AGILE BASED COMPETENCY MANAGEMENT

ABC Management

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Article: Choosing competency according to right context

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1. Choosing competency

The selection of competent employees is today a key factor of success. However, this is not an easy task. Selection of staff powers should be primarily based on the requirements of your organization and the workplace. In some types of work are important requirements for mental processes (e.g. operators of airports, stockbrokers, bank clerks). In the other hand, we are interested in candidates with a specific personality profile, which you might want to look at based on the five-factor model of personality – "Big Five": open to experience –closed, conscientious – chaotic, extroverted – iIntroverred, conciliatory - tenacious, emotionally stabled - neurotic. For example, a high level of extrovert profile is an important factor of success in jobs that require frequent social contacts (e.g. manager, trader).

Nowadays, while the selection of the competence of employees, it is necessary to account the high variability of the environment and its impact on the workplace, and it's terms and conditions. Some competences, which once seemed to be crucial, and now they lose their meaning because of making a change in the long term and the principles of the functioning of the Organization. These changes arise for example participation in teams working in different countries, sometimes in different time zones, leading virtual or multicultural projects, sometimes less formalized, for example, when we cooperate with agency staff, etc.

2. What is the meaning of the context?

That's why the context, defined as organizational reality, differs depending on the area of activity. Competencies manifest themselves differently in production companies , than they do, for example, in higher education institutions.

However, in both cases, the same competencies exist. For example, organization of work. Still, it's worth noting that this competence would be used differently in a production company than it would in a higher education institution. In a production company, organizing one's work depends on, among others, planning and delivering the production plan; split into daily/weekly/quarterly or shift objectives and a fast response to any deviations from the production plan (breakdowns, additional orders, etc). In the case of the higher education institution, organizing one's work may entail defining SMART objectives or unassisted scheduling and achieving goals.

3. Role of context in the study of competence

This observation was seriously taken into consideration while formulating the Competence Assessment in the Work Context Method. In this method, we propose taking one more step in comparison to many other classic approaches. However, we start at the same point: competencies have their definitions and have their components (aspects), which also have their own definitions. The aspects are the basis for preparing descriptions of situations, which we call cases. What makes our method unique is that the context has been introduced into the area of competence – the workplace environment where the respondent and its observers operate. The context is reflected in the 'Method of Competence Assessment in Work Context' at the situation description level, while the definitions of competencies and aspects are constant and fixed.

The context also affects a set of desired competencies in a given organization if, for example, this organization has no sales functions - competencies such as: "Telephone sales" or "Prospecting" will not be applicable. On the other hand, a "People Management" competence will be applicable in every organization regardless of the area of activity, as long as there is a supervisor and a subordinate. Therefore, choosing the correct context to study affects both the set of competencies which are important and the content of the study cases.

In other words, if an employee examines the "People Management" competence, he will receive a set of cases (descriptions of situations) to be solved. These cases will apply solely to his own workplace environment, and not to that of an abstracted manager.

We can ask a question - what is the function of competencies in the Method of Competence Assessment in Work Context, if its key element is based on specific cases relating to the context of a given organization?

If one were orthodox about this issue one might say that the very concept of competencies with their aspects and profile grouping is not entirely necessary.

We could do without this middle layer which sorts out the cases according to a specific key. Such a statement is justified because it is the situation descriptions which are the vehicles for the study as well as the vehicle for the information to be passed onto the respondent by the organization.

All of the information necessary for an outcomes analysis and the building of an Individual Development Plan is included. We can imagine that the report would only give information about the correctly solved cases (from the organization's point of view) and not those which were solved incorrectly. Completing this information, with comments helping to understand the organization's expectancy, may be sufficient feedback in stating the way cases are solved.

With such an approach, the described competencies will only be used in a certain taxonomy. They help organize the cases and group them in packages that comply with a given competence. Feedback is grouped and structured and perhaps that's just enough to leave out the definitions and aspects of the competence.

4. What are the benefits ?

To sum up, let's see what the benefits of using the Method of Competence Assessment in the Work Context are:

● Firstly, we get a study based on the description of situations taking into account the respondent's and observers' workplace environment which increases the study transparency – the feedback is unambiguous and there is no need for the person receiving the feedback to "guess" what the reason for such an assessment is.

● Secondly, the context of the performed job clearly defines the set of competencies to be examined.

● Thirdly, the cases which are context based make it easier to complete the competence assessment questionnaire.

In short: the context in our Method makes it possible for the entire study to be more adequate for the whole organization and for its respondents.