

# Developing Competencies For Middle Level Managers Across Areas Of Functional Specialization – A Study In An Indian BPO

\* *Dr. G. Prageetha Raju*

\*\* *Smita Kulkarni*

## INTRODUCTION

In a continuously changing environment, for a sustained personal development, an expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in managerial roles becomes vital (Davis et al., 2004; Jackson et al., 2003; Tubbs and Schulz, 2006). In this regard, the competency approach marks a new development and the importance given to competencies in the organizational context is continually increasing (Matthewman, 1995). When capturing and capitalizing on individual capabilities, it is important to understand whether managers working in different work environments require different sets of competencies in order to satisfy the different job demands that are encountered or whether different job demands connected to different areas of functional specialization could be satisfied by a common set of management competencies. Though there is an enormous diversity in the scope of competency studies, a few empirical research studies have been conducted on management competency requirements for different functional areas. Findings of such studies have indicated that the variations in functions and contexts of managerial roles make a one-size-fits-all competency profile impractical (Barber and Tietje, 2004; Hayes et al., 2000; McKenna, 2002). In most cases, randomly developed competencies (self-developed or developed by consultants) are used by policy makers in making crucial decisions on HR issues and programs. Few studies have been conducted in Asia and that too, were confined to a single functional area. Wang and Chen (2002) conducted a study on managerial competency modeling for selection and assessment in China using hierarchical strategic job analysis and a survey on leadership competency to formulate a model of managerial competency. They suggested that managerial skills for middle managers included strategic decision making, relationship coordination, empowerment and facilitation, business monitoring, and innovation. Furthermore, there is very little research reported in the literature for exploring the competencies required by middle managers. Even if there are, the perception of informants in the work situation is frequently used by researchers when studying competency (van der Velde et al, 1999). Therefore, the present study aims at examining whether there is a set of management competencies that should be possessed by middle managers, irrespective of the functional area they belong to.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✿ To examine the current competency levels for middle managers across functional areas/specialization.
- ✿ To examine the competencies that are essential at present.

## METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted when the company approached the researchers to develop competencies for their middle managers. Data from this study comes from two self administered questionnaires vis-à-vis personal structured interviews to the middle management position holders in the organization under study. First questionnaire consisted of questions with respect to tasks. The second questionnaire consists of questions with respect to competencies. There were a total of 21 positions at the middle manager level that were assessed across eight different departments in the BPO namely Finance, Technology (IT), Business Development, Human Resources, Work Force Management, Training, Facilities, and Operations. This study is conducted in two major phases. In Phase 1, a task-based job

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\* Associate Professor and Head of the Department for OB and HR, Symbiosis Center for Management and Human Resource Development (SCMHRD), Pune. E-mail : dr.prageetha@gmail.com

\*\* Assistant Professor of OB and HR, IBS, Hyderabad. E-mail : trish.smita@gmail.com

analysis is performed on each position. In this study, the following aspects of the job are described in detail :

- ✿ Relationships pertaining to each position;
- ✿ The position description;
- ✿ The Key Responsibility Areas in detail.

In phase 2, two types of work-related competency clusters were identified - namely, the functional/technical competencies and the behavioral competencies. The knowledge and skills were categorized under the functional/technical competencies cluster and the values/attributes were categorized under the behavioral competencies cluster. In this study, the perceptions of the respondents were taken for current/present performance and were cross verified with the subject matter experts (SME), who were the top managers to whom the respondents reported. A four step methodology was adopted to identify competencies. **First**, a wide-ranging set of competencies was created, that were taken from competency literature. **Second**, in order to standardize the terminology of competency items, a list of 27 competencies was summarized, that was abstracted from various sources in literature. This list was treated as a hypothetical list. **Third**, this list was categorized into two categories - the technical/functional and behavioral. This list was given to the SMEs and to the respondents to rank them in order of importance using Likert type of scale which is as follows:

Proficiency Level	1	2	3	4	5
Importance	No Need	Low	Average	High	Very High

Fourthly, Delphi Technique<sup>1</sup> was used to arrive at the competencies required for middle managers across functional specializations. The ranks given by SMEs were circulated between the respondents repeatedly until they could reach a consensus. At the end of the Delphi technique, 13 competencies (8 technical and 5 behavioral competencies respectively) were identified to be important for current performance. Initially, five competencies under each category were identified, but the top managers identified three more competencies (which were accepted by the respondents too) with respect to some functional areas and asked the researchers to add it. Thus, the addition was made. In phase 3, a competency dictionary was developed to define the competencies identified and was circulated to all the respondents and also, the proficiency levels were developed. The study was conducted in 2008 between February and May. For a year, the competencies identified were tested and were standardized across the organization.<sup>2</sup>

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

**Mc Clelland (1976)** described competency as characteristics underlying superior performance. The term “*competency*” was first used in the managerial context in the research conducted by **Boyatzis (1982)** in the late 1970s in USA to identify the characteristics, which distinguishes superior from average managerial performance. **Boyatzis (1982)** adopted the term “*competency*”, plural “*competencies*”, which he described as an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to effective or superior performance in a job. The study concluded that there was no single factor, but a range of factors that differentiated superior from average performers. These included personal characteristics, experience, motives and other attributes. Following the definition given by **Hay Group (2001)**, for this study, a competency is considered as a measurable characteristic of a person that is related to effective performance in a specific job, organization or culture. There is an assumption that all effective leadership behaviors are applicable across the different levels of managerial positions (**Bass and Stogdill, 1990 and Dopson and Stewart, 1990 and Lee, 1981**). However, overwhelming evidence shows that, to be effective, different hierarchical positions require different managerial behaviors (**Kraut et al, 1989**).

## COMPANY PROFILE

Zeal Business Support Services is a Zeal Enterprise (*names changed on the instruction of the company*) and a 100% subsidiary of Zeal Sons. It is a leading business process outsourcing (BPO) services provider, and one of the largest third party business services providers in India, the company provides both voice and non-voice based BPO services.

<sup>1</sup>The company insisted on the use of Delphi technique instead of statistical measures.

<sup>2</sup>The authors were not involved after the development of the competencies.

Zeal Business Support Services commenced operations in May 2004, and is, today, a rapidly growing company with over 4,500 employees. The company was set up primarily to address the large internal needs of the entire Zeal Group and also to focus on external business opportunities. As an ISO 9001:2000 certified and BS7799 certified organization, Zeal Business Support Services' value proposition stems from its consistent and continuous focus on business excellence initiatives, in striving for excellence in systems, processes and people. Zeal Business Support Services is one of the few providers of services in multiple languages; its service delivery competency is in nine Indian languages apart from English. Geographically wide spread, the state-of-the art centers offer a secure work place and are geared for rapid scalability. They provide an excellent work environment with facilities and amenities that address every employee need.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- ✿ The methods used for collecting data were very few due to limited availability of time .
- ✿ Listing the competencies of the organization was not performed in this study, if done, the competencies of the organization and job holder can be correlated when sketching the competency profile.
- ✿ The future competencies could not be identified as the company insisted that they only wanted current expertise and current importance.

## FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

✿ **Finance Area:** The Finance Department, like any other company, takes care of the overall finance activities ranging from General Company Accounting to Payroll. The department handles the day to day cash inflow and outflow activities of the company by keeping track of the internal and external customers and vendors.

**Table 1: The Positions Analyzed From Each Functional Area**

Functional Area	Positions Analyzed	Reports to
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Manager - Accounts</li> <li>• Manager - Accounts</li> <li>• Senior Manager - Costing and MIS</li> <li>• Manager - SBU support</li> <li>• Senior Manager - Materials Management</li> </ul>	Financial Controller
IT (Technology)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Manager - Telecom&amp;IT Support</li> <li>• Manager - IT Support</li> <li>• Senior Manager - Network Support and Application Development</li> <li>• Manager - Application Development</li> <li>• Senior Manager - Presales and Internal Audit</li> <li>• Manager - Pre-sales</li> </ul>	Sr. Managers report to Technology Consultant and Managers report to Senior Managers.
Human Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Manager HR - Location</li> <li>• Manager - Recruitments</li> <li>• Manager - HR Operations</li> </ul>	Sr. Manager reports to Location head and Managers report to Sr. Manager-Location.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Manager - Training</li> <li>• Manager-Training</li> </ul>	• Sr. Manager reports to Sr. VP(training) and Manager reports to Center Head, who in turn reports to Sr. VP (training).
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sr. Manager - Operations</li> <li>• Manager - Operations</li> </ul>	• Sr. Manager reports to Cluster Head and Manager reports to SR. Manager-Operations
Business Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sr. Managers - Business Development</li> </ul>	• Asst. VP (Business Development)
Workforce Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manager - Workforce Management (WFM)</li> </ul>	• Reports to Center Head
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manager-Facilities</li> </ul>	• Center Head

❖ **Information Technology Area** : The complete portfolio of technology requirement and support for the whole of the BPO is handled by the technology department. This department provides end to end technology support and solutions that are required for the call center operations and support teams in the organization.

**Table 2: Critical Stakeholders, Position Description, & KRA For Every Position In The Finance Functional Area**

Position	Critical stakeholders	Position Description	KRA
Sr. Manager- Accounts	Auditors Bankers Other Departments/vendors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for MIS, Budget Implementation - Oversee Formulation, Presentation &amp; execution, Supervision, Compliance to Accounting Standards, Applying Accounting Principles &amp; procedures to work products.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budgetary Control</li> <li>Internal Control</li> <li>Ascertain business risks &amp; ensure adequate insurance coverage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring Payroll Activity</li> </ul> </li> <li>Ledger Scrutiny and monitoring books of accounts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend internal &amp; statutory audits and coordinate with the auditors.</li> <li>To adopt, comply, and maintain the books of accounts as per Indian accounting standards.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Abide by Statutory requirement of deduction and payment of Income Tax, Tax Deductible at Source (TDS) from the Parties and Employees, and filing TDS returns, Tax audit Returns along with Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT), Adhere to the BS 7799 requirement of Information Security, clean desk policy and ISO 9001 objectives.</li> </ul>
Sr. Manager- Materials Management	Operations teams & Finance Customers and Clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for Pricing, Costing, MIS, Budgeting &amp; Controlling of Business Segment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for Current Assets and implementation of Asset Management modules. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handle Service Tax procedures.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Collect, compile, and analyze Asset management data from Facilities and IT depts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take charge of year end activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Provide support for SAP Implementation in Finance.</li> </ul>
Manager- SBU	All Functions Clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for Pricing, Costing, MIS, Business Plan, AOP &amp; AOP Implementation, Profitability analysis, Revenue assurance and debtors' management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial Pricing &amp; Process Costing.</li> <li>Revenue Assurance &amp; Invoicing &amp; Audits.</li> <li>Debtors reconciliation and collection, Process profitability statement to the operations team.</li> <li>BS 7799 Maintenance &amp; ISO 9001 &amp; SAP Implementation.</li> </ul>
Sr. Manager- Costing and MIS	Clients, Other Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for Pricing, Costing, MIS, Business Plan, AOP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation of annual Budget.</li> <li>Pricing for prospective clients, Preparation of Corporate MIS. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval of Capex/Opex.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Support to internal Customers Handover to SBU commercial team.</li> <li>Various pricing methodologies of BPO industry.</li> </ul>
Manager - Accounts	Auditors and Cost Authorities, Bankers Other Departments /	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage MIS, Budget Implementation, Supervision of Indian and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Optimum Utilization of Funds.</li> <li>Renewal of Mediclaim Policy &amp; EDLI (Employees Deposit Linked Insurance).</li> </ul>

	Vendors / Group companies	US accounting policies & processes and systems in the company.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PAN (Permanent Account Number) transfer.</li> <li>• Timely Audits of India Operations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamline USA Accounts.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Implementation of ISO for Finance.</li> <li>• Timely submission of vouchers and bills by other departments.</li> <li>• Routing bills through creditors system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training US Accounts personnel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAP Implementation</li> <li>• Change of Cash Flow format.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Consolidation of US accounts with Indian books.</li> <li>• Setting up a cash flow format for US branch.</li> <li>• Setting up Age wise Debtors and Creditors reporting system at US.</li> </ul>
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❖ **Human Resources Area:** The HR department in BPO takes up responsibility of all basic HR activities of the BPO- from Recruitment to Performance Management and Employee Relations.

❖ **Training Competency Profiles :** The initial training for the new recruits and ongoing training for employees are the

**Table 3 : Critical Stakeholders, Position Description, & KRA For Every Position In The IT ( Technology) Functional Area**

Position	Critical stakeholders	Position Description	KRA
Sr. Manager- Telecom and IT Support	Support Functions, Operations, Clients and Vendors, Telecom Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan, Implement and manage Telecom Infrastructure strategy for all locations based on business requirement;</li> <li>Responsible for ensuring Availability, Performance, Utilization and Optimum Costs, Managing and Implementing IT service delivery processes across all locations and ensuring smooth IT Support to internal customers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity Management through Asset Utilization, Procurement forecast, and Assessing Business requirement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT Financial Management</li> <li>• Vendor Management</li> <li>• Service Support</li> <li>• Service Delivery</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Organization IT Security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Project KRA's</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Folder Structure :</b> Data uploading to relevant folders.</li> <li>• <b>Tenant partitioning :</b> Existing Tenant and COR Plan, new proposal, final implementation.</li> <li>• <b>VOIP Solution :</b> Configuration &amp; ACD implementation.</li> </ul>
Manager- IT Support	Support Functions, Operations Vendors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for managing &amp; implementing IT service delivery process for the entire BPO and play a leading role in the integration, testing and commissioning of a uniform Helpdesk Service Model as per ITIL standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT Service &amp; Support to Internal Customers and Project Management capabilities.</li> <li>• Owner for assets, Configuration, Release, and Service Level Agreement(SLA) problem / Incident Management.</li> <li>• Development of Knowledge database for Known errors (standard operating procedures) and mapping client and internal user requirements.</li> <li>• Compliance to ISO and BS standards and also Government regulations.</li> </ul>

		Take leading role in Technology department's interaction with clients and Internal Customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and creation of uptime reports for all clients and processes.</li> <li>• Capacity utilization reporting and analysis.</li> <li>• Transition management and change management.</li> <li>• Generation of MIS from HP Service Desk and provide analytical inputs.</li> </ul>
Sr. Manager- Network Security and Application Development	Support Functions Operations, Clients and Vendors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing organizational IT Security and adherence to ISO and Responsible for ensuring Availability, performance utilization and Optimum Costs, and effective client service relationship; Continuously evaluate Technology and offer cost effective solutions for the same; Plan, implement and manage Network Security and Infrastructure Strategies for all locations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity Management through Server/IVR/ logger/ Link Utilization.</li> <li>• IT financial Management - Cost per seat in terms of system support infrastructure.</li> <li>• Vendor management, Service Support and service delivery. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patch management of all Servers/Desktops and Antivirus updation.</li> <li>• Compliance Check of Server and Server Management , &amp; Management of Web Logic Servers.</li> <li>• Oracle &amp; SQL Database management.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• SAP Basis Administration, Restoration Drills, Organization- IT security &amp; Quality Process/Internal Compliance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Project KRA's</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share Point Portal.</li> <li>• SAN/Virtualization - Identify Servers for Virtualization and Final Implementation.</li> </ul>
Manager- Application Development	Partners, Vendors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and develop applications for Business and Office Support, Responsible for effective client service relationship, Continuously evaluate Technology and offer cost effective solutions for the same.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leveraging support from partners &amp; vendors to ensure smooth implementation.</li> <li>• Ensure reduction of cost of application, implementation &amp; maintenance, by reducing the number of software platforms.</li> <li>• Own and handle assets, SLA and Incident Management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evolving policies and procedures for organizational Application landscape.</li> <li>• Framing organization wide Application Landscape.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Handle changes and upgrading of Systems and Application Infrastructure and also maintain 99.5% availability.</li> </ul>
Sr. Manager- Presales & Project	<p><b>Internal</b> - Support Functions &amp; operations</p> <p><b>External</b> - Respective clients, all tech vendors, client representatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for providing technology solutions to new &amp; existing clients, Execution of project, transition management, Supporting the BD team for getting new business, Inspiring prospects on technology infrastructure &amp; introduction of new technology at the contact center.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity Management , Ensure cost efficiencies pertaining to IT, Vendor Management, Ensure Compliance, Knowledge Management, Incident Management, Configuration Management, Problem Management, Service Level Agreement Management, Availability &amp; Continuity Management, &amp; Project handling.</li> </ul>

Manager- Presales	<b>Internal support functions</b> - Operations, External clients, tech vendors, client representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for understanding client requirements, designing solutions, responding to RFP's, implementation of Projects and transition management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity Management , Projects, Ensure cost efficiencies pertaining to IT, Knowledge Management, and Transition Management.</li> </ul>
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activities done by this department. Providing product centric training, and soft skills training to the newly hired Customer Care Executives (CCE) is the major activity of the Training department at the BPO.

**Table 4: Critical Stakeholders, Position Description, & KRA For Every Position In The HR Functional Area**

Position	Critical stakeholders	Position description	KRA
Sr. Manager- HR (Location)	All employees of BPO, Trainers, Consultants, vendors and suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for accurate and timely implementation for all HR policies and processes at the center, provide guidance to the HR team to deliver their responsibilities more effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for the performance management system.</li> <li>Conduct internal audits for all processes, including payroll and establishment.</li> <li>Responsible for implementation of processes for increment, confirmation, salary revision, re-fitment and promotions, Statutory compliance and reporting, disciplinary actions, recruitment and related activities, timely conduct of exit formalities.</li> <li>Implementing a mechanism to handle all employee grievances.</li> <li>Implement a mechanism to maintain the database of employees and ensure accuracy in the HRMS.</li> </ul>
Manager - HR Operations	All departments and employees of BPO, Consultants, Trainers and Vendors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To Plan and monitor ER, Establishment and PMS for the location.</li> </ul>	
Manager - HR (Recruitment)	All departments of BPO, Consultants, Colleges and Employment Exchanges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To Plan, Monitor and control the execution of recruitment in the location.</li> </ul>	

❁ **Operations Area:** The operations department is the department that accounts for almost 90% of the total manpower of BPO. This department caters to the call center operations of various clients, with most of the employees in the entry level as Customer Care Executives (CCEs) or Senior CCEs. There are Senior Managers and Managers for each and every client process of BPO, where all of them perform the same set of tasks and share the same kind of responsibilities.

❁ **Business Development Area (BD) :** The BD department in BPO takes up the responsibility of bringing in new clients and handling existing clients for the call center operations. Performing market researches across the globe and building partnerships with new clients is one of the major tasks of this department.

❁ **Work Force Management (WFM) Area:** The WFM team is the department that is responsible for constant reports and monitoring of Manpower, Call Center Operations and Client Service Level Agreements. The department generates the Manpower reports on a regular basis, thereby keeping track of the present and future manpower needs for every process. They also interact with the clients on the SLAs and their compliances in terms of things like Average Call Handling Time by Customer Care Executives (CCE) and number of calls taken by every one of them.

**Table 5: Critical Stakeholders, Position Description, & KRA For Every Position In The Training Functional Area**

Position	Critical stakeholders	Position description	KRA
Sr. Manager Training	<p><b>Customers-Internal</b> (Operations department), <b>Customers</b> - <b>External</b>(Client), <b>Vendors-Internal</b> (Facilities &amp; IT &amp; HR areas)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for implementing product &amp; process knowledge and soft skills training across locations.</li> <li>• Ensure timely reporting of Training metrics.</li> <li>• Understand new product requirements and Knowledge gaps of associates and plan training to fill the gap.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and review training processes across the clusters.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance to internal standards.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure conversion of ILT to E-learning module.</li> <li>• Ensure implementation of ESS &amp; SAP.</li> </ul>
Manager Training	<p>Operations dept, Facilities, IT, HR areas External Clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for implementing training in clusters.</li> <li>• Encompassing product &amp; process knowledge and voice training.</li> <li>• Understand knowledge gaps of associates, implement &amp; evaluate the orientation program.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand new product Requirements.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective training for the induction, there by reducing retraining due to non certification.</li> <li>• Dip stick rating by the Operations, Feedback from the trainees.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCE workbook.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure 100% New Hire Gurukul clearance.</li> <li>• Cut down on expenses on print-outs and photo copies through online tests.</li> <li>• Ensure that there is no damage or loss of training resources.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting induction or refresher training, creating modules, developing activities.</li> <li>• Ensure effective training.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Regularly upgrade self knowledge on training areas and necessary facilitation and instructional skills.</li> <li>• Develop and enhance the capabilities of and add value to other members within the function and other functions.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts activities that aim at professional and personal development.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Shares knowledge with others, which aims at professional and personal development via articles, stories, magazines, periodicals, sales etc.</li> <li>• Recommend, participate, and drive activities which aim at enhancing or developing the professional and personal skills of members of the functions, the other functions and the organization.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve processes, modules, materials, reports, methodology, activities, training design, and output.</li> <li>• Initiative for self development and value addition and recommends the same for other members of the function, not only related to immediate training output, but also other areas.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Initiative to recommend from time to time, new areas of training.</li> </ul>



**Table 6: Critical Stakeholders, Position Description, & KRA For Every Position In The Operations Functional Area**

Position	Critical stakeholders	Position description	KRA
Sr. Manager-Operations	Support Functions, Operations, Clients, and Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for end-to-end service delivery process or a substantial part of a large/complex delivery process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for overall SLA delivery for the process.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand clients delivery expectations, translate them into various delivery parameters.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Coordinate with the support staff during ramp ups.</li> <li>Control attrition, responsible for P&amp;L of the process.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adherence to regulatory compliances.</li> <li>To ensure high levels of employee satisfaction and engagement.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Manager-Operations	People within the process in Operations, Clients, and Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for end-to-end service delivery process or a substantial part of a large/complex delivery process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for overall SLA delivery for the process.</li> <li>Understand clients' delivery expectations, translate them into various delivery parameters.</li> <li>Coordinate with the support staff for recruitments, on-boarding and training.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Control attrition.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Responsible for P&amp;L of the process.</li> <li>Review performance with the Center Head and National Account Managers at least once every month.</li> <li>Maintain the L2 level Manpower.</li> </ul>

**Table 7: Critical Stakeholders, Position Description, & KRA For Every Position In The Business Development Functional Area**

Position	Critical stakeholders	Position description	KRA
Sr. Manager- BD	Prospective clients and /or channel partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for scanning the market for prospective businesses and generating new clients from India, North America, UK-Europe &amp; ANZ region and responding to specific proposal requests from prospective clients including liaising with other functions within the company to successfully win orders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instrumental in securing orders &amp; closing deals with clients (International &amp; domestic).</li> <li>Extensively worked on RFI, RFP, Proposal, Presentation submission while pursuing various business opportunities, to name a few key accounts.</li> <li>Continuous assistance to Managing Director, business head in developing Presence in New Geographies ( South Africa &amp; Indonesia).</li> <li>Engagement with TCS/CMC for joint market offerings.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ISO audit preparation, Re engineering Zeal, BPO presentation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

✿ **Facilities Area:** The overall delivery and availability of Workplace Facilities to all employees of BPO is the main responsibility of this department. Interacting with vendors and internal customers for providing various facilities in the office including workstations and hygiene in office are the activities of this department.

From the KRAs (Table 9 and Table 10) and the review of literature, the following thirteen competencies (functional and behavioral) are identified: As mentioned earlier, the top managers have added two competencies, viz., business acumen and aligning performance with business as two functional competencies for some functional areas. To check the reliability, Cronbach alpha was used and the reliability scores were above the customary reference point 0.70.

**Table 8 : Critical Stakeholders, Position Description, & KRA For Every Position In The Workforce Management Functional Area**

Position	Critical stakeholders	Position description	KRA
Manager - Workforce management	Blue Pumpkin support team Operations & IT support team, and Clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for the Manpower Requirements, Forecasting, Scheduling and Reporting needs on a Daily/Weekly/Monthly basis for all aligned processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Projecting Quarterly / Annual requirement of employees.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning and controlling Idle Time to keep it close to targeted time.</li> <li>Monitoring Service Levels.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Building processes and mechanisms to ensure WFM specialist and New hires quickly learn and become proficient in Blue Pumpkin &amp; CMS applications.</li> <li>Coordinating with Clients on Planning and Strategizing.</li> <li>Enable Operations to deliver the agreed KPIs and enhance the Productivity and Profitability of the process.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that the call volumes forecasted for all processes specified are within the specification.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Monitoring and auditing all reports sent by the TL/Exec to the Client and Operations teams.</li> <li>Maintaining a track of Seat Utilization and identifying opportunities to improve the same.</li> <li>Creating and maintaining reports on various metrics and sharing the same with all.</li> <li>Escalating all workforce issues with the BP support partner.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verify Billing data before being shared with Clients.</li> <li>Drive ISO / BS 7799 in the WFM function.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Table 9 : Critical Stakeholders, Position Description, & KRA For Every Position In The Facilities Functional Area**

Position	Critical stakeholders	Position description	KRA
Manager-Facilities	Clients, visitors and all functional areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for management of facilities, power supply, air-conditioning, security systems, office upkeep, cafeteria/pantry, administrative support services (for senior management team, employees and visitors), procurement/distribution of office supplies, transport, travel, guest house, and vendor management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost Efficiency</li> <li>Internal Customer Satisfaction</li> <li>Subordinate Development &amp; Team Training                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Power Supply to Premises</li> </ul> </li> <li>Documentation - Monthly MIS &amp; facilities functional matrix.</li> <li>Compliance with Processes &amp; Procedures - ISO, CMS, BS 7799.</li> </ul>

The findings suggested that all the 13 competencies were perceived to be “important” or “very important”. The top six most important competencies for middle managers included Technical expertise, compliance to standards, analytical thinking, planning and organizing, and strategic decision making. They were all rated as “very important” for the success of middle managers, with average mean values higher than 4.00 out of 5.00.

Negotiation skill was perceived to be very important in the HR area and Facilities area while Aligning performance to business has received high importance in HR area, Training area and the Facilities area, while it was lesser in the other areas. Business Acumen received high importance in the Operations area, Training, and Business Development area and less than high importance in the other areas. In fact, quality orientation and analytical thinking and Planning and

**Table 10: Competencies And Cronbach's Standardized Item Alpha Values**

Competencies	Current Expertise	Current Importance
<b>Technical Competencies</b>		
1. Business Acumen		
2. Compliance to Standards		
3. Aligning performance with business		
4. Application Skills		
5. Analytical thinking		
6. Technical Expertise		
7. Quality Orientation		
8. Process Orientation	0.8691	0.8841
<b>Behavioral Competencies</b>		
9. Building partnerships		
10. Planning & Organizing		
11. Managing Vision & Purpose		
12. Strategic Decision Making		
13. Negotiation Skill	0.8771	0.8971

**Table 11: Mean Values**

Competency	Mean
Technical Expertise	4.25
Compliance to Standards	4.18
Planning & Organizing	4.05
Strategic Decision Making	4.05
Analytical Thinking	4.14
Quality Orientation	4.14

organizing and strategic decision making received equal importance. Technical expertise, compliance to standards, Managing Vision and Purpose, and Building Partnerships are found to be critical for success across all functional areas.

## COMPETENCIES IDENTIFIED, ACCEPTED, AND IMPLEMENTED

**Table 12 : Finance Area Competencies**

Position → Competencies ↓		Sr. Manager - Accounts	Manager - Accounts	Sr. manager- Material Management	Manager- SBU	Sr. Manager - Costing and MIS
Functional/ Technical Competencies	Compliance to Standards	5	4	4	4	4
	Application Skills (MS Excel & SAP)	4	4	4	4	4
	Technical Expertise - Finance	4	5	3	4	3
	Analytical Thinking	5	3	5	3	5
	Quality Orientation(Attention to Detail)	4	4	4	4	4
	Process orientation	-----	-----	-----	5	-----
Behavioral Competencies	Building Partnerships	4	4	4	3	4
	Planning and Organizing	4	3	4	4	4
	Managing Vision and Purpose	5	4	5	5	5
	Strategic Decision Making	4	4	4	-----	4

----- indicates, "Not relevant"

**Table 13 : IT Area Competencies**

Position → Competencies ↓		Sr. Manager Telecom & IT Support	Manager - IT Support	Sr. manager- N/W Security & Application Development	Manager- Application Development	Sr. Manager- Presales & Projects	Manager - Presales
Functional/ Technical Competencies	Compliance to Standards	5	4	5	4	5	4
	Application Skills (SAP)	----	----	-----	-----	4	-----
	Technical Expertise - IT	5	4	5	4	5	4
	Analytical Thinking	5	4	5	4	5	4
	Quality Orientation	4	4	4	4	4	4
	(Attention to Detail)						
	Process orientation	-----	----	-----	----	-----	----
Behavioral Competencies	Building Partnerships	4	3	4	3	5	3
	Planning and Organizing	5	4	4	4	4	4
	Managing Vision and Purpose	5	4	5	4	5	4
	Strategic Decision Making	4	-----	4	-----	4	-----
	Process Orientation	-----	3	-----	3		3

**Table 14 : HR Area Competencies**

Position → Competencies ↓		Sr. Manager - HR (Location)	Manager- HR (Operations)	Manager - HR (Recruitment)
Functional/ Technical Competencies	Compliance to Standards	3	3	4
	Application Skills	5	3	3
	Technical Expertise - HR	3	4	4
	Analytical Thinking	5	4	4
	Quality Orientation(Attention to Detail)	4	5	4
Behavioral Competencies	Building Partnerships	4	4	5
	Planning and Organizing	4	4	4
	Managing Vision and Purpose	3	5	3
	Aligning performance for success	5	4	4
	Negotiation skill	4	4	4

**Table 15 : Training Area Competencies**

Position → Competencies ↓		Sr. Manager - HR (Training)	Manager - Training
Functional/ Technical Competencies	Technical/professional Expertise	4	4
	Aligning Performance for Success	5	4
	Business Acumen	4	4
	Analytical Thinking	4	4
	Quality Orientation(Attention to Detail)	5	5
Behavioral Competencies	Managing Vision and Purpose	4	3
	Building Partnerships	4	3
	Planning and Organizing	5	4
	Strategic Decision Making	4	4

**Table 16 : Operations Area Competencies**

Position → Competencies ↓		Sr. Manager - Operations	Manager - Operations
Functional/ Technical Competencies	Technical/professional Expertise	5	4
	Aligning Performance for Success	4	3
	Business Acumen	5	4
	Analytical Thinking	4	3
	Quality Orientation(Attention to Detail)	4	4
Behavioral Competencies	Managing Vision and Purpose	5	4
	Building Partnerships	4	3
	Planning and Organizing	5	4
	Strategic Decision Making	4	4

**Table 17 : Business Development Area Competencies**

Position → Competencies ↓		Sr. Manager - Business Development
Functional/ Technical Competencies	Business Acumen	4
	Professional Expertise	5
	Building Partnerships	5
	Analytical Thinking	4
	Negotiation Skills	5
Behavioral Competencies	Quality Orientation	4
	Managing Vision and Purpose	5
	Planning and Organizing	5
	Strategic Decision Making	4

**Table 18: Workforce Management Competencies**

Manager - WFM	
Functional Competency	Proficiency
Aligning Performance for Success	4
Business Acumen	4
Technical/Professional Expertise	4
Analytical Thinking	4
Quality Orientation(Attention to Detail)	4
Behavioral Competency	Proficiency
Managing Vision and Purpose	5
Building Partnerships	4
Planning and Organizing	5
Strategic Decision Making	4

**Table 19 : Facilities area Competencies**

Manager - Facilities	
Functional Competency	Proficiency
Compliance to Standards	4
Professional Expertise	5
Analytical Thinking	4
Quality Orientation(Attention to Detail)	5
Behavioral Competency	Proficiency
Building Partnerships	5
Planning and Organizing	5
Managing Vision and Purpose	5
Negotiation Skills	5

## CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This study attempted to explore the competencies critical for middle managers in BPO. The competencies identified here for middle managers are relevant for their positions. Due to their unique position in the organization, middle level

managers face a lot of challenges than the top level managers. More specifically, the position of middle managers placed them in a complex network with other people. Developing, adapting, and maintaining good relationships are very important for middle managers. Technical expertise, compliance to standards, Managing Vision and Purpose, Building Partnerships, Planning and Organizing, Strategic Decision Making, negotiating was identified to be critical for success, for middle managers across all functional areas in the BPO organization.

✿ The Competency Mapping Process can be further made more helpful by involving all the stakeholders involved during the formation of the competency profile and also during mapping, shortly, a 360 degree feedback can be adopted for these processes.

✿ The setting up of assessment and development centers in the organization can help the competency based processes with more assistance and can also nourish the talent pool available in the organization.

✿ Recruitment and selection in BPO can be made into a competency based one, where in, the competencies required for the role are laid before the selection process, thereby enabling the selection of candidates who fit in the required competencies.

✿ The training department can also take up the responsibilities of providing training to employees on the various required competencies and their proficiency levels, thereby nourishing the intellectual strength of the organization as well as individuals.

## HOW THIS STUDY HELPS HRM?

This study was intended to identify the functional and behavioral competencies required for middle level managers in BPO in India. It contributes to HRD field in two ways; **First**, it informs the KRAs, the competency profile and critical stakeholders of middle managers in Indian BPOs, **Secondly**, it can act as reference to researchers while making similar studies.

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