Enhancing Workplace Learning and Performance by Adopting Skills Framework

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Supported by
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Profile of Presenter

William has worked in:
• Shipbuilding
• Engineering
• Hotel

Portfolio:
• Talent attraction
• Compensation & benefits
• Performance management
• Industrial relations
• Talent development

For the last 22 years:
• Human capital performance consulting
• Training

Recent Focus:
• Workplace learning consulting
• Skills framework training
Importance of Workplace Learning & Performance

Leveraging the Skills Framework

Case Studies

Key Learning Points

Self Assessment Tool
Importance of Workplace Learning & Performance
The workplace is traditionally viewed as a place of work, and not a place of learning.

Without *purposeful learning at work, systemic* and *continuous* performance improvement may not occur.

### An Effective Workplace = Work and Learning both take place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workplace (Enterprise)</th>
<th>Profits (Results)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>Proficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In a lean workforce, focus should also be on the productivity of learning – *at the workplace*

**Workplace Learning - Learning from Hands-On Experience**
- Increased scope or responsibilities
- Training or mentoring others
- Projects and special assignments

**Social Learning - Learning from Exposure**
- Observe more experienced colleagues
- Being coached or mentored
- After-event review

**Formal Learning – Learning from Structured Education**
- External workshops
- Seminars
- E-learning

Source: McCall, Lombardo and Eichinger, survey of nearly 200 executives self-report how they believed they learned; Wikipedia
Importance of Workplace Learning & Performance

Key Challenge

- Skills standards are difficult to develop, implement and sustain within a company
- Alignment is needed across jobs along the employee life cycle & continuous review to keep them current
Leveraging the Skills Framework
Leveraging the Skills Framework

The Industry Transformation Map

- Industry sector specific Industry Transformation Maps (ITMs) have been developed
- 4 main pillars – Productivity, Jobs & Skills, Innovation & Internationalisation

### Industry Transformation Map
(A skills and innovation-driven Economy)

#### Productivity
- Higher-value added activities
- Operational excellence
- Shared industry platforms for mass adoption

#### Jobs & Skills
- Manpower-lean
- Skills for greater value creation
- Lifelong learning
- HR capabilities to maximise workforce potential

#### Innovation
- Leverage technology
- Value-creation
- Enterprise capabilities
- Develop own products & brands

#### Internationalisation
- Globally-competitive local enterprises
- Access to markets – Digital channels
- Leverage international networks
The Skills Framework is an integral part of ITM, supporting the ‘Jobs & Skills’ pillar.

It provides industry driven information on job roles and skills for the human capital value-add activities.
Skills Map – job role, critical work function, key tasks, technical skills and generic skills

Career Map – jobs & progression pathway

Technical Skills and Competencies – 6 levels of knowledge and abilities descriptors

Generic Skills and Competencies – Basic, Intermediate and Advance descriptors
Competencies must be aligned to the job roles & performance expectations for each milestone initiative

The Skills Framework is a useful resource of job roles and competencies to support this
Case Study 1: Career Development
Case Study 1: Career Development

Developing a Job Grade Structure for Career Development (1/5)

Background
• Operated in Singapore for over 40 years
• > 200 employees, with several long-service employees
• Job roles include tooling inspectors, mould makers, machinists, cam programmers, storekeepers, drivers, packers, technicians, engineers

HR Practices
• Job structure: 2 tracks – General Management and Technical & Engineering; 12 grades covering all job roles from store assistants to directors
• Reward based on performance, promotion based on performance or upon reaching maximum of scale

Impact
• High wage cost but employees are not necessarily right skilled for the role
• Bottleneck in progression especially for the Technical & Engineering track
Case Study 1: Career Development

Developing a Job Grade Structure for Career Development (2/5)

Project Objectives

01: Provide a career pathway for the engineers

02: Differentiate job roles and skills requirements for each job grade

03: Clarity in promotion criteria
Case Study 1: Career Development

A Job Evaluation tool was developed using the Technical Skills and Competencies (TSC) General Descriptors of the Skills Framework.

The 4 descriptors were used to establish the job value:

01 RESPONSIBILITY
Degree of supervision and accountability

02 AUTONOMY
Degree of decision-making

03 COMPLEXITY
Degree of difficulty of situations and tasks

04 KNOWLEDGE & ABILITIES
Required to support work as described under responsibility, autonomy and complexity
Critical Work Functions and Key Tasks descriptors for each job title were matched with the Roles and Responsibilities of relevant job roles of the company.

Technical Skills and Competencies (TSC) and Generic Skills and Competencies (GSC) were used to identify skills for each job role.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Grade</th>
<th>Company Job Title</th>
<th>Skills Framework Job Titles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Engineer III</td>
<td>Engineer (E &amp; PE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Master Craftsman (PE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Engineer II</td>
<td>Engineer (E &amp; PE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Master Craftsman (PE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Associate Engineer</td>
<td>Associate Engineer (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Engineer (E &amp; PE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Team Leader Technician</td>
<td>Technician (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Mould Maker</td>
<td>Process Specialist (PE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group / Team Leader (PE)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case Study 1: Career Development

Benefits of using the Skills Framework

- Current job grade structure of 12 grades were expanded with possible career progression pathways
- Detailed description of criteria for career development and promotion were developed
- HR team was able to rationalise and update the current job grade structure based on the wealth of information in the Skills Framework

Key Challenge in Development & Implementation

Managers and supervisors found the statements difficult to relate to their daily work
Case Study 2: Recruitment & Onboarding
Case Study 2: Recruitment & Onboarding

Establishing a Competency-Based Recruitment and Onboarding Process (1/3)

**Background**
- A local industrial automation control components and process measurement company
- Serves industries such as pharmaceutical, building & construction and electronic manufacturing and has a retail store

**HR Practices**
- No dedicated HR person-in-charge
- Day-to-day HR operations were handled by the manager who was also in charge of finance and administration
- New candidates usually interviewed by the Director, and no specific competency standards were set as benchmark for proficiency

**Impact**
- Interview questions and format were unstructured, dependent on the Director’s experience and knowledge of the job requirements
- At confirmation, it was generally based on ‘gut feel’ that the new hire was teachable and was making progress
Skills Frameworks from a variety of industries were referenced for relevant job titles, domain critical work functions & key tasks.

Validation and Review with company

Performance expectations of each task were developed

Competency-based interview questions were developed

Standards established form evidence that interviewer look for in a candidate

Purposeful skills onboarding programme developed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Task</th>
<th>Competency-based Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set up calibration work station and equipment</td>
<td>Tell me about how did you usually set up the calibration work station and equipment in the previous company.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Tasks
1. Carry out calibration in both laboratory and on-site
2. Set up calibration work station and equipment
3. Collected data
4. Install and dismantle calibration equipment
5. Troubleshoot and repair calibration equipment
6. Pay visual attention to the performance of the equipment
7. Review and analyse data collected
8. Identify trending behaviour
9. Prepare and review report with Senior Engineer

Standards
- Ensure that the company and client's instrument readings have minimized bias.
- Ensure equipment is periodically calibrated (every x weeks) to reduce downtime.
- Ensure that data is collected in a fair and unbiased way.
- Ensure that problems arising from equipment are resolved in a timely and accurate manner to reduce disruption to work.
- Ensure quick identification of poor equipment performance to facilitate diagnosis of its cause.
Benefits of using the Skills Framework

- Job descriptions with performance expectations, contextualised skills requirements, competency-based interview question list and interview assessment tool can be developed expeditiously.
- Interviewers will be able to conduct interviews and selections in a more consistent manner.
- Targeted areas to train the new hire can be identified quickly and systematically.

Key Challenge in Development in Implementation

- Added documentation seen as added workload and administrative overheads.
- The use of documented standard statements for interviews may be perceived as restrictive because gut feel is more natural and perceptively efficient.
Case Study 3: Performance Management
An early childhood operator aimed to enhance the evaluation criteria in the performance appraisal system.

Current appraisal criteria definitions tended to be general.

- Appraisal criteria definitions were subjected to appraiser’s broad interpretations
- Assessment ratings were inconsistent among appraisers
- Areas for development were not consistently interpreted
- Individual learning & development plans were difficult to develop
Project Objectives

Adopt the skills standards statements from the ECCE Skills Framework into the appraisal forms

More objective performance appraisal assessment

Individual learning and development plans that are better aligned to industry standards
Case Study 3: Performance Management

Skill descriptions were used as a basis to assess performance.

The 5 domains – Knowledge & Analysis, Application & Adaptation, Innovation & Value creation, Social Intelligence & Ethics and Learning to Learn were used to analyse the strengths and gaps of employee’s performance.

Targeted learning & development activities were identified for employees.

The appraisers were trained on how to appraise and identify learning and development needs.
Benefits of using the Skills Framework

- The appraisers achieved better clarity on how to interpret the skill standards and how to use them for assessment.
- Clarity of the skill standards enhances dialogue and understanding about employee performance.
- Support the performance management process by aligning expectations, coaching, assessment and development planning.

Key Challenge in Development in Implementation

- The use of documented standard statements may be seen as a set of audit documents unless a strong performance and learning culture exist in the workplace.
- Users still do not know how to use a perceptively clearer document.
04 Key Learning Points
Enterprises and users must be able to relate to the statements in their daily work in order to find them relevant for adoption.

Otherwise, there is still a barrier to interpret what the statement means before finding them relatable.
Enterprises must develop a culture to use documented standard statements as a guide to manage performance, competencies, learning and development.

Otherwise, the documentation may be perceived as restrictive because gut feel is more natural and perceptively efficient.
Enterprises should have a learning and performance culture in order for the Skills Framework to be a value-adding reference-base to support such a culture.

Otherwise, the documentation of Skills Framework may be seen as another set of audit documents.
Enterprises should possess documented management processes as placeholders where the critical work functions, key tasks, technical and generic skills and competency statements can readily be placed.

Otherwise, to adopt the Skills Framework may be perceived as added workload and administration overheads.
Enterprises need to train the users (managers and supervisors) on how to use the Skills Framework.

It cannot take for granted that once the statements are in the templates, the users will automatically know how to use them.
05

Self-Assessment Tool
## Self-Assessment Tool
### Skills Framework Adoption Readiness Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Readiness</th>
<th>1 - 3</th>
<th>4 - 6</th>
<th>7 - 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Documentation</strong></td>
<td>Key work processes are not documented</td>
<td></td>
<td>Key work processes are documented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actions and Decisions</strong></td>
<td>Actions and decisions are guided by gut feel and experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>Actions and decisions are guided by documented statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning and Performance Culture</strong></td>
<td>Standards and quality issues are highlighted and resolved only as when problems arise</td>
<td></td>
<td>There are established and observed standards and quality at the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ease of Using Documented Standards by Employees</strong></td>
<td>Employees do not usually refer to any documentation to interpret work requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td>Employees are trained to interpret and use SOPs, Work Instructions, manuals, blueprints as a part of their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ease of Using Documentation by Supervisors and Managers</strong></td>
<td>Supervisors and managers are not trained to use documentations to manage / standards work performance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisors and managers are trained to use documentations to manage / standardise work performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Self-Assessment Tool
### Readiness Scale and Next Step Recommendation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Next Step Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - 18</td>
<td>Not ready. Requires significant work to build a culture to reference documented standards</td>
<td>Build culture by using Skills Framework in a specific function, process or location that will bring visible value to business operations to demonstrate benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 - 33</td>
<td>Somewhat ready. Requires strong leadership and communication to establish values and benefits to reference documented standards</td>
<td>Strengthen learning and performance leadership at all levels. Build consensus among leaders to adopt Skills Framework in agreed areas of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 – 50</td>
<td>Ready. Contextualise the skills standards to existing document and carry out training</td>
<td>May adopt Skills Framework at the enterprise level including support functions and processes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concluding Remarks

In a lean workforce, every employee’s capability counts

Start building a strong Learning and Performance culture at the workplace

Leverage Skills Framework to support key human capabilities initiatives in the employee lifecycle

Case studies have provided lessons that the Skills Framework is a useful resource
Thank You