

**TALENT.**

TALENT WHITEPAPER

# PATH PQ

Competency Framework





## Overview

With their superior ability to predict future job performance in organisations, psychometric assessments are commonly used for a variety of purposes across the employee lifespan. Psychometric assessments have been particularly useful to Talent Management professionals who focus on implementing strategic HR processes to help to maximise the performance of an organisation's human capital. Indeed, these tools can effectively evaluate a variety of individual characteristics including sales potential, conscientiousness, cognitive ability, customer service potential, interpersonal effectiveness, and leadership ability, all of which have been proven to be important for successful performance in a variety of jobs.

The PATH assessments can be applied to roles with any number of applicants, including identifying the most suitable candidate for a leadership role from shortlisted applicants to narrowing down a pool of graduate applicants to find those most likely to perform well in a specific organisation. Likewise, they can be used not just for selection purposes but to better inform performance appraisal and professional development processes.

The PATH PQ is Talegent's online psychometric assessment that is designed to assess candidates' personality across a variety of domains. It is capable of identifying how an individual is likely to conduct themselves in the workplace and recognises their strengths and weaknesses relative to the general population. Unlike many other psychological assessments, the PATH PQ is applicable across a variety of job types, levels, and industries. It can also be readily customised to the particular needs of an organisation in a way that is both more time and cost effective than other popular assessment tools.

## What Is The PATH Competency Framework?

The PATH Competency Framework underlies all of Talegent's PATH Personality assessments. The Framework informs the output reports of the PATH PQ, providing a logical, practical, and consistent approach to describing candidates' results and effectively summarising the types of behaviours candidates are likely to display in the workplace. To do this, each competency is made up of specifically selected scales from the PATH PQ which have been grouped together in a scientifically based way to translate candidates' results into a series more meaningful and relevant messages.

For example, an individual's scores on the PATH PQ scales of Compliant, Reliable and Meticulous can be grouped together to give an overall picture of their Adherence, one of the PATH competencies. In doing so, the PATH Competency Framework can offer an advantageous indication of whether an individual is likely to succeed in a particular role.

The PATH Competency Framework comprehensively covers a wide range of job relevant competencies including those from Talegent's previous models, models we have previously developed for our clients, and models from other providers.

## What Are Competencies?

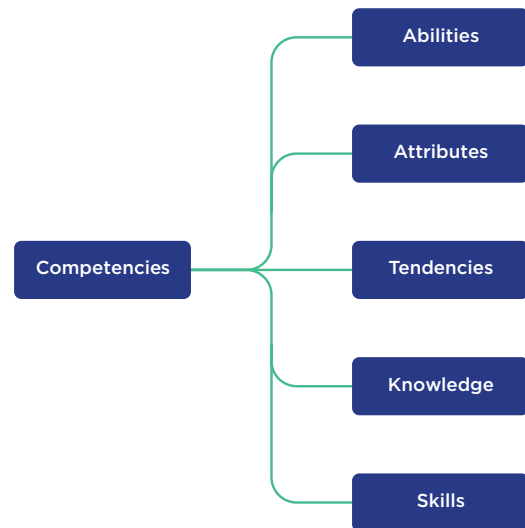
It is generally accepted that competencies are reflected in observable behaviours (Leigh et al., 2007) which, when measured with tools such as the PATH PQ, can distinguish between high and low performers in the workplace (Rodriguez, Patel, Bright, Gregory & Gowing, 2002).

More specifically, Talegent defines competencies as underlying measureable characteristics of an individual that are evident in observable behaviours and actions, which in turn drive successful performance in the workplace. They are the result of the particular set of abilities, attributes and tendencies an individual possesses.

# Difference Between Competencies And KSAs

Competencies relate to how a cluster of related knowledge, skills, and abilities, along with personal attributes and tendencies, are used in role performance and how they are broadly applied in the context of a particular set of job requirements.

In contrast, knowledge, skills, and abilities are generally more specific learned capabilities that are acquired through practice or training and relate to carrying out a task well. The figure to the right illustrates the components that competencies often encompass.



## The Challenge - Building A Better Competency Model

With a constantly changing business environment, the particular knowledge, skills, and abilities related to maximal performance are continuously evolving. As such, it is vital that psychometric assessment tools be updated regularly to ensure they remain valid and reliable predictors of behaviour in the present day. In a similar fashion, Talegent believes it is equally important

to keep up to date with the latest industry trends and advances, thereby enabling our assessment tools to effectively recognise today's best performers and also be more likely to identify the best candidates for tomorrow. We encourage and act upon feedback from our clients, adding in and continuously validating new scales that meet their dynamic needs.

## Competency Approach

### 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

**A literature review was initially conducted to gauge the latest research and findings related to the use of competency frameworks in organisations. The review focussed on four particular issues:**

#### Evidence-based Competencies in Organisations

As competency models are typically developed bespoke to an organisation, no empirical evidence exists to support many of the models in use by organisations today. Most models rely strongly on face validity, whereby the competencies that make up the model intuitively look and sound like they would be important for a particular role.

A recent study investigated the existence of a broad set of competencies that exist across organisations in both British and Singaporean samples, and found evidence of nine common competencies that could differentiate between high and low performance in management level professionals (Chong, 2013). These competencies included Strategic Perspective, Analysis & Judgment, Planning & Organising, Managing Staff, Assertiveness & Decisiveness, Oral Communication, Energy & Initiative, Interpersonal Sensitivity, and Adaptability & Resilience. A further two competencies appeared to be specific to the British sample (Business Sense and Achievement Motivation) and one was specific to the Singaporean sample (Integrity).

#### Current Trends in Competency Modelling

Understanding the latest industry trends in competency modelling is critical in enabling Talegent to develop a strong model and clearly differentiate it from those of our competitors. Two key trends arose in relation to competency modelling – cultural sensitivity and corporate entrepreneurialism.

- Sensitivity to Diversity is a broader concept stemming from cultural sensitivity. It refers to being aware, accepting and sensitive to any differences that may arise from differences in culture, gender and/or sexual orientation (Chong, 2008).
- Corporate Entrepreneurialism builds on previous concepts of creativity and incorporates innovation, acquiring and disseminating information, and championing and sponsoring new ventures (Hayton & Kelley, 2006).

## Common Criticisms of Competency Models

Competency models are not without their critics and difficulties. Many issues have been raised in relation to their validity, predictive ability, and general lack of empirical evidence to support each model. Competency models are sometimes argued to be too generic and lacking in evidence behind the choice of competencies within the model, often relying solely on face validity. Further, they often lack empirical evidence demonstrating a significant, positive relationship between the use of competency models and individual job performance and/or organisational success (Markus, Cooper-Thomas & Alpress, 2005). Psychologists have debated many of these issues among themselves in relation to competency models of leadership (Hollenbeck, McCall & Silzer, 2006). Some purported that competency models are useless because they often assume:

- A single set of characteristics adequately describes all effective leaders,
- Characteristics are independent of each other and of the context,
- Having 'more' competencies makes a person a better leader (as opposed to having a combination of strengths and weaknesses),
- Competency models must be correct because they are supported by senior management, and
- When HR systems (including training, selection etc.) are based on competencies, these systems work more effectively.

*"Competencies are helpful because they allow senior management to openly communicate which leader behaviours are important, they help to discriminate the performance of individuals, they can be used to link leader behaviours to the strategic directions and goals of the business, and they can provide an integrative model of leadership that is relevant across many positions and leadership situations."*

In response, other psychologists have stated that competency models may still have a long way to go, but they are still a valuable resource for both individuals and organisations (Hollenbeck, McCall & Silzer, 2006). While not all models are well researched or developed, they were created to link to particular knowledge, skills, and abilities, which are well known to relate to individual performance and organisational success. They are also useful for self-development purposes, and can help HR professionals to summarise a range of useful leadership behaviours which can then be used in selecting or developing new leaders. From an organisational perspective, competencies are helpful because they allow senior management

to openly communicate which leader behaviours are important, they help to assess the performance of individuals, they can be used to link leader behaviours to the strategic directions and goals of the business, and they can provide an integrative model of leadership that is relevant across many positions and leadership situations. It is concluded that while current competency models are far from being faultless, they still serve a variety of purposes for individuals and organisations. As with all scientific endeavours, they are continuously being improved upon by successive approximations, and can only stand to become more robust and valuable in the future.

## Recommended Number of Competencies

Again, as competency models are typically developed bespoke to an organisation, no 'ideal' number of competencies exists. The literature simply recommends the inclusion of 10 to 20 competencies, allowing models to be comprehensive and useful without being cumbersome or overwhelming (Hollenbeck, McCall & Silzer, 2006).



## 2. COMPETITOR REVIEW

Undertaking a thorough review of our competitors' models was an essential step in developing Talegent's new competency model. It enabled us to identify the most common factors that appeared across industries and organisations, and recognise the gaps and overlaps of existing models, thereby revealing the areas we needed to improve on to create an outstanding product.

The competencies of nine models were reviewed and mapped against popular industry standards, including those from SHL, Lominger and Saville. In addition to the competitor models, the review included eight of Talegent's previous models and models that Talegent had previously custom built for clients. An excerpt of the review is illustrated below.

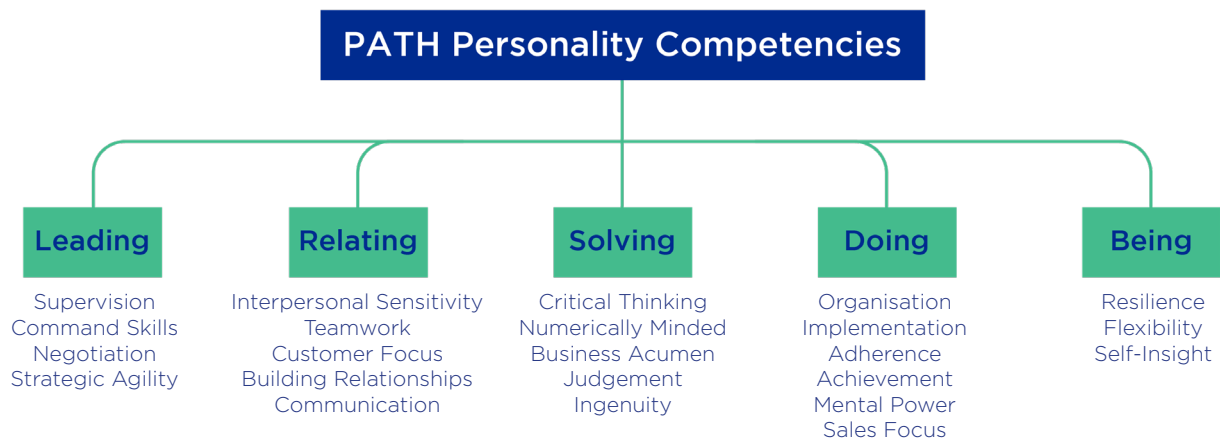
SHL Great 8	Lominger	Saville
Leading and Deciding	Getting Work Done Through Others Dealing with Trouble Making Tough People Calls Doesn't Inspire or Build Talent	Providing Leadership
Supporting and Cooperating	Relating Skills Caring About Others Managing Diverse Relationships Acting with Honour and Character Doesn't Relate Well to Others	Giving Support
Interacting and Presenting	Communicating Effectively Inspiring Others Being Open and Receptive	Building Relationships Communicating Information
Analysing and Interpreting	Understanding the Business Making Complex Decisions	Evaluating Problems Investigating Issues
Creating and Conceptualising	Creating the New and Different	Creating Innovation
Organising and Executing	Keeping on Point Getting Organised Managing Work Processes	Processing Details Structuring Tasks
Adapting and Coping	Demonstrating Personal Flexibility	Showing Resilience Adjusting to Change
Enterprising and Performing	Focusing on the Bottom Line Being Organisationally Savvy Managing Up Doesn't Deliver Results	Driving Success

*Table 1: Excerpt of the Competitor Review Matrix*

## 3. CLIENT REVIEW

To ensure we were building the most useful, relevant and practical competency model for our clients we reviewed the roles they most commonly recruit for, making sure that our new competencies would cover all of their requirements (based on job descriptions and task analyses) and that a wide variety of jobs could be easily mapped to the new set of competencies. This final step facilitated our efforts to develop the best model possible, certifying that it would be a strategically valuable and highly beneficial tool for clients in the future.

# Overview of Model



Competencies relate to how a cluster of related knowledge, skills, and abilities, along with personal attributes and tendencies, are used in role performance and how they are broadly applied in the context of a particular set of job requirements.

Cluster	Factor	Definition
LEADING	Supervision	Provides guidance, development opportunities and feedback to direct reports. Manages conflicts within the team quickly and efficiently.
	Command Skills	Is confident in giving direction and willing to accept responsibility for the decisions and actions of the team. Drives action and progress through motivating team members and delegating appropriately.
	Negotiation	Is effective in influencing the thoughts and actions of others. Successfully negotiates and persuades others to align with their goals
	Strategic Agility	Takes a big-picture, long-term view when planning and anticipating potential impacts on the business. Weighs up options and implications, identifies strategies and plans, and is comfortable with managed risk.
RELATING	Interpersonal Sensitivity	Is sensitive to the needs and emotions of others. Practices perceptive listening, understands nonverbal cues and responds appropriately.
	Teamwork	Supports and collaborates with team members to achieve targets. Appreciates the benefits of diversity and works well with a variety of people.
	Customer Focus	Is motivated by exceeding customer expectations and fulfilling obligations to others. Interacts with customers in a friendly, considerate manner, responding to social cues appropriately. Treats all customers equally.
	Building Relationships	Initiates and maintains relationships with colleagues, is socially confident and quick to build rapport. Tends to create a positive first impression and affiliate well with individuals at all levels, both internal and external to the organisation.
	Communication	Communicates in a clear, confident, and articulate manner. Is effective at influencing others to see things a given way. Adapts communication style to be appropriate to the audience or group they are presenting to.

SOLVING	Critical Thinking	Critically analyses and evaluates information in a logical way when solving complex problems. Breaks down problems into smaller components and seeks to identify underlying causes.
	Numerically Minded	Is comfortable with and capable of interpreting numerical information and using this to aid in problem solving. Has a preference for using numbers and hard data when solving problems.
	Business Acumen	Understands the wider business context and seeks to maximise returns in a business environment. Is future-orientated and strategic and seeks areas for business improvement.
	Judgement	Is confident making judgements based on the information available, even if it is not complete or the situation is ambiguous.
	Ingenuity	Generates and implements new and innovative solutions, ideas, and approaches to problems. Is strategically minded, future-orientated and anticipates issues before they arise. Takes a broad perspective and is open to taking calculated risks.
DOING	Organisation	Is organised and tends to take a structured approach to tasks/goals. Plans effectively and manages resources and execution appropriately to ensure projects are delivered on time.
	Implementation	Is reliable, detail-focused and meticulous. Follows through on plans to ensure they are carried out accordingly.
	Adherence	Values rules, guidelines, and set procedures and adheres to these closely. Consistently follows through with deliverables in a timely manner.
	Achievement	Demonstrates a strong focus on high performance standards and personal achievement. Sets selfstretch goals and works persistently to achieve them. Displays high work focus, high levels of energy, and goes above and beyond to exceed expectations. Is ambitious and constantly seeks to advance their career.
	Mental Power	Has a desire to learn more and is able to learn new information and skills quickly. Is able to apply learnt information to new problems. Quick to pick up technical concepts.
BEING	Sales Focus	Is persuasive, energetic, and engaging while guiding customers toward sales. Puts effort into meeting and exceeding sales targets and is motivated, not daunted by challenging goals.
	Resilience	Remains calm, composed, and optimistic in stressful or high pressure situations. Perseveres in the face of obstacles or setbacks and carries on with the task at hand. Strong drive to finish tasks, will actively seek to overcome potential hurdles.
	Flexibility	Highly open and adaptable to change. Responds to change in an enthusiastic manner and adjusts quickly, with little disruption to workload in the process.
	Self-Insight	Is aware of own strengths and weaknesses and actively seeks out opportunities for new learning and growth. Strives to keep abreast of the latest industry trends and technologies.

## KEY ASPECTS OF MODEL

A comprehensive collection of 23 competencies, grouped into 5 general clusters.

An integrative model that can be applied across all levels and areas of any organisation and all aspects of measurement in the employee lifecycle.

Brings together particular knowledge, skills, and abilities which are well known to relate to individual performance and organisational success and translates them into competencies which are clearly relevant and meaningful for organisations.

Allows senior management to openly communicate which organisational behaviours are important, and can be used to link leader behaviours to the strategic directions and goals of the business.

## BENEFITS AND APPLICATIONS

Cost and time effective while producing a more consistent and high quality product for clients.

Can be easily and effectively tailored to provide bespoke competency models for clients with specific briefs, such as for particular job families, levels, and industries.

Useful for all aspects of the employee lifecycle including selection, self- and professional development, performance appraisal, and succession planning processes.

Can help HR professionals to summarise a range of useful leadership behaviours which can then be used in selecting or developing new leaders.

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