Thinking) required in a number of Job Families, as well as Technical or Professional competencies that apply to specific job families (e.g., Finance; IT).

**Job Specific Competencies:** These competencies are specific to roles or jobs within a given Job Family and can include General, as well as Technical and Professional, competencies.

**Leadership Competencies:** Key competencies pertaining to roles in an organization that involve managing, supervising or influencing others.

**Notion:** Each proficiency level comes complete with a notion that, in turn, provides a high-level summary of the overall theme identified at each level.

**Proficiency Scale:** Proficiency Levels define incremental degrees of proficiency ranging from lower to higher for a given competency.

**Technical Competencies:** Competencies that focus on key competencies and standards of performance within specific functions, technical or professional areas - for example, Finance Competencies; IT Competencies.

## About HRSG

HRSG provides cutting-edge software and professional services. Since 1989, we have worked with a range of industries to define talent needs, address skill deficiencies, and improve individual and organizational performance. We are a recognized leader in the field of competency-based talent management, and our flagship software, CompetencyCore™, is used by organizations around the world, to integrate competencies across the talent management lifecycle. For more information, please visit [www.hrsg.ca](http://www.hrsg.ca).