

Defining 'Curiosity' as a Key Competency with Its Related Behavioral Indicators for Knowledge Driven Technology Industry

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Abstract: *Curiosity plays a crucial role in learning and development in any organization and at various levels. It is a concept which is not only complex in nature but also extremely challenging to understand in terms of its applicability and impact. In this paper the contexts under which curiosity can be elicited for mapping it to the organizational level competency models is discussed along with its key behavioral indicators. In this paper we'll review mapping an important EI element 'Curiosity' to individual-organizational competencies by breaking it into several easily comprehensible sections viz. understanding competency mapping & competency modeling, understanding curiosity in the context of knowledge driven technology industry and defining curiosity as a key behavioral indicator for knowledge driven technology industry*

Keywords: Curiosity, competency, key behavioral indicators, competency mapping

1. What is a Competency?

A competency is the expressed ability to be effective and efficient in a unique situation. Several types of behaviors may make up a given competency. For example, one competency is the ability to negotiate. Negotiation skill may surface in a variety of situations, from extracting the maximum conditions in a small team project to making wise moves during for a win-win situation in times of crisis. Competencies can also be bundled into various classes, or, categories. Examples of such categories include, competencies that are unique to a certain role, or competencies that fit a broader range of hierarchy vertically or horizontally. Whatever the competency is, there are three key attributes that are consistent across the board are that the competencies must always be observable, measurable, and vital to success in one's job in terms of performance and related job satisfaction.

1.1 Competency Modeling

A Competency model is an accurate, observable, and measurable list of the knowledge pointers, skills, traits and attributes demonstrated through behavior that results in outstanding performance within a given set of work environment.

Competency modeling is organized into tiers of competencies and includes descriptions of the activities and behaviors associated with each competency. Competency models are varied in terms of their applicability to a particular type of organization and industry and are often customized according to the organization. As such, the elements of a competency model communicate, in clear terms, the situations and conditions of performance. Individual competencies are organized into competency themes and mapped in under various competency groups in a competency model to enable people in an organization or profession to understand, discuss, and apply the competencies to workforce performance and evaluate the same.

1.2 Understanding Curiosity in the context of knowledge driven technology industry

Curiosity is much more important to an enterprise's performance than was previously thought. That's because cultivating it organization wide helps leaders and their employees adapt to uncertain market conditions and external pressures: When an employee's curiosity is triggered, they think more deeply and rationally about decisions and tend to come up with more-creative, innovative and away-from-the-league solutions. Additionally, leaders gain more respect from their followers and motivate employees to develop more-trusting and collaborative work dynamics with colleagues because of their curiosity.

Moreover, the world of technology is highly dynamic, the technology or language that might be frequently used now could become obsolete in few years. For example- Learning new technologies not only expands one's mind and career options but can also help developers better understand aspects of languages or technology they previously thought they knew. In the current scenario coding skills are the most sought after skills in a knowledge driven industry as are certain programming languages and technologies, which translates into promotions, higher salaries or better projects for employees with that skill. For many developers, the desire to learn new technologies is powerful. Whether it's learning a new language in reference to the role or acquiring a new technical skill project, developers have a passion for code. So it is quite apparent that learning new technologies is important to anyone serving as a developer at work.

Defining curiosity as a key behavioral indicator for knowledge driven technology industry

We have defined fifteen key behavioral indicators that would help analyze the competency 'Curiosity' under Human Competency Approach which can be served as sub-part of any organization-based competency model for employees at Entry-level, mid-level or senior level, across all verticals. Instead of gathering data, selection of concepts

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from available individual job competency models and from books and articles on leadership, business, organizational development, and human resource development has been resorted to.

1.3 Classification of Competencies

In order to set the context of theoretically derived competence classes, a brief review is given regarding one of the classification patterns.

Carrol and McCrackin (1988) divided competencies into three categories.

- 1) Core competencies (Hamel and Prahalad,1994): A core competency provides an organization with a unique capability to create a difference in its products as compared to its competitors and use that strength strategically. Core competencies refer to those competencies which essential and almost necessary for an employee to possess.
- 2) Leadership / managerial competencies: This category involves competencies that are related to leading an organization and people. Some examples include "visionary leadership", "strategic thinking", and "developing people".
- 3) Functional competencies: These are job-specific skills required to perform a particular job role or profession (Ozcelik and Ferman, 2006:75).

Defining Curiosity as a key behavioral human competency as a sub-part of an organizational-level competency model

Human Competency	Element Name	Key Behavioral Indicators
Trait/ Attitude	Curiosity	1. Exhibits Creativity
		2. High on problem solving trajectory
		3. Action-oriented
		4. Ready to take corrective measures
		5. Embrace unpredictable
		6. Ready to research into newer fields
		7. Constantly build knowledge
		8. Embrace questions and solicit feedback for self improvement
		9. Open to insights and opinions of the third-party
		10. Easily form and maintain work-place healthy relationships with their co-workers
		11. Good listener
		12. High learning ability
		13. Self motivated to share the knowledge among peers and subordinates
		14. sense of achievement
		15. Focused

Here are fifteen key behavioral indicators that would help analyze the trait-Curiosity under Human Competency Approach:

1. Exhibits Creativity -Every potential employee or a current employee has a need. A curious employee is research oriented towards a product or service in an effort to bring product enhancement and improvement to the quality of service.

2. High on problem solving trajectory and activity level- Curious employees tend to maintain involvement levels and discover unknown facts about their industry. While others are procrastinating or repeating the same methodologies over and again, these people tend to challenge traditional and beaten methods and are undergoing research and experimentation, to learn and develop new methodologies.

3. Action oriented-curious people tend to be optimistic than their other counterparts. They take rejections in stride. They aim to evaluate various courses of actions discover what went wrong or what they could improvise on, and then take action.

4. Ready to take corrective measures -Curious employees and leaders inculcate a environment where every practice is questioned. This directs ways for the organization to innovate, become flexible towards change, and maintain an competitive edge in fast-moving, competitive markets. This motivates them to continuously optimize their organizational practices. Curious employees brain storm till the time they discover more about the issue, or identify the root cause of a problem.

5. Embrace unpredictable-Curious employees welcome professional and role-related surprises. They try new technologies, languages or put across questions they’ve never asked earlier.

6. Ready to research into newer fields-Curious employees are always researching and experimenting with newer techniques so as to constantly build knowledge. .

7. Constantly build knowledge -Curious people are avid learners. Taking cues and learning from what worked in a variety of scenarios is important to continue refining one’s process. Curiosity makes employees learn all they can about their process, and have the requisite data to to pin down on the optimal practices.

8. Embrace questions and solicit feedback for self improvement -Curious employees welcome questions. When encountering something new, they aren’t afraid to ask questions and solicit feedback that they think will make them better. After some practice, these people become familiar with the new domains. And this is a huge advantage for anyone in a dynamic business setting where unexpected market trends follow.

9. Open to insights and opinions of the third-party -The ability to confide a sense of being right in favor of being open to the insights and opinions of others is a trait of curious people, this has innumerable benefits the work-place culture, particularly among leaders, curious teams always look at a wide array of scope for product innovations and solutions to problems.

10. Easily form and maintain work-place healthy relationships with their co-workers - a healthy level of curiosity about different viewpoints and opinions enables employee to easily form and maintain work-place relationships.

11. Good listener-Curious employees tend to be not only good listeners but also conversationalist while being so they focus on the person they're connecting with and talking to about what they're interested in or might be struggling with.

12. High learning ability-Curious employees are always seeking new skills and knowledge by engaging in workshops, enrolling in new professional courses and in self learning.

13. Self- motivated to share the knowledge among peers and subordinates- Curiosity keeps the employees consistently self motivated to share the knowledge among peers and subordinates, to take the take the efforts in training and grooming them in new things which in turn keeps them self-motivated to put in the time and effort to learn.

14. Achievement Oriented-While most employees are afraid of the contingencies, curious people treat it as an opportunity to move ahead. In spite of being satisfied with their current role, curious people intend to make ground breaking discoveries or practices which takes the organization notches above is rewarding for both the employee as well as the organization respectively.

15. Focused-Finally, and most importantly, curious employees are focused towards achieving their objectives of learning that they find it easier to focus on multiple aspects of a thing at a time.