

ENABLING A FUTURE ORIENTED, STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE
MANAGEMENT OF COMPETENCE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A GERMAN
INSURANCE COMPANY

MSc in Business Administration



Author: Alexander Riffert

Student number: s0163546

Datum: 19.9.2013

University of Twente

Business Administration

Supervisors: Prof. dr. J.K. Looise

Dr. A.A.M. Wognum

Abstract

In order to support a German insurance company to cope with the challenges of demographic change and on-going globalization, the study at hand aims at enabling a strategic, proactive perspective on the management of competence. A three stage research model has been designed that starts with enabling a foundation for strategic competence management by finding gaps between scientifically proposed strategic competence management and practices in place at the insurance company. It continues with enabling employee categorization into job families and by developing related competence profiles. In the last stage, these competencies have been projected into a 5 year future perspective in order to identify anticipated imbalances and to create motivation to close prior competence management gaps. For the gap analysis, as well as for the design of job-families and related competencies, several focus-groups have been used. For the competence foresight, a quasi-experimental survey has been designed that uses internal and external change contingencies specific to the company's context as manipulation stimulus. The results demonstrate how to enable a strategic, proactive perspective on competence management and identified main barriers for implementation that should be tackled explicitly, as well as potential benefits if implemented successfully. Finally, this study contributed to the scientific field of strategic human resource management by evaluating common perspectives in terms of their value in practical settings, yielding evidence in favor of contingency theory. Furthermore, it provides reason to integrate the foresight of competence into strategic competence management to facilitate a proactive orientation.

Table of Content

Content	Page
1. Introduction	5
2. Problem statement	8
3. Research model	9
4. Theories and concepts	13
4.1 Strategic competence management framework (stage 1)	13
4.2 Job-families (stage 2)	16
4.3 Defining competence (stage 2)	19
4.4 Strategic human resource management (stage 2)	22
4.5 Competence foresight (stage 3)	24
5. Study relevance	26
6. Method	27
6.1 Focus-group: contextual Inquiry	27
6.1.1 Underlying rationale	27
6.1.2 Confidentiality and reportage	28
6.1.3 Procedure	29
6.2 Focus-group: job-families & competences	29
6.2.1 Procedure	29
6.3 Focus-group: strategic contingency perspective	30
6.3.1 Procedure	30

6.4	Survey: competence Foresight	31
6.4.1	Underlying rationale	31
6.4.2	Procedure	31
6.4.3	Instrument	33
6.4.4	Data-Analysis	33
7.	Results	34
7.1	Contextual inquiry	34
7.2	Job-families & competences	38
7.3	Strategic contingency perspective	40
7.4	Competence foresight	42
8.	Discussion	52
8.1	Enabling strategic competence management	52
8.2	From single employees towards job-families	54
8.3	Competence foresight	54
8.4	Limitations	56
8.5	Managerial implications	57
8.6.	Scientific relevance	58
9.	Conclusion	59
	References	61
	Appendix	65

1. Introduction

The world is changing since its very begin, but since the onset of globalization, change becomes of high velocity, putting even companies with a long history of success on pressure to adapt / anticipate these changes to keep their competitive advantage. Accordingly, human resource practitioners face the challenge to translate changing environmental contingencies into programs to manage and support human resources effectively (Tarique & Schuler, 2010). In this vein, the resource based view (Barney, 1991) yields that sustainable competitive advantage depends on characteristics of resources used to generate revenues. A resource can be considered important, if it is rare, valuable, and inimitable. As the ability to adapt to changes cannot be generated by material resources, the term human resources and its important contribution for sustainable competitive advantage received much attention since the 90's (Chamber, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, & Michaels, 1998). Comparable to tangible resources, some valuable human resources are especially rare. Therefore, organizations have to compete against each other to get an ongoing flow of these scarce resources. As this view incorporates the influence of market mechanisms on the availability and quality of human resource flows, it highlights the strategic proposition about managing those (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). It can thus be assumed that managing human resource flows should not be considered as a set of best practices, but should be contingent to the business context and related competitive strategy, as applying a set of best practices would ultimately lead to mediocrity as its effect on competition would diminish as every competitor could apply those practices, because it lacks inimitability derived from the interaction effect between practice and organization. Conclusively, a company that wants to succeed needs the ability to adapt on several organizational levels, so as the Human resource department and associated programs.

The German insurance sector faces several challenges. Within the last decade, growth rates have the tendency to stagnate, a process that increased during the economic crisis in

2008. In similar vein, the capital market developed in a challenging way. Through increased competition and associated “price wars”, insurance companies are forced to become more cost-efficient.

The focal insurance company has a long history of stability and absence of structural changes. Therefore, the challenge as described above is of very relevance for the future success of this company. Sophisticated, sustainable strategic human resource management does not exist yet, but the company wants to initiate the implementation of strategic HRM tools.

The company has a rather mechanic organizational structure¹. In total, the company consists out of 15 resorts, which are subdivided into different departments and sub-departments. A resort basically clusters insurance domains, for example finance, sales, service etc. Each resort has its own chairman in the council. As the resorts differ in their focus of work and related performance indicators, it is important to acknowledge that different job-types have different strategic values within different resorts and associated departments.

The business strategy of the company goes contradictory to global trends in the insurance sector. While others, for example the Allianz strive to centralize all processes to exploit synergy effects and accordingly increase cost-efficacy (Allianz, 2012), the focal company highlights her roots in North-western Germany and has many staffed offices in the region. Instead of outsourcing call-centers to India, as the Allianz and others do, the company owns service/call-centers in Münster and Hamburg. The rationale is that the insurance business is built on trust, and as more a company deviates from its roots and becomes a ‘global player’, as more it loses trust in the target segments. This may be an explanation why the company was less affected from the economic crisis as the decreasing trust in financial institutes affected the company less than her competitors². However, the demands for cost-

¹ The source of this information refers to documents internal to the company

² The source of this information refers to documents internal to the company

efficacy remain as the owners demand for continuously growing high profits. Therefore, the following corporate profile has been formulated by the company's top management³:

1. The company wants to differentiate herself from competitors by being a regional insurance company with high levels of customer trust in the target segments.
2. Emphasis on the company as mid-sized insurance company with decentralized decision making and high responsibility for subordinate organizations.
3. Exploitation of cost-synergies wherever possible.
4. Increasing business substance and developing a sustainable competitive advantage and associated high profits.

From this profile the following official strategic goals derived:

Growth related:

1. Increase of composite insurance profits at a rate above 1%.
2. Expansion of the sustainable life-insurance business.

Substance related:

1. Increase of equity capital and related risk-bearing ability.
2. Conservative risk-profile.

Profit related:

1. Annual after tax profit of 150 million euro.
2. Cost reduction across the whole group.

One major threat to achieve these goals is partly the reason why the company has been successful in the past. Cost reduction and associated re-structuring of processes and responsibilities demands for high organizational flexibility, on the management level as well as on the employee level (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004).). The company is a regional

³ The source of this information refers to documents internal to the company

organization with a long history and embedded in an organizational culture that stresses stability and employment security. In the past, it has been a key success factor as it attracted skilled employees who were committed to the organization. Nowadays, this mentality has led to less flexibility, which may hinder the necessary changes. This becomes important as it directly affects the employee competences needed by the organization. This can be best illustrated using a fictional example: assuming that strictly task related competence, for example the ability to successfully work on an operative insurance case, were of most importance in the past, new challenges of rising technologies may form new competence requirements. This could, for example, refer to more general analytical abilities to cope with more complex processes. Thus, based on this assumption, it is likely to expect differences between competence available at the present moment and those that are actually needed based on the company's business orientation. Furthermore, it is conceivable that those potential imbalances are supposed to increase as a function of time, as external change processes keep continuing while little is done within the company to adapt to those changes.

2. Problem statement

Stakeholders from the company's top-management are aware that competence related practices used at the company are rather old-fashioned and are not connected to the strategic orientation of the company. Overall, these are estimated as loose bundles of human resource development practices to increase individual competences that are requested bottom-up from line managers, if they want some subordinates being trained in specific domains of competence.

At the moment, the HR controller uses a huge Excel file that incorporates every employee's actual employment status as well as the height of the salary. This means, that within this system, employees are represented as numbers within the organizational structure. This approach is used to regulate salaries and to have an overview about the workforce.

However, a clear classification of job-families and related job-functions does not exist, making it hardly possible to enable strategic employee planning. No efforts have been undertaken to enable qualitative HR planning by building clusters of job-types into job-families, with the purpose of enabling a more visionary, anticipating planning of future demands by incorporating global trends and related consequences for the workforce. Accordingly, the non-existing job-families are not related to competences and numerical dimensions of supply and demand. Conclusively, the present tool for managing HR flows is not strategically oriented and does not correct for future scenarios that reflect global trends, so as ongoing globalization and demographic change.

Relevant stakeholders from the top management of the company realize the potential competitive advantages of strategic competence management and asked for a research that enables such an approach. Therefore, the umbrella research question of this project is:

How to enable a strategic, future-oriented perspective on the management of competence within the company?

3. Research model

As enabling a strategic, future oriented perspective on the management of competence within the company is a very broad project that involves several subsequent stages, the following research model has been designed (for an overview see figure 1). Basically, it distinguishes between three stages. These will be shortly described in the following section to clarify the structure of this research, as well as the interrelationship between the three stages. More in-depth information will be provided in the corresponding sections.

The first stage, the contextual inquiry aims at confronting a strategic competence management system with the system in place at the company, in order to identify gaps between both. The content of this stereotypical system derives from scientific theory about

competence management as described in the section *4.1 Strategic competence management framework (p.13)*, thus providing a state of art perspective. Besides the mere gap-analysis, this stage also incorporates gaining insight into the stakeholder perspective to evaluate which approach is feasible within the company's context and which features would facilitate its implementation.

The second stage aims at building the foundation for strategic competence management by enabling categorization of employees into job-families and to develop a related competence catalogue. As input for this stage, theories about competence and job-families will be used. For more information see sections *4.3 Defining competence (p.19)* and *4.2 Job-families (p.16)*. Within the same stage but separated from the enabling perspective, relevant external and internal contingencies will be identified that are supposed to have an effect on the competence requirements of the job-families. The rationale for this approach is based on different perspectives on strategic human resource management as explained in the section *4.4 Strategic human resource management (p.21)*.

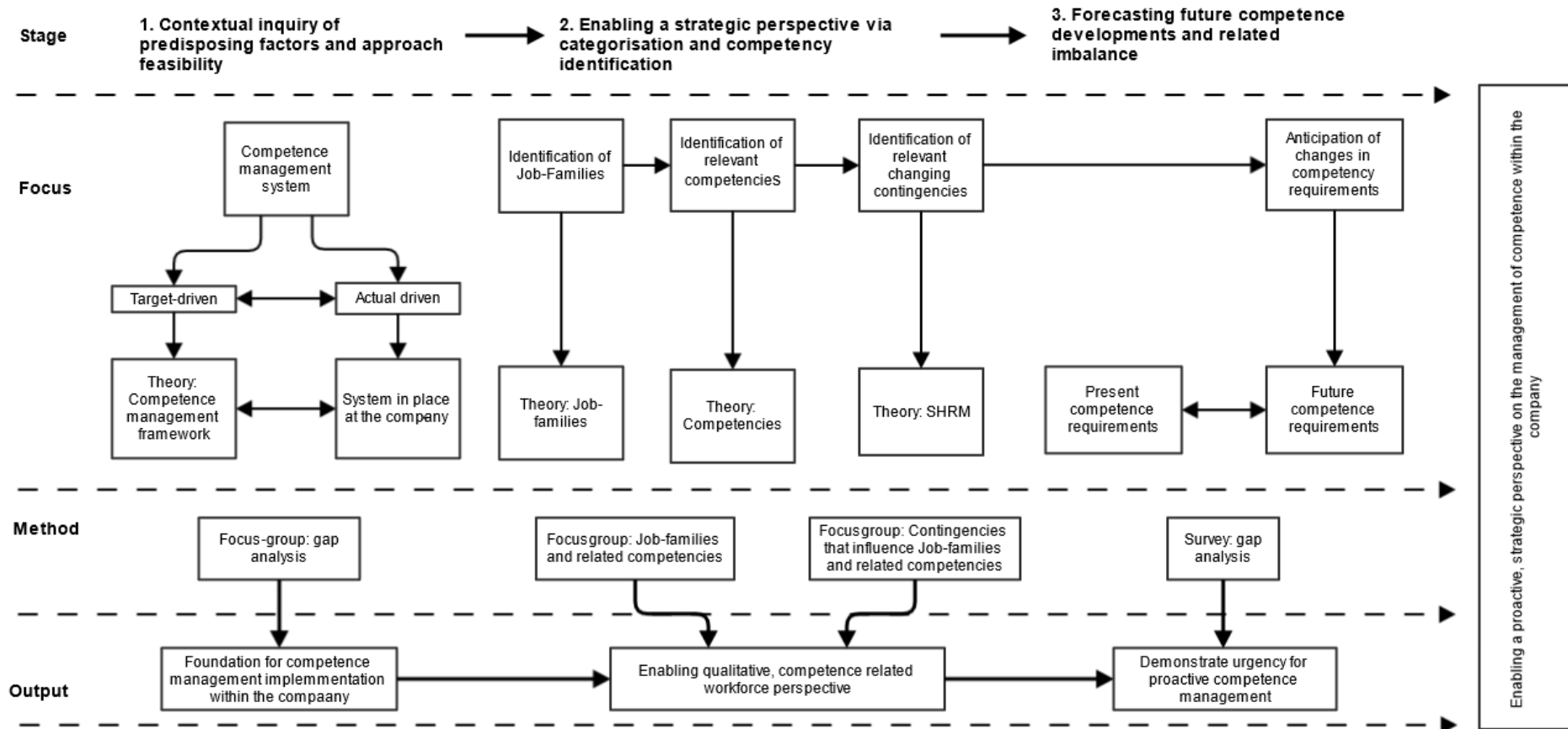
The output of stage 2 will then be used in stage 3 in a survey to assess competence requirements for a job-family in the present, followed by an extrapolation in 5 year perspective, stimulated by anticipation of changes in competence requirements based on prior identified internal and external contingencies. More information will be given in the section *4.5 Competence foresight (p.24)*. The reason for this is basically to provide a visualization of current and anticipated imbalances as a motivation for the company to engage in actions that close the gap between the strategic competence management system and the system in place at the company and to enable a proactive view on strategic competence development. The main rationale for this approach derived from the prior contextual inquiry and is contingent to internal factors and politics.

Besides the 3 stage-approach, which is mainly focussed on delivering value to the management of the company, this study contributes the field of SHRM by confronting the

most common theoretical perspectives with the situation at the company, to see which fits best to explain the organizational reality of introducing a strategic competence management system. Furthermore, it tests the usability of competence foresight as element within strategic competence management. More information will be provided in the section 5. *Study Relevance (p.26)*

Figure 1:

Overview about the research model, highlighting the three stages approach.



4. Theories and concepts

4.1 Strategic competence management framework (stage 1)

Managing competence strategically within an organization involves several managerial processes, ranging from strategic to operational considerations (Capece & Bazzica, 2013). As a starting point, it is important to understand the organizations' role within the competitive environment and how it intends to gain competitive advantage (Belkadi, Bonjour & Dulmet, 2007). With regards to the definition of competence used in this paper (see 4.3 *Defining competence, p. 19*), it is contingent to the business strategy and therefore derives from strategic considerations.

Thus, based on normative corporate goals, related strategic competence should be identified and modeled to develop a competence catalogue which is eliciting employee requirements and results in employee requirement profiles (Gröne, Beyer, Clemenz, Eberhardt, & Ostermaier, 2004 ; Kunzmann & Schmidt, 2007).

In the next step, diagnostics should be used to assess competence profiles, resulting in a gap analysis which identifies areas where developmental measures are necessary and are linked to numerical workforce supply (Kunzmann & Schmidt, 2007). The outcome then should be translated into anticipating human resource planning (Gröne et al., 2004), which includes the following sectors:

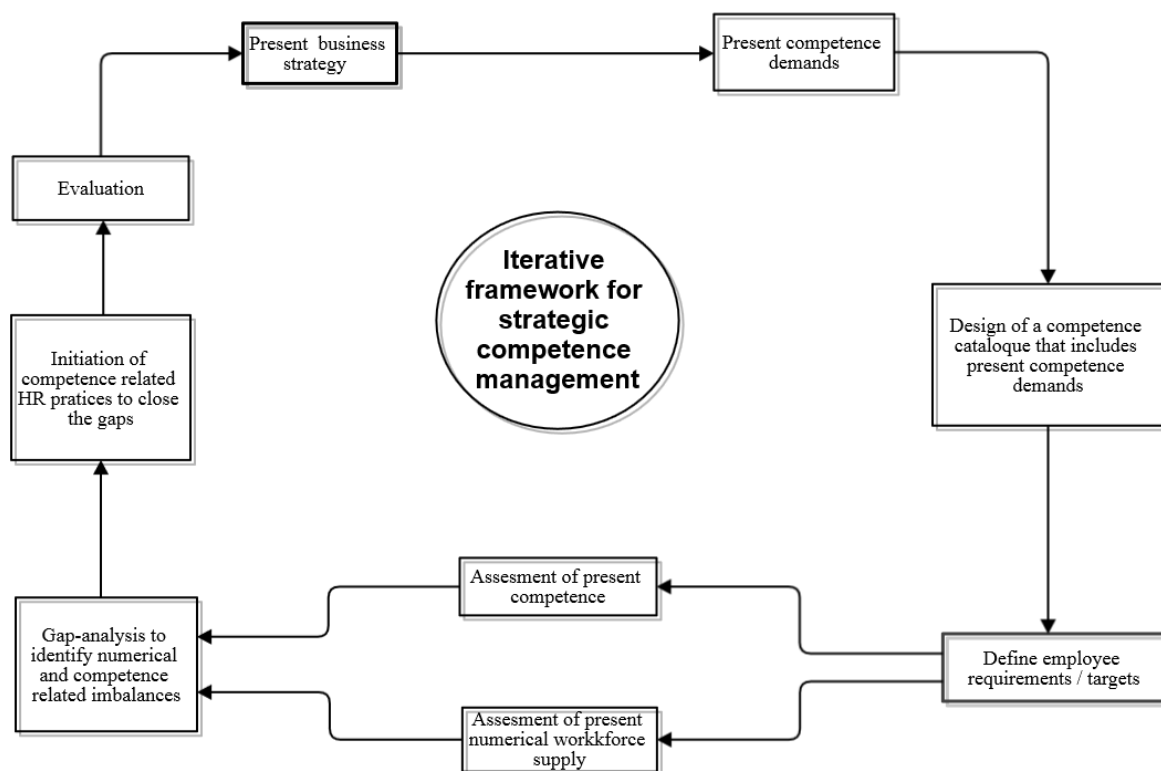
1. Sources of losses, so as retirement, and resignations.
2. Sources for back-up, so as talented people via career development.
3. Future demands, as derived from strategic and operational business orientation.
4. Related imbalance of competences.

Based on the outcome, actual planning practices should be implemented. These normally refer to employee development, recruitment or replacement (Gröne et al, 2004). This step is followed by an evaluation if the implemented measures closed the competence gaps successfully.

The whole framework should be considered as iterative (Capece & Bazzica, 2013), as a change in corporate goals may change related important competence requirements. In reverse causality, improved competences may change the organizations competitive position and initiate new demands for competence. In this case, the procedure as described above needs to be re-launched to make sure that competence requirements are still up to date. Figure 2 provides an overview about the prior explained framework for strategic competence management.

Figure 2:

Composed iterative framework for strategic competence management. Incorporates elements from different authors as discussed in the prior section.



Several critical success factors have been identified that are important for the successful implementation of strategic competence management systems (Gröne et al., 2004). First, the system must be supported by the work-council, who could perceive the systematic evaluation of competences as a threat for employee job-security in some cases. Furthermore,

the system and related practices should be in line with work-related jurisdiction. Second, the costs for implementing the system should be kept at a cost-efficient level. If HR development practices and related outcomes have to be adjusted according to the competences integrated in the competence management system, it should be done in a collaborative way to increase support from the HR development department. Third, the competence catalogue needs to be updated on a regular basis. Without being updated, the advantage will decay fast. Fourth, it is of utter importance that the system is accepted by those who collect data on regular basis. As those are in most cases first line manager, it means additional workload. Therefore, it is important to convey the message that a successful competence managing system leads to more efficacy in the long-term perspective and ultimately reduces workload.

Conclusively, it is of most importance to make sure that relevant stakeholders evaluate the strategic competence management system as useful to facilitate implementation. Therefore, it seems useful to compare the strategic competence management framework as presented above with the system in place to identify how the actual system could be improved to close the gap. Thus, in line with the umbrella research question, the following specified sub-questions emerge:

What are the gaps between features of the strategic competence management system and features of the system in place at the company?

As this research is oriented towards improving the situation at the company and therefore needs to acknowledge issues of internal context and feasibility, an important additional sub-question emerges:

What measures are feasible to close the gap between the strategic competence management system and the system in place at the company?

4.2 Job-families (stage 2)

The roots of job-families go back to the field of industrial psychology and the associated strive for performance evaluation: “*A central and long-standing problem in study of human work performance has been their lack of a comprehensive system for classifying and interrelating performance-related variables*” (Pearlman, 1980, p.1). The development of a system that classified performance-related criteria and created a shared mental representation of this concept formed the foundation for further research in industrial psychology (Fleishman, 1967a; Prien & Ronan, 1971).

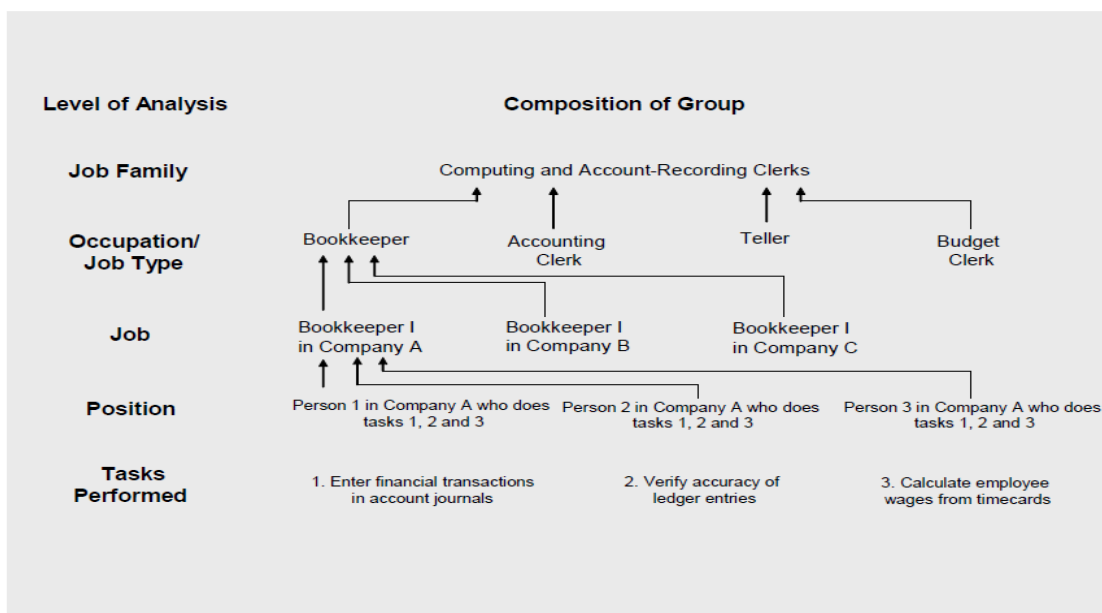
In general, two approaches can be distinguished. One focuses on individual characteristics associated with performance, the other on work-characteristics associated with performance. The individual-oriented approaches frequently yield classifications of human characteristics that are positively related to certain performance indicators. Good examples for this kind of results are the work of Fleishman (1967b) and Guilfort (1967). The work-nature-oriented approach was shaped by the interaction effect between employee and intrinsic motivation derived from the job-design. One example for this approach is McCornicks, Jeanneret, and Mecham’s Position Analysis Questionnaire (1972).

In the following years, researcher strove to integrate both approaches. One prominent example is the work of Schoenfeldt (1974) who firstly introduced the term job-family by linking biographical similarities of employees to critical job-success criteria. The resulting grouping of employees into categories and related job-demands yield first definitions of the job-families concept: “*A job-family is simply a group or cluster of jobs that are in some manner interrelated*” (Pearlman, 1980, p.41). This interrelationship has been operationalized in terms of shared job demands and deriving job-types. Pearlman (1980) explained the composition of job families as followed: On the lowest level, tasks have to be performed, for example entering financial transactions or verifying accuracy of ledger entries. Within different departments, different employees are performing the same tasks due to their position

within the organizational structure. Therefore, they can be summarized in a job-type as they share core tasks, in this case the job-type name would be ‘Bookkeeper’. On a more abstract level, other job-types, for example accounting clerks or budget clerks share tasks that are not identical but very similar as they use similar but situational modified mental models. Therefore, all these job-types are summarized in one job-family. In our example, the job-family would be labeled ‘Computing and Account-Recording Clerks’. For an overview see figure 3.

Figure 3

Examples of different job-types and groupings at different levels of analysis (Pearlman 1980).



However, the above explained approach concentrates on job-related tasks which derive from the position within the organizational structure. In modern industrial settings, it seems conceivable that a system perspective should be applied that does not isolate job-positions and associated tasks but put a more sophisticated perspective on how people work and interact. This is in line with Baron and Kreps (1999, p. 313.): „...old job descriptions were replaced by a more flexible set of grids or skill matrices that describe the particular bundles of skills and levels of performance applicable to different families of jobs“. In similar vein, Moravec and Tucker (1992, p. 37 ff.) state: „A job, as we have trained to think of it, is a set of static,

predetermined duties created by the management and evaluated by the human resources department, which also assigns salary levels to it. ...People are hired or promoted according to how well they fit this job description. This, unfortunately, is an old, industrial-engineering construct - one that ignores the obvious differences in the way people think, grow, communicate, and approach their work. It also ignores the fluidity of business and technology needs. ...If we want to unlock the potential of both individuals and the organization, we need to change this way of design, allocate, and talk about work. Organizations that fail to do this are in danger of following the dinosaur into oblivion“. The direct consequence is that job-families should be built around shared job-content instead of mere job-description to facilitate cross functional networking and collaboration. This approach leads to several HR management benefits. First, staffing can use an employee pool within job-families instead of searching through several organizational units, as the prior already implies a certain degree of shared competences and related job-content. Accordingly, key competences are clearly defined and this understanding is shared within the company. Second, these job-families can create transparency about who is the relevant point of contact concerning a particular job-related topic, as they facilitate the development of formal and informal networks. Third, the perceived membership of a job-family may strengthen the emotional affinity of an employee thus facilitating organizational citizenship behavior. Furthermore, this approach will avoid that an employee's main task derives from placement within the organizational structure, but from the work-content. It can thus be concluded that using job-families can lead to a more efficient HR management.

In line with the umbrella research question, the following specified sub-question emerges:

Which job-families can be identified within the company?

4.3 Defining competence (stage 2)

There are various definitions of competences available that differ in scope and applicability for the context of this research, as no generally accepted definition exists. Therefore, the following section will discuss several approaches and finally yield a definition for the context of this thesis.

The following table (see table 1) presents the most common definitions of competence.

Table 1

Most common definitions of competence

Author	Definition
Bennour & Crestani, 2007	Competence is seen as a composition of three elements. The first refers to a combination of theoretical, contextual, and procedural knowledge. The second refers to practical and empirical know-how, the third to relational or cognitive attributes and behaviors
Drejer, 1996	Competence can be defined as a system of human beings. Using (hard) technology in an organized way and under the influence of a culture to create output that yields a competitive advantage for the firm
Torkkeli & Tuominen, 2002	Competence is seen as the successful implementation of the ability to exploit resources, where the actor can be the company or a individual employee

Belkadi, Bonjour & Dulmet, 2007	A competence is a construction, the result of a combination of cognitive resources from the concerned individual and of a network of resources from his/her environment
Tobias & Dietrich, 2003	Competence is a set of personal characteristics (knowledge, skills, abilities), which are relatively stable across different situations
Lysaght & Altschuld, 2000	Competence is the degree to which individuals can apply the skills and knowledge associated with a profession to the full range of situations that fall within the domain of the particular profession
Hamel & Prahalad, 1994	Competence is a bundle of skills and technologies that enables a company to provide benefits for customers rather than single skill or technology

Although there is a huge difference between those definitions, each contributes to the understanding of the relationship between competence and work-situation (Belkadi et al., 2007): First, competence is seen as something that adds value beyond the simple possession of resources. Second, competence is related to a specific actor, which can refer to an individual, a team, or a company. Third, competence is supposed to be related to a cognitive structure which influences the way particular activities are performed and has the tendency to be quite stable across a variety of situations. Fourth, competences are not the same as stereotypes. They are not fixed but contingent to the organizational environment. They can be developed and, if their limits are exceeded, new competences can emerge. It has to be

highlighted that competences on the intra- and interpersonal level are of relevance as it is out of concern of this study to change inherent features of the organization. As this study aims at linking competence requirements to job-families, the following definition can be composed:

Competence is a set of attributes possessed by a job-family member that enables the effective use or creation of organizational resources to increase the organization's competitive advantage. These attributes consist out of job-specific skills, knowledge and abilities and incorporate the social interaction dimension by integrating mental models. Competence is contingent to the organizational context and may therefore change as a function of time and related changes in the competitive environment.

Competence has been operationalized in many ways, similar to the wide scope of different definitions (Belkadi et al, 2007). As tests of intelligence were considered as poor predictor of job-performance, the assessment of competences was considered as alternative. These measured dispositions and skills that were not only focused on cognitive ability but included other intra- and inter-individual factors, so as self-regulation and social skills. Models of competence therefore typically include (Winterton, Delmare, Le Deist, & Stringfellow, 2006):

1. General problem solving competence
2. Critical thinking skills
3. Domain general and domain specific knowledge
4. Realistic, positive self-confidence
5. Social competences

From the prior, some implications derive. First, competence should not be considered as best-practice, but as being contingent to organizational needs. Therefore a set of relevant competences should be developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders who can judge

and evaluate based on their professional background which competences are relevant to increase competitive advantage and how they could be operationalized within the company context. Second, as competences should be linked to job-families, it is important to fulfill two parameters: having competences that are specific enough to reflect competence requirements within a job family, while being general enough to enable a cross functional comparison and differentiation between job-families.

In line with the umbrella research question, the following specified sub-question emerges:

Which competences can be identified within the company that are relevant for the success of the particular job-families?

4.4 Strategic human resource management (stage 2)

Various approaches exist that all strive to explain how human resources should be managed to gain the best organizational performance. In general, three broad modes of theorizing can be identified. These are the universalistic perspective, the contingency perspective and the configurational approach. In the following section, those modes of theorizing will be discussed to find the best-fitting theoretical perspective for the purpose of this study.

The universalistic perspective basically focuses on the linear relationship between a particular HR practice and the desired HR outcome of organizational performance, yielding mostly generalizable definitions of best practices, for example the effects of training and development on employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities (Delery & Doty, 1996; Terpstra & Rozell, 1993). The perspective has been extended to multiple practices that are supposed to be effective, referred to as High Performance Work Systems. However, it is to mention that the effects of those practices are only supposed to be additive and that related studies do not acknowledge potential effects of interdependence and related synergy effects. Accordingly,

this perspective implicitly denies that different practices could be combined in certain ways to increase their efficacy build on interaction effects. Neither does this perspective acknowledge the influence of alignment between business strategy and HR practice.

The contingency perspective, on the other hand, acknowledges that the relationship between a particular HR practice and HR outcome can be moderated by several contingencies. In general, three broad domains of contingencies can be identified. First, the alignment between business strategy and HR activities has been identified as important factor (Cappelli & Singh, 1992; Kerr, 1985). The extent to which business strategy influences HR practice should not be understood as an unidirectional relationship but an interactive strategy development (Lado & Wilson, 1994), putting emphasis on the resource based paradigm of HR, making it a valuable strategic asset and consequently an important element of strategic management (Barney & Wright, 1998). Second, organizational characteristics are considered as important contingencies, so as organizational size, technology and structure (Jackson & Schuler, 1995), as well as internal political relationships (Pfeffer & Davis-Blake, 1987). Third, factors external to the organization are considered to be important. These mainly refer to the technological, macro-economic, labor and competitive context (Boxall, 1998).

Opposed to the universalistic point of view, the configurational perspective puts emphasis on the relationship between HR practices, modeling a multidimensional model of relationships that aims at finding synergy effects and internal coherency. Comparable to the contingency perspective, this view acknowledges the influence of external factors on internal coherency (Doty, Glick & Huber, 1993).

As the purpose of this study is to enable a strategic perspective on the management of competences, the universalistic perspective seems not to be useful, as applying a set of best practices would ultimately lead to mediocrity, as its effect on competition would diminish as every competitor could apply those practices, because it lacks inimitability derived from the interaction effect between practice and organization. Although the configurational perspective

pinpoints to a very holistic approach that does not only focus on isolated practices, the application of this perspective exceeds the capacity of this research, as evaluating a multidimensional model of all possible synergy effects between strategic competence management and unique organizational characteristics goes way beyond the purpose of this explorative research. Therefore, the most promising approach incorporates the effects of external and internal contingencies, which may have reciprocal relationships and determine the value of human resources. With regards to competence requirements, it is assumable that the competitive environment as well as related technologies and other external and internal factors predefine and interact with labor requirements and that those effects differ strongly between industry sectors and/or businesses. Furthermore, it is conceivable that external pressures are manifested in internal characteristics as well. Therefore, it is very important to get a good understanding about the external and internal contingencies that may influence the management of competences within the company. These will become of special importance for the forecast of changing competences.

4.5 Competence foresight (stage 3)

In order to enable a proactive approach on strategic competence management, it is crucial to anticipate future factors that influence the company context and associated competence requirements. The concept of competence foresight has been defined by the European Foresight Monitoring Network as a participative approach to creating shared long-term visions to inform short term decision making process (Crehan, 2006). According to Siikaniemi (2012) the foresight of competence starts with identifying the relevant factors that will change in future perspective and influences the competences needed by an organization to pursue competitive advantage. Compared to traditional HR planning approaches, competence foresight does not only focus on quantitative, statistical estimations of supply and demand, but adds the dimension of anticipated competence imbalance, which can be

translated into concrete HR development measures to close the gap between current and anticipated competences proactively. Accordingly, proactive planning can be considered as a source of competitive advantage.

Therefore, the following specified sub-questions derive:

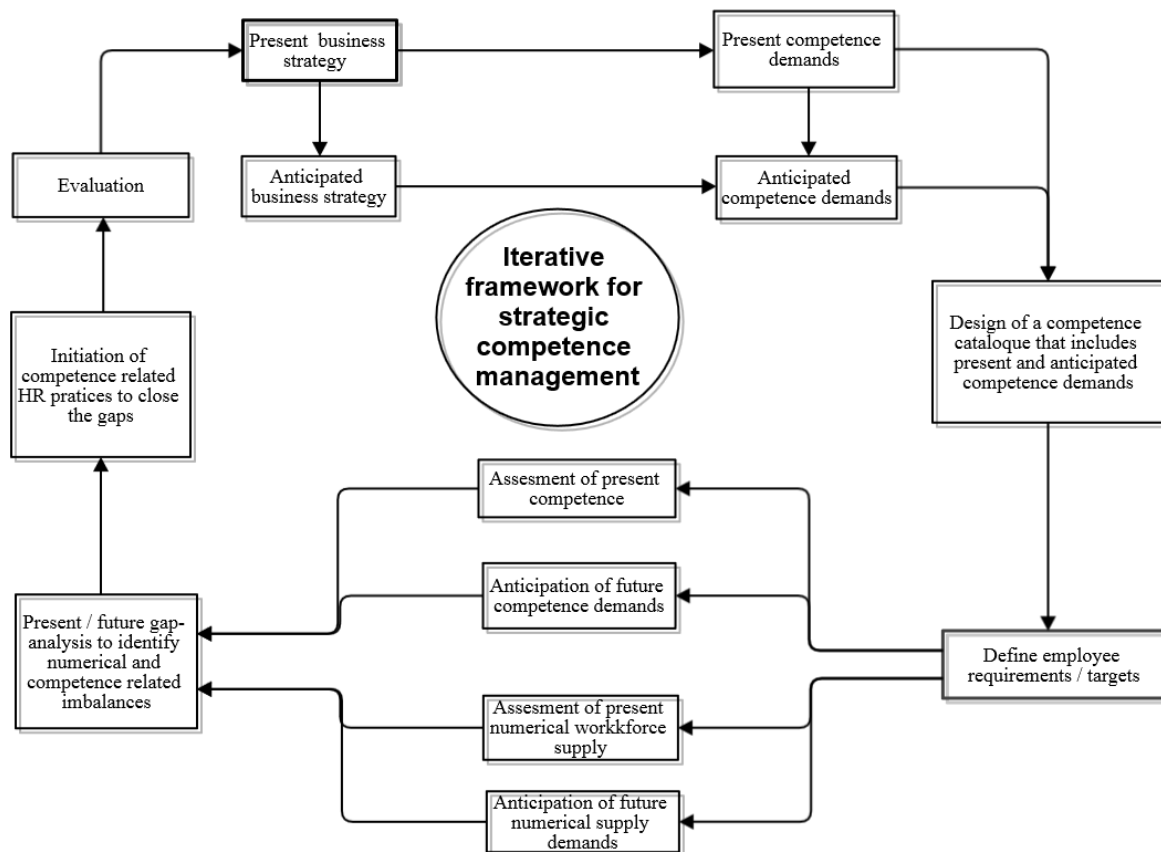
Which future external and internal contingencies are supposed to influence the competences needed by each job-family to maintain competitive advantage?

How do the job-family related competences change as a function of time and prior identified contingencies?

If incorporating competence foresight into the strategic competence management framework, by adding elements of anticipated business strategy, anticipated competence requirements, and related future imbalances, the prior presented framework (see figure 2) could benefit from being more proactive. It puts emphasis on assessing gaps not only in a present actual target comparison, but applying the same procedure to anticipated imbalances of competence and workforce supply (for an overview see figure 4). Gröne et al. (2004) claimed that strategic competence management is frequently less effective, as a gap in time exists between identifying a competence related imbalance and launching related HR practices. If a proactive orientation is integrated, this time lag could be reduced, because the perspective would change from reactive towards proactive.

Figure 4

Visualized incorporation of competence foresight into the strategic competence management framework by adding elements of anticipated business strategy, anticipated competence requirements, and related future imbalances.



5. Study relevance

The scope and relevance of this study can be attributed to both, the scientific and practitioner level. The strategic competence management gap-analysis, the development of job-families and associated competence profiles as well as the competence forecast apply well-known theories to the context of the company, thus delivering practical value to the organization.

The scientific relevance and contribution of this study is threefold. The first derives from the competence prognosis in future perspective. Little research has been done that

focusses on forecasting future competence developments on the organizational level (Siikaniemi, 2012). As relevant contingencies are supposed to be fast-changing as a function of ongoing globalization and its impact on organizational requirements, reactive approaches may be too slow to cope with these changes. Therefore, a proactive prognosis can be a source of competitive advantage as proposed by the resource based view, especially as it is inherently depended on the interaction effect of external and internal contingencies, which makes the prognosis quite unique and hard to imitate or transferable to other contexts. Related to this, the second scientific contribution refers to the integration of competence foresight into a strategic competence management framework in a real, non-theoretical environment to test it's usability. The third scientific contribution of this study refers a usability test of SHRM theories in the practical context. If the results can be clearly linked to the influences of internal and external contingencies, it would be another piece of evidence that pleas against the universalistic perspective.

6. Method

6.1 Focus group: contextual inquiry (stage 1)

6.1.1 Underlying rationale

Except for the competence prognosis, this study made intensively use of focus-groups. The relevant rationale is that competence management is embedded in a complex environment where different professions interact on several ecological levels which may imply between-departmental differences. In contrast to traditional interviews, the focus group enables access to information that goes beyond an individual's opinion and can emerge from dynamic group interactions, thus investigating the effects of shared or diffused mental models (Gibbs, 1997). Using only a small number of guiding questions, the focus group can generate in-depth considerations of participating stakeholders, leaving leeway for unexpected insights (Mauro & de Quiros, 2009). Conclusively, applying a focus group to the context of this

research can deliver results that are unique to the context of the company and may not be covered by simply conducting interviews.

A second reason for using focus groups refers to an organizational specific politics. As relevant top-management stakeholders start thinking about implementing a strategic competence management system in the future, organizing official focus-groups brings the topic “on the table” in all the different departments. As participants of the focus groups were asked to reflect on several issues, especially those participants in the focus groups about changing contingencies, their understanding of the topic and related importance for the company can be assumed to increase. Therefore, it is conceivable that on the long term perspective, these focus-groups will have an additional benefit by creating acceptance and a particular readiness potential which may facilitate the creation and implementation of a company specific competence management system that enables a future-oriented perspective.

A third reason for using focus groups refers to the perceived seriousness of the topic and related research by those who participate. Surveys admitted to line managers, for example, can be easily neglected or procrastinated as they are perceived as less urgent, therefore delaying the whole research process. Opposed to that, invitations to focus groups from the department of strategy are supposed to be estimated as of more relevance thus yielding two assumable consequences. First, the focus groups are fixed scheduled and cannot be delayed. Second, especially first line managers will feel needed and appreciated, as the invitation was send via their principal department leader, which may raise their eagerness to contribute to a new project that may become important in the near future.

6.1.2 Confidentiality and reportage

As the content of each focus-group tangled sensible information about the business orientation as well as internal dynamics within the company, it was not possible to audio-record and to transcribe the focus-groups. Instead, a protocol has been written during and after

each focus-group that reported the main findings and insights. However, these protocols are only available within the company, as they incorporate names and department signatures, which the legal departments don't want to leave the building. Therefore, only the anonymized, more abstract insights will be presented in the result section.

6.1.3 Procedure

A focus group has been held to investigate the gap between the strategic competence management system and the system in place at the company. Invited participants were the main HR controller, the HR manager, the head of strategic leadership development, the head of employee development, as well as three second line manager from different resorts and a represent from the work council. These were chosen based on prior discussions with the HR manager, as he identified them as most important.

The strategic competence management approach, as described in the section *4.1 Strategic competence management framework (pp.13)*, has been presented. Then, the participants were asked to discuss the system in place and reflect about shortcomings and possibilities for improvement. Second, they were asked to reflect which attributes of a new system are important for their specific stakeholder perspective and which of them are feasible within the company context. The opinions were collected on a flip-chart.

6.2 Focus group: job-families & competences (Stage 2)

6.2.1 Procedure

As no employee categorization existed, focus groups have been conducted to enable the categorization of employees in job-families. In total, 11 focus groups have been organized, one for each resort (covering all 15 resorts was not possible due to internal barriers and time issues). Within each focus-group most of the principal department leader from the related resort participated as well as some related first line managers. They were introduced to

the job-family concept by explaining the aggregation model used by Pearlman (1980, see figure 3, p.17) and asked accordingly to reflect on the following question: Which employees in my (main) department perform around a shared content cluster that demands for comparable attributes, skills and abilities. The different mentioned job-family suggestions were collected on a flipchart and the participants were stimulated towards more aggregation to achieve consensus. It has been part of the discussion and goal setting of this focus-group to find the right balance between specifications on the one hand to enable career-development within job-families, and generalization on the other hand to enhance comparability and visualization for the strategic choice perspective.

In the next step, relevant competences for each job-family have been defined. All available assessment center criteria that are used within the company were used as input and combined with most common perspectives on competence as described in the theory section. For example, one assessment criteria is the ability to work in teams and is tested during roleplaying tasks with several solicitants. Furthermore, the stakeholders were stimulated to think about criteria that were missing and could be important in the future. The results were collected on a flipchart.

6.3 Focus-group: Strategic contingency perspective (stage 2)

6.3.1 Procedure

In this third focus-group, the same participants were invited that participated in the prior focus-group about job-families and related competence profiles. However, instead of 11 separate focus-groups, only 8 have been conducted, including main departments that are mainly focusing on the operational functional areas of the company. This was mainly due to time restrictions and exceeding workload in the other main departments.

First, they were asked to reflect on the actual business strategy in terms of efficacy and in how far it should be adjusted in the following years as a function of globalization,

technologisation and demographic change. A distinction has been made between changes in the insurance environment and changes internal to the company. Their answers were organized on a flipchart according to these dimensions. In a second step, those changes were selected and prioritized by the participants that were considered as influencing competence requirements.

6.4 Survey: competence foresight (stage 3)

6.4.1 Underlying rationale

To evaluate which competences have which relevance for each job-family in the present and to get a estimation how they will develop in future perspective, a survey has been designed. Furthermore, purpose was to create awareness for the urgency to engage in proactive, strategic competence management.

Anticipating the future is rather difficult, especially in modern times. However, globalization, technologization and demographic change are affecting companies since several years, so many managers observed changes in the past and may be able to project these trends to the near and far future (of course with decreasing validity as the interval increases). Therefore, their experience should be used as most promising starting point.

Furthermore, statistical procedures will be used to evaluate the job-family integrity in terms of shared competence requirements. As yielded by focus group results in stage 2, the job-family “Operative Case Worker” contributes for about 70% of all employees within the company. Therefore, statistical procedures will use sub-categories, for example the domains of “*Service*” and “*Contract*” to investigate if the label “Operative Case Worker” needs a more specified distinction and to triangulate the findings from the prior focus group.

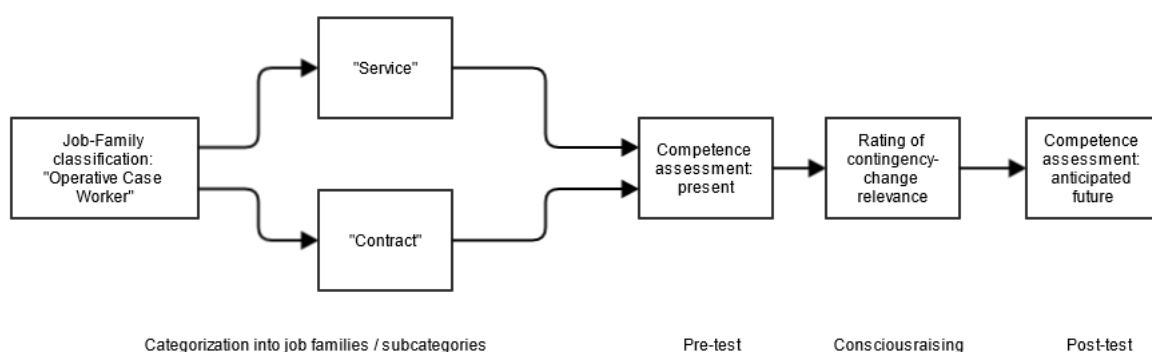
6.4.2 Procedure

Every main department manager who had many subordinates from the job-family “Operative Case Worker” was asked to participate. In total, six main department manager agreed to support this survey. They send the survey to their first line manager to get their data.

This way, 65 first line managers were asked to fill in the survey. They were asked to fill in the domain of Operative Case Worker, thus making a distinction between the *service* and the *contract* category and then rate the relevance of each competence at the present moment for the particular sub-job-family (for an overview about the quantitative instrument used see section 6.4.3 *Instrument, p.33*, for the entire survey see *Appendix, p.66*). It is to mention that it was not possible to collect data about particular employees, as the work-council was strictly against it. Therefore, the participants rated the competences of a stereotypical job-family member. The competence profile thus reflects the competence a prototypical employee should possess in the present moment to cope with his/her work-requirements. After present competences have been assessed, the first line managers were asked to rate the relevance of the prior identified internal and external change processes for their very department. The intention was to change the way of thinking about competences by providing input for their mental models about changing contingencies. In terms of an experiment, this step is considered as the manipulation. The idea was to raise consciousness about possible change influences for the next step, the prognosis of competence development. The participants were then asked to estimate how the competence scores from the first run would change under the premise of changing contingencies as rated before in a 5-year perspective. For an overview about the survey design see figure 5.

Figure 5

Survey-structure.



6.4.3 Instrument

The concept of competence as measured within this survey is coherent to the competence catalogue as developed within the prior focus group. Each single competence has been operationalized in an item with a 9-point Likert Scale continuum, ranging from “not important at all” to “utterly important” (see *Appendix, p. 66*). In total, 14 competences were operationalized, which are aggregated into four main categories, namely *professional competence, method competence, social competence, and self-competence*. For an overview about each competence see section *7.2 Job-Families & Competences (p. 38)*.

A pilot study was not possible, as the time, line managers were willing to spend, was limited. Therefore, the formulated questions for each concept were discussed with the head of HR strategy and two first line managers to ensure face validity.

6.4.4 Data analysis

In the first step, the data were checked for normal distribution, which has been confirmed by the Skewness and Kurtosis test. In the second step, a paired sample t-test has been performed to investigate if the overall competence change within each competence is due to random error. In this step, no distinction has been made between the *contract / service* category, but they were pooled together. In the third step, an independent sample t-test has been performed using the variable “*contract / service*” as independent variable and the competence scores as dependent variable (pretest). The rationale was to investigate if the competence requirements differ strongly between those two broad domains of “Operative Case Worker”.

For the evaluation of competence foresight, a paired sample t-test has been performed that clustered each pre-test competence with the particular post-test competence. The rationale was to investigate if the changing scores may be due random error. Furthermore, within subject effect-sizes have been calculated to give a profound estimation of assumed future imbalances. As those effect-sizes do not aim at comparing between an experimental and

control group, but the development within one competence, the following formula has been used as it reflects the standard procedure if standard deviations differ between pre- and post-test (Cumming & Finch, 2001)

$$[\text{MEAN (Post-test)} - \text{MEAN (Pre-test)}] / \text{Standard deviation (pre-test)}$$

7. Results

7.1 Contextual inquiry

It was the intention of this focus-group to understand the competence management context at the company and to identify gaps between the actual situation and a strategic competence management system, as well as getting estimation about feasibility issues surrounding a possible solution. In the following section, the stakeholder perspective surrounding this issue will be described.

The participants, even the head of HR controlling, shared consensus that the actual HR system is outdated. On a yearly base, all employee data has to be transferred to an Excel table that incorporates an employee's position within the organizational structure as well as the wages that have to be paid. Within this system no qualitative data related to an employee, for example categorization into job-families and competence profiles exist. These issues are part of the responsibility of the first line managers and not centrally stored. As the workforce should be reduced in the following years according to a "Sollstellenplan", this lack of qualitative data yields huge problems. First, it is not always completely clear when employees will leave the organization. Assuming that cohorts of employees will drop out as a function of their age, this information is rather useful as it could enable a social acceptable reduction of the workforce by simply not staffing these positions again. The system in place has too much variability concerning this issue. Second, the workforce can hardly be reduced according to an employee's talent, as a global visualization for relevant decision makers does not exist. The stakeholders shared consensus that a huge problem of the company refers to the employee-

position oriented HR policy, whereas a competence- oriented policy would enable a more flexible and proactive staffing.

The head of employee development added that employee development is oriented on department demands but not on a systematic holding wide program that is strategy driven and has defined targets for development. Furthermore, the department for HR development is only responsible for training “soft skills,”(meta-competences, abilities), whereas job-specific knowledge is trained by the first line managers within a departmental unit. Again, clear targets are missing. Accordingly, cross boundary careers little exist, although highly demanded by the stakeholders as they are considered as a source of organizational flexibility.

Based on the situation of the HR development department, it is important to mention that in the view of this study, competence mainly includes soft-skills, as an approach that integrates every job-specific / task- specific competence would take approximately several years as no systematic data conduction has ever taken place.

Besides these shortcomings, the stakeholders agreed that the insurance sector will change in the next 10 years. Therefore, the new system should be more proactive, thus incorporating anticipated changes in competences and related job-families.

From these shortcomings some implications for improvement derived that have been formulated by the stakeholders:

1. The new system should incorporate more precise drop-out data
2. The new system should enable a qualitative perspective on an employee’s talent/competence.
3. The new system should define targets for the HR development department
4. The new system should define targets for first line managers to train their subordinates

5. The new system should create a talent pool that can be used to enable more cross-boundary careers according to an employee's competences and not his/her position within the organizational structure.
6. Ultimately, the new system should facilitate the achievement of the "Sollstellenplan" in an efficient way
7. The new system should be proactive towards anticipated changes of demanded employee competences.

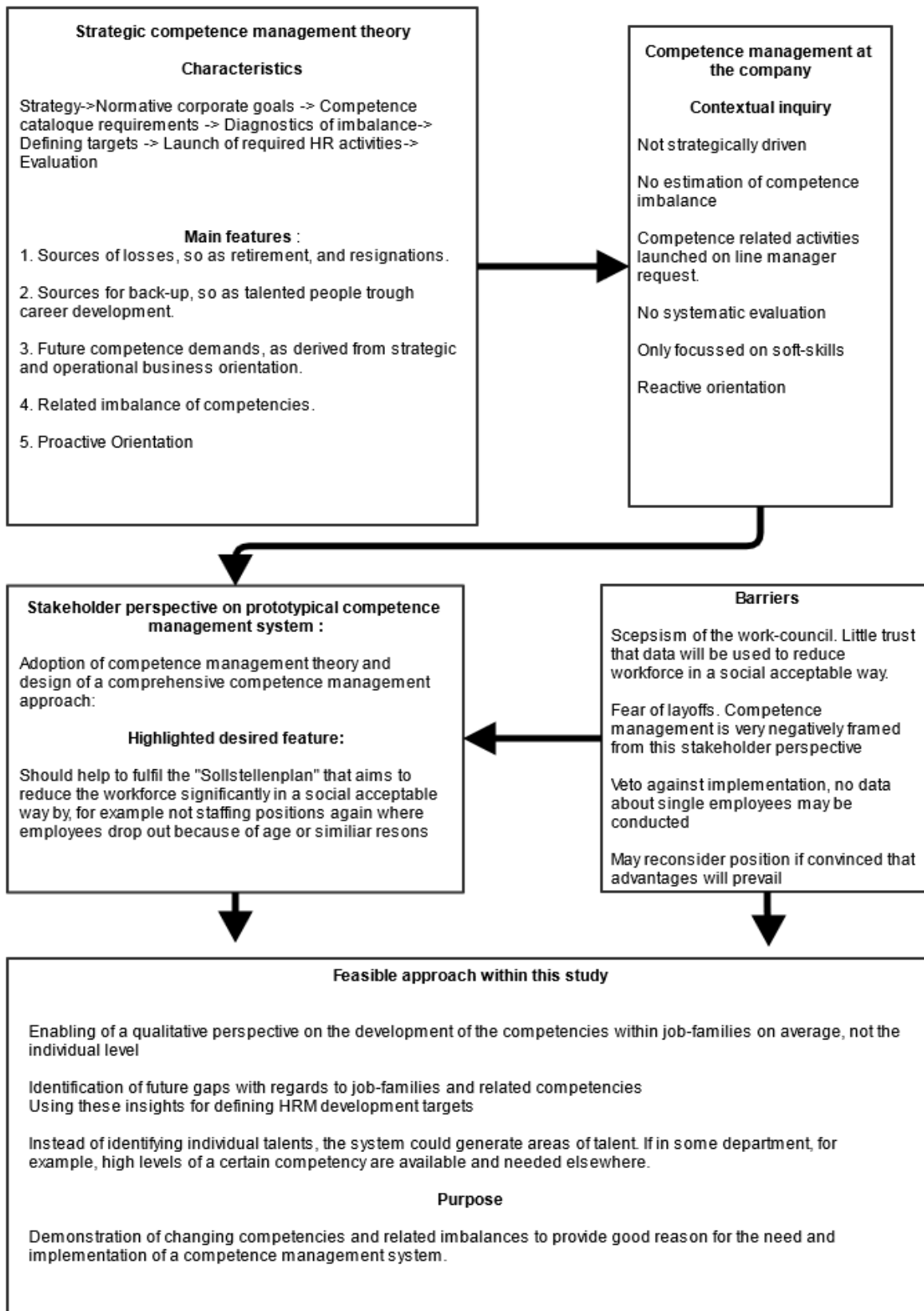
One eminent problem towards this approach has been identified. The work council does not want that a student is gathering these data about employees. They fear that the data could be misused to fire employees with less talent and that the "Sollstellenplan" would not be achieved in a social acceptable way. In the following debate, a solution emerged. Instead of gathering data about individual employees, first line managers will report which competences an average employee needs to perform his/her tasks successfully. The same procedure will be used for competence prognosis. The gap between present and prognosticated competences can then be used to identify the potential of the system if individual data would be used. If the test-run of this project is successful and proves it's use, the work-council will reconsider its position. Accordingly, in the view of this study, the feasible characteristics would be:

1. Enabling of a quantitative perspective on the development of the competences within job-families on average.
2. Identification of future gaps with regards to job-families and related competences
3. Accordingly these insights should be used for defining HRM development targets
4. Instead of identifying individual talents, the system could generate areas of talent. If in some department, for example, high levels of a certain competence are available and needed elsewhere.

For an overview about the important focus-group results see figure 6

Figure 6:

Overview about the results of the contextual inquiry.



7.2 Focus group: job-families & competences

In total, 14 job-families have been identified.

- Operative Case Worker
- Underwriting
- Sales and Distribution
- Product management
- Investment Management
- Controlling
- Actuary
- Legal Affairs
- Human Resources / Organization
- Administration
- IT
- Infrastructure
- Revision
- Leadership

A special role has the “Operative Case Worker”, as it constitutes for round about 70% of all employees and is related to the daily business activities of an insurance company for example car- or life-insurance. The percentage is a rough estimation based on the overall number of operative departments compared with more specialized departments. Within this category, a distinction should be made between those “Operative Case Worker” who work in the service field, and those in the contract field, as those two broad areas demand for different levels of competence. In the service field, for example, employees have to interact with customers frequently, which claim more sophisticated social competence.

Based on the reflection about job-families, several related competences have been identified. The following catalogue provides an overview about all competences that may have different values for each job-family. Note that job-specific competences were clustered in the dimensions of specialist and generalist as this study focusses more on meta competences:

- 1 Professional competence: Refer to job-specific skills and knowledge. A distinction can be made between two broad categories:
 - 1.1 *Specialist*: Specific professional competence regarding in-depth knowledge about products, processes, and procedures.
 - 1.2 *Generalist*: Ability to understand and to use the reciprocity between departments and areas of subject.
- 2 Method competence: Needed to solve tasks and problematic situations that are beyond daily work routines.
 - 2.1 *Analytical ability*: Being able to process a huge amount of information and to draw the right conclusions to solve problems effectively.
 - 2.2 *Project planning*: Being able to organize and conduct project work.
 - 2.3 *Rhetoric*: Ability to convince others in a dialogue or presentation.
- 3 Social competence: Ability to interact successfully with different people in different situations.
 - 3.1 *Adaptability*: Ability to adapt to changing work environments and related challenges.
 - 3.2 *Ability to emphasize*: Being able to understand the feelings and motivations of others.
 - 3.3 *Capacity for teamwork*: Ability to work in teams effectively and to solve team related conflicts in order to foster solutions.
 - 3.4 *Assertiveness*: Being able to defend one's opinion and to assert if necessary.

3.5 *Coaching ability*: Being able to convey/train good behavior and/or knowledge to others.

4 Self-competence: Attitude and coping strategies regarding the Self

4.1 *Resilience*: Being able to stay calm in stressful situations and to manage time properly.

4.2 *Willingness to change*: Being motivated to change if necessary, incorporates the ability to use feedback to improve oneself.

4.3 *Eagerness to succeed*.

7.3 Strategic contingency perspective

The focus-group that aimed at identifying contingency factors within the company context that are supposed to change as a function of time yield several results, that can be clustered as being internal or external to the organization. These will be listed in the following section.

Assumptions about the changing external contingencies are:

- 1 Competition and related cost-pressures keep rising as function of market adjustments and demographic change.
- 2 The amount of information, connectivity and associated change-processes will increase tremendously.
- 3 The interval of knowledge becoming obsolete will be shorter.
- 4 The rise of new technologies will continue.
 - 4.1 Industrialization of the insurance sector through automatized processes.
 - 4.2 Work- and private life keep merging, working hours become more volatile.
 - 4.3 Virtual teams and related forms of communication will increase in importance.
 - 4.4 Physical workplace will decrease in importance in favor of virtual workplaces.

- 5 Europeanization and globalization of the market: English may become the new business language, the market will work 24 hours.
- 6 Regulative requirements will increase, for example risk-management, SolvencyII, jurisdiction, consumer protection, or data protection.
- 7 Customer profiles will become more complex and differentiated as a function of ongoing individualization.
 - 7.1 “Internet generation” on the one hand: Claim to manage insurance contracts online and flexible.
 - 7.2 “Pay as you live” contracts on the other hand: Claim to get individually tailored insurance contracts.
- 8 Demographic development of the labor market: Shrinking supply of needed employees. More and more competition regarding workforces. Future employees will have higher standards concerning their employer and work conditions. However, the new generations will be more willing to fluctuate.

Assumptions about changing internal contingencies are:

- 1 Product-development: succeeding cycles of product development are going to be shorter as a function of increasing competition. Development of customer-tailored products becomes much more complex.
- 2 Situational customer communication will increase while document handling will decrease.
- 3 Project-work will increase: Specialists from different functions and departments will work together on topics central to the company’s success.
- 4 The on-going optimization of processes will lead to more highly valuable job-function with new competences:
 - 4.1 Increased demand for consulting abilities
 - 4.2 Increased demand to process control abilities

4.3 General controlling abilities

- 5 The interaction between back-office, field service and agencies will increase and borders become more fluent.
- 6 Operative case departments will become smaller (for example car-insurance or third party liability). As a consequence, more permeability between units is necessary to solve work-load peaks as the critical employee mass would not be sufficient in only

7.4 Competence foresight

Out of the invited 65 line managers, 48 participated in the survey and provided a competence foresight for the job-family “Operative Case Worker”. Of these, 19 were attributable to the category “*service*” and 29 to the category “*contract*”. The scale reliability analysis confirmed prior face validity checks, yielding a Cronbachs alpha for each field of competence above the critical threshold of .7 (for more details see table 2).

Table 2

Scale reliability analysis based on Cronbachs alpha.

Field of competence	Cronbachs alpha	Number of items
Professional competence	.763	2
Method competence	.716	3
Social competence	.846	5
Self-competence	.813	4

The results demonstrate that the competence requirements differ between each single competence, as well as between fields of competence in the present moment (see figure 7 for visualization, table 3 for statistical information). *Social competences* (mean=6.79) and *self-competences* (mean=7.3), and *professional competences* (mean=7.22) were rated as being important. Opposed to that, *method competences* (mean=5.14) was rated as only being of

moderate importance. On the single competence level, *project planning* (mean=3.5), *rhetoric* (mean=4.82), and *ability to coach others* (mean=4.28) were rated as less important compared to the others in the present moment.

In 5 –year future perspective, all competences gained in importance, except of the *specialist* dimension, which did not reach the significance threshold (see table 3 for statistical information). Especially those competences, which were rated as less important in the present moment, gained importance in 5 year perspective. *Rhetoric* (mean=5.6) is rated as being more important, as well as *ability to coach others* (mean=5.2). Even *project planning* (mean =4.6) is considered as gaining importance. The competence being of utterly importance in the 5 – year perspective is *adaptability* (mean=8.50).

Figure 7

Mean competence requirements in the present and the 5 year future perspective. Means reflect the item scale continuum, ranging from 1= "not important at all" to 9= "utterly important"

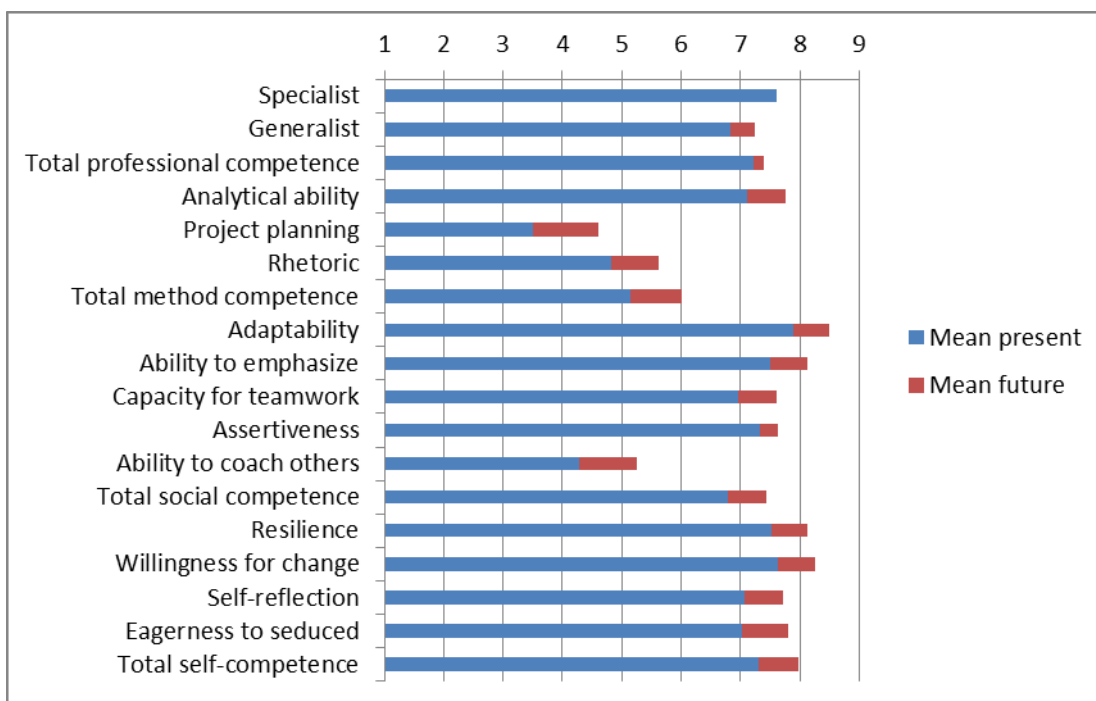


Table 3

Provides means and standard deviations for both, the present and the 5-year future perspective, as well as T-value, degrees of freedom and significance level (alpha = .05) based on a paired sample t-test. Means reflect the item scale continuum, ranging from 1= "not important at all" to 9= "utterly important".

Competence	Means		SD		T	Df	p
	Present	Future	Present	Future			
Specialist	7.61	7.57	1.14	1.29	-.265	45	0.396
Generalist	6.83	7.24	1.51	1.14	2.797	45	0.004
Total professional competence	7.22	7.40	1.33	1.22	1.266	45	0.200
Analytical ability	7.11	7.76	1.48	0.92	5.771	45	0.000
Project planning	3.50	4.61	1.64	1.65	7.246	45	0.000
Rhetoric	4.83	5.63	1.82	1.84	5.997	45	0.000
Total method competence	5.14	6.00	1.32	1.13	9.302	45	0.000
Adaptability	7.89	8.50	0.95	0.72	6.725	45	0.000
Ability to emphasize	7.50	8.13	1.09	1.00	5.175	45	0.000
Capacity for teamwork	6.96	7.61	0.99	1.08	5.379	45	0.000
Assertiveness	7.33	7.63	1.21	0.97	3.288	45	0.001
Ability to coach others	4.28	5.26	1.24	1.63	7.319	45	0.000
Total social competence	6.79	7.43	0.87	0.83	7.894	45	0.000
Resilience	7.52	8.13	1.07	0.78	5.780	45	0.000
Willingness for change	7.63	8.26	0.95	0.80	7.015	45	0.000
Self-reflection	7.07	7.72	1.18	1.19	5.564	45	0.000
Eagerness to be seduced	7.02	7.80	1.24	0.98	5.044	45	0.000
Total self-competence	7.31	7.98	0.89	0.81	8.238	45	0.000

The degree of competence requirements differs strongly between the *service* and *contract* category, yielding substantial evidence that the job-family “Operative Case Worker” is not homogenous in the present moment (see figure 8 for visualization, table 4 for statistical information). The following competences are rated systematically as more important in the *service* category compared with the *contract* category:

- *Specialist* (mean(service)=8.11, mean(contract)=7.26, T(44)=-2.62, p<0.01)
- *Generalist* (mean(service)=7.42, mean(contract)=6.41, T(44)=-2.35, p<0.01)
- *Analytical ability* (mean(service)=7.95, mean(contract)=6.52, T(44)=-3.64, p<0.001)
- *Rhetoric* (mean(service)=5.42, mean(contract)=4.41, T(44)=-1.92, p<0.03)
- *Assertiveness* (mean(service)=7.79, mean(contract)=7.00, T(44)=-2.27, p<0.01)
- *Self-reflection* (mean(service)=7.53, mean(contract)=6.74, T(44)=-2.33, p<0.01)
- *Eagerness to succeed* (mean(service)=7.42, mean(contract)=6.74, T(44)=-1.89, p<0.03)

Figure 8

Visualized differences between the Operative Case Worker subcategories “contract” and “service” at the present moment.

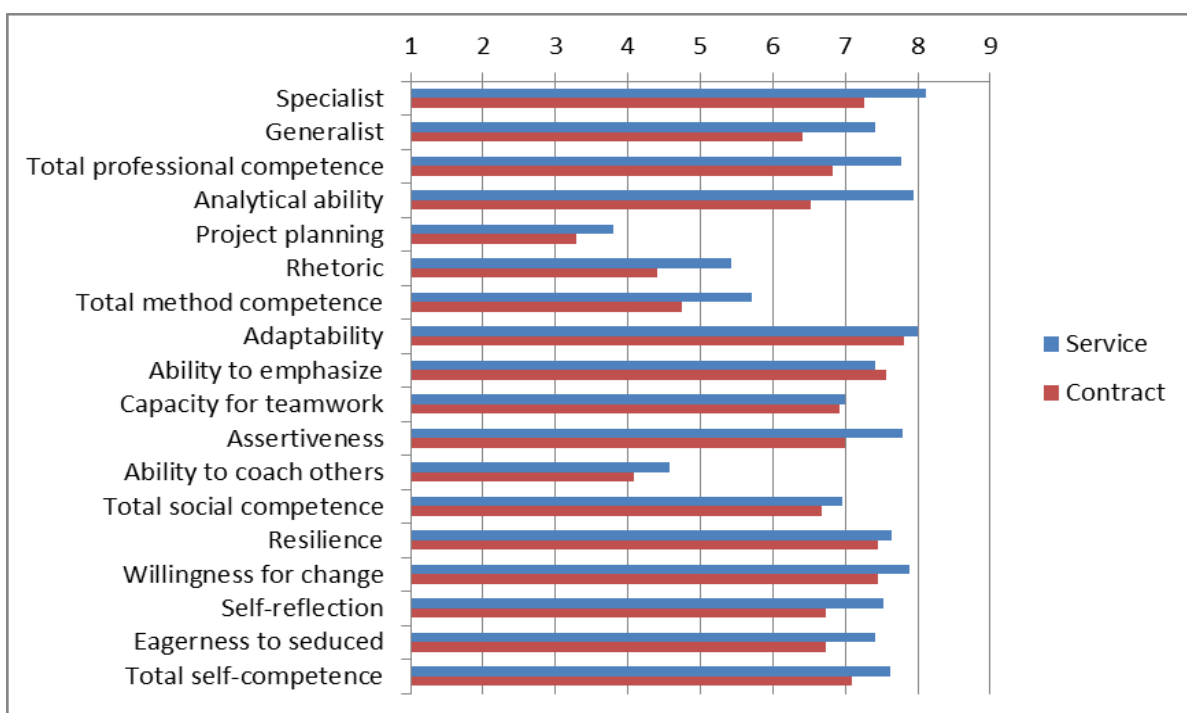


Table 4:

Differences between the “service” and “contract” category in the present moment. Provides means and standard deviations for both categories, as well as T-value, degrees of freedom and significance level (alpha =.05) based on an independent sample t-test. Means reflect the item scale continuum, ranging from 1= “not important at all” to 9= “utterly important”.

Competence	Means		SD		T	Df	p
	Service	Contract	Service	Contract			
Specialist	8.11	7.26	0.99	1.13	-2.62	44	0.01
Generalist	7.42	6.41	1.50	1.39	-2.35	44	0.01
Total professional competence	7.76	6.83	1.25	1.26	-2.49	44	0.01
Analytical ability	7.95	6.52	1.03	1.48	-3.64	44	0.00
Project planning	3.79	3.30	1.99	1.35	-1.00	44	0.16
Rhetoric	5.42	4.41	1.89	1.67	-1.92	44	0.03
Total method competence	5.72	4.74	1.33	1.17	-2.63	44	0.01
Adaptability	8.00	7.81	1.15	0.79	-0.65	44	0.26
Ability to emphasize	7.42	7.56	1.39	0.85	0.41	44	0.34
Capacity for teamwork	7.00	6.93	1.25	0.78	-0.25	44	0.40
Assertiveness	7.79	7.00	1.23	1.11	-2.27	44	0.01
Ability to coach others	4.58	4.07	1.22	1.24	-1.37	44	0.09
Total social competence	6.96	6.67	0.98	0.78	-1.10	44	0.14
Resilience	7.63	7.44	1.12	1.05	-0.58	44	0.28
Willingness for change	7.89	7.44	1.10	0.80	-1.61	44	0.06
Self-reflection	7.53	6.74	0.90	1.26	-2.33	44	0.01
Eagerness to seduced	7.42	6.74	1.22	1.20	-1.89	44	0.03
Total self-competence	7.62	7.09	0.89	0.84	-2.03	44	0.02

Furthermore, there is a difference between both categories with regards to the anticipated competence change (see table 5). Although the contract category scored systematically lower on many competences, the effect size of anticipated change is systematically higher in this category. The anticipated change within *analytical ability*, for example, shows an effect-size of “.73” in the *contract* category and an effect-size of “.26” in the *service* category. Especially the *social competences* gain the most in importance in the *contract* category, yielding an effect size of “1.2” compared with “.42” in the *service* category. Thus the effects of competence foresight affect the *contract* category stronger, which implies a higher degree of anticipated imbalances.

Table 5

Effect sizes of anticipated competence change for both categories of the Operational Case Worker job – family.

Competence	Effect- size contract	Effect- size service
Specialist	0.00	0.05
Generalist	0.56	-0.03
Total professional competence	0.28	0.02
Analytical ability	0.73	0.26
Project planning	0.89	0.31
Rhetoric	0.62	0.40
Total method competence	0.95	0.57
Adaptability	1.11	0.40
Ability to emphasize	1.07	0.30
Capacity for teamwork	1.21	0.33
Assertiveness	0.43	0.08
Ability to coach others	1.06	0.53

Total social competence	1.20	0.42
Resilience	0.59	0.42
Willingness for change	0.97	0.24
Self-reflection	0.73	0.46
Eagerness to seduced	0.93	0.34
Total self-competence	0.98	0.43

As it has been demonstrated that the job-family “Operative Case Worker” is heterogeneous, the following section will evaluate anticipated competence related imbalances separately.

In the *service* category the overall competence requirements are considered as very important on average in the present moment (see figure 9 for visualization, table 6 for statistical information). Exceptions are *project planning* (mean=5.4), *rhetoric* (mean=5.4), and *ability to coach others* (mean=4.5), which are considered as being only moderately important. However, in 5-year future perspective, these gain the most in importance, thus yielding strong potential future imbalances. For the other competences, the change score reached significance, except for *assertiveness*, *willingness for change*, and the *specialist/generalist* continuum. Especially the *adaptability* competence showed the highest value within this study, being considered as utterly important in the 5-year perspective.

However, it is to mention that the overall effect sizes of those anticipated changes is rather low compared with the *contract* category as demonstrated in the prior section.

Figure 9

Visualized, anticipated imbalances for the “service” category. Means reflect the item scale continuum, ranging from 1= “not important at all” to 9= “utterly important”.

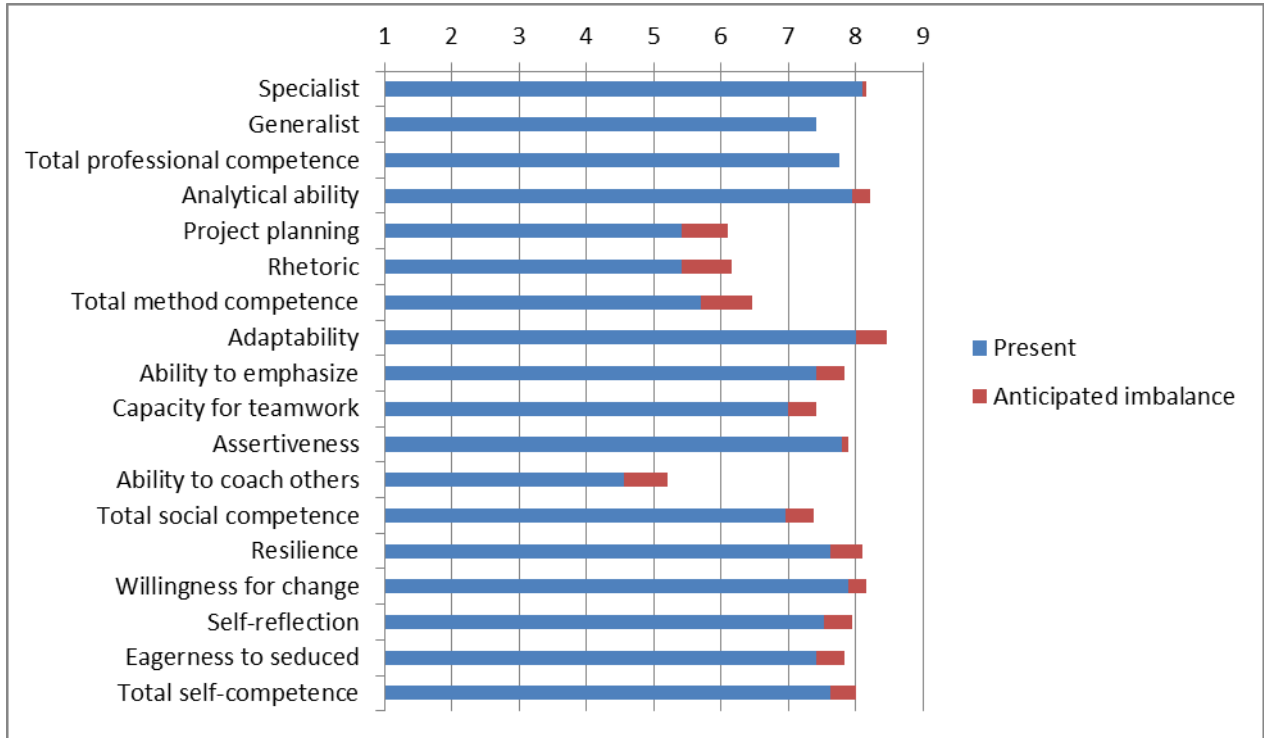


Table 6

Anticipated competence imbalances for the category “service”. Provides means and standard deviations for both, the present and future perspective, as well as T-value, degrees of freedom and significance level (alpha =.05) based on a paired-sample t-test. Means reflect the item scale continuum, ranging from 1= “not important at all” to 9= “utterly important”.

Competence	Means		SD		Df	T	p
	Present	Future	Present	Future			
Specialist	8.10	8.15	.994	.89	18	-.252	.201
Generalist	7.42	7.37	1.50	1.26	18	.252	.201
Total professional competence	7.76	7.76	1.24	1.08	18	0	.201
Analytical ability	7.94	8.21	1.025	.85	18	-2.535	.005
Project planning	5.42	5.05	1.98	2.07	18	-4.440	.000
Rhetoric	5.42	6.15	1.80	1.74	18	-3.441	.001

Total method competence	5.71	6.47	1.33	1.20	18	-5.182	.000
Adaptability	8	8.49	1.15	.96	18	-3.375	.001
Ability to emphasize	7.42	7.84	1.38	1.30	18	-2.388	.007
Capacity for teamwork	7	7.42	1.25	1.16	18	-1.804	.022
Assertiveness	7.79	7.89	1.23	1.14	18	-.809	.107
Ability to coach others	4.56	5.21	1.22	1.23	18	-3.314	.001
Total social competence	6.96	7.37	.97	.86	18	-3.572	.001
Resilience	7.63	8.10	1.11	1.04	18	-3.375	.000
Willingness for change	7.89	8.16	1.10	1.12	18	-2.041	.14
Self-reflection	7.53	7.95	.90	1.07	18	-2.650	.004
Eagerness to seduced	7.42	7.84	1.22	1.22	18	-2.191	.011
Total self-competence	7.62	8.01	.89	1.01	18	-4.025	.000

Within the *contract* category, overall competence requirements were rated as important, thus less than in the *service* category, where most of the competence demanded was rated as very important. Similar to the later, *project planning*, *rhetoric*, and *ability to coach others* scored lower. However, in the 5-year future perspective, there is a strong gain in importance within almost each field of competence, yielding strong anticipated imbalances for almost every competence, except for *specialist* (see figure 10, for statistical information see table 7). Comparable to the *service* category the *adaptability* competence showed the highest value, being considered as utterly important in the 5 year perspective.

Figure 10

Visualized, anticipated imbalances for the “contract” category. Means reflect the item scale continuum, ranging from 1= “not important at all” to 9= “utterly important”.

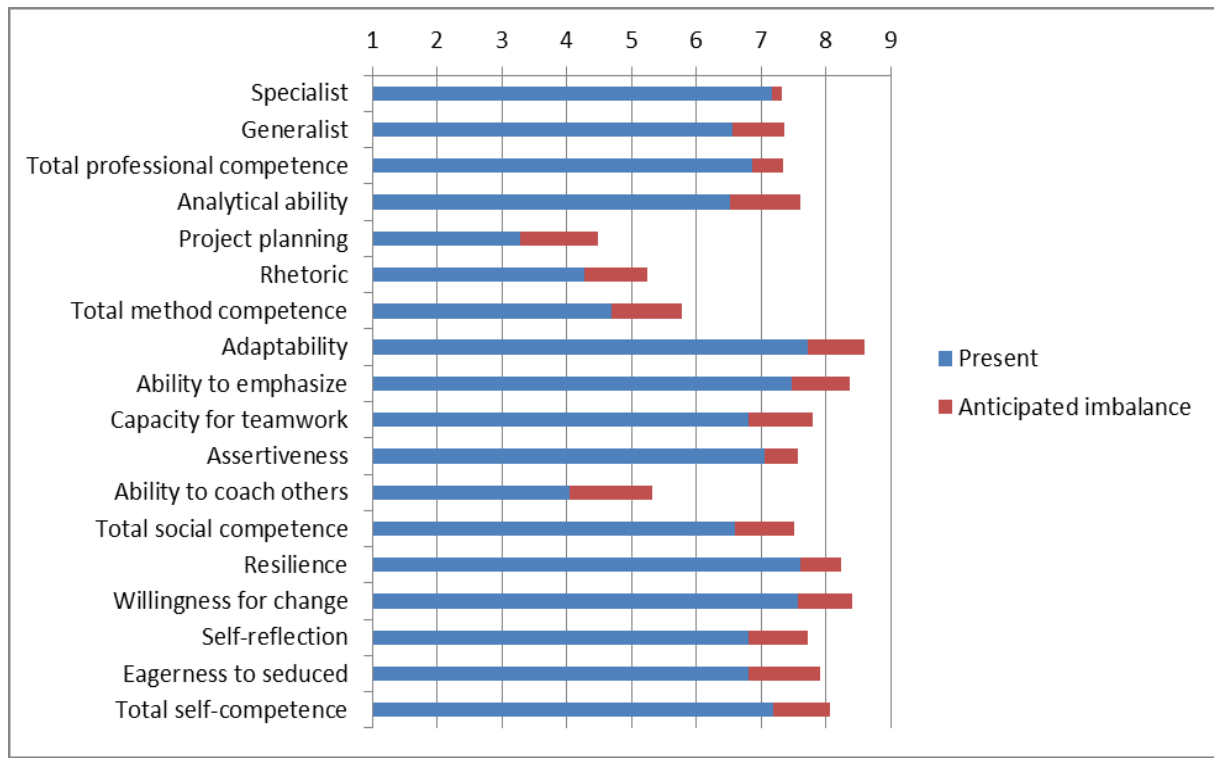


Table 7

Anticipated competence imbalances for the category “contract”. Provides means and standard deviations for both, the present and future perspective, as well as T-value, degrees of freedom and significance level ($\alpha = .05$) based on a paired-sample t-test. Means reflect the item scale continuum, ranging from 1= “not important at all” to 9= “utterly important”.

Competence	Means		SD		DF	T	p
	Present	Future	Present	Future			
Specialist	7.16	7.32	1.106	1.52	28	-.558	.291
Generalist	6.560	7.36	1.41	1.15	28	-4.382	.000
Total professional competence	6.86	7.34	1.26	1.34	28	-2.47	.146
Analytical ability	6.52	7.6	1.47	.91	28	-5.939	.000
Project planning	3.28	4.48	1.34	1.33	28	-5.765	.000

Rhetoric	4.28	5.24	1.54	1.73	28	-5.136	.000
Total method competence	4.70	5.77	1.12	1.01	28	-7.371	.000
Adaptability	7.72	8.60	.79	.78	28	-6.063	.000
Ability to emphasize	7.48	8.36	.82	.70	28	-4.993	.000
Capacity for teamwork	6.80	7.80	.82	1.08	28	-5.774	.000
Assertiveness	7.05	7.56	1.17	.96	28	-3.980	.001
Ability to coach others	4.04	5.32	1.20	1.70	28	-7.185	.000
Total social competence	6.59	7.52	.77	.84	28	-6.907	.000
Resilience	7.60	8.24	1.08	.59	28	-4.226	.000
Willingness for change	7.56	8.40	.86	.50	28	-7.584	.000
Self-reflection	6.80	7.72	1.25	1.24	28	-5.335	.000
Eagerness to seduced	6.80	7.92	1.20	.86	28	-4.956	.000
Total self-competence	7.19	8.07	.89	.70	28	-7.997	.000

8. Discussion

The results of this research provide several contributions to enable a strategic, proactive perspective on the management of competence within the focal company, which, comparable to the research model of this study, should be considered stage-wise. In the following, these stages will be discussed, as well as the scientific contribution of this study.

8.1 Enabling strategic competence management

First, as a foundation, a strategic competence management system should be implemented that goes beyond the mere accumulation of employees, their job-positions and related salaries. A distinction can be made between two broad areas of needed improvement. The first tackles the general understanding of a coherent strategic competence management

system that is built on strategic considerations and translated into operational activities and HR planning efforts. The second tackles organizational characteristics that may form barriers to the success of a strategic competence management system. The prior area of needed improvement is of most importance, as it highlights the major gaps between the proposed scientific orientation towards strategic competence management and practices in place. First of all, the company lacks employee requirement profiles and competence catalogues that derive from strategic considerations. This has a twofold consequence. First, it cannot be controlled if strategic considerations from the top-management do result in changes of the competence profiles (Kunzmann & Schmidt, 2007). Consequently, future demands as derived from strategic orientations are hard to estimate. Second, the knowledge about employee competences is centered within departmental units. Thus no homogenous and central data point exists which makes it rather difficult to find sources for backup in different departments and may restricted holding wide career development and organizational flexibility. According to Gröne et al. (2004), a central data point predetermines the success of a strategic competence management system, as it provides a mean for calculating anticipated competence imbalances and thus facilitates the definition of HR targets to plan further HR activities. Furthermore, it enables a companywide competence pool, which allows more organizational flexibility in finding sources for back-up or career-development (Kunzmann & Schmidt, 2007).

Although the focus group showed that relevant stakeholders from the company understand the need for a strategic competence management system and test options to engage in related activities, the position of the work council marks the key barrier for successful implementation of the desired system. Although many scientific concepts and publications praise the advantages of such a system (Gröne et al., 2004; Hall, 1984; Kunzmann & Schmidt, 2007), they seem to lack the incorporation of the maybe most important relevant psychosocial factor, namely the human fear of power misuse and employment uncertainty, in this case

manifested in the work-councils opposition. Even Gröne et al. (2004), who provided an overview about factors that are important for implementation, lacked in-depth insight into the psychosocial resistance towards strategic competence management. However, with regards to generalization to different cultural contexts or nationalities, it has to be acknowledged that psychosocial factors, so as uncertainty avoidance, may be different, thus moderating the effects of fear about power misuse (Hofstede, 2001). Therefore, this insight should only be extrapolated to the German context.

8.2 From single employees towards job-families

Once the infrastructure in terms of a strategic competence management system has been implemented, the paradigm change from single employee perception towards the use of job-families should be facilitated. This would enable several HR benefits as discussed in the section *4.2 Job-families (pp. 16)*. With regards to the outcome of stage 1, the most important feature is that staffing can use an employee pool within job-families instead of searching through several organizational units, as the prior already implies a certain degree of shared competences and related job-content. With regards to the desired social acceptable workforce reduction, this will enable much more leeway, as employees from a department that has to shrink can be easily transferred to other departments with comparable job-family related competence profiles. The workforce reduction can then just be organized based on dropouts of elderly employees.

8.3 Competence foresight

The results of competence foresight can be divided into three main contributions. First, they demonstrate that the job-family “Operative Case Worker” is too heterogeneous to be unified in strategic present perspective. Second, the results show that several competence imbalances are assumed to exist in the 5-year future perspective. Third, it gives reason to

incorporate elements of competence foresight into the strategic competence management framework. In the following section, these contributions will be discussed.

In the *service* category all competence levels are relatively high compared with the *contract* category. Accordingly assumed forecast effects are relatively low in effect size, as the scale only ranged from 1 to 9 and a mean score close to 8 has already been reached frequently in the present. Opposed to that, the category *contract* scored systematically lower on all competences. However, the effect sizes of the change for each competence were much higher in magnitude, yielding many anticipated imbalances. Conclusively, it can be assumed that the sub-job-family “Operative Contract Case Worker” needs particular attention from the human resource development department in the next 5 years, as related competences gain most in importance.

With regards to the results on the differences between both types of “Operative Case Workers” in the present and future perspective, the above discussed effect yields at least the assumption that the competence requirements are going to level out in the next decade. Although the differences between both categories are supposed to be there in the future, their effect decreased, which could be explained by the identified internal contingency that the on-going optimization of processes will lead to more highly valuable job-functions with rising competence requirements. With regards to the eminent anticipated internal contingency that operative case departments will become smaller with the consequence that more permeability between units is necessary to solve workload peaks, this development can form an opportunity. If the anticipated imbalances can be closed within the contract category, permeability between departments to solve work-peaks would be facilitated.

Besides the differences between the *contract* and *service* category, it is striking that the competence of *adaptability* is supposed to be of utter importance for all “Operative Case Worker”, as it was rated the highest, in the present and the future perspective. Thus, line managers are aware that the work environment and related challenges will change within the

company and need their subordinates to be able to cope with those new challenges. Especially with regards to the long history of the company, without an organizational culture of change and flexibility, this pinpoints to a topic of emerging relevance. Although the anticipated imbalance for *adaptability* is relatively low compared with other competences, the initial and lasting high value gives reason to put special emphasis on this issue by investing into related training and development to foster *adaptability*.

Furthermore, it is striking that *method competences* are less important at the present moment, but will gain the most in importance within the 5-year perspective, especially in the *contract* category. Therefore, the human resource development department should define targets to close this anticipated gap.

Based on the prior discussed advantages of competence foresight, there is reason to assume that strategic competence management would benefit from incorporating the proactive perspective as it would reduce the time gap between identifying imbalances and launching related HR practices (see figure 4, p. 36). As several imbalances have been identified that are supposed to become relevant in 5-year perspective it would be beneficial to close the gaps proactively.

8.4. Limitations

Besides the implications of the survey results, it is to highlight that the competences evaluated in this study derive from a prototypical "Operative Case Worker", a first line manager needs to run his/her department. Therefore, it is questionable if the actual employees really meet those demands. Conclusively, it can be assumed that the effects of anticipated competence imbalance are probably systematically underestimated.

There is another limitation to the foresight of competence, as it is based on the assumed ability of first line managers to translate anticipated changes in relevant external and internal contingencies into changes in competence requirements. Accordingly, forecasts

should not be mistaken as facts, as they rely strongly on subjective estimations of future developments and do not incorporate future events or aspects which may change the forecast. However, first line managers are supposed to be more likely to translate more abstract strategic choices and related changing contingencies into pragmatic viewpoints based on daily life routines, which makes them a valuable source for estimating future competence developments.

Another limitation refers to the use of focus-groups. All participants were embedded in the political context of the company and may have pursued their own interest instead of trying to contribute in a scientific way. This way, it may have happened that bias occurred. However, as many focus-groups have been conducted that were on average very consistent in their output, it can be assumed that this effect is rather minimal.

8.5 Managerial Implications

The study at hand gives reason to assume that eminent competence imbalances will appear within the next few years, as a function of changing internal and external contingencies. Furthermore, it gives reason that those effects are systematically underestimated as only prototypical employee types were assessed and a gap between the prototypical mental model of a line manager and reality may exist. Therefore, a reasonable approach would target the evaluation of competence for each employee separately, including not only meta-competences but all job-specific competences, as well as drop-out dates. With regards to strategic competence management theory, this would enable the best perspective on future planning efforts. Furthermore, this should be done companywide for all job-families, not only for “Operative Case Workers”. Doing so would enable the company to cope with demographic change and the need for long-term workforce reduction via a strategic competence management system.

A scenario to exemplify this though:

If assuming that the *service* category of “Operative Case Worker” loses workload in the following years, as a function of on-going process optimization and technologiation, less employees are needed in those departments. In this case, demographic change forms an opportunity for a social acceptable reduction of the workforce, as simply not staffing positions of retiring employees again leads to workforce reduction. If the reduction target for those departments is still unmet, those with high levels of meta-competence could be transferred to other departments, where their level of competence is needed but employee retirement forms a treat, as the workload over-exceeds the current amount of employees necessary to solve the peak. As this study demonstrated, the category *contract* could be one of those departments which could benefit from such source of competence. This way, a leeway for HR planning and staffing efforts can be created that facilitates the fulfillment of the “Sollstellenplan” in a social acceptable way, without losing competences or employee trust.

For the work-council, it is important to weigh between two dimensions. On one hand, the economic advantage the company could gain by implementing a proactive competence management system, which could ultimately lead to a better overall performance and therefore keep on granting employment stability while reducing the workforce in an social acceptable way. On the other hand, the fear of power misuse, which, if manifested in an opposition towards strategic competence management, could form competitive disadvantages in the long term perspective and thereby threaten jobs at the company.

8.6 Scientific relevance

The prior insights on the difficulties of implementing a strategic competence management system at the company demonstrate that just introducing a set of best practices would not lead to a successful implementation, as organizational contingencies strongly influence the systems success. The company with its long history of stability and taken for granted success in the German insurance sector, formed an organizational culture that seems

to be suspicious towards any kind of change. This goes in line with the assumption of Jackson and Schuler (1995) that organizational structures are supposed to moderate the effect between HR practice and HR outcome. Similar, the opposition of the work-council could be attributed to internal political relationships, which have been introduced as important moderator by Pfeffer and Davis-Blake (1987). Besides its plea for a contingency perspective, the configurational point of view (Doty, Glick & Huber, 1993) can contribute to solve the situation at the company. As willingness to change seems to be a major problem, change facilitating HR practices on the individual and organizational level could lead to a coherent approach that reduces barriers to the successful implementation of a strategic competence management system. If such a system proves beneficial and delivers advantages, for example by reducing the workforce in a social acceptable way without mass layoffs, it could increase the value of change related HR practices as well, yielding a multidimensional model of relationships and synergy effects with high internal coherency.

Another important contribution refers to the application of a competence foresight approach in the context of strategic competence management. Although primarily used to create awareness for future competence management challenges within the company to exemplify the urgency for strategic competence management, it could facilitate the scientific way of thinking about strategic competence management. Further research should investigate the predictive power of competence foresight as well as relevant success factors, as this field seems to be understudied. Thus, the study at hand could mark one of the first practical orientations towards proactive and strategic competence management so far.

9. Conclusion

It can be concluded that it is possible to enable a proactive, strategic perspective on competence management within the focal company. This study demonstrated the very need for such a system as well as the rising relevance within a 5-year perspective. Furthermore, it

provides reason to integrate competence foresight into strategic competence management frameworks. However, against the universalistic perspective, internal company contingencies are identified as barrier for successful implementation, which must be tackled explicitly. Only if tailored to internal political needs, a strategic competence management system would prevail and ultimately enable a social acceptable fulfillment of the “Sollstellenplan”. Furthermore, having a strategic competence management system that is uniquely tailored to company specific contingencies would provide a source of sustainable competitive advantage.

References

- Allianz group. (2012). *Annual Report*. Retrieved from https://www.allianz.com/v_1363330305000/media/investor_relations/en/results_reports/annual_report/ar2012/ar2012_group_final.pdf.
- Barney, J. B., & Wright, P. M. (1998). On Becoming a Strategic Partner: The Role of Human Resources in Competitive Advantage. *Human Resource Management, 37*(1), 31-46.
- Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management, 17*(1), 99-120.
- Baron, J. N., & Kreps, D. (1999). *Strategic human resources: Framework for general managers*. New York: John Wiley.
- Belkadi, F., Bonjour, E., & Dulmet, M. (2007). Competency characterization by means of work situation modeling. *Competence Management in Industrial Processes, 58*(2), 164–178.
- Bennour, M., & Crestani, D. (2007). Using competences in performance estimation: from the activity to the process. *Computers in Industry, 58*(2), 151-163.
- Boxall, P. (1998). Achieving competitive advantage through human resource strategy: Towards a theory of industry dynamics. *Human Resource Management Review, 8*(3), 265–288.
- Capece, G., & Bazzica, P. (2013). A Practical Proposal for a “Competence Plan Fulfillment” Key Performance Indicator. *Knowledge and Process Management, 20*(1), 40–49.
- Cappelli, P., & Singh, H. (1992). Integrating Strategic Human Resources and Strategic Management. In D. Lewin, O. S. Mitchell & P. Sherer. (eds), *Research Frontiers in Industrial Relations and Human Resources* (pp. 165-192). Madison, WI: Industrial Relations Research Association.
- Chambers, E. G., Foulon, M., Handfield-Jones, H., Hankin, S. M., & Michaels, E. G. (1998). The war for talent. *McKinsey Quarterly, 3*, 44-57.
- Crehan, P. (2006). *European foresight monitoring network (efmn)*. Retrieved August 9, 2013, from http://ec.europa.eu/research/foresight/10/article_3962_en.htm .

- Cumming, G., & Finch, S. (2001). A primer on the understanding, use, and calculation of confidence intervals that are based on central and noncentral distributions. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 61*, 530–572.
- Delery, J. E., & Doty, D. H. (1996). Modes of Theorizing in Strategic Human Resource Management: Test of Universalistic Contingency, and Configurational Performance Predictions. *The Academy of Management Journal, 39*(4), 802-35.
- Doty, D. H., Glick, W. H., & Huber, G. P. (1993). Fit, Equifinality, and Organisational Effectiveness: A Test of Two Configurational Theories. *The Academy of Management Journal, 36*, 1196-250.
- Drejer, A. (1996). *Integration of business strategy and competence development*. Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Production, Aalborg University.
- Fleischman, E. A. (1967a). Performance assessment based on empirically derived task taxonomy. *Human Factors, 9*, 349-366.
- Fleischman, E. A. (1967b). Development of a behavior taxonomy for describing human tasks: A correlational experimental approach. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 51*, 1-10.
- Gibbs, A. (1997). *Focus Groups. Social Research Update*. Guildford: University of Surrey.
- Gröne, T., Beyer, M., Clemenz, J., Eberhardt, A., & Ostermaier, M. (2004). *Effizientes Kompetenzmanagement in Unternehmen*. Stuttgart: Ibidem.
- Guilford, J. P. (1967). *The nature of human intelligence*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Hamel, G., & Prahalad, C. K. (1994). *Competing for the future*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Jackson, S. E., & Schuler, R. S. (1995). Understanding Human Resource Management in the Context of Organizations and their Environments. *Annual Review of Psychology, 46*, 237-64.

- Kerr, J. L. (1985). Diversifications Strategies and Managerial Rewards: An Empirical Study. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 28, 155-79.
- Kunzmann, E., & Schmidt, A. (2007). *Sustainable competency- oriented human resource development with ontology-based competency catalogs*. Paper presented at conference eChallenges 07, Den Haag.
- Lado, A. A., & Wilson. M. C. (1994). Human Resource Systems and Sustained Competitive Advantage: A Competence-Based Perspective. *The Academy of Management Review*, 19(4), 699-727.
- Lewis, R. E., & Heckman, R. J. (2006). Talent management: A critical review. *Human Resource Management Review*, 16(2), 139–154.
- Lysaght, R. M., & Altschuld, J. M. (2000). Beyond initial certification: the assessment and maintenance of competence in professions. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 23(1), 95-104.
- Mauro, A., & de Quiros, F. G. B. (2009). Patient-Centered E-Health Design. In E. V. Wilson (eds.), *Patient-Centered E-Health* (2th ed., pp. 10-24). London: Information Science Reference.
- McCornick, E. J., Jeanneret, P. R., & Mecham, R. C. (1972). A study of job characteristics and job dimensions as based on the Position Analysis Questionnaire (PAQ). *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 56, 347-368.
- Moravec, M., & Tucker, R. (1992). Job description for the 21st century. *Personnel Journal*, 71, 37-44.
- Pearlman, K. (1980). Job families: A review and discussion of their Potential Utility for Personnel Selection. *Psychological Bulletin*, 47, 1-56.
- Pfeffer, J., & Davis-Blake. A. (1987) Understanding Organizational Wage Structure: A Resource Dependence Approach. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 30, 437-55.
- Prien, E. P., & Ronan, W. W. (1971). Job analysis: A review of research findings. *Personnel Psychology*, 24(3), 371-396.

- Schoenfeldt, L. F. (1974). Utilization of manpower: Development and evaluation of assessment-classification model for matching individuals with jobs. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 59*, 593-595.
- Siikaniemi, L. (2012). Information pathways for the competence foresight mechanism in talent management framework. *European Journal of Training and Development, 36*(1), 46-65.
- Tarique, I., & Schuler, R.S. (2010). Global talent management: Literature review, integrative framework, and suggestions for further research. *Journal of World Business, 45*(2), 122-133.
- Terpstra, D. E., & Rozell, E. J. (1993). The Relationship of Staffing Practices to Organizational Level Measures of Performance. *Personnel Psychology, 46*, 27-48.
- Tobias, L., & Dietrich, H. (2003). Identifying employee competencies in dynamic work domains: methodological considerations and a case study. *Journal of Universal Computer Science, 9*(12), 1500-1518.
- Torkkeli, M., & Tuominen, M. (2002). The contribution of technology selection to core competences. *International Journal of Production Economics, 77*, 271-284.
- Winterton, J., Delmare, F., Le Deist, F. D., Stringfellow, E. (2006). Typology of knowledge, skills and competences; clarification of the concept and prototype. *Cedefop Reference Series, 64*.

Appendix

Erfassung der Kompetenzen auf Basis der Job-Familien

- ein Versuch, zur qualitativen und quantitativen Personalplanung mehr Aussagekraft zur Ausgangslage und zur Zukunftsperspektive zu erhalten –

- Befragung im Rahmen der Masterthese von Alexander Riffert
in Kooperation mit der Abteilung 01-2103 der PNW Holding -

Einführung

Der folgende Fragebogen dient der Verbesserung der qualitativen Personalplanung. Nur wenn wir wissen welche Kompetenzen in welcher Qualität und welchem Umfang in welcher Abteilung jetzt und in Zukunft benötigt werden, ist es möglich eine proaktive, nachhaltige Personalplanung durchzuführen. Durch die Teilnahme an dieser Erhebung helfen Sie aktiv bei der Durchführung dieses Projektes.

Anleitung

Die folgende Seite listet die in Vorgesprächen identifizierten Job-Familien auf. Bitte wählen sie welcher Job-Familie ihre MA zugeordnet werden können. Tragen sie bitte den Namen der jeweiligen Job-Familie in dem folgenden Fragebogen ein.

Bitte bewerten sie im ersten Durchgang die idealtypischen Kompetenzen ihrer Mitarbeiter im IST Zustand. Wichtig ist, dass es sich nicht um eine Erfassung individueller Kompetenzen, sondern um eine gemittelte Bestandsaufnahme der Kompetenzanforderungen innerhalb ihrer Abteilung handelt. Bitte markieren sie das zutreffende Kästchen mit einem „X“

Im nächsten Schritt werden Sie gebeten, sich mit der Zukunft zu beschäftigen. Hierzu finden Sie ein Szenario, in dem eine wahrscheinliche Zukunftsausrichtung der Provinzial dargestellt wird. Bitte bewerten Sie dieses je nach Bedeutung für Ihren Verantwortungsbereich wie im Dokument beschrieben.

Danach füllen Sie bitte den folgenden Fragebogen erneut aus. Dieses mal mit dem Gedanken wohin sich die jeweiligen Kompetenzen innerhalb der nächsten 5 Jahre voraussichtlich entwickeln werden.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Bereitschaft an diesem Projekt mitzuarbeiten und mich bei meiner Masterthese zu unterstützen!

In Vorgesprächen wurden die folgenden Job-Familien identifiziert. Bitte wählen sie welche für ihre Abteilung zutrifft. Bei der operativen Sachbearbeitung wurde eine feinere Unterteilung vorgenommen.

Sollten sie mehr als eine der unten gelisteten Job-Familien in Ihrer Abteilung identifizieren, füllen sie bitte einen separaten Fragebogen für die zweite Job-Familie aus.

Job-Familie			Kürzel
Operative Sachbearbeitung			
	Haftpflicht	Leistung	OHL
		Vertrag	OHV
	Unfall	Leistung	OUL
		Vertrag	OUV
	Leben	Leistung	OLL
		Vertrag	OLV
	Kraftfahrzeug	Leistung	OKL
		Vertrag	OKV
	Technische	Leistung	OTL
		Vertrag	OTV
	Sach	Leistung	OSL
		Vertrag	OSV
	Rück	Leistung	ORL
		Vertrag	ORV
Underwriting			
Vertrieblicher Art			
Produkt/Marktmanagement			
Controlling			
Akturieller Art			
Schwerpunkt Kapitalanlagen			
Rechtlicher Art			
Personal / Organisation			
Schulung			
Kaufmännisch- administrativ			
Informationstechnologisch			
Infrastruktur			
Revision			
Führung			
Führung/Leitung			

Abteilung: _____

Jobfamilie: _____

Fachkompetenz

Anwendung von einschlägigen Fachkenntnissen und Fertigkeiten in bestimmten Situationen. Es wird davon ausgegangen, dass die thematische Ausprägung einer Fachkompetenz aus der Zugehörigkeit zu einer Job-Familie bzw. des Fachgebietes herzuleiten ist. Im Folgenden geht es dementsprechend um die Ausprägungen bzw. den geforderten Grad an Fachkenntnis und nicht um den thematischen Inhalt. Wichtig ist, dass es im Folgenden um den durchschnittlichen, stereotypischen Stelleninhaber innerhalb ihrer Abteilung geht, nicht um ein spezielles Individuum.

1. Der Stelleninhaber/-in benötigt sehr fachspezifische Kenntnisse (Spezialist).

Unwichtig		Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Der Stelleninhaber/-in muss die Wechselwirkung zwischen Fachbereichen und Themenfeldern erkennen, beurteilen und gestalten können (Generalist).

Unwichtig		Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Methodenkompetenz

Fähigkeit zur Bewältigung von Aufgaben und Problemsituationen, die sich der Routine entziehen

1. Der Stelleninhaber/-in benötigt die Fähigkeit, aus einer Vielzahl von Informationen die richtigen Schlüsse zu ziehen, um komplexe Probleme rational lösen zu können.

Unwichtig		Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Der Stelleninhaber/-in muss in der Lage sein, Projekte leiten, steuern und beeinflussen zu können.

Unwichtig		Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Der Stelleninhaber/-in benötigt die Fähigkeit, z.B. im Rahmen eines Vortrages oder einer Präsentation, andere zu überzeugen und mitzunehmen.

Unwichtig		Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sozialkompetenz

Umgang mit anderen Menschen in unterschiedlichen Situationen

1. Der Stelleninhaber/-in benötigt die Fähigkeit, sich auf veränderte Anforderungen und Gegebenheiten schnell einstellen zu können.

Unwichtig		Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig
-----------	--	----------------------	--	---------	--	--------------	--	-----------------

3. Der Stelleninhaber/-in muss Neuem offen gegenüberstehen, Wandel akzeptieren und auf Feedback und Kritik reagieren können.

Unwichtig		Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Der Stelleninhaber/-in muss das eigene Denken, den eigenen Standpunkt, sowie das eigene Handeln kritisch hinterfragen und auch aus anderer Perspektive beurteilen und ggfs ändern können.

Unwichtig		Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Der Stelleninhaber/-in ergreift Initiative, setzt Impulse, übernimmt Verantwortung, und ist auch nach Misserfolgen schnell wieder aktiv.

Unwichtig		Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

-SZENARIO-

Im Folgenden wird beschrieben, welche Veränderungen -, bedingt durch globale Veränderungsprozesse, die auch die Provinzial beeinflussen werden - in den kommenden Jahren vermutlich zu erwarten sind. Entscheiden Sie für sich, inwieweit Sie vermuten, dass die unten gelisteten Veränderungen Einfluss auf Ihren Arbeitsbereich haben werden. Bitte vergeben Sie Ihre Einschätzung mit „1“ für sehr schwach, „2“ für mäßig, und „3“ für sehr stark in der rechten Spalte an.

Denken Sie daran, dass es darum geht, die Auswirkungen dieser Veränderungsprozesse auf die jeweiligen Kompetenzanforderungen zu beleuchten. Daher werden Sie gebeten, nach der Bearbeitung der Veränderungsprozessliste, den Kompetenzkatalog ein weiteres Mal auszufüllen. Nur dieses Mal machen Sie die 5 Jahresperspektive bitte kenntlich, indem Sie das entsprechende Feld einkreisen anstatt ein Kreuz zu machen.

1. Annahmen zu Veränderungen im Umfeld

◆ Der Wettbewerbs- und damit der Kostendruck steigen weiter durch weitere Marktberäumigungsprozesse und den durch die demografische Entwicklung kleiner werdenden Markt	
◆ Infoflut, Vernetzung, Komplexität, Beschleunigung, Arbeitsverdichtung und Veränderungsgeschwindigkeit nehmen weiter zu	
◆ Wissen veraltet immer schneller	
◆ Technisierung und die technologische Entwicklung schreiten weiter voran	
○ Automatisierung der Prozesse / Industrialisierung des Versicherungsgeschäfts	
○ Arbeits- und Privatleben fließen mehr ineinander, Arbeitszeit wird immer volatiler	
○ Virtuelle Teams und Zusammenarbeitsformen gewinnen an Bedeutung	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Der Stelleninhaber/-in benötigt die Fähigkeit sich, wenn notwendig, auch durchzusetzen.

Unwichtig	Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Der Stelleninhaber/-in benötigt Coachingfähigkeiten.

Unwichtig	Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Selbstkompetenz

Umgang mit der eigenen Person

1. Der Stelleninhaber/-in muss seine eigenen Stärken und Schwächen kennen und aus eigenem Antrieb daran arbeiten können.

Unwichtig	Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Der Stelleninhaber/-in muss Ruhe/Gelassenheit in hektischen Situationen bewahren und Aufgaben in vorgegebener Zeit meistern können.

Unwichtig	Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Der Stelleninhaber/-in muss Neuem offen gegenüberstehen, Wandel akzeptieren und auf Feedback und Kritik reagieren können.

Unwichtig	Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Der Stelleninhaber/-in muss das eigene Denken, den eigenen Standpunkt, sowie das eigene Handeln kritisch hinterfragen und auch aus anderer Perspektive beurteilen und ggfs ändern können.

Unwichtig	Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Der Stelleninhaber/-in ergreift Initiative, setzt Impulse, übernimmt Verantwortung, und ist auch nach Misserfolgen schnell wieder aktiv.

Unwichtig	Eher weniger wichtig		Wichtig		Sehr wichtig		Äußerst wichtig	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Vielen Dank für Ihre Mitarbeit !