Illustrative Case Study (B)

European e-Competence Framework (e-CF)

in a Corporate / ICT supplier environment

ABOUT THE e-CF. The European e-Competence Framework (e-CF) provides a reference of 36 competences as required and applied at the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) workplace, using a common language for competences, skills and capability levels that can be understood across Europe. As the first sector-specific implementation of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the e-CF was designed and developed for application by ICT service, user and supply companies, for managers and human resource (HR) departments, and for education institutions and training bodies, and other organizations in public and private sectors.

The framework was developed under the umbrella of the CEN ICT Skills Workshop through a process of close cooperation between ICT business and human resource (HR) experts, stakeholders and policy institutions from many different countries and at the EU level. Published by CEN for the first time in 2008 and followed by a further enhanced version 2.0 in 2010, the framework brings benefits to a growing community of users throughout Europe and overseas.

To support e-CF application within multiple environments, a series of illustrative case studies provide examples, benefits and hints of how to make best use of the e-CF.

The following case study illuminates the e-CF application from the perspective of an ICT supplier.

Key perspectives

- e-CF for consultants
- Identifying training needs
- Training development
- Competence gap identification

Summary

To develop technological solutions and support clients, it is imperative that ICT supply companies attract, retain and develop high caliber staff. Innovation and product quality are inextricably linked to the capabilities of the managers and professionals employed by ICT supply companies. Given this need KPN, a Dutch telecommunications supplier, decided to enhance the education and training of its workforce by engaging Capgemini to advise and implement a program to enable structured access to relevant education and training opportunities.

KPN had a well-developed human resources management system that provided the basis for job evaluation, pay scales and performance management, but this did not include linkage to education and training opportunities. Some education programs were developed and delivered In-house and others sourced from external training providers. Capgemini were engaged to recommend a structured education and training solution that would enable staff access to approved and relevant training opportunities from internal or external sources.

Capgemini recommended that education and training should be based upon competence requirements and proposed the development of an online tool to manage the process of education and training identification and booking. The structure selected to underpin this online facility was the e-CF. The e-CF provided a methodological approach to the identification of competence, knowledge and skills required by ICT professionals and managers within the organization. By deploying the e-CF, a consistent benchmark of competences was available to reference education and training programs addressing individual or organizational, competence development requirements.

e-CF Value

The e-CF enabled Capgemini, and their client KPN, to better understand the competence development requirements of the organization and of individual employees within the organization. By focusing upon these competence needs, as clearly articulated within the competence descriptors of the e-CF, the relevance and capability of relevant training opportunities became much clearer.

Challenges encountered

Relating existing training and education programs to the e-CF is not a perfect science. It is rare that existing training materials provide an exact match to competences articulated within the e-CF, in consequence some flexibility has to be deployed in the process of mapping education to competence. Overlaps and under laps of training program matches to the e-CF are inevitable and these must be catered for and evaluated by knowledgeable mapping staff. However this exercise brings clarity to the opportunities and possible deficiencies of existing training options and can lead to a more targeted approach for future course developments.

Benefits highlighted

By deploying the e-CF, a better common understanding of training options and opportunities has been highlighted for KPN. An online training reference manual and booking facility has been developed based upon the metrics of the e-CF. The e-CF cell and level structure readily lends itself to being systemized and provides a consistent matrix for deployment within online tools.

Furthermore, future training programs are being developed to meet the identified competence requirements of the workforce. These new programs will closely follow the competences articulated by the e-CF and provide targeted training opportunities.

The method adopted

KPN initially adopted a focused approach by concentrating upon four categories of job roles:

> Business Architects
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> Project Management
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> Configuration Management
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> Test Professionals

An online competence assessment tool was developed to address these ICT professional specialisms that was directly linked to a training catalogue containing related training options.

The underlying principle adopted within this case sample, is the identification of competence gaps. Using the e-CF, ICT professionals are able to identify their competence needs and compare them to a directory of education and training programs also expressed in competence terminology. In this way differences between competence needs and competence attainment can be closed.

Expansion to other examples

Identifying competence gaps for future requirements is a significant application of the e-CF; the following are further examples of how this capability is used in practice.

- Individuals can compare their competence profile with potential new roles to support future career progression – they may also use typical European ICT Professional Profiles, found at http://www.ecompetences.eu/2165,ICT+Professional+Profiles.html