



**STRATEGIC
COMPETENCY
DICTIONARY**



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Adaptability

Maintaining effectiveness when experiencing major changes in work tasks or the work environment; adjusting effectively to work within new work structures, processes, requirements, or cultures.

How do you hone the competency?

Tries to understand changes—Tries to understand changes in work tasks, situations, and environment as well as the logic or basis for change; actively seeks information about new work situations.

Approaches change or newness positively—Treats change and new situations as opportunities for learning or growth; focuses on the beneficial aspects of change; speaks positively about the change to others.

Adjusts behavior—Quickly modifies behavior to deal effectively with changes in the work environment; readily tries new approaches appropriate for new or changed situations; does not persist with ineffective behaviors.

Applied Learning

Assimilating and applying new job-related information in a timely manner.

How do you hone the competency?

Actively participates in learning activities—Takes part in needed learning activities in a way that makes the most of the learning experience (e.g., takes notes, asks questions, does required tasks).

Quickly gains knowledge, understanding, or skill—Readily absorbs and comprehends new information from formal and informal learning experiences.

Applies knowledge or skill—Puts new knowledge, understanding, or skill to practical use on the job; furthers learning through trial and error.

Building a Successful Team

Using appropriate methods and a flexible interpersonal style to help build a cohesive team; facilitating the completion of team goals.

How do you hone the competency?

Develops direction—Ensures that the purpose and importance of the team are clarified (e.g., team has a clear charter or mission statement); guides the setting of specific and measurable team goals and objectives.

Develops structure—Helps to clarify roles and responsibilities of team members; helps ensure that necessary steering, review, or support functions are in place.

Facilitates goal accomplishment—Makes procedural or process suggestions for achieving team goals or performing team functions; provides necessary resources or helps to remove obstacles to team accomplishments.

Involves others—Listens to and fully involves others in team decisions and actions; values and uses individual differences and talents.

Informs others on team—Shares important or relevant information with the team.

Models commitment—Adheres to the team's expectations and guidelines; fulfills team responsibilities; demonstrates personal commitment to the team.

Building Customer Loyalty

Effectively meeting customer needs; building productive customer relationships; taking responsibility for customer satisfaction and loyalty.

How do you hone the competency?

Uses effective interpersonal skills—Establishes good interpersonal relationships by helping people feel valued, appreciated, and included in discussions (enhances self-esteem, empathizes, involves, discloses, supports).

Acknowledges the person—Greet customers promptly and courteously; gives customers full attention.

Clarifies the current situation—Asks questions to determine needs; listens carefully; provides appropriate information; summarizes to check understanding.

Meets or exceeds needs—Acts promptly in routine situations; agrees on a clear course of action in non-routine situations; takes opportunities to exceed expectations without making unreasonable commitments.

Confirms satisfaction—Asks questions to check for satisfaction; commits to follow-through, if appropriate; thanks customer.

Takes the “heat”—Handles upset customers by hearing the customer out, empathizing, apologizing, and taking personal responsibility for resolving customer problems/issues.

Building Partnerships

Identifying opportunities and taking action to build strategic relationships between one's area and other areas, teams, departments, units, or organizations to help achieve business goals.

How do you hone the competency?

Identifies partnership needs—Analyzes the organization and own area to identify key relationships that should be initiated or improved to further the attainment of own area's goals.

Explores partnership opportunities—Exchanges information with potential partner areas to clarify partnership benefits and potential problems; collaboratively determines the scope and expectations of the partnership so that both areas' needs can be met.

Formulates action plans—Collaboratively determines courses of action to realize mutual goals; facilitates agreement on each partner's responsibilities and needed support.

Subordinates own area's goals—Places higher priority on organization's goals than on own area's goals; anticipates effects of own area's actions and decisions on partners; influences others to support partnership objectives.

Monitors partnership—Implements effective means for monitoring and evaluating the partnership process and the attainment of mutual goals.



Building Positive Working Relationships (Teamwork/Collaboration)

Developing and using collaborative relationships to facilitate the accomplishment of work goals.

How do you hone the competency?

Seeks opportunities—Proactively tries to build effective working relationships with other people.

Clarifies the current situation—Probes for and provides information to clarify situations.

Develops others' and own ideas—Seeks and expands on original ideas, enhances others' ideas, and contributes own ideas about the issues at hand.

Subordinates personal goals—Places higher priority on team or organization goals than on own goals.

Facilitates agreement—Gains agreement from partners to support ideas or take partnership-oriented action; uses sound rationale to explain value of actions.

Uses effective interpersonal skills—Establishes good interpersonal relationships by helping people feel valued, appreciated, and included in discussions (enhances self-esteem, empathizes, involves, discloses, supports)

Building Trust

Interacting with others in a way that gives them confidence in one's intentions and those of the organization.

How do you hone the competency?

Operates with integrity—Demonstrates honesty; keeps commitments; behaves in a consistent manner.

Discloses own positions—Shares thoughts, feelings, and rationale so that others understand personal positions.

Remains open to ideas—Listens to others and objectively considers others' ideas and opinions, even when they conflict with one's own.

Supports others—Treats people with dignity, respect, and fairness; gives proper credit to others; stands up for deserving others and their ideas even in the face of resistance or challenge.

Coaching

Providing timely guidance and feedback to help others strengthen specific knowledge/skill areas needed to accomplish a task or solve a problem.

How do you hone the competency?

Clarifies the current situation—Clarifies expected behaviors, knowledge, and level of proficiency by seeking and giving information and checking for understanding.

Explains and demonstrates—Provides instruction, positive models, and opportunities for observation in order to help others develop skills; encourages questions to ensure understanding.

Provides feedback and reinforcement—Gives timely, appropriate feedback on performance; reinforces efforts and progress.

Uses effective interpersonal skills—Establishes good interpersonal relationships by helping people feel valued, appreciated, and included in discussions (enhances self-esteem, empathizes, involves, discloses, supports).

Communication

Clearly conveying information and ideas through a variety of media to individuals or groups in a manner that engages the audience and helps them understand and retain the message

How do you hone the competency?

Organizes the communication—Clarifies purpose and importance; stresses major points; follows a logical sequence.

Maintains audience attention—Keeps the audience engaged through use of techniques such as analogies, illustrations, humor, an appealing style, body language, and voice inflection.

Adjusts to the audience—Frames message in line with audience experience, background, and expectations; uses terms, examples, and analogies that are meaningful to the audience.

Ensures understanding—Seeks input from audience; checks understanding; presents message in different ways to enhance understanding.

Adheres to accepted conventions—Uses syntax, pace, volume, diction, and mechanics appropriate to the media being used.

Comprehends communication from others—Attends to messages from others; correctly interprets messages and responds appropriately.

Continuous Learning

Actively identifying new areas for learning; regularly creating and taking advantage of learning opportunities; using newly gained knowledge and skill on the job and learning through their application.

How do you hone the competency?

Targets learning needs—Seeks and uses feedback and other sources of information to identify appropriate areas for learning.

Seeks learning activities—Identifies and participates in appropriate learning activities (e.g., courses, reading, self-study, coaching, experiential learning) that help fulfill learning needs.

Maximizes learning—Actively participates in learning activities in a way that makes the most of the learning experience (e.g., takes notes, asks questions, critically analyzes information, keeps on-the-job application in mind, does required tasks).

Applies knowledge or skill—Puts new knowledge, understanding, or skill to practical use on the job; furthers learning through trial and error.

Takes risks in learning—Puts self in unfamiliar or uncomfortable situation in order to learn; asks questions at the risk of appearing foolish; takes on challenging or unfamiliar assignments.



Contributing to Team Success

Actively participating as a member of a team to move the team toward the completion of goals.

How do you hone the competency?

Facilitates goal accomplishment—Makes procedural or process suggestions for achieving team goals or performing team functions; provides necessary resources or helps to remove obstacles to help the team accomplish its goals.

Involves others—Listens to and fully involves others in team decisions and actions; values and uses individual differences and talents.

Informs others on team—Shares important or relevant information with the team.

Models commitment—Adheres to the team's expectations and guidelines; fulfills team responsibilities; demonstrates personal commitment to the team.

Customer Focus

Making customers and their needs a primary focus of one's actions; developing and sustaining productive customer relationships.

How do you hone the competency?

Seeks to understand customers—Actively seeks information to understand customers' circumstances, problems, expectations, and needs.

Educates customers—Shares information with customers to build their understanding of issues and capabilities.

Builds collaborative relationships—Builds rapport and cooperative relationships with customers.

Takes action to meet customer needs and concerns—Considers how actions or plans will affect customers; responds quickly to meet customer needs and resolve problems; avoids overcommitments.

Sets up customer feedback systems—Implements effective ways to monitor and evaluate customer concerns, issues, and satisfaction and to anticipate customer needs.

Decision Making

Identifying and understanding issues, problems, and opportunities; comparing data from different sources to draw conclusions; using effective approaches for choosing a course of action or developing appropriate solutions; taking action that is consistent with available facts, constraints, and probable consequences.

How do you hone the competency?

Identifies issues, problems, and opportunities—Recognizes issues, problems, or opportunities and determines whether action is needed.

Gathers information—Identifies the need for and collects information to better understand issues, problems, and opportunities.

Interprets information—Integrates information from a variety of sources; detects trends, associations, and cause-effect relationships.

Generates alternatives—Creates relevant options for addressing problems/opportunities and achieving desired outcomes.

Chooses appropriate action—Formulates clear decision criteria; evaluates options by considering implications and consequences; chooses an effective option.

Commits to action—Makes decisions within a reasonable time.



Involves others—Includes others in the decision-making process as warranted to obtain good information, make the most appropriate decisions, and ensure buy-in and understanding of the resulting decisions.

Delegation

Allocating decision-making authority and/or task responsibility to appropriate others to maximize the organization's and individuals' effectiveness.

How do you hone the competency?

Shares appropriate responsibilities—Allocates decision-making authority and/or task responsibility in appropriate areas to appropriate individuals (considering positive and negative impact, organizational values and structures, and enhancement of the individual's knowledge/skills).

Defines parameters—Clearly communicates the parameters of the delegated responsibility, including decision-making authority and any required actions, constraints, or deadlines.

Provides support without removing responsibility—Suggests resources and provides assistance or coaching as needed; expresses confidence in the individual.

Stays informed—Establishes appropriate procedures to keep informed of issues and results in areas of shared responsibility.

Developing Others

Planning and supporting the development of individuals' skills and abilities so that they can fulfill current or future job/role responsibilities more effectively.

How do you hone the competency?

Collaboratively establishes development goals—Works with individuals to identify areas for development, understand need for improvement, and set specific development goals.

Collaboratively establishes development plans—Works with individuals to identify options for meeting development goals; explores environmental supports and barriers to development; jointly determines appropriate developmental activities.

Creates a learning environment—Secures resources required to support development efforts; ensures that opportunities for development are available; offers assistance to help individuals overcome obstacles to learning.

Monitors progress—Gives individuals specific feedback on their performance related to established goals; highlights key positive and negative performance issues; adjusts plans to ensure development.

Energy

Consistently maintaining high levels of activity or productivity; sustaining long working hours when necessary; operating with vigor, effectiveness, and determination over extended periods of time.

How do you hone the competency?

Maintains stamina—Keeps a strong work pace over time; exhibits intensity in completing work objectives.

Maintains effectiveness—Performs mentally or physically taxing work effectively; retains the capacity for effective action or accomplishment over long periods of time.

Facilitating Change

Encouraging others to seek opportunities for different and innovative approaches to addressing problems and opportunities; facilitating the implementation and acceptance of change within the workplace.

How do you hone the competency?

Encourages boundary breaking—Encourages employees to question established work processes or assumptions; challenges employees to ask “why” until underlying cause is discovered; involves stakeholders in continuous improvement actions and alternatives.

Values sound approaches—Consistently remains open to ideas offered by others; supports and uses good ideas to solve problems or address issues.

Rewards change—Recognizes and rewards employees who make useful changes. Addresses change resistance—Helps individuals overcome resistance to change; shows empathy with people who feel loss as a result of change.

Manages complexity and contradictions—Tries to minimize complexities, contradictions, and paradoxes or reduce their impact; clarifies direction and smoothes the process of change.

Gaining Commitment

Using appropriate interpersonal styles and techniques to gain acceptance of ideas or plans; modifying one's own behavior to accommodate tasks, situations, and individuals involved.

How do you hone the competency?

Opens discussions effectively—Describes expectations, goals, requests, or future states in a way that provides clarity and excites interest.

Clarifies the current situation—Seeks, gives, and summarizes information; ensures that the situation/issue at hand is understood.

Develops others' and own ideas—Presents own ideas; seeks and develops suggestions of others; makes procedural suggestions.

Facilitates agreement—Uses appropriate influence strategies (such as demonstrating benefits or giving rewards) to gain genuine agreement; persists by using different approaches as needed to gain commitment.

Closes discussions with clear summaries—Summarizes outcomes of discussions and establishes next steps if needed.

Uses effective interpersonal skills—Establishes good interpersonal relationships by helping people feel valued, appreciated, and included in discussions (enhances self-esteem, empathizes, involves, discloses, supports).

Impact

Creating a good first impression, commanding attention and respect, showing an air of confidence.

How do you hone the competency?

Dresses appropriately—Maintains professional, businesslike image.

Displays professional demeanor—Exhibits a calm appearance; does not appear nervous or overly anxious; responds openly and warmly when appropriate.

Speaks confidently—Speaks with a self-assured tone of voice.

Information Monitoring

Setting up ongoing procedures to collect and review information needed to manage an organization or ongoing activities within it.

How do you hone the competency?

Identifies monitoring needs—Determines which systems, processes, or areas need to be monitored; identifies what information needs to be obtained.

Develops monitoring systems—Establishes systems to monitor activities or outputs that are easy to use and that provide timely and pertinent information.

Implements tracking systems—Effectively puts in place monitoring systems with minimal interruption for other organizational processes.

Reviews data—Collects and reviews data on a regular basis to determine progress, anticipate needs, and make necessary adjustments to employees or processes.

Initiating Action (Initiative)

Taking prompt action to accomplish objectives; taking action to achieve goals beyond what is required; being proactive.

How do you hone the competency?

Responds quickly—Takes immediate action when confronted with a problem or when made aware of a situation.

Takes independent action—Implements new ideas or potential solutions without prompting; does not wait for others to take action or to request action.

Goes above and beyond—Takes action that goes beyond job requirements in order to achieve objectives.

Innovation

Generating innovative solutions in work situations; trying different and novel ways to deal with work problems and opportunities.

How do you hone the competency?

Challenges paradigms—Identifies implicit assumptions in the way problems or situations are defined or presented; sees alternative ways to view or define problems; is not constrained by the thoughts or approaches of others.

Leverages diverse resources—Draws upon multiple and diverse sources (individuals, disciplines, bodies of knowledge) for ideas and inspiration.

Thinks expansively—Combines ideas in unique ways or makes connections between disparate ideas; explores different lines of thought; views situations from multiple perspectives; brainstorms multiple approaches/solutions.

Evaluates multiple solutions—Examines numerous potential solutions and evaluates each before accepting any.

Ensures relevance—Targets important areas for innovation and develops solutions that address meaningful work issues.

Leading/Living the Vision and Values

Keeping the organization's vision and values at the forefront of decision-making and action.

How do you hone the competency?

Communicates the importance of the vision and values—Helps others understand the organization's vision and values and their importance.

Moves others to action—Translates the vision and values into day-to-day activities and behaviors; guides and motivates others to take actions that support the vision and values.

Models the vision and values—Takes actions, makes decisions, and shapes team or group priorities to reflect the organization's vision and values.

Rewards living the vision and values—Recognizes and rewards employees whose actions support the organization's vision and values.

Managing Conflict

Dealing effectively with others in an antagonistic situation; using appropriate inter-personal styles and methods to reduce tension or conflict between two or more people.

How do you hone the competency?

Opens discussions effectively—Establishes a clear and compelling rationale for resolving the conflict.

Clarifies the current situation—Collects information from relevant sources to understand the conflict.

Remains open to all sides—Objectively views the conflict from all sides.

Stays focused on resolution—Stays focused on resolving the conflict and avoids personal issues and attacks.

Develops others' and own ideas—Presents and seeks potential solutions or positive courses of action.

Initiates action—Takes positive action to resolve the conflict in a way that addresses the issue, dissipates the conflict, and maintains the relationship.

Closes discussions with clear summaries—Summarizes to ensure that all are aware of agreements and required actions.

Managing Work (Includes Time Management)

Effectively managing one's time and resources to ensure that work is completed efficiently.

How do you hone the competency?

Prioritizes—Identifies more critical and less critical activities and tasks; adjusts priorities when appropriate.

Makes preparations—Ensures that required equipment and/or materials are in appropriate locations so that own and others' work can be done effectively.

Schedules—Effectively allocates own time to complete work; coordinates own and others' schedules to avoid conflicts.

Leverages resources—Takes advantage of available resources (individuals, processes, departments, and tools) to complete work efficiently.

Stays focused—Uses time effectively and prevents irrelevant issues or distractions from interfering with work completion.

Negotiation

Effectively exploring alternatives and positions to reach outcomes that gain the support and acceptance of all parties.

How do you hone the competency?

Clarifies the current situation—Explores all parties' needs, concerns, and initial positions, including own.

Identifies points of agreement/disagreement—Builds common ground by highlighting areas of agreement; focuses efforts by pointing out areas of disagreement.

Keeps discussion issue oriented—Manages the interpersonal process to stay focused on the task; constructively addresses emotions and conflict.

Develops others' and own ideas—Engages in mutual problem solving by brainstorming alternative positions or approaches and evaluating them openly and fairly.

Builds support for preferred alternatives—Builds value of preferred alternatives by relating them to the other party's needs; responds to objections by emphasizing value; exposes problems with undesirable alternatives.

Facilitates agreement—Seeks a win-win solution through a give-and-take process that recognizes each party's core needs.

Planning and Organizing

Establishing courses of action for self and others to ensure that work is completed efficiently.

How do you hone the competency?

Prioritizes—Identifies more critical and less critical activities and assignments; adjusts priorities when appropriate.

Determines tasks and resources—Determines project/assignment requirements by breaking them down into tasks; identifying equipment, materials, and people needed; and coordinating with internal and external partners.

Schedules—Allocates appropriate amounts of time for completing own and others' work; avoids scheduling conflicts; develops timelines and milestones.

Leverages resources—Takes advantage of available resources (individuals, processes, departments, and tools) to complete work efficiently.

Stays focused—Uses time effectively and prevents irrelevant issues or distractions from interfering with work completion.

Quality Orientation (Attention to Detail)

Accomplishing tasks by considering all areas involved, no matter how small; showing concern for all aspects of the job; accurately checking processes and tasks; being watchful over a period of time.

How do you hone the competency?

Follows procedures—Accurately and carefully follows established procedures for completing work tasks.

Ensures high-quality output—Vigilantly watches over job processes, tasks, and work products to ensure freedom from errors, omissions, or defects.

Takes action—Initiates action to correct quality problems or notifies others of quality issues as appropriate.

Risk Taking

Initiating action that tries to achieve a recognized benefit or advantage when potential negative consequences are understood.

How do you hone the competency?

Actively seeks opportunities—Pursues situations or opportunities that can lead to either substantial benefit or significant negative consequence.

Calculates risk—Gathers information to understand probability of success, benefits of success, and consequences of failure.

Commits to action—Initiates action despite uncertainty of outcome; is willing to accept the consequences of failure.

Strategic Decision-Making

Obtaining information and identifying key issues and relationships relevant to achieving a long-range goal or vision; committing to a course of action to accomplish a long-range goal or vision after developing alternatives based on logical assumptions, facts, available resources, constraints, and organizational values.

How do you hone the competency?

Gathers information—Identifies and fills gaps in information required to understand strategic issues.

Organizes information—Organizes information and data to identify/explain major trends, problems, and causes; compares and combines information to identify underlying issues.

Evaluates/Selects strategies—Generates and considers options for actions to achieve a long-range goal or vision; develops decision criteria considering factors such as cost, benefits, risks, timing, and buy-in; selects the strategy most likely to succeed.

Establishes implementation plan—Identifies the key tasks and resources needed to achieve objectives.

Executes plan—Makes sure strategies are carried out; monitors results and makes adjustments as needed.

Stress Tolerance

Maintaining stable performance under pressure or opposition (such as time pressure or job ambiguity); handling stress in a manner that is acceptable to others and to the organization.

How do you hone the competency?

Maintains focus—Stays focused on work tasks and productively uses time and energy when under stress.

Maintains relationships—Presents a positive disposition and maintains constructive interpersonal relationships when under stress.

Copes effectively—Develops appropriate strategies as needed to alter conditions that create stress and to sustain physical and mental health.

Tenacity

Staying with a position or plan of action until the desired objective is obtained or is no longer reasonably attainable.

How do you hone the competency?

Persists in efforts—Works to achieve goal in spite of barriers or difficulties; actively works to overcome obstacles by changing strategies, doubling efforts, using multiple approaches, etc.

Redirects focus—Adjusts focus when it becomes obvious that a goal cannot be achieved; redirects energy into related achievable goals if appropriate.

Valuing Diversity

Appreciating and leveraging the capabilities, insights, and ideas of all individuals; working effectively with individuals of diverse style, ability, and motivation.

How do you hone the competency?

Leverages diversity—Seeks out and uses ideas, opinions, and insights from diverse and various sources and individuals; maximizes effectiveness by using individuals' particular talents and abilities on tasks or assignments.

Seeks understanding—Establishes relationships with and learns more about people of other cultures and backgrounds (e.g., special issues, social norms, decision-making approaches, preferences).

Champions diversity—Advocates the value of diversity to others; takes actions to increase diversity in the workplace (e.g., by recruiting and developing people from varied backgrounds and cultures); confronts racist, sexist, or inappropriate behavior by others; challenges exclusionary organizational practices.

Takes actions that respect diversity—Examines own biases and behaviors to avoid stereotypical actions or responses; plans and takes actions that consider the diversity of those involved or affected.