Korn Ferry
Leadership Architect™

Global competency framework

Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™
Research guide and technical manual

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Introduction to the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ Research guide and technical manual

What is the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™?

The Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ is a global competency framework that helps employees perform personal assessments of their strengths and weaknesses or the strengths and weaknesses of others. It can be used in building competency profiles, interviewing, career development, and performance reviews. The Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ is also useful in HR planning, such as determining what kinds of key job experiences would be pivotal in developing managers so they can better activate the organization's strategy. In addition, the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ helps individuals build comprehensive, research-based, and experience-tested development plans on the most common development needs.

This manual is designed primarily as a technical reference to help deepen your understanding of the research background behind the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™.

You can refer to this technical manual for a variety of purposes:

- Build your knowledge regarding the research studies and empirical research.

- Build your knowledge regarding the research background for the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™.

- Review some key findings from our normative studies and empirical research.

- Find answers to some frequently asked questions.

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Section I – Introduction to competencies and competency modeling

For most organizations, the investment in human capital represents a significant proportion of all investments. This is not a foolhardy gamble. Human capital is a lever that has the potential to propel a business to a very competitive position. But, it depends on how well human capital is managed. It is the job of strategic HR and the talent management function in particular to attract, develop, and deploy the right talent for the right roles. When executive teams recognize HR as a strategic and enabling function, leveraging talent becomes a focus and a differentiator for the business.

Study after study has found that strategic HR is more likely to have a positive impact on business success when there is alignment.

- First, the talent strategy must align to the business strategy. This means that an organization's approach to talent must enable the organization's accomplishment of its business objectives.

- Second, there must be alignment across all talent management practices. When talent management practices are integrated, the different practices and processes reinforce each other and they have a more powerful overall effect on how human capital is positioned to support the business.

- Third, how work is accomplished must be aligned, both to achieve efficiency and to facilitate effective collaboration across all levels of the organization.

For many organizations, competencies have become the red thread that links all talent management practices together and aligns talent strategy to business strategy. Competencies provide a clear set of expectations that are aspirational in the same way a business strategy is aspirational. Competencies describe leadership skills that are general enough to prepare leaders for a dynamic business environment, one in which jobs are never the same from year to year. And competencies are the "how" of performance.

The question then becomes, how can an organization use competencies to advance its business goals? That brings us to the purpose of this technical manual—to explore best practices in competency modeling. Based on the collected wisdom and experience of Korn Ferry competency experts, those best practices and recommendations are presented here.

Competencies are the skills and behaviors required for success that can be observed (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2009). Examples include Business insight, Plans and aligns, Collaborates, and Situational adaptability. Competencies enable us to make meaningful contributions that support the organization. And, because competencies shape our behavior, they determine to a large extent how we do our jobs, how we accomplish goals (Ruyle & Orr, 2011).

Historical perspective on competencies and competency modeling

The history of competency modeling can be traced back to the work of psychologist David McClelland. In the article "Testing for Competence Rather Than 'Intelligence,'" McClelland (1973) argued that assessment tools such as intelligence tests predict academic performance more than success on the job. Instead of testing for traits related to intelligence that are far removed from practical outcomes, McClelland suggested that the best test for selection and employment purposes would be one that assesses real job skills.

Shortly after this article was published, job analysis techniques and assessment centers were increasingly implemented in organizations. The objective of job analysis is to identify work activities involved in a job and specify what is required of the worker. Assessment centers evaluate job candidates on these worker requirements through techniques such as work simulations, in-basket exercises, and leaderless group discussions. During the 1970s, things began to change when the results of assessment centers began to influence the field (Bray, Campbell, & Grant, 1974). Practitioners and researchers discovered that many organizations using assessment centers were assessing roughly the same skills. They found substantial overlap across the skill sets for different jobs in different organizations. It became clear that a common set of competencies could specify the job requirements for a wide range of jobs across industries (Thornton & Byham, 1982).

These findings from assessment centers spurred the competency modeling movement during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Competency modeling had made enough of an inroad that in 1997, the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology commissioned a task force to investigate and review the practice of competency modeling (Schippmann et al., 2000). The task force identified some key benefits of competency modeling over traditional job-analysis techniques.

Schippmann et al. (2000) found that competency modeling and competencies (a) establish a link between roles and business goals and strategies, (b) serve as a platform for training and development applications, (c) emphasize long-term organizational fit versus short-term job match, (d) capture value and personality orientations that are not typically seen in job analysis, and (e) enhance face validity through the language and spirit that is important to the organizations. Despite the identified benefits, some experts involved in this study were skeptical about the viability of competency modeling and expected it to die quickly.

To the contrary! Competency modeling has continued to gain popularity during the past decade. This popularity was probably aided by the shift in the nature of work—from routinized tasks and activities to knowledge-based work. Competencies made it easier to observe and measure the quality of work output. A benchmarking study by the American Productivity and Quality Council in 2004 found that every one of their "best practice organizations" had developed a competency model designed to guide their selection and development efforts. In fact, because competencies can be aligned to organizational strategy and provide a general framework of capabilities, it is difficult to find any organization today that doesn't have a competency model (Hollenbeck, 2009). What has driven the widespread use of competency modeling?

The driving forces behind competency modeling

There are many reasons competency modeling has become so popular. According to one study by the Aberdeen Group (2007), the top drivers for using competencies include:

- Alignment with business objectives

- Enhanced productivity

- Increasing workforce nimbleness

- Identifying and developing high potentials and the retention of top talent

Much of this surge in popularity has to do with the nature of today's dynamic business climate. To be effective, organizations and employees must demonstrate the flexibility and agility to adapt and change their behaviors as the situation changes. It is a business imperative to switch from a job-centered model to a more general, person-centered model. Because competencies focus on broader skills required for success in a changing work environment, many experts believe the interest in the practice of competency modeling will continue to grow in the future.

The call for strategic HR

In many organizations, labor costs account for more than 50% of the total cost of doing business. Managing human capital strategically can help a firm obtain a competitive advantage (Porter, 1985). Achieving competitive advantage through human capital requires a strategic approach to HR. Strategic human resource management aligns internal HR practices with organizational strategies to build employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities in an effort to support the execution of those strategies to achieve business objectives.

However, HR has struggled for a long time to play a strategic role in organizations (Lawler & Mohrman, 2003; Ulrich, 1997). Competency modeling has the potential to fill an important void in the traditional HR function by infusing day-to-day employee behavior with strategic relevance (Sanchez & Levine, 2009). Because the competency modeling process includes a substantial effort to understand an organization's business context and competitive strategy, it establishes a direct line of sight between individual competency requirements and the broader goals of the organization (Schippmann et al., 2000).

In other words, competency modeling takes strategic objectives into consideration and identifies competencies critical for achieving the strategic goals. In this regard, competency modeling is different from traditional job analysis. Competency modeling is forward-looking. It specifies skill requirements for the successful execution of long-range strategies. In contrast, traditional job analysis focuses on the here and now and portrays the job as it has been performed to date.

Since competency modeling is future-oriented and signals strategic intentions of the organization, it is instrumental in influencing employee behaviors. As an HR executive in a large financial company declared, "(Competencies) articulate what we would like an organization or an individual to be better at. Competencies are important, as they help to communicate what an organization or individual stands for or what the expectation is" (Hayton & McEvoy, 2006). Job analysis, on the other hand, does not focus on the aspirational. Table 1 highlights some of the key differences between competency modeling and job analysis.

Table 1. The difference between competency modeling and traditional job analysis.

Traditional job analysis	Competency modeling
Focused on the past/present	Future-focused
Describes what has been/is done	Describes how it should be done
Linked to day-to-day operations	Linked to organizational strategy
Emphasizes mostly technique aspect of the job	Captures value and personality orientation
Describes behavior	Influences behavior
Links to a specific job	Applies to many jobs

Linking corporate core competencies to individual employee competencies

In 1990, Prahalad and Hamel introduced the concept of "core competence" for the corporation. These authors observed that some companies achieved more sustainable competitive advantages over others through establishing and managing a portfolio of core competencies rather than a portfolio of businesses. The concept of core competence has since had a significant amount of influence on human resource management.

Corporate core competencies reflect the collective capabilities of the organization. Traditionally, human resource management has been concerned with individual skills, knowledge, and abilities. Corporate competencies are formed when individual skills, knowledge, and abilities are widely shared across all employees in an organization. Fundamentally, corporate core competencies are reflected in human capital and institutionalized in organizations through strategic human resource management practices (Werbel & DeMarie, 2005). Edward Lawler (1994) called for a competency-based approach to organizing and managing human capital. He contended that the skills of individual employees are critical to developing and supporting organizational performance, particular organizational capabilities, and strategic direction.

By adopting competency-based HR practices, organizations can create systems that proactively support the development of specific corporate competencies. Such core competence models have been gaining popularity and have become one of the mainstream business strategies for many organizations.

It's important to note the difference between core, functional, and technical competencies.

- Competencies are measurable behavioral skills that contribute to success on the job. Core competencies are a set of competencies an organization identifies that are aligned with and support corporate core values and business strategies. These competencies define what type of company it wants to be or how the company is different from other companies.

- Functional competencies describe the capabilities that are shared across the entire function. Typically, these are behavioral competencies, although they may be foundational technical skills/capabilities.

- Technical competencies describe the necessary expertise in a specific role or set of roles (but typically not across the entire function). For example, the ability to work with an accounts payable system may be required in part of a finance department but not everyone in the function needs that capability.

These different types of competencies can provide clear expectations and specificity. They can also create complexity in competency models. The number and types of functional or technical competency models and job families vary by organization. Inevitably, there is a struggle to balance the desire to create broadband functions and the need to get competencies closest to the position so they are relevant to the job they attempt to describe.

The number of functions may also help to determine the competencies used in specific models. For example, a recent report, "The Role of Competencies in Driving Financial Performance," states that "Because financial services companies tend to be stove-piped into distinct functional business units, [a good] communication [competency] breaks down these large barriers and makes individuals more effective and gives them greater perspective" (Bersin, 2007).

The dynamic nature of what is required for success in the modern business world

A critical issue in human resource management is to match individuals with specific position requirements. It requires accurate and thorough information for the role. In other words, organizations need to understand the tasks to be performed and the skills, knowledge, and abilities required for effective performance in a role. Yet, as competition and technological innovations increase and product life cycles get shorter, jobs are becoming more dynamic. Tasks, roles, and the skills required change frequently in the modern business world.

Competency modeling is a good method for profiling the dynamic aspect of changing requirements. There are two basic reasons for this. First, as discussed previously, competency modeling is forward-looking and future-oriented. It not only specifies what is essential in the current role, but also identifies what is critical for future situations. Second, competencies are intentionally defined in generic terms (McClelland, 1973). They represent clusters of personal characteristics for performance dimensions rather than very narrow-scoped skills (Tett, Guterman, Bleier, & Murphy, 2000). Competencies defined in this way obtain maximum generalizability to various job environments. These two reasons give competency modeling the flexibility to provide job information in a rapidly changing business world.

The most critical determinant of the optimal framework for competency models is their link to business performance. Competencies are the embodiment of the organization's business strategy through its people. Research shows that when managers identify the competencies required for high performance, they are right approximately half of the time. The problem is that they don't know which half! Ultimately, the ability (through research) to predict which capabilities are the most critical to performance allows for smaller, simpler, and more targeted models.

Horizontally aligning HR practices for integrated talent management

Competency models must facilitate the achievement of real and measurable business results. Competency models should not be introduced as a stand-alone tool within a mature and fully functioning talent management program. By themselves, the value of competency models is limited to providing a common language to discuss how employees behave in terms of current performance or whether they have the requisite skills and abilities to excel in other positions. The common language of competencies, when adopted into other practices, creates a shared mental model of performance and common language across HR processes throughout the employee life cycle. However, when they are implemented in isolation or don't connect with other programs, practices, and the organization's long-term goals, they have little impact, create more confusion, and can be scrutinized over the value they add.

The desire to link HR and OD practices together at the enterprise level requires a common language and a finite set of knowledge, skills, and abilities (competencies) that could prove equally effective when used across levels and functions in the organization and support a number of distinct but interrelated HR processes (i.e., selection, development, performance management, and succession planning). An organization's collection of competencies can articulate minimum qualifications for a job; however, this makes the competency model less forward-looking and future-focused. It is very challenging for organizations to use competency models to articulate both basic

requirements and the stretch behaviors for future leaders. A better use for leadership competency models is to articulate the expectations that will differentiate candidates, evaluate performance quality, and provide a solid foundation from which highly effective HR and OD practices could be built.

Competency modeling helps the HR function fulfill a strategic role by vertically aligning different HR practices to organizational strategic objectives. In addition, competency modeling facilitates the integration of talent management practices by horizontally aligning various HR practices (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Integrated talent management takes on different meanings in organizations. The most obvious one pertains to the alignment of different components in a talent management system, including activities such as selecting, deploying, developing, engaging, and retaining employees. When different components are designed and implemented on the foundation of the same model, they create a holistic system in which the pieces reinforce each other. For example, when organizations select, develop, reward, and promote employees on the same set of competencies, the consistency communicates to employees the strategic importance of these competencies. This approach creates a strong organizational culture that contributes to the establishment of high-performance work systems (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004).

A less obvious but equally important implication of integrated talent management is the consistency of the HR systems across boundaries such as job families, business units, and geographies. Because competencies are applicable to various jobs in a variety of job functions, competency-based HR practices create an HR system that connects different roles, making role comparison possible. Now, different functions, different jobs, and different positions are interrelated, making integrated and systematic talent management possible. This type of integration is particularly important for flattened organizations that call for boundaryless working systems (Barnes-Nelson, 1997) and globalized organizations that require standardization across cultures and geographies (De Meuse, Dai, Hallenbeck, & Tang, 2008; Ryan, Wiechmann, & Hemingway, 2003).

Researchers have consistently recommended that organizations adopt an integrated approach to talent management (Becker & Huselid, 1999; Werbel & DeMarie, 2005; Wright & Snell, 1991). More and more, organizations take this suggestion to heart as they design their human resource management systems. This recommendation from researchers has galvanized much of the interest in competency modeling during the past two decades.

The popularity of developmental 360 feedback systems

Finally, competency modeling has become increasingly popular as more and more companies employ developmental 360 feedback programs as part of their talent management strategy. It has been estimated that nearly 90% of Fortune 1000 firms in the United States use some form of 360 feedback (Expert Training Systems, 2011; Waldman & Atwater, 1998). This human resource practice also has gained popularity in many other countries (Brutus et al., 2006). For example, 85% of Australia's top 500 corporations have adopted 360 feedback (Carruthers, 2003). Designing and implementing a strong and effective human resource management system requires not only a consistent process, but also consistent content (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004).

Competency modeling provides the common language and assessment criteria for jobs and positions across functions, across business units, and across geographies. Typically, 360 feedback asks the self, boss, peers, direct reports, and customers to rate an individual on a set of skills. Competencies are accessible and easy for raters to comprehend because they are worded in clear business language. In addition, competencies in 360 feedback describe observable behaviors. The language used and the behavioral descriptions enhance the meaningfulness and relevance of the assessment items to an individual's job. Therefore, competencies are a natural fit for the developmental 360 feedback system. The proliferation of 360 feedback has promoted the acceptance of competency modeling in many organizations.

The business impact of competencies

Although more and more companies have adopted competency modeling, a key question arises—is there evidence that competencies yield a return on investment? In other words, does competency-based HR generate positive outcomes for organizations?

The most sophisticated users of competencies are able to achieve the final step in realizing the value of their talent management efforts. When an organization is able to conduct advanced analytical research, then that organization is able to take full advantage of their competency modeling efforts. At that point, they can link competencies with organizational outcomes that matter, such as profitability, increased revenues, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement. When organizations can develop a process to determine which dimensions of performance (competencies, behaviors) predict each critical strategic objective or outcome, they can achieve the real business impact of the initiative.

A business impact analysis can help organizations determine:

- Which competencies best differentiate "A" players (high performers) from "B" players (average performers) or "C" players (low performers).
- Which behaviors have the greatest overall impact on outcomes, such as productivity, customer service, and employee engagement.
- Where efforts should be focused to gain the greatest performance improvement.
- Where key business strategies or initiatives may be at risk due to talent constraints.

This analysis can use statistical methodologies to examine the ratings from a group of individuals to determine the competencies and behaviors that have the most significant impact on key outcomes. For example, if an organization wants to identify those competencies most closely associated with individual productivity, the analysis would examine the relationship between competency ratings from feedback surveys and individual productivity data obtained from the organization. The resulting analysis would generate relative-importance weights for the competencies included in the survey as they relate to productivity.

A number of empirical studies have also attempted to address this issue of return on investment. Below are some findings that highlight the business impact of competencies:

- Russell's (2001) longitudinal study found that top-level corporate executive performance can be reliably predicted from assessments of top-level executive competencies. The competency-based executive assessment and selection procedure generated an estimated $3 million in annual profit per candidate selected in this study.

- In a study with 62 health care facilities, Towler and Britt (2006) found that employee job satisfaction was positively related to leadership competencies at 6 months ($r = 0.42$) and 9 months ($r = 0.43$) after a leadership feedback program. In addition, leadership competencies were also significantly related to industry experts' performance ratings of the facilities ($r = 0.50$).

- Pluzdrak (2007) conducted a case study to examine how a leadership development program influenced leadership competencies among a sample of vice presidents and how this improvement on leadership competencies was related to business outcomes in a private label sales and marketing organization. The study reported that changes in behavior among a set of key competencies (e.g., Customer Focus, Interpersonal Savvy, *Drive for* Results, Decision Quality, Ethics and Values, and Integrity and Trust) were positively correlated to profits, turnover, and actual net.

- A Fortune 100 financial services company examined the link between their existing management competency data with some key performance metrics (Clark & Weitzman, 2008). A regression analysis indicated that a list of 13 core competencies accounted for 54% of the difference between supervisor performance and average/low performance for the first-year sales commission measure and 30% of the difference between supervisor performance and retention. The study also found that by training and developing each average or low-performing executive to become one standard deviation better on the key competencies that drive performance, the company would generate an additional $467,000 per executive in first-year commissions, while reducing turnover costs by $580,000 per executive.

- A large, non-franchised coffee chain in the US wanted to understand what differentiated great district managers from good district managers. An evaluation of district manager competencies revealed that district managers who were rated above average in Staffing were outperforming their peers. In fact, by improving district managers' skill in Staffing from below average to average, or from average to above average, the value was $16.7 million in additional annual revenue (Heine & Sevy, 2010).

The findings from these studies are quite positive. But we believe these studies are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the actual benefits of a competency-based HR system. The majority of the evaluative studies in the literature have focused on separate HR management practices such as selection or a leadership development program.

As discussed above, competency modeling provides a foundation for organizations to strategically align and integrate their talent management. The benefits of competency modeling are optimized when different components in a talent management system are aligned and integrated to support the achievement of the strategic goals.

It has been increasingly recognized among researchers that the evaluation should move from a focus on separate human resource management (HRM) practices and individual employee performance to a more macro focus on the overall set of HRM practices and company performance (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Delery & Doty, 1996; Huselid & Becker, 1996). Future research will likely investigate how competency modeling contributes to the establishment of an integrated HR system and how this system influences organizational outcomes.

Section II – Competencies that drive business strategy

A strategic approach to competencies

Building and maintaining competency models in an organization can take shape in a couple of different ways. A top-down approach is a more centralized approach that allows different functions and business units to align with the organization's broader strategy and goals. On the other hand, a bottom-up approach gives subject-matter experts the opportunity to document the specific behaviors and skills associated with the best performers of a given role, function, or level.

Traditionally, many competency models have been created from the bottom up. This follows the approach of traditional task- and skill-based job analyses and likely arises out of a need to (a) select employees for a specific role, (b) reorganize roles and responsibilities within a department, or (c) enhance the career planning and development for a given function. Thus, the need to document what it takes to be successful in a role, a job family, or a job function is paramount. The bottom-up approach tends to be decentralized, which makes competency models very specific and useful for individual roles and departments. But when siloed efforts to develop competency models multiply across the organization, it becomes nearly impossible to manage it all. Any attempt at aggregating different models in the organization may create a voluminous library of competencies that include redundancies and varying levels of specificity. This approach makes it incredibly difficult to use for integrated talent management, comparison of internal candidates, and setting consistent expectations for success (Storfer, 2011).

A top-down approach to competency modeling involves selecting a universal set of competencies that are needed across the organization as a whole in order to advance the organization's purpose, vision and values, and strategy. This is a forward-looking, aspirational approach (Prastacos, Soderquist, & Vakola, 2005). The competencies are then parsed based on relevancy for a particular function, job family, or role. This approach yields a number of benefits and is considered a best practice in development (Orr, Sneltjes, & Dai, 2009). There are a couple of key benefits to a top-down approach to competency management. First, there is greater assurance that competencies are aligned with organizational strategy, goals, and vision and values, thus giving assurance that the selected competencies will drive organizational results. This is advantageous in not only obtaining senior leadership adoption, but also ensuring sustainability of the competency model for tomorrow's organization. Second, a top-down approach lends itself nicely to an integrated approach to talent management, specifically future-oriented programs such as workforce planning, succession management, leadership development programs, and individual developmental planning. This alignment not only creates a broad and sturdy foundation from which all HR and OD practices can be built, but also forces a common set of language to describe performance expectations—helping organizations select, develop, and retain the talent required to achieve its goals, both today and tomorrow.

Without a thoughtful and strategic approach, developing and implementing a competency model in any organization can quickly become victim to an unwieldy and unnecessarily complex task. To avoid competency chaos and to maximize the value that can be achieved through strategic application of competencies, six conditions must be met:

- Clear vision.

- Aligned to business strategy.

- Solid foundation.

- Executive commitment.

- Execution excellence.

- Ongoing management and governance.

Clear vision – A view into a future where integrated human capital management processes reliably yield the information and talent decisions needed to ensure a supply of superior leaders who will drive improved performance. This condition includes an understanding of how each of the talent management processes will be addressed and the associated competency requirements. Also included is a clear vision of the desired culture of the organization and the message that the competencies should send when they are presented to the organization. In addition, it includes a clear link to business outcomes, both for stakeholder buy-in and to evaluate impact.

Aligned to business strategy – A solid understanding of the outcomes desired from the organization's business strategy and their alignment with a mature talent management strategy. Based on the organization's strategic vision, the behaviors and experiences most crucial to addressing its business needs are clearly linked (by competencies) to integrated human capital management processes.

Solid foundation – A research-based, experience-tested competency framework. This becomes the basis for integration of talent management applications and enables strategic, enterprise-wide impact. A solid foundation requires a consistent and duplication-free competency framework, a set of consistent competency profiles, and an underlying rationale that will support business analytics. The content must be simple enough to adopt and use on an everyday basis and strong enough to support its objectives. Most often this will include a clear framework that parallels the organizational structure, including the number of hierarchical levels. This condition will serve as the foundation for competency-based activity.

Executive commitment – Clear direction from executive management will help ensure that managers and employees get involved early and often so that they understand the value in doing things differently and begin to build skill and change behavior.

Execution excellence – The best talent management applications implemented with the best processes will not achieve desired business outcomes if managers and employees don't know where to start, or if they find the process too hard to use. In addition to skillful project management, successful execution requires a simple implementation process that addresses technology and infrastructure issues, competency foundation requirements, and organization/people concerns. It must make the new leadership "brand" memorable, measure the engagement, and reinforce the message whenever and wherever necessary.

Of equal importance is the need to "market" the competencies so that employees see the need to make the required behavior changes to align with the articulated and desired behaviors. The science of advertising and marketing is based upon determining effective approaches to induce specified behavior. Getting employees to change their behavior requires nothing less.

Ongoing management and governance – The organization will need a plan for managing and updating competency content to keep it relevant and aligned to strategy. Competency models need to evolve as the business strategy evolves. Updated competency models ensure that selection and development decisions are in line with the company's strategic direction.

Developing competency models

1. Do not reinvent the wheel. Use a research-based competency library as the foundation.

   Leadership competencies have already been identified, so do not waste precious time and resources conducting a study to figure out what leadership competencies exist (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2002). Because most competency libraries have tremendous overlap, consider these selection criteria as you're looking for the right competency library:

   - Accessible, practical, and simple. Line managers are most likely to adapt and use competencies if they are written in clear, practical terms—not HR-speak.

   - Ongoing research. Normative studies identify the skill level of the general population. When these are conducted on a regular basis, you are ensured that your competency profiles are based on the most up-to-date research available. Validity studies make sure that the competencies identified in the library still function as distinct skills and are organized in the appropriate themes.

   - Global relevance. For large, multi-national companies, it's important that competency profiles be valid on a global scale. Ensuring that the content of the competencies taps what is important within and across cultures is the first essential step. This can be verified with global samples and validity studies that ensure cultural nuances are taken into account when identifying the leadership skills required for success.

   - Consulting support or self-sufficiency. Seasoned competency modeling experts can lead you through the process of building the right competency model and help you integrate competencies throughout your talent management practices. Alternatively, having the option to become certified and "do it yourself" offers additional flexibility.

   - Integrated tools and resources. Access to resources that explain the competencies, standardize assessment, offer suggestions for development, or provide selection criteria helps you integrate competencies into the everyday practices of your people managers. With integrated and scalable tools and resources, a competency model becomes the foundation for an integrated talent management system.

   - Intellectual property license. Having the rights to the content allows you to customize and integrate it into your organization. A license makes it easy to bring competencies to life within leadership development programs, career development materials, or your HR information systems and intranet.

   - Languages available. For competencies to be the lingua franca of talent management in your organization, they must be translated and localized. Your associates around the world need to be able to speak competencies in their own language and cultural context.

2. Identify the target areas for competency profiles.

    Depending on the context, you may want to focus on creating organization level, position level, functional area, or role-specific competency profiles.

    - Core organization competency profiles reflect the set of critical competencies required throughout the firm to shape the organizational capabilities and culture required to achieve the strategic intent (Ruyle & Orr, 2011).

    - Position-level-specific competency profiles are often used to enhance development, career planning, and succession planning.

    - Role-specific competency profiles based on job analyses are often used to create job descriptions, guide behavioral-based interviews, generate development plans, aid in selection for assignments and promotions, and generally inform workforce planning activities.

    In many cases, a comprehensive competency model will have more than one of these components. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate two of the many ways comprehensive competency models might be structured. A competency model could specify leadership competencies by core, position level, and functional area (see figure 1). In a slightly altered approach, a competency model could highlight core competencies and position level competencies grouped by theme (see figure 2). The competency profile for a specific role is found by combining the core, level-specific, and function-specific competencies. For example, the competency profile for a vice president of finance would include the core leadership competencies, executive level leadership competencies, and the leadership competencies for the finance function.

Figure 1. A competency model that specifies leadership competencies by core, position level, and functional area.
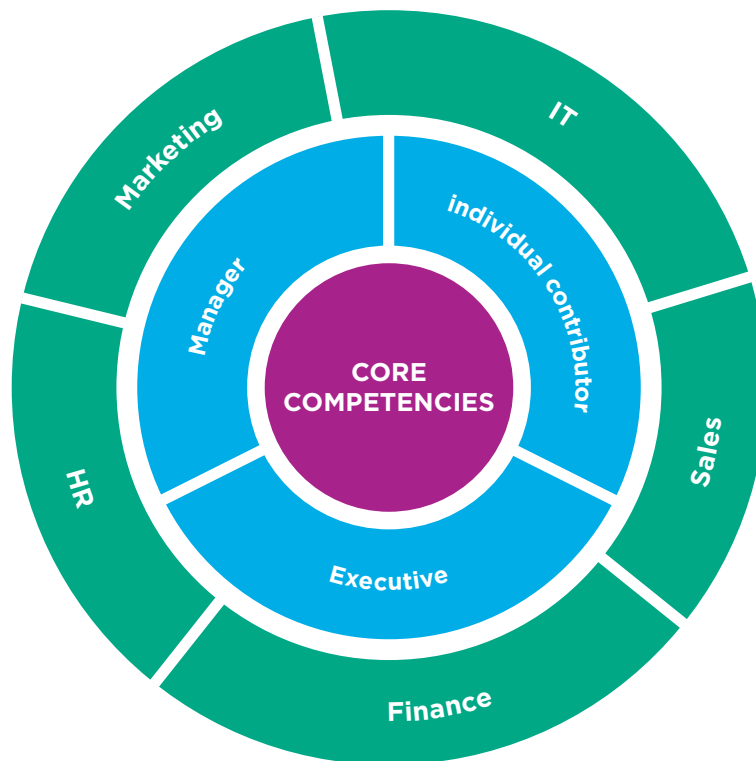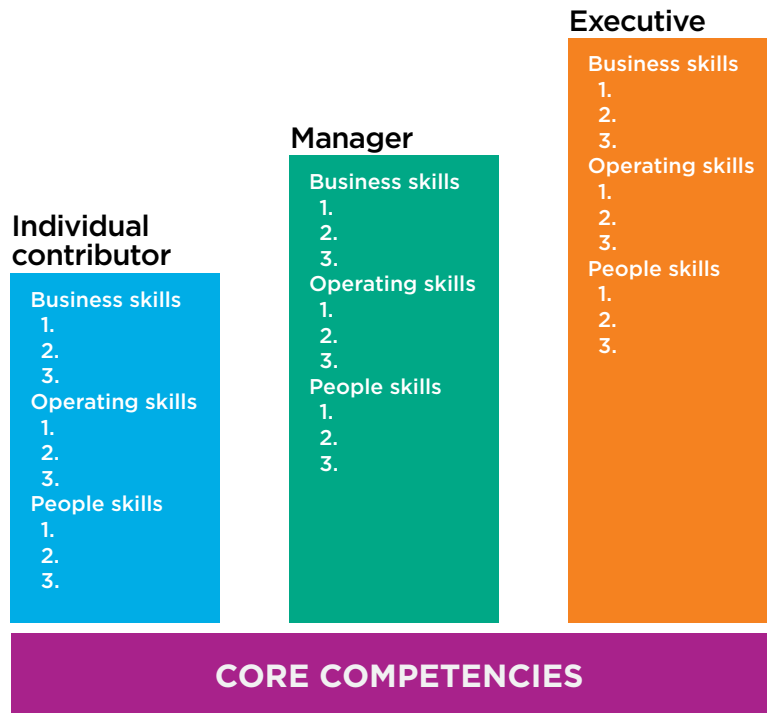
Figure 2. A competency model that highlights core competencies and position level competencies – grouped by theme.

Executive

Business skills
1.
2.
3.
Operating skills
1.
2.
3.
People skills
1.
2.
3.

Manager

Business skills
1.
2.
3.
Operating skills
1.
2.
3.
People skills
1.
2.
3.

Individual contributor

Business skills
1.
2.
3.
Operating skills
1.
2.
3.
People skills
1.
2.
3.

CORE COMPETENCIES

3. Consult the research and the experts to know which competencies are most critical for success in different contexts.

   Empirical studies have analyzed which leadership skills are most strongly correlated with high performance ratings, business outcomes, and promotion. Conversely, studies have looked at how weaknesses in certain skills or the presence of problematic stallers and stoppers contribute to demotion or termination. For example, studies show that Decision quality and Resourcefulness are both competencies significantly correlated with performance at all levels of leadership. Using these research findings can help you pick the most powerful competencies for your competency profiles.

   Competency modeling experts are an invaluable resource to tap. They have observed successful leaders in many contexts and have the experience to know how to identify the right competencies to include in a competency profile. Because they have conducted competency modeling exercises for numerous organizations across many geographies and levels, they have developed a database of best-in-class profiles. A competency expert can help ensure that you are combining the voices of your organization with research to build a model that will drive success in your unique context.

4. Identify key stakeholders to participate in the development of competency profiles.

   Key stakeholders could include executives, HR or organization development (OD) experts, or subject-matter experts who are stellar performers in the target position. Involving various contributors provides a wide perspective on what is mission critical for a particular role or position. Be careful not to cast the net too wide, however. Too many opinions can dilute the final product. Be selective and involve the right stakeholders. The act of involving key stakeholders goes a long way in acceptance and adoption of the competency profiles when you are ready to roll them out to the organization. Leveraging stakeholders to inform the model shifts the ownership from just HR to firm-wide adoption.

5. Design future-oriented competency profiles.

   Competency profiles, as compared to traditional forms of job analysis, are designed to focus on what's required for future success (Sanchez & Levine, 2009). Competency profiles are intended to help leaders achieve the business vision and strategies which are future-oriented; therefore, competency profiles need to mirror that future orientation. Rather than a description of what makes people successful today, the question we want to answer is what competencies will be critical for success tomorrow, given potential future challenges, expectations, and deliverables that will be required for the role or position. Expert facilitation of the competency modeling process is one way to ensure that the stakeholders' mindsets stay future-focused.

6. Classify competencies as price-of-admission versus competitive-edge.

It can be tempting to include a long list of competencies. Those who have gone through this exercise know how hard it is to reduce the list. Many HR practitioners wonder how many competencies to include in their organization's competency model. It depends. It depends on how many competencies are needed to accurately predict high performance. It depends on how many competencies the organization has an appetite for. And it depends on how HR intends to use the model. A general guideline is to select 10 or fewer core competencies that can create focus for the organization and another 5 to 15 competencies to address the skills that make a real difference for different jobs (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2002).

Another way to keep a competency model succinct and focused on differentiators is to classify mission-critical competencies as either price-of-admission (something that could be selected for) or a competitive-edge skill (something that could be selected for, but will most likely need to be developed). These decisions are made by referencing what the research shows. According to normative data and developmental difficulty analysis, a competency such as Action oriented is high in skill for most people and easiest to develop; therefore, it is a good candidate for the "price-of-admission" classification. A recruiter might screen for these when reviewing the resume or when conducting the screening interview. Develops talent is a low skill for most people and moderately difficult to develop, so this would be a competitive-edge competency in the "select for" category. *Cultivates* innovation is a weakness for most people, so this would be something the organization would want to invest in developing. Classifying competencies into price-of-admission, select for, or develop for allows a more fine-tuned approach and keeps employees focused in the areas that are most critical to develop (Hallenbeck & Eichinger, 2006).

Finally, another approach is to think of the overall competency model as the "Context" model, the library for a given job, position, level, or role, and then select a subset of those competencies, also known as the "Focus," on which to concentrate for a specific activity. This allows for a complete and effective model, but at the same time provides the simplicity of usage for the employee.

7. Link leadership competencies to technical/functional competency models.

Leadership competencies account for most of what makes a person successful (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2009). However, specific technical/functional skills are important as well, especially at lower levels in the organization. Thinking through how to seamlessly link leadership expectations with professional skill requirements can complete the picture for leaders. For example, your organization may have core organization-wide competencies as well as competencies identified for each level of leadership. Layered on top of that may be technical/functional competencies for functions such as finance or job families such as business analyst or project management. This provides an employee with a broader understanding of the requirements for success for both the level (manager) and the function or technical area (design). Leadership competencies and technical/functional competencies can link up in job descriptions, assessments, learning and development, succession planning, and career pathing.

8. Align competency profiles to the organization's mission, vision and values, and business strategy.

Ideally, a competency model is used consistently as the common foundation for integrated talent management practices and provides tangible support and reinforcement of the broader organization's purpose, vision and values, strategy, and organizational capabilities. This is the only way to fully leverage the potential of competency models. Unfortunately, this step is often overlooked.

Involving executives who have contributed to setting the organization's vision and business objectives promotes a direct link between what needs to be accomplished in the future and the leadership skills that will get you there. Alternatively, if executives are unable to provide the time required, have a competency consultant provide an expert mapping to translate the mission, vision, values statements, or business objectives into the leadership competencies required to deliver in those areas. This step is critical because these are the unique qualities of your organization's culture and strongly influence the right mix of competencies required for success at your organization.

The organizational context of desired employee behavior and competencies

Leveraging competencies to support the organizational variables may sound like a good idea in theory, but how exactly do you do it in practice? Korn Ferry introduces a detailed methodology to help practitioners think through competency selection when developing a competency model from the bottom up, or for a single role (Ruyle & Orr, 2011). This involves comparing competencies against a set of criteria—such as availability of the skills in the labor marketplace and difficulty to development them—included in the most important competencies for a given level or role, etc. For any competency, you can gauge the relative strength of the competency model based on how many of the criteria are satisfied. A similar approach can be used with respect to the organizational variables (Bray et al., 1974). Competencies can be evaluated against criteria such as supporting the mission/purpose, the vision, each of the values, and the organizational capabilities. These organizational variables become factors that help ascertain which competencies are most mission critical to include in the competency framework.

Gaps appearing will quickly highlight areas to reconsider or areas for further discussion to ensure that your organizational competency library drives success today and prepares your leaders for the challenges of tomorrow. And, as an ancillary benefit, evaluating competencies against criteria forces you through the due diligence of competency selection, helps prepare you to articulate the final selection to your executive committee, and provides much needed support for any skeptic's acceptance you have to win over to ensure success. And, for additional support, you can always practice creating a few models or job profiles from the library to further aid in the final decision-making process.

Figure 3 below describes the relationship between key organizational variables and employee variables such as overall performance and the demonstration of competencies that support the organization's purpose for existence. We recognize that not all organizations have widely communicated each of these elements, and some have combined these for brevity. We also acknowledge that there are many definitions and frameworks for each of the elements depicted below. Figure 3 intends to create a shared understanding of the relationship between high-level organization goals and individual competencies.

Figure 3. Competencies drive the organization's purpose.

An organization's mission or purpose describes the organization's reason for being. The two words are often used interchangeably and are typically stated in a single sentence or short statement. The statement avoids controversial remarks and is written with the intent of being clearly understood. The purpose answers the question of why the organization exists, but stops short at describing exactly how it does so. If the mission or purpose were the title of a book, the vision and values become a mini text on how to pursue achieving the mission.

Sample mission statements include:

- *We give the gift of sight to those who would otherwise live in darkness.*
- *We make delectable cuisine accessible to all diners, regardless of food restrictions.*
- *We give neglected and abused pets a new life through adoption into a healthy, happy, loving home.*

The vision brings the purpose statement from the esoteric to something more tangible by giving guidance as to how the mission will be achieved. Vision statements often specify how the organization will leverage its strengths or differentiate itself from the competition. It often includes a philosophy on how it will interact with all of the various stakeholder groups. The vision statement can position the organization's goals in terms of dominance (footprint, percent market share, global reach, finest quality, highest profitability, etc.). It's another way of phrasing the organization's long-term goals.

Sample vision statements include:

- *Our vision is to ensure that all children have access to corrective eyewear so sight is one less barrier they have to worry about and they can see the beauty in the world.*
- *We believe in bringing our wonderful culinary creations to each diner, treating everyone as individuals and providing everyone with a tailored experience.*
- *We believe that even pets can smile, and we work to unite caring and capable families with disadvantaged animals, enhancing the lives of all involved.*

Linking competencies to vision

If we were to use the second of the three vision examples presented above, and use this as another point of data to develop our organizational competency library, there are several questions we can pose for discussion to facilitate the initial mapping:

> *What constitutes wonderful? How do you bring a wonderful culinary experience to a diner? What exactly is a creation? Does presentation count? How do you treat each customer as an individual? How do you tailor an experience? How do you ensure a good experience for everyone? How might you need to tailor the culinary creation to meet an individual's needs?*

Having discussed the answers to questions such as these, it becomes easier to identify a list of competencies that support and drive vision. Remember, the purpose of this exercise is not to develop a specific job profile, but rather to derive the broader organizational library of competencies that are needed for the organization to achieve its vision. The following five competencies are a subset of the potential competencies that could be mapped and are presented along with an explanation:

- Customer focus: Necessary to ensure all customers are treated as equally important, and that the customer experience is tailored to the needs of the party and its individual members.
- *Drives* results: Essential for delivering excellence in both the customer experience and in the culinary creations.
- Interpersonal savvy: Critical for reading the needs and expectations of each guest.
- *Balances* stakeholders: Ensuring that the needs of all guests are anticipated.
- Nimble learning: Meaning that learning is derived from what works well for the guests as well as those things they are less positive about. It means experimentation will be used to deliver a positive experience.

Linking competencies to values

An organization's values are the foundation of its culture. Values are at the core of why we do what we do and how we are expected to treat one another, both inside and outside the organization. In other words, values provide guidance for employees as to how to act and behave in pursuit of the vision and set expectations for what is considered acceptable behavior. Without the explicit statement of values the organization agrees to operate by, there could be varied ways of pursuing performance goals and some could threaten the organization's reputation or stability. Although values themselves are not overtly observable, there are observable behaviors to indicate whether employees are operating in accordance with the agreed-upon values. Most organizations provide precise definitions for what the values mean to the company. Thus, values are often the easiest of the organizational variables to directly align with competencies and competency behaviors.

Both the vision and values become a rallying point for employees to stand behind and unite as a common entity toward the organization's shared goal, as long as they are messaged properly, understood, and compelling. Because values are often implied by observable behaviors, it becomes important to tie competency language and behaviors to the operating values of the organization. The list of potential values is numerous, but organizations typically select those that deal with how employees deal with one another and other stakeholders, how they approach risk and innovation, communication, etc.

Of the organizational variables discussed above, values are the clearest way to ensure your competency model is aligned with the organization's map to success, so we spend more time discussing it here. This is not to suggest that the vision and purpose should be ignored in order to map your library and/or models, but that, by their very nature, they are more organizationally aspirational and less tangible to derive behavioral examples to include in the competency language. Values are relatively more descriptive and concrete and we can compare them on behavioral terms. Behaviors demonstrating these values should be echoed and reflected in the competency language for the sake of consistency and unifying a common message. For instance, if the organization values taking calculated risks in the spirit of innovation, your competency model should include something along the lines of risk taking and innovation. Their absence should be a clear indication of misalignment. However, if these

values are aspirational and the culture is still somewhat risk averse in areas, you may wish to include something that speaks to standing up and voicing one's opinion without consensus from one's peers. Competency modeling can become an art and a science, with a bit of complexity.

If you start with a list of defined organizational values and wish to select competencies that support them, we recommend taking an interim step before diving right in. Values are personal and held by individuals and, as a set of psychological constructs, are not directly observable. You can, however, draw inferences about individuals' values based on their behavior, or observe whether their behavior reinforces or is in opposition to a value. Thus, we recommend translating the values into how they would manifest in observable behaviors. This simple step will facilitate the mapping of competencies and can prove highly valuable for later uses in determining fit at the selection stage or evaluating fit for subsequent leadership promotions. More importantly, they can be shared with leaders as examples of how to model the organizational values. See table 2 below for an example of what it may look like to map competencies to values.

Table 2. Example mapping of competencies to organizational values.

Results orientation	Open communication	Customer orientation	Collaboration	Innovation
Drives results	Communicates effectively	*Balances* stakeholders	*Builds effective* teams	*Cultivates* innovation
Resourcefulness	*Drives* engagement	Customer focus	*Values* differences	Global perspective

Some competencies may map to multiple values. Some values may have more competencies that reflect them than others. And the mapping of the competencies will largely depend on how the company sees the values playing out in behaviors and the definitions of the competencies. The names of the competencies may not be an obvious match, but the definition lends itself to the mapping.

After you have constructed a preliminary mapping to the values, do you notice any misses? Do you need to add or swap out competencies that better support the purpose or vision but are not captured with the values? If you are following a top-down approach, once you have a library of organizational competencies, you can then develop models for specific roles, job families, or functions that utilize a subset of the larger library (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2009).

Organizational culture

Culture is a term that gets a lot of airtime but whose definition varies as much as the people that describe it. For our purposes, we look at organizational culture as "the way things are or get done around here." Edgar Schein, in his research on organizational culture, says that culture cannot be measured quantitatively because many elements exist at the subconscious level and cannot be articulated, let alone objectively measured. There are a number of interesting models used to describe elements of organizational culture. Most of us can understand and communicate what a flat vs. hierarchical organization looks like and how it impacts how decisions are made and how we communicate. All of the preceding organizational terms (purpose, vision, and values) help shape and are influenced by the organization's culture. Your organization's culture may give you some unique insight as to what competencies are important, but this should be a primary source for the language you use to define your competencies and the behaviors associated with them.

Linking competencies to strategy

As we move from the more aspirational to the more tangible elements of figure 3, we come to strategy. This is a topic about which entire volumes have been written, and we will shy away from many of the philosophical debates which lack consensus. We tend to think of strategy as having a shorter life span than a purpose or vision, which is more enduring. Strategies may be pursued over a 2–4 year period, sometimes with multiple strategies in place simultaneously. But strategies are no less important, and they provide more frequent opportunities for communicating with employees and articulating specifically what is needed to execute the strategy successfully. Release of annual business plans or a new strategy can easily incorporate the core competencies that are needed for successful execution. Such messaging draws a clear and concrete line between competencies and individual behaviors and the successful attainment of organizational goals. Don't assume that employees will necessarily make the implicit connection. Be explicit and consistent with your key messages. Ensure they are thoughtful. With solid construction, combining key messages can tell a coherent, consistent, and meaningful story.

Sample strategies:

- *We will develop partnerships to identify at-risk children, create access to optometric care, and reinforce the value of sight with proper aftercare.*

- *We match our culinary expertise to meet the food sensitivities of our diners to close a gap in the marketplace.*

- *We will create opportunities for animals and families to meet through partnerships in the community and growing our volunteer base.*

If we were to use the second of the three strategy examples presented above, and use this as another point of data to develop our organizational competency library, there are several questions we can pose for discussion to facilitate the initial mapping:

> *What is culinary expertise, where do we have it, and how does it compare to the expertise of our competitors? How do we identify food sensitivities? How do we leverage culinary expertise to meet the food sensitivities of our diners? What does it mean to meet their needs? What is the marketplace gap we refer to? How does meeting food sensitivity needs fill this gap?*

Having satisfactorily answered questions such as these, it becomes easier to identify a list of competencies that support and drive this strategy forward. Remember, the purpose of this exercise is not to develop a specific job profile, but rather to derive the broader organizational library of competencies that are needed for the organization to achieve its strategy. The following six competencies are a subset of the potential competencies that could be mapped and are presented along with an explanation:

- Customer focus: Necessary to ensure that all customers are treated as equally important, regardless of food sensitivities or special requests. Customers are the reason the company stays in business.

- Communicates effectively: In a restaurant environment, all employees on the line, as well as the server, must be aware of food sensitivities to avoid accidental contamination. If this information is not shared clearly and accurately, jobs cannot be performed effectively.

- *Cultivates* innovation: Important to derive alternative dishes to satisfy all possible food sensitivities.

- *Optimizes* work processes: Essential for maintaining effective processes and systems that prevent food contamination.

- Plans and aligns: Critical for ensuring that all plates in a party come out hot and at the same time, regardless of differences in preparation time.

- Directs work: Critical if each staff member is to be clear on their role in delivering the customer experience.

Organizational capabilities

Organizational capabilities are similar to competencies but at the level of the organization. These capabilities ensure that the organization can perform with reliable predictability, repeatedly, and efficiently (Smith, 2008). They are often used to take inventory of what currently exists and compare it to what will be needed in the future of the organization. For example, being first to market or being innovative may be capabilities that the organization as a whole excels in, even if this is not true for every single employee. The gap between the current and future state for needed capabilities can prove informative as you build the broader organizational competency library.

Individual performance and competencies

Individual performance goals and demonstration of individual competencies are depicted separately in figure 3 because it demonstrates how the organization's purpose translates into individual employee performance, which should rest upon a foundation of competencies and behaviors. Many of our readers have seen similar graphics when it comes to depicting the cascade of organizational goals to functional and individual performance objectives. An important step often missed in this process is the translation of critical behaviors that support living the vision and values, being a role model and getting objective results the right way. In some cases, behaviors and competencies are absent from performance goals, which could inadvertently convey the message that individuals are not accountable for demonstrating competencies. In other cases, the same competencies appear year after year on reviews and other forms, but the linkage is unclear, raters rush through their completion, and overinflation is often a problem.

While it is possible for an organization to use a performance appraisal process that includes only objective measures, we believe that an employee's performance represents not only *what* was accomplished, but also *how* it was accomplished. While it is possible to achieve stellar results by cutting corners, selling subpar goods, or sacrificing service to customers, all of these behaviors could have a detrimental impact to customer retention or the organization's reputation in the long-term. Thus, while undesirable behaviors led to the good performance outcomes one year, the repetition of these same behaviors year after year is unlikely to result in sustainable performance over time.

We use this example of performance objectives, first, as perhaps the clearest way to illustrate the link between the language of competencies, HR practices, and organizational variables.

> **Results at any cost.** A sales professional has had difficulties with a supplier delivering goods within the contractual date promised. He decides to go with a different vendor known for substandard products and closes a sale before year-end just to make his numbers and earn his bonus. The customer had many problems with the product delivered—it was late, continued to break, and the customer ended up losing money due to returns. While the salesperson may have met his numbers this time, it is unlikely that he can sustain this performance over time using similar behaviors to close a deal. And, his behaviors damaged the company's reputation.

One of the issues that impacts an organization's culture is the balance that they support between the *what* and the *how* of performance. Some organizations view them both as equally important, but a significant shift in priority in either direction not only makes a statement of culture, but can impact organizational performance as well.

Implementing competency models

Often the effort and investment around the development of competency models far exceeds the care and attention given to ensure that the competency models are integrated into HR practices and introduced to employees in the organization. Plan to spend at least as much time and effort (if not 2–3 times more) on implementing competency profiles as you spend creating them. We like to encourage clients to have a road map for implementation before any competency modeling work begins. This road map builds accountability for the implementation phase, and it helps start the change management process with key stakeholders. Here are some suggestions to keep in mind as you begin applying the competency profiles you worked so hard to create.

Once you have finalized your organizational competency library, you can turn your efforts to embedding the model into existing HR and OD practices. Using competencies as the red thread to weave all of the programs together with a common language reinforces what really matters to the organization and keeps it simple for leaders and employees alike. Competencies should be at the core of all talent management practices for a fully integrated approach to talent management. But not all competencies are used for every practice. Figure 4 depicts competencies at the center of all HR and OD programs and practices. The relationship between competencies and some of these practices is obvious while others are more indirect. But the importance of embedding competencies and aligning them with existing practices is clear, given how competencies can be a powerful enabler of business strategy and culture.

Figure 4. Competencies related to HR and OD practices.
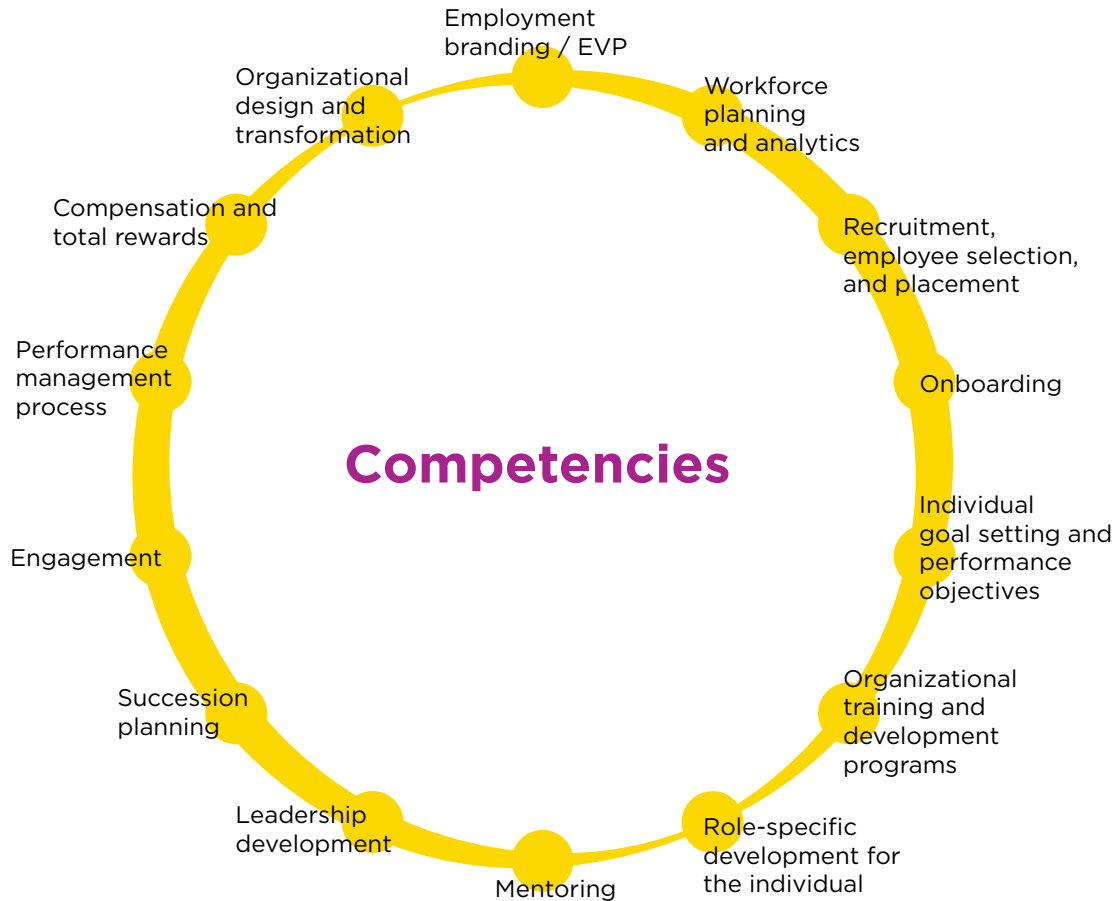
1. Start at the top.

   Setting expectations with employees regarding leadership behaviors will fall flat unless senior leaders are on board. Get buy-in from senior leadership teams that these are the leadership behaviors critical to any leader's success in the organization. Consider providing executives with a multi-rater assessment so that they can get feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. By asking for feedback and creating an improvement plan for themselves, they are modeling the behavior they want the rest of the organization to adopt.

2. Evaluate current talent management practices and what motivates leaders to determine the best place to begin integrating competencies.

   Where to begin? It's a big question and one that may be determined by either your current or your desired organizational culture. It's important to take an inventory of your current HR and talent management practices and evaluate how embedded they are in the organization. Processes that are widespread and well implemented may be a harder place to start because of the change management involved. On the other hand, less sophisticated processes allow room for improvement and employees will see added value right away. Take interviewing and selection, for example. If the current state is decentralized and mostly managed by the individual hiring manager, offering a competency-based selection process not only adds science to the process, but also makes it easier for those hiring managers. Identify the greatest need and begin there—other talent management practices will follow.

   Another way of determining the best place to begin integrating competencies is to consider where competencies would most influence leaders' behavior and where you would see results most quickly. Depending on what motivates leaders in your organization, you could consider various starting points. Perhaps leaders feel valued when they receive individual assessment and coaching—you could start with a multi-rater assessment process. Perhaps leaders in your organization attach tremendous value to leadership development programs—you could build a curriculum based on the competency profiles. If leaders in your organization are most driven by career opportunities, you could focus on developing competencies through on-the-job assignments. Or, if you think it will be challenging to inspire behavior change with existing employees, you may begin using a competency-based interviewing and selection process for new employees.

Employment branding/employment value proposition. Organizations that include their must-have or desired competencies not only set expectations up front for candidates, but also create the perception that not just anyone can work here. It takes something special to become an employee, and this could increase the desirability of the organization—many times being the employer of choice is a strategic imperative. The evolution of interactive web sites and social media has made it easier for companies to market their employment brand with clear, consistent, and compelling messages, with a lower investment of resources.

Workforce planning and analytics. The success of these activities depends upon your organization's ability to accurately assess competencies in the current workforce and predict those competencies that will be needed in the future. At the rate of change we've witnessed in the past few decades, such tasks seem challenging, but necessary. While technical skill sets and requirements may change with technology, interpersonal and leadership skills will continue to increase in importance. Failure to estimate what is needed in your talent pipeline will undoubtedly hinder, if not paralyze, the organization. And competencies lie at the heart of the matter. Since functional and technical competencies are likely to change more frequently, they must be revised as needed to accurately capture the work being performed and ensure the organization is set up for success in achieving its purpose, vision and values, and strategy.

Recruitment and selection. These processes are perhaps one of the most obvious and easiest areas to embed competencies and align your model with existing practices. Structured, competency-based, behavioral interviews can yield tremendous insight into how effectively a candidate has demonstrated competencies in past experiences, while providing a valid and legally defensible method of assessment when used appropriately with trained interviewers (Hallenbeck & Eichinger, 2006). Additionally, situational judgment tests and job simulations can provide additional sources of information about a candidate's level of proficiency with certain competencies. As with all selection tools and practices, you will need to ensure that the competencies are job-related and necessary for successful performance in the job and that the tools measuring these competencies are valid and legally defensible.

Onboarding. Getting a new hire acclimated and performing is another area where competencies are helpful. Onboarding is a great opportunity to introduce new hires to the competencies that are most important for their roles, as well as where they can find additional information about further developing competencies for their current jobs and for future career planning. This is not where you would introduce the complexity of the entire library down to all the behavioral statements, but you can share competencies that are common to the performance management process or their level in the organization.

Learning and development. Learning and development programs can link a desired change in skill to the specific leadership competencies that are developed in each offering. Individual development plans should be competency-based and can either emphasize bringing performance up to an acceptable level, improving upon already effective performance levels, or preparing the employee to take on a new role. Both leadership and functional/technical competencies may be highlighted in these plans, and if your organization behaviorally differentiates competencies based on level of effectiveness or organizational level, such descriptors will prove invaluable in development discussions and planning.

Mentoring. Mentors can be a wonderful resource for sharing how they handled past experiences and providing ideas about how to improve competency proficiency and become more effective. This practice is heavily influenced by the organization's culture in terms of whether or not a mentoring program exists, the nature of the objectives, and the degree of structure.

Leadership development is one of the practices where organizational culture and competencies collide to influence its design. For a practice such as 360 feedback, the items can be revised to reflect the new competency language for alignment. Action learning projects can also be tailored to develop specific competencies such as problem solving or strategic thinking, and if there is a cohort, participants can share strategies for becoming more effective in different competencies.

Succession planning. This is a practice where assessing competencies can drive critical talent decisions and create a pipeline of ready talent for your system. Identifying bench candidates that can effectively backfill a vacant position requires that the person has the competencies that are essential for success in the target role. Although the ability to perform the job effectively is an essential consideration for placement, other factors such as fit with the culture or balance with the other leadership team members should be taken into account.

Engagement. Some models of employee engagement have been mapped to competencies. This helps translate what leaders need to do more of, or better, in order to increase employee engagement. Like 360 feedback, engagement summary reports can provide managers with key information on their own competency shortcomings. When followed by sincere and heartfelt action, managers can model the performance-feedback-improvement loop to their team.

Performance management process. The performance management process can include rating competency behaviors and results as part of the formal process. Competencies lend richness to the language of performance. This practice facilitates the feedback process and makes it easier for managers to discuss how the effectiveness of different behaviors contributed to the results. Competency ratings can be done separately, but the link between behaviors and results is weakened. Two approaches to including competencies in the performance management process can be used, both leveraging a subset of competencies:

(1) Select a subset of the individual's competencies that are essential for effectiveness.

(2) Use the same subset of competencies from the organizational library for all employees, such as those that exemplify the organizational values.

Keep in mind, some competencies are better suited for use in performance management than others. For example, competencies like Resourcefulness, Decision quality, *Drives* results, and Business insight are more concrete and observable, which makes them easier for managers to rate. Other competencies like Situational adaptability and *Manages* complexity are not as easily connected with the achievement of performance goals, and it would be better to avoid including them in the performance management process.

Compensation and total rewards. An organization's total rewards philosophy will largely depend upon its culture, but some organizations opt to pay for higher proficiency in competencies, favorably rewarding those individuals who outperform their colleagues. Additionally, organizations frequently draw parallels between compensation broadbands and organization levels for leadership competencies.

Organizational design and transformation. These are reliant almost equally on organizational culture and competencies. The structure of the organization has drastic implications for what is needed to successfully execute the job responsibilities. Risk taking, problem solving, strategic thinking, communication, and developing others are all competencies that become more or less important, depending upon the span of control and how the responsibilities are distributed across the company. Any type of change to the organization design requires understanding the difference between the current and future state, what is needed for success in the future, and taking a careful inventory of current talent. In some cases, your current talent may not be a good fit for the new roles, and external talent may need to be infused into the organization.

3. Enable your integrated talent management processes with the right technology.

   Consider the underlying technologies that link your talent management processes. You will likely want to embed the organization's competency profiles in your human resource management system (HRMS), talent management system (TMS), learning management system (LMS), communication portal, or other system that allows you to communicate and update the content as needed. Ensure that the applications you have in place are able to draw upon the appropriate inputs and provide the appropriate outputs to other HR applications—a critical foundation for all future efforts to integrate processes. By mapping the interactions of processes and conducting a future state/current state gap analysis, you can assess the best place to begin your efforts to integrate competencies into talent management processes.

   It is important to carefully consider which system you want to use and how the processes built into the systems will impact your existing process approach. Further, and most importantly, it is critical to identify the "systems of record" for people, job, and competency data in case you develop more than one version of the truth and fall into competency or data chaos. Take care not to let the latest technology platform drive your competency strategy; just because there is a certain field or workflow within a system, does not mean that it is based on best practices or right for your organization.

4. Give something before expecting something from others.

   Before you get too eager to assess and evaluate everyone against the mission-critical leadership skills, make sure that you are setting them up for success. In some cases, you might be raising the bar on leadership expectations. Or perhaps the content of the competency profile is different from the behaviors that have been rewarded in the past. Either way, it will be important to provide employees with development resources so that they feel set up for success. Consider introducing employees to the competencies in a positive, purely developmental setting before you put competencies into selection tools or even multi-rater surveys. This introduction will help build goodwill and promote the overall adoption of competencies into the organization.

5. Anticipate that you will revisit and refresh your competency profiles.

   Business strategies change. The competency model you create and roll out to the organization needs to reflect adjustments in organizational strategy, vision, and direction. Think about how you will communicate these changes and make updates to materials and resources employees are using. For example, you may find a way to house competency profiles on a centralized drive and encourage employees to download them as

needed. This centralization would allow you to make revisions as necessary. Communicating the long-term plan for using competency profiles in your organization will also reassure employees that this is not a passing fad—it's a new, strategic way to integrate talent management efforts. And remember to schedule a regular review of your competencies after each scheduled organizational strategic planning session.

6. Determine how you will measure your results.

    What is the business impact you expect to see based on your efforts? Set your targets in key areas such as skill development, engagement, higher productivity, performance ratings, reduced turnover, or more ready-now candidates for key positions. While it is very complex to measure, it is not unrealistic to assume that a best-in-class integrated talent management system will result in increased shareholder value (Huselid, 1995; Pfeffer, 1998).

7. Assess your organization's talent management strategy:

    Overcoming competency chaos may seem difficult. To make it easier, we recommend a three-step process that considers the current maturity of the organization's talent management strategies:

    (1) Figure out where we are now:
    - How mature are our current talent management strategies?
    - What's our existing business need and vision for strategic talent management?
    - What talent management applications and IT systems do we have in place and how well aligned are they?
    - What are our competency assets and how can they be put together to create a cohesive foundation?
    - Where do we have gaps?
    - What is the level of executive commitment to overcome barriers and realize success?

    (2) Determine where we need to go:
    - What is required to support development and learning systems?
    - What about selection readiness assessment?
    - What is needed to stand up to the scrutiny of pay for performance or succession planning and promotion decisions?
    - What kind of competency framework will we need to minimize overlap, redundancy, and chaos?

    (3) Build a strategy road map:
    - What is the foundational architecture?
    - What do we need first?
    - What's needed for a quick win?
    - What more will be needed?
    - What is our time frame?

Table 3 suggests five levels of maturity in competency implementation (paralleling the model/structure outlined by Carnegie Mellon in their People Capability Maturity Model) that can be used to diagnose and assess the current level of your organization. It also suggests the conditions that should be present to move from one level of maturity to the next. Using this table, organizations can create a specific agenda to sequentially progress toward greater maturity.

For example, an organization must start with a strategy that has the end result in mind. If the goal is a system to identify, differentiate, and develop talent for better decisions of all types—selection, promotion, development, and succession—then an integrated talent management system will be needed with organization-wide analytics based on an aligned set of standards for all processes—from recruitment to retirement. This means better tools to:

- Build, customize, and manage a single, consistent competency and model library.
- Structure those competency models to provide both vertical and horizontal comparability.
- Leverage information about competencies by getting different applications to talk to each other.
- Enable managers to make sound decisions about jobs and people on a daily basis.

Table 3. Competency implementation maturity/utility model (abridged).

MATURITY LEVEL CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5
1. BUSINESS NEED: pilot, play to core	**EXPERIMENT** visibility; do latest thing; fad	**MANAGEMENT** Communication (competency list as values statement), Control e.g., perf mgmt rating on employees in a job or unit	**PERFORMANCE** Improve productivity, reduce costs, cut cycle times, correct specific problem (e.g., high new hire failure rate, turnover)	**INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE** Profit, ROI	**ENTERPRISE** Shareholder Value
2. ORG SPAN, IMPACT: pilot to enterprise-wide	• One-off pilot study: single job, workgroup, department	• Single job in several org units (e.g., sales); several jobs in one job family, function	• Multiple org units, processes, operations linked to produce economic outcome	• Multiple business: functions, processes linked in profit center balanced scorecard	• Enterprise-wide: multiple businesses
3. HR APPLICATION: One to all	• Single HR function: >job/team/org analysis/ design or >staffing or >development or >perf management, or >compensation	• Two or more HR functions: A and B, but not linked synergistically to improve performance	• Several HR functions that interact in causal flow value chain to increase performance (e.g., better staffing + training + perf mgmt)	• Several HR and other business functions (product development/ R&D, supply, production, finance, marketing / sales) that interact to improve business performance	• All HR functions across multiple businesses, geographies
4. COMPETENCY METHODOLOGY: inconsistent methods to standardized, reliable, validated	• Many data collection methods: panel, survey; no standards	• Standardized data collection: survey, perf management form	• Standardized BEI, 360 survey, test competency assessment methods	• Standardized BEI, 360 survey, test competency assessment methods linked	• Standardized BEI, 360 survey, test competency assessment methods worldwide
5. CONTENT: random ramblings to standardized, reliable, validated content	• No standard competency dictionaries or definitions	• Standard core competency dictionary used across org units; local supplements	• Standard core competency dictionary used across processes; local supplements; $EVA of competence at unsuccessful, average, and superior (+1SD) points on performance bell curve	• Standard core competency dictionary used across business functions; local supplements; $EVA of competence at unsuccessful, average, and superior (+1SD) points on performance bell curve	• Standard core competency dictionary used enterprise-wide with local supplements; $EVA of competence at unsuccessful, average, and superior (+1SD) points on performance bell curve
6. IT SYSTEMS, SOFTWARE SUPPORT: none to integrated HRIS to ERP; s-o-a predictive analytics	• None	• Integrated HR database or linked unit databases; simple survey>database> reporting	• Integrated HR database or linked unit databases • Statistics software (e.g., SPSS) to test reliability and validity of HR competency independent variables to predict dependent variables $EVA outcomes	• Integrated HR and linked ERP databases • SEM and time series statistics to test balanced scorecard value chain/causal flow models: "upstream" competency (HR learning and innovation), ops and customer IVs prediction of DV business financial outcomes	• Integrated HR and linked ERP databases • SEM and time series statistics to test balanced scorecard value chain/causal flow models: "upstream" competency (HR learning and innovation), ops and customer IVs prediction of global business financial outcomes

Adapted from the Competency Maturity Model by Lyle M. Spencer and Paul D. Storfer. Reprinted with permission.

So, for example, if you have determined that your organization is currently at Level 2 and you wish to move the organization to Level 3, there are certain things that you must have and certain things you must do to make that happen. Some of these will affect the culture and people in the organization and the corresponding competency initiatives, and some will require investments in technology and systems infrastructure.

With table 3 and table 4, you can create your own tailored plan with specific initiatives that assist in increasing the maturity of the organization and advancing toward Talent Management Value Realization.

Table 4. Maturity level 3 plan.

	MATURITY LEVEL 3	TO THE EXTENT THESE ARE NOT IN PLACE, TO REACH MATURITY LEVEL 3, YOU WOULD NEED TO:
PEOPLE/ORG CULTURE	• Formalized HR management structure, within which HR seeks to provide some level of strategic information to senior executives • Performance Management programs in place including a formal Performance Appraisal program of some kind • Formal recruiting efforts and supporting organization • Some business processes formalized take into account Web-based delivery of HR services and programs	• Define the organizational structure • Define the rules and roles of job functions (non-specific) for executives, managerial, line, and individual contributors • Implement a well-defined Performance Management Program
COMPETENCY INITIATIVES	• Competencies integrated into organizational Performance Management programs • Core competencies for levels of positions from executive through individual contributor are in place, typically within just one business unit; not yet consistent within all business units across geographies; identified competencies for a few job families, but not yet down to the functional position level • Some metrics related to performance of workforce are generated, mostly turnover and retention	• Define and implement a pilot Performance Management Program • Seek employee acceptance and feedback during Performance Management Program development • Integrate Performance Management within workflow and consider best practice research • Explore metrics and scorecard utilization related to workforce capabilities • Build competency definitions for all jobs in a single business unit, and then use this to pilot additional business units
SYSTEMS/ INFRASTRUCTURE	• Fairly comprehensive HRIS capability, either a best-of-breed Talent Management Application package or an Enterprise Resource Planning system or an effective home-grown system • HRIS maintaining job and position levels and descriptions, as well as reporting relationships; organization structure and organization charting a plus • Ability to gain access to other non-HR systems such as financials via automated interfaces (bi-directional) and customer relations to generate some rudimentary metrics • Methodology for data input via Lotus Notes or similar and ready for use to capture and update employee performance plans	• Implement "go-live" plans for an HRIS that includes functionality for Performance Management and Career Development • Build appropriate interfaces to non-HR systems such as finance and customer relations/billing • Ensure your systems have the capability to support basic or rudimentary metrics and scorecards related to capturing workforce capabilities, movement, and future trends

Organizing competencies from the library, model, or profile

The term *competency* has been used in conjunction with other words such as competency library, competency framework, competency model, mega competencies, competency clusters, technical and leadership competencies, job competency profile, etc. It is just as easy for two well-seasoned experts to get confused when they are not using the nomenclature in the same way, as it is for the novice who is new to competencies. Essentially, it all comes down to level of granularity. In this section, we will attempt to define and illustrate how all of the nomenclature fits together.

At its most granular level, a competency is essentially a knowledge, skill, ability, or other characteristic (KSAO) or a combination of KSAOs that is needed for effective performance in a job (Campion, Fink, Ruggeberg, Carr, Phillips, & Odman (2011).

A comprehensive set of competencies needed to perform a job can be called a competency model. Likewise, the term *competency model* can be applied to a job function, like accounting. When applied to a job function, the competencies needed for an individual job may be called a competency profile.

Finally, a *competency library* is a universe of all possible competencies needed to perform work. There are many research-based competency libraries available (the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ is one example) that can be further tailored for an organization to create their own competency library.

Of course, even when organizations select a subset of competencies from a competency library, the list can still be quite large. Often, there are between 20 and 30 competency profiles for a single job. So, to aid memory and heuristics, it is not uncommon to create ways of displaying how the competencies group together. The benefit of this is to provide fewer concepts to remember and also create a visual of how the competencies for individual jobs and job families combine with other functions to create a master list of competencies needed for the organization to achieve success.

Figure 5 below provides a visual depiction of how competencies (those that are numbered) are grouped together into broader categories such as clusters (lettered) and factors (F1, F2, etc.). Such an illustration is useful in depicting an entire organizational library or even a job profile as it groups together related competencies and clusters. Appearing at the bottom of figure 5 is a small table that depicts how individual competencies can be further defined in granularity by organizational level and/or level of proficiency. It is important to note that such a detailed illustration of competencies is not appropriate for all uses. Although the levels depicted in the table might prove useful for assigning performance ratings, guiding development, and coaching, the broader categories of clusters or factors may be a better choice to diagnose organizational strengths and weaknesses.

Figure 5. Sample hierarchical structure of a competency model.
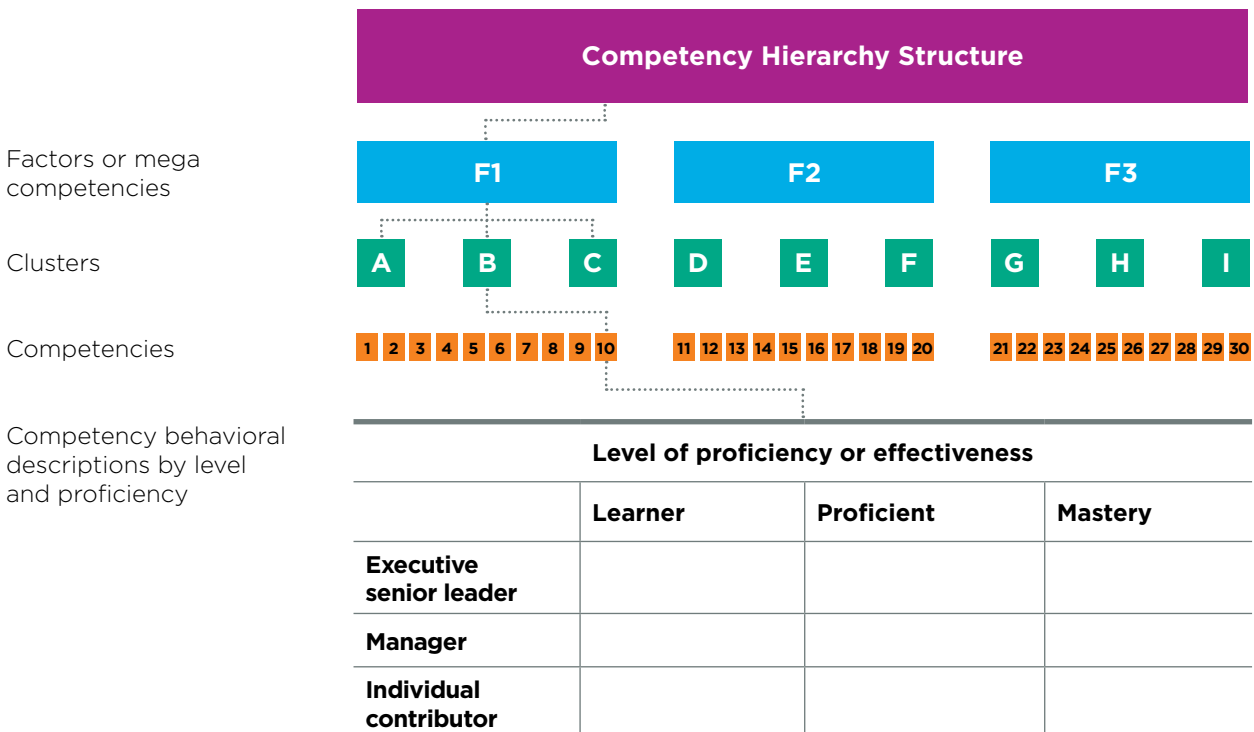
Now, if figure 5 depicted an organization's entire competency library, along with the behavioral statements associated with the different levels in the organization and varying levels of proficiency, the amount of information would be overwhelming. Rarely would such a display of comprehensive and detailed information be designed for employee consumption. Instead, it is held by HR or OD practitioners, and its varying levels of granularity are used for different purposes.

Section III – The foundation of the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ library

Overview of the research on leadership competencies

The research and development of taxonomies of managerial behavior during the past few decades has contributed to the establishment and refinement of several leadership competency libraries. There is a rich tradition in the leadership literature to investigate and understand managerial performance. Early studies mostly focused on what managers or leaders do. For example, some initial research identified eight managerial activities: supervising, planning, evaluating, coordinating, investigating, representing, negotiating, and staffing (Mahoney, Jerdee, & Carroll, 1963; Penfield, 1974). Based on an in-depth, structured observation study of executives, Mintzberg (1975) delineated the following 10 essential management roles: figurehead, leader, liaison, monitor, disseminator, spokesman, entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator.

At about the same time, Tornow and Pinto (1976) developed a Management Position Description Questionnaire for objectively describing the job content of executive and management positions. Their study indicated that the job content of positions from a wide range of managerial levels and functions could be described in terms of 13 factors. Tornow and Pinto further stated that various positions could be compared based on the similarities and differences in these 13 factors.

Later studies moved beyond describing the job content and began to evaluate and integrate classifications of management skills. For example, Schippmann, Prien, and Hughes (1991) identified 22 dimensions of job skill classifications for management positions. Built primarily on the studies conducted at the Center for Creative Leadership, Lombardo and Eichinger (2002) developed a leadership competency library that encompassed 6 Factors, 21 Clusters, and 67 Competencies. John Campbell (2012a) summarized several decades of research on behavior, performance, and effectiveness into 6 leadership performance factors and 8 management performance factors.

One finding from the leadership literature is particularly important for the practice of competency modeling. Although the language and the specifications may be different for the competency libraries developed by different resources, the content, the themes, and the structures are very similar (Tett, Guterman, Bleier, & Murphy, 2000). Campbell (2012b) asserts, based on his survey of 60 years of literature, that while the context has changed a lot (e.g., globalization, technology, speed, complexity) and the context affects which elements are most important, the elements themselves (competencies) required for effective performance remain the same. Therefore, our refreshed model is very much aligned with the previous models. But at the same time, it reflects the changes in the environment such as globalization, complexity, and diversity.

The research foundation and development of the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™

The development of the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ was based on some key criteria and principles:

- Skills that matter most for performance.

- Skills that are most relevant in the 21st century context.

- Valid across global regions.

- Content that is user-friendly and simple.

- Drives multiple processes including selection, development, performance, and competency modeling.

The Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ was built by leveraging all of the expertise from the combined decades of knowledge and the hundreds of thousands of leadership assessments Korn Ferry has amassed.

Development of the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ Global Competency Framework came about through rigorous analysis using a combination of quantitative, qualitative, and market-based data, sourcing from both Korn Ferry's own extensive data stores and external research literature sources:

- Extensive review of the scientific literature.

- Research analyses based upon legacy competency libraries from Lominger and PDI Ninth House.

- Intellectual property from Lominger, PDI Ninth House, and Global Novations.

- Global and industry trends.

- Customer input.

- Expert input.

This work proceeded in three parallel threads.

Market-based review of global and industry trends

A review of global and industry trends was undertaken using data from a variety of sources, both internal and external.

1. A team of Korn Ferry competency consultants from all legacy organizations and with global experience was convened to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the legacy competencies and competency frameworks. Their input was to be based on capturing their experience with clients. A variety of information was gleaned from the team regarding competency gaps; competencies which, as defined or measured, did not capture the competency effectively; and competencies which were not effectively observable. One example of the conclusions reached by the consultant team was that legacy competencies pertaining to developing talent were too focused on HR processes and not enough on a culture which provides coaching and development opportunities.

2. A review of current business literature on competencies was undertaken. The review surfaced some core and expected competencies of varying specificity. All are included in the new framework in a variety of ways:

   - Integrity/Ethics.
   - Strategy.
   - Results Focus.
   - Judgment.
   - Passion/Optimism.
   - Building the Team.
   - People Development.
   - Accountability.

3. That review yielded a number of emerging trends which generally took the form of emerging business imperatives with implications for competencies, including:

   - A focus on innovation.
   - The need for learning-agile leadership.
   - A perspective in leaders that is broad and global.
   - An imperative for managing diverse workforces—broadly defined.
   - An increasing desire to select for the correct competencies to ensure the firm has the talent able to achieve strategic goals.
   - A need to also retain a focus on developing talent that is already in place, given the overall talent shortage currently being experienced and expected to continue throughout the first quarter of this century.

4. A survey of a broad cross-section of competency consultants added additional data for consideration of market perspectives.

   Several key trends regarding competency content and use emerged from the review of global and industry needs overall:

   - Need for simplified models and applications.
   - Desire for technology-enabled tools to support the competency models in application.
   - Simple access to the complexity of competencies.

Review of the scientific literature

A review of the scientific literature reveals that truly effective deployment of competencies in a firm for prediction, development, and measurement requires a clear differentiation between antecedents of performance, performance, and outcomes of performance. Competencies are clearly part of performance. Within the Korn Ferry Four Dimensions of Leadership and Talent, competencies represent the behavioral aspects of performance. The four-dimension framework provides a whole-person view of leadership quality.

Our review of the scientific literature resulted in an increased focus on the behavioral in the competencies included in the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ as one component of the Korn Ferry Four Dimensions of Leadership and Talent.

Quantitative analysis

A number of quantitative analyses were undertaken using legacy data from Lominger and PDI Ninth House to glean information which would inform the new competency framework:

- The relative importance of competencies from 360 data provided a look back at what managers say is important.

- Validity analysis identified which competencies best predict what is actually important in boss ratings of performance, potential, and peril.

- Frequency of use of competencies by clients was evaluated.

- Skill ratings were reviewed for average level of skill efficiency and for variance in performance.

- Critical gaps between observed skill and importance were identified.

- Survey data from consultants were gathered regarding most critical and least critical competencies to include in the framework.

Integration

The Korn Ferry Institute team was charged with integrating information from the review of global and industry trends, the review of scientific literature, and the quantitative analysis. In addition, the integration team considered desirable aspects of legacy competency approaches using the guiding principles described on page 25.

The Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ library

Based on a review of more recent literature, a consideration of key 21st century trends, and insights from our data, we derived the new Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ library, which is comprised of 4 Factors, 12 Clusters, and 38 Competencies.

FACTOR I: THOUGHT

A. Understanding the business
- 5. Business insight
- 11. Customer focus
- 17. Financial acumen
- 35. Tech savvy

B. Making complex decisions
- 8. *Manages* complexity
- 12. Decision quality
- 32. *Balances* stakeholders

C. Creating the new and different
- 18. Global perspective
- 19. *Cultivates* innovation
- 33. Strategic mindset

FACTOR II: RESULTS

D. Taking initiative
- 2. Action oriented
- 27. Resourcefulness

E. Managing execution
- 15. Directs work
- 25. Plans and aligns
- 38. *Optimizes* work processes

F. Focusing on performance
- 1. *Ensures* accountability
- 28. *Drives* results

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

G. Building collaborative relationships
- 6. Collaborates
- 9. *Manages* conflict
- 20. Interpersonal savvy
- 21. *Builds* networks

H. Optimizing diverse talent
- 4. Attracts top talent
- 13. Develops talent
- 14. *Values* differences
- 34. *Builds effective* teams

I. Influencing people
- 7. Communicates effectively
- 16. *Drives* engagement
- 23. Organizational savvy
- 24. Persuades
- 37. *Drives* vision and purpose

FACTOR IV: SELF

J. Being authentic
- 10. Courage
- 36. *Instills* trust

K. Being open
- 29. *Demonstrates* self-awareness
- 30. Self-development

L. Being flexible and adaptable
- 3. *Manages* ambiguity
- 22. Nimble learning
- 26. *Being* resilient
- 31. Situational adaptability

The structure of the framework

The Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ is designed to be used for several purposes:

- Development: Assessing skill level (informally or formally) for the purpose of development.

- Performance: Assessing performance (informally or formally).

- Competency modeling: Articulating which skills are mission critical for a particular role, department, level, or organization.

- Selection: Identifying which competencies are table stakes and which competencies are differentiating for a given role.

- Helping individuals achieve higher levels of contribution for specific competencies.

In order to serve the above purposes, content has been created that includes:

Competency Anchored Rating Scales (CARS): These general competency definitions include descriptors of Talented, Skilled, Less skilled, and Overused skill. In application, Competency Anchored Rating Scales help assess skill level for the purpose of development.

Four Stages® of Contribution: These definitions specify skilled behaviors at different levels of proficiency, including: Contributes dependently, Contributes independently, Contributes through others, and Contributes strategically. Stages help individuals develop within a role—higher levels of contribution can be achieved by progressively developing from Stage 1 through Stage 4.

Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS): For each of the behaviors at a Stage of Contribution, behavioral descriptions illustrate specific gradations of skill for Exceeds expectations, Meets expectations, and Needs improvement. Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales are often used to assess performance.

Figure 6. The Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ competency framework hierarchy.
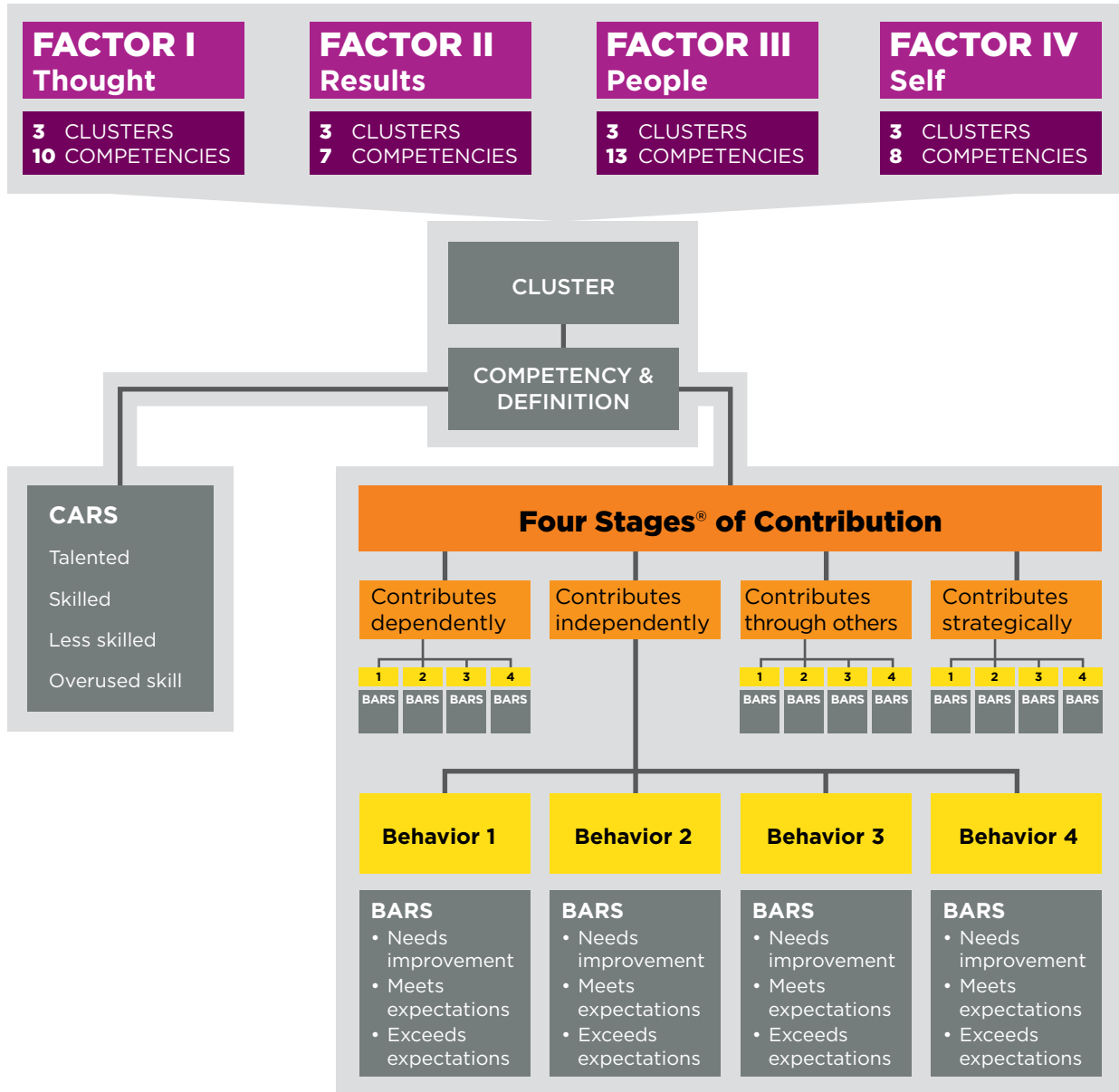
Sample competency: *Manages* complexity

Consider the following content for a sample competency, *Manages* complexity:

Competency title: *Manages* complexity

Competency definition: Making sense of complex, high quantity, and sometimes contradictory information to effectively solve problems.

Competency Anchored Rating Scales (CARS)

Less skilled	Skilled	Talented	Overused skill
• Misses the complexity of issues and force fits solutions. • Doesn't gather sufficient information to assess situations completely. • Relies solely on intuition, even when contrary information exists. • Is caught off guard when problems surface without an obvious solution.	• Asks the right questions to accurately analyze situations. • Acquires data from multiple and diverse sources when solving problems. • Uncovers root causes to difficult problems. • Evaluates pros and cons, risks and benefits of different solution options.	• Readily distinguishes between what's relevant and what's unimportant to make sense of complex situations. • Looks beyond the obvious and doesn't stop at the first answers. • Analyzes multiple and diverse sources of information to define problems accurately before moving to solutions.	• May tend toward analysis paralysis. • May wait too long to come to a conclusion. • May get caught up in the process and miss the big picture. • May make things more complex than needed.

Stage 4 (Contributes strategically) BARS (which demonstrate different levels of proficiency).

Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS)

Behavior	Needs improvement	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations
Approaches problems from a systems perspective, defining connections, linkages, and interdependencies.	Recognizes only the most obvious issues of a problem without identifying the connections, linkages, or interdependencies to other problems.	Understands the systematic elements of issues; sees the major connections, linkages, and interdependencies of problems.	Scrutinizes problems from a systems perspective; draws out subtle connections, linkages, and interdependencies in order to resolve multiple issues at once.
Obtains resources and establishes organizational processes that enable effective information gathering.	Provides inefficient, ineffective, or few resources or processes to support effective information gathering.	Takes steps to ensure the organization has the resources and processes in place to gather the information it needs.	Deploys highly effective processes and distributes the right resources to enable quick, successful information gathering.
Anticipates complex challenges the organization may face in the future.	Acts as if present conditions will persist indefinitely, missing opportunities to forecast future challenges.	Thinks about the future of the organization and identifies some long-term challenges ahead.	Gives careful consideration to the challenges the organization will face in the future, proactively identifying some possible alternatives and responses.
Synthesizes information from many sources to arrive at a broad and deep understanding of complex issues.	Does not seek multiple sources or tie different pieces of information together, maintaining only a general or incomplete understanding of issues.	Integrates the relevant pieces of information to gain a solid understanding of the issues.	Assembles many pieces of information into a cohesive and sophisticated understanding of complex issues.

Factor analysis

The Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ specifies a total of 38 Competencies which roll up into 12 Clusters and 4 Factors. Using the legacy competency data, confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to test the factor structures. Table 5 below presents the results of the two analyses—one performed at the cluster level, the other one at the factor level. Because of the very large sample size (N = 5,863), the χ^2 was statistically significant for both analyses, p < .01. However, all the other fit statistics suggested adequate to good fit of the models to the data. This means that the factor and cluster structure of the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ is sound.

Table 5. Results of confirmatory factor analyses at the cluster and factor levels.

	Chi-Square	NFI	CFI	IFI	SRMR
Cluster	χ^2 = 38928, *df* = 528	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.06
Factor	χ^2 = 46992, *df* = 588	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.07
		Good Fit	Good Fit	Good Fit	Adequate Fit
		> 0.95	> 0.95	> 0.95	0.08 – 0.10

Note. NFI denotes "Normed Fit Index." CFI denotes "Comparative Fit Index." IFI denotes "Incremental Fix Index." SRMR denotes "Standardized Root Mean Residual." One can conclude the model fits the data when at least three fit statistics meet the criteria.

Validity

The central issue in validity is: How do the competencies correlate with performance for each position level? Correlation and multiple regression analyses were run to examine the relationship between competencies and performance outcomes.

The legacy data were used to run the correlations between competencies and three types of criteria outcomes—Performance, Promotability, and Risk of derailment. All the data were collected through the 360 feedback process. The data were obtained from 67,826 participants. Ratings on the three criteria outcomes were provided by the bosses of the participants. Competency scores were the averages across all other raters (excluding self-ratings). All the ratings used a five-point scale. The position level breakdown of this sample is provided in table 6 below. Due to the very small sample size of Entry level individual contributor (ELIC), we need to interpret the results pertaining to this position level with caution.

Table 6. Sample distribution of position levels for the global validation study.

Job level	*N*	Percentage (%)
Entry level individual contributor (ELIC)	233	0.34
Mid-senior level individual contributor (MID-SR IC)	9,725	14.34
First level leader (FLL)	23,748	35.01
Mid-level leader (MLL)	23,088	34.04
Business unit leader (BUL)	9,530	14.05
Senior executive (SE)	1,502	2.21
Total	*67,826*	*100.00*

Important organizational outcomes include overall performance, advancement, and derailment. In general, a contributor or leader with stronger competencies will be a stronger performer, more likely to get ahead, and less likely to derail. Each of these outcomes is related to a person's competencies, but in slightly different ways.

Correlations between competencies and overall performance by position level

Table 7 below presents the correlations between competencies and Overall performance for six position levels. The competencies are displayed in descending order based on the rankings for the Senior executive position. The majority of the correlations are statistically significant. The top third competencies that are most highly correlated with Overall performance for each organizational level are highlighted in yellow. The Overall performance correlations and rankings for each individual position level will also be presented.

Table 7. Correlations between competencies and overall performance by position level.

Item	Factor	Competency	ELIC	MID-SR IC	FLL	MLL	BUL	SE
1	Results	*Ensures* accountability	0.48	0.50	0.53	0.50	0.42	0.51
8	Thought	*Manages* complexity	0.48	0.53	0.48	0.45	0.43	0.51
25	Results	Plans and aligns	0.55	0.48	0.52	0.50	0.47	0.51
22	Self	Nimble learning	0.42	0.47	0.48	0.39	0.41	0.50
19	Thought	*Cultivates* innovation	0.26	0.45	0.47	0.41	0.39	0.49
28	Results	*Drives* results	0.66	0.57	0.55	0.51	0.49	0.48
12	Thought	Decision quality	0.38	0.54	0.50	0.53	0.47	0.48
15	Results	Directs work	0.25	0.45	0.52	0.45	0.40	0.48
10	Self	Courage	0.21	0.34	0.52	0.43	0.39	0.47
31	Self	Situational adaptability	0.50	0.56	0.50	0.45	0.35	0.47
27	Results	Resourcefulness	0.27	0.49	0.51	0.48	0.48	0.46
4	People	Attracts top talent	0.08	0.33	0.43	0.37	0.38	0.46
26	Self	*Being* resilient	0.67	0.59	0.50	0.54	0.40	0.45
24	People	Persuades	0.31	0.50	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45
38	Results	*Optimizes* work processes	0.28	0.40	0.51	0.42	0.36	0.45
21	People	*Builds* networks	0.43	0.29	0.35	0.33	0.43	0.44
37	People	*Drives* vision and purpose	0.40	0.41	0.42	0.36	0.38	0.44
34	People	*Builds effective* teams	0.49	0.42	0.40	0.43	0.37	0.44
33	Thought	Strategic mindset	0.42	0.42	0.46	0.47	0.47	0.44
29	Self	*Demonstrates* self-awareness	0.23	0.54	0.31	0.38	0.20	0.42
16	People	*Drives* engagement	0.38	0.41	0.43	0.42	0.40	0.42
7	People	Communicates effectively	0.39	0.48	0.43	0.39	0.33	0.41
36	Self	*Instills* trust	0.55	0.51	0.41	0.45	0.37	0.41
3	Self	*Manages* ambiguity	0.47	0.41	0.41	0.33	0.42	0.40
9	People	*Manages* conflict	0.38	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	0.39
18	Thought	Global perspective	0.32	0.43	0.45	0.34	0.39	0.38
23	People	Organizational savvy	0.43	0.42	0.52	0.38	0.50	0.38
13	People	Develops talent	0.33	0.38	0.42	0.42	0.37	0.38
30	Self	Self-development	0.52	0.48	0.43	0.40	0.33	0.38
5	Thought	Business insight	0.38	0.29	0.38	0.36	0.38	0.37
20	People	Interpersonal savvy	0.47	0.44	0.34	0.37	0.33	0.35
11	Thought	Customer focus	0.36	0.43	0.39	0.44	0.36	0.34
14	People	*Values* differences	0.48	0.41	0.42	0.38	0.36	0.34
17	Thought	Financial acumen	*	*	*	0.47	0.45	0.32
6	People	Collaborates	0.43	0.48	0.42	0.46	0.39	0.32
2	Results	Action oriented	0.45	0.48	0.48	0.41	0.37	0.28
35	Thought	Tech savvy	0.22	0.38	0.38	0.29	0.21	0.26
32	Thought	*Balances* stakeholders	*	*	*	*	*	*

*Normative data pending

As can be gleaned from table 7 above, some competencies such as *Ensures* accountability, *Manages* complexity, Plans and aligns, *Drives* results, Decision quality, Situational adaptability, Resourcefulness, and *Being* resilient are among the top third competencies that are correlated with performance for most or all position levels. These largely come from the Results factor, with a few from Thought and Self mixed in. Besides the similarities, some competencies were more related to certain position levels. For instance, it seems that Strategic mindset, Financial acumen (both from Thought), *Builds* networks, and Attracts top talent (both from People) tend to be among the top third correlations with Business unit leaders' and Senior executives' performance. Conversely, Self-development, *Builds effective* teams, *Values* differences, and Interpersonal savvy (all in the People or Self factors) drive performance more at lower organizational levels.

Table 8. Correlations between competencies and overall performance for Entry level individual contributors.

Item	Factor	Competency	Performance correlation	Rank
26	Self	*Being* resilient	0.67	1
28	Results	*Drives* results	0.66	2
25	Results	Plans and aligns	0.55	3
36	Self	*Instills* trust	0.55	4
30	Self	Self-development	0.52	5
31	Self	Situational adaptability	0.50	6
34	People	*Builds effective* teams	0.49	7
1	Results	*Ensures* accountability	0.48	8
8	Thought	*Manages* complexity	0.48	9
14	People	*Values* differences	0.48	10
3	Self	*Manages* ambiguity	0.47	11
20	People	Interpersonal savvy	0.47	12
2	Results	Action oriented	0.45	13
21	People	*Builds* networks	0.43	14
6	People	Collaborates	0.43	15
23	People	Organizational savvy	0.43	16
33	Thought	Strategic mindset	0.42	17
22	Self	Nimble learning	0.42	18
37	People	*Drives* vision and purpose	0.40	19
7	People	Communicates effectively	0.39	20
16	People	*Drives* engagement	0.38	21
5	Thought	Business insight	0.38	22
9	People	*Manages* conflict	0.38	23
12	Thought	Decision quality	0.38	24
11	Thought	Customer focus	0.36	25
13	People	Develops talent	0.33	26
18	Thought	Global perspective	0.32	27
24	People	Persuades	0.31	28
38	Results	*Optimizes* work processes	0.28	29
27	Results	Resourcefulness	0.27	30
19	Thought	*Cultivates* innovation	0.26	31
15	Results	Directs work	0.25	32
29	Self	*Demonstrates* self-awareness	0.23	33
35	Thought	Tech savvy	0.22	34
10	Self	Courage	0.21	35
4	People	Attracts top talent	0.08	36
17	Thought	Financial acumen	*	*
32	Thought	*Balances* stakeholders	*	*

*Normative data pending

Table 9. Correlations between competencies and overall performance for Mid-senior level individual contributors.

Item	Factor	Competency	Performance correlation	Rank
26	Self	*Being* resilient	0.59	1
28	Results	*Drives* results	0.57	2
31	Self	Situational adaptability	0.56	3
29	Self	*Demonstrates* self-awareness	0.54	4
12	Thought	Decision quality	0.54	5
8	Thought	*Manages* complexity	0.53	6
36	Self	*Instills* trust	0.51	7
1	Results	*Ensures* accountability	0.50	8
24	People	Persuades	0.50	9
27	Results	Resourcefulness	0.49	10
6	People	Collaborates	0.48	11
2	Results	Action oriented	0.48	12
7	People	Communicates effectively	0.48	13
30	Self	Self-development	0.48	14
25	Results	Plans and aligns	0.48	15
22	Self	Nimble learning	0.47	16
15	Results	Directs work	0.45	17
19	Thought	*Cultivates* innovation	0.45	18
20	People	Interpersonal savvy	0.44	19
11	Thought	Customer focus	0.43	20
18	Thought	Global perspective	0.43	21
33	Thought	Strategic mindset	0.42	22
34	People	*Builds effective* teams	0.42	23
23	People	Organizational savvy	0.42	24
3	Self	*Manages* ambiguity	0.41	25
14	People	*Values* differences	0.41	26
16	People	*Drives* engagement	0.41	27
37	People	*Drives* vision and purpose	0.41	28
38	Results	*Optimizes* work processes	0.40	29
9	People	*Manages* conflict	0.39	30
35	Thought	Tech savvy	0.38	31
13	People	Develops talent	0.38	32
10	Self	Courage	0.34	33
4	People	Attracts top talent	0.33	34
5	Thought	Business insight	0.29	35
21	People	*Builds* networks	0.29	36
17	Thought	Financial acumen	*	*
32	Thought	*Balances* stakeholders	*	*

*Normative data pending

Table 10. Correlations between competencies and overall performance for First level leaders.

Item	Factor	Competency	Performance correlation	Rank
28	Results	*Drives* results	0.55	1
1	Results	*Ensures* accountability	0.53	2
25	Results	Plans and aligns	0.52	3
23	People	Organizational savvy	0.52	4
15	Results	Directs work	0.52	5
10	Self	Courage	0.52	6
27	Results	Resourcefulness	0.51	7
38	Results	*Optimizes* work processes	0.51	8
31	Self	Situational adaptability	0.50	9
26	Self	*Being* resilient	0.50	10
12	Thought	Decision quality	0.50	11
2	Results	Action oriented	0.48	12
22	Self	Nimble learning	0.48	13
8	Thought	*Manages* complexity	0.48	14
19	Thought	*Cultivates* innovation	0.47	15
33	Thought	Strategic mindset	0.46	16
18	Thought	Global perspective	0.45	17
24	People	Persuades	0.45	18
30	Self	Self-development	0.43	19
4	People	Attracts top talent	0.43	20
16	People	*Drives* engagement	0.43	21
7	People	Communicates effectively	0.43	22
6	People	Collaborates	0.42	23
14	People	*Values* differences	0.42	24
37	People	*Drives* vision and purpose	0.42	25
13	People	Develops talent	0.42	26
36	Self	*Instills* trust	0.41	27
3	Self	*Manages* ambiguity	0.41	28
34	People	*Builds effective* teams	0.40	29
11	Thought	Customer focus	0.39	30
9	People	*Manages* conflict	0.39	31
5	Thought	Business insight	0.38	32
35	Thought	Tech savvy	0.38	33
21	People	*Builds* networks	0.35	34
20	People	Interpersonal savvy	0.34	35
29	Self	*Demonstrates* self-awareness	0.31	36
17	Thought	Financial acumen	*	*
32	Thought	*Balances* stakeholders	*	*

*Normative data pending

Table 11. Correlations between competencies and overall performance for Mid-level leaders.

Item	Factor	Competency	Performance correlation	Rank
26	Self	*Being* resilient	0.54	1
12	Thought	Decision quality	0.53	2
28	Results	*Drives* results	0.51	3
25	Results	Plans and aligns	0.50	4
1	Results	*Ensures* accountability	0.50	5
27	Results	Resourcefulness	0.48	6
33	Thought	Strategic mindset	0.47	7
17	Thought	Financial acumen	0.47	8
6	People	Collaborates	0.46	9
8	Thought	*Manages* complexity	0.45	10
31	Self	Situational adaptability	0.45	11
24	People	Persuades	0.45	12
36	Self	*Instills* trust	0.45	13
15	Results	Directs work	0.45	14
11	Thought	Customer focus	0.44	15
10	Self	Courage	0.43	16
34	People	*Builds effective* teams	0.43	17
16	People	*Drives* engagement	0.42	18
13	People	Develops talent	0.42	19
38	Results	*Optimizes* work processes	0.42	20
19	Thought	*Cultivates* innovation	0.41	21
2	Results	Action oriented	0.41	22
30	Self	Self-development	0.40	23
7	People	Communicates effectively	0.39	24
22	Self	Nimble learning	0.39	25
9	People	*Manages* conflict	0.38	26
14	People	*Values* differences	0.38	27
23	People	Organizational savvy	0.38	28
29	Self	*Demonstrates* self-awareness	0.38	29
4	People	Attracts top talent	0.37	30
20	People	Interpersonal savvy	0.37	31
5	Thought	Business insight	0.36	32
37	People	*Drives* vision and purpose	0.36	33
18	Thought	Global perspective	0.34	34
3	Self	*Manages* ambiguity	0.33	35
21	People	*Builds* networks	0.33	36
35	Thought	Tech savvy	0.29	37
32	Thought	*Balances* stakeholders	*	*

*Normative data pending

Table 12. Correlations between competencies and overall performance for Business unit leaders.

Item	Factor	Competency	Performance correlation	Rank
23	People	Organizational savvy	0.50	1
28	Results	*Drives* results	0.49	2
27	Results	Resourcefulness	0.48	3
33	Thought	Strategic mindset	0.47	4
12	Thought	Decision quality	0.47	5
25	Results	Plans and aligns	0.47	6
24	People	Persuades	0.45	7
17	Thought	Financial acumen	0.45	8
8	Thought	*Manages* complexity	0.43	9
21	People	*Builds* networks	0.43	10
3	Self	*Manages* ambiguity	0.42	11
1	Results	*Ensures* accountability	0.42	12
22	Self	Nimble learning	0.41	13
15	Results	Directs work	0.40	14
26	Self	*Being* resilient	0.40	15
16	People	*Drives* engagement	0.40	16
19	Thought	*Cultivates* innovation	0.39	17
18	Thought	Global perspective	0.39	18
10	Self	Courage	0.39	19
6	People	Collaborates	0.39	20
5	Thought	Business insight	0.38	21
9	People	*Manages* conflict	0.38	22
4	People	Attracts top talent	0.38	23
37	People	*Drives* vision and purpose	0.38	24
13	People	Develops talent	0.37	25
2	Results	Action oriented	0.37	26
36	Self	*Instills* trust	0.37	27
34	People	*Builds effective* teams	0.37	28
38	Results	*Optimizes* work processes	0.36	29
14	People	*Values* differences	0.36	30
11	Thought	Customer focus	0.36	31
31	Self	Situational adaptability	0.35	32
20	People	Interpersonal savvy	0.33	33
7	People	Communicates effectively	0.33	34
30	Self	Self-development	0.33	35
35	Thought	Tech savvy	0.21	36
29	Self	*Demonstrates* self-awareness	0.20	37
32	Thought	*Balances* stakeholders	*	*

*Normative data pending

Table 13. Correlations between competencies and overall performance for Senior executives.

Item	Factor	Competency	Performance correlation	Rank
1	Results	*Ensures* accountability	0.51	1
8	Thought	*Manages* complexity	0.51	2
25	Results	Plans and aligns	0.51	3
22	Self	Nimble learning	0.50	4
19	Thought	*Cultivates* innovation	0.49	5
28	Results	*Drives* results	0.48	6
12	Thought	Decision quality	0.48	7
15	Results	Directs work	0.48	8
10	Self	Courage	0.47	9
31	Self	Situational adaptability	0.47	10
27	Results	Resourcefulness	0.46	11
4	People	Attracts top talent	0.46	12
26	Self	*Being* resilient	0.45	13
24	People	Persuades	0.45	14
38	Results	*Optimizes* work processes	0.45	15
21	People	*Builds* networks	0.44	16
37	People	*Drives* vision and purpose	0.44	17
34	People	*Builds effective* teams	0.44	18
33	Thought	Strategic mindset	0.44	19
29	Self	*Demonstrates* self-awareness	0.42	20
16	People	*Drives* engagement	0.42	21
7	People	Communicates effectively	0.41	22
36	Self	*Instills* trust	0.41	23
3	Self	*Manages* ambiguity	0.40	24
9	People	*Manages* conflict	0.39	25
18	Thought	Global perspective	0.38	26
23	People	Organizational savvy	0.38	27
13	People	Develops talent	0.38	28
30	Self	Self-development	0.38	29
5	Thought	Business insight	0.37	30
20	People	Interpersonal savvy	0.35	31
11	Thought	Customer focus	0.34	32
14	People	*Values* differences	0.34	33
6	People	Collaborates	0.32	34
17	Thought	Financial acumen	0.32	35
2	Results	Action oriented	0.28	36
35	Thought	Tech savvy	0.26	37
32	Thought	*Balances* stakeholders	*	*

*Normative data pending

Correlations between competencies and promotability by position level

The competencies are displayed in order based on the rankings for the Senior executive position. The top third competencies that are most highly correlated with Promotability are highlighted in yellow.

Table 14. Correlations between competencies and promotability by position level.

Item	Factor	Competency	ELIC	MID-SR IC	FLL	MLL	BUL	SE
19	Thought	*Cultivates* innovation	0.05	0.34	0.35	0.33	0.29	0.38
22	Self	Nimble learning	0.20	0.37	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.38
21	People	*Builds* networks	0.18	0.30	0.19	0.27	0.30	0.37
27	Results	Resourcefulness	-0.01	0.35	0.33	0.34	0.30	0.35
12	Thought	Decision quality	-0.01	0.36	0.27	0.35	0.29	0.34
8	Thought	*Manages* complexity	0.17	0.39	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.34
31	Self	Situational adaptability	0.37	0.41	0.36	0.30	0.16	0.33
33	Thought	Strategic mindset	0.23	0.31	0.34	0.38	0.35	0.33
37	People	*Drives* vision and purpose	0.20	0.28	0.25	0.27	0.26	0.33
25	Results	Plans and aligns	0.22	0.30	0.35	0.33	0.29	0.33
3	Self	*Manages* ambiguity	0.28	0.32	0.19	0.19	0.32	0.32
24	People	Persuades	0.13	0.37	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.32
11	Thought	Customer focus	0.12	0.31	0.25	0.31	0.22	0.31
1	Results	*Ensures* accountability	0.34	0.41	0.36	0.33	0.24	0.30
9	People	*Manages* conflict	0.08	0.31	0.24	0.24	0.27	0.30
16	People	*Drives* engagement	0.16	0.28	0.28	0.26	0.24	0.30
15	Results	Directs work	0.07	0.40	0.32	0.29	0.22	0.29
34	People	*Builds effective* teams	0.24	0.26	0.24	0.27	0.21	0.29
28	Results	*Drives* results	0.34	0.36	0.35	0.32	0.31	0.28
4	People	Attracts top talent	-0.09	0.22	0.24	0.21	0.20	0.28
10	Self	Courage	0.04	0.30	0.33	0.29	0.25	0.28
38	Results	*Optimizes* work processes	0.09	0.29	0.33	0.26	0.24	0.27
18	Thought	Global perspective	0.24	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.29	0.25
5	Thought	Business insight	0.22	0.23	0.26	0.24	0.28	0.24
13	People	Develops talent	0.25	0.25	0.28	0.27	0.22	0.24
20	People	Interpersonal savvy	0.20	0.32	0.25	0.26	0.19	0.22
14	People	*Values* differences	0.21	0.31	0.18	0.21	0.20	0.22
7	People	Communicates effectively	0.10	0.38	0.30	0.25	0.20	0.22
30	Self	Self-development	0.20	0.34	0.29	0.27	0.20	0.21
17	Thought	Financial acumen	*	*	*	0.38	0.30	0.20
36	Self	*Instills* trust	0.23	0.39	0.23	0.26	0.22	0.19
29	Self	*Demonstrates* self-awareness	0.06	0.33	0.12	0.15	0.00	0.18
26	Self	*Being* resilient	0.51	0.43	0.20	0.35	0.18	0.17
2	Results	Action oriented	0.15	0.29	0.30	0.24	0.20	0.17
6	People	Collaborates	0.13	0.34	0.17	0.27	0.25	0.13
23	People	Organizational savvy	0.26	0.32	0.34	0.26	0.35	0.11
35	Thought	Tech savvy	0.04	0.30	0.18	0.21	0.17	0.08
32	Thought	*Balances* stakeholders	*	*	*	*	*	*

*Normative data pending

As can be seen in table 14, several competencies are among the top third correlated with Promotability for most or all position levels. They are *Cultivates* innovation, Resourcefulness, Decision quality, *Manages* complexity, Situational adaptability, Strategic mindset, Plans and aligns, Persuades, *Ensures* accountability, and *Drives* results. Four of the 10 are Thought, four are Results, and one each Self and People, but all with a more complex and big-picture lens than the competencies that drive Performance. Some competencies were more related to certain position levels. For example, Customer focus, *Optimizes* work processes, and Courage seem to be among the top third correlated competencies with Mid-level managers' Promotability.

Correlations between competencies and risk of derailment by position level

In table 15, the competencies are displayed in order based on the rankings for the Senior executive position. The top third competencies that are most highly correlated with Risk of derailment are highlighted in yellow. A positive and high correlation suggests that weakness on the competency could be associated with high risk of derailment. Said in a different way, higher skill in the competencies with the highest correlations are the best way to prevent derailment.

Some competencies are among the top third correlated with Risk of derailment for most or all position levels. They are Interpersonal savvy, Plans and aligns, Nimble learning, Situational adaptability, *Manages* complexity, *Instills* trust, Resourcefulness, and *Drives* results. Of these eight, three are from the Self factor, three from Results, and one each from People and Thought. The pattern here is different from Performance, where Results competencies were dominant, and Promotability, where both Thought and Results were key. In addition, for each of the top two levels, half of the competencies most strongly related to derailment are People competencies—e.g., failure to communicate, persuade, build teams, show organizational or interpersonal savvy. The findings are supported by the derailment research in which derailed managers and executives shared one or more characteristics such as difficulty to adapt or change and failure to deliver results (e.g., Lombardo & McCauley, 1988).

Table 15. Correlations between competencies and risk of derailment by position level.

Item	Factor	Competency	ELIC	MID-SR IC	FLL	MLL	BUL	SE
7	People	Communicates effectively	0.06	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.25	0.38
19	Thought	*Cultivates* innovation	-0.02	0.24	0.30	0.27	0.24	0.36
20	People	Interpersonal savvy	0.22	0.35	0.30	0.33	0.33	0.34
34	People	*Builds effective* teams	0.22	0.20	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.34
25	Results	Plans and aligns	0.30	0.30	0.37	0.36	0.34	0.34
23	People	Organizational savvy	0.06	0.28	0.35	0.24	0.38	0.34
16	People	*Drives* engagement	0.26	0.20	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.34
22	Self	Nimble learning	0.25	0.27	0.34	0.29	0.32	0.33
24	People	Persuades	0.10	0.31	0.32	0.30	0.33	0.32
31	Self	Situational adaptability	0.14	0.34	0.39	0.35	0.32	0.32
8	Thought	*Manages* complexity	0.27	0.36	0.34	0.30	0.31	0.31
36	Self	*Instills* trust	0.15	0.34	0.33	0.34	0.32	0.31
27	Results	Resourcefulness	0.12	0.31	0.38	0.34	0.36	0.31
12	Thought	Decision quality	0.22	0.26	0.37	0.40	0.30	0.30
21	People	*Builds* networks	0.26	0.13	0.23	0.21	0.35	0.30
15	Results	Directs work	-0.10	0.15	0.33	0.28	0.31	0.29
3	Self	*Manages* ambiguity	0.31	0.24	0.31	0.25	0.30	0.29
4	People	Attracts top talent	-0.03	0.10	0.28	0.24	0.24	0.29
10	Self	Courage	-0.16	0.10	0.31	0.26	0.27	0.29
9	People	*Manages* conflict	0.08	0.29	0.34	0.33	0.34	0.29
37	People	*Drives* vision and purpose	0.27	0.17	0.28	0.22	0.26	0.28
13	People	Develops talent	0.16	0.27	0.30	0.28	0.28	0.28
1	Results	*Ensures* accountability	0.27	0.27	0.30	0.30	0.27	0.28
33	Thought	Strategic mindset	0.27	0.13	0.34	0.31	0.30	0.27
28	Results	*Drives* results	0.40	0.36	0.37	0.32	0.31	0.27
38	Results	*Optimizes* work processes	0.05	0.21	0.39	0.35	0.28	0.25
11	Thought	Customer focus	0.25	0.24	0.29	0.31	0.28	0.25
17	Thought	Financial acumen	*	*	*	0.31	0.29	0.24
26	Self	*Being* resilient	0.24	0.30	0.34	0.41	0.25	0.24
18	Thought	Global perspective	0.08	0.16	0.29	0.23	0.26	0.24
30	Self	Self-development	0.20	0.32	0.31	0.29	0.27	0.23
2	Results	Action oriented	0.33	0.26	0.36	0.26	0.25	0.23
6	People	Collaborates	0.15	0.30	0.33	0.31	0.32	0.22
29	Self	*Demonstrates* self-awareness	-0.16	0.29	0.22	0.25	-0.03	0.21
5	Thought	Business insight	0.18	0.07	0.24	0.21	0.24	0.18
14	People	*Values* differences	0.12	0.08	0.28	0.25	0.23	0.14
35	Thought	Tech savvy	-0.13	0.24	0.19	0.18	0.18	0.02
32	Thought	*Balances* stakeholders	*	*	*	*	*	*

*Normative data pending

Multiple regression analysis

Because many competencies correlate with performance, multiple regression analysis was run to examine the variance accounted for by competencies on performance. This analysis explains how much difference in job performance can be explained by the competencies. The results show that this library of competencies accounts for between 42.5% and 64% of total job performance (see table 16 below). Competencies explain less of the differences in performance at higher management levels, in part because accumulated career experiences carry more weight as one rises toward executive leadership. Overall, this finding is impressive because it takes away a large portion of the guesswork when hiring and developing talent. Knowing that competencies account for this much of an individual's performance means that organizations can make talent decisions with greater confidence (Barnfield, Dai, Jouve, Orr, Sneltjes, & Storfer, 2014).

Table 16. Total variance accounted for by competencies.

Variance accounted for	IC	Supervisor	Manager	Executive
Performance	64.0%	52.9%	42.5%	45.0%

Global relevance and competency rating in different regions

Any competency framework that is relevant to 21st century organizations must address globalization by being applicable within different cultures as well as capturing what is needed to work across countries and cultures. To ensure this, first, competencies were chosen that address what is important to leaders in a global economy with shrinking distances. With global systems, global processes, and global customers, more and more roles have some global aspect to them. And, therefore, there are many different kinds of global leaders, as described by Sloan, Hazucha, and Van Katwyk (2003), including market responsiveness leader, global efficiency leader, worldwide learning leader, and corporate integration leader. These authors and Hazucha, Sloan, and Storfer (2012) describe the competencies required of various global leaders, noting that many of them are important for any leader. This aligns with findings from the seminal GLOBE study (House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, Dorfman, Javidan, Dickson, & Gupta, 1999), which found many universal positives and negatives across cultures and fewer elements that were culturally contingent—positive leadership characteristics in some cultures but not in others. The two competencies identified by Hazucha et al. (2012) as unique to global roles are global business perspective and cultural sensitivity. This can be tested by comparing competency profiles across cultures. Kowske and Anthony (2007) compared importance ratings across 12 countries and found a high degree of correlation between the profiles, together with some distinct patterns of differences.

Similar methodology was applied with the data available on 36 of the new Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ competencies. The result: skill and importance ratings were similar across global regions. Skill ratings and importance ratings were collected from organizations located in the following six international regions of the world. The mean skill and importance ratings were compared among the six international regions to assess the extent of similarity of the ratings.

Table 17. Six regions and sample size.

Region	Sample size	Percentage
North America (NA)	9,723	44.2
Europe (EU)	4,858	22.1
New Zealand/Australia (NZ/AU)	2,148	9.8
Asia	3,176	14.4
South America (SA)	1,790	8.1
Africa (AF)	319	1.4
Total	*22,014*	*100.0*

Skill ratings

In an attempt to examine how related the mean skill ratings are across the globe, we performed a correlational analysis among six global regions. As can be seen in table 18 below, the mean ratings were highly correlated among the six regions. Pearson correlation coefficients ranged from 0.88 to 0.98, suggesting that the relative strengths and weaknesses are similar around the world.

Table 18. Correlations of mean skill ratings for six global regions.

Region	NA	EU	NZ/AU	Asia	SA	AF
NA	-					
EU	0.97	-				
NZ/AU	0.98	0.97	-			
Asia	0.93	0.97	0.93	-		
SA	0.90	0.93	0.88	0.92	-	
AF	0.89	0.94	0.88	0.96	0.91	-

Note. All the correlation coefficients are statistically significant, $p < .01$.

The result of a correlational analysis of competency rank orders is provided in table 19 below. Overall, the relationships are very high with Spearman correlation coefficients ranging from 0.87 to 0.98.

Table 19. Correlations of rank order of skill ratings for six global regions.

Region	NA	EU	NZ/AU	Asia	SA	AF
NA	-					
EU	0.98	-				
NZ/AU	0.97	0.97	-			
Asia	0.92	0.96	0.93	-		
SA	0.90	0.91	0.91	0.90	-	
AF	0.89	0.93	0.89	0.96	0.87	-

Note. All the correlation coefficients are statistically significant, $p < .01$.

Importance ratings

The results of a correlational analysis indicated that there is a very high relationship for competency importance ratings (by 360 raters) among the six international regions with Pearson correlation coefficients ranging from 0.85 to 0.97.

Table 20. Correlations of mean importance ratings for six global regions.

Region	NA	EU	NZ/AU	Asia	SA	AF
NA	-					
EU	0.94	-				
NZ/AU	0.97	0.94	-			
Asia	0.90	0.95	0.86	-		
SA	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.87	-	
AF	0.89	0.94	0.85	0.97	0.86	-

Note. All the correlation coefficients are statistically significant, $p < .01$.

A look at the rank order of importance (based on the mean importance ratings) suggests that people around the world agree on which competencies are most important. Overall, as the correlational table (table 21) below indicates, the rankings were very similar.

Table 21. Correlations of rank order of importance ratings for six global regions.

Region	NA	EU	NZ/AU	Asia	SA	AF
NA	-					
EU	0.95	-				
NZ/AU	0.97	0.93	-			
Asia	0.87	0.93	0.84	-		
SA	0.84	0.86	0.85	0.85	-	
AF	0.85	0.90	0.79	0.96	0.83	-

Note. All the rank order correlation coefficients are statistically significant, $p < .01$.

Section IV – Career Stallers and Stoppers

In the past two decades, research has advanced our understanding of career derailment. While a variety of theoretical models of derailment exist in the literature, two things are widely acknowledged (Hogan, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2011; Tang, Dai, & De Meuse, 2013):

First, derailment can be traced fundamentally to two reasons: the lack of some desirable characteristics and the presence of some undesirable characteristics.

Second, factors leading to derailment can manifest at two levels: behaviors and predispositions.

The assessment of derailment factors, however, faces with psychometric challenges. Behaviors associated with derailment are low base-rate phenomena. Our research demonstrated that derailment ratings are heavily skewed; rarely will managers receive high ratings for performing the undesirable behaviors.

The Lombardo and Eichinger (2002) model of derailment assess 19 Career Stallers and Stoppers. The development of the model was based on early executive derailment research in which the two authors were involved. The predictive validity of this assessment model has also received empirical support (Tang et al., 2013).

To address the psychometric challenges, the 19 Career Stallers and Stoppers were examined with regard to how they can be reliably assessed—at the behavioral level or the predisposition level. As a result of this investigation, we grouped the original 19 Career Stallers and Stoppers into two categories.

Career stallers and stoppers in the first category represent undesirable characteristics that reflect an individual's laden predisposition. They will be assessed in other areas of the Korn Ferry Four Dimensions of Leadership and Talent. They include:

- *Unable to* adapt to differences.
- *Overly* ambitious.
- Arrogant.
- Betrayal of trust.
- *Lack of* composure.
- Defensiveness.
- Insensitive to others.
- Overmanaging.

Career stallers and stoppers in the second category can be assessed through the observation of behavioral manifestation. These career stallers and stoppers are included in the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™.

Through factor analysis, these 10 Career Stallers and Stoppers can be organized into three Clusters:

Clusters	Career Stallers and Stoppers
Trouble with people	Blocked personal learner
	Lack of ethics and values
	Political missteps
Doesn't inspire or build talent	*Poor* administrator
	Failure to build a team
	Failure to staff effectively
Too narrow	Key skill deficiencies
	Non-strategic
	Overdependence on an advocate
	Overdependence on a single skill

Section V – Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ relationship to other constructs

Competency correlations

Understanding how the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ competencies relate to each other (as determined by intercorrelations) can be helpful in determining which competencies to choose for a competency model, identifying potential competency substitutes when an individual lacks skill, and which competencies can be used as compensators when a skill is overused.

Table 22. Inter-competency correlations.

Item	Competency	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1	*Ensures accountability*		0.69	0.56	0.63	0.54	0.64	0.59	0.68	0.62	0.78	0.57	0.78	0.63	0.58	0.70	0.61		0.60	0.58
2	Action oriented	0.69		0.51	0.48	0.46	0.49	0.43	0.55	0.48	0.63	0.56	0.64	0.44	0.45	0.44	0.48		0.49	0.57
3	*Manages ambiguity*	0.56	0.51		0.55	0.54	0.54	0.56	0.56	0.62	0.53	0.48	0.67	0.41	0.60	0.55	0.54		0.63	0.57
4	Attracts top talent	0.63	0.48	0.55		0.47	0.61	0.57	0.52	0.62	0.64	0.52	0.66	0.63	0.67	0.65	0.64		0.57	0.55
5	Business insight	0.54	0.46	0.54	0.47		0.38	0.48	0.57	0.47	0.52	0.45	0.61	0.36	0.44	0.47	0.38		0.68	0.52
6	Collaborates	0.64	0.49	0.54	0.61	0.38		0.69	0.56	0.69	0.52	0.64	0.66	0.62	0.76	0.71	0.76		0.50	0.49
7	Communicates effectively	0.59	0.43	0.56	0.57	0.48	0.69		0.56	0.56	0.48	0.48	0.62	0.51	0.70	0.62	0.61		0.61	0.56
8	*Manages complexity*	0.68	0.55	0.56	0.52	0.57	0.56	0.56		0.53	0.53	0.47	0.73	0.44	0.51	0.51	0.43		0.65	0.59
9	*Manages conflict*	0.62	0.48	0.62	0.62	0.47	0.69	0.56	0.53		0.53	0.53	0.66	0.53	0.68	0.66	0.65		0.57	0.48
10	Courage	0.78	0.63	0.53	0.64	0.52	0.52	0.48	0.53	0.53		0.46	0.71	0.60	0.51	0.67	0.57		0.57	0.53
11	Customer focus	0.57	0.56	0.48	0.52	0.45	0.64	0.48	0.47	0.53	0.46		0.58	0.46	0.61	0.51	0.57		0.47	0.60
12	Decision quality	0.78	0.64	0.67	0.66	0.61	0.66	0.62	0.73	0.66	0.71	0.58		0.55	0.61	0.69	0.60		0.67	0.60
13	Develops talent	0.63	0.44	0.41	0.63	0.36	0.62	0.51	0.44	0.53	0.60	0.46	0.55		0.57	0.69	0.69		0.47	0.49
14	*Values differences*	0.58	0.45	0.60	0.67	0.44	0.76	0.70	0.51	0.68	0.51	0.61	0.61	0.57		0.64	0.71		0.56	0.53
15	Directs work	0.70	0.44	0.55	0.65	0.47	0.71	0.62	0.51	0.66	0.67	0.51	0.69	0.69	0.64		0.74		0.62	0.49
16	Drives engagement	0.61	0.48	0.54	0.64	0.38	0.76	0.61	0.43	0.65	0.57	0.57	0.60	0.69	0.71	0.74			0.50	0.54
17	Financial acumen																			
18	Global perspective	0.60	0.49	0.63	0.57	0.68	0.50	0.61	0.65	0.57	0.57	0.47	0.67	0.47	0.56	0.62	0.50			0.66
19	*Cultivates innovation*	0.58	0.57	0.57	0.55	0.52	0.49	0.56	0.59	0.48	0.53	0.60	0.60	0.49	0.53	0.49	0.54		0.66	
20	Interpersonal savvy	0.39	0.34	0.52	0.50	0.31	0.74	0.62	0.33	0.62	0.34	0.55	0.46	0.47	0.56	0.54	0.70		0.43	0.41
21	*Builds networks*	0.45	0.36	0.60	0.50	0.55	0.51	0.61	0.46	0.61	0.46	0.43	0.54	0.40	0.54	0.51	0.50		0.61	0.43
22	Nimble learning	0.64	0.62	0.62	0.52	0.53	0.53	0.56	0.69	0.52	0.56	0.50	0.68	0.45	0.53	0.49	0.49		0.65	0.68
23	Organizational savvy	0.64	0.54	0.65	0.58	0.67	0.56	0.68	0.59	0.63	0.63	0.51	0.69	0.48	0.60	0.59	0.54		0.69	0.57
24	Persuades	0.54	0.44	0.61	0.55	0.55	0.60	0.60	0.50	0.72	0.56	0.53	0.62	0.47	0.60	0.59	0.60		0.59	0.49
25	Plans and aligns	0.78	0.57	0.52	0.57	0.51	0.62	0.60	0.66	0.56	0.64	0.51	0.77	0.57	0.52	0.70	0.54		0.58	0.51
26	*Being resilient*	0.68	0.62	0.67	0.57	0.49	0.69	0.67	0.63	0.66	0.55	0.60	0.70	0.51	0.67	0.61	0.62		0.60	0.52
27	Resourcefulness	0.75	0.60	0.51	0.57	0.50	0.60	0.57	0.59	0.56	0.64	0.53	0.73	0.54	0.53	0.67	0.55		0.54	0.52
28	Drives results	0.74	0.76	0.51	0.54	0.54	0.52	0.48	0.62	0.53	0.67	0.55	0.71	0.50	0.45	0.54	0.51		0.54	0.55
29	Demonstrates self-awareness	0.53	0.43	0.52	0.58	0.32	0.76	0.61	0.44	0.60	0.46	0.57	0.53	0.54	0.73	0.59	0.69		0.47	0.48
30	Self-development	0.60	0.54	0.46	0.51	0.37	0.57	0.59	0.52	0.50	0.49	0.49	0.54	0.52	0.57	0.52	0.53		0.52	0.55
31	Situational adaptability	0.61	0.48	0.67	0.63	0.46	0.75	0.71	0.56	0.72	0.55	0.57	0.66	0.58	0.74	0.66	0.70		0.62	0.58
32	*Balances stakeholders*																			
33	Strategic mindset	0.63	0.53	0.63	0.56	0.71	0.46	0.57	0.66	0.54	0.61	0.46	0.69	0.47	0.50	0.54	0.48		0.78	0.68
34	*Builds effective teams*	0.62	0.47	0.51	0.65	0.37	0.74	0.58	0.44	0.63	0.58	0.55	0.60	0.70	0.69	0.74	0.83		0.48	0.51
35	Tech savvy	0.46	0.39	0.38	0.32	0.42	0.33	0.38	0.62	0.29	0.33	0.32	0.49	0.26	0.33	0.29	0.24		0.47	0.51
36	*Instills trust*	0.60	0.45	0.46	0.54	0.39	0.74	0.62	0.55	0.57	0.46	0.55	0.60	0.50	0.70	0.56	0.59		0.48	0.38
37	Drives vision and purpose	0.61	0.55	0.56	0.57	0.54	0.55	0.60	0.48	0.58	0.60	0.52	0.58	0.58	0.56	0.60	0.65		0.65	0.69
38	*Optimizes work processes*	0.72	0.51	0.52	0.58	0.51	0.62	0.60	0.67	0.54	0.59	0.51	0.69	0.57	0.57	0.68	0.55		0.59	0.58

Table 22. Inter-competency correlations (continued).

Item	Competency	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38
1	*Ensures accountability*	0.39	0.45	0.64	0.64	0.54	0.78	0.68	0.75	0.74	0.53	0.60	0.61		0.63	0.62	0.46	0.60	0.61	0.72
2	Action oriented	0.34	0.36	0.62	0.54	0.44	0.57	0.62	0.60	0.76	0.43	0.54	0.48		0.53	0.47	0.39	0.45	0.55	0.51
3	*Manages ambiguity*	0.52	0.60	0.62	0.65	0.61	0.52	0.67	0.51	0.51	0.52	0.46	0.67		0.63	0.51	0.38	0.46	0.56	0.52
4	Attracts top talent	0.50	0.50	0.52	0.58	0.55	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.54	0.58	0.51	0.63		0.56	0.65	0.32	0.54	0.57	0.58
5	Business insight	0.31	0.55	0.53	0.67	0.55	0.51	0.49	0.50	0.54	0.32	0.37	0.46		0.71	0.37	0.42	0.39	0.54	0.51
6	Collaborates	0.74	0.51	0.53	0.56	0.60	0.62	0.69	0.60	0.52	0.76	0.57	0.75		0.46	0.74	0.33	0.74	0.55	0.62
7	Communicates effectively	0.62	0.61	0.56	0.68	0.60	0.60	0.67	0.57	0.48	0.61	0.59	0.71		0.57	0.58	0.38	0.62	0.60	0.60
8	*Manages complexity*	0.33	0.46	0.69	0.59	0.50	0.66	0.63	0.59	0.62	0.44	0.52	0.56		0.66	0.44	0.62	0.55	0.48	0.67
9	*Manages conflict*	0.62	0.61	0.52	0.63	0.72	0.56	0.66	0.56	0.53	0.60	0.50	0.72		0.54	0.63	0.29	0.57	0.58	0.54
10	Courage	0.34	0.46	0.56	0.63	0.56	0.64	0.55	0.64	0.67	0.46	0.49	0.55		0.61	0.58	0.33	0.46	0.60	0.59
11	Customer focus	0.55	0.43	0.50	0.51	0.53	0.51	0.60	0.53	0.55	0.57	0.49	0.57		0.46	0.55	0.32	0.55	0.52	0.51
12	Decision quality	0.46	0.54	0.68	0.69	0.62	0.77	0.70	0.73	0.71	0.53	0.54	0.66		0.69	0.60	0.49	0.60	0.58	0.69
13	Develops talent	0.47	0.40	0.45	0.48	0.47	0.57	0.51	0.54	0.50	0.54	0.52	0.58		0.47	0.70	0.26	0.50	0.58	0.57
14	*Values differences*	0.72	0.56	0.53	0.60	0.60	0.52	0.67	0.53	0.45	0.73	0.57	0.74		0.50	0.69	0.33	0.70	0.56	0.57
15	Directs work	0.54	0.51	0.49	0.59	0.59	0.70	0.61	0.67	0.54	0.59	0.52	0.66		0.54	0.74	0.29	0.56	0.60	0.68
16	*Drives engagement*	0.70	0.50	0.49	0.54	0.60	0.54	0.62	0.55	0.51	0.69	0.53	0.70		0.48	0.83	0.24	0.59	0.65	0.55
17	Financial acumen																			
18	Global perspective	0.43	0.61	0.65	0.69	0.59	0.58	0.60	0.54	0.54	0.47	0.52	0.62		0.78	0.48	0.47	0.48	0.65	0.59
19	*Cultivates innovation*	0.41	0.43	0.68	0.57	0.49	0.51	0.52	0.52	0.55	0.48	0.55	0.58		0.68	0.51	0.51	0.38	0.69	0.58
20	Interpersonal savvy		0.59	0.39	0.53	0.63	0.35	0.59	0.37	0.33	0.70	0.44	0.70		0.37	0.64	0.17	0.59	0.50	0.39
21	*Builds networks*	0.59		0.46	0.74	0.68	0.46	0.57	0.46	0.43	0.45	0.41	0.63		0.59	0.46	0.22	0.43	0.54	0.45
22	Nimble learning	0.39	0.46		0.60	0.48	0.60	0.61	0.56	0.63	0.48	0.60	0.61		0.65	0.47	0.64	0.46	0.57	0.62
23	Organizational savvy	0.53	0.74	0.60		0.66	0.59	0.64	0.61	0.60	0.48	0.50	0.62		0.69	0.52	0.37	0.51	0.61	0.59
24	Persuades	0.63	0.68	0.48	0.66		0.50	0.62	0.51	0.50	0.53	0.44	0.68		0.57	0.56	0.26	0.51	0.56	0.48
25	Plans and aligns	0.35	0.46	0.60	0.59	0.50		0.65	0.78	0.69	0.45	0.55	0.58		0.60	0.56	0.44	0.54	0.53	0.75
26	*Being resilient*	0.59	0.57	0.61	0.64	0.62	0.65		0.63	0.64	0.60	0.59	0.71		0.56	0.60	0.42	0.68	0.57	0.61
27	Resourcefulness	0.37	0.46	0.56	0.61	0.51	0.78	0.63		0.67	0.44	0.52	0.54		0.56	0.57	0.40	0.51	0.54	0.70
28	*Drives results*	0.33	0.43	0.63	0.60	0.50	0.69	0.64	0.67		0.40	0.54	0.52		0.59	0.51	0.42	0.47	0.56	0.59
29	Demonstrates self-awareness	0.70	0.45	0.48	0.48	0.53	0.45	0.60	0.44	0.40		0.57	0.74		0.40	0.66	0.26	0.67	0.52	0.51
30	Self-development	0.44	0.41	0.60	0.50	0.44	0.55	0.59	0.52	0.54	0.57		0.66		0.48	0.52	0.44	0.52	0.56	0.58
31	Situational adaptability	0.70	0.63	0.61	0.62	0.68	0.58	0.71	0.54	0.52	0.74	0.66			0.57	0.68	0.37	0.64	0.62	0.60
32	Balances stakeholders																			
33	Strategic mindset	0.37	0.59	0.65	0.69	0.57	0.60	0.56	0.56	0.59	0.40	0.48	0.57			0.46	0.47	0.43	0.68	0.60
34	*Builds effective teams*	0.64	0.46	0.47	0.52	0.56	0.56	0.60	0.57	0.51	0.66	0.52	0.68		0.46		0.25	0.60	0.61	0.56
35	Tech savvy	0.17	0.22	0.64	0.37	0.26	0.44	0.42	0.40	0.42	0.26	0.44	0.37		0.47	0.25		0.34	0.33	0.53
36	*Instills* trust	0.59	0.43	0.46	0.51	0.51	0.54	0.68	0.51	0.47	0.67	0.52	0.64		0.43	0.60	0.34		0.44	0.55
37	Drives vision and purpose	0.50	0.54	0.57	0.61	0.56	0.53	0.57	0.54	0.56	0.52	0.56	0.62		0.68	0.61	0.33	0.62		0.56
38	Optimizes work processes	0.39	0.45	0.62	0.59	0.48	0.75	0.61	0.70	0.59	0.51	0.58	0.60		0.60	0.56	0.53	0.55	0.56	

Compensators

Competencies contribute to performance effectiveness. Overuse of competencies, however, may create noise and become counterproductive in certain circumstances. When a competency is overused, individuals may add some other competencies to compensate for the overused strength. Use these compensators to lessen the noise and the damage caused by the overuse.

Two sources of information are used to derive the compensators for each of the 38 competencies:

- Previous mapping of compensators in the legacy competency library (Korn Ferry International, 2010). The logic of the mapping was analyzed. This mapping provides the starting point for identifying the compensators for the new competencies.

- The correlations among the new competencies. Competencies that are less correlated with each other are candidates for compensators. Compensating competencies are one key way to neutralize the effects of overuse.

Table 23 below identifies five compensators for each competency.

Table 23. Compensators.

Competency	Compensators
1. *Ensures* accountability	Communicates effectively (7), *Cultivates* innovation (19), Interpersonal savvy (20), Persuades (24), *Demonstrates* self-awareness (29)
2. Action oriented	Communicates effectively (7), Develops talent (13), Financial acumen (17), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Builds* networks (21)
3. *Manages* ambiguity	Financial acumen (17), Plans and aligns (25), Resourcefulness (27), Tech savvy (35), *Optimizes* work processes (38)
4. Attracts top talent	Action oriented (2), *Manages* complexity (8), Nimble learning (22), Self-development (30), Tech savvy (35)
5. Business insight	Develops talent (13), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Demonstrates* self-awareness (29), Self-development (30), Tech savvy (35)
6. Collaborates	Action oriented (2), Courage (10), *Cultivates* innovation (19), *Drives* results (28), Tech savvy (35)
7. Communicates effectively	Action oriented (2), Business insight (5), Courage (10), *Drives* results (28), Tech savvy (35)
8. *Manages* complexity	Develops talent (13), *Drives* engagement (16), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Demonstrates* self-awareness (29), *Builds effective* teams (34)
9. *Manages* conflict	Action oriented (2), *Cultivates* innovation (19), *Drives* results (28), Tech savvy (35), *Optimizes* work processes (38)
10. Courage	Communicates effectively (7), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Demonstrates* self-awareness (29), *Balances* stakeholders (32), *Instills* trust (36)
11. Customer focus	Business insight (5), Courage (10), *Balances* stakeholders (32), Tech savvy (35), *Optimizes* work processes (38)
12. Decision quality	Develops talent (13), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Demonstrates* self-awareness (29), Self-development (30), Tech savvy (35)
13. Develops talent	Action oriented (2), Financial acumen (17), *Builds* networks (21), Nimble learning (22), Tech savvy (35)
14. *Values* differences	Action oriented (2), Courage (10), Plans and aligns (25), *Drives* results (28), Tech savvy (35)
15. Directs work	Action oriented (2), Business insight (5), *Cultivates* innovation (19), Nimble learning (22), Tech savvy (35)
16. *Drives* engagement	Action oriented (2), Business insight (5), Financial acumen (17), *Balances* stakeholders (32), Tech savvy (35)

Competency	Compensators
17. Financial acumen	*Manages* ambiguity (3), Develops talent (13), *Drives* engagement (16), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Balances* stakeholders (32)
18. Global perspective	Action oriented (2), Collaborates (6), Customer focus (11), Develops talent (13), *Builds effective* teams (34)
19. *Cultivates* innovation	*Manages* conflict (9), Financial acumen (17), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Builds* networks (21), *Demonstrates* self-awareness (29)
20. Interpersonal savvy	Action oriented (2), Business insight (5), *Manages* complexity (8), Courage (10), *Drives* results (28)
21. *Builds* networks	Action oriented (2), Develops talent (13), *Drives* results (28), *Instills* trust (36), *Optimizes* work processes (38)
22. Nimble learning	Develops talent (13), *Drives* engagement (16), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Builds effective* teams (34), *Instills* trust (36)
23. Organizational savvy	Action oriented (2), Customer focus (11), Financial acumen (17), *Demonstrates* self-awareness (29), *Instills* trust (36)
24. Persuades	Action oriented (2), Plans and aligns (25), *Drives* results (28), Self-development (30), *Optimizes* work processes (38)
25. Plans and aligns	*Manages* ambiguity (3), Customer focus (11), *Cultivates* innovation (19), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Builds* networks (21)
26. *Being* resilient	Business insight (5), *Cultivates* innovation (19), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Balances* stakeholders (32), Strategic mindset (33)
27. Resourcefulness	*Manages* ambiguity (3), Customer focus (11), *Values* differences (14), Global perspective (18), *Cultivates* innovation (19)
28. *Drives* results	Communicates effectively (7), *Values* differences (14), *Drives* engagement (16), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Instills* trust (36)
29. *Demonstrates* self-awareness	Action oriented (2), Business insight (5), *Manages* complexity (8), *Drives* results (28), Strategic mindset (33)
30. Self-development	*Manages* ambiguity (3), Attracts top Talent (4), Courage (10), Customer focus (11), Persuades (24)
31. Situational adaptability	Action oriented (2), Courage (10), Plans and aligns (25), *Drives* results (28), *Optimizes* work processes (38)
32. *Balances* stakeholders	*Ensures* accountability (1), *Drives* engagement (16), Financial acumen (17), *Drives* results (28), Strategic mindset (33)
33. Strategic mindset	Action oriented (2), Directs work (15), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Balances* stakeholders (32), *Instills* trust (36)
34. *Builds effective* teams	Action oriented (2), Business insight (5), *Builds* networks (21), *Drives* results (28), *Balances* stakeholders (32)
35. Tech savvy	Develops talent (13), *Drives* engagement (16), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Builds* networks (21), Persuades (24)
36. *Instills* trust	Action oriented (2), *Cultivates* innovation (19), *Builds* networks (21), Nimble learning (22), *Drives* vision and purpose (37)
37. *Drives* vision and purpose	Action oriented (2), Customer focus (11), Plans and aligns (25), Resourcefulness (27), *Instills* trust (36)
38. *Optimizes* work processes	*Manages* ambiguity (3), Customer focus (11), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Builds* networks (21), Persuades (24)

Substitutes

For various reasons, individuals may not want to work to develop a competency directly. Yet the weakness in this area will have some negative effects on performance outcomes. Individuals can use other competencies to cover for, substitute for, or neutralize the negative effects of the lack of the skill. Because substitutes are more behaviorally similar, they are able to cover for the area that is lacking.

Two sources of information are used to derive the substitutes for each of the 38 competencies:

- Previous mapping of substitutes in the legacy competency library (Korn Ferry International, 2010). The logic of the mapping was analyzed. This mapping provides the starting point for identifying the substitutes for the new competencies.

- The correlations among the new competencies. Competencies that are mostly correlated with each other are candidates for substitutes.

Table 24 below identifies five substitutes for each competency.

Table 24. Substitutes.

Competency	Substitutes
1. *Ensures* accountability	Action oriented (2), Courage (10), Decision quality (12), Directs work (15), *Drives* results (28)
2. Action oriented	*Ensures* accountability (1), Courage (10), Decision quality (12), *Being* resilient (26), *Drives* results (28)
3. *Manages* ambiguity	Decision quality (12), Nimble learning (22), *Being* resilient (26), Situational adaptability (31), Strategic mindset (33)
4. Attracts top talent	Develops talent (13), *Values* differences (14), Direct Works (15), *Drives* engagement (16), *Builds effective* teams (34)
5. Business insight	Decision quality (12), Financial acumen (17), Global perspective (18), Organizational savvy (23), Strategic mindset (33)
6. Collaborates	*Manages* conflict (9), *Values* differences (14), Interpersonal savvy (20), *Builds effective* teams (34), *Instills* trust (36)
7. Communicates effectively	Collaborates (6), *Values* differences (14), Directs work (15), Interpersonal savvy (20), Situational adaptability (31)
8. *Manages* complexity	Decision quality (12), Global perspective (18), Nimble learning (22), *Balances* stakeholders (32), Strategic mindset (33)
9. *Manages* conflict	Courage (10), Persuades (24), *Being* resilient (26), Situational adaptability (31), *Balances* stakeholders (32)
10. Courage	*Ensures* accountability (1), *Manages* conflict (9), Decision quality (12), Directs work (15), *Drives* results (28)
11. Customer focus	*Ensures* accountability (1), Collaborates (6), Communicates effectively (7), *Values* differences (14), Situational adaptability (31)
12. Decision quality	*Manages* complexity (8), Plans and aligns (25), *Drives* results (28), *Balances* stakeholders (32), Strategic mindset (33)
13. Develops talent	Attracts top talent (4), Courage (10), Directs work (15), *Drives* engagement (16), *Builds effective* teams (34)
14. *Values* differences	Collaborates (6), *Drives* engagement (16), Interpersonal savvy (20), Demonstrate Self-Awareness (29), Situational adaptability (31)
15. Directs work	*Ensures* accountability (1), Develops talent (13), *Drives* engagement (16), Plans and aligns (25), *Builds effective* teams (34)
16. *Drives* engagement	Develops talent (13), *Values* differences (14), Directs work (15), *Builds effective* teams (34), *Drives* vision and purpose (37)

Competency	Substitutes
17. Financial acumen	Business insight (5), Resourcefulness (27), *Drives* results (28), Strategic mindset (33), Tech savvy (35)
18. Global perspective	Business insight (5), *Manages* complexity (8), Nimble learning (22), Organizational savvy (23), Strategic mindset (33)
19. *Cultivates* innovation	Decision quality (12), Global perspective (18), Nimble learning (22), Strategic mindset (33), *Drives* vision and purpose (37)
20. Interpersonal savvy	Collaborates (6), Communicates effectively (7), *Manages* conflict (9), *Values* differences (14), Situational adaptability (31)
21. *Builds* networks	Communicates effectively (7), Interpersonal savvy (20), Organizational savvy (23), Persuades (24), Situational adaptability (31)
22. Nimble learning	*Manages* ambiguity (3), *Manages* complexity (8), Decision quality (12), Global perspective (18), *Cultivates* innovation (19)
23. Organizational savvy	Business insight (5), Communicates effectively (7), *Manages* conflict (9), *Builds* networks (21), Persuades (24)
24. Persuades	Communicates effectively (7), *Manages* conflict (9), Interpersonal savvy (20), Organizational savvy (23), Situational adaptability (31)
25. Plans and aligns	*Ensures* accountability (1), Decision quality (12), Directs work (15), Resourcefulness (27), *Optimizes* work processes (38)
26. *Being* resilient	*Ensures* accountability (1), *Manages* ambiguity (3), *Manages* conflict (9), *Drives* results (28), Situational adaptability (31)
27. Resourcefulness	*Ensures* accountability (1), Directs work (15), Financial acumen (17), Plans and aligns (25), *Optimizes* work processes (38)
28. *Drives* results	*Ensures* accountability (1), Action oriented (2), Decision quality (12), Plans and aligns (25), Resourcefulness (27)
29. *Demonstrates* self-awareness	Collaborates (6), *Values* differences (14), Interpersonal savvy (20), Situational adaptability (31), *Instills* trust (36)
30. Self-development	*Values* differences (14), Nimble learning (22), *Being* resilient (26), *Demonstrates* self-awareness (29), Situational adaptability (31)
31. Situational adaptability	Collaborates (6), Communicates effectively (7), *Manages* conflict (9), *Values* differences (14), *Demonstrates* self-awareness (29)
32. *Balances* stakeholders	Business insight (5), *Manages* conflict (9), Decision quality (12), *Builds* networks (21), Persuades (24)
33. Strategic mindset	Business insight (5), Decision quality (12), Global perspective (18), *Cultivates* innovation (19), *Drives* vision and purpose (37)
34. *Builds effective* teams	Collaborates (6), Develops talent (13), *Values* differences (14), Directs work (15), *Drives* engagement (16)
35. Tech savvy	*Manages* complexity (8), Global perspective (18), *Cultivates* innovation (19), Nimble learning (22), *Optimizes* work processes (38)
36. *Instills* trust	*Ensures* accountability (1), Collaborates (6), Communicates effectively (7), *Values* differences (14), *Demonstrates* self-awareness (29)
37. *Drives* vision and purpose	Communicates effectively (7), *Drives* engagement (16), Global perspective (18), *Cultivates* innovation (19), Strategic mindset (33)
38. *Optimizes* work processes	*Manages* complexity (8), Decision quality (12), Directs work (15), Plans and aligns (25), Resourcefulness (27)

Developmental difficulty

All competencies are not created equal. One way they differ is that some competencies are harder for people to develop than others. A coding system has been developed to assess developmental difficulty of different competencies. The difficulty index is made up of three elements:

Element #1 – The underlying nature of the competency

Element #2 – The actual importance of the competency (according to research)

Element #3 – The perceived importance of the competency (according to raters)

Element #1 – The underlying nature of the competency

The first element comes from the inherent nature of the competencies themselves. The difficulty of developing any competency is affected by at least six components:

1. **Complexity of the skills.** How complex are the skills that are needed to execute the competency well? The more demanding the skills involved and the sheer number of rules and processes there are, the harder the competency would be to develop.

Consequently, Business insight (#5) is more involved and harder to become proficient in than Action oriented (#2). The number of things you must learn and become skilled in is significantly different.

2. **Experience.** How much experience is needed before the competency could be executed well? Experience adds context and rules of success and failure and the lessons of history. Competencies that need a great deal of experience before you can do them well will be harder (less likely or fewer people have had those experiences) and take longer to develop than those that require little or no experience.

Hence, Global perspective (#18) takes more experience to be good at than Tech savvy (#35).

3. **Beliefs.** To what extent does the competency depend on the attitudes, values, opinions, and beliefs of the individual? There are times when the difficulty in building and performing a skill is not the skill itself, but not wanting to do something. The more beliefs are involved in learning and performing, the harder the competency would be to execute.

So, *Values* differences (#14) is more dependent upon enhancing and lubricating beliefs than Plans and aligns (#25).

4. **Cognitive complexity.** To what extent does performing the competency draw upon raw intellectual abilities and the ability to do complex parallel processing of incomplete information? The more the competency draws upon intellectual horsepower and cognitive complexity, the harder it would be to execute the competency.

Therefore, Strategic mindset (#33) draws on more native intellectual ability than *Drives* results (#28) and would be harder to develop.

5. **Emotions.** To what extent does performing the competency involve, engage, or trigger emotions? The more emotions a competency involves, the harder it would be for most to execute.

Thus, *Manages* conflict (#9) involves more emotions than *Optimizes* work processes (#38) and would, therefore, be harder to develop and perform well (all other factors held equal).

6. **Human makeup.** To what extent does the competency derive from a person's makeup such as body chemistry, native skills, innate predisposition, natural tendencies, brain structure, and the like? The more a competency is involved with makeup, the harder it would be to develop any differently than originally designed.

So, Situational adaptability (#31) is more dependent upon a person's nature or disposition than Customer focus (#11), and changing a person's level of situational adaptability would be harder than teaching someone to be more customer focused.

Element #2 – Actual importance of the competency

The second element comes from the research of the leadership assessment data. We studied the extent to which each of the competencies directly relates to performance or promotion (potential). In theory, the lower the actual importance, the more difficult the skill would be to develop because it rarely relates to performance or promotion. Thus, there wouldn't be many support systems in place to help people develop. So we ordered the competencies in terms of how well they relate to performance and promotion across companies and across levels. The scale is inverted—the more important, the easier it should be to get support. This should be a general indicator of how difficult it is for people to develop or have gained proficiency in these competencies. If a competency is widely related to performance and promotion, it should get much more developmental support than a competency that is rarely related. Importance impacts a person's opportunity for development.

Element #3 – Perceived importance of the competency.

The third element also is derived from the leadership assessment database. It is the perceived (how raters view it) importance to performing well and succeeding of the competencies from highest to lowest. The theory is that the lower the perceived importance of the competency, the lower the motivation to develop the skill and the less support would be available. Therefore, the harder to develop the skill. For example, our norms indicate that Customer focus (#11) is among the most important and, therefore, would receive a lower difficulty rating since people would be highly motivated to develop this skill. On the other hand, people rate Courage (#10) less important and, therefore, it receives a higher difficulty weight because it would be harder to convince someone that they ought to work on such an unimportant need. Perceived importance impacts a person's motivation for development.

The Developmental difficulty index.

The Developmental difficulty index is the sum of Elements 1, 2, and 3. Legacy competencies have been coded for developmental difficulty. The coding has received some empirical support. Developmental difficulty index scores of new competencies were derived from the previous coding. Specifically, when a new competency is directly linked to one legacy competency, the index score of the legacy competency is taken for the new competency. If a new competency is linked to multiple legacy competencies, the average index score of the legacy competencies is taken for the new competency. After the coding, the 38 new competencies are grouped into five categories according to their level of difficulty. The five categories are 1–Easiest, 2–Easier, 3–Moderate, 4–Harder, and 5–Hardest. Table 25 below illustrates the differential difficulty categories of the 38 competencies. The coding is negatively correlated with the mean skill ratings of the competencies (r = -.66, p < .001), suggesting people are less skilled on difficult competencies.

Table 25. Developmental difficulty index for competencies.

Competency	Level of difficulty
1. *Ensures* accountability	2
2. Action oriented	1
3. Manages ambiguity	5
4. Attracts top talent	3
5. Business insight	3
6. Collaborates	2
7. Communicates effectively	2
8. *Manages* complexity	3
9. *Manages* conflict	5
10. Courage	4
11. Customer focus	1
12. Decision quality	2
13. Develops talent	4
14. *Values* differences	4
15. Directs work	2
16. *Drives* engagement	3
17. Financial acumen	1
18. Global perspective	3
19. *Cultivates* innovation	5
20. Interpersonal savvy	4
21. *Builds* networks	5
22. Nimble learning	3
23. Organizational savvy	4
24. Persuades	4
25. Plans and aligns	1
26. *Being* resilient	3
27. Resourcefulness	2
28. *Drives* results	1
29. *Demonstrates* self-awareness	3
30. Self-development	3
31. Situational adaptability	5
32. *Balances* stakeholders	2
33. Strategic mindset	5
34. *Builds effective* teams	5
35. Tech savvy	1
36. *Instills* trust	1
37. *Drives* vision and purpose	4
38. *Optimizes* work processes	3

1 = Easiest; 2 = Easier; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Harder; 5 = Hardest

Competencies related to EQ

The ability to perceive and manage emotions contributes to a leader's interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. This ability has been referred to as Emotional Intelligence (EI) or Emotional Quotient (EQ). Legacy competencies were mapped to EQ based on Daniel Goleman's model of emotional competencies (1998). Goleman's model outlines five dimensions of emotional competencies:

1. **Self-awareness –** the ability to read your own emotions and recognize their impact while using gut feelings to guide decisions.
2. **Self-regulation –** involves controlling your own emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances.
3. **Motivation –** a passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status; a propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence.
4. **Empathy –** the ability to sense, understand, and react to others' emotions while comprehending social networks.
5. **Relationship management –** the ability to inspire, influence, and develop others while managing conflict.

The relationship between the new competencies and EQ was derived from previous mapping (Korn Ferry International, 2010). Specifically, if a new competency is related to one or a few legacy competencies that have been connected with EQ, the new competency is also considered to be related to EQ. Table 26 below presents the top 12 competencies that are related to EQ in a descending order.

Table 26. Competencies related to EQ.

Competency	Rank order
9. *Manages* conflict	1
3. *Manages* ambiguity	2
16. *Drives* engagement	3
20. Interpersonal savvy	4
26. *Being* resilient	5
14. *Values* differences	6
29. *Demonstrates* self-awareness	7
34. *Builds effective* teams	8
23. Organizational savvy	9
36. *Instills* trust	10
31. Situational adaptability	11
6. Collaborates	12

Section VI – Legacy competency mappings

Knowing that many organizations will be looking to migrate to or compare their models with the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™, we have mapped the framework to all three legacy competency frameworks including Lominger, PDI Ninth House, and Global Novations. Of course, legacy PDI Ninth House and Global Novations were somewhat broader in conceptualization than were the legacy Lominger competencies. These broader competencies are mapped to the new framework where the core behaviors have the best match. Similarly, the narrower competencies have been mapped to the new framework where the match is the best behavioral fit.

Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ legacy competency mapping – Lominger

NEW Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ framework			
Factor(4)	**Cluster (12)**	**Competency (38)**	**Factor/Cluster/Competency in legacy Lominger**
FACTOR I: Thought	Understanding the business (A)	Business insight (5)	Strategic Skills/Understanding the Business/Business Acumen
		Customer focus (11)	Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Managing Diverse Relationships/Customer Focus
		Financial acumen (17)	
		Tech savvy (35)	Strategic Skills/Understanding the Business/Technical Learning
	Making complex decisions (B)	*Manages* complexity (8)	Strategic Skills/Making Complex Decisions/Problem Solving
		Decision quality (12)	Operating Skills/Keeping on Point/*Timely* Decision Making & Strategic Skills/Making Complex Decisions/Decision Quality
		Balances stakeholders (32)	
	Creating the new and different (C)	Global perspective (18)	Strategic Skills/Creating the New and Different/Perspective
		Cultivates innovation (19)	Strategic Skills/Creating the New and Different/Creativity & Strategic Skills/Creating the New and Different/Innovation Management
		Strategic mindset (33)	Strategic Skills/Creating the New and Different/Strategic Agility
FACTOR II: Results	Taking initiative (D)	Action oriented (2)	Energy and Drive/Focusing on the Bottom Line/Action Oriented
		Resourcefulness (27)	Operating Skills/Getting Organized/Organizing
	Managing execution (E)	Directs work (15)	Operating Skills/Getting Work Done Through Others/Delegation & Operating Skills/Getting Work Done Through Others/Directing Others
		Plans and aligns (25)	Operating Skills/Getting Organized/Planning & Operating Skills/Keeping on Point/Priority Setting
		Optimizes work processes (38)	Operating Skills/Managing Work Processes/Process Management & Operating Skills/Managing Work Processes/*Managing Through* Systems & Operating Skills/Managing Work Processes/Total Work Systems
	Focusing on performance (F)	*Ensures* accountability (1)	Operating Skills/Getting Work Done Through Others/Managing and Measuring Work & Courage/Dealing with Trouble/Standing Alone
		Drives results (28)	Energy and Drive/Focusing on the Bottom Line/*Drive for* Results

Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ legacy competency mapping – Lominger *(continued)*

NEW Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ framework			
Factor(4)	**Cluster (12)**	**Competency (38)**	**Factor/Cluster/Competency in legacy Lominger**
FACTOR III: People	Building collaborative relationships (G)	Collaborates (6)	Operating Skills/Getting Work Done Through Others/Informing & Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Managing Diverse Relationships/Peer Relationships
		Manages conflict (9)	Courage/Dealing with Trouble/Conflict Management
		Interpersonal savvy (20)	Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Relating Skills/Interpersonal Savvy
		Builds networks (21)	Organizational Positioning Skills/Being Organizationally Savvy/Political Savvy
	Optimizing diverse talent (H)	Attracts top talent (4)	Courage/Making Tough People Calls/Hiring and Staffing & Courage/Making Tough People Calls/Sizing Up People
		Develops talent (13)	Operating Skills/Getting Work Done Through Others/Developing Direct Reports and Others
		Values differences (14)	Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Managing Diverse Relationships/*Managing* Diversity & Personal and Interpersonal Skills/*Managing* Diverse Relationships/Understanding Others
		Builds effective teams (34)	Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Inspiring Others/*Building Effective* Teams
	Influencing people (I)	Communicates effectively (7)	Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Being Open and Receptive/Listening & Organizational Positioning Skills/Communicating Effectively/Presentation Skills & Organizational Positioning Skills/Communicating Effectively/Written Communications
		Drives engagement (16)	Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Inspiring Others/Motivating Others
		Organizational savvy (23)	Organizational Positioning Skills/Managing Up/Comfort Around Higher Management & Organizational Positioning Skills/Being Organizationally Savvy/Organizational Agility
		Persuades (24)	Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Inspiring Others/Negotiating
		Drives vision and purpose (37)	Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Inspiring Others/*Managing* Vision and Purpose
FACTOR IV: Self	Being authentic (J)	Courage (10)	Courage/Dealing with Trouble/Command Skills & Courage/Dealing with Trouble/Confronting Direct Reports & Courage/Dealing with Trouble/Managerial Courage
		Instills trust (36)	Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Acting with Honor and Character/Ethics and Values & Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Acting with Honor and Character/Integrity and Trust
	Being open (K)	*Demonstrates* self-awareness (29)	Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Being Open and Receptive/Personal Disclosure & Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Demonstrating Personal Flexibility/Self-Knowledge
		Self-development (30)	Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Demonstrating Personal Flexibility/Self-Development
	Being flexible and adaptable (L)	*Manages* ambiguity (3)	Strategic Skills/Creating the New and Different/*Dealing with* Ambiguity
		Nimble learning (22)	Strategic Skills/Making Complex Decisions/Learning on the Fly
		Being resilient (26)	Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Being Open and Receptive/Composure & Energy and Drive/Focusing on the Bottom Line/Perseverance
		Situational adaptability (31)	Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Demonstrating Personal Flexibility/*Dealing with* Paradox & Personal and Interpersonal Skills/Demonstrating Personal Flexibility/Personal Learning

Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ legacy competency mapping – PDI Ninth House

NEW Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ framework			
Factor (4)	**Cluster (12)**	**Competency (38)**	**Super Factor/Competency in legacy PDI**
FACTOR I: Thought	Understanding the business (A)	Business insight (5)	
		Customer focus (11)	Results Leadership/Focus on Customers
		Financial acumen (17)	Thought Leadership/Financial/Quantitative Acumen
		Tech savvy (35)	
	Making complex decisions (B)	*Manages* complexity (8)	Thought Leadership/Analysis
		Decision quality (12)	Thought Leadership/Judgment
		Balances stakeholders (32)	
	Creating the new and different (C)	Global perspective (18)	Thought Leadership/Global Perspective
		Cultivates innovation (19)	Thought Leadership/Innovation
		Strategic mindset (33)	Thought Leadership/Strategic Thinking
FACTOR II: Results	Taking initiative (D)	Action oriented (2)	
		Resourcefulness (27)	Results Leadership/Execution
	Managing execution (E)	Directs work (15)	
		Plans and aligns (25)	Results Leadership/Planning
		Optimizes work processes (38)	Results Leadership/Process Improvement
	Focusing on performance (F)	*Ensures* accountability (1)	
		Drives results (28)	Results Leadership/Results Orientation
FACTOR III: People	Building collaborative relationships (G)	Collaborates (6)	People Leadership/Collaboration
		Manages conflict (9)	
		Interpersonal savvy (20)	People Leadership/Building Relationships
		Builds networks (21)	
	Optimizing diverse talent (H)	Attracts top talent (4)	
		Develops talent (13)	People Leadership/Talent Enhancement
		Values differences (14)	
		Builds effective teams (34)	
	Influencing people (I)	Communicates effectively (7)	People Leadership/Effective Communication
		Drives engagement (16)	People Leadership/Engage and Inspire
		Organizational savvy (23)	
		Persuades (24)	People Leadership/Influence
		Drives vision and purpose (37)	
FACTOR IV: Self	Being authentic (J)	Courage (10)	Results Leadership/Courage
		Instills trust (36)	Personal Leadership/Establishing Trust
	Being open (K)	*Demonstrates* self-awareness (29)	
		Self-development (30)	
	Being flexible and adaptable (L)	*Manages* ambiguity (3)	
		Nimble learning (22)	
		Being resilient (26)	
		Situational adaptability (31)	Personal Leadership/Adaptability

Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ legacy competency mapping – Global Novations

NEW Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ framework			
Factor (4)	Cluster (12)	Competency (38)	Competency in legacy GN
FACTOR I: Thought	Understanding the business (A)	Business insight (5)	Business Acumen
		Customer focus (11)	Customer Focus
		Financial acumen (17)	
		Tech savvy (35)	
	Making complex decisions (B)	*Manages* complexity (8)	Problem Solving and Analysis
		Decision quality (12)	Decisiveness and Judgment
		Balances stakeholders (32)	
	Creating the new and different (C)	Global perspective (18)	
		Cultivates innovation (19)	Creativity and Innovation
		Strategic mindset (33)	Strategic Alignment
FACTOR II: Results	Taking initiative (D)	Action oriented (2)	
		Resourcefulness (27)	
	Managing execution (E)	Directs work (15)	
		Plans and aligns (25)	Planning and Organizing
		Optimizes work processes (38)	Continuous Quality/Performance Improvement
	Focusing on performance (F)	*Ensures* accountability (1)	
		Drives results (28)	Gets Results
FACTOR III: People	Building collaborative relationships (G)	Collaborates (6)	Collaboration and Teamwork
		Manages conflict (9)	
		Interpersonal savvy (20)	Relationship Building
		Builds networks (21)	
	Optimizing diverse talent (H)	Attracts top talent (4)	
		Develops talent (13)	Develops Capability
		Values differences (14)	Valuing Diversity
		Builds effective teams (34)	Collaboration and Teamwork
	Influencing people (I)	Communicates effectively (7)	Open Communication
		Drives engagement (16)	
		Organizational savvy (23)	Organizational Savvy
		Persuades (24)	Influencing
		Drives vision and purpose (37)	
FACTOR IV: Self	Being authentic (J)	Courage (10)	
		Instills trust (36)	Integrity
	Being open (K)	*Demonstrates* self-awareness (29)	
		Self-development (30)	
	Being flexible and adaptable (L)	*Manages* ambiguity (3)	Flexibility and Achieving Change
		Nimble learning (22)	Learning Predisposition
		Being resilient (26)	Resilience
		Situational adaptability (31)	

Section VII – Frequently asked questions

Competency library

1. *How was the new Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ created?*

Standing on the shoulders of three great organizations—Lominger, PDI, and Global Novations—we combined decades of research and global insights and worked with forward-thinking clients to identify what matters most in determining performance in today's 21st century environment. The analyses contained in this manual represent the vast data insights from across Korn Ferry.

2. *How do you measure the validity of the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ library?*

The competencies included in the library are the ones that most correlate with performance for all levels of leadership as well as for individual contributors. Studies in this technical manual suggest that the factor structure is sound, that the competencies account for 42.5%–64% of the variance in performance, and that they are globally relevant.

3. *How frequently will the Korn Ferry competency research be updated?*

Normative studies are typically conducted every three to four years. (Note: We have observed that competency norms are very stable. Our normative study conducted in 2013 has a global sample and shows very similar findings to our 2003, 2006, and 2009 normative studies.) Studies that look at correlations with performance outcomes and business outcomes will be conducted on an ongoing basis with partner organizations.

4. *Why are there 4 Factors, 12 Clusters, and 38 Competencies?*

Based on the factor analysis and a qualitative thematic approach, organizing the competencies into 4 Factors and 12 Clusters made the most sense. Upon intense review of the research and the literature, it was determined that 38 Competencies accounted for the majority of variance in performance.

5. *Can the competencies be tailored to my organization?*

Yes, this is possible. Korn Ferry experts within our consulting group work with organizations to do custom competency models and tailor our intellectual property as needed. When possible, we recommend using our language in order to maintain strong linkages to our research, supporting tools, and solutions.

6. *Does this competency library support an integrated approach to talent management?*

Yes. Individual competencies are what drive an organization's broader capabilities which in turn enable an organization to achieve its objectives. The Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ allows for integration across talent management processes including selection, development, performance, and succession. It allows adapting to the different expectations of each organizational level. It also enables alignment of individual skills to the organization's business strategy.

7. *What are some ways I can use the competencies in my organization?*

Competencies are often referred to as the red thread, the lingua franca, the language of talent, the glue. Whatever metaphor you prefer, the point is the same: competencies help to integrate talent management practices and provide a critical link to business strategy. You can use the competencies to define what skills are required for success in the organization, for a team, or for an individual. You can use competencies to help individuals identify strengths and weaknesses and determine the best developmental opportunities, given their career goals. Competencies are also helpful in the interviewing and selection process and provide a more objective measure for structured interviews.

8. *Why is there no competency for leadership, change management, or project management?*

These are what we would call compound competencies. They are areas that require proficiency in multiple competencies. For example, to be good in change management, an individual would need skill in *Manages* ambiguity, *Drives* vision and purpose, and *Cultivates* innovation (to name a few). All items in the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ collectively have something to do with success as a manager and a leader.

9. *How were the clusters derived?*

Both statistical analysis and expert judgment played a role when constructing the clusters. It is the typical approach in psychological studies. Our recent construct validation study confirmed the structure of the library (see Section III, p. 31)

Building a business case for competencies

10. ***How can I make the case to my organization about the need for leaders to have better personal and interpersonal skills when we always reward them based on other areas?***

The competencies included in the People Factor and the Self Factor are often what differentiate success at higher levels of leadership. Personal and interpersonal skills factor strongly into what determines high performance (please refer to the performance correlations in Section III). Derailment research has shown that CEOs and managers derail largely due to poor personal and interpersonal skills.

11. ***What is the return on investment (ROI) for competency-based talent management?***

Many research studies have shown that the use of competencies appears to have a significant impact on ROI. For example, best-in-class organizations were found to be nearly twice as likely as laggard companies to have competency models in place in their organizations (Aberdeen Group, 2007). Our study with a client company found that after using our competencies and developmental materials, turnover dropped from 30% to below 10%, the acceptance of offers of employment went from 40% to 70%, and employee satisfaction increased significantly. In another company, researchers reported that being better at certain competencies is worth $467,000 in commissions and $580,000 in reduced turnover—over a million dollars per manager. (For more details, see "The business impact of competencies," p. 5).

General statistics questions

12. ***What do the terms "valid" and "correlated" mean? What terminology should I know to read and interpret Korn Ferry technical manuals and reports accurately?***

These terms reflect psychometric indices that people can refer to in order to judge the quality of an assessment tool.

Validity refers to the degree to which the inference from the test score is reasonable. In employment settings, we use predictive validity because the assessment often is used to select people on the assumption that a high score on the assessment will predict a high score on job performance ratings. The inference here is that a high score on the assessment suggests a high score on job performance. A validity index also ranges from 0.00 to 1.00. "1.00" denotes that a score on the assessment corresponds perfectly to the score on the job performance rating. "0.00" means that the score on the assessment cannot predict at all the scores on the job performance rating. (For more information, see "Validity," p. 31.)

Correlation simply means the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two variables. When the correlation is positive, a high score on one variable corresponds to a high score on the other variable. When the correlation is negative, high scores on one variable correspond to low scores on the other variable. The strength of correlation also ranges from 0.00 to 1.00.

13. ***How can I tell whether something is strongly correlated or not? What is the threshold for something to be considered statistically significant?***

Correlation is the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two variables. The correlation coefficient, r, is used to describe the relationship. The range of r is from −1.00 to +1.00. The closer r is to −1.00 or +1.00, the stronger the variables are related. If r is 0.00, it indicates there is no relationship between the variables. A negative correlation means that as one variable gets larger, another variable gets smaller. For example, the relationship between the amount of TV watched and academic performance is negative (actually, around −0.30). A positive correlation means that as one variable gets larger, another gets larger as well. For example, the relationship between weight and height is positive (around 0.60). Whether or not a validity coefficient (correlation coefficient) is statistically significant depends on sample size. A large correlation coefficient may not be significant if the sample size is small. In contrast, a small correlation coefficient may be significant if the sample size is large. In practice, we care more about what is called "the effect size," rather, whether the relationship is statistically significant. There is no consensus regarding the threshold for validity. A predictor with a small but consistent predictive validity may have practical value. For example, structured interviewing has a predictive validity of about 0.40. Personality testing has a predictive validity of about 0.30. Simply obtaining a statistically significant validity coefficient depends largely on the number of employees in one's sample. A coefficient of 0.02 could be statistically significant with a sample size of 100,000 employees. However, it would have little practical value in helping predict employee behavior.

14. ***What is the best way to communicate the validity of these competencies in a language my company will understand?***

In a company setting, predictive validity is often used. It simply means the extent to which a test score will predict job performance. High scores on an assessment will predict high scores on job performance ratings.

15. Does using the term "factor" in the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ library mean that the structure was statistically derived?

Yes, factors were statistically derived. There are common themes among the competencies in the same factors. (For more information, see "Factor Analysis," p. 31.)

16. How are the performance correlations decided for each role?

They are statistically supported by validation studies. When we conducted the validation studies, we collected position level information of the participants as well as data on performance. For each of the position levels, we identified the competencies that were most related to job performance.

Competency profiling

17. When selecting and prioritizing competencies for a role, job, or level, is there any best practice or guidance on how to choose competencies?

When developing a job profile, these questions should be asked:

- What are the strategic goals of the organization or function?

- What are the expectations or requirements of the job?

- What differentiates high performers?

- What are the challenges incumbents will face?

These questions should help frame decisions on which competencies to ultimately include in the success profile for the job. How concentrated or spread out those competencies are across different factors and clusters really depends on the nature of the role. As a general rule, if it is observed that the competencies selected are tightly concentrated in a particular factor or cluster, one should ask whether each competency is a unique and significant differentiator for performance in that role. Korn Ferry's Competency Profiling Manager can help you create and use competency profiles.

Assessing competencies

18. How accurate are self-assessments of strengths and weaknesses on the competencies?

With a traditional 1 to 5 rating scale, individuals tend to rate themselves high. With new advances in psychometric methods, there are ways of preventing faking for self-assessments. With the right assessment method and mathematical algorithms, self-assessments can be very reliable.

19. Why is the direct manager considered to be the most accurate rater when rating competencies?

Why wouldn't peers be better raters? Overall, the research has shown that boss ratings are the most accurate because the boss is the rater most concerned about the learner's performance and is most familiar with their job duties and responsibilities. Peers are able to provide accurate ratings on some other areas (e.g., interpersonal skills), but they may not be familiar or motivated to provide accurate ratings in others. However, it is crucial to bear in mind that different rater groups should be included in the 360 assessment. Different groups provide different, unique perspectives on the learner's performance. The 360 feedback is a valid way to reveal how a learner's behaviors are perceived by the boss, peers, direct reports, and others and compare those ratings to self-ratings. Some rater sources are more accurate than others for certain competencies.

20. What improvement in mean rating can learners expect to see if they participate in a multi-rater and then retake it?

The answer to this question depends upon what development actions were taken by the learner after receiving assessment feedback and also on the instrument being used.

If a person wants to retake a 360, they need to allow enough time to develop their skills, and for raters to notice. Typically, we recommend waiting 18 months. While it is not possible to measure statistical significance in the differences between one individual's Time 1 and Time 2 ratings, we do recommend a general rule of thumb in terms of interpreting score differences over time. Specifically, we would regard shifts of .33 to .50 (in either direction) on any individual competency to be noteworthy. Anything greater than .50 would most certainly be noteworthy and is not something that we commonly observe.

Please note that a certain amount of variability naturally occurs as a result of individual rater error and the phenomenon of regression to the mean in repeated ratings. Also, some ratings could be influenced by personal or political considerations, particularly at the lower end of the rating scale (e.g., "I rated this person really low the last time. I think they got the message, so maybe I won't be quite as critical this time around."). That being said, the .33–.50 range is still a good guideline for gauging the relative significance of ratings shifts.

21. *What assessments of competencies will be available?*

Korn Ferry has two 360 instruments available to measure competencies in the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™. For development purposes, the VOICES® assessment will enable you to choose the full library of competencies, a filtered model of competencies, or create a model that best reflects what you want to measure. For performance evaluation and decision making (plus development), the TalentView® of Leadership Performance assessment is available. While VOICES® assesses whole competencies, TalentView® of Leadership Performance measures specific behaviors within a competency, using a Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) instead of a Likert scale, so that the data can be used to compare across people as well as for development. In addition, Korn Ferry's highly predictive, high fidelity, simulation-based assessments of potential and readiness will be available over the next year to measure level filter and custom models for high-stakes selection and development.

Developing competencies

22. *What resources, tools, and solutions are available to help with competency-based development?*

Useful tools will include both print and online resources. Tools include placemats, sort cards, quick reference guide (QRG), print and e-book development resources, and interview protocols. These will be available in US English, UK English, and eight other languages. They are French, German, Spanish (International), Portuguese (Brazil), Simplified Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Russian.

What's new, different, and better

23. *Why are there fewer career stallers and stoppers? Where did the stallers and stoppers come from?*

The legacy Lominger Leadership Architect® included 19 Career Stallers and Stoppers. Some of these are competency-based derailers, reflecting the absence of a skill, and some are disposition-based derailers, describing the presence of a negative tendency. The Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ retained the stallers that are related to the absence or misuse of competencies. Disposition-based derailers will be included in the Korn Ferry personality assessment.

24. *What ideas and approaches were adopted from the different legacy organizations in Korn Ferry?*

Each legacy organization brought something to the table that they were known for. Lominger's Leadership Architect® brought rigorous ongoing research, clear accessible language, and tremendous development and interview content. PDI Ninth House brought precision of behaviors by leadership level and the ability to assess competencies for the purpose of development or the purpose of performance. Global Novations brought stages— or levels of contribution—which articulate levels of proficiency for a given competency.

25. *What are the key benefits of the integration across legacy frameworks?*

A key benefit to integrating the intellectual property across legacy frameworks is the access to an unprecedented amount of data which points us toward what matters most in any situation. They also allowed us to build out competency content that enables organizations to apply competencies for many different purposes.

26. *What position levels is the competency library built for?*

The Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ is built for all levels of leadership—from individual contributors all the way to C-suite executives.

27. *What is a filter? How were they developed?*

A filter is a way to create a focused model from the library, based on priority areas. In other words, it's the way in which a competency is prioritized and valued for a specific reason. Some competencies are more related to success in certain contexts. Filters will include options such as business challenges, position levels, industries, and functions. A filter can be used to create a model specific to your needs. For example, if you want a model to address a particular business challenge (e.g., Innovation), you would use the Innovation filter to identify the subset of competencies and behaviors most important for success against that business challenge. You can then further refine the model by selecting a function filter such as finance or marketing.

28. *Where did the Global Focus Areas go?*

The Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ is a global competency library. The Global Focus Areas which were part of the legacy Lominger Leadership Architect® have been incorporated into the competencies and definitions.

29. *What makes the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ global? What evidence of global relevance will we have for this library?*

The Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ Global Competency Framework is so named to exemplify that this new approach to competencies addresses skills and behaviors critical for success in a 21st century global context. The global relevance of the new global competency framework arises from data accumulated as a result of the Korn Ferry global footprint as well as both the competency and assessment work we have done internationally with millions of individuals over the past four decades. In deriving the framework, a key input came from Korn Ferry consultants across the globe. We checked in to confirm which competencies are the most compelling and differentiating to clients and what will be important to distinguish Korn Ferry as a firm that is truly global in its approach. In many cases, skills and behaviors that demonstrate a global mindset take shape as skill and focus in valuing diverse viewpoints and perspectives. This language is inherent in competencies across the framework. Some examples include:

- From Interpersonal savvy: "Relating openly and comfortably with diverse groups of people."

- From *Builds effective* teams: "Building strong-identity teams that apply their diverse skills and perspectives to achieve common goals."

- From *Balances* stakeholders: "Anticipating and balancing the needs of multiple stakeholders."

Specific competencies that point toward global leadership and global relevance will be identified during the focus model creation process.

In addition, the competencies Global perspective, *Values* differences, and Tech savvy address global relevance. To ensure that the competency content is globally relevant, it is reviewed by localization and translation experts who flag any language deemed too colloquial or too difficult to translate. Finally, as testament to our commitment as a global provider of competency solutions, the new framework will be launched in nine languages.

Standard definitions

30. *What is the definition of a competency?*

A competency is a skill, something that people do, that is important for performance and success on the job.

31. *What is a competency profile and how does it compare to a success profile?*

A competency profile includes the skills required for success for a given role or level. A success profile includes skills plus other dispositions, experiences, and motivators that enable success in a given role or level.

32. *What is a competency model and how does it compare to a competency library?*

A competency library defines the whole universe of skills that are important for success. A competency model is a subset of the library competencies that are most important for success in a specific role, level, function, or organization.

Conclusion

The charter for strategic HR is to identify, develop, and deploy top talent in order to enable an organization to achieve its strategic objectives. By identifying the competencies that are mission critical for success and providing the support for leaders to meet those expectations, strategic HR provides a lingua franca—a common language—for talent. Competencies become the link that integrates talent management practices from interviewing and selection, onboarding, assessment, leadership development, succession management, and deployment.

Competency modeling helps HR functions leverage their strategic roles by vertically aligning different HR practices to organizational strategic objectives. In addition, competency modeling facilitates the integration of talent management practices by horizontally aligning various HR practices (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). When different HR processes are designed and implemented using the same model, it creates a holistic, self-reinforcing system. For example, when organizations select, develop, reward, and promote employees on the same set of competencies, the consistency unambiguously communicates to employees the strategic importance of these competencies. This creates a strong organizational climate that contributes to the establishment of high-performance work systems (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004).

But competency-based talent management systems take time to establish. Even in countries experiencing rapid economic growth, where growing companies are eager to adopt more strategic HR practices, the integration and enterprise-wide adoption of competencies still takes time (Wu, Lin, & Jin, 2011). It is rare for organizations to implement a competency model and quickly flick the switch with all the changes going live simultaneously.

Like all other organizational interventions, the initial implementation or subsequent alignment and embedding of competency models involves change and requires persistence. Stakeholder communication will be a critical component to your success. Be prepared to provide compelling answers to questions such as:

- Why are we doing this?

- Why does it have to be done now?

- What will happen if we don't do it?

- How does it impact me? How will I benefit?

- How will this benefit the organization?

- When will it go into effect?

- Why are we doing a slow integration rather than all at once?

- How does this affect my job? My pay?

- How much additional time will this add when it comes to hiring employees, performance reviews, talent reviews, etc.?

- How will we know if this is successful?

Looking ahead, what do the next two decades hold for competencies and competency modeling? For one, we can only imagine that the technology systems that support the integration of talent management systems will become increasingly sophisticated. More detailed and more integrated data will allow HR professionals to become very precise as they assess, develop, and deploy talent across an organization. We also expect to see additional breakthroughs in the science of leadership, specifically regarding what variables predict success in various positions or functions. Finally, we anticipate that talent management professionals along with line managers will become more and more adept at using competencies to manage talent—paving the way for more fine-tuned, sophisticated competency-based talent management systems.

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