



CASE STUDY

Fast-Tracking Competency Model Development

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BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The client is a large global retail organization with a desire to create a more formalized development path for succession into management positions. This particular management position is a critical role in the organization but the internal Talent Management team has had a difficult time finding qualified, interested candidates. Given the global emphasis and fast pace of the organization, the specific challenges were:

- Outlining the requisite skills and major responsibilities of the position to more clearly communicate scope and key aspects of role
- Attracting internal candidates to the positions
- Creating consistency in the role requirements across countries and business units
- Defining a complete set of retail competency models (across three levels of management) within six months

The Talent Management team recognized that it needed a highly specialized, efficient consulting partner with global expertise to create the unique, customized models for these critical roles in the organization. The organization chose viaPeople to help them with this initiative. The decision was not only based on the expertise of viaPeople's Industrial Organizational Psychology consulting team, but also because of viaPeople's flexible software platform which can support future assessment initiatives once the models were defined.

SOLUTION

viaPeople recommended a three-step process to identify critical behaviors, skills and key responsibilities necessary for success in this role.

STEP 1: Data Collection

To accommodate the global management structure and achieve maximum buy-in for the process, the viaPeople consulting team gathered critical job information in three different ways:

- In-person focus groups
- Web-based focus groups
- One-on-one telephone interviews

Using these three formats provided flexibility for the organization, expedited the data collection process and still allowed the viaPeople consulting team to get the most important job details first-hand from the employees. For all of the models, the viaPeople consultants also collected job information from the incumbent's manager to ensure that all current (as well as future) skills were taken into account.

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STEP 2: Classification of Behaviors into Competencies

In order to design a customized competency model for these management positions, the viaPeople consulting team categorized the similar qualitative data into factors, eventually comprising distinct competencies. Because of the unique organizational culture, the management competency models needed to highlight areas of particular importance to the organization. As such, behaviors addressing constant change and ambiguity, key trends in the industry, monitoring competition and other behaviors not commonly found in standard or “canned” competency models were included.

STEP 3: Ensuring Content Validity with Management Population

Regardless of how carefully a competency model is developed, it is important to “test” the model within the current management population to ensure its relevance and usefulness. After draft versions of the competency models were developed, these models were provided to the managers in order to gather more feedback on specific wording and terminology. The models were also provided to the managers so that they could use them in a mock assessment with staff members and determine whether the behaviors defined in the models were appropriate for this level of leader.

The models were also presented to the HR Steering Committee and the Executive Board for final review.

RESULTS

The competency modeling initiative was a great success not only in identifying those unique behaviors that make leaders in this particular industry successful, but also in the level of buy-in achieved for the models.

The Talent Management team initially utilized the models to accomplish two objectives: measuring the performance of the current management population and focusing their resources on developing a training program for existing and future managers.

Once the organization fully implemented the models, it allowed high potential candidates to more clearly see the skills needed and scope of role for these management positions, making it more attractive in terms of a career path. The models also allowed the organization to define consistent expectations and standards for the role across business units and countries. Ultimately, the competency models allowed the organization to attract the best candidates for these positions and provide learning opportunities for existing managers so they can continue to excel in their career growth within the company.

