

# AGILE BASED COMPETENCY MANAGEMENT

ABC Management

Output 3 / Activity 1

How to develop cases properly? – instruction for consultant and HR about how to prepare cases for particular organisation

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Date of delivery

25 February 2016

Project partners



## What is a case?

A case provides a brief description of a typical situation which happens or can happen to a key competence survey respondent in his/her professional life. It is carefully designed to illustrate a particular situation that requires a behaviour, decision or reaction based on the competence specified in one of the aspects discussed. It also takes into account respondents' professional context - occupation (managers, specialists), type of industry, job (salesmen, office workers). *Agile Based Competency Management* tool includes 20 competences divided into 5 separate aspects. Cases reflect each individual aspect which makes 100 cases for twenty competences.

Every case - a description of a particular typical situation - has got three selection options: The Most Effective, The Least Effective and Medium Effective. Survey participants are unaware of the scale as they can see only the content of the case and the three options with no further guidance. They are requested to choose the most and the least appropriate reaction to the case presented.

## The role of a case

Cases are useful for recruiters, HR departments and other decision-makers in companies. They help to assess one's behaviours and attitudes in work-related situations. They are also useful for assessing soft-skills, non-academic behaviours and practical intelligence to select the right candidate for a job or to show desired directions for an employee's development. They can be used as a practical tool for self-judgment and for defining the directions for self-development as well.

## The way cases are developed

1. Every case is supposed to describe a particular aspect of a given competence;
2. Each case begins with "You...", and the options with "I..." (*Case*: "You have to finish a very important job, and your colleague wants you to make a decision at the same time. What do you do? *Option*: "I would do my job first, than I would start the conversation", NOT: "You would do my job first, than you would start the conversation");
3. Put all the key information necessary to make a decision in the case, not in options ;
4. If you refer to a person, use both sex forms: he/she, his/her etc.;
5. The options should be clear for the respondents. Try to use simple language in options and create sentences which are as short as possible;
6. One of the options should be the most preferred and one should be the least expected one. The key for the decision which behaviour is the most and which the least desired should be generally based on good practices, according to companies' specific needs;
7. All the relevant circumstances that may impact my decision should be included in the description of the situation;
8. If a selection results from one's approach, attitude, beliefs, acceptance or rejection of a situation or one's behaviour, it has to be referred to in the description;

9. Refer to a respondent's professional background - whether he/she is a manager, the industry, etc.;
10. Use real names and locations referring to one's professional background. Don't use true names and job titles.
11. When assessing a competence use only relevant information - refrain from additional extra details that have no impact on the context;
12. Don't overload the case with information irrelevant to the competence assessment which may blur the overall picture;
13. Make your description easy - do not try to „catch” the respondent;
14. „It depends” is not accepted as the respondent's first reaction;
15. When defining the situational context think about drawing general conclusions in the comments section - is it really possible to draw conclusions in given circumstances?
16. Use the same terms in successive case sections, e.g. „the essence of the problem” is not the same as „reason for the problem”;
17. Avoid colloquial language, instead of „bunk off work” use „leave work”.



Moreover, when describing the three Options, remember that:

18. Reactions should be uniform, e.g. resolutions only, actions only, etc.;
19. Reactions should correspond with the situations; a reaction cannot assume circumstances that are not described in the situation;
20. Reactions should directly refer to predispositions/abilities related to the aspect of a given competence to be assessed;
21. Do not include various actions/resolutions within a single reaction - a respondent may agree with one of them, yet the other one may be unacceptable;
22. Make sure that a given reaction results from assumed level of predisposition/ability within the particular aspect of a selected competence; You may do that by referring to the competence and aspects definitions.

### Example of an Agile Based Competency Management case

#### Competence: CHANGE MANAGEMENT

**Competence definition:** *The ability to plan and introduce a new process, methods of working, approach, etc. in the organization with minimum resistance of those who are affected by the change.*

**Aspect:** (The manager) Implements the change. Vigorously tries to overcome other people's resistance to change, without being discouraged.

**Aspect definition:** *The manager is able to manage the process of change implementation effectively. He/she tries hard and succeeds in mitigating the resistance and gaining acceptance*

*in case of any problems. He/she demonstrates and provides a model example how to face the change successfully and efficiently.*



**Content of the case** corresponding to a given aspect of the Change Management competence:

<b>Case content</b>	<b>You are a manager. Your team has to move to another location within your company. The team members have started to complain because it means a change for them and everybody knows that people usually don't like changes. How do you react?</b>
<b>Option 1</b>	I explain the benefits and inevitable nature of the change with patience. I don't discourage myself because I treat changes as a natural process. I also show good examples to our team members who have already changed their location.
<b>Option 2</b>	I point out that the decision has already been made. Why complain? If the company authorities have decided about our movement, we are to do it even if we don't want to.
<b>Option 3</b>	I point out that the decision has already been made. If someone wants to hinder it, he/she should expect consequences.