



Unlocking the Door to Talent

Adapted from *Three Things You Should Know About Workplace Competencies*

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Competencies are the key to talent.

Whether you are looking for a new job or a promotion, employers will try to evaluate how well your talents fit with a given role. These evaluations are rarely 100% accurate, but when properly carried out they are the best predictor of future job performance and engagement. Predictions are particularly accurate when performance is carefully measured, and when the job in question has been thoroughly profiled.

But what competencies are employers looking for today, and how do they measure them? Here are three key observations.



Although most organizations see themselves as unique, they are largely looking for the same set of competencies.

They're looking for EQ, good judgment, integrity, global mindset, resilience and learning agility (which is yet to be coherently defined). Cynics view these competencies as mere "HR fads", but they are also reflective of our Zeitgeist and indicative of what employers value today, particularly when they look for future leaders. So, what do they want? They want learning animals, with the capacity to see things from a global perspective, and an ability to solve problems that have still not been defined. In fact, finding problems is as important as solving them. They also value

interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Interestingly, despite the high penetration of technology in the workplace and the fact that most of our relationships are now mediated by technology, there is still a premium for soft skills, and big decisions are as driven by chemistry and intuition as they have been in the past. And in addition to all this employers are interested in people who are honest and dependable, as well as able to deal with stress and pressure. In brief, companies look for individuals who can get ahead, get along, and find meaning at work.



Competency-based interviews are a great idea, but they are rarely adequately executed.

First, because when candidates know in advance what scenarios they will be given – e.g., “tell me about a situation where you demonstrated composure and leadership”, or “can you think of a situation where you displayed altruism and team spirit” – they can prepare their answers and fake-good. Unsurprisingly, when interviewees are aware of the selection criteria they tend to perform better on the interview. Second, since the most effective interviews are structured and scored according to pre-defined criteria and data-driven algorithms (i.e., people who answer

X will usually do Y in the future), they can usually be replaced by psychometric tests, which are also quicker and more cost-effective. Third, what matters most to employers is not so much what competencies you already have, but what competencies you are likely to develop in the future – again, this can be better predicted by personality tests than a resume or interview. The big money is on the rare find or the ability to identify the real hidden gems that will develop into the superstars of tomorrow, and that requires much more than a job interview.



Competencies are necessary, but not sufficient, for success.

Indeed, the real world is full of examples of competent people who despite all their talents end up underperforming or even derailing. These cases of wasted talent can be found in every culture, every industry, and every organization. At times the core problem is integrity – think Dominic Strauss Kahn, the promiscuous IMF pimp who in spite of his extraordinary intellect and expertise was unable to inhibit his psychopathic and deviant dark side tendencies. At times the main issue is simply motivation. Organizational psychologists have long distinguished between maximal performance – the best you can do – and typical performance – what you usually do – and

the difference between the two is motivation. Thus an important task for leaders, if not the most important one, is to ensure that the difference between individuals' maximal and typical performance is as minimal as possible. In order to achieve this they need to be able to engage their employees and teams. The world of sports is full of examples of talented professional athletes who, upon changing teams or managers, experience dramatic changes in performance, sometimes for a very long time – Fernando Torres, Andy Murray, and Maria Sharapova illustrate such inconsistencies, as well as the importance of a good coach.

The Bottom Line

For nearly 30 years, Hogan has helped some of the most advanced and powerful organizations in the world get the right people in the right place. Now, Hogan Configure brings the same game-changing people analytics to you.

Hogan Configure leverages three decades of data to create the only competency-based solution that puts Hogan's predictive power and scientific rigor at your fingertips. The easy-to-use, three-step process allows employers to create, customize and compare candidates in order to determine their key attributes, qualities and skills.

Competencies are the key to talent. Hogan Configure allows companies to decode that talent, and accurately identify those who will thrive in a particular position, whether it's a new hire or someone within your organization.



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