

AGILE BASED COMPETENCY MANAGEMENT

ABC Management

Output 1 / Activity 4

Article: Proper competency assessment

Article author

E-PEERS

Date of delivery

OCTOBER 2015

Project partners





1. Competency assessments

Competence management requires a proper assessment of the competences which the employees have and, therefore, forces the organization to make the continuous monitoring of the level of their knowledge and skills, providing at the same moment, the methods for carrying out such an analysis. This requires the application of the system of periodic assessment, in which the competences are equal to the criteria. In practice, there are four main groups of methods and tools used in the competence assessments:

- **observation scales and questionnaires** (based on the evaluation of 180 and 360-degree) - refer to the observable aspects of people functioning, which are described at all levels using behavioral language-descriptions of behavior;
- **competency tests** - they evaluate competencies in terms of knowledge (how we should behave) and attitudes (what is our attitude towards to the required behaviors);
- **a behavioral interview** (a base of human resources selection process) - this is the kind of conversation, in which questions are asked with a description of the specific competence; answering the questions, the employee has to refer to his or her experience from the past; It is assumed that if someone behaved in a certain way in the past, he or she will behave the same in the future;
- **Assessment & Development Center** - a variety of methods, techniques and instruments used to diagnose competences; they may include different types of tests, samples of work, job, or interviews.

Assessing all of the employees in terms of the competence they work with, allows us to create a database of all the competences in the organization. Thanks to the fact it allows to have a full awareness of the level of competence, as well as the inadequacies and the untapped potential of all people employed. Analysis of competence is necessary for making the relevant decisions in the context of the implementation connected with the company strategies and long-term plans.

2. 360 degree feedback study



Let's take a look at a study based on feedback 360 degrees. The aim of the feedback is to support the development of the tested individual. It's name comes from the fact that the feedback for the respondent is given by the observers, who are people from their surroundings: the supervisor, co-workers and subordinates.

Let's see the example : Adam's boss is Jan, the subordinate is Anna, and Adam often works with Michael. If Adam was being tested, then the others would observe him and provide feedback. It's possible to modify this study: 270-degree feedback, or 180-degree when it is given only by some of the observers (e.g. feedback is not given by the subordinates, or only by the supervisor). The respondent, in each of the variants, conducts a self-assessment. Sometimes the word "feedback" is replaced with the term "assessment".

As a part of the study, the participants (both the respondent and the observers) have to indicate in the presented case - a description of a situation reflecting the company reality - a type of response or action, which is most typical of the tested person, as well as one, which describes them least.

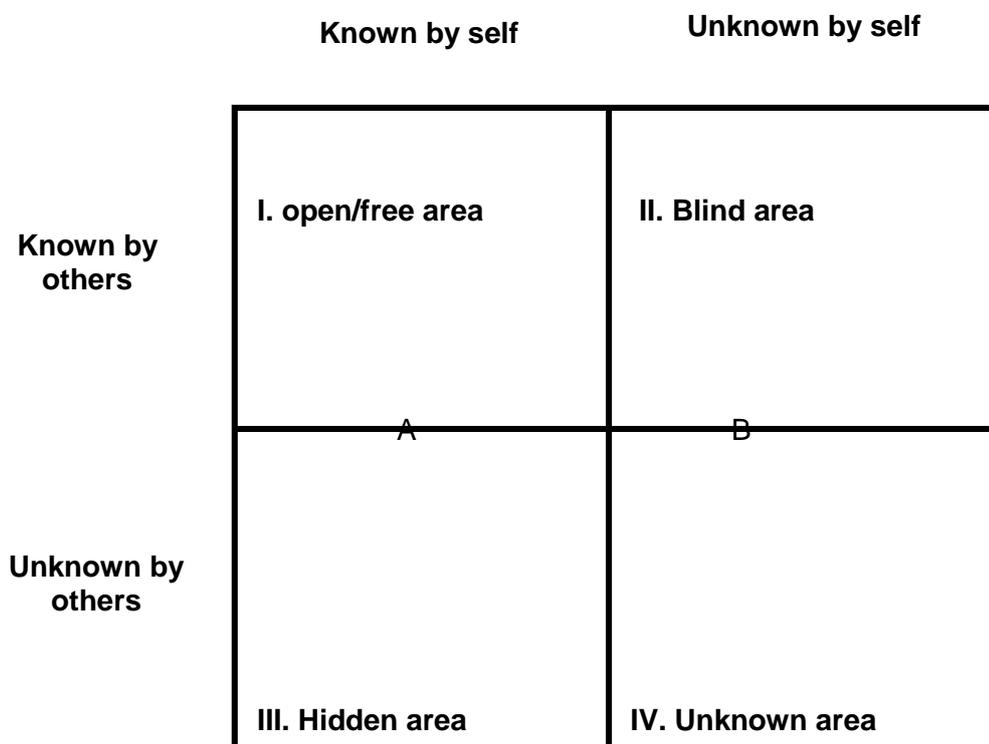
In order for feedback to be valuable, it is important for the people giving it to be carefully chosen. These should be individuals who've had a lot of interaction with the respondent and have worked together for at least 6-9 months. Depending on the organization's decision, the observers are chosen by HR after consulting the supervisors and the respondents, or by the respondents themselves. Each of these solutions has its advantages. In the first case, when the observers are chosen by HR, the feedback is more balanced. When observers are picked by the respondents themselves, then the feedback is easier to accept. Even if it's not quite complete, it always gives information necessary to build a development plan.

The study results are anonymous and the assessed person receives them in an individual report. This report includes both the information on the respondent's average result related to a given competence, as well as the information regarding the range of the results received by people taking part in the study (e.g. the average result was 45%, and the results range from 20% to 75%). It applies both to the co-workers and to the subordinates (feedback may not always be anonymous as some employees have only one supervisor). Of course, it may happen that the study considers only one co-worker or one subordinate. In this case, individual consent is required.



3. Why do we need feedback?

Why should we care about feedback at all? The concept of Johari window comes to it's defence.



Window A is the comfort zone meaning that the person's knowledge about themselves and the observers opinions are the same. As a part of the feedback, such compliant information becomes visible. However, feedback will also include content from Window B which will be surprising for the respondent. What's more, feedback will not include the content from Window C which can be considered unfair by the respondent.

4. Barriers in receiving feedback

It is not easy to give feedback however, it's easier to provide if it's anonymous. It is also difficult to receive feedback. During the workshop, which is used to create the Individual Development Plan, the feedback reaches the respondent. Apart from the processes described in the Johari window concept, there are also three different perspectives that form in the respondent's mind:

- his own idea about himself, his competencies and the gaps in them
- his own idea of how the feedback from others will look
- feedback from others

The report which the respondent and Adam gets, includes the results as a percentage according to a particular competence divided into the results from: the self-assessment, the result received from the supervisor, the co-workers result and the subordinates result. Each of these results is completed with a comment facilitating it's interpretation. After analysing the data and

understanding the feedback, the participants are now clear about how they are seen. One more important comment here. This perception is of course subjective.



The received feedback may be totally contradictory with the respondent's self-assessment. It does not change the fact that the feedback makes the respondent aware about how he is seen by his colleagues. By receiving feedback, the respondent makes an effort of planning the activities that are part of the Individual Development Plan. This in turn will change the respondent's behaviour and as a consequence, the way he is seen by colleagues. You can find the details about report construction and how to interpret it in a video tutorial entitled "Different Kinds of Competence Reports".

5. What are the benefits?

Let's look once again at the benefits of giving and receiving feedback.

- Firstly, by receiving feedback from many perspectives, the respondents have the chance to check how their activities/behaviours are perceived by their workers/co-workers/subordinates.
- Secondly, on the basis of the received feedback, the respondents receive information which is necessary to improve their behaviours and a way of communicating it so it's in line with the competencies required of them in their position.
- Thirdly, by getting precise feedback about their own behaviour, the respondents have the possibility to increase the awareness of their own incompetencies and plan growth.

Remember, feedback is a great gift which gives you a chance for perfection.