EMERGING COMPETENCY METHODS FOR THE FUTURE

Timothy R. Athey and Michael S. Orth

Competency-based applications have gained a foothold in HR practice worldwide; however, changes in the business environment and the structure of work itself are challenging the value of traditional competency methods in achieving strategic organizational benefits. The key question facing HR executives and practitioners today is how to leverage existing competency practices to greatly increase the impact of competency development on business results. The authors identify five emerging trends in the evolution of competency methods, identify the implications for HR practice, and propose several new directions for the application of competency methods to improve organizational learning and business performance. © *1999 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.*

Introduction

The use of competency methods as the basis for human resource management has become widespread in the United States and is gaining a foothold in international HR practice. An entire industry of consulting has grown up around the design and application of competency models, with sold-out conferences devoted to the topic now taking place. Some estimates indicate that U.S. businesses have spent as much as $100 million a year over the past several years in developing and implementing competency models (Spencer, 1997).

The growth of the competency industry has not been without controversy. While some eminent figures in the field have viewed the competency movement as revolutionary (Lawler, 1994; McClelland, 1994; 1973), others have seriously questioned the validity of the approach (Barrett & Depinet, 1991; Barrett, 1997). As the growth of competency applications continues to accelerate, it is appropriate to reflect on the direction this movement is taking. This article investigates how the use of traditional competency methods is evolving and targets several potential new directions for the future of competency practice.

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What Are Competencies?

The definition of what a competency is has evolved significantly over the years. The earliest concept provided by McClelland (1973) referred to competencies as components of performance associated with "clusters of life outcomes" (p. 15). This definition views competencies very broadly as any psychological or behavioral attributes associated with success. As the concept matured, thinking shifted to a more specific view of competencies as "knowledge, skills, abilities, or other characteristics (KSAOs) that differentiate high from average performance" (Mirable, 1997, p. 75). The

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concept has also been taken to the strategic level by Prahalad and Hamel (1990), who introduced the concept of "core competence" to refer to the unique intellectual, process, and product competencies associated with market competitiveness. It is not uncommon today to hear the term *organizational competencies* used in reference to the collective learning and performance capabilities of entire companies. The competency concept has had a powerful impact on HR practice and will continue to influence the field for decades to come.

Most readers are aware that the competency movement was originally initiated by David McClelland (1973) as an alternative to the trait and intelligence approaches to measuring and predicting human performance.

Given the degree of change impacting many companies today, the concept of competency has, by necessity, taken on much broader dimensions. Based on current thinking, as well as the authors' experience, the definition that best fits the direction in which the competency field is moving is represented as follows:

> A competency is . . .
>
> a set of *observable* performance dimensions, including *individual* knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as *collective* team, process, and organizational capabilities, that are linked to *high performance*, and provide the organization with *sustainable competitive advantage*.

Based on this definition, competencies may include a wide range of individual, team, or organizational capabilities, including the following:

- knowledge or skills associated with current job performance;
- emerging knowledge or skills required for future success;
- intellectual or behavioral best practices of high performing people or teams;
- process capabilities that enhance organizational or business performance;
- new ways of thinking or behaving that provide distinctive competitive advantage.

As competency methods evolve to meet rapidly changing business needs, the definition of what competencies represent will also continue to change.

The Roots of the Competency Approach

Most readers are aware that the competency movement was originally initiated by David McClelland (1973) as an alternative to the trait and intelligence approaches to measuring and predicting human performance. Originally applied to the field of educational achievement testing, the competency approach was soon adopted for many other educational and business applications. The key advantages of the competency approach, and the reasons for its widespread adoption in industry, can be summarized as follows (McClelland, 1973):

1. The best way to understand performance is to observe what people *actually do* to be successful (i.e., competencies), rather than rely on assumptions about underlying traits or attributes such as intelligence.
2. The best way to measure and predict performance is to have people *perform* key aspects of the competency you want to measure, rather than administering a test to assess underlying traits or attributes.
3. Competencies can be *learned and developed* over time, in contrast to traits and attributes that are viewed as inherent and largely immutable.
4. Competencies should be made *visible and accessible* to people so they can understand and develop the required level of performance, rather than be cloaked in the veil of mystery associated with traits and intelligence factors.
5. Competencies should be linked to *meaningful life outcomes* that describe the way people must perform in the real world, rather than esoteric mental traits or constructs that only psychologists can understand.

While these basic principles may seem obvious in retrospect, they have laid the foundation for thinking about human learning and performance and have guided the development of existing competency methods for addressing the challenges of twentieth century organizations.

Trends in the Evolution of Competency Methods

Competency methods have served the HR profession well for several decades. However, changes in the business environment and the nature of work itself have created new problems and challenges for the implementation of competency methods in many organizations. Based on the changes taking place in many organizations, we point to five basic trends in the evolution of competency methods that will directly impact their future use by HR professionals. Although these trends challenge our basic assumptions about competency methods, they reflect a natural evolution in the application of these methods to meet changing business and organizational needs.

Trend 1: Demand for More Participative Competency Approaches

This a controversial issue in the field of competency practice today and is the subject of considerable debate (Barrett, 1997; Spencer, 1997; Boyatzis, 1994). The competency modeling process grew out of the scientific "control group" method in which the behavior of a select group of high performers is compared to a group of average performers. The frequency of behaviors between these two groups is then tested for statistically significant differences with the end result being a "model" of the competencies uniquely demonstrated by high performers.

While this approach makes intuitive sense, its use in the increasingly open organizational settings that exist in many companies today can cause problems. The control group approach is often applied in a deceptive manner with participants often not told the truth about the group (high performer or average) to which they belong. The purpose of deception, common to psychological research, is to minimize bias in the data collection process that may result from people knowing the group to which they have been assigned; however, the advantages in validity gained through this approach are increasingly outweighed by the secrecy and the resulting erosion of trust that accompanies this method. As organizations move to more open and participative work arrangements, the "scientific" approach to competency modeling will become less and less feasible.

While there may continue to be targeted applications for "control group" methods in the future, the use of more open and participative approaches to competency analysis is clearly the direction in which the competency field is moving (McLagan & Nel, 1997). This trend is taking many forms, from the design of skill management responsibilities into self-managed teams (Mohrman, Cohen, & Mohrman, 1995) to the growing use of software applications that provide broad access to competency tools and information throughout the organization (R. Mirable, personal communication, January 1998). The focus of HR practice in the future will likely be less on the precise definition of competencies themselves and more on the development of ways to ensure the direct access and appropriate use of competency methods by managers and employees in an increasingly open information environment.

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Trend 2: Shift Toward Short-Cycle Competency Methods

As explained above, the traditional approach to competency modeling typically involves identifying groups of "high" and "average" performers, conducting behavioral interviews (often tape recorded and transcribed), content analysis of those interviews, and testing for statistically significant differences between the two groups. While this approach provides some degree of statistical reliability in identifying the specific behaviors that actually differentiate high from average performance, it can be very time and cost intensive and often not a good fit for organizations with rapidly changing job structures and performance requirements.

As a result of growing competition and cost pressure, many organizations have dramatically reduced the cycle time required to deliver new products and services to the market (Meyer, 1993). This has, in turn, impacted the cycle time available for skill acquisition and development and has required organizations to adopt accelerated competency strategies to support this pace of change. For these reasons, many organizations are moving to

more flexible, computer-based competency management systems that can respond quickly to changing business needs and skill requirements (Mirable, 1998).

Linked to a common database of competencies, managers and employees are using automated competency systems to quickly profile new performance requirements and to access the information and training they need to build the required knowledge and skills (McLagan & Nel, 1997). These systems expedite the identification and deployment of people within the company who may possess specific competencies needed for critical project or business activities. While automated competency systems lack some of the precision of more in-depth approaches, they more than compensate by the speed with which new competencies can be identified, developed, and deployed throughout the organization. As information systems become more "intelligent" and user friendly, automated competency methods will likely become the norm.

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Trend 3: Increasing Emphasis on Emerging Future Competencies

The traditional approach to competency modeling has, by its very nature, often been more focused on describing past behavior than on anticipating future performance requirements. This is due to the fact that competencies are typically identified by comparing the behavior of people *currently* classified as high and average performers, then looking for differences between the two groups. Although this approach is acceptable for some applications, there are two potential problems that can occur.

First, the focus of competency analysis is usually on the performance that people have demonstrated in the past to achieve results. For example, critical behavior interviewing, one of the most commonly employed approaches to analyzing competencies, specifically requires people to recall past events or "critical incidents" that demonstrate effective or ineffective performance. This process provides a detailed profile of what past success looks like, but often lends little insight into what people must do differently in the future to meet changing business needs.

Secondly, competencies are often subtly influenced by existing norms and values about what represents "high" or "average" performance in a particular organization. These cultural norms and values have a direct impact on how success is defined and determine the people who are selected as "high" or "average" performers. Consequently, many competency models provide more insight into the correct behaviors that are rewarded by management than into what effective performance should be in the future. As the pace of change accelerates in many industries, the capacity to anticipate future competency requirements and to let go of old ways of thinking and behaving will become an increasingly important competitive advantage.

Trend 4: Increasing Focus on Team and Process Competencies

Fundamental to the competency approach is the emphasis on *individual* learning and performance. This view is based on the psychological approach to learning and performance pioneered by McClelland (1973) and other psychologists who launched the field of competency study. Underlying this view is the assumption that the individual is the primary unit of analysis in understanding organizational performance. Consequently, the bulk of competency modeling work that has occurred over the past several decades has focused largely on exploring the differences in performance between individual people. As long as the "job" continues to be the basic unit of analysis for describing work, the individual approach to competency development has served HR practitioners well; however, two developments in the structure of work today have changed this view.

First, many organizations are rapidly moving away from hierarchical management structures to flatter, more process-driven arrangements (Quinn, 1992; Lawler, 1994; Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick, & Kerr, 1995; Galbraith, 1995; Overholt, 1997). From the manufacturing line to the board room, it is increasingly common to see temporary, cross-functional teams organized around core processes as the dominant work structure. Consequently, it is becoming more important to understand and develop cross-functional team and process

capabilities as critical variables in achieving business results. This does not imply that HR practitioners simply focus on "individual behavior" in team or process settings, but that they actually apply competency methods to understand and improve collective team and process performance.

Secondly, most organizations are faced with a growing need to utilize people with critical skills and knowledge regardless of their physical or geographical location. This demand has led to the emergence of "virtual teams" comprised of people from diverse functional backgrounds, geographical locations, time zones, and cultures (O'Hara-Devereaux & Johansen, 1994). With the growing need to utilize virtual team structures, there will be an increasing need to define the individual, team, and organizational competencies required to successfully manage in this new "virtual" work environment.

Trend #5: Transition to an Organizational Learning Perspective

The application of competency methods has been driven largely by the HR function. This is not surprising given the fact that HR first took the initiative to introduce these methods into their organizations. As a result, competency methods have been applied predominantly to improve existing HR applications such as training and development, interviewing and selection, succession planning, and management/executive development. These efforts have typically been owned by the HR function and driven throughout the organization as part of an overall HR development strategy.

Given the trends identified toward faster, more distributed, and participative competency methods, the future value of competencies in many organizations will not reside in HR development applications per se, but in a much broader range of organizational learning benefits. The concept of organizational learning is still evolving and has been the source of much confusion. The simplest and most practical definition that the authors' have found is the following: "A learning organization is an organization skilled at *creating*, *acquiring*, and *transferring knowledge*, and at *modifying its behavior* to reflect new knowledge and insights" (Garvin, 1993, p. 80). Garvin also identifies five basic activities encompassed by the concept of organizational learning: (1) systematic problem solving, (2) experimentation, (3) learning from past experience, (4) learning from others, and (5) transfer of knowledge. These five objectives may help point the way for the future of competency practice in many organizations.

The application of competency methods to organizational learning has several practical implications for HR professionals. First, it suggests a shift away from the molecular analysis of individual skills and behaviors to a focus on higher level organizational capabilities such as problem solving and experimentation. It is becoming increasingly important to build organizational and process competencies that will enable people to combine and leverage their individual knowledge for greater organizational advantage.

Second, it suggests a growing emphasis on developing more efficient ways to accelerate the creation and diffusion of knowledge and best practices across the organization. Competency methods provide HR professionals with an already established toolkit for capturing and communicating actionable learning (Argyris, 1993) in clear, behavioral terms that can be easily understood and implemented.

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Finally, it suggests a move away from traditional "push-oriented" development strategies that are owned and driven by HR toward more "pull-oriented" learning strategies that are owned and driven by managers and employees. In this context, the role of HR will continue to evolve toward one of process facilitator and consultant in the appropriate use of competency methods to accelerate individual, team, and organizational change (Ulrich, 1997).

Practical Implications for Human Resource Practice

Clearly, there are significant changes taking place in the use of competency methods in many organizations. Although some of these changes are not new, they continue to pose a range of practical implications for HR practitioners in designing and implementing future competency strategies. Some of the implications that are impacting HR organizations today are summarized in Table I.

There are several specific implications, however, for the role of HR practitioners resulting from these competency trends that deserve special mention.

Besides the implications for the application of competency methods, the trends outlined in this article also signal a continuing shift in the role that HR will play in the business enterprise. The changing role of HR is already the focus of attention of academics and practitioners (Ulrich, 1997; Ulrich & Losey, Eds., 1997). There are several specific implications, however, for the role of HR practitioners resulting from these competency trends that deserve special mention. These emerging role requirements are described as follows.

1. *Learning Systems Integrator* works with your organization to establish a common language and approach for describing individual, team, and organizational competencies and links all

TABLE I **Implications for HR Practice.**

Competency Trends	*Implications for HR Practice*
Demand for more participative competency approaches	• Deployment of more accessible and user-friendly competency methods. • Definition of guidelines for the use of more distributed competency tools. • Development of improved methods to manage the involvement of large groups of people in the competency modeling and development process.
Move toward short-cycle competency methods	• Design and deployment of simpler competency methods. • Growth of more rapid, on-demand training and education systems. • Deployment of new information technologies to provide flexible, real-time competency assessment and feedback applications.
Increasing emphasis on emerging future competencies	• Integration of competency methods with the business planning process. • Development of more flexible competency systems that can be quickly adapted to changing business strategies and organizational structures. • Application of competency methods to facilitate and accelerate change.
Shift to a team and process focus	• Focus on team, process, and role as the key units of competency analysis. • Integration of competency methods with TQM and process reengineering. • Definition and development of competencies for virtual team success.
Transition to an organizational learning perspective	• Application of competency methods to define and capture best practices. • Development of methods to accelerate the sharing of knowledge and innovation across the organization. • Shift from "push" to "pull" learning strategies with emphasis on team learning and coaching in addition to formal classroom training.

learning activities and investments together into an integrated framework. This does not mean "standardizing" on a single methodology or approach, but ensuring that all learning activities fit together and that information and resources can be easily leveraged across the organization.

2. *Strategic Performance Coach* works directly with your management team(s) to facilitate the business planning process and to translate strategic business goals into the current and future competencies that your organization will need to successfully achieve those business goals. The focus of this role is on building the leadership capacity of your management team(s) and developing the organizational and process capabilities needed to execute strategy and achieve business results.
3. *Learning Process Facilitator* works directly with individuals and teams to assess real-time learning and performance needs, helps them to problem solve and remove immediate barriers to learning and performance, and advises them on how to access and use available learning resources to continuously improve their performance. This includes the introduction and deployment of user-friendly information systems that can provide direct and immediate access to the information people need to meet their own learning and development needs.
4. *Knowledge Transfer Agent* actively searches for innovations and best practices throughout your organization, especially at the "outer fringes", and creates mechanisms for quickly diffusing this knowledge to others. This requires a shift away from formal HR development programs to encompass more immediate and hands-on involvement with people at all levels of the organization in sharing their knowledge and experience directly with others.
5. *Change Interpreter* works with your management team(s) to define organizational and process change strategies and *translates* those change strategies into clear behavioral terms that can be readily understood and implemented by individuals and teams. This includes the potential use of competency methods to define and communicate the expectations that exist for what the required changes look like and how they can be put into action.

It is the authors' observation that many HR practitioners are, in fact, already doing some of the things outlined in the new role requirements; however, the evolution of competency methods described in this article may provide additional momentum and supporting tools for continuing to build the HR role of the future.

New Directions for Competency Practice—Case Examples

The *challenges* facing the field of competency practice are both daunting and exciting; the *opportunity* for HR practitioners to reinvent competency methods to meet the challenges of the future are significant. Some of the new directions in which the competency field is moving are illustrated by the following three practical examples.

1. Using Information Systems to Support Competency Development: Strategic Skill Deployment in Siemens-Nixdorf

The demand for more participative and short-cycle competency approaches is increasing in many organizations. This trend is especially relevant to the high technology industry in which frequent market and organizational changes have become the norm. In addition, growing reliance on service and consulting in many of these organizations has placed new emphasis on the management of employee skills and knowledge as a strategic competitive advantage. Many companies have turned to the use of information technologies to respond to this challenge.

An innovative example of a company linking competency methods with information technology to meet the needs of a rapidly changing business environment is represented

by Siemens-Nixdorf Informationsystems (SNI) in Munich, Germany. Faced with growing competitive pressure worldwide and the need to better utilize the talent of employees, SNI has launched an ambitious effort to implement what it refers to as a "consulting culture" in the company. The goal at SNI is to have every employee think of him/herself as a "consultant" to the company with specific knowledge, experience, and competencies to contribute to the enterprise.

A key aspect of this culture change process is the development of a comprehensive skill management system, called MAG Plus (short for Mitarbeiter gesprach, or "staff dialogue"), to provide SNI managers and employees with a comprehensive competency toolkit. The key objectives of the MAG Plus strategy at SNI is to identify the skills required for current and future business performance, to make those skills visible and accessible to managers and employees, and to invest in the development of those skills on both an individual and a corporate level. In pursuit of those objectives, the MAG Plus system includes the following components:

A key aspect of this culture change process is the development of a comprehensive skill management system.

1. Development of a *common language* that can be used company-wide to define critical knowledge, work experiences, and skills related to SNI's future competitiveness and to establish a consistent platform for the competency tools and applications included in the MAG Plus system.
2. Definition of *career models* and *job profiles* for all key jobs in the company. Career models describe where a specific job fits within the overall career structure of the company, while job profiles describe the specific responsibilities, skill requirements, communication network, and business targets for individual jobs.
3. Deployment of a *staff dialogue process* ("Mitarbeitergesprach") that defines a consistent process for managers and employees to discuss current job performance and plan for future improvements and career opportunities.
4. Design and development of a *skills database* that provides a company-wide view of the key skills that exist in the company and that will ultimately provide SNI managers with visibility to those skills and where they are located.

The MAG Plus system provides a user friendly Windows-based software application that makes the above information on career models, job profiles, staff dialogue, and training resources widely available to managers and employees on their desktops. According to Roland Polte, Manager of SNI's MAG Plus initiative, "With a company of 35,000 employees, it is of vital interest to know what skills exist in the company and where those skills are located. The MAG Plus system is an important step in that direction for SNI". The marriage of competency methods with information technology is providing SNI with the foundation for creating an open and accessible information environment for its managers and employees to respond to rapidly changing business needs.

2. Using Competencies to Translate Strategy into Action: Performance Visioning at Hewlett-Packard

The need to shift to a more future-focused approach to competency modeling is clear. In addition, there is a need to implement new business strategies quickly and to use competency methods to translate strategy, structure, and process changes into behavioral terms that people can promptly understand and implement. This will require a new set of methods that is focused not on the analysis of current gaps between high and average performance, but more on the skills required for long-term future success. These approaches must be flexible, allow for high involvement, and must be linked to the strategic business planning process.

One example of linking competencies directly to business strategy is illustrated by Hewlett-Packard's (HP) Performance Analysis Roadmap (PAR) process. This five-step approach was developed out of the need to help HP's organizations make simultaneous changes in business direction while also redefining the new roles and competencies required to execute that new business. Some

examples of the types of changes facing HP that require this approach include shifting a traditional manufacturing operation to a service delivery business and moving an internally focused software lab to a more customer-oriented strategic account structure.

The PAR consulting model is structured around five basic steps that help an organization move from a new strategic vision to an actual definition of the roles, behaviors, and competencies required to successfully put that vision into action. The basic PAR steps are briefly summarized as follows:

1. Creation of a "vision matrix" that defines the future of the business along several key organizational criteria or characteristics. The vision matrix forces managers to go beyond vague images of the future to actually define the specific characteristics that describe how the business should operate to be successful.
2. Definition of a "desired performance matrix" that defines specific role requirements, behaviors, and competencies linked to the vision characteristics. This critical step requires the organization to describe in observable, measurable terms the performance needed to put the vision characteristics into action at an individual, team, and organization level.
3. Development of a "metrics diagram" identifying specific organizational metrics linked to each of the vision characteristics. These metrics add "teeth" to the PAR process and provide a basis for holding people accountable for actually doing the things that will move the organization toward its vision.
4. Establishment of a "PAR contract" that identifies some of the fundamental barriers and inhibitors to change that may get in the way of moving people to the new business vision. These barriers and inhibitors are analyzed for root causes, and owners are identified to develop and implement solutions.
5. Definition of a "solutions implementation matrix" that lays out the specific actions in terms of process design, role definition, competency development, and rewards that need to be in place to implement the new business model. This matrix helps to pull together all the information from the PAR process into a clearly defined action plan with objectives, owners, and metrics.

Taken together, the five steps of the PAR process describe a major consulting engagement and change initiative to help implement a new business strategy. HR managers and consultants typically play a central role in implementing the PAR process at HP by working with senior management to clarify the business vision, build sponsorship and readiness for change, and bring a structured process to the table. According to Mary Nur, an internal change management consultant for HP and user of the PAR process, "The PAR methodology provides HR professionals with a structured approach for guiding strategic alignment efforts and for linking business vision to measurable metrics, individual and team competencies, and on-the-job performance. The strength of the process is that it gives you a structured toolkit for helping managers translate vision into action." The use of competencies to link job performance directly with vision is providing HP with a powerful mechanism for implementing business strategy in a quick and practical manner.

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3. *Virtual Organization Design: Deployment of HR Services in Hewlett-Packard's Latin American Region*

Some of the key competitive differentiators for many organizations today is their ability to identify new business challenges quickly, to assemble the right people with the right skills regardless of their physical location, and to deploy those people and skills effectively. This is especially critical for service-intensive operations such as HR, which must make maximum use of limited resources and human capital. An example of this process in action, also from Hewlett-Packard, is illustrated by HP's Latin American Regional HR Organization.

Business in HP's Latin American Region has for several years been growing at an aggressive rate, placing increasing demands on HR services in the region to support operations across the geographically and culturally diverse Latin American region. As employee population grew in each country, HR staff would simply be added at the country level to meet the growing demand. This posed significant challenges for HR management at the regional level to create a new model for HR services that could leverage key HR competencies and eliminate redundancies (and associated expenses) across the region.

In response to this challenge, Mike Nichols, HP's Latin American Regional HR Manager, Judy Issokson with HP's Americas Education Department, and Glen Tines, Consultant with HP's Strategic Change Services, teamed up to define a new HR delivery model that could be deployed across the region for maximum efficiency. They began by identifying the core HR processes that must be delivered across the region including staffing, compensation, benefits, and education. Each of these core processes was further analyzed in-depth, with key inputs, outputs, HR support role and associated competencies required for each process defined. Each HR support role and associated competencies were further evaluated in terms of whether they could best be done locally or if the role/competency could be shared across the region. The detailed, and sometimes difficult, designation of core HR competencies as either "regional" or "local" has led to the design of a more flexible HR delivery model, helped to differentiate the role of local versus regional HR services, and has allowed HP to leverage key HR competencies across the region.

As HR managers continue to reengineer their roles in this challenging new business environment, these emerging competency methods can provide important building blocks for their own evolving HR strategy.

An additional challenge facing the deployment of a shared HR services model in HP's Latin American region was to create a mechanism for facilitating communication and information sharing among the extremely distributed and culturally diverse HR offices in the region. This is a common challenge to implementing virtual work systems and has been a barrier to leveraging services across HP's Latin America region in the past. To address these issues, Regional HR Management, the Americas Education, and Strategic Change Services once again teamed up to create a PC-based application, code named Magellan, to capture, store, and distribute information about the emerging HR services model. This system enabled critical HR design information to be shared immediately with key business stakeholders and reinforced greater collaboration among HR professionals in the region. According to Glen Tines:

> Locating the organization design content on the Web greatly increased the speed of communication and helped to demystify the process as new roles and structures were being developed. Placing the project in an electronic space allowed for synchronous participation across the region which ultimately lowered project costs, increased quality, and accommodated the schedules of very busy, geographically dispersed people.

The use of a competency based approach to HP's Latin American Region HR design, combined with the development of a Web-based information system, are helping to leverage key HR competencies and knowledge assets to HP's strategic advantage.

Conclusion

HR practitioners are faced with many new opportunities to utilize competency methods to improve individual, team, and organizational performance. The examples provided serve to illustrate some of the types of innovations that are currently taking place in the competency field. As HR managers continue to reengineer their roles in this challenging new business environment, these emerging competency methods can provide important building blocks for their own evolving HR strategy. The driving force behind these new competency methods is the growing need for HR executives and practitioners to translate business strategy into new learning and performance requirements much more quickly and to help their organizations meet the needs of the future. As the pace of change in business, government, and education continues to accelerate, the emerging competency approaches outlined in this article provide a roadmap for continued innovation and development in the competency field.

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