

# AGILE BASED COMPETENCY MANAGEMENT

ABC Management

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### 1. The meaning of context

Often enough the classic methods of competence assessment give results, that assessed people cannot draw fast, relevant solutions. Why? The answer is simple: these methods don't take context into account. The context is defined as different realities in which the tested individuals function. The common approach in the practice of management is based on the idea that competencies are as an all-purpose. Description of each competency is therefore usually very general so it fits for various work-related situations. Such an approach is to ensure a high degree of efficiency through standardization of the terms of reference books. Meanwhile, the result is that the descriptions are vague and it is difficult to use them for specific positions in various organizations with their diversity and specific differences. The context of work creates a big impact on the use by the employees. In every organization there are certain values and rules of proceedings (often unwritten) that influence our behaviour. The other factors are also important: relationships with superiors and colleagues, the pressure of time, different types of behaviour, bonus systems etc. These factors may significantly facilitate or hinder the use of employee competence.

### 2. Contextual Competence Assessment method

This approach is revealed in the Contextual Competence Assessment method. It goes without saying, that In the Contextual Competence Assessment method - an important role is played by the context. which is understood as the work reality in which the process of the study is set. For example, a production company works within a different context than that of a legal court or a sales organization.



But let's sort it out. The following structure is used in our method: Each studied competence has its own definition, which is very general. But for example: the "team building" competence may have the following definition:

*It is a conscious process-based action undertaken by a supervisor (based on selected activities) which works to satisfy the emotional and job related needs of team members. The aim of this process is to create an environment where every team member understands and identifies with the goals set for the team. During performance team members follow adopted norms and rules.*

Each competence is divided into aspects. Aspects can be described as the components of a given competence. In the "team building" competence, the following aspects can be distinguished: setting standards and rules, building trust and matching tasks to employees. Each aspect has its own definition. In the case of the "setting standards and rules" aspect, the definition may be as follows:

*"Standards and rules set by the supervisor relate to the specific expected behaviour as well as the unacceptable one. Norms and rules are needed by the team in order to set the rules of cooperation both in the operational and the ethical areas."*

As noted, there is no situational context at any of the above levels - the characteristics of the workplace has no influence on the definitions of competencies and their aspects.

The context carriers are the descriptions of situations - cases. A description of a situation relates to each aspect separately - during the study each aspect is represented by one situation description. Each of these descriptions is provided with three possible reactions. The respondents are supposed to choose the behaviour which is most typical of them - responses closest to them (maximum) and responses least familiar to them (minimum).

Descriptions of situations may vary depending on the context. In production companies interactions between employees are different from those in sales organizations or legal courts.

Let's see how it works in specific examples.

Let's take the "Communication" competence and "Giving Feedback" aspect. In the case of a production company, a correctly prepared description of a situation will sound like this:

*According to the programme, 10 units were supposed to be prepared for the client yesterday and sent to them this morning. However, it turns out that they weren't accepted because 4 of them were not assembled correctly. The client informed us that he doesn't want to waste time unloading the delivery because he can see the defects. He demands a complete redelivery and is very dissatisfied. This situation was caused by a particular person in your team. How will you conduct the conversation?*

In the case of the sales organization:

*As a Regional Sales Manager, you made a sales plan for this month with each of your subordinates individually. It is halfway through the month and you see that you are off target. Results vary. However in your team there are individuals that are significantly below target. How do you react in such a situation?*



In the case of the court, it will be as follows:

*During your absence one of your employees sent a notice to the president of the court. It turned out that the notice was returned because it wasn't prepared using the applicable template. Because of this, the case that was supposed to be done is still pending. How do you deal with your subordinate?*

All of these situations should help one measure the level of similar competencies and aspects, but they substantially differ in content. This approach is the most important assumption of the Contextual Competence Assessment Method.

### 3. What are the benefits?

To sum up, let's see how context relates to the study of competence:

- Firstly, thanks to this method we avoid the need to interpret participant's specific behaviours. We give the tested individual clear information which helps to develop the competencies.
- Secondly, in order to create the action plan we avoid the tested individual's interpretation. This helps them relate the feedback received to specific situations.
- Thirdly, the Contextual Competency Assessment Method has similar dynamics, credibility and effectiveness to that of the Assessment Center study. It becomes it's equivalent but is less organizationally complicated and definitely much less expensive.