



A learning and performance organisation

Enterprises have long been enthusiastic in search of methodologies and resources to build a sustainable learning and performance culture at the workplace. While performance is inherently expected, a workplace is a place of work; it is not necessarily thought of as a place for learning. Yet sustainable work performance cannot be achieved unless there is learning out of the work.

In order to build an effective learning and performance culture, there must first be alignment and clarity throughout the organisation. This involves first setting up the right performance and competency standards, then communicating these standards throughout the

organisation and finally ensuring employees are able to perform up to those standards. Of the three areas, the primary challenge would be developing an agreed set of performance and competency standards.

Setting up the performance and competency standards

HRM and HRD managers would know very well the difficult task of developing, from scratch, performance and competency standards for learning and performance purposes. The development process requires technical and domain expertise that often resides with the line function managers, who usually have other work priorities. Even when a

competency framework has been developed, keeping it up-to-date requires organisational resources. Sometimes the document may become outdated even before the performance and learning processes it intends to support can be fully developed and mature in practice.

The national effort to develop and sustain a Skills Framework¹ at the industry level has helped individual enterprises alleviate the long gestation period for developing a viable, credible and practical competency framework to apply to the workplace. The Skills Framework is an integral component of the Industry Transformation Maps² and provides



key information on sector, career pathways, occupations/job roles, emerging skills required, as well as a list of training programmes for skills upgrading and mastery.

Key factors for success

More enterprises are seeing the benefits of its use and have begun to adopt them in their HR

processes throughout the employee life cycle, from talent attraction to employee retention, such as job grade structures, recruitment and selection, performance management, and learning and development. As with any adoption of new practices, adopting the Skills Framework requires careful attention to details, to make it a success within the unique idiosyncratic cultures of each enterprise.

We had the benefit of working with some early adopters and here are the key learning points gleaned:

- 1 Relevance and ease of use** - It should not be assumed that once the statements are in the templates, the users will automatically know how to interpret them. The statements would likely need to be contextualised or training is required during the implementation so that the end users are able to relate them in their daily work.
- 2 Readiness of culture to follow standards** - There must be a culture that is comfortable with the use of documented standard statements as a guide to manage performance, competencies, and learning and development.
- 3 Readiness of culture in supporting learning** - Where there is a learning and

performance culture, the Skills Framework can be a value-adding reference base, which helps to reinforce such a culture.

- 4 State of current documentation** - Existing documented management processes act as placeholders where the critical work functions, key tasks, technical and generic skills, and competency statements can readily be adopted.

Next steps

If you are looking to put in place a set of performance and competency standards using the Skills Framework, you may use the above pointers for self-reflection and assessment of readiness. Resources and assistance are available to support enterprises in putting in place the infrastructure for a learning and performance organisation. Enterprises should take the opportunity to consider how they can use the Skills Framework to support work performance and business results in a lean workforce, where every employee's capability counts. 

Resources:

- ¹ <http://www.skillsfuture.sg/skills-framework>
- ² <https://www.mti.gov.sg/en/ITMs/Overview>

EON Consulting & Training Pte Ltd

Established in 1996, EON Consulting & Training Pte Ltd specialises in providing human capital consulting and training services. EON has helped organisations improve strategic human capital alignment and day-to-day HR operations through three areas - consulting, training and information services. Besides enhancing the overall HR capabilities of SMEs, EON implemented workplace learning solutions to help build a continuous learning and improvement system. EON has also been running workshops for HR practitioners to facilitate adoption of Skills Frameworks for various industries.