

Competency Statements

The first step in the training needs analysis process is to identify the future state. What do you want the results to look like when the skills gap has been bridged and training is complete?

An easy place to find the ideal future state is to look for competency statements in a job description or job analysis conducted by your HR department.

A good future state summary is objective, realistic, and quantitative, just like a competency statement.

Sample future state/competency statements for someone working in a contact center, for example, could include a general competency statement that is further broken into individual competencies. Here are some examples.

Competency Group: Contribute to an environment that focuses on customer value.

Competencies required:

- Manage knowledge of the customer and the market
- Create value with every sales opportunity
- Communicate the value to customers
- Create and manage a customer retention plan
- Measure the value of the transaction

Competency Group: Maintain up-to-date product and technical knowledge.

Competencies required:

- Take learning and professional development opportunities to keep up to date
- Acquire up-to-date technical skills and demonstrate proficiency every four to six months
- Be a lifelong learner
- Conduct product and marketplace research to stay current

Competency Group: Strong communication skills.

Competencies required:

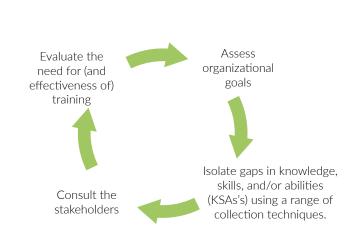
- Able to speak clearly
- Capable problem solver
- Complete training on communication for difficult situations

When Is Training Not Appropriate?

When these issues are present, training is not going to resolve the problem.

- Unclear feedback or unclear performance expectations.
- Lack of resources (tools, materials, equipment) needed to do the job.
- A poor match between the employee's skills and the job requirements.
- Factors stemming from illness or injury.

The ICE Method



Sample Analysis Questions

Here are some sample questions.

- What are the key goals and targets for your group in the next six to twelve months?
- What are the challenges/barriers that you face in meeting these goals?
- Describe the type of person who can contribute the most in meeting these goals.
- Think of your own knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA's). Do you have what you need to meet these goals?
- What are your weaknesses for meeting these goals?
- What additional KSA's would help you to be successful?
- When someone new starts working in your area, what information and training would be most helpful to them?
- Beyond training, what else could be done to help you and your fellow team members to be successful?
- Identify training needs that will assist employees in developing KSA's to perform better and meet goals more effectively.

Sample Training Needs Analysis

Future State	Current State	Gap	Action Plan
Customer e-mail inquiries will be replied to within 24 hours on average	Average response time is 32 hours	8 hours	 Create e-mail templates about the most frequent inquiries Conduct training on using and customizing these templates Conduct problem-solving training
Customer telephone inquiries will be answered within 5 minutes on average	Average hold time is 8 minutes	3 minutes	 Create electronic templates to replace paper templates Conduct training on the new templates Provide customer service reps with more clearly defined authorization and spending levels Stagger lunch and shift changeover times

Gathering Information

When you conduct a training needs analysis, you can use any or all of the five primary data collection methods:

- Interviews
- Focus group discussions
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Document and statistical analysis
- Observation

To get the information you need, you might be able to select a "vertical slice" of the organization or a representative sampling. Or, you might interview everyone. You might also use a blended approach involving interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires.

The Five Whys Technique

(Five is a good number of "why" questions to ask, but you may need more or fewer questions than this.)

Why were you late for work today?

I was late for work because my car ran out of gas.

Why did your car run out of gas?

My car ran out of gas because I didn't put gas in it.

Why didn't you put gas in your car?

I didn't put gas in my car because I didn't have any money.

Why didn't you have any money?

I don't have any money because I spent it all on the weekend.