

Producing Competent Civil Servants



PAHRODF

Philippines Australia
Human Resource and
Organisational Development
Facility

CSC's mandate, as the central human resource institution of the Philippine bureaucracy, is to implement "efficient and effective human resource management and development for the Philippine bureaucracy". From the time CSC was established, however, its function has always been focused to giving exams, processing appointments and ensuring that the people who are appointed to positions in government agencies have the knowledge and skills called for by the job.

"Before, we thought that as long as our recruits get a high score in the examination and they express themselves well, that is enough. Our recruitment assessment was numerical – we gave a rating of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or a rating of 75, 80, 85 – it's all about numbers," said Director Edith Dela Pena, CSC OHRMD.

In 2011, the Facility introduced the concept of "competency models" to the commission through an HR/OD intervention called Competency Modelling and Profiling. This intervention, which ran until 2012, aimed to develop the competency requirements for the different positions in the government; and assist the CSC in adopting a competency-based HR system for its recruitment, selection and promotion, performance management, talent development and career management.

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CASE STUDY

EDITH DELA PENA

Civil Service Commission



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Accordingly, in 2011, the commission set the targets for its performance governance system (PGS). Led by Director Edith Dela Pena, CSC's Office of Human Resource Management and Development set off to meet the target, i.e. 70% profile match of CSC employees by 2013. This means that employees of CSC should meet the critical competencies required of their positions by 2013.

Through a series of capacity-building initiatives, i.e. workshops, simulations, coaching, brainstorming sessions and benchmark meetings with local and international private and public organisations who have competency modelling, the Facility's intervention gave CSC an entirely new perspective on recruitment and talent management.

Beyond numbers: competency-based recruitment

"In the past, you can ask anything you want in our recruitment interview and then rate the applicant based on your assessment. Now, because of the support of the Facility, our recruitment assessment has depth and substance. We are now using behavioural event interviews (BEI) to assess competencies, and we develop write-ups about our recruits. For example, does the applicant speak well? Before if the applicant speaks English fluently, then, usually that is enough. But now speaking English effectively is just one of the competencies we look for," said Director Dela Pena.

With guidance from the Facility, CSC completed a competency model reflecting the core, leadership, and technical competencies critical to CSC and its strategic priorities. The commission updated its qualification standards to reflect not just "education, experience, training and eligibility criteria" in recruiting personnel, but also the necessary competencies relevant to the position.

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By applying the concepts of a competency-based system, the CSC recognised that (i) competencies are better predictors of effectiveness and (ii) its inclusion in the recruitment process ensures placement of the right people in the job vacancies.

“We have now prepared the different competencies required of the positions, and we are now conscious of the kind of recruits we are having in the commission. As much as possible we want to hire those who already meet or are exhibiting the required competencies of the position, because, now, we know the benefits that it can give to our organisation,” said Director Edith.

In 2012, the CSC staff trained on BEI also trained the personnel selection board (PSB) - the body that conducts assessment for the different organisations of the government in the Regions. With assistance from the Facility, CSC provided the necessary capacity building to members of the PSB, cascading their learnings on competency-based systems.

Enhanced talent management system for quality public service

With the competency model in place, CSC now also has clear basis for its talent development and assessment initiatives, job standards and promotion criteria, as well as performance management work. This is critical to CSC’s achieving its Learning and Growth objective of a 70% match of all CSC staff to the competency profiles of their positions by 2013.

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CSC first designed and implemented a competency-profiling tool to determine the percent of CSC employees who match their positions’ profile. “Now that we already have competencies in place, we are regularly doing assessment of the competencies of our people and it is easier. Now, we are working on our Learning and Development (L&D) using the competency assessment results,” said Director Dela Pena. She also said that in the past, it was not clear to them who among the employees should receive HR interventions. L&D programs therefore used to focus on people who they considered good performers. Through the Facility’s intervention, Director Dela Pena’s team strategically worked on the competency development of their people.

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“It is not just about giving any training or any program that we can think of. We now have a basis. If there are a certain percentage of our people who need to acquire certain competencies, we provide the right program for them. We realised that it is important to bring the people who don't meet the required competencies of their job to the level where they are supposed to be because it will benefit the entire organisation,” said Director Dela Pena.

With this as their motivation, CSC already surpassed their 70% target. Director Dela Pena reported that in 2013 76.4% of their people are already meeting the mission critical competencies of their positions. Aside from surpassing the target, this result is also a big improvement from their 53% score in 2011 when they first did the assessment on the CSC employees' competencies.

From regulatory to strategic

Director Dela Pena has been with CSC for thirty years now and has seen the evolution of HR in the commission from the time when it was performing traditional regulatory functions, i.e. leave computation, recording of attendance and punctuality and administering exams, to doing more strategic functions. She considers herself fortunate to be in the commission at this time.

“We are lucky to be provided with all the necessary interventions, not just the competency project, but also other relevant interventions – leadership and coaching, strengthening of CSI, change management and now the L&D and PRIME HR. The interventions allowed us to have a better understanding, appreciation, and connection of human resource management and of the different HR systems that we are now trying to put in place to ensure well-performing HR offices, systems and processes, not only for the commission, but more importantly, for the entire bureaucracy,” said Director Dela Pena.