Competency Development

**Continuous Learning and Job Knowledge**
This competency means to have the ability to develop and improve one’s skills and knowledge through learning events and experiences in order to achieve overall objectives and adapt to changes in the workplace. It can be done through seminars and workshops, trainings, coaching or mentoring. It also involves taking responsibility for keeping up to date on current research and technology in one’s work and identifying areas for development and training that will enhance job performance. Job knowledge competency measures one’s mastery of the concepts needed to perform certain work and includes elements of both capacity to learn and opportunity to learn.

*Developmental Suggestions*
- Complete required online training and complete additional online training courses that are applicable.
- Be on the lookout for seminars, workshops, classes that are applicable and ask supervisor if you can attend.
- Read periodicals, journals, books and online topics that will help you stay informed on current information related to your job or to your organization.


**Building Relationships**
This competency is about working to build or maintain friendly, reciprocal and warm relationships or networks of contacts with people. Building relationships means developing and maintaining good relationships with a variety of people. The person who possesses this competency makes close personal friends, has a wide, informal network of colleagues and nurtures relationships related to activities or projects.

*Developmental Suggestions*
- Take part in professional associations or appropriate social events to build a network and strengthen relationships.
- Identify organizational dynamics. Practice thinking in terms of these dynamics rather than simply about individuals or roles. What are the systemic relationships of people and groups within the organization? How can these relationships be capitalized on to win support for your ideas?


**Communication**
This competency is the ability to send clear and convincing messages to an audience in an open and effective way. People with this competency make their presentations in an engaging style and are open to dialogue with the audience. The person who possesses this competency uses nonverbal cues, like tone of voice, to express feelings that reinforce messages and uses visual aids to clarify or underscore messages when making a presentation.

*Developmental Suggestions*
- Identify and observe others who have an engaging style while presenting. Pay particular attention to their nonverbal behavior. Notice the visual aids being used and how the aids help to get the message across.
- When providing information to people, encourage them to ask questions and to summarize the key points to ensure they have understood.
Videotape yourself making a presentation and critique it for style, use of example and nonverbal cues.

Watch the movie, Mr. Holland’s Opus for use of communication techniques.


**Dependability and Organizational Support**

This competency can be described as taking action that is consistent with what you say and value. It includes communicating intentions, ideas, and feelings openly and directly and welcoming openness and honesty in others. The individual shows integrity and takes responsibility for his/her own behavior and performance. This individual builds trust through reliability and authenticity. This competency is not just about reacting to the requests of others; it’s also about being proactive in knowing what other’s needs are before they are articulated.

**Developmental Suggestions**

- Spend some time exploring the values and principles that you feel most strongly about. Write down the most important ones and examine whether your behavior is consistent with these values.

- Set a measurable goal to improve the level of service provided to your customers. Include a needs analysis, an analysis of your service and an analysis of the concerns and needs of your customers.

Recommended Reading: Principle-Centered Leadership, Stephen Covey, 1992.

**Teamwork, Cooperation, and Diversity Commitment**

This competency is about working cooperatively with others, being part of a team, and working together as opposed to working separately or competitively. Teamwork is enjoying shared responsibility and rewards for accomplishments. It is actively participating and enjoying building the capability of the team. The person who possesses the competency Teamwork maintains cooperative working relationships, builds team identity and promotes a friendly, cooperative climate.

**Developmental Suggestions**

- Create a symbol or project for a group or team to rally around, or hold a get-together to celebrate the team’s success.

- Avoid taking control of the agenda or being the first to make suggestions; share the different roles being played in the group.

- Watch the movie The Great Escape, which shows both the problems and benefits of people working together to accomplish common objectives.


**Achievement Orientation**

This competency shows a concern for working toward a standard of excellence. This standard may be a personal need to improve performance over past accomplishments, to outperform others, or even to surpass the greatest accomplishment ever achieved. The person who possesses the competence of Achievement Orientation anticipates obstacles, takes calculated risks, and sets measurable goals.

**Developmental Suggestions**

- Consider current projects to practice Achievement Orientation. Create some moderate risk goals or an innovative solution for the project. Regularly monitor progress against the plan and discuss progress with others. The goal is to understand the implications of the work and accomplishments against a plan.

- Keep a log of demonstrated Achievement Orientation behaviors. At the end of the day or week, think about how well obstacles were anticipated. Determine any risks that were taken and any progress toward the work or personal goals.

**Judgment and Decisions**

This competency is demonstrated when an individual identifies and understands issues, problems and opportunities by comparing data from different sources in order to draw conclusions. The person who possesses this competency takes action that is consistent with available facts, constraints and probable consequences.

Developmental Suggestions

- When preparing for a change, think about the people involved. How will the change impact them? What questions or comments might be made? Use the answers to prepare for a discussion with the affected individuals.

- Take part in a task force or committee on an important and timely organizational/cross-departmental problem. Analyze committee members’ styles and thought processes. Interview or shadow a leader whom you find an effective decision maker.


**Leadership and Initiative**

Leadership competency is the ability to take on the role as leader of a team or group. It implies a desire to lead others. People with this competency work to bring people together to get the job done. They are able to build a strong sense of belonging within the group, leading others to feel they are part of something larger than themselves. This person makes activities or projects engaging and inspires others by articulating a vision or mission. Initiative competency is the ability to identify a problem, obstacle or opportunity and take action on it. People who show initiative are consistently striving to do better, to experience new challenges and opportunities and to be held accountable for their actions and ideas. The person who possesses this competency acts rather than waits and seeks information in creative ways.

Developmental Suggestions

- Volunteer to be a leader of a service organization that markets its information to the community and solicits funds for support.

- Make a list of all external factors that affect your department (e.g., economy, state legislature). Make a similar list of all internal factors affecting your department (e.g., leadership styles, organizational goals and strategies). Looking at both lists, identify changes, emerging trends and opportunities and problems. Map out in detail the steps you need to take in order to capitalize on those opportunities or take actions to prevent significant problems.

- Interview or shadow a leader whom you find inspirational. Ask yourself why you find this individual inspirational. Analyze this person’s style and ask how he/she views his/her role.

- Watch the movie, *Twelve O’clock High* for an in depth study of leadership-how it can succeed and how it can fail.


**Supervisors - Managing and Supervising People**

This is about the ability to foster the long-term learning or development of others. Its focus is on the developmental intent and effect rather than on the formal role of teaching or training. Those who do this well spend time helping people find their own way to excellence through specific feedback on current performance. The person who possesses this competency offers feedback to improve another person’s performance, mentors or coaches others and recognizes specific strengths of others.

Developmental Suggestions

- Regularly take time to talk to individuals about their aspirations, the things they want to do better and the things they would like to try out.

- Watch the movie *Good Will Hunting*. This story is about helping someone see the opportunities in his future.