Competency Model at Global Line Limited (GLL) : A Case Study

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Abstract

This case study is about an Indian media organization - Global Line Limited (GLL) that had a very robust Human Resource function. The HR department of GLL recently introduced a competency model that measures 44 different competencies for potential recruits. The competencies had been categorized into skills, knowledge, and talent. The head of the HR department was convinced that the competency based selection process was working positively for them until a young professional named Suman was hired in the talent acquisition team of the department. Suman collected feedback from line managers, analyzed the process, and tried to identify ways to further improve the system. The significant learning from this case is that HR departments of business organizations must innovate and must be proactive in implementing the latest HR technologies. However, the practical applicability of the model must be kept in mind while framing any HR model. Furthermore, the HR should always stay connected with the pulse of the workforce to ascertain whether or not the function is adding adequate value to business outcomes.

Keywords: **competency mapping, behavioral event interviews, competency model**
JEL Classification : M5

Competency Model At Global Line Limited (GLL)

Suman was working with the Talent Acquisition team of the Human Resources Function at GLL. She had completed her Masters in Management Studies specializing in Human Resources from Scott Institute of Management, Mumbai. She was the star student of her college - always appreciated by her professors and peers. Suman's friends and professors were sure that Suman would complete her MBA program with flying colors and would bag the best available job on the campus. As predicted, on October 27, 2011, Suman got through the final recruitment process of GLL, and was offered a placement in Mumbai location. She had been interviewed for over an hour and the interview questions were quite specific and skill based. She was intrigued and totally fascinated by the behavioral event interview technique that she had to undergo for the final interview. Suman was in awe of the robust selection process followed by Global Line Limited. She joined GLL's Mumbai office on January 19, 2012.

About GLL

GLL is one of India's leading television, media, and entertainment companies. It is amongst the largest producers and aggregators of Hindi programming in the world, with an extensive library housing over 100,000 hours of television content. With rights to more than 3,000 movie titles from foremost studios and of iconic film stars, GLL houses the world's largest Hindi film library. Through its strong presence worldwide, GLL entertains over 650 million viewers

Important : The case has been released after ensuring anonymity to the organization and to the individuals concerned. The true name of the organization was removed and replaced with a fictitious name (Global Line Limited). Further, the case does not contain information pertaining to strategy or any other aspect that may give any advantage to the competitors. The case is intended to be a basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation.

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across 168 countries. The GLL stable owns an integrated range of businesses. All of these in singularity adhere to the content-to-consumer value chain model of media and the entertainment business. GLL is a pioneer in every aspect of content aggregation and distribution through traditional media like satellite and cable and new media like the Internet, in India. As on March 31, 2011, GLL films had an employee strength of approximately 3,400.

Industry Overview

In India, there are approximately 450 television channels. The television industry generates INR 135 billion of ad spends, which accounts for 39% of the total ad spend in the country. Zee, Sony, and Star TV are the major players in the country. There are approximately 100 million analogue television households in India, and are expected to grow to 175 million households by 2015. There are approximately 25 million DTH households. Airtel, Dish TV, and Tata Sky are the major players. BSNL/MTNL and Reliance Communications are the major mobile TV operators. Key trends affecting the Indian television sector include the expected development of digital TV, mobile TV, IPTV services and the entry of new providers in the country. Private television is growing at an increasing rate. Recent developments include the Dish TV – Times Group & Star Group – One97 partnerships to offer mobile VAS, including "Mobile Active" and other services on a mobile platform. Bharti Airtel has invested close to INR 700 million to set up a DMX (digital media exchange) to offer video-grid as a service to broadcasters in India.

The Indian television industry is regulated by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). It is responsible for issuing licenses to private television and radio stations, managing broadcasting frequencies, and handling the legal supervision of private broadcasters as well as preparing and launching digital broadcasting in India. The subscription revenue is expected to improve with digitization. While the number of DTH subscribers witnessed a growth of 62 per cent in 2010-11, the pace of digitization is set to get a fillip by the recent move of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) requiring the four metros in the country to be fully digitized by October 2012, and the rest of the country to be digitized by December 2014. This is expected to improve the subscription revenues in the medium-term, thereby providing a healthy upside for the broadcasters. The number of consumers viewing television content on screens other than the television itself is on the rise. People are accessing video content on laptop and tablet devices, and even mobile phones. Many airline companies have installed "In-Flight Entertainment Systems" that offer a wide range of catalogs for the entertainment of the passengers. Each passenger thus has control over what he wants to see.

Suman's Choice

After going through an extensive induction program of 15 days, Suman was questioned regarding her choice of the department she wanted to work with. Suman recalled her positive experience with the selection process and how mighty impressed she was with the competency-based selection format, and she also thought that she always had a knack towards talent acquisition. Her choice was crystal clear. Considering the interest of their new recruit, Mr. Rakesh Shetty, Director, Human Resources at GLL decided to depute Suman in the talent acquisition team.

The Challenge

Recently, GLL found that they were unable to select the right candidate for the right job. After a tough brain storming session, they discovered that though the structure was extensive to assess a potential recruit on all the competencies, it was exhaustive enough to confuse the assessors. As her first assignment in the department, Suman was asked to assess the competency model of GLL. She knew that GLL had 44 competencies on which a candidate was assessed. Initially, Suman thought to herself, "that should be easy...what I am going to do is find out how many and who all of our direct and indirect competitors use the competency-based selection process. I will also try to get access into the competencies they have identified as selection criteria, their definitions, and the measurement scale they are using. How and where should I look to get this confidential data? In the meanwhile, let me also start talking to people about our process and what they feel about it." Suman knew deep in her heart that she had begun to feel apprehensive about the model being followed at GLL. Suman went to have a word directly with Mr. Shetty. Mr. Shetty told Suman, "We (referring to the HR dept.) are very satisfied with the performance of the current model as it has helped in reducing the attrition rate and the recruitment cost. The board is also supportive of this model as it gives us a competitive standing within the industry."

Perusing the sheets of the competency mapping process of GLL, Suman observed that they followed a behavioral

competency mapping technique. The attributes on which a candidate was assessed are (Refer to Table 1):

a) Skills

b) Knowledge

Table 1 : Attributes on which a candidate is assessed at GLL
Section A: Skills Assessment
• Technical Skills • Verbal Communication skills • Written Communication skills • Negotiation skills
Section B: Knowledge Assessment
• Qualification • Years of experience in a good pedigree organization, relevant to the job role • Domain Knowledge
Section C: Talent Assessment
STRIVING TALENT
• **Achiever :** Demonstrates a drive that is internal, constant, and self imposed • **Stamina :** Displays a capacity for physical endurance • **Competition :** Ability to guide one's success comparatively • **Desire :** Demonstrates a need to claim significance, through independence, excellence risk and recognition • **Competence :** Seeks to achieve expertise and mastery • **Belief :** Displays a need to orient one's life around certain prevailing values • **Mission :** Demonstrates a drive to put one's beliefs into action • **Service :** Demonstrates a drive to be of service to others • **Ethics :** Demonstrates clear understanding of right and wrong, which guides one's actions • **Vision :** Able to paint value based word pictures about the future
THINKING TALENT
• **Focus :** Able to set goals & use them every day to guide actions • **Discipline :** Demonstrates the need to impose structure on to life and work • **Work Orientation :** Mentally rehearse and review • **Gestalt :** Demonstrates a need to see order and accuracy • **Responsibility :** A need to assume personal accountability for your work • **Concept :** Able to develop a framework by which to make sense of things • **Performance Orientation :** Demonstrates a need to be objective and to measure performance • **Strategic Thinking :** Able to play out alternative scenarios in the future • **Business Thinking :** Demonstrates ability to apply strategic thinking talent in financial decisions • **Problem Solving :** Able to think things through with incomplete data • **Formulation :** Able to find coherent patterns with incoherent data sets • **Numerical :** Exhibits an affinity for numbers

• **Creativity :** Able to break existing configurations in favour more effective/appealing ones
RELATING TALENT
• **Woo :** Enable a need to gain the approval of others • **Empathy :** Able to identify feelings and perspectives of others • **Relater :** Exhibits a need to build bonds that last • **Multi Relater :** Able to build extensive network of acquaintances • **Interpersonal :** Able to purposely capitalize on relationships • **Individualized Perception :** Displays an awareness of individual differences • **Developer :** Exhibits a need to invest in others and to derive satisfaction in doing so • **Stimulator :** Able to create enthusiasm & drama • **Team :** Exhibits a need to build feelings of mutual support • **Positivity :** Demonstrates a need to look on the bright side • **Persuasion :** Able to persuade others logically • **Command :** Able to take charge • **Activator :** Demonstrates an impatience to move others into action • **Courage :** Able to use emotion to overcome resistance
Source : Company Information

c) Talent – Striving, Thinking, Relating

Suman found out that overall, GLL had 44 sub-competencies upon which a candidate was assessed. They had further mapped these 44 competencies to the different job roles of their company - as to which competency is required for a particular role in what intensity. These competencies had been jotted down by discussing the roles with respective functional managers. GLL had started following this model in the year 2010. It had been two years since they had implemented this model without any significant changes. To measure the effectiveness of this model, they used the following metrics (refer to Table 2) :

a) Attrition rate

b) Recruitment cost

Table 2: Attrition Data

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Attrition Rate	21%	22%	25%	27%	23%
Increase in recruitment cost over the previous year	5%	5%	7%	7%	7%

Source : Company Information

Suman overheard two middle managers from the marketing division talking to each other while she was waiting near the conference room. One of them said, "Rating the employee on the 44 listed competencies was the most tedious task for me as a manager, as I believed that a lot of the competencies were very similar. Some of the competencies were redundant for some positions, while they were important for other positions. They need to make a set of competencies which are universal across departments for honing leadership skills. " His colleague responded, "Lack of universal application was the most important problem with the 44 competency model. A few competencies were not measurable, while a few were unimportant for a specific position. These same unimportant competencies could be very important for other positions." Suman was quick to have realized that a set of 44 generic competencies was making the structure redundant and confusing. She knew that analyzing the case of GLL would reveal that a lot of competencies are redundant in their model. The BEI sheet seemed structured. However, while analyzing each and

every parameter, Suman was perplexed with some issues, which she shared with Mr. Shetty. She said, "Sir, I have been talking to some of our Heads of Businesses and other key personnel. One feedback is repetitive, that the model must be further refined. Many of our managers are finding it very difficult to assess the 44 competencies. They find it just too exhaustive. Some competencies are redundant, some are very difficult to measure, while there are even a few that appear repetitive. For example, the difference between *Activator* and *Stimulator* was not very clear. Also, Discipline is taken in terms of both work and life, and *Arranger* is taken for work. Sir, we must do something about all these problems." Mr. Shetty did not respond; he only smiled and signaled Suman that he will discuss this later. Suman was a little skeptical now. She always had a view that the more compact the structure, the better is the measurement and assessment of competencies. However, the current model was just too extensive. This was in sharp contradiction with what Mr. Shetty had told Suman - that they had not faced any difficulty since the implementation of this structure. Suman knew that she had to carry out a critical analysis, whether or not her hypothesis was correct. She knew someone in the IT department and got in touch with this person for her comments about the process. Suman pleaded Jayanti to be truthful as this was an informal chat, and she promised Jayanti that she would not quote her officially. Jayanti commented, "My biggest difficulty with the 44 competency model was the fact that all employees could not be measured on them, not because they didn't have those skills, but because they weren't getting the chances to display them."

Review Questions

1) Critically evaluate the existing Competency Model at GLL. Which five out of the 44 according to you are the most crucial generic competencies? Why?

2) Do you think the metrics used by GLL for measuring the effectiveness of the competency model is appropriate? In what other ways can the effectiveness of the GLL Competency model be measured?

3) If you were Suman, what recommendations would you make to the Board for improving the Competency model of GLL? What barriers would you anticipate? Suggest solutions for the same.

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