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# People Capability Maturity Model<sup>®</sup> (P-CMM<sup>®</sup>)

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FOR THE COMMANDER

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# Competency Analysis

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*A process area at Maturity Level 3: Defined*

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**Purpose**                      **The purpose of Competency Analysis is to identify the knowledge, skills, and process abilities required to perform the organization’s business activities so that they may be developed and used as a basis for workforce practices.**

**Description**                      Prahalad and Hamel [Prahalad 90] describe an organization’s core competence as the combination of technology and production skills that create its products and services and provide its competitive advantage in the marketplace. Achieving and sustaining a core competence requires assembling a workforce comprised of people with different types of knowledge, skill, and abilities to follow processes. Each of these different sets of knowledge, skills, and process abilities constitute a workforce competency. The range of workforce competencies needed by an organization is determined by the range of business activities that collectively constitute or support the organization’s core competencies.

Competency Analysis begins by analyzing the organization’s business activities to identify the workforce competencies required to perform them. These workforce competencies are each analyzed to identify their essential knowledge, skills, and process abilities. Workforce competency descriptions are periodically reassessed to ensure they remain current with the actual knowledge, skills, and process abilities required by the organization’s business activities. The organization maintains a repository of these workforce competency descriptions. The work processes used by capable individuals in each workforce competency are defined and updated as necessary. Anticipated changes in products, services, processes, or technologies are analyzed to determine their implications for future workforce competency requirements.

Competency information regarding an individual’s capability in the workforce competencies relevant to their work or career is collected and maintained. From this competency information, resource profiles of the organization’s level of capability in each of its workforce competencies

can be determined. Competency information is updated as necessary to keep it current.

Workforce competency descriptions and information are used to guide strategic workforce planning, support development of the organization's workforce competencies, and enable the tailoring of workforce activities across the organization. Competency descriptions and information should be used at the unit level in performing the workforce activities described in the Staffing, Training and Development, Performance Management, Competency Development, Competency-Based Practices, and other process areas. Individuals should have access to workforce competency descriptions for planning their development and career activities.

## **Goals**

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- Goal 1**                    **The workforce competencies required to perform the organization's business activities are defined and updated.**
- Goal 2**                    **The work processes used within each workforce competency are established and maintained.**
- Goal 3**                    **The organization tracks its capability in each of its workforce competencies.**
- Goal 4**                    **Competency Analysis practices are institutionalized to ensure they are performed as defined organizational processes.**

## Commitment to Perform

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### **Commitment 1      The organization establishes and maintains a documented policy for conducting its Competency Analysis activities.**

Issues typically addressed in the policy include:

1. Workforce competency analyses serve the business objectives and stated values of the organization.
2. The workforce competencies required to accomplish the organization's business objectives (including technical, managerial, and administrative work) are identified.
3. A list of the workforce competencies on which to base workforce activities is maintained and revised, as necessary.
4. Workforce competency analyses are conducted on a periodic and event-driven basis to maintain and update the workforce competency descriptions.
5. A repository of defined workforce competency descriptions and competency information is maintained.
6. Appropriate Competency Analysis procedures are defined, documented, and used.

The human resources function or other appropriate professionals should review all Competency Analysis procedures to ensure they:

- Are consistent with relevant laws, regulations, and organizational policies
- Respect the rights and dignity of individuals and groups

Competency Analysis procedures are established and maintained for:

- documenting and maintaining workforce competency descriptions,
- determining changes in workforce competency descriptions,
- controlling changes or updates to workforce competency descriptions,

- ❑ collecting and storing of competency information, and
- ❑ maintaining and using the workforce competency information repository, including who has access and for what purposes.

Refer to Practices 6, 7, and 8 of this process area for practices regarding the development and maintenance of the organization's workforce competency information repository.

7. Competency Analysis practices and activities comply with relevant laws, regulations, and organizational policies.

**Commitment 2**

**An organizational role(s) is assigned responsibility for coordinating Competency Analysis activities across the organization.**

Examples of individuals who might be assigned responsibility for coordinating workforce competency analysis activities include the following:

- Members of the human resources function or other appropriate professionals
- Members of the training or development functions
- Organizational competency definition or competency management group
- Committee of representatives from ownership teams for each workforce competency

## Ability to Perform

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### Ability 1

**A responsible individual(s) coordinates the Competency Analysis activities for defining, developing, and maintaining each workforce competency.**

Workforce competency analyses may involve individuals from numerous units across the organization. The individuals who conduct the initial analyses of a workforce competency may not be the same individuals who maintain the competency descriptions or coordinate development in the competency over time. Examples of individuals or groups that may be involved in defining and maintaining a workforce competency include the following:

- Human resources or other appropriate professionals
- An organizational competency definition or competency management group
- Process engineering groups focused in areas of workforce competency
- Responsible individuals housed within a functional unit devoted to a specific workforce competency (e.g., a center of excellence)
- A group of experienced, capable individuals within the competency who form a competency ownership team

### Ability 2

**Adequate resources are provided for performing Competency Analysis activities.**

1. Documentation of the organization's business activities and processes are made available for analysis.
2. Strategic and operational business objectives are made available for developing the strategic workforce plan.

3. Experienced individuals who have expertise in workforce competency analysis are made available.

Examples of individuals who can contribute to workforce competency analysis include the following:

- Members of the human resources function or other appropriate professionals
- Members of the training or development functions
- Members of quality or process improvement groups
- Managers
- Business strategists
- Instructional designers

4. Resources for supporting Competency Analysis activities are made available.

Examples of resources to support workforce competency analysis include the following:

- Task analysis tools
- Position analysis questionnaires
- Skills analysis inventories
- Process analysis instruments
- Data collection and analysis tools
- Knowledge acquisition or knowledge engineering tools

5. Funding to accomplish Competency Analysis activities is made available.
6. Time, resources, and access to staff for analyzing workforce competencies are made available.

**Ability 3**

**Individuals performing Competency Analysis activities develop the knowledge, skills, and process abilities needed to perform their responsibilities.**

1. Individuals performing Competency Analysis activities receive preparation in relevant analysis methods and techniques needed to perform their responsibilities.



2. Individuals who participate in Competency Analysis activities are provided orientation to the purpose of and methods used in the Competency Analysis activities.

Examples of topics that might be included in the preparation of those involved in competency analysis techniques include the following:

- Workflow and task analysis
- Knowledge and skill analysis
- Behavioral analysis
- Knowledge engineering
- Process analysis and definition

**Ability 4**

**The practices and procedures for performing Competency Analysis are defined and documented.**

1. Practices and procedures are defined and documented at the organizational or unit levels, as appropriate.
2. Guidelines for tailoring the practices and procedures for use in different circumstances are documented and made available, as necessary.
3. The individual(s) assigned responsibility for coordinating Competency Analysis activities across the organization ensures that defined practices and procedures are:
  - maintained under version control,
  - disseminated through appropriate media,
  - interpreted appropriately for different situations, and
  - updated through orderly methods.
4. Experiences, lessons learned, measurement results, and improvement information derived from planning and performing Competency Analysis practices are captured to support the future use and improvement of the organization's practices.

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## Practices Performed

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**Practice 1**

**The workforce competencies required to perform the organization's business activities are identified.**

A *competency* is an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to effective and/or superior performance, as determined by measurable, objective criteria, in a job or situation [adapted from Spencer 93, p. 9]. This concept of a competency of an individual is different from the concept of a core competency of an organization, as formulated by Prahalad and Hamel [Prahalad 90]. The People CMM refers to the concept of a competency at the individual level as a *workforce competency* possessed by the individual. This is similar to Athey and Orth's [Athey 99] description of a competency as a set of observable performance dimensions, including individual knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as collective team, process, and organizational capabilities, that are linked to high performance, and provide the organization with sustainable competitive advantage.

A *workforce competency* represents the knowledge, skills, and process abilities needed within the workforce to perform the organization's business activities. A workforce competency can be stated at a very abstract level, such as a need for a workforce competency in software engineering or technical writing. Workforce competencies can also be decomposed to more granular abilities, such as competencies in designing avionics software, testing switching system software, or writing user manuals and training materials for reservation systems.

1. The business activities that implement the organization's mission and strategy are identified.
2. The workforce competencies the organization must develop and maintain to perform these business activities are identified.

**Practice 2**

**Each of the organization's workforce competencies is analyzed to identify the knowledge, skills, and process abilities that compose it.**

Competencies have often been treated as descriptions of effective behaviors performed as part of a job. Although these descriptions provided a starting point for discussing performance, they often did not include sufficient detail about the knowledge or specific skills an individual needed to match the behavioral descriptions in practice. The People CMM encourages analyzing the knowledge, skills, and process abilities comprising a workforce competency to the level of detail required for diagnosing development needs and appropriate activities. Thus, a workforce competency should describe its constituent knowledge, skills, and process abilities to a level sufficient for guiding development activities that enable capable performance of required job behaviors.

- *Knowledge* is the information and understanding that an individual must have to perform a task successfully.
- *Skills* are the behaviors that an individual must be able to perform in order to accomplish committed work. Skills may involve behaviors that directly accomplish the task or that provide the support of, or coordination with, others involved in accomplishing tasks.
- *Process abilities* are the capacity to perform individual skills in the specific sequencing or method used in the organization to coordinate activities among individuals or groups, and to adjust the performance of skills, as necessary, to maintain an orderly flow of work.

1. A plan is developed for analyzing workforce competencies that typically includes:
  - the competency analysis activities to be performed,
  - the schedule for competency analysis activities,
  - the individuals or groups responsible for competency analysis activities,
  - the resources and effort required, including access to the staff, and
  - the process for review and approval of the plan by all parties affected by competency analysis activities.

2. A method is selected for performing workforce competency analyses.

Examples of methods for workforce competency analysis include the following:

- Position analysis
- Critical incident interviews
- Behavioral event interviews
- Process analysis and engineering
- Task analysis
- Knowledge engineering
- Analysis of skill needs

3. The organization defines the level for decomposing the knowledge, skills, and process abilities underlying each of its workforce competencies.

The granularity, or level of detail, of descriptions may vary across workforce competencies. One approach is for the organization to maintain high-level descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and process abilities that are generic to a workforce competency across its many applications in the organization. Organizational components at lower levels may elaborate or tailor these generic descriptions for the specific knowledge, skills, and process abilities required to perform their committed work.

4. The knowledge, skills, and process abilities required to perform committed work are defined for each workforce competency.
5. Subject matter experts are involved in analyzing the knowledge, skills, and process abilities required to perform their committed work.
6. A description of the knowledge, skills, and process abilities is defined for each workforce competency using a representation and format that is appropriate for its intended use.
7. Descriptions of workforce competencies are used for guiding workforce practices at the organizational level and within units.

**Practice 3**

**Workforce competency descriptions are documented and maintained according to a documented procedure.**

1. Workforce competency descriptions are documented and maintained to provide descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and process abilities underlying each workforce competency.

Workforce competency descriptions vary widely based on the organization's philosophy about the most important contributors to individual performance. Many organizations have described competencies as sets of behavioral characteristics. Other organizations have focused on specific components of knowledge or elements of skill. Examples of information that may be incorporated into workforce competency descriptions include the following:

- Knowledge required to perform required tasks
- Skills required to perform required tasks
- Competency-based processes or workflows that an individual may be expected to perform
- Ability to perform skills within the processes or workflows defined by the organization for performing the work
- Behavioral characteristics of how skills and processes are performed
- Behavioral manifestations of an orientation toward the work, colleagues, or customers
- Personality characteristics that are conducive to successful performance
- Types or levels of knowledge, skills, and process abilities that would characterize different levels of capability in a workforce competency

Workforce competency descriptions may include descriptions of workflows or competency-based processes that competent individuals are expected to perform. However, these process descriptions are often described separately as organizational business processes or procedures. Refer to Practice 5 for information relating to establishing and maintaining competency-based processes.

2. Workforce competency descriptions are documented and maintained according to organization standards.

Organization standards are applied when documenting and maintaining workforce competency descriptions to ensure:

- Consistency among the workforce competency descriptions
- Suitability of the workforce competency descriptions for their intended use.

Examples of issues addressed by these organization standards typically include the following:

- Format and content of workforce competency descriptions
- Level of granularity needed to understand and describe the workforce competency
- Storage of workforce competency descriptions in an information base that is designed for use in supporting and performing workforce activities

3. Workforce competency descriptions are controlled and maintained under version control for use in supporting and performing workforce activities.
4. Workforce competency descriptions are made available to the workforce for use in:
  - designing or tailoring workforce practices,
  - performing workforce activities, or
  - planning individual development opportunities.

**Practice 4****Workforce competency descriptions are updated on a periodic and event-driven basis.**

1. Workforce competencies are periodically reanalyzed to determine if they continue to reflect the knowledge, skills, and process abilities necessary to perform the organization's business activities.

Each of the workforce competency descriptions is periodically evaluated to determine whether its level of detail is appropriate for its intended use. Workforce competency descriptions are as likely to be over-defined as they are to be under-defined. As workforce competency information begins to be collected and used, those providing and consuming this information are able to provide feedback on the appropriate granularity and structure for different workforce competency descriptions. This feedback may determine the need for, and provide insight for, adjusting organizational standards for workforce competency descriptions.

2. Changes in products, services, processes, or technology are analyzed as necessary to determine whether:
  - affected workforce competency descriptions need to be updated,
  - new workforce competencies need to be defined, or
  - obsolete workforce competencies need to be phased out.
3. Action is taken to update, add, or phase out affected workforce competency descriptions based on the results of periodic or event-driven reanalysis.

Typical changes to workforce competency descriptions may include the following:

- New knowledge and skills that must be developed or acquired
- Changes in existing knowledge and skills
- Knowledge and skills that are outdated or no longer needed

4. Organization standards for workforce competency descriptions are adjusted, as necessary.
5. Changes to workforce competency descriptions are incorporated according to a documented procedure and organization standards.
6. Changes to workforce competency descriptions are provided as input for developing strategic workforce plans and for planning workforce activities within units.

**Practice 5**

**The competency-based processes to be performed by capable individuals in each workforce competency are established and maintained.**

*A competency-based process* defines how individuals within a specific workforce competency apply their knowledge, perform their skills, and apply their process abilities within the context of an organization's defined work processes. Competency-based processes are documented, trained, performed, enforced, measured, and improved over time. Possessing a process ability indicates that an individual is able to perform the competency-based processes appropriate for someone at their level of development in the workforce competency. A process ability for a particular competency may represent only part of a defined organizational process, since other elements of the defined process may be performed by individuals with different workforce competencies. To define the process abilities incorporated in each workforce competency, the organization needs to have defined the competency-based processes that an individual in each workforce competency would be expected to perform in accomplishing their committed work.

Examples of competency-based processes include the following:

- The defined processes used by software developers for designing, developing, and testing a product
- The defined processes used by a sales group for managing a sales cycle with a prospective customer
- The defined processes used by an organization's financial group for gathering data, analyzing results, and preparing inputs for the quarterly financial report
- The processes used by an emergency medical team in handling specific forms of trauma



1. A capability is established for defining and maintaining the processes used within each workforce competency.

Examples of those capable of defining and maintaining competency-based processes include the following:

- A corporate group, such as a quality department
- A quality or process improvement group
- Responsible individual(s) housed within a functional unit devoted to a specific competency
- A group of subject matter experts within the competency who form a process or competency ownership team

2. Competency-based processes are documented and made available for guiding those developing or performing a workforce competency.

Defined, competency-based processes should:

- Be consistent with a standard for process representation
- Capture the best practices from the organization's current business activities related to the workforce competency
- Identify the behaviors expected of a capable individual
- Describe what should be done but not precisely how to do it
- Be tailorable for use under different conditions
- Clarify points of coordination among individuals or roles who must cooperate to accomplish committed work
- Be defined with the participation of capable individuals who are currently performing the processes
- Correct gaps or weaknesses in the processes currently in use
- Be managed and taught as a component of a workforce competency
- Be fit for use
- Be presented in a format that is easy to understand and use

3. Documented competency-based processes are updated on an event-driven basis to reflect:
  - changes in business operations, products, or services,
  - changes in other processes or development technologies,
  - lessons learned from the performance of competency-based processes, or
  - other process improvements.

**Practice 6****Information about the use of competency-based processes is captured and made available.**

Refer to Practice 8 of the Competency Development process area for practices regarding the capture and use of competency-based experiences and information within a competency community.

Examples of information that could be captured include the following:

- Quantitative data on the use of processes
- Quality records
- Documentation produced through performing the processes
- Guidelines for tailoring processes
- Lessons learned

1. Information collected on the performance of competency-based processes is maintained in a repository for future use.
2. Lessons learned are identified that improve competency-based processes for future use.
3. Information regarding the use and performance of competency-based processes is made available.

**Practice 7**

**Competency information regarding the capabilities of individuals in their workforce competencies is collected and maintained according to a documented procedure.**

*Competency information* typically describes an individual's level of capability in relation to the list of knowledge, skills, and process abilities contained in relevant workforce competency descriptions. Although competency information is typically collected at the individual level, it could be collected at other levels. For instance, competency information might be collected at the workgroup level if a particular workforce competency is a characteristic of a workgroup and would not exist as a competency of individuals acting alone.

1. This documented procedure typically specifies:
  - responsibilities for collecting and maintaining competency information,
  - what competency information is collected and maintained in the organization's workforce competency information repository,
  - how competency information is used,
  - how competency information is represented and presented,
  - how confidentiality is established and maintained for competency information,
  - what competency information is made available, if any,
  - who may have access to competency information and under what circumstances,
  - how competency information is controlled and updated,
  - how the completeness and accuracy of competency information is audited,
  - restrictions on the use of competency information, and
  - mechanisms by which individuals can review and correct their competency information.

2. Individuals participate in collecting and organizing their competency information according to the documented procedure.

Individuals may complete their own competency information alone or in cooperation with a responsible individual, such as a supervisor, mentor, or human resources representative. Relevant information is drawn from many sources and organized into the format used for describing competencies by the organization.

Example sources of information on an individual's level of capability in a workforce competency include the following:

- Training and other development records
- Mentoring or apprenticeship reports
- Performance management records
- Career planning information
- Management assessment of knowledge, skills, and process abilities
- Self-assessment of knowledge, skills, and process abilities
- Peer evaluations
- Process assessments
- Awards and achievements
- Professional accomplishments
- Assessment centers
- Information from the performance of business activities

3. The validity of an individual's competency information is established by the individual, as well as by a party responsible for verifying the accuracy of information being submitted to the organization's repository.
4. On a periodic or event-driven basis, individuals and other responsible parties review, update, and verify an individual's competency information.

**Practice 8**                      **Current resource profiles for each of the organization’s workforce competencies are determined.**

A *resource profile* for a workforce competency represents the number of individuals at each level of capability within the workforce competency. An example of progressive levels of capability within a workforce competency may include a beginner, a novice, a journeyman, a senior practitioner, and a master or expert.

1. Competency information is aggregated at the organizational level for each of the organization’s workforce competencies.

Information to be aggregated includes measures defined in the Staffing, Training and Development, Performance Management, Competency Development, and Career Development process areas.

2. The organization uses aggregated competency information to develop a resource profile for each of the organization’s workforce competencies.

Examples of capability information that might be included in a resource profile include the following:

- Number of individuals in each competency
- Number of individuals at each level of capability within each workforce competency
- Distribution of individuals at each graduated career level within each workforce competency
- Distribution of knowledge and skill within each workforce competency
- Number of individuals possessing specialized skills, such as experience with a specific programming languages, design methodologies, or specific applications or legacy systems, within each workforce competency
- Distribution of workforce competencies across units in the organization

3. Resource profiles are made available, as appropriate, for use in workforce planning, the analysis of workforce practices, and other workforce activities.

**Practice 9**

**Competency information is updated on a periodic and event-driven basis.**

1. Competency information for an individual (or other unit of analysis) may be updated as accomplishments, experience, or events justify.
2. Competency information for affected individuals should be updated as appropriate when workforce competency descriptions are modified, added, or phased out.
3. The state of the organization's competency information is periodically audited to ensure that it is maintained with appropriate currency.

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## **Measurement and Analysis**

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**Measurement 1**

**Measurements are made and used to determine the status and performance of Competency Analysis activities within each unit and across the organization.**

Examples of measurements include the following:

- Amount of time or number of people involved in analyzing workforce competencies or in collecting competency information
- Number of workforce competencies defined
- Effectiveness of meeting milestones in analyzing workforce competencies or collecting competency information
- Amount of competency information collected
- Period between updates of workforce competency analyses or competency information
- Extent to which competency information is used in designing or tailoring workforce practices and performing workforce activities

**Measurement 2**      **Measurements are made and used to determine the quality of workforce competency descriptions and competency information.**

Examples of measurements of the quality of workforce competency descriptions or of competency information include the following:

- Level of detail to which workforce competency descriptions are defined
- Frequency and range of uses of workforce competency descriptions and competency information
- Usability of workforce competency descriptions or competency information
- Number of revisions made to workforce competency descriptions
- Number of corrections made to competency information

## **Verifying Implementation**

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**Verification 1**      **A responsible individual(s) verifies that Competency Analysis activities are conducted according to the organization’s documented policies, practices, procedures, and, where appropriate, plans; and addresses noncompliance.**

These reviews verify that:

1. Competency Analysis activities comply with the organization’s policies and stated values.
2. All actions related to the development of workforce competency descriptions and the use of competency information are periodically reviewed to ensure that they conform to documented policies.
3. Competency Analysis activities comply with relevant laws and regulations.
4. Competency Analysis activities are performed according to the organization’s documented practices and procedures.
5. Noncompliance items are handled appropriately.

6. Workforce competency descriptions and competency information are consistent with existing and anticipated organizational conditions and needs.

**Verification 2**

**Executive management periodically reviews the Competency Analysis activities, status, and results; and resolves issues.**

These reviews verify:

1. The appropriateness of workforce competency analysis activities and competency information.
2. Progress in performing Competency Analysis activities.
3. Results from reviews of Competency Analysis practices and activities.

Refer to Verification 1 for practices regarding reviews of Competency Analysis activities to ensure adherence to the following:

- Relevant laws and regulations
- Organizational policies, practices, and procedures

4. Status of resolution of noncompliance issues.
5. Trends related to competency analysis.
6. Effectiveness of Competency Analysis activities in supporting workforce activities.

**Verification 3**

**The definition and use of competency descriptions and competency information are periodically audited for compliance with organizational policies.**