

E-Recruiting Tips

What are Competencies?

The term competency, or “key competency”, is used to describe a set of behaviors (persistent patterns) that reflect a unique combination of:

- knowledge
- skills
- abilities
- attributes – motivations, attitudes, values and beliefs associated with exceptional performance in an organizational role.

Why is it important to develop competencies before opening a recruitment?

Competencies provide an essential, integrating framework for every step in the recruitment and selection process.

Competencies:

- describe the hard and soft skills necessary to perform a job well
- are the blueprint that make up the ideal candidate
- establish the criteria to evaluate candidates through every step in the selection process (a template for making comparisons)
- ensure consistency and fairness (communicate and evaluate using the same set of criteria)
- help applicants self screen
- can be a diagnostic tool to evaluate performance

What are hard and soft skills?

Hard Skills: are easier to identify because they are objective and measurable (quantitative). These are skills that people learn in order to perform the duties of the job (e.g. using EXCEL, operating a piece of machinery).

Soft Skills: are more difficult to define because they are subjective (qualitative), they are based upon observation and outcomes, positive or negative, of human interactions.

For Example:

Listening Competency: the definition of listening competence includes behaviors such as eye contact, head nodding, verbal affirmations and accurate paraphrasing or summarizing. How well one exhibits effective listening competence depends upon *knowledge* about listening, *skill* in using these listening behaviors and the *motivation* to listen (do I value other peoples opinions?)

What's the recipe for developing job related competencies?

Ingredients: 1 engaged hiring authority
1 job spec
A touch of creative thinking

- 1st** Talk with the hiring authority and gather the information needed to develop the competencies, which include the **unique** duties, knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes required to be a successful candidate and employee
- 2nd** Add the job specs to use as a reference to help define these competencies
- Last** But not least, add a touch of creativity to clearly communicate these competencies in a way that targets, intrigues and captures a particular audience you want in your pool of applicants

How do I get the information I need from the hiring authority?

Ask them for it! The hiring authority has a wealth of valuable information just waiting to be tapped. Meet with the hiring authority and use *effective questions*. This will establish a relationship as well as get the essential information you need to develop the framework (competencies) and strategy for your recruitment.

What type of questions do I need to ask in order to get the information I need from the hiring authority?

First, ask yourself what you need to know – **for example**:

- organizational objectives, culture and vision
- job duties and responsibilities
- specific competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes) needed to find the ideal candidate (all hard and soft skills)
- what's worked in prior recruitments and what has yet to be tried
- specific niche associations, or websites specific to targeted audience
- people who are willing, able and qualified to be panel members
- *And More*

Now that you know what you need, use your Enlightened Leadership training and convert the information you need to know into effective questions -- **for example**:

- What does it take to be successful in this job?
- Think back to the best person you've had in this job, what made them the best?
- Think about someone who struggled, why did they struggle?
- What do you anticipate this person's primary duties will be?
- How will the qualities you need for today fit with the direction and goals you have in mind for the future?
- What professional organizations do you suggest I look to for potential candidates?

How many and what type of competencies should I select for each recruitment?

- The competencies you select will be those identified as most important to be successful on the job.
- Typically you should use 3 – 5 key competencies meshing other related competencies within the *criteria*.

How do I customize competencies for different recruitments?

- *Criteria* are the definitions that make up a *customized competency*
- Use the tools mentioned in the "**recipe for developing job related competencies**" to help you design your criteria definitions.

- Detailed and customized criteria (hence customized competencies) create a recruiting tool that is much easier to apply and measure against, ***they are the essential foundation for every recruitment strategy***

Below are examples of how the same competency, “Communication”, can be defined in different ways to meet the needs of a specific recruitment.

Example of a communication competency developed for a Public Relations Assistant:

Communication

- ◆ Composing clear, accurate and concise written documents
- ◆ Responding to inquires and complaints
- ◆ Effectively communicating with the public, supervisors and staff
- ◆ Writing/developing public relations and/or press release material
- ◆ Interacting with vendors to provide support for various public communications and special events

Example of a communication competency developed for a Real Estate/Finance Manager:

Communication

- ◆ Directly negotiating at the highest organizational levels for financial and real estate transactions
- ◆ Effectively coordinate and communicate with upper level management, corporate leaders, and/or elected officials
- ◆ Directly reporting to and communicating with the community, public, stockholders, and/or other public/private officials
- ◆ Proven written communications
- ◆ Oral presentation skills

Example of a communication competency developed for an Information Systems Manager:

Communication

Demonstrated ability to:

- ◆ Effectively use communication skills to translate both technical and non-technical terminology
- ◆ Write clear, concise, informative and organized communications
- ◆ Successfully negotiate contracts
- ◆ Understand and meet the needs of a varied and large clientele and translate the voice of the customer into business improvements
- ◆ Understand and clearly communicate the organization’s strategy

Are all competencies created equal?

No! As demonstrated above, a competency such as Communication is uniquely defined for each recruitment. The details (criteria) that make up a competency highlight the specific needs you are seeking, and become your template to measure applicants against.

In addition to the differences in criteria that make up a competency, a competency may be weighted differently depending on the specific recruitment. For example:

You've just been assigned a recruitment for an Information System Manager I position. Initially you anticipate a recruitment that will weigh high on the technical side. However, during your discussion with the hiring authority regarding what a successful candidate looks like, you soon realize this recruitment will be just the opposite.

- *Leadership x 4*
- *Strategic Planning x 3*
- *Communications x 2*
- *Technical (up to date knowledge of) x 1*

The above example demonstrates two things:

1. All competencies are not created equal
2. Engaging the hiring authority to develop your competencies is **CRUTIAL**

What is the value of using the County's new recruiting strategy that is competency based vs. the traditional knowledge and skills based processes?

Although the traditional method of recruiting has worked for many years, the new recruiting strategy which is competency based provides a more effective and efficient method of recruiting and focuses on targeting talent to meet internal customer needs.

Why? For starters, it provides new:

- **Recruitment Strategies – of all kinds**
 - Uses competency based recruitment strategy which *incorporates the soft skills (personal/interpersonal skills)* as well as the hard skills (technical skills) necessary to be a successful candidate/employee, as well as establishes the criteria to evaluate candidates through every step in the selection process ensuring consistency and fairness
 - Emphasis is placed on developing recruitment strategies throughout every phase of the recruitment, for example:
 - Analysis and information gathering
 - Communication and Advertising vehicles (how, what, who and why)
 - Rater selection and coaching
 - Resume management
 - Selection method strategies
 - Timeline development
 - Etc...
- **Lines of Communication**
 - Provides new methods for gaining information to clearly communicate the unique job characteristics, work environment, skills, knowledge, abilities and attributes necessary to develop the customized competencies used to screen in top talent
 - Establishes and communicates a clear vision of the ideal candidate and the overall competences required for the job, were applicants can easily self-screen in or out of a recruitment as well as tailor their response regarding his/her qualifications
 - Provides a tool for recruiters to use when communicating with or screening in applicants/candidates
- **Customer Service Outlook -- “Customer” vs. “Applicant”**

- Emphasis is placed on viewing the applicant as the customer and focus is placed on providing better customer service, easier application processes, time efficiency and active communication with the customer throughout the recruitment process
- **Creative Marketing and Communications Development**
 - Uses different communication tools and creative thinking to develop a fresher style, more reader friendly, clearer and more appealing job bulletin that target a specific pool of applicants and opportunity to present an Employer of Choice Image
 - Works with electronic marketing and communication tools (job boards, email communication and resume management methods, etc.), in addition to traditional advertising methods, to actively and effectively communicate and reach a broader, uniquely targeted pool of applicants
- **AND MORE!**

Prove it!

Don't take our word for it, just ask Bill Rawlings, Director of CEO/Purchasing and Real Estate, and County employee for the past 17 years. When a position for a high level Real Estate/Finance Manager opened, CEO ran a traditional recruitment. Unfortunately, after hundreds of applicants and months later, the traditional recruitment did not meet the goal of bringing in the right applicant for the job. What the recruitment needed was a serious overhaul-so we did just that. Through the use of various strategic approaches, focused on competency based recruiting methods, we got the expected results.

From the time the second recruitment opened, it was clear the applicants who were responding were more closely in line with the experience, skills and abilities that Bill was looking for. Recently we had a chance to talk with Bill to discuss his experience and the success of the competency based recruitment – here is what he had to say.

"The new recruitment strategy helped develop a clearer focus of who we were really looking for, resulting in a tighter targeted pool of applicants. Through clearly communicating the competencies and requirements for the job, it was evident that applicants were able to self-screen in and out of the recruitment." Bill further remarked, "The bulletin was clear on the skills we were looking for. Unlike the first recruitment that focused mostly on the technical skills (real estate experience), soft skills were identified (communications, leadership, judgment, etc.), which helped screen in the appropriate applicants. By far this was the **most successful recruitment I have ever had.**"

Prove it!

Gretchen Derbyshire, recruiter for Public Facilities and Resources Department (PFRD), says, "Since using the new competency based, strategic recruiting approach I have noticed a huge difference in how we are communicating with and being seen by hiring authorities in our department. There is a new excitement and energy being seen by both the recruiters and the hiring authorities we have worked with. Hiring authorities are more engaged and involved in the whole recruitment process and it shows.

By meeting with the hiring authority before opening a recruitment, we are better able to communicate what our ideal candidate looks like. **As a result, it has shortened the posting time and it's increased the quality and quantity of viable candidates.**" Gretchen further commented that in just the past two months since using a competency

based approach to recruiting, PFRD's Human Resources department has received two appreciation letters from hiring authorities acknowledging satisfaction with PFRD HR's strategic approach to recruiting.

What do others have to say about using competency based recruiting?

Bruce Griffiths, an Industrial Organizational Psychologist, and president of Organizational Systems International (OSI) has been providing management and organizational development services for the past 22 years for companies such as Disney, Nike, Crayola, Hallmark, Petco, the list goes on. When asked why it was important to use competencies when looking for your ideal candidate, he said, "If you're going to buy a car, it's important to line out all the criteria you are looking for in that car. Having criteria makes you a more efficient, effective buyer. The same can be said for using criteria for recruiting...it makes you a more efficient, effective recruiter."

Steven Covey, author of The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, may have said it best when he said, "**Begin with the end in mind**". With the end in mind, or knowing what the superior candidate looks like, you can then define the criteria that make up that candidate, cluster those criteria into categories called *competencies*, and screen all applicants against these competencies -- **the highly effective candidates will rise to the top!**

Are there resources to help me develop competencies, write bulletins and enhance my strategic recruiting style?

- One great tool has been around the County for some time now – the PIP manual. In the PIP manual you will find a list of competencies and criteria that define them.
- OSI has put together a handy recruiter tool called the Polaris Competency Card Set. This set of 3 x 5 cards is a competency model that is comprehensive, easy to use and can be applied across all key management and professional roles. Not all competencies are relevant to all roles, however, within this model, a subset of essential competencies can be configured for every role. This tool is helpful in developing competency based job bulletins, selection strategies and interview questions. CEO/HR is providing one of these card sets to each recruiting team as an additional resource to add to your recruiter toolkit. If additional sets are needed, they can be purchased online at www.orgsysint.com.
- It is highly recommended that recruiting staff attend Enlightened Leadership (EL) training. Also if you've already taken the course, the online refresher is suggested <http://www.oc.ca.gov/hr/training/enlightenedleadership.htm> Through the various training modules you will learn skills that will help in every step in the recruitment process - from engaging the hiring authority in competency identification, to developing effective interview questions and evaluating recruitment strategy techniques.
- Ask others what is working for them, research other jobs that are on the County website and see what new methods you would like to incorporate into your style of recruiting.
- Open a personalized account via the Virtual Application so you can have the system automatically email you each time a new recruitment opens in your pre-selected categories. By using this tool it will enable you to manage your future and current

recruiting needs, see what others are doing and get fresh ideas to help you write job bulletins.

- We are currently offering personalized consulting assistance. If you need assistance in evaluating your recruitment strategies and associated processes, have a specific recruitment you need help with, or want assistance in updating a job bulletin, contact Marguerite Adams at 714-834-6199 to learn how we can be of assistance.

Strategic Recruiting Contacts:

- Recruiting feedback and strategy including Recruiter Meeting content and development of an Online Recruiting System
 - Marguerite Adams - Marguerite.Adams@ocgov.com, (714) 834-6199
- Recruiter Tools
 - Rosie Santiesteban – Rosie.Santiesteban@ocgov.com, (714) 834-2846
- Virtual Application bulletin technical support, modifications or deletions
 - Erin Monaco – Erin.Monico@ocgov.com, (714) 834-4616
- TRAC support, back-up Virtual Application Support
 - Zareen Husain - Zareen.Husain@ocgov.com, (714) 834-5318
- TRAC back-up
 - Leon Phung – Leon.Phung@ocgov.com, (714) 834-7357
- Change Social Security Number
 - Ines Lozano - Ines.Lozano@ocgov.com, (714) 834-6287