

Bank of Competence

How to work with

strategic competence development

TOOL BOX

SUBPROJECT: COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF RECRUITING

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Participating partners:

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Akureyri Island



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Background

Social Services in our municipalities will be facing new challenges in the future. The proportions of elderly in our municipalities have been predicted to increase in the coming years. The requirement for increased skills of our employees is growing. It is important that our organizations and our employees are given good opportunities to meet the rising demands of society. Work in elderly care is becoming more demanding, as the customer needs change. More and more people grow older, live at home longer, which leads to expectations for quality of care becomes higher.

When an organisation is working with competence concepts, it is very important that everyone knows the meaning of the concepts that are being used. If we do not work with common definitions we risk misunderstanding each other and talk about different things. Everyone in the organisation must have an understanding of the meaning of the different skills and attitudes which are needed in different professions. There is really only one way to do this – to create a *competence model*. The competence model compiles and defines the different concepts which are necessary for different professions.

The first important steps in a successful competence maintenance is to identify recruitment needs and do a background analysis and needs analysis. The need analysis is made through formulating a target- and responsibility description and demand specification through critical incidents (critical incidents, CI).

Strategic competence development is to have the customers needs and the future ahead. We can see the need of a long-term strategic thinking concerning the organization's goals and future.

Strategic competence development concerns

- Inventory of existing skills
- Planning for future skills needs
- Recruitment and internal recruitment
- Skills of existing and new employees
- Reward the creative efforts



Starting points for a successful competence maintenance

- The goals and part goals of the operation
- Responsibilities for the different positions
- Activities and duties which are part of the work with fulfilling the goals
- Identification of the demands this puts on the employee in question concerning education, experience, knowledge and competence.

Not until we have identified the demands can we develop our ability and find the right resource for each need and each task.

During OLE2 we have had the opportunity to test new ways of thinking about strategic competence supply and how to build up a competence bank within the health and care professions.

TOOL BOX

Based on our ideas and work about strategic competence development and how to build up a competence bank we have prepared a tool box for any other organisation interested in use our ideas about strategic competence development and how to building up competence bank.

The Tool Box contents

Guidelines

Instructions for how to start work with strategic competence development and competencebank

Documentations

Instructions on work process concerning checklists, templates and equipment

Conclusions



How to do - step by step

1.1 Form workgroups – decide meetings

The work groups mission is to find out what kind of competence the organisation needs. A useful structure for finding out what the organisation needs to function is dividing the competence and the supposition the organisation needs from its employees into six areas:

- Education
- Experience
- Knowledge
- Competence
- Interest and development potential
- Practical suppositions and other demands

1.2 Use the work material for support

The work material contains definitions and suggestions for a competence model.

1.3 Make a timeplan

When will the different steps be taken, when will the work with mapping competences be completed, and when will there be a follow-up.

1.4 Seek support, cooperation and discuss with others

Secure knowledge and competence by having effective communication – same language. Have a clear demand specification and agree on success factors regarding the work. Differentiate between direct and indirect demands. Avoid pit traps like having a far to general and unspecific demand specification as well as assuming education and experience is the same thing as knowledge and competence.

Anchor in supervisiongroup and discuss with union representatives.

1.5 Follow-up – where are we in the process?

Document your work! Which recruitment needs are there and how does the background analysis look? Are the goal- and responsibility descriptions and demand



specifications correctly formulated? This to ensure introduction of new employees and development will work correctly.

1.6 Competence demands are set by the operations director

1.7 Yearly follow-up of set competence demands

Do a yearly follow-up of the set competence demands to ensure that the organisation is ready to meet future challenges and demands in the long run.



Documentation

Here you can find examples of templates and links about strategic competence development and competence bank.

Works Material

Different situations make different demands

All situations make different demands on us and some policies are more effective than others in a given surrounding. A demanding work situation with high demands on involvement fits better for a person with a high energy level than a person who needs calm.

We become more effective in situations which are natural for us and we are most comfortable in the environments where our way of acting fits in.

When we think over the demands that are put on the supposition we should not just focus on the tasks themselves. Här måste vi även beakta den sociala dimensionen både vad gäller dem man kommer att arbeta nära och i den mer övergripande företagskulturen. We must also look at the social dimension both regarding those you will work closely with and in the larger organization culture.

“Everyone is nice for an hour – then they are themselves.”

Education and experience

Education

Here it is about the formal demands which are made of the applicants. It could be educations, courses, certificates, legitimations, etc. For some professions you learn it informally, and you need make sure the service in question demands a certain academic level, or if other forms of education work just as well.

Experience

Experience is something wider than education and includes everything that a given person has done or been a part of. Experience can be general and the person could have acquired it through studies or in the private life. It is more common that the experience the employer is interested in is connected to the work. Just like education demands, experience demands are easy to use for cleaning up among applicants.



But, then there is an obvious risk that we evaluate formalia rather than the quality of the material and that persons with attractive competence (knowledge, skills and fitting capabilities) are weeded out.

Knowledge and competence

Knowledge

Knowledge is about the content of the qualities a person bring to a worksituation. Knowledge is the things you know, no matter how you learnt it. When you search for a person to a specific job there are areas that the person needs to master. Knowledge have a direct relevance for the completion of the work.

Competence

Competence is about the skills and suppositions we use to establish a workable performance. Skills can be analytical or cognitively conditioned or be about the ability to perform certain typers of tasks. The approach is based on the personality and is a complement to the skills. It describes a persons typical behaviour and how a person reacts and acts in different situations.

Interest and development potential

It is not just the current skills and personality in an employee, it is also the potential to develop and grow into new roles. The employee today have to work in the future organisation as well, maybe even as a leader. A persons developmentpotential is built more on skills and approach (intelligence and personal capabilities) rather than the current knowledge. Another important factor is the persons interest. Learning that we search for is often stimulating, while learning that is forced on us becomes demanding and tiresome. An effective organisation needs to have an open and honest communication between employees about their own circumstances, interests and goals. Toghether you can create realistic expectations on eachother - as well as exploiting the potential and engagement that is developed based on the fact that the individuals future plans and the organisations future plans cooperate.

Practical expectations and other demands

The work puts some additional demands which could be hard to place under some of the earlier titles. It could touch on more concrete aspects like work hours and local questions. It is also about common medicinal demands, you need to be in more or less decent physical shape to handle the work. It could also be about attitude questions which are crucial for some types of work.



Differing between education, experience, knowledge, skills and approach.

Practically, organisations have trouble differing between education, experience, knowledge and competence. The most common problem is the assumption that education or experience is that same thing as knowledge or skills. It leads to becoming too general and unclear in setting the demands. If that happens, you are not communicating effectively. That's why it is a deciding factor that you pay attention to details in your work with the demand specifications and really clarify, to yourself and to others, what the success factors of the work are. Here it is about differing between direct and indirect demands.

Direct or indirect demands

Direct demands have a direct impact on the work achievement. It is about how behaviour, knowledge, skills or abilities which have a direct effect on how you perform your work and what you bring to the organisation.

Indirect demands are the kind of demands which in themselves don't affect the work achievements, but indirectly can create suppositions for a certain achievement. Because their effect is indirect they are not a guarantee for certain behavior. It is more like they increase the probability or improve the basis.

It is not the education in itself, but the knowledge and the approaches it is eventually translated into that affects if the person is successful.



Proposition for competence model

This competence model has been developed by Malin Lindelöw, fil.dr. in psychology.

A possibility to start with is the assumption that there are more that unites different organizations than what differentiates them. The competence model is a tool of general value and developed considering the major talent- and personality theories but also contains relevant aspects on motivation. The competence model is a living document and can be a support for developing your own competence model. You also need to be prepared to somewhat regularly look over the competence model. Work life changes, new professions are added, the organization or environment demands new things which you as an employer needs to be capable of meeting and the competence model need to be rewritten to be able to properly describe this.

Skills and approaches

The competence model contains 31 different skills and approaches and can be considered relatively covering. If you lack concepts that should be defined and added to your own version of the model. Concepts in the competence model can be categorized in different ways.

The concept that describes personal abilities, approaches that depends on a person's abilities to handle themselves and their own reactions. The next section describes social skills, also known as how a person acts when he or she needs to relate to others. After that comes the concept **leadership capabilities**, which compiles the classic dimensions which recur in formulating leaderprofiles. It is important to remember that these are dimensions that can be just as relevant to professions that does not contain a formal leadership or employee responsibility. The competence model is then finished with intellectual skills, which touches on a person's analytical capacities and capabilities to intellectually do certain tasks.

The concepts should be formed so that they reflect different dimensions and don't overlap.

The basis for strategic competence supplying and building up a competence bank is like step 1 in identifying recruitment needs and making a background analysis. Step 2 is making a need analysis through formulating a goal- and responsibility description and demand specification through critical incident (CI).



Step 1 Background analysis and recruitment needs

Preparation

The process starts with a need for recruitment, perhaps through an earlier employee quitting or the workload increasing. Tasks and new responsibilities might appear that prevents the current employees from keeping up. Like all changes this means openings for new possibilities.

You need to stop and think about the plans and strategies the organization has for the future. It might not be clear that the exact same service can be put back. Maybe it is better to restructure the tasks, or move a current co-worker upwards or to the side and get a vacancy through that.

The process can also start through the organization wanting to do structured work with competence development and find a plan for a strategic competence supplying. This can be done through working out common demand specifications for the large work groups in the organization.

The background analysis should answer question such as...

- What changes do we face?
- What areas of expertise will increase in the future?
- Who will diminish?
- Will it lead to organizational changes?
- What competence is there today?
- What development ways can we see for the current employees concerning their concerns and wishes?
- How do we want the future to look?

Start with the factual and future need for competence based on a customer- and work perspective.

Step 2 Needs analysis – goals and responsibility description

1. What goals does the operation have?
2. What goals does the employee work towards and how are they connected to the operations goals?



3. What responsibilities are there?
4. What tasks are part of fulfilling the goals?
5. What is the relative weight (hyperlink) for the different goals and tasks?

The goal- and responsibility description is a description of the organizations and the works basis. It compiles the work and is the basis of the demand specification.

Definition – relative weight

Tasks consume a lot of time

How large part of the work hours the employee puts on a certain task. Tasks with a large part are more important than tasks which do not take as many hours.

Tasks which help fulfilling the goals

How closely connected the task is to the fulfilling of the most important goals. Tasks related to the most central goals are important, even if they are not time-consuming.

The list of tasks plays a crucial role

The relative weight clarifies the actual content of the profession and makes the work with identifying competence demands easier as well as clarifying what is most central and what should be prioritized both in the daily work and in the valuing of current and future co-workers.

Needs analysis – Demand specification through critical incidents(CI)

6. Which education is necessary for this?
7. What experience is needed?
8. What knowledge is needed?
9. Which competence helps fulfilling the goals, responsibility and handles the tasks?

Answer this question by going through steps a, b, c, and d.

9.a Choose competences from the competence model (hyperlink). Do this first individually.

9.b Discuss the competences in the group and agree on a common prioritization.



Competence demands concerning a single profession are recommended to select about 6-8 competences.

9.c Identify critical incidents that mattered to the fulfilling of the goals or failing the goals. Go through the critical incidents by describing:

- *The basis*
- *The acting*
- *The result*

If the result was positive, look for the competences contributing to this. If the result was negative, evaluate which competences were missing.

Secure that a sufficient amount of critical incidents have been checked and that these adequately reflect the different goals and tasks.

9.d Compare the results for b and c. Clear out any abnormalities and document the work.

10. What other demands are necessary?

Definition – Critical incident (CI)

CI is a method for collecting information about critical incidents which have proven to be of outmost importance for reaching the set goals or not. It is originally developed in the 1950s. The goal was to map what attributes and skills were so important for work that they are the difference between succeeding and failing. (Flanagan 1954).

CI continues to build on the work which has already been done in the goal- and responsibility description but here you identify critical incidents that affected the fulfilling of the goals more concretely. The events you work with should not be fictional or hypothetical. They should be real and someone should have enough detailed knowledge about the event to describe its basis and how it happened. Someone must have been directly or indirectly involved in the event and gained an insight in the situation. It is good to choose events that affected the goal fulfillment both positively and negatively.



Suggestions for a Competence Model

The Competence Model – a tool for creating common definitions.

Personal abilities

Personal maturity. Feels secure, stable and have self-awareness. Sees relations in their right perspective, differs the personal and professional. Acts in a way attuned to the situation.

Integrity. Have well thought out and clear values and ability to think conceptually from an ethical perspective. Is ruled by ethics and values in deciding situations.

Independence. Has the courage to act after their own conviction.

Initiative taker. Takes initiative, starts activities and reaches results.

Self-sufficient. Tar ansvar för sin uppgift. Takes responsibility for their task. Structures their own attempts and drives their processes.

Flexible. Can easily adapt to changed circumstances. Can quickly change their viewpoint and approach. Sees possibilities in change.

Stable. Calm and controlled in stressful or difficult situations. Keeps a realistic perspective on situations and focuses on the right things.

Achievement focused. Works hard to reach lofty goals. Is focused on the work and actively seeks new challenges. The work results in personal enjoyment.

Energic. Has the ability to work hard and spend time, energy and commitment on their work.

Perseverant. Remains motivated and effective despite setbacks and disappointments. Keeps working until the project is finished or the goals have been reached.

Social skills

Cooperative ability. Works well with other people. Relates to them in a perceptive and smooth way. Listens, communicates and solves conflicts in a constructive way.



Relationship creating. Is outgoing and socially active in working situations. Creates contacts and maintains relationships.

Empathic ability. Has the ability to understand other peoples perspective or situations without taking over that persons feeling.

Mouth to mouth communication. Speaks clearly, well formulated and engaged in meetings and with large and small groups. Listens and is receptive for the counterpart and adapts to the situation.

Loyal. Expresses a positive attitude to their work, the operation or/and the organisation. Works according to made decisions, the work plan, goals, policies and guidelines. Only criticizes in the correct environments or directly with concerned parts or superior.

Service minded. Is calm, attentive and accommodating in their response. Have interest, will and ability to help others and does their best to deliver solutions.

Convincing. Is good at affecting and convincing. Makes others change opinion or behavior.

Cultural awareness. Values differences and understands how background, culture and group belonging affects one self and others. Has the ability to take this into account when decisions are made and line is chosen.

Leadership abilities

Leadership. Leads, motivates and gives others remit that are necessary to effectively reach common goals. Coordinates groups and becomes a point of reference for others. Creates commitment and participation.

Clear. Communicates in a clear way. Makes sure that messages get where they should and that all parts understand the expectations. Reminds and follows up.

Economical awareness.. Understands and uses business principles. Focuses on costs, income and effectiveness from an economical perspective.

Strategic. Thinks strategically and has a wide perspective on questions. Sees the long-term importance and other consequences and adapts their actions to this.

Judgment. Makes correct decisions and priorities. Weighs together complex information and different considerations and shows good judgment.



Decisive. Makes quick decisions and acts based on these, despite limited information or difficult circumstances. Shows judgment under time pressure.

Intellectual abilities

Structured. Plans, organizes and prioritizes the work effectively. Makes and holds timeframes.

Quality aware. Is exact and well aware of goals and quality standard. Put heavy weight on living up to these.

Creative Often has new ideas and new ways of solving problems in work related questions. Rethinking that can be used practically and leads to results.

Specialist knowledge. Understands the union aspects of the work especially well. Continually supplies their specialist knowledge. Is a resource for others.

Problem solving analysis capability. Works well with complex questions. Analyzes and breaks down problem to component parts and solves complicated problems.

Numerically analytical ability. Understands numerical basis. Reads numerical tasks quickly and correctly.

Linguistic analytical ability. Understands complicated linguistic basis, both written and spoken. Produces own documents of high quality.



Conclusions

What you have created through the competence model is common terms and a common language, which aids communication with each others. The common terms help structure the work with manpower, new recruits and developing the current employees. The competence model becomes a kind of “smorgasbord” from which you can choose the skills and approaches a certain work category or profession needs. They are part of the demand profile - alongside education, experience and special skills. Except that the concepts secure the meanings when we ask for a certain ability or skill it also has continued use for development of current employees. The concepts you have identified for a profession is an excellent starting point for competence areas which single employees need to develop.

We have succeeded when we have a clear picture of:

- What basis can we expect in the future and what competences do we need
- What knowledge and competence that needs to carry the organization forward to help with reaching the goals of the organization
- What demands will we put on tomorrow's coworkers
- How do we want to work to develop current coworkers to meet new challenges
- How we will work to be an attractive employer and keeping the right coworkers

Above work with mapping competences and gathering them in a bank of competence is done manually but you can with advantage use any kind of IT-based tools to compile the material and then use the tool in the continued development work with strategic competence maintenance.

Today the market has several IT-based tools to use. It is important that such a registry tool might work together with other programs that deal with personal information. That is why it hasn't been possible during the project time to use a common such tool because our organizations have different rules and use different systems.



IT-based Competence Bank in Norway

After the central bargaining in Norway in the spring of 2008, employers are obliged to carry out surveys of employee skills and expertise needed to analyze the local authorities. Skills and competence are of great importance for the individual employee, community and society. This applies to all skills, both formal and informal learning. To secure and develop general and specific business skills is important to consider the individual's formal and real competence and encourage skills upgrading.

It is important that employees are motivated to increase their knowledge and enhance their skills through targeted and systematic training through internal and external offers. Employers and individual employees have individually and jointly responsible for participating in skills development.

Employers have a responsibility to identify the employee skills and expertise needed to analyze the local authorities. On the basis of this survey it will be prepared a plan for skills upgrading.

In Bodø, it was decided to search in the market for an IT- based tool that could perform this mapping. It was also decided that we should look for a supplement to the programs that already was used in our community.

TOOL BOX

Based on our ideas and work about strategic competence development and how to build up a competence bank we have prepared a tool box for any other organisation intressed in use our ideas about strategic competence development and how to building up competence bank.

The Tool Box contents

1. Guidelines

Instructions for how to start work with strategic competence development and competencebank

2. Conclusions



1.8 Projectgroup

Pick out representatives from the departments or groups of staff who would be involved in this work.

Anchor the project in the management group

1.9 Projectplan

Write a detailed and concrete plan with a description of the target and the implementation.

- What ?
- When?
- How?
- Who?

1.10 Evaluate continuous

- What have been done?
- What remains?
- What must we change?

1.11 Conclusion and choice of care programs

1.12 Completion of the survey to all employees

- Information to all employers; what information must be entered and why
- Create a recipe for implementation
- Add ensure that everyone can do this yourself
- Paving the way for those who do not have enough computer skills with the help and access to computer



Conclusions

After completion of this, there are several possibilities for the use of this documentation of employee skills .

Initially this was meant to be used in wage negotiations, but we now have the opportunity to have a better planning of our services and the need for resources in the future.

In a future of scarcity of human resources is important to have a better idea of what we need of expertise. This is therefore used in all future recruitment in the municipality. It gives us a better idea of what our staff have the expertise to come forward.