Everything You Need To Know About Capability Development Frameworks

A Capability Development Framework (CDF) is a critical tool used by organisations to understand the unique skills and knowledge (competencies) required at each employee level across the organisation. An effective CDF shapes recruitment, development, career planning and performance measurement.

After years of designing and embedding CDF’s for organisations, Tonka Learning has collected our must-knows for any organisation wishing to create a CDF and improve it’s effectiveness. All the best!

1. **Make the CDF unique to your organisation.** If you’re thinking of copying a CDF from somewhere else, think again. It must be unique so at the very least take a CDF off the shelf and tailor to your organisation. FYI, most CDF’s are complex to write so be prepared to outsource for support.

2. **Show clear progression from level to level.** We think 4 employee levels in a CDF is about the right number. You need to show a clear distinction between levels, and this takes time to perfect.

3. **Include a balance of technical and people skills and knowledge.** Employee capabilities of the future need to balance people skills, i.e. communication, emotional judgment and adapting to change with more technical skills, i.e. commercial acumen, marketing and systems and process knowledge. FYI, you can run with 3 capabilities or 10 capabilities; the total number is irrelevant (at the end of the day it’s not a memory test).

4. **Get buy-in at all levels.** The best CDF’s are when leaders invest time reviewing and improving the descriptors under each capability; you’re half-way there if you can achieve this! Importantly, also make the time to get to each team meeting to share the CDF and what it means for them.

5. **Measure employees against the CDF.** There are many options here. Incorporate the CDF in the performance review, whether you do performance reviews quarterly or annually. Consider a 360-annual assessment on the CDF for senior leaders. And for senior leaders, think about including something around promoting the CDF in the CDF underneath the most relevant capability.

6. **Ensure your managers see development gaps as teachable opportunities.** When an individual is measured and falls short in a capability, that’s OK; it’s not a performance management issue – it’s a development opportunity. Managers need to support this way of thinking.

7. **After your CDF, start with development systems.** While CDF’s hit so many touchpoints, i.e. recruitment and career planning, start with developing your people against the capabilities in your CDF. This might include quarterly development plans, teaching employees how to set robust development goals and building in a KPI for all employees on maintaining currency.

8. **Don’t treat each individual capability as its own capability on your learning calendar.** Your capabilities will work interdependently so rather than take a linear approach to learning, look for opportunities to create learning solutions that target multiple capabilities at once.

For more ideas on how your organisation can get the most from your Capability Development Framework, please reach out to Tonka Learning at 1300 597 294 or at hello@tonkalearning.com.

Thank you. Tonka Learning