

# COMPETENCY MODELS

## IMPROVING BUSINESS PERFORMANCE ONE PERSON AT A TIME

Cambria Consulting creates competency models that drive organizational performance through a “common language” that links key talent management processes.

Simply put, “competencies” include knowledge, skills and personal attributes that contribute to an individual’s success in a particular job or business situation.

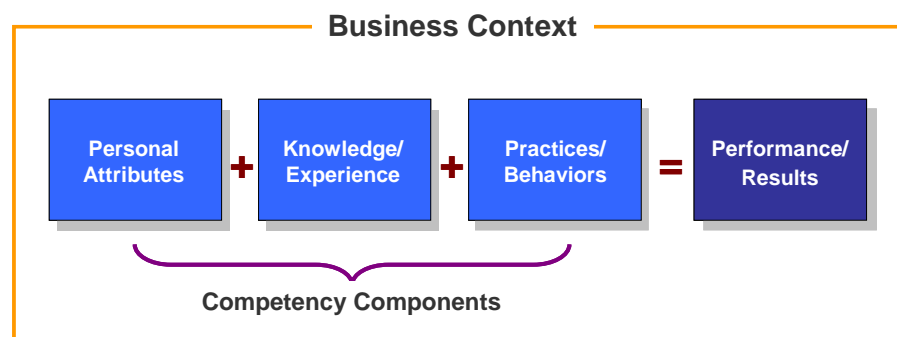
The word “competency” has had many different meanings and associations since the early years of competency-based talent management. Beginning in 1973, with the publication of Harvard professor David McClelland’s breakthrough article, “Testing for Competence rather than for ‘Intelligence’”, “competency” became shorthand for any personal characteristic that differentiated the best job performers from the average. Accordingly, a “competency model” was a description of the different capabilities that contribute most to individual performance in a particular job or role.

This is still a core theme in competency model development: describe the fewest factors that account for the most difference in individual performance. Today, competency models are used to select new hires, manage performance, guide promotion and succession planning, and, in short, to improve the performance of people throughout the organization.

### COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE

“Competency models” are organizing frameworks that describe the link between competence and performance.

Cambria Consulting uses a simple yet comprehensive definition of a competency: it is a *knowledge, skill or personal attribute that contributes to an individual’s success in a particular job or business situation*. The corresponding framework that underlies Cambria’s approach to competency model development is as follows:



We partner with our clients to use competencies in support of their business and human resource strategies.

Many consulting firms today offer competency development services using a variety of approaches. Cambria’s clients tend to have many of the talent management basics firmly in place but seek a more sophisticated understanding of the individual factors that drive organizational performance – not only for today but in the future. They view Cambria as a partner that can help them navigate between today and tomorrow, and align their human resource management systems with the requirements of strategy.

Cambria's competency models are built on what top performers actually do and the knowledge, skills and experiences that drive their success.

We build competencies for the future, grounded in the reality of the present and the emerging challenges to the enterprise.

## OUR APPROACH

- Cambria Consulting takes a business-focused approach to identifying the capabilities that separate the best job performers from the rest, in the context of real business challenges and the strategy of the client organization. Because no two organizations share the same business context, challenges, culture, or strategy, a top performer in one organization may not be a top performer in another. This is why Cambria Consulting builds competency models that are customized to our clients' unique characteristics.
- We identify competencies based on what top performers actually do, as opposed to what people believe they do; our models are based on fact, not opinion. Nevertheless, our long experience allows us to be flexible and practical in our approach: we combine business strategy discussions, top-performer interviews, and technology tools to identify and validate the most important competencies for different roles and functions, as well as for the organization as a whole.
- Cambria specializes in "competency branding". We believe that competency language should be carefully crafted to reflect the strategy and ideal culture of the organization, and we work with our clients to create a unique competency language that captures and communicates the essence of their culture and strategy and reflects their fundamental values. We do not use, nor do we advocate, generic competency dictionaries as the foundation of our work.
- We maintain a database of hundreds of customized competency models that span a wide range of organizations, industries and positions in contributor, manager, and executive roles. Our database helps us compare a client's competency model with others developed in similar industries, situations, and challenges, providing a meaningful benchmark with other top-performing organizations.
- Our competency models are future-focused. Just as past performance is no guarantee of future performance, we take the extra step to project competency requirements forward through examining the implications of business strategy for capabilities needed by people in high-leverage jobs. Whether our competencies describe best performance today or in for the future, our competency models raise the bar on individual and organizational performance.

## THE CAMBRIA DIFFERENCE

As pioneers in developing competency models for prominent Fortune 500 and financial services clients, Cambria Consulting brings over 30 years of experience in crafting business-focused competencies for hiring, job definition, performance management, development, promotion, career development and succession planning. Unlike menu-driven approaches, our competency work is customized to our clients' business requirements and clearly articulates what's most important in a way that assures understanding, acceptance, and practical application.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

George Klemp  
Cambria Consulting, Inc.  
One Bowdoin Square  
Boston, MA 02114  
(617) 523-7500

[www.cambriaconsulting.com](http://www.cambriaconsulting.com)