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6 Reasons Competency Management is the Key to a Successful Hybrid Work Model

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For many, “back to work” is a simple phrase that’s meant to describe a fairly complex reality – one that likely includes a hybrid work environment. And “returning” employees are really a mix of profiles. Some employees are migrating from work-from-home situations. Others may be reentering the workforce following a furlough. Newer employees may be about to experience the office workplace for the first time. And a company’s newest recruits are being hired and onboarded into a workplace that’s morphing now to keep up with new protocols, employee preferences, and customer requirements.

Employers are faced with a need to align employees with new policies, processes, and performance requirements of their shared new world. What skills and competencies are needed for success? How do you build a hybrid workplace model that works? Here are six ways competency management can support your hybrid work environment:

ONE: Discover Where Employees Work Best

As you’re building your hybrid workplace model, learn what you can from the competency data you have in place. If your company is using a [competency management program](#) to track and manage the skills, knowledge, and abilities of your employees, review that data to learn what work styles and habits are leading to better performance. Capture the “best practice” competencies for broader workforce success. Also, dig into the competency data of individuals. Who is thriving while working remotely? Who is struggling?

Your insights can help guide decisions about workforce policies, where individual employees should work, and how to support workers to get the most from each employee.



TWO: Define What Skills Employees Need to be Successful

The pandemic changed where employees work, how they do their work, and how they interact with colleagues. If employees don’t keep up with how things work now, they (and you) will miss out on being successful moving forward. Over time, outdated employee skills and competencies will lead to poor employee, and company, performance.

As you set up your hybrid workplace, review and refresh your competency model to reflect the skills and competencies employees need to be successful in today’s workplace and marketplace.

THREE: Identify Essential Competencies to Serve Customers Well

In both [the UK](#) and the [US](#), customer satisfaction indices are lower than they were the previous year. There’s a mix of reasons for the decline over the past year. Still, for your organization to thrive, your employees need to know how to serve customers well today, within your hybrid work environment.



Customer feedback will help you identify and promote the employee skills and competencies that are most impactful. Which skills are most closely correlated with customer satisfaction? How skilled are your customer-facing employees in those areas?

Use your insights to update customer satisfaction KPIs and job descriptions for customer-facing employees.

FOUR: Refresh Job Descriptions for Recruiting

Before hiring your next cohort of employees, arm your recruiters and hiring managers with your refreshed job descriptions. You'll want to hire people based on the skills and best practices of employees who are doing those jobs well now.

Refresh job descriptions to reflect the skills and competencies that employees need to thrive in a hybrid work environment. Specify levels of proficiency for things like communication skills, ability to work independently, ability to collaborate with remote colleagues, being confident enough to ask questions, or raise a flag when help is needed.

FIVE: Adjust L&D Initiatives for the Hybrid Workplace

A hybrid workplace not only requires different skills and competencies than what are needed to thrive in a traditional office setting. It also means that employees will be learning differently, too. In a shared office setting, informal peer-to-peer collaboration and learning often happen through the course of a day or week. In a hybrid work environment, more of that learning will need to be structured. Ongoing [skills assessments](#) can help to identify a learning path for employees – and to track progress.

Use skills assessments to home in on the skills and competencies that individuals need to succeed in a hybrid environment. Shore up your online information, tools, and courses to help employees get up to speed on their technical and professional skills. Schedule peer-to-peer time online or in the office to allow for less formal guidance and support.

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SIX: Setup Managers for Inclusive Supervision

Unfortunately, a hybrid workplace can inadvertently promote unfair management practices. Although remote employee performance is generally comparable to in-office work, “Managers are twice as likely to give negative, corrective feedback to remote employees versus in-office workers,” says executive coach Marcel Schwantes in this [Inc. article](#). Similarly, [BBC reports](#) that in-person workers are more likely to get promoted.

Be sure your managers are using your competency management system to track, manage, and assess employee performance. Reinforce competency data-driven decisions across all employees, to minimize the unconscious biases against remote-working employees.

Are you preparing a long-term hybrid work environment? Learn how Avilar’s [WebMentor Skills™](#) software can support your effort. Or, [contact us](#) to get the conversation started.

About Avilar

Avilar – The Competency Company™ is a leader in workforce planning and development with web-based competency management and learning solutions for corporations, government, and non-profit organizations. Formed in 1997, Avilar was a pioneer with its award-winning WebMentor™ product line and has built itself on the basis of superior customer service and highly adaptable product design.

Avilar consultants are recognized as industry thought leaders and have decades of experience in implementation and analysis. Let Avilar help you transform your organization from ordinary to extraordinary.

