**15five**

# The 15Five Competency Creation Playbook

# Overview & FAQs

## What is a competency?
## And what is the difference between a competency and a skill?

A competency is a demonstrable and measurable collection of knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work functions successfully.

A skill is defined as a proficiency, facility, or dexterity that is acquired or developed through training or experience.

In short, a skill is a specific ability to perform a task or activity, while a competency is a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that are required to perform a particular job or task effectively.

**Some key differences between competency and skill:**

- **Scope:** A skill is specific and focused, while a competency is broader and more comprehensive.

- **Application:** A skill is typically applied to a specific task or activity, while a competency is applied to a broader role or job.

- **Development:** Skills are often developed through training and practice, while competencies require a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that are developed over time.

- **Measurement:** Skills can be measured more easily and objectively than competencies, which are more subjective and require a more holistic approach to evaluation.

*Sources: TalentAlign, GPT-4, 15Five*

## What is a competency framework?

A competency framework refers to a collection of competencies that are needed for effective job performance. The combination of knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitude, and other characteristics, and the set of competencies, is typically referred to as the competency framework.

*Source: [SHRM](SHRM)*

## What's the purpose of having competencies?

The clarity that competencies bring helps managers be more effective in their roles, increase team performance, and increase employee engagement at every level.

**Competencies are designed to:**

- Enable high performance through role clarity and definition

- Provide transparency, clarity, and alignment between managers and employees on what is expected to achieve high levels of performance and how to grow in the role.

- Provide an agreement around what extraordinary looks like in a given role, where managers and team members can go back to the competencies anytime as a reference point to align on performance.

- Provide clarity and examples on what ineffective looks like, so there's no question, and so direct feedback can be given with less stress and discomfort by the manager or peers.

- Promote growth and development and link knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitude, and other characteristics to outcomes.

- Enable a manager to coach someone on what they can specifically work on when performance is not meeting expectations. This part also helps those who want to move into specific roles know what they can work on, learn, develop, or get exposure to in order to prepare themselves to someday get a promotion into that role.

- Provide tools for performance management and performance assessment.

- Cultivate strong company and team culture.

- Generate value and impact - for your team members, the company, your customers, and your broader community.

**Having competencies helps to resolve the following pain points:**

- Mitigate bare-minimum and low performance issues on teams

- Alleviate performance perception gaps between an individual team member and their manager

- Provide clarity around performance expectations by operating through agreement (rather than from expectation)

- For managers who shy away from giving direct feedback, competencies minimize the discomfort and do a lot of the heavy lifting for the manager.

  > Competencies can be a manager's best friend - they make it possible to say and point to behavioral statements that are typically challenging to surface.

**Therefore, competencies also:**

- Help provide coaching reference material for managers, and self-development tips for employees

- Help guide managers and team members on possible internal career paths based on strengths, zone of genius, and high performance to-date

- Help inform managers and leadership around retention and succession strategies

- Provide useful details for recruiters and interviews, and create effective behavioral interviews for hiring new team members

- This helps hiring managers and the interview team to better vet the candidates and make informed decisions around hiring the most appropriate candidate for the role, team, and company.

## Who are stakeholders involved in supporting a Competency Framework? How does it benefit each group?

- **Department Leaders and Managers are responsible** for defining competencies for their team's roles. This will help define and hold team members to a high standard of performance, which will lead to achievement of desired impact around business outcomes. Competencies also help department leaders and managers identify individual and team strengths, any gaps in competencies, and training and development opportunities.

- **Team Members** are held accountable to taking responsibility in proactively identifying and developing areas of growth to take their performance to the next level through strengths-role alignment and competency development. This will enable team members to achieve extraordinary performance and growth in their career.

- **The HR and People Team** is responsible for partnering with department leaders and managers to define job descriptions. The competency framework is a key part of Role and Performance Agreements - these are tools that act as a north star for each individual at 15Five and our success as an organization is not possible without them. The HR/People team is also responsible for orchestrating performance reviews and enabling the capability to measure competencies. This will enable the HR/People team to have visibility into areas of development around competencies.

- The **Senior Leadership Team** is responsible for holding all department leaders, managers, and team members to a high standard of performance by advocating for the importance of the competency framework and sharing input around what extraordinary looks like on their respective teams.

- A **member of the HR/People Team** is the owner of the competency framework and is held responsible and accountable to the development and maintenance of the framework, in addition to supporting all stakeholders involved.

## How do I assess competencies at my org?

Competencies can be measured via your 15Five performance review process. Review admins can indicate whether or not they want to ask competency questions in a question template. They can then specify if they want to ask "role-based", "group", and/or "global" competency questions.

The system will apply the correct questions to a review cycle by leveraging the role of the participants in the cycle to determine which competencies should be assessed.

By being reviewed on current competency levels, team members will get a sense of what knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitude, and other characteristics are needed to create impact and achieve outcomes in their respective roles.

Having competencies as a central part of your performance review process also helps facilitate career development conversations between managers and employees, providing clarity and confidence for all parties involved.

## What else should we do with our competency data?

**The data will enable managers and individual team members to:**

- *Address any perception gaps* in competency levels

- *Create clarity* on how 1-2 prioritized competencies can be further developed

- Enable the individual team member to ***create self-development goals***, focused on 1-2 prioritized competencies

**Managers can also leverage summary level data for their teams to identify:**

- Individual and team strengths

- Gaps in competencies

- Training and development opportunities

# Role Competencies Creation Guide

Our recommendation is to have team leaders **create 5 competencies for each role on your team**. If you feel the need to have more than 5 competencies, we recommend a maximum of 7 competencies.

**NOTE**: If there is only one person in a given role, you can create team competencies that are relevant to all team members OR encourage that person to help define what extraordinary looks like in their role.

## Here are our recommended steps to follow when creating role-based competencies in your organization:

**STEP 1**  Gather input from your team members using a *Google Form*

**STEP 2**  Research industry resources for examples of specific role competencies, and consult free AI tools like ChatGPT (see below for example prompts and competencies)

**STEP 3**  Synthesize qualitative information gathered from team members and industry resources

**STEP 4**  Create role-based competencies.

- Leverage the behavioral statements your team members said as descriptors of the competencies

- Define what extraordinary looks like, what good looks like, and what ineffective looks like

**STEP 5**  Share the role competencies on a team meeting

- Train the team on what the role competencies are

- Gather feedback, create alignment and agreement

**STEP 6**  Update the role's job description to incorporate the role competencies

**STEP 7**  Provide team members with the updated job description, and share the JD with the HR/People team

**STEP 8**  Leverage the 15Five performance review cycle to continuously measure each competency by role, group, and or company-wide

# Competency Library

## 15Five's Examples of Competencies For Managers

### Developing Business Acumen

Developing Business Acumen refers to the ability to analyze complex situations, anticipate future trends and possibilities, and develop plans that take into account various factors and contingencies across a business environment.

**Team members with this competency are skilled at:**

- Considering the broader context and long-term implications of a decision or action.

- Breaking down complex problems into manageable parts and analyzing them systematically.

- Developing strategies that are aligned with organizational goals and objectives.

### Setting Goals

Setting Goals refers to the ability to prioritize work and define measurable objectives that an individual or organization wants to achieve. It involves identifying the desired outcome or results and developing a plan to reach that goal.

**Team members with this competency are skilled at:**

- Understanding the company-wide goals, and setting team/individual goals that move the needle on business outcomes and impact

- Creating effective Role & Performance Agreements for each role that outlines the mission, outcomes, and competencies of the role, so that each team member has role clarity

- Defining quantifiable and qualitative KPIs and metrics for each role

## Enabling Productivity

Enabling productivity refers to the process of creating an environment or providing resources and tools that allow individuals to work efficiently and effectively towards achieving their goals. Enabling productivity involves identifying the factors that may hinder productivity and finding ways to eliminate or mitigate them.

**Team members with this competency are skilled at:**

- Implementing regular check-ins, such as weekly or monthly meetings, to review progress and provide feedback on performance.

- Holding team members accountable for their actions and decisions.

- Re-establishing metrics to measure progress towards achieving goals and objectives when priorities shift.

## Giving and Receiving Feedback

Giving and receiving feedback is the process of providing or getting information about performance, behavior, or actions with the intention of improvement or the continuation of doing something well.

**Team members with this competency are skilled at:**

- Providing specific, constructive feedback to their team, which can help them identify areas for improvement and take steps to enhance their performance.

- Being open to criticism and willing to make changes in their behavior or approach.

- Listening actively to the feedback provided by others, and taking steps to act on the feedback to improve performance.

## Influencing Others

Influencing others refers to the ability to affect people's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. People with this skill are aware of people, their values and needs and they use this knowledge as a means to drive organizational impact.

**Team members with this competency are skilled at:**

- Communicating priorities and work effectively across the org.

- Building the team's change capability and capacity by transparently communicating the why behind changes

- Demonstrating the behaviors and attitudes they want to see in their team members, such as accountability, responsibility, and professionalism.

## Supporting Career Growth

Supporting career growth involves helping individuals to develop the knowledge, skills, and experience they need to achieve their career goals. It can take many forms, including mentoring, training, coaching, and providing opportunities for learning and growth.

**Team members with this competency are skilled at:**

- Developing effective team and role specific onboarding and training

- Understanding what motivates each of your team members, aligning strengths and energizing work to their roles

- Co-creating growth plans with each of your team members, effectively communicating their potential for increased rewards over time based on performance

- Identifying opportunities for team members that enable their growth and development

## Building Strong Teams

Building a strong team involves fostering a group of individuals who work well together, are committed to a common purpose, and are able to achieve their goals efficiently and effectively together.

**Team members with this competency are skilled at:**

- Building rapport and trust with each individual team member, and between team members

- Demonstrating ownership for team culture and employee engagement initiatives

- Encouraging a sense of belonging and ensuring the equitable treatment of all

## Self-Management

Self-management includes leaders staying organized, focused, and productive while also managing their teams effectively.

**Team members with this competency are skilled at:**

- Understanding who they are as a leader, their impact on others in how they show up with your team

- Engaging in conscious practices to self regulate

- Assessing situations carefully before deciding whether or not to delegate

# Using AI for Assistance in Developing Competencies

As an HR leader, incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) into your competency creation processes can offer you significant benefits, such as improved accuracy, efficiency, and objectivity. However, it's crucial to consider the potential risks and challenges that come with using AI, such as biases in algorithms and data privacy concerns.

To mitigate these risks, it's essential to work with a diverse team, ensure data privacy compliance, and regularly audit the AI system's results. Additionally, it's important to recognize that AI should be used as a tool to support and enhance human decision-making, not replace it entirely.

Keep in mind that AI-generated competencies should be continuously reviewed and refined over time to ensure they remain relevant and aligned with your organization's goals and culture.

**EXAMPLE AI PROMPT**

## Provide competencies and descriptions for the following roles:

- Human Resources Business Partner

- People Operations Specialist

- Total Rewards Manager

- Strategic People Partner

- Recruiter

## Human Resources Business Partner:

- **Business Acumen:** Understanding of business operations, financials, and market trends to drive HR strategies that align with business objectives.

- **Consulting and Communication:** Ability to build relationships and influence decision-making with key stakeholders through effective communication, consultation, and collaboration.

- **Change Management:** Ability to lead change initiatives and manage resistance to change, including creating and implementing change management plans.

- **Talent Management:** Knowledge of talent acquisition, development, and retention strategies to attract and retain top talent.

- **HR Expertise:** Knowledge of HR policies, laws, and regulations to ensure compliance and mitigate risk.

## People Operations Specialist:

- **HR Operations:** Knowledge of HR systems and processes, including HRIS, payroll, benefits, and compliance.

- **Analytical and Problem-Solving Skills:** Ability to analyze HR data, identify trends, and develop solutions to improve HR operations.

- **Customer Service:** Ability to provide excellent customer service to employees and managers, including responding to inquiries and resolving issues in a timely and professional manner.

- **Project Management:** Ability to manage multiple HR projects simultaneously, ensuring timely completion and quality outcomes.

- **Attention to Detail:** Ability to ensure accuracy and completeness of HR data and documents.

## Total Rewards Manager:

- **Compensation and Benefits:** Knowledge of compensation and benefits programs, including salary structures, bonus plans, health and wellness benefits, and retirement plans.

- **Market Analysis:** Ability to conduct market research and analyze data to ensure competitive compensation and benefits programs.

- **Data Analytics:** Ability to use data and analytics to make informed decisions about compensation and benefits programs.

- **Communication and Collaboration:** Ability to communicate effectively with employees and managers about compensation and benefits programs and collaborate with internal and external partners to ensure program success.

- **Compliance:** Knowledge of laws and regulations related to compensation and benefits, including ERISA, FLSA, and ACA.

## Strategic People Partner:

- **Strategic Thinking:** Ability to think strategically and translate business objectives into HR strategies and initiatives.

- **Relationship Management:** Ability to build strong relationships with key stakeholders, including executives, managers, and employees.

- **Talent Management:** Knowledge of talent acquisition, development, and retention strategies to attract and retain top talent.

- **Change Management:** Ability to lead change initiatives and manage resistance to change, including creating and implementing change management plans.

- **HR Expertise:** Knowledge of HR policies, laws, and regulations to ensure compliance and mitigate risk.

## Recruiter:

- **Sourcing and Networking:** Ability to source and attract top talent through various channels, including social media, job boards, and referrals.

- **Screening and Assessment:** Ability to screen and assess candidate qualifications, experience, and fit for the role and organization.

- **Interviewing and Selection:** Ability to conduct effective interviews and make informed selection decisions based on candidate qualifications, experience, and fit for the role and organization.

- **Communication and Influence:** Ability to communicate effectively with candidates and hiring managers and influence decision-making throughout the recruiting process.

- **Compliance:** Knowledge of laws and regulations related to recruiting, including EEO.

*Additional resources: Korn Ferry Leadership Competencies*

### Configure competency questions

To add or update any competency, visit Competencies and Paths under Feature Settings

- [ ] **Role-based generated**
  Competency questions are generated by roles. If there are duplicate competencies in Company wide and Group, the role-based question will be shown instead.

- [ ] **Group membership**
  Competency questions will be generated based on group membership.

- [ ] **Company wide**
  Company wide competency questions are asked to all participants.

Select an answer template    Add new answer template

Recommended

Include field for optional content

Cancel    Create question

By following the steps and best practices outlined in this playbook, you can create a competency framework that aligns with your goals and culture, and continuously improve and refine it over time.

If you have any questions about competencies or want to learn more about how 15Five can support your organization's competency development initiatives, please don't hesitate to **reach out to our team**. We would be happy to answer any questions you have!