

*Moscow, Russia*  
*Almasud Meshari Mohammed S.,*  
*master's student*  
*Moscow Pedagogical*  
*State University,*  
*Moscow, Russia*

## **ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYEES' BUSINESS QUALITIES BASED ON A COMPETENCE-BASED APPROACH**

*Abstract. This article examines the application of a competency-based approach to personnel assessment. It discusses the theoretical foundations of the competency-based approach, its objectives, advantages, and recommendations for implementation. It also analyzes the impact of the competency-based approach on improving the overall effectiveness of the personnel assessment system. The study's results substantiate the feasibility of implementing a personnel assessment system based on the competency-based approach.*

*Keywords: competencies, competency assessment methods, competency-based approach, personnel assessment, HR management, organizational effectiveness.*

In the current conditions of dynamic transformation of the labor market, understanding individual abilities and skills has ceased to be an optional element, becoming a mandatory requirement. Empirical evidence suggests that the list of competencies in demand in various professions has changed by about a quarter since 2015, and this indicator is projected to double by 2027. This trend actualizes the introduction of effective evaluation tools.

In this context, competence-based assessment (COE), which is a strategic approach to measuring an individual's ability to perform professional tasks relevant

to the position held, is of particular importance. This paper is devoted to the analysis of COE: its essence, classification of applied methods, implementation procedure are considered, and the advantages that this approach provides are identified.

Competence-based assessment is a methodology aimed at measuring the skills, knowledge and abilities of an individual in relation to specific job responsibilities or educational goals. Unlike traditional forms of assessment, which focus on theoretical training, the competence approach focuses on practical effectiveness, assessing the ability of the subject to effectively apply the acquired information in real conditions.

As part of the competence assessment, tasks are developed that model current professional requirements or educational goals. These tasks allow you to measure employees' proficiency in key competencies. The results obtained can be structured through a competence matrix, which facilitates the processes of reporting, monitoring and data analysis. Competency-based training often accompanies the evaluation process, ensuring that staff are prepared to meet established standards.

Assessment of competencies in the work environment is necessary to verify the ability of employees to perform tasks in accordance with pre-defined criteria. Such assessments are used for external recruitment, internal staff movement through promotion, and identifying professional development needs by measuring technical and behavioral competencies. A hands-on orientation allows organizations to align staff competencies with functional responsibilities, ensuring optimal job placement and creating personalized training programs aimed at increasing productivity. This method also facilitates succession planning, allowing you to identify potential leaders based on demonstrated competencies.

When evaluating students, the competence approach allows you to determine the level of proficiency in specific skills or knowledge, focusing on practical application, and not on rote memorization. This approach makes it

possible to determine whether students are able to use their knowledge in real-world situations, ensuring that they meet academic or industry requirements. Competence assessment provides the formation of individualized educational trajectories, where the student's progress is determined by the achieved level of competence, and not by the time frame. In addition, it prepares students for professional activities by developing critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and adaptability, which aligns educational outcomes with the needs of today's industry.

Competency assessment measures an individual's ability to integrate a set of knowledge, skills, and behavioral patterns to successfully complete tasks in real-world settings, assessing how effectively a person combines various elements to achieve the desired results. In contrast, skill assessment focuses on measuring specific technical or soft skills in an isolated context, often determining proficiency in areas such as communication, problem solving, or technical expertise.

Organizations often use a skills assessment system to provide a structured approach to measuring and developing these competencies. Knowledge assessment, in turn, is focused on testing the individual's understanding of facts, concepts, and theories; however, it may not reflect the ability to apply this knowledge in practical activities.

The key components of a competency-based assessment are:

- Clear competence framework. The competency framework defines the specific skills, knowledge, and behaviors needed to successfully perform a role, providing a standardized benchmark for evaluating employees and matching evaluation criteria to the specifics of the position.
- Evaluation criteria. These criteria detail the expected performance levels for each competence, contributing to an objective assessment and structured measurement of employee compliance with the required standards.
- Real-world scenarios. Assessment is often based on real or simulated work situations, which allows you to evaluate the application of competencies in practice and reflects current requirements for completing tasks.

- Feedback loops. Continuous formative feedback allows individuals to understand their strengths and areas of development, stimulating continuous improvement of skills and ensuring effective achievement of the required level of competence.

The assessment procedure, based on the competence approach, is a permanent cycle that combines diagnostics and improvement, and not a single event. Each stage follows logically from the previous one, which guarantees systematic improvement and mastery of professional skills. The key phases of this process are described below<sup>1</sup>.

### 1. Self-assessment

The starting point of the competence assessment is introspection. At this stage, employees reflect on their own abilities and skills that are relevant to their current position. This is a cognitive procedure that allows you to identify both strengths and growth areas, understand key competencies, and identify aspects that require further development. Objective self-assessment can form a reliable foundation for the subsequent stages of competence assessment.

### 2. Analysis of workplace activities

The next stage involves an examination of professional activity, during which the manager or manager evaluates the employee's performance in real-world working conditions. This analysis usually takes into account the quality of tasks performed, productivity, ability to manage tasks, team interaction skills, and other role-specific competencies. The goal is to determine how effectively an individual applies their knowledge and skills in a practical context. A detailed study of work behavior can provide valuable information that either confirms or contradicts the initial self-assessment.

### 3. Identifying development needs

The next step is to identify gaps or deficits that need to be addressed. At this stage, the results of self-assessment and workplace analysis are synthesized in

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<sup>1</sup> Kalinovskaya N.A., Yakovleva K.V. Implementation of professional corporate standards and personnel assessment tasks // International Journal of Humanities and Natural Sciences. 2017. No. 3.

order to identify areas that need improvement. The ultimate goal is to develop a comprehensive plan aimed at eliminating the identified skill gaps and further strengthening competencies.

#### 4. Learning within and outside the workflow

Training is an integral component of the competence assessment procedure. Once the estimated data is collected, it is critical to effectively implement them in practice. On-the-job training provides an opportunity to improve skills in a real-world, hands-on environment and includes activities such as job rotation, mentoring, or monitoring the work of a colleague. On the contrary, learning outside the workplace involves more structured formats, such as participation in seminars, webinars, or official educational programs.

#### 5. Re-evaluation

After the completion of the training phase, a second assessment is conducted to measure progress and determine the impact of educational activities. This step is crucial for verifying whether the identified development needs have been met and whether there is a noticeable improvement in the employee's competencies.

#### 6. Continuous improvement

Finally, competency assessment emphasizes the importance of continuous diagnosis and improvement. After re-evaluation, the cycle resumes, which ensures that the skills are up-to-date and meet modern requirements. Regular self-assessments and fieldwork reviews, combined with continuous training and development initiatives, help individuals consistently improve their professional skills. According to PwC, 74% of employees are ready to learn new skills or undergo retraining to maintain employment, which makes continuous improvement a joint task of employers and employees aimed at improving their skills and career growth.

#### Methods of competence assessment

Unlike the assessment procedure, which describes a sequence of stages, these methods focus on the tools used to measure competencies. Each method provides a unique perspective, ensuring that the assessment is comprehensive. The choice of a particular approach depends on the position, context, and purpose of the assessment. The main methods used in the competence approach are listed below.

In the context of staff competence assessment, several key methods are identified, each of which has specific characteristics and scope of application. The first of these is an assessment by the manager and supervisor, which is based on direct observation and analysis of employee interaction in the work environment. During this procedure, higher-level employees evaluate such parameters as the quality of tasks performed, productivity, ability to organize the work process, teamwork skills, and other competencies determined by the specifics of the position. Such an assessment is often an important element of a broader management audit aimed at identifying the individual's leadership potential and willingness to accept increased responsibility. This approach provides an external perspective on the employee's current performance and current capabilities.

The second method involves the involvement of an expert or an experienced specialist to analyze the level of competence. Such a person can be an industry professional or an internal expert of the organization who has a deep understanding of the specifics of the role and the required competencies. The assessments received from such specialists are highly valuable, as they are based on their extensive practical experience and fundamental knowledge of the subject area.

The third approach is a multi-pronged assessment, known as the 360-degree method or using multiple evaluators. This technique involves collecting feedback from a variety of sources, including peers, subordinates, direct supervisors, and in some cases, clients. The 360-degree assessment provides a comprehensive view of the individual's skills, competencies, and overall

performance. This method is particularly important when evaluating managerial positions where interpersonal and managerial qualities are critically important.

The fourth method is implemented through assessment centers and accredited training organizations (RTOS). Assessment centers use tools that include modeling of work situations, structured interviews, and psychometric tests to check whether an individual meets the established standards of competence. In turn, RTOS provide services in the field of professional education and training (VET), conducting an assessment for compliance with industry standards in order to verify competencies and certify the ability of an employee to perform specific job tasks.

The fifth method is based on the use of specialized tools for assessing competencies that are part of competence management systems. These tools provide a structured and standardized approach to analyzing individual skills and abilities. The range of such tools ranges from online tests and simulations to practical tasks and performance analysis. They provide an objective measure of competence, contributing to effective skill development.

The choice of a specific method for assessing the competencies of a student or employee is determined by the context, the nature of job responsibilities, and the list of competencies being evaluated. The approach used should be consistent with the overall objective of the evaluation procedure.

The key advantage of competence assessment is the possibility of individualized learning. Each person is characterized by a unique combination of strengths, areas of development and the rate of assimilation of the material. The use of competence-based assessment allows an individual to work purposefully to eliminate their weaknesses, while continuing to improve their existing strengths. This approach is a personalized strategy that takes into account individual abilities and professional development needs.

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