

Chapter 5

The Structure of Talent: A Co-constructed Competency Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This chapter advances a discourse on a co-constructed competency model referred to as the SCCM. The SCCM is an alternative competency management strategy designed to build talent needed to increase productivity. A competency model buttress talent management and how human resource management, can be designed and implemented. Arguments drawn indicate that competency models, in particular those concerned with organizational capabilities, are relatively ineffective when developed outside the organization. A contrast of the competency models developed elsewhere with those espoused within the organization by the knowledge communities (KC) and effectiveness demonstrated in the latter approach. By reviewing selections from the literature that established the competency development movement, a foundation on past knowledge is considered in the design and implementation of the capability required to champion organization. The SCCM approach is applicable to most organizations in creating explicit knowledge, skills, and behavior necessary to increase productivity.

INTRODUCTION

Global competition has forced many corporations to focus on the bottom-line and to recruit people who are effective from the beginning. This global competition has also created the demand for a better-organized workplace, competent workforce and the need for increased productivity. This chapter suggests an alternative method of differentiating what people do at work using the platform of social construction and its tenets of a knowledge community. Social construction founded on the premise that experience and collective knowing through the forum can progress organizational goals. The chapter proceeds to drawing the hypothesis: only the knowledge community (KC) can develop, distribute and diffuse the practices useful in organization.

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Background

A Statement About the Literature Review

An assumption made about the predominant models of competencies is that they are not appropriate because the majority have no focus on any particular organization. The assumption is that the mainstream are inappropriate because they view knowledge and skills as universal. There is an uneven distribution of cognitive ability in organizations. One of the reason for this phenomenon is that in a normal distribution, that represents organizational knowledge and skills, people will fit into the four quarters according to their abilities and disposition to do the job. Cultural difference is another example why people at work may differ. For instance, high school graduates from different countries may have a different level of understanding of many subjects such as the games of soccer, basketball or lawn tennis compared to what local high school graduates may know about the same subjects. This may occur for many reasons, but the most the time culture in each country can be unique. For example, the curricula in two countries differ tremendously. Because of such diversity, organization takes different meaning in each situation. Corporations do their best to create or acquire the knowledge they perceive will put them in good stead, thus successful organizations must understand the environment in which they operate to be successful.

The SCCM is an alternative knowledge management model useful in aiding a firm to understand its business in relationship to what the people employed can do. The SCCM approach is applicable in the assessment and evaluation of prevailing cultural conditions in organization. Figure 1 depicts the proposed “co-constructed competency model” or the SCCM. The four circles are equal and represent the competency attributes of knowledge, attitudes, skills and technology. These are part of an organization’s intellectual property. The behavior of each attribute affects the behavior of the whole structure. The attributes are all equal and competencies/expertise occurs where the four circles meet. If any of the attributes is misaligned from the center, the structure loses its essential properties, which are competencies.

Positive Reinforcement

Although technology is important in production systems, people who operate the tools, equipment or machines make the difference. People in the organization must have the mindset to work effectively. Positive reinforcement give people outcomes they desire when they do the job right all the time. Desirable outcomes include pay, praise or promotion. By linking reinforcers to the performance of functional behaviors, managers motivate people to perform the desired job tasks correctly all the time.

Negative Reinforcement

Negative attitudes can cause the deflection of the competencies/expertise. The results can be undesirable outcomes such as re-working the job and creating extra costs. Customers normally do not like their time to be wasted; they will take their custom elsewhere. A SCCM is a tool managers can use to measure performance and to understand the gap between actual and desirable output. The Likert scales can be adapted to appreciate the distribution of culture in organization. In Table 1, an assessment of prevailing cultural conditions at Adam Smith Pin Production plant:

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