Internal Management Consulting
Competency Model Taxonomy

Adapted from the ASTD Competency Study: Mapping the Future—New Workplace Learning and Performance Competencies. Permission has been granted by ASTD to use this adapted model for the purposes of educating members of the AIMC at the 2005 Annual Conference. AIMC members can use the competencies internally within their organizations for the purpose of educating, developing, and improving the performance of internal management consultants. Any external use of this model or use beyond that intended by ASTD including use on the Web is prohibited. To seek additional permission, write to ASTD, Publications Department, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043.

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Competencies

Competencies are clusters of skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviors required for job success. Managers need to know about competencies to make appropriate personnel decisions and guide employees’ performance. Employees need to know about competencies because they provide a road map of how to succeed on the job.

The ASTD study identified a set of competencies that are considered important and necessary for the majority of individuals in the workplace learning and performance profession. Those competencies have been modified slightly for the internal management consulting profession.

Business/Management Competencies

- Analyzing Needs and Proposing Solutions
- Planning and Implementing Assignments
- Driving Results
- Applying Business Acumen
- Thinking Strategically

Interpersonal/Personal Competencies

- Communicating Effectively
- Demonstrating Adaptability
- Networking and Partnering
- Building Trust
- Influencing Stakeholders

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Business/Management Competencies

ANALYZING NEEDS AND PROPOSING SOLUTIONS

Identifying and understanding business issues and client needs, problems, and opportunities; comparing data from different sources to draw conclusions; using effective approaches for choosing a course of action or developing appropriate solutions; taking action that is consistent with available facts, constraints, and probable consequences.

KEY ACTIONS

Gathers information about client needs—Collects information to better understand client needs, issues, problems, and opportunities; reviews organizational information and human performance outcomes; studies organizational systems to better understand the factors affecting performance; integrates information from a variety of sources; asks internal and external partners for input and insight.

Diagnoses performance issues—Uses research methods to isolate the causes of performance problems; proposes theories to understand and explain the factors affecting performance; detects trends, associations, and cause-effect relationships.

Generates multiple alternatives—Gathers information about best practices; thinks expansively and brainstorms multiple approaches; generates relevant options for addressing problems/opportunities and achieving desired outcomes; maintains a database or bank of possible solutions and their effectiveness.

Searches for innovative solutions—Challenges paradigms and looks for innovative alternatives; draws upon diverse sources for ideas and inspiration in creative problem-solving activities.

Chooses appropriate solution(s)—Formulates clear decision criteria; evaluates options by considering implications, risks, feasibility, and consequences on the client and on other parts of the organization; prioritizes and chooses an effective option.

Recognizes impact—Considers the implications of decisions, solutions, and strategies in other contexts; makes decisions using a broad range of knowledge that extends beyond the limitations of the organization and its immediate needs.

Proposes solution(s)—Recommends a plan or process for making changes; clearly explains rationale for the recommended solution and how it will address the performance gap or opportunity.

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PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING ASSIGNMENTS

Developing action plans, obtaining resources, and completing assignments in a timely manner to ensure that goals are achieved.

KEY ACTIONS

Establishes parameters and forecasts outcomes—Identifies critical project parameters along with potential needs and trends that may affect success; agrees to action and commits resources based on careful consideration of possible future events.

Uses planning tools to create project plans—Uses planning tools such as Gantt charts, risk analysis, and roles/responsibility matrices to create a practical action plan; identifies critical activities and assignments along with less-critical tasks; adjusts the project plan and priorities as needed.

Manages budget—Calculates projected costs and develops budget; monitors expenses relative to budgeted costs; adjusts spending and resource allocation as new challenges arise.

Determines tasks and resources—Determines project requirements by breaking them down into tasks and identifying types of equipment, materials, and persons needed.

Plans for contingencies—Proactively identifies potential problems and creates contingency plans or work-arounds to implement if problems occur.

Mobilizes resources—Takes advantage of available resources (people, processes, departments, and tools) to complete work efficiently; coordinates with internal and external partners.

Manages time—Allocates appropriate amounts of time for completing own and others’ work; avoids scheduling conflicts; develops timelines and milestones and stays focused on achieving them.

Tracks progress and ensures completion—Monitors progress to ensure projects are completed on time and efficiently; follows up with individuals as needed to check progress; regularly communicates with stakeholders to ensure that promised goals have been achieved; identifies what is working well along with problems and obstacles; makes course corrections during the project.

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DRIVING RESULTS

Identifying opportunities for improvement and setting well-defined goals; orchestrating efforts and measuring progress; striving to achieve goals and produce exceptional results.

KEY ACTIONS

Targets improvement opportunities—Systematically evaluates business opportunities and targets those with the greatest potential for impacting results; identifies opportunities to improve organizational performance; continually seeks new ways of leveraging human performance to improve business results.

Establishes goals and objectives—Sets stretch goals to encourage higher performance; establishes S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) objectives to achieve reliable business results.

Orchestrates effort to achieve results—Mobilizes additional resources as needed and works tenaciously to achieve stretch goals.

Overcomes obstacles—Identifies obstacles to achieving the organization’s strategy; anticipates and overcomes barriers; prevents irrelevant issues or distractions from interfering with timely completion of important tasks.

Provides courageous leadership—Takes a stand and follows through with actions that support business objectives, even when those actions may be unpopular.

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APPLYING BUSINESS ACUMEN

Understanding the organization’s business model and financial goals; utilizing economic, financial, and organizational data to build and document the business case for investing in solutions; using business terminology when communicating with others.

KEY ACTIONS

**Understands the business**—Understands the organization’s business model and competitive position in the marketplace; understands how the business is leveraging core competencies for growth and profitability; understands the value proposition to external customers.

**Understands business operations**—Understands the organization’s structure, systems, functions, and business processes; understands how the organization operates, including its planning processes, decision-making channels, and information management systems; understands how products and services are developed, sold, and delivered to customers.

**Applies financial data**—Understands financial goals and interprets financial data related to business success measures, such as a balanced scorecard; accurately reads and understands the implications of balance sheets, graphs, charts, tables, etc.; performs quantitative calculations in building a business case, preparing budgets, evaluating solution impact, and calculating return on investment (ROI).

**Uses business terminology to gain credibility**—Translates jargon into business terminology that stakeholders will understand and respect; speaks the language of the business when applying professional expertise.

**Recognizes business priorities**—Tracks the changing needs and expectations of external customers; identifies links between internal demands and external needs; works to understand the business priorities of internal clients and how the internal management consulting function could help them achieve greater success.

**Creates a value proposition**—Establishes the link between business needs and specific solutions; documents how solutions will achieve targeted business results; identifies outcomes that will result from implementing solutions; creates a compelling business case.

**Advances the business agenda**—Understands how decisions are made in the organizational structure and how power is exercised; recognizes key stakeholders and their priorities; leverages understanding of politics across business units and decision makers; presents and defends the business value of solutions.

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THINKING STRATEGICALLY

Understanding internal and external factors that impact business results in organizations; keeping abreast of trends and anticipating opportunities to add value to the business; operating from a systems perspective in developing strategies and building alignment with overall organizational strategies.

KEY ACTIONS

Understands external factors impacting performance—Understands the political, economic, sociological, cultural, and global factors that can affect an organization’s performance in the marketplace.

Understands the organizational context for internal management consulting—Understands how internal management consultants contribute to organizational success; understands how different aspects of the organization are integrated with each other, the business strategy, and organizational structures.

Recognizes and acts on emerging opportunities—Anticipates how trends may impact and shape the industry; scans and monitors new developments in the management consulting field; shows curiosity about the business and challenges assumptions; seeks inspiration from different perspectives in constructing future scenarios; frames options for the internal consulting function to add value to the business.

Builds strategic alignment—Contributes to the development and refinement of the organization’s vision, goals, and strategies with a focus on human capital; integrates and synthesizes other viewpoints to build alignment.

Develops internal management consulting strategies—Develops both short- and long-term internal management strategies that support the organization’s strategic direction; generates options to achieve a long-range strategic goal or vision.

Operates from a systems perspective—Views the organization as a dynamic system; recognizes the need to understand and integrate interconnected elements; sees the big picture and complex relationships; recognizes patterns and broad implications of issues; balances long-term strategic goals with short-term priorities when making decisions.

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Interpersonal/Personal Competencies

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Expressing thoughts, feelings, and ideas in a clear, concise, and compelling manner in both individual and group situations; actively listening to others; adjusting style to capture the attention of the audience; developing and deploying targeted communication strategies that inform and build support.

KEY ACTIONS

Develops and deploys effective communication strategies—Creates plans for communicating and leveraging information; employs diverse media to summarize and convey results.

Delivers clear messages—Uses appropriate vocabulary; understands the material and demonstrates command of the topic; logically and simply conveys ideas.

Presents with impact—Speaks with appropriate pace and inflection; conveys an air of confidence, ease, and enthusiasm; uses congruent nonverbal communication; uses visual aids to enhance understanding of the content.

Adjusts message content and delivery—Monitors audience reactions and adopts alternative strategies to improve overall impact; presents own message in different ways to enhance understanding; responds appropriately to questions and feedback.

Demonstrates active listening—Listens to others, interprets their message correctly; checks understanding; acknowledges different viewpoints.

Invites dialogue—Engages others in dialogue by using appropriate questioning techniques and involving others in conversations about things that matter; encourages people to express their hopes and fears; welcomes feedback.

Creates clear written communication—Writes clearly and understandably; sequences information in a logical manner to aid understanding; avoids jargon or technical words; uses a tone and format suggested by the topic and audience.

Masters multiple communication methods—Selects communication media and methods based on the needs of the recipients; adapts to virtual work situations involving remote workers who may use a range of communication styles and methods.

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DEMONSTRATING ADAPTABILITY

Maintaining effectiveness when experiencing major changes in work tasks, the work environment, or conditions affecting the organization (for example, economic, political, cultural, or technological); remaining open to new people, thoughts, and approaches; adjusting effectively to work within new work structures, processes, requirements, or cultures.

KEY ACTIONS

**Seeks to understand changes**—Seeks to understand changes in work tasks, situations, and environment as well as the logic or basis for change; actively seeks information about new work situations and withholds judgment.

**Approaches change positively**—Treats changes as opportunities for learning or growth; focuses on the beneficial aspects of change; speaks positively and advocates the change when it helps promote organizational goals and strategy.

**Remains open to different ideas and approaches**—Thinks expansively by remaining open to different lines of thought and approaches; readily tries new and different approaches in changing situations.

**Adjusts behavior**—Quickly modifies behavior to deal effectively with changes in the work environment; acquires new knowledge or skills to deal with the change; does not persist with ineffective behaviors; shows resiliency and maintains effectiveness even in the face of uncertainty or ambiguity.

**Adapts to handle implementation challenges**—Effectively handles global, cultural, economic, social, and political challenges to the effective implementation of solutions; works to overcome barriers and deal constructively with nontraditional or challenging situations.

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NETWORKING AND PARTNERING

Developing and using a network of collaborative relationships with internal and external contacts to leverage strategy in a way that facilitates the accomplishment of business results.

KEY ACTIONS

Networks with others—Proactively builds a personal network of individuals and groups inside and outside of the organization who can provide quick advice or solutions; includes influential people (such as senior leaders, department heads, external vendors/suppliers) and internal management consulting experts.

Benchmarks and shares best practices—Maintains contacts with others outside of the organization to learn from their experiences and share best practices in internal management consulting; regularly learns from others in the profession through personal communications and conference interactions.

Establishes common goals—Places priority on organization goals and finding ways for partners to work together for the common goal; establishes common ground with internal management consulting goals to facilitate cooperation.

Develops partnering relationships—Establishes strong interpersonal relationships by staying in close contact with key individuals and working cooperatively; helps others feel valued and appreciated by monitoring their needs and exchanging occasional favors (for example, providing a sounding board to test proposals or learn what’s happening in other parts of the industry).

Generates new collaborative possibilities—Seeks and expands on original ideas, enhances others’ ideas, and contributes own ideas about the issues at hand; gains clarity about own thinking; expands options for future collaboration.

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BUILDING TRUST

Interacting with others in a way that gives them confidence in one’s intentions and those of the organization.

KEY ACTIONS

**Operates with integrity**—Demonstrates honesty and behaves according to ethical principles; ensures that words and actions are consistent; walks the talk; behaves dependably across situations.

**Discloses position**—Shares thoughts, feelings, and rationale so that others understand positions and policies.

**Maintains confidentiality**—Keeps private or sensitive information about others confidential.

**Leads by example**—Serves as a role model for the organization’s values; takes responsibility for delivering on commitments; gives proper credit to others; acknowledges own mistakes rather than blaming others.

**Treats people fairly**—Treats all stakeholders with dignity, respect, and fairness; listens to others without prejudget; objectively considers others’ ideas and opinions, even when they conflict with prescribed policies, procedures, or commonly held beliefs; champions the perspectives of different partners even in the face of resistance; engages in effective conflict resolution.

**Ensures compliance with legal, ethical, and regulatory requirements**—Ensures that processes and results comply with relevant legal, ethical, and regulatory requirements; monitors compliance and creates reports if needed.

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INFLUENCING STAKEHOLDERS

Selling the value of the recommended solution as a way of improving organizational performance; gaining commitment to solutions that will improve individual, team, and organizational performance.

KEY ACTIONS

Analyze stakeholder perspectives—Identifies key stakeholders, analyzes likely reactions, and determines how to address their unique needs and preferences.

Establish a marketing strategy—Develops a strategy for presenting the business case and proposed solution; plans how to leverage supportive factors and overcome or minimize barriers; prepares a communication campaign.

Communicate a strong value proposition—Helps listeners understand how the proposed solution will achieve targeted business results; provides convincing rationale based on the business case.

Build energy and support—Encourages collaboration from people representing different levels and functions; invites people to participate in the decision-making process to obtain good input, create buy-in, and ensure understanding of the resulting decisions.

Gain commitment to the solution—Uses various influencing techniques to win support for the proposed solution; makes persuasive arguments, handles objections, negotiates key points, and summarizes outcomes; gains agreement to implement a solution or take partnership-oriented action.

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