

**“IMPORTANT BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES FOR HUMAN
RESOURCE PROFESSIONALS IN SOUTH AFRICA”**

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DECLARATION

I, Jorn Gerd Dannheimer, declare that '*Important Behavioural Competencies for Human Resources Professionals in South Africa*' is my own unaided work both in content and execution. All the resources I used in this study are cited and referred to in the reference list by means of a comprehensive referencing system. Apart from the normal guidance from my study leaders, I have received no assistance.

I declare that this content has never been used before for any qualification at any tertiary institution.

Jorn Gerd Dannheimer

November 2004

ABSTRACT

Orientation: The job inherent requirements for Human Resource (HR) professionals, as is for any role, are constantly undergoing change due to the dynamic environment that we work and exist in. With the transition from traditional Personnel Management to more contemporary and strategic HR Management, these adjustments required for the role and of the incumbents have become more and more pronounced. It is important that, as HR professionals, one frequently reassesses and clarifies the inherent requirements for the role, based on the needs and demands from the broader world of work and its role-players. The concern is however whether HR professionals realise and understand which behavioural competencies they should display in order to meet the changing demands and whether they actually are 'living' these.

Research Purpose: The aim of this paper is to determine the relevant behavioural competencies for HR professionals based on the analysis of various views gathered from current HR professionals.

Research Results: It was found that competencies such as 'Planning and Organising', 'Problem Solving and Analysis', 'Specialist and Technical Knowledge', 'Strategic Thinking' as well as 'Interpersonal Sensitivity' are all important in order to ensure effective service delivery for HR professionals. An additional competency, 'Leading and Supervising' was also identified as important, although related more to managerial HR functions. From these results it is however also evident that competencies relating to adapting and responding to change in the workplace, and the importance of being able to deliver and achieve results, were omitted from the ideal profile. This, in comparison to various articles and research presented by authors on the exact importance of such competencies in order for the HR discipline to add value to the organisation, makes it evident that many HR professionals have still not completed the transition from the traditional Personnel Management to the more strategic HR Management.

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INTRODUCTION

With the ever-changing world of work and the countless factors that directly and indirectly have an influence on organisations, are Human Resource (HR) professionals still aware of what business and its role-players actually need from them? Do HR professionals understand which competencies they should actually adopt and exhibit in order to become the business partner that organisations so desperately need and always talk about?

The aim of this study is to determine the relevant behavioural competencies for HR professionals and whether these are actually being adopted and realised in the field. This will be done by firstly discussing the changing role of HR from the traditional Personnel Management to the strategic HR Management. Secondly, the paper will focus on the value of competencies within organisations and why there is a need for having an integrated business language. Following this as a third key point of discussion the paper will define what competencies actually are and discuss the specific model applied in this study. Fourthly, the existing literature on the required competencies for the HR profession will be reviewed, leading lastly to the examination and discussion of the results of the study in light of this existing body of knowledge.

CHANGING HR ROLE: PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT VS. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Indisputably, the HR discipline has undergone fundamental change and will probably always be faced with this. As the work contexts and business demands keep on changing, the priorities and focus areas for HR professionals keep moving and adapting. By transforming from the traditional Personnel Management era to becoming a more tactical and strategic business partner within organisations, role-players have witnessed how the demands on the HR professionals have become more taxing and challenging, demanding a more comprehensive as well as more specific set of characteristics than

before. In his book, *Human Resource Champions*, David Ulrich (1997, p. vii) proposes a new vision for HR, “that it be defined not by what it does, but by what it delivers – results that enrich the organisation’s value to the customer, investors and employees”. He believes HR needs to shed “Old Myths” and take on “New Realities”, adopting competencies and redefining roles focusing on results in order to evolve into a true profession that adds value to the organisation. This vision of adopting new realities applies to most, if not all organisations, in that HR related changes occur on a process level, strategy level, service delivery as well as structure level, causing HR professionals to take on new roles in these changing conditions. The main drive is not to design a set of competencies relevant to a HR professional’s job, but rather to ensure that the set of HR competencies are continuously revised and updated, aligning it to the constant evolution the HR discipline and world of work are experiencing. Schoonover (2003) states that even though many HR professionals have already started making the necessary adjustments, many HR departments still need to catch-up and support these initiatives by focusing on specific areas. According to Schoonover, the focus should be on:

- developing a compelling vision and value proposition for their whole organisation;
- aligning the focus of their efforts on more strategic outcomes;
- re-negotiating their roles and relationships with operational leaders within organisations; and
- committing to major, immediate competency development.

From these focus areas it is evident that there is a need for HR professionals to get directly involved in the strategic and tactical thinking and actions surrounding business. There seems to be a need for contracting and managing the relationships between the broader business and HR as a valued service provider and facilitator.

Goss (1994, p. 4-6) also researched the transition from personnel management to human resource management and identified the main factors that led to the appearance of HRM. For the author, increasing international competition, industrial and organisational restructuring, as well as the new managerialism all had a direct bearing on the development of HRM. Carrell, Grobler, Elbert, Marx, Hatfield and Van der Schyf (1997, p. 4) effectively summed up the phenomenon of change and transformation facing this profession, by stating that the traditional approaches to personnel management, which were based on ‘commands’ and ‘controls’ have given way to a practice that supports

employee commitment, enhanced communication and cooperation. The authors also go on to state that one of the main reasons for the transition is due to the need for more effective response to the diversified workforce and flexibility in dealing with different demands, situations and requests.

Bohlander, Snell and Sherman (2001, p. 6-19) identified six factors that have an ongoing influence on the nature of the HR role as well as the competencies required in order to lead to success in the workplace. These factors relate to businesses going more global; having to adapt to and embrace new technology; managing change; developing human capital; responding to the market; and containing costs. Similarly, Gerber, Nel and van Dyk (1998, p. 12-14) stated that several aspects are influenced by as well as influence the HR role. HR's existence and performance is definitely not in isolation, but rather reaches across four broad components of the external environments (social, political, economic and technological environments); the organisation (its size, structure, technology and culture); the work itself (nature and complexity of the work/decision making, the extent of autonomy and amount of variety); and the individual or the employee (individual attributes, knowledge, skills, attitudes, personality, values and expectations).

It can be assumed that the discipline is well into the transformation from Personnel Management to Human Resource Management (HRM). Many authors have elaborated on what makes HRM different from Personnel Management and why there is the need to facilitate such change. According to Gerber et al. (1998), the term Human Resource Management (HRM) is preferred over Personnel Management due to it being:

“...a process much broader than designing personnel programmes; it also involves the strategic planning and implementation.” (p. 10).

The authors further proposed:

“The expanded definition of HRM also includes responsibilities that can only be assumed by Line Managers. Therefore the audience is not only students who wish to become HR professionals but as business students who plan to become Line Managers.” (p. 10).

Cascio (1995) (cited in Gerber et al 1998, p. 10-11) suggested that Personnel Management is more practical, useful and instrumental, concerned mainly with administration and implementation. HRM on the other hand is more concerned with strategic aspects and involves total development of the human resources within the organisations. He also stated that HRM is concerned more with the broader implications of the management of change and not only with the effects of change on the organisation. To Cascio, Personnel Management is more reactive and diagnostic, meaning that it reacts to changes in the labour market conditions, legislation, trade unions and any other external factors. In contrast, HRM is more prescriptive and is concerned with strategies, developments, and evolution. Cascio also stated that HRM dictates and establishes the general policy of employee relations. It therefore assists in developing a culture within the organisation that supports effective employee relations and cooperation. Personnel Management is more concerned with the enforcement of company rules and regulations. In summary, he stated that Personnel Management adopts a shorter-term view while HRM is more concerned with the longer-term aspects of the human resources within an organisation, creating a culture that supports individual employee commitment and striving for higher performance.

Armstrong (2000, p. 6) also emphasised the strategic aspect embodied within HRM. Some of the main aspects Armstrong stressed included commitment to the organisation's mission and values and the need for integration between the organisational and HR strategies. HRM is an activity driven from top management but that is also a shared responsibility with line management. Armstrong also stated that HRM is directly focused on improving the competitive advantage, as well as achieving higher levels of performance outputs throughout the organisation. Similar to Armstrong, Cascio (1998, p. 5-6) also elaborated on the strategic aspect contained within human resource management, more specifically, Human Resource Planning (HRP). According to Cascio, HRP's primary emphasis is on anticipating and timeously responding to the needs of the internal and external organisational environment. The needs forecasting is followed by the planning and implementation of appropriate actions, solutions or programmes that must then be maintained and managed in order to ensure continued success and growth.

From the various literature sources it is quite clear that the focus changed from a reactive, procedural and almost ritual Personnel Management to a strategic, long-term based and

proactive HRM, where the focus is not on the regulation and protection of rules and procedures, but rather on the facilitation of and contribution towards the success and optimum performance of the human resources and the organisation as a whole. In summary, Armstrong (2000, p. 141-144) pointed out that HRM requires four roles to be adopted and displayed by individuals in order to be successful and add value. The author described these roles to be the 'Strategist' role; the 'Business Partner' role; the 'Innovator' role; and the 'Change Manager' role.

THE VALUE OF COMPETENCIES

Competencies have been researched and debated for many years as a means of setting goals or success criteria and defining the desired outcomes of behaviours within the world of work. They continue to sustain the interest of many, especially in the varying times we find ourselves in. With the ongoing challenge of realigning approaches to the Human Resources (HR) field to better suit the business environment, more and more professionals are realising the value and importance of implementing and moving towards competency-based systems as an integrated business language, in order to meet organisational needs more effectively (Schoonover 2003).

The question why to use competencies as success criteria for a HR professional might however still linger. Spencer (1993) (cited in United States Office of Personnel Management, 1999, p. 13) clearly stated that competencies are more likely to be determinants of success in complex jobs than only knowledge and skills are. However, in light of this statement, the question whether there really is a difference between competencies and knowledge or skills, is very relevant. If one briefly considers that most authors have defined competencies as success criteria made up of behaviours, knowledge, skills and abilities, one can understand Spencer's statement that not only knowledge and skills are the important aspects to regard as success criteria, but rather the fuller spectrum of behaviours and abilities as well. Competencies are defined in more detail in the next section.

A study completed by the United States Office of Personnel Management (September 1999, p. 7-8), illustrates that competencies can be used to directly facilitate the change within the HR discipline. The study recognises that the HR role is moving from an emphasis on rules to an emphasis on results. In order to facilitate this paradigm shift, one can expect institutions to identify new competencies as a way of refocusing the organisation on what is really more essential and what it takes for the workforce to be successful. With such competency models highlighting the essential aspects needed by organisations, competencies also serve as vehicles for change. The study also demonstrates that competencies provide a mechanism to focus on the technical aspects of a particular job and devise a critical path through regulations and laws to the results desired by management. The study furthermore suggested that competencies can be used to “raise-the-bar” on employee performance by not only stipulating the desired behaviours, but also by forming part of the standard human resource applications geared towards improving and optimising the workforce.

According to a study conducted in 1996 by the American Compensation Association (cited in United States Office of Personnel Management, 1999, p. 8), the spectrum of HR applications, such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, as well as compensation and reward are all directly based on the competency language applied in competency models as a means of integrating these processes. The United States Office of Personnel Management (September 1999, p. 8) also concluded in their research that competencies support the new and more strategic HR role by broadly and comprehensively defining job requirements across occupational specialities and by aligning individual as well as team performance with the broader organisation strategies and vision. Following this, the United States Office of Personnel Management went on to state that there is therefore a difference in competency requirements for different roles, such as for example the role of a senior HR generalist and that of a HR specialist (1999, p. 13). Similarly, according to Schoonover (2002, p. 1) competencies are strongly context driven and could therefore differ for the same job but in different industries.

However, apart from these variations resulting from different contexts, there has to be a common trend or thread that prevails across HR roles in different industries. There should be a common denominator that allows HR professionals to move across industries

without feeling out of place or experiencing a lack of knowledgeable about the discipline. These questions support the need to design and develop a competency model for HR professionals that would be both generic enough to be applicable to different companies in different industries, as well as emphasise the distinguishing factors differentiating this specific role from other roles.

Competencies Defined

Competencies can be broadly defined as the behavioural success factors that distinguish excellent performance from poorer performance within a specific work context. That means that competencies are useful in clarifying work standards and expectations, help focus appraisal and reward systems and align individuals with the institutional or department mission. In reviewing the existing body of work and articles published on work-related competencies, a specific trend was identified in the definition of competencies. Even though the definitions differed semantically, competencies seemed to mostly consist of a set of required behaviours, abilities, skills and knowledge that lead to job success.

In defining competencies, different authors applied different approaches. In 1982, Boyatzis (cited in Bartram, Callinan and Robertson, 2002, p. 229) followed a trait-based approach and defined a competency as:

“...an underlying characteristic of a person which results in an effective and/or superior performance in a job... it may be a motive, trait, skill, aspect of one’s self image or social role, or body of knowledge which he or she uses.”

Similarly Woodruffe (1992) (cited in Bartram et al., 2002, p. 229) was another author that also initially adopted a trait-based approach and stated that:

“...competencies are indeed the same as aspects of personality such as traits and motives, but those terms are so poorly understood and agreed that to say that competencies are for example traits, risks competencies inheriting the confusion that surrounds traits.”

Woodruffe's specific definition emphasises the importance of having clearly defined competencies as behavioural performance descriptors. He later presented a more behaviourally based definition by defining competencies as a set of behavioural patterns that must be brought to a position by the incumbent in order for the incumbent to perform the required tasks and functions with competence (Woodruffe 1992 cited in Bartram et al., 2002, p. 229-230). In further discussions of competencies, Woodruffe also suggested that one should rather exclude work performance aspects such as technical knowledge, skills and abilities from competency definitions and focus more on the behavioural attributes required in a job. This is mainly due to competencies representing actions and behaviours that people display in order to achieve results and not merely what people possess.

In support of Woodruffe's suggestion, Bartram, Callinan and Robertson (2002, p. 234-235) made the distinction between competence and competency very clear and also placed more emphasis on the latter. According to Bartram et al. "*competence*" relates to one's level of performance in relation to the pre-defined set of required performance outcomes or standards. An individual's competence would therefore only have meaning and value in relation to the required performance standards and outcomes. The required or pre-defined performance outcomes or standards therefore prescribe what competence would mean for specific actions or objectives. Beaumont (1996) (cited in Bartram et al., 2002, p. 235) defined competence, in relation to occupational standards-based qualifications, as:

"...the ability to apply knowledge, understanding and skills in performing to the standards required in employment. This includes solving problems and meeting changing demands".

In essence "*competence*" is about the application of knowledge and skills, judged in relation to some standard or set of performance standards. On the other hand, Bartram et al. (2002) defined "*competency*" as the manner in which people go about achieving the end results or the objectives – typically what behaviours people show in order to be more effective than their colleague(s) or team member(s) (p. 235). Competencies may therefore be seen as the set of behaviours that underpin successful performance, i.e. the enablers that support performance. This is vastly different to the term "*competence*",

which is defined by the set of performance criteria that relate to the objectives that have to be met.

In short, Bartram et al. (2002, p. 235) listed the following points to be the main differences between competence and competencies:

- Competencies are “behavioural repertoires”, while competence is a state of attainment;
- Competence is about achievement and is always backward looking. A statement of competence is about where a person is now and not where a person might be in the future;
- Competencies may be used as a backward-looking measurement (360° development feedback), concurrent measurement (assessment centres) or as a forward-looking measurement (competency potential);
- By applying one’s competency, one demonstrates competence in a work setting; and
- A job competency defines how a person must go about achieving the end results and how knowledge and skills must be applied in context of the job requirements.

Schoonover (2003) had a similar definition of competencies and suggested that competencies only include behaviours that lead to excellent performance and do not consist of knowledge or skills as such but rather the applied knowledge, applied skills and behaviours that produce and lead to success.

One can expect most organisations that apply the “competency language” in their approaches to HR, to define, list and apply competencies specific to their industry. Tucker and Cofsky in 1994 (cited in United States Office of Personnel Management, 1999, p. 7) stated that competencies could be grouped as follows:

- Skills – the demonstration of expertise or abilities (e.g. persuading others in negotiations, planning and thinking effectively in advance);
- Knowledge – the information accumulated in a specific area of expertise (e.g. HR; Information Technology; Law);
- Self-concepts – one’s perceptions, attitudes, values and self-image;

- Traits – the general disposition to behave in a certain way; and
- Motives – recurrent thoughts driving behaviours (e.g. respect of others, drive for achievement, affiliation).

Bartram et al. (2002) had a similar definition and propose that competencies are defined as a set of behaviours that are instrumental in the delivery of the desired results or outcomes (p. 7). Bartram et al. (2002, p. 7-8) distinguished between four main sets of variables, namely “Competencies”, “Competency Potential”, “Context/Situation” and “Results/Outcomes”.

Bartram et al. defined “Competencies” as the behaviours that a person shows or adopts in the workplace in order to achieve the specific objective/result. This definition clearly points out what the desired behaviours are for a specific context. “Competency potential” is more detailed than “Competencies” and refers to the personal attributes that are intrinsic within individuals, which will support more directly the presenting or showing of desired behaviours (competencies). These attributes that are necessary for someone to show the desired behaviours do not all manifest in actual behaviour as the environment within which the job exists moderates the desired behaviours that are shown. Bartram et al. defined the “Context” as implicit or explicit situational factors that influence the individual’s displayed behaviour. These factors could range from the objectives set by the organisation for the job, the reward systems in place, the colleagues one works with, the physical working environment itself or the supervision by others of one’s own work. “Results”, is defined as the desired outcomes that are the results of behaviour, i.e. the job objectives that should be met by the individual. Bartram et al. state though that one must take cognisance of the fact that even if an individual possesses the competency potential which supports the displaying of desired behaviours within the work context, the desired results of the job can sometimes still not be achieved due to several unforeseen external events that interfere and prevent this from taking place.

Similar to the distinction made by Bartram et al. (2002) between measures that predict competencies and measures of competency, Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, Sager (1993) (cited in Bartram et al., 2002, p. 8) have also differentiated between “antecedent” person factors (personality and ability) and “determinants” (knowledge, skills and motivation) of work-behaviour. Campbell et al. did not only focus on measuring competencies but also

the personal attributes that support one's competencies, i.e. the probability of future success in a job (competency potential).

From the competency definitions listed above and from the research available, it is evident that competencies provide more than just clarity and structure to the organisation, the manager and the job incumbent. From being an indication of inherent job requirements that lead to success, to offering an integrated solution for the various HR applications ranging from recruitment and selection through to development and succession planning, competencies directly provide input and add value to the whole organisation. The impact and realisation of this has resulted in organisations and the wider world of work adopting competencies as the operating language.

Many theorists and authors have developed competency models that help define effective behaviour for HR professionals. When Tett et al. (2000) (cited in Bartram et al. 2002, p. 231) referenced 12 different models from academic literature, they noted certain overlaps as well as distinct differences between models. The similarities or overlaps related to the content of these various models, whereas the incongruencies related to the detail contained in the models, the descriptions, definitions, emphasis and level of aggregation. There seemed to be a difference between the practice-based and the more academic competency models in that the practice-based models tended to be more fully developed and contained more detail with regards to instrumentation, behavioural anchors, associated development action points and data on correlations with dispositional measurements. The academic models focused more on providing a detailed and comprehensive account of the domain, which however seemed to be more economic or parsimonious at times. In the practical application of competency models, the detailed structure and comprehensive nature of practice-based models supports accurate integration and use of competencies far more in order to further enhance performance and 'raise the bar'.

The Universal Competency Framework™

An example of a competency framework that incorporates the academic and practice-based approaches is the model developed by Bartram (2002, p. 232-234). This model, the Universal Competency Framework (UCF™) adopts a three tier approach, where the

bottom tier consists of 112 component competencies, which all relate to 20 competency dimensions on the middle tier, which in turn load on to eight competency factors in the top tier.

In the bottom tier, the component competencies, the 112 components were derived from extensive analyses, combining the practice-based and academic approaches to creating competency models. These components can be considered as competencies broken down to the point where no other competency is included or subsumed by any of the other competencies. The components are therefore seen as the building blocks for creating further sets of competencies.

In the middle tier, the 20 competency dimensions reflect the competencies that have been frequently identified in job analysis and have been used in assessment and development centres over the last two decades.

The top tier, the eight competency factors, represents the psychological constructs that underlie competencies and covers the broad domain or spectrum of human behaviour. It can clearly be seen how these 'big-eight' factors in this framework relate to the big-five of personality (extroversion, agreeableness, openness to experiences, emotional stability and conscientiousness), Spearman's "g" factor of intelligence, as well as achievement and the need for power or control. These eight factors can be used effectively to map existing competencies, dispositions and attainments to a set of competencies. Table 1 displays the relationship between the big eight competency factors in the top tier with the 20 competency dimensions in the middle tier.

Table 1: Relationship between Great-8 Factors and 20 Competency Dimensions (Bartram et al. 2002, p. 233)

8 Competency Factors	20 Competency Dimensions
1 Leading and Deciding	1.1 Deciding and Initiating Action
	1.2 Leading and Supervising
2 Supporting and Co-operating	2.1 Working with People
	2.2 Adhering to Principles and Values
3 Interacting and Presenting	3.1 Relating and Networking
	3.2 Persuading and Influencing
	3.3 Presenting and Communicating Information
4 Analysing and Interpreting	4.1 Writing and Reporting
	4.2 Applying Expertise and Technology
	4.3 Analysing
5 Creating and Conceptualising	5.1 Learning and Researching
	5.2 Creating and Innovating
	5.3 Formulating Strategies and Concepts
6 Organising and Executing	6.1 Planning and Organising
	6.2 Delivering Results and Meeting Customer Expectations
	6.3 Following Instructions and Procedures
7 Adapting and Coping	7.1 Adapting and Responding to Change
	7.2 Coping with Pressures and Setbacks
8 Enterprising and Performing	8.1 Achieving Personal Work Goals and Objectives
	8.2 Entrepreneurial and Commercial Thinking

It is evident from table 1 that the big eight factors cover the main areas of individual differences that have been studied by psychologists over the past century. Due to the comprehensive nature of the UCF™, it has been utilised in this research paper in order to determine the competency-based requirements for HR professionals and will be

discussed in more detail later. It is important to note that only the competencies identified as important and essential will be displayed in this study and not the full range within the competency framework.

Competencies For Human Resource Professionals

The HR discipline has been well researched by various authors and academics, providing a great deal of literature exploring this role in detail. When reviewing the existing literature on what a HR professional role typically entails, one can clearly note the similarities across the findings. Cascio (1998, p. 3) defines human resource management as the attraction, selection, retention, development and use of human resources in order to achieve both individual and organisational objectives. Bohlander et al. (2001, p. 6) stated that the role involves aspects relating to job or organisational design, HR planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, career development, performance management, compensation and remuneration management, employee health and safety (EAP), as well as employee relations. It became evident from the research reviewed that other researchers have presented very similar definitions, stating, in summary, that the role relates to the provisioning, the maintenance and the development of human resources.

Carrell et al. (1997, p. 14) defined the primary role of Human Resource Management as simply being to ensure that the organisation's human resources are effectively utilised and managed. According to the authors, this is achieved by means of relevant personnel programmes, policies, relationship management and various procedures. The authors also listed some of the typical responsibilities associated with the role. These included job analysis and design; recruitment, selection, induction and internal staffing; appraisal, training, development and career management; compensation and health; labour relations; as well as human resource information systems, research and problem solving.

Goss (1994, p. 6-10) postulated a broader view and stated that there are three main themes to HRM namely: human relations psychology, strategic management theory, as well as flexibility and quality management. The focus in human relations psychology is on gaining maximum motivation and commitment out of employees. Work contexts and jobs are obviously structured and designed around these themes in order to facilitate

them. Goss states that the movement in organisations is away from the traditional supervisory control and autocratic hierarchy to commitment and team spirit/team work or partnership, respectively (1994, p. 7-8). In strategic management theory Goss places emphasis on the forecasting, planning and broad-based thinking in order to determine what the organisational needs are, what the current organisational strengths are, as well as what the possibility of success could be in a specific direction (1994, p. 8-9). Goss' intention with flexibility was the organisation's ability to swiftly respond to any changing demands, ensuring that the human resources are efficiently utilised to deliver maximum output (1994, p. 9-10).

The British Institute for Personnel Management adopted a comprehensive definition by Graham and Bennett (1993) (cited in Gerber et al. 1998, p. 9) of what Personnel management is, namely:

“Personnel Management is that part of management concerned with people at work and with their relationships within an enterprise. Its aim is to bring together and to develop into an effective enterprise the men and women who make up an enterprise and, having regard for the well-being of the individual and the working groups, to enable them to make their best contribution to its success.”

Other authors have adopted a more holistic or strategic approach, such as Armstrong (2000, p. 7-8) who identified two types of Human Resource Management (HRM). According to Armstrong, the one type is 'Hard HRM' which emphasises the quantitative, calculative and business-strategic aspects of managing the headcount resource in as 'rational' a way. The second type, Armstrong called 'Soft HRM' which traces its roots to the Human Relations School, emphasising communication, motivation and leadership. In a later section, Armstrong's view on strategic HRM is explored in more detail.

When Wilson (2000) reviewed existing research on the competencies required for HR professionals, she defined a model consisting of 14 competencies. Each with its own definition, these competencies were identified by Wilson as being the most essential for the specific role of HR professionals. Table 2 displays these 14 competencies.

Table 2: Wilson’s Model of HR Professional Competencies (viewed on the State University of New York website)

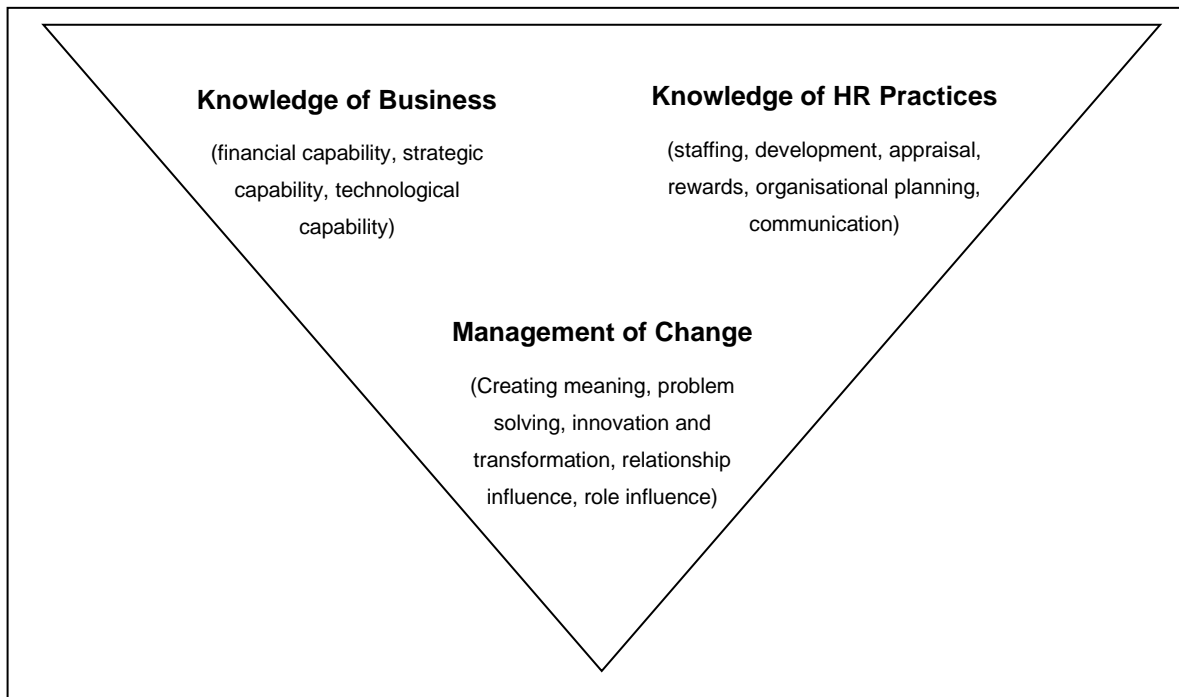
Competency	Competency definition
Relationship Focused	Approachable; relates easily to diverse groups and individuals; builds and develops relationships.
Customer Focused	Focused on all aspects of service and product delivery; always knows the customer comes first.
Organisational Skills	Able to set priorities; time and meeting management skills; able to delegate.
Problem Solving	Ability to weave through necessary channels to accomplish outcomes in complex settings; understanding of processes and quality improvement.
Assessment of Talent	Ability to judge and assess talent, recruit and select staff appropriate to current and future organisational needs; appreciation for and emphasis on developing a diverse workforce.
Integrity	Forthright; direct; widely trusted.
Intelligence	Ability to grasp complex concepts and determine courses of action.
Energetic	Action orientated; hard working; likes challenges.
Active Listening	Ability to absorb and translate others’ statements into objective responses and actions; ability to give and receive feedback in an appropriate manner.

Table 2: Continued

Competency	Competency definition
Composure and Professionalism	Ability to maintain professional demeanour in difficult or stressful situations; patience with customers; ability to diffuse anger and deal with difficult customers.
Presentation Skills	Ability to present and convey information on a wide variety of settings.
Flexibility	Ability to cope effectively with change and uncertainty; ability to quickly; ability to maintain a balanced perspective and see all sides of an issue.
Vision	Ability to see the 'big picture' within the industry, the organisation and the function now and in the future; ability to translate a future state for others and instil a sense of vision in them; ability to motivate others.
Political Awareness	Sensitive towards political situations; able to assess political climate and how it affects responsibilities.

Similarly, research conducted by Ulrich (2000, p. 251-254) indicates that the success of HR professionals hinges on a three domain framework, which includes having knowledge of the business, delivery of HR, and management of change processes. Competencies in each domain contribute in different ways to the overall performance of HR professionals. According to Ulrich's research, knowledge of business explains 18 percent of the performance of HR professionals, knowledge of HR practices explains 23 percent and change management explains 41 percent. Figure 1 presents the three domains clearly. As part of this research Ulrich identified an additional domain, over and above the three main domains, which relates to personal credibility. These four domains, he believes add direct value to the delivery of HR services by professionals.

Figure 1: Relative competencies for HR Professionals as Business Partners (Ulrich, 2000, p. 251)



In 2001 the International Personnel Management Association (cited in South Western Learning 2002) defined a comprehensive competency model for the HR discipline containing 22 competencies ranging from the more strategic business involvement, such as understanding and supporting the organisational vision, mission, strategies and applying business systems thinking, through to the more interpersonal aspects of understanding individual customer needs, understanding the behaviour of others and building interpersonal relationships.

By comparing various HR related competency models, it became evident that the behavioural requirements stipulated in the models seem to broadly cover four areas within the job context. These four areas relate to the 'strategic involvement of HR' in the organisation; the 'operational responsibilities' and 'specialist knowledge' components that require mastery in the function; the direct relation and focus on 'customer needs' and the satisfaction thereof; and the 'broad understanding of business systems', processes and the macro environment. The Human Resource Management Certification programme at Bentley College (www.bentley.edu) supports this by broadly grouping HR related competencies under the clusters of 'Technical competencies', 'Business competencies',

'Interpersonal competencies' and 'Intellectual competencies'. Within each cluster, an array of more specific competencies is listed that stipulates the desired behaviours.

Similarly Morton (1999) (cited in Armstrong 2000, p. 144-146) designed a HR competency model focusing mainly on the three areas of: Business knowledge; HR practices knowledge; and Change Management. When investigating this model in detail, it became evident that these competencies actually refer more to the knowledge and technical requirements rather than behavioural attributes and abilities of HR roles. This was also the case in a model utilised by the Human Resources Institute of New Zealand (HRINZ) where the focus was primarily on technical knowledge aspects such as training and development, remuneration and benefits, performance management and HR planning and staffing. These varying characteristics of competency models may cause a problem and possible misinterpretation by readers in that some authors view competency models as being a framework providing guidance with regards to the most desirable behavioural attributes required for a specific context, while others see competency models merely as a list of required knowledge and expertise areas, referring rather to a model of competence and not a model of competency.

The competencies contained in a competency model need to be clearly defined and accurate in describing the type of behaviour, skill or ability required for effective performance in the job. Poorly designed competency models do not have clearly structured competencies, which could easily overlap with other descriptors and result in confusion. To avoid this, Bartram et al. (2002) listed some basic characteristics needed by effectively constructed competencies. According to the authors, effective competencies:

- Cover work activities and relate to the work context;
- Are independent of one another;
- Are manageable in numbers – not too many relevant competencies;
- Are clearly and comprehensively defined;
- Differentiate between high and low or poor performance;
- Reflect the organisation's language and culture; and
- Have evidence, such as behavioural anchors, which help interpret performance in relation to the competency.

From the list provided by Bartram et al. it becomes evident that it is not an easy or quick exercise to design a sound competency model. The designed competencies need to meet basic criteria in order to ensure the validity of the model, allowing the user(s) to base decisions and actions thereon. Job analysis, as a means to design and create competency models and clarify roles and responsibilities is discussed in more detail later.

As the HR role is undergoing constant change to suit the dynamic environment better, these competency models would need to be adapted to accurately address the changes. Schoonover (2003) wrote comprehensively on the HR role in the new century and how the competency requirements have changed. Schoonover (2003, p. 5-6) stated that there are still three main roles adopted by HR professionals, despite the fact that each role's requirements have expanded significantly. The first role, the 'HR Product/Service Specialist', relates to the product and service development, delivery and application/utilisation of key technologies. The 'HR Generalist' role focuses on dealing with the internal client, customising and installing solutions for them in order to maximise team effectiveness. The third role, the 'HR Strategist' relates to business team partnerships, development of HR strategies, objectives and the alignment thereof with the broader organisational strategy.

Schoonover (2003, p. 6) defines competencies as a set of context specific behaviours that define what success looks like in action or in a particular setting. The HR specific competency model defined by Schoonover is structured into four main building blocks: 'Personal Attributes'; 'Leadership and Management Competencies'; 'HR Core Competencies'; and 'Role-specific HR Competencies'. Each of these four building blocks represents success factors that are responses to different environmental requirements. Because the four building blocks are modular in design, one can easily create a customised model or profile for a specific HR role within a specific context to closely resemble the requirements of that specific role. The 'Personal Attributes' focus on the basic attributes required for successful performance across all types, levels and functions of jobs, in different industries. These are the basic and critical aspects that any employee should possess in their personality make-up in order to be successful in their endeavours and consist of four attributes. The 'Leadership and Management Competencies' relate to the success factors that differentiate performance across career levels or bands. The

focus is on whether individuals can adapt their behaviour and responses to suit the changed or variable focus on the following dimensions:

- Strategic vs. tactical needs;
- Person vs. task demands;
- Demands relating to opening vs. closing system boundaries; and
- Efforts relating to initiating vs. completing processes.

The 'Core HR Competencies' building block is different from the previous two in that the focus now moves directly onto the HR role in detail. Here, the required competencies focus on those aspects shared across all HR roles and consists of 11 competencies, ranging from the provision of specialist and advisory services and customers to the identification and integration of technological advancements within the HR discipline. The last building block, 'HR role-specific competencies', focuses on those success factors that distinguish the roles from one another by stipulating the role-specific competencies required in specific jobs.

Yeung, Brockbank and Ulrich (1994) (cited in Bohlander et al. 2001, p. 29-30) also developed a model based on changes experienced by the HR role in the world of work. In this model, the combination of the desired behavioural attributes with the required knowledge and skills areas is clearly evident. The model is displayed in table 3.

Table 3: The Changing HR Role (Yeung et al. cited in Bohlander et al. 2001, -. 29-30)

Business Mastery	Personal Credibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Acumen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lived Values
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courage
Change Mastery	HR Mastery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal Skills and influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Solving Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance appraisal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovativeness and Creativity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation Design

It is also evident from this model that there is a balance between delivering the specialist HR services and spending effort and energy on understanding the broader picture and the strategic plans or objectives of the organisation as a whole. Various internal or external aspects could obviously cause a direct change or have an indirect influence on the HR discipline and such a competency model. The key to remaining up to date with these changes is to maintain knowledge of what the latest trends or developments are and how interdependent these aspects actually are from one another. This will be discussed in more detail later.

Job Analysis: Towards Role Clarity And Competency Models

The importance of clearly defined and well-structured competency models has briefly been discussed above. However, how does one go about defining or designing these models? Is it sufficient to randomly list attributes and work-related aspects that describe the job or cluster of jobs in detail and inevitably list work-related competencies? Or should one follow a more structured and scientific process whereby one reviews work activities, asks questions, interviews stakeholders and review pieces of work or diaries in order to obtain an accurate reflection of what the job(s) entails so as to determine from this which competencies the most essential ones are? There is unfortunately not a single 'yes' or

'no' answer to this question – the fact is that there is no particular method that is the only and most suitable method across all different work related situations. Bohlander et al. (2001, p. 91) wrote regarding this:

“Several different job analysis approaches are used to gather data, each with specific advantages and disadvantages.”

Therefore, to answer the above question and to be able to determine the most appropriate technique for a specific scenario, one has to consider a variety of context related aspects. These aspects may include, amongst others, the time, budget and other related resources allocated to one's disposal, the availability and participation of knowledgeable respondents and job analysis experts, accurate and comprehensive background information regarding the current scenario (macro- and micro-environment) and finally, and maybe even one of the most important considerations, the clear understanding of the purpose and intent of the specific job analysis intervention. Gerber et al. (1998, p. 70-74) and Bohlander et al. (2001, p. 91-94) listed some of the methods used in analysing jobs, including interviews, questionnaires, diaries, the Critical Incidents method and Repertory Grid method as well as observations. Gerber et al. also stated that the application of job analysis results is very wide and typically provides answers to the following questions:

- How can a job be structured to increase employee performance?
- How much time is necessary to carry out the specific job / task?
- What activities must be carried out within the job?
- What type of skills and experience are necessary to successfully fulfil job requirements?

Irrelevant of the methodology applied, it is always crucial when defining competencies that one focuses on the job and the job requirements itself as a basis for the job analysis and not only consider what makes an incumbent successful in the position – two or more colleagues could be effective in the same job for different reasons and a different set of attributes.

An ideal approach to job analysis would be to utilise a combination of techniques in order to determine the inherent characteristics of the job or cluster of jobs. In so doing, one can obtain information about the job(s) from various viewpoints, ensuring a more accurate

and representative picture of reality. A typical multi-method approach could, for example, include unstructured interviews, such as visionary interviews, respondent observations, diary reviews and structured interviews or questionnaires.

During visionary interviews, informed and knowledgeable respondents are asked to elaborate on and discuss the broader rationale and intent behind the job(s) in question in order to create an accurate holistic or strategic understanding of the purpose and value-add of the job(s). Visionary interviews are often also extremely valuable in clarifying a job and its parameters not only for the job analyst, who might be new to the discussion, but also for other stakeholders directly involved in specifying the requirements for the job. By conducting such role-clarifying discussions or interviews, the characteristics, concepts and ideas behind the specific job are again elucidated, refined and crystallised.

Respondent observations and diary reviews are also very effective in obtaining an accurate and realistic picture of different jobs. By observing and recording the tasks, events, interactions, behaviours and different situations typically found within a job, a real-time reflection of the job's inherent characteristics can be created. It can be expected though that these two methods could be rather time-consuming and could be subject to some complications. For example, should the observations or reviews be done on a non-representative sample or done over a too short a period that does not allow sufficient observation of a wider range of usual events and situations to naturally occur within the job context, the collected information and conclusions drawn could be skewed and not present a wider and true reflection.

Structured interviews, such as job analysis questionnaires are extremely controlled means of gathering job relevant information. Depending on the type of questionnaire used, a structured interview could also take slightly longer, however adding more value and comprehensiveness to the information gathered. It is crucial, as with any other job analysis technique to ensure that the respondents participating in the job analysis are knowledgeable of the specific job(s) in question and would be able to supply an accurate and realistic reflection of what is required.

No matter what technique or combination of techniques was applied to a job analysis intervention, it is always important and valuable to discuss and feed the results back to the stakeholders involved in the job analysis. Stakeholders might often have a clear idea or mental picture of what a job entails but may be unable to express, formulate or stipulate this in the form of job descriptions and person specifications. By providing feedback to them, one does not only “close the loop”, but also validate the outputs to ensure that these are once again accurate and realistic.

Designing competency models is one step further from the initial and crucial job analysis. Once one has an accurate indication of what the individual jobs entail, a reflection of the relevant job objectives, essential job tasks and required competencies, the focus now moves to integrating and streamlining the various jobs on the different levels within the organisation or department in order to clearly distinguish and comprehend the succession of competency requirements between different jobs and across different levels. With competency models in place, a wide range of applications, including the general HR roles of recruitment and selection, performance management, training and development, as well as succession planning, easily follow and are guided by the operating or business language of competencies.

The specific job analysis technique applied in this research was a type of structured questionnaire called the Work Profiling System (WPS) developed by the SHL Group plc. The WPS process requires a trained facilitator to guide job-knowledgeable respondents through the gathering of the job relevant information in order to create a complete and comprehensive picture of the job. The process is divided into three broad processes. The first process requires respondents to define the main purpose or strategic intent of the job or cluster of jobs. Here, the respondents are also asked to list the job objectives or key performance areas relevant to the job. It is absolutely crucial to spend sufficient time and effort on defining and listing the main purpose and job objectives so as to facilitate common understanding of the job and its responsibilities – especially in new jobs or where there is little role clarity. If this information is not clearly specified and delineated, the remainder of the processes could be hindered.

The second process consists of a detailed analysis of possible job tasks or activities with the aim of choosing the relevant activities and rating each of these in terms of their

importance to the overall objectives, as well as the time spent on these tasks. This relative criticality on each activity provides the end users with a ranking of activities that indicates the activities that are typically the most important, typically the most time-consuming or activities with high criticality but low time-spent and vice versa. The final list of relevant activities chosen by respondents during a WPS session could be between 90 to over 140 activities, chosen from a repertoire of just under 400 options clustered into 31 broader groups of activities. These activities relate to, for example, either planning and organising, managing tasks, communicating, receiving information, working with information, integrating information, managing people, motivating others, influencing or persuading others, etc. Once the individual activities have been chosen and allocated a criticality score, the second process is completed by the ranking of the relevant broader activity groups as per their relative importance to the job and its objectives. In total, the second process in a WPS session could last between 1.5 to 2.5 hours.

During the third and last process, the focus changes to specifying the knowledge, skills, experience and training requirements of the specific job, as well as detailing the contextual variables defining the environment typical to the job or cluster of jobs. Here aspects such as the type of interpersonal contact, the complexity of verbal, numeric or diagrammatic reasoning, the type of disabilities that would hinder job performance, the levels of reporting and more are discussed to obtain a clearer understanding of the environment surrounding the specific job and its responsibilities.

Once the three processes described above have been completed, the data is scored and interpreted to determine, amongst others, the competency-based requirements for the specific job.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Sample

The research data consisted of 76 HR related job profiles completed by HR professionals for purposes of identifying the inherent job requirements for specific roles. The data was collected by means of the structured job analysis questionnaire called the Work Profiling System (WPS), described earlier. With each of the 76 job profiles, the focus was on analysing the relevant tasks or work activities rated for each profile, the contextual variables stipulated which describe the work environment in more detail, as well as the subsequent range of competencies relevant to each job. The contextual variables consisted of over 30 aspects, considered individually in order to create a realistic picture of the work context. To mention only a few, these ranged from experience, qualifications and knowledge requirements to levels of reporting, responsibility for resources, time span of impact and complexity of reasoning. In total, this provided a comprehensive spectrum of variables and information to consider during the research project.

The collection of the data occurred in two contexts. The first was by means of job analysis training courses, aimed at equipping individuals with the skill to become experts and independently conduct job analysis sessions using the WPS software. As part of the training courses, experts guided the delegates through the completion the WPS questionnaires, focusing on their specific roles as HR professionals. The second context was through the facilitation of job analysis sessions by job analysis experts within organisations, taking them through the structured process and obtaining the relevant information.

Upon a detailed qualitative analysis of each job profile's information and content, it was found that nine of these profiles did not have complete information. Some of the critical variables or aspects within the job profile were not fully completed, therefore presenting some concerns with regards to the comprehensiveness of the data. The sample was then reduced to 67 job profiles. Within the final research data, the majority of the job profiles (64%) related to non-managerial and more operational HR roles, with the remainder (36%) relating to managerial HR roles. Based on this, the data was analysed from three different perspectives or groups to ensure comprehensive coverage, as well

as accommodation of all the possible variances. This is described in more detail in the next section. For the purpose of this study the three perspectives or groups are referred to as:

- All 67 job profiles: Group 1 (Grp. 1);
- Non-managerial job profiles: Group 2 (Grp. 2); and
- Managerial job profiles: Group 3 (Grp. 3).

Research Methodology

As mentioned above, the data had to be analysed from three different perspectives in order to ensure a realistic investigation into the behavioural competency requirements for HR professionals. The first and most vital viewpoint was to consider Group 1, all 67 job profiles in one cluster in order to determine, through a frequency analysis and the respective arithmetic means, which the most essential behavioural competencies are across the 67 job profiles. Each job profile's inherent behavioural competency characteristics are presented in line with the UCF™ discussed previously. Each behavioural competency was rated on four levels of importance, which included:

- Extreme: essential for this specific job;
- Important: definite importance for this specific job;
- Moderate: of some importance for this specific job; and
- Baseline: basic level of competency expected in all jobs.

Each importance level was allocated a numeric value representing the respective importance. This allowed the calculation of the arithmetic means for each competency. The following numerical values were assigned to each level of importance:

- Extreme: 4;
- Important: 3;
- Moderate: 2; and
- Baseline: 1.

The arithmetic mean of each behavioural competency was calculated for each job profile, providing a clear indication of the most crucial competencies from the wider range. The mean for each competency was interpreted according to the following rule:

- 4 – 5: Extreme (essential, specifically for HR roles);
- 3 – 3.99: Important (definite importance, specifically for HR roles);
- 2 – 2.99: Moderate (some importance, specifically for HR roles); and
- 1 – 1.99: Baseline (generally important for most jobs)

Having established the essential behavioural competencies in Group 1, the second and third perspective or groups followed. These considered the non-managerial (Group 2) and managerial (Group 3) job profiles separately. Investigating these groups separately was necessary in order to determine what influence, if any, these two different organisational levels would have on the competency-based requirements identified across all 67 job profiles. In order to accurately split the 67 job profiles into two data sets, a cluster analysis was done using specific contextual variables (objects) within each job profile (cluster) that would assist in distinguishing between the managerial and non-managerial job profiles. Cluster analysis was chosen as a means of distinction due to the method's ability to join together objects into successively larger clusters, using a measure of similarity.

The contextual variables that were used included:

- Qualification requirements;
- Upward levels of reporting; and
- Required years of work experience.

These contextual variables were applied in the cluster analysis due to their direct contribution towards determining the appropriate level or job grade of a specific job profile. When conducting a cluster analysis, different clustering and linkage rules can be applied. For the purpose of this study, *Joining* or *Tree-clustering* was applied in order to establish clusters. This method uses the dissimilarities or distances between objects when forming clusters. These distances can be based on a single dimension, or as in this paper, multiple dimensions.

As part of tree-clustering, the *single-linkage* rule was used, which follows the approach of linking two clusters or determining the distance between these clusters based on the distances of the two closest objects in the different clusters. The distances between the

objects were computed by means of a *Euclidean distance measure* due to the multi-dimensional space, which is the geometric distance in this multidimensional space – this is probably the most commonly used type of distance measure. This analysis resulted in a final overall cluster consisting of 39 job profiles that were similar, based on the three contextual variables. The results of the cluster analysis were displayed by means of a *Horizontal Hierarchical Tree Plot*, which graphically presents the various clusters at different strengths or distances. These results are shown and discussed in more detail below.

However, due to some job profiles not having clearly stipulated contextual variables, causing some contamination within the cluster analysis, it was not adequate to simply continue with the investigation of which the most essential competencies are based purely on the cluster analysis. A further distinction had to be made between the job profiles, which was then based on the job titles and important work activities in each profile in order to further add value and clarity to the clustering of non-managerial and managerial jobs. This resulted in two groups, one being the non-managerial group consisting of 43 job profiles (Group 2) and the second being the managerial group consisting of 24 job profiles (Group 3). This additional analysis and distinction between the two levels directly supported and added value to the initial cluster analysis in that the majority (67%) of the initial cluster formed by the cluster analysis was part of the non-managerial group formed by the second analysis. This overlap in the clustering of the individual job profiles provided additional confidence to the research process.

With the variation in the seniority levels of the job profiles being accommodated, it was then necessary to determine what the actual differences were between the non-managerial and managerial job profiles in terms of the behavioural competency requirements. The same process was now applied to these two groups as was to the initial overall group of 67 job profiles. By means of a frequency analysis and the calculation and interpretation of the arithmetic means, the differences as well as similarities were clearly noted. In addition to this, it also became evident that the results between the two groups were mostly in line with the results of the first group containing all 67 job profiles. These results are discussed in more detail below.

However, there was still a need to determine whether the differences between the non-managerial and managerial groups were actually practically significant differences. This practical significance was determined by calculating the effect sizes (Cohen's d) of the actual differences between the mean scores of the two groups. According to Steyn (SA Journal of Industrial Psychology, 2002, p. 10-15) it is not only important to know whether a relationship exists, but also to know whether this relationship is strong enough to be considered an important or practically significant relationship. Steyn (Journal of Industrial Psychology, 2000, p. 1-3) also stipulated that the calculation of practical significance (also called psychological significance) is especially important where one works with complete populations or samples.

The interpretation of effect size (d) in order to determine the importance of a relationship was based on the guidelines provided by Thalheimer and Cook (2002). These were as follows:

- Negligible effect: ≥ -0.15 and $< .15$;
- Small effect: $\geq .15$ and $< .40$;
- Medium effect: $\geq .40$ and $< .75$;
- Large effect: $\geq .75$ and < 1.10 ;
- Very large effect: ≥ 1.10 and < 1.45 ; and
- Huge effect: > 1.45 .

For the purposes of this study, an effect size (d) of 0.75 or larger was considered as having a practical significance and therefore being practically important.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The research results are displayed and discussed according to the methodology applied and as previously discussed. In the above discussions regarding competencies, emphasis was placed on the various aspects comprising competencies and the different viewpoints of researchers. It became evident in these sections that researchers have defined competencies differently over the years but all seem to agree that aspects such as behavioural attributes, skills, knowledge and abilities are some of the main

components constituting competencies. It is important to remember that the aim in this paper was to determine specifically the behavioural aspects within competencies that are relevant to HR professionals. Emphasis is therefore not placed on specific skills and knowledge or technical areas that should be mastered by HR professionals, but rather the behavioural competencies that enable and facilitate successful performance in the workplace.

Behavioural Competency Requirements For All 67 Job Profiles (Group 1)

As mentioned above, the initial focus was on determining the most important behavioural competency requirements for all 67 job profiles. As per the frequency analysis and evaluation of the mean values, table 4 displays the competencies that were seen as important across all 67 HR job profiles. The interpretation of the arithmetic mean on four different importance levels, as discussed above, was applied in the analysis, resulting in only five competencies being listed as being important competency requirements for Group 1. Note that table 4 is purely a summarised reflection of the most relevant competencies with the respective definitions. At a later stage, the statistical data such as mean values, standard deviations and effect sizes are discussed and presented in detail.

Table 4: Important Competencies Across all 67 Job Profiles (Group 1)

Competency (Dimension)	Competency Definition
Planning and Organising	Sets clearly defined objectives; plans activities and projects well in advance and takes account of possible changing circumstances; identifies and organises resources needed to accomplish tasks; manages time effectively; monitors performance against deadlines and milestones.
Analysing	Analyses numerical data, verbal data and all other sources of information; Breaks information into component parts, patterns and relationships; Probes for further information or greater understanding of a problem; Makes rational judgements from the available information and analysis; Produces workable solutions to a range of problems; Demonstrates an understanding of how one issue may be a part of a much larger system
Presenting and Communicating Information	Speaks clearly and fluently; Expresses opinions, information and key points of an argument clearly; Makes presentations and undertakes public speaking with skill and confidence; Responds quickly to the needs of an audience and to their reactions and feedback; Projects credibility
Formulating Strategies and Concepts	Works strategically to realise organisational goals; Sets and develops strategies; Identifies and develops positive and compelling visions of the organisation's future potential; Takes account of a wide range of issues across, and related to, the organisation
Working with People	Shows respect for the views and contributions of other team members; shows empathy; listens, supports and cares for others; consults others and shares information and expertise with them; builds team spirit and reconciles conflict; adapts to the team and fits in well.

From table 4 it is evident that there is a specific focus on aspects involving the planning of activities, projects, departments or setting objectives and organising to ensure

resources are in place to deliver upon these objectives. Similarly to this, the competency of strategic thinking, in this case called “Formulating Strategies and Concepts”, also seems important, emphasising the value-add of strategising, creating visions and broad-based thinking. As could be expected the competency of interpersonal sensitivity and being people-focused was identified as one of the relevant competencies. Having to present to others, convey information and accurate messages, as well as being confident and projecting credibility in front of an audience also seems important. One aspect that could be applied broadly to other jobs as well is the accurate analysis of detailed and critical information, basing judgements and decisions there on and providing practical or workable solutions to problems.

In table 5, the same competencies are presented, however now providing the additional statistical information, as well as the respective components that further define and support the various competencies. The components, as mentioned previously in the discussion of the Universal Competency Framework (UCF™) represent the bottom most tier of the UCF™ and are the building blocks of competencies.

Table 5: Individual Components Making up the Relevant Competencies (Group 1)

Competency (Dimension)	Std Deviation	Mean	Components
Planning and Organising	0.9226	3.24	Setting Objectives
			Planning
			Managing Time
			Managing Resources
			Monitoring Progress
Analysing	0.6086	3.57	Analysing and Evaluating Information
			Testing Assumptions and Investigating
			Producing Solutions
			Making Judgements
			Demonstrating Systems Thinking

Table 5: Continued

Competency (Dimension)	Std Deviation	Mean	Components
Presenting and Communicating Information	0.7828	3.43	Speaking Fluently
			Explaining Concepts and Opinions
			Articulating Key Points of an Argument
			Presenting and Public Speaking
			Projecting Credibility
			Responding to an Audience
Formulating Strategies and Concepts	0.7703	3.27	Thinking Broadly
			Approaching Work Strategically
			Setting and Developing Strategy
			Visioning
Working with People	0.8264	3.21	Understanding Others
			Adapting to the Team
			Building Team Spirit
			Recognising and Rewarding Contributions
			Listening
			Consulting Others
			Communicating Proactively
			Showing Tolerance and Consideration
			Showing Empathy
			Supporting Others
			Caring for Others
Developing and Communicating Self-knowledge and Insight			

From table 4 and 5 it is evident that there is a strong focus on the detailed analysis of information, making judgments on issues and providing solutions to problems. From an

interactive point of view, effective communication and presentation of information seems important, as is the respectful and supportive interaction with people a key requirement. In comparison to other existing HR competency models, such as the model discussed previously by Wilson in table 2, it can be noted that there are a number of similarities between the behavioural competency requirements listed in table 5 and those listed by Wilson as important. Firstly there is a clear overlap with regards to having to plan and organise work activities and responsibilities, priorities as well as time management skills. Secondly, there is also a close link between the importance of maintaining relationships with others and interacting in a respectful, sensitive and effective manner with them in order to support and achieve objectives. Thirdly, the 'Analysis' competency that was identified as the most important during this research is similar to what Wilson calls 'Problem Solving' – being able to sift through detailed information and make judgments or base decisions thereon. Fourthly, Wilson also listed 'Presentation skills' and 'Active Listening' as important, which were identified in this research as 'Presenting and Communicating Information', all relating to the effective communication or provision of information based on requests received. Lastly, what was identified as 'Formulating Strategies and Concepts' in this study was listed by Wilson as 'Vision', incorporating the aspect of long-term and broad-based thinking and translating this into a vision for others.

However, from the comparison of essential competencies listed in table 5 with Wilson's model in table 2, it is evident that some competencies are not reflected equally in both. One reason for this might be the difference in interpretation of what is essential or relevant, and what is moderately required or other competencies required for HR professionals. Due to the focus in this research being only on identifying the more relevant, i.e. extreme or essential and important competencies for HR professionals, other competencies such as 'Personal Motivation', 'Flexibility', 'Resilience', 'Persuasiveness' that resulted as being moderately important for Group 1 are not listed in table 5.

Behavioural Competency Requirements For Non-Managerial And Managerial HR Jobs

Once the most important competencies have been identified for all 67 job profiles, it is important to determine how these competencies would differ for non-managerial and managerial job profiles. Based on the cluster analysis using the specific chosen

contextual variables, a cluster was created consisting mainly of non-managerial job profiles. After an evaluation of the data, the cluster was further enhanced by a review of job titles and important and essential work tasks in order to ensure that a more homogenous cluster of non-managerial job profiles is created. The results of the cluster analysis are displayed in figure 2.

In the tree diagram in figure 2, one can see how the different job profiles are clustered at different distance measures, i.e. relationship strengths. The vertical axis contains the job profiles considered for the cluster analysis, which were in this case all 67 job profiles. The horizontal axis displays the respective distance measures at which certain profiles are clustered together. The further one moves from the left to the right of the axis, the weaker the linkage or relationship becomes. In other words, with every move to the right of the horizontal axis, one lowers the threshold regarding the decision when to declare two or more objects as part of the same cluster. As a result, one links more and more objects together and aggregates larger and larger clusters of increasingly dissimilar elements.

Following the cluster analysis, the sample of non-managerial job profiles was analysed in the same manner as the sample containing all 67 job profiles in order to determine which the most extreme and important behavioural competencies are. The results of this are displayed below in table 6.

Figure 2: Results of Cluster analysis to create homogenous non-managerial cluster

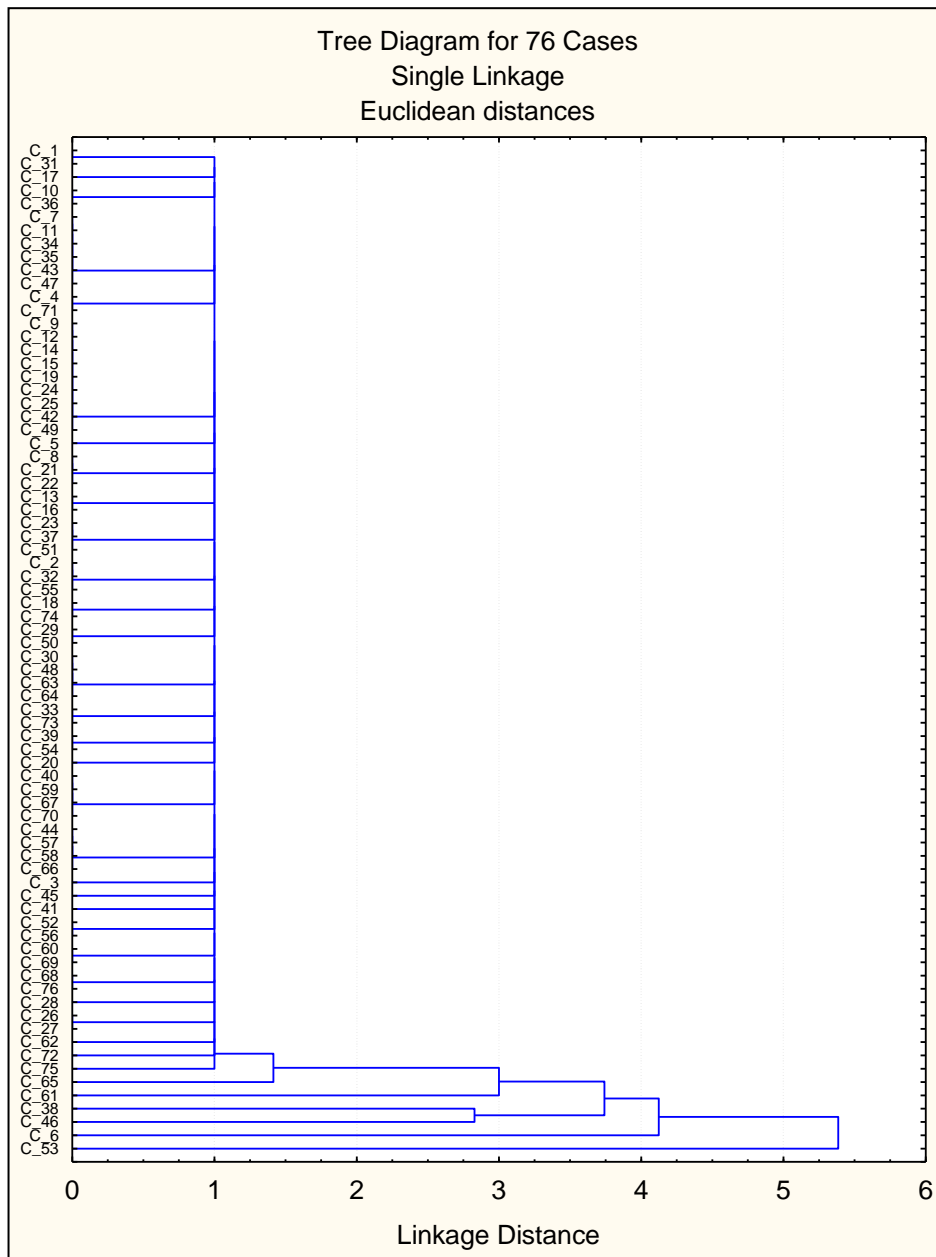


Table 6: Important Behavioural Competencies for Non-Managerial HR Profiles (Group 2)

Competency (Dimension)	Std Deviation	Mean	Components
Planning and Organising	0.9359	3.07	Setting Objectives
			Planning
			Managing Time
			Managing Resources
			Monitoring Progress
Applying Expertise and Technology	0.7683	3.07	Applying Technical Expertise
			Building Technical Expertise
			Sharing Expertise
			Using Technology Resources
			Demonstrating Physical and Manual Skills
			Demonstrating Cross Functional Awareness
Analysing	0.5925	3.51	Analysing and Evaluating Information
			Testing Assumptions and Investigating
			Producing Solutions
			Making Judgements
			Demonstrating Systems Thinking
Presenting and Communicating Information	0.7959	3.44	Speaking Fluently
			Explaining Concepts and Opinions
			Articulating Key Points of an Argument
			Presenting and Public Speaking
			Projecting Credibility
			Responding to an Audience

Table 6: Continued

Competency (Dimension)	Std Deviation	Mean	Components
Formulating Strategies and Concepts	0.75	3.09	Thinking Broadly
			Approaching Work Strategically
			Setting and Developing Strategy
			Visioning
Working with People	0.851	3.12	Understanding Others
			Adapting to the Team
			Building Team Spirit
			Recognising and Rewarding Contributions
			Listening
			Consulting Others
			Communicating Proactively
			Showing Tolerance and Consideration
			Showing Empathy
			Supporting Others
			Caring for Others
Developing and Communicating Self-knowledge and Insight			

The results in table 6 present a very similar picture as the results obtained from all 67 job profiles (table 5). In addition, it is clearly evident that there is an additional focus with the non-managerial HR profiles specifically on being able to apply specialist knowledge, expertise and technology. In comparison to the non-managerial requirements the results for the managerial HR profiles are listed in table 7.

Table 7: Important Behavioural Competencies for Managerial HR Profiles (Group 3)

Competency (Dimension)	Std Deviation	Mean	Components
Leading and Supervising	0.794	3.25	Providing Direction and Co-ordinating Action
			Supervising and Monitoring Behaviour
			Coaching
			Delegating
			Empowering Staff
			Motivating Others
			Developing Staff
			Identifying and Recruiting Talent
Planning and Organising	0.833	3.54	Setting Objectives
			Planning
			Managing Time
			Managing Resources
			Monitoring Progress
Analysing	0.637	3.67	Analysing and Evaluating Information
			Testing Assumptions and Investigating
			Producing Solutions
			Making Judgements
			Demonstrating Systems Thinking
Presenting and Communicating Information	0.7755	3.42	Speaking Fluently
			Explaining Concepts and Opinions
			Articulating Key Points of an Argument
			Presenting and Public Speaking
			Projecting Credibility
			Responding to an Audience

Table 7: Continued

Competency (Dimension)	Std Deviation	Mean	Components
Formulating Strategies and Concepts	0.7173	3.58	Thinking Broadly
			Approaching Work Strategically
			Setting and Developing Strategy
			Visioning
Working with People	0.7697	3.38	Understanding Others
			Adapting to the Team
			Building Team Spirit
			Recognising and Rewarding Contributions
			Listening
			Consulting Others
			Communicating Proactively
			Showing Tolerance and Consideration
			Showing Empathy
			Supporting Others
			Caring for Others
Developing and Communicating Self-knowledge and Insight			

Similar to table 5 and 6, there is a trend across the non-managerial and managerial HR profiles that is clearly visible. However, from table 7 above one can see that the focus has moved from the application of specialist knowledge and expertise to the leadership, directing and motivation of others. Based on the mean differences, one can also see that other competencies such as “Formulating Strategies and Concepts” and “Planning and Organising” have received a lot more emphasis within the managerial group than the non-managerial group.

The interpretation of the differences in means between the two groups was aided by calculating the effect sizes (d) of the managerial and non-managerial competencies. Table 8 presents the effect sizes for each of the considered competencies.

Table 8: Effect Sizes of Competency Relationships

Competency	Non-managerial (Grp. 2)		Managerial (Grp. 3)		Effect size (d)	Interpretati on of effect
	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev		
Leading and Supervising	2.53	0.7973	3.25	0.7940	0.92	Large
Planning and Organising	3.07	0.9359	3.54	0.8330	0.53	Medium
Applying Expertise and Technology	3.07	0.7683	2.79	0.5882	0.40	Medium
Analysing	3.51	0.5925	3.67	0.6370	0.27	Small
Presenting and Communicating Information	3.44	0.7959	3.42	0.7755	0.03	Negligible
Formulating Strategies and Concepts	3.09	0.7500	3.58	0.7173	0.67	Medium
Working with People	3.12	0.8510	3.38	0.7697	0.32	Small

Evaluating table 8 from a holistic point of view, it is evident that the majority of the relevant competencies are very similar for the non-managerial and managerial groups. For the competencies of 'Planning and Organising'; 'Applying Expertise and Technology'; 'Analysing'; 'Presenting and Communicating Information'; 'Formulating Strategies and Concepts'; and 'Working with People', the effect sizes range from medium to negligible, concluding that the differences in importance for these respective competencies are not practically significant.

'Leading and Supervising' was the only competency that was significantly more important for the managerial group than for the non-managerial one, due to the effect size of the relationship being large.

Although not practically significant, when considering only the mean differences for each competency across the two groups, further differences become evident. 'Planning and Organising' was seen as more important for the managerial roles, placing more emphasis on managers having to set objectives, plan ahead and manage time and resources. Having to apply specialist knowledge, expertise and technical knowledge seems more important for the non-managerial group, especially in their operational service delivery. Analysing, demonstrating systems thinking and producing solutions seem similarly important for both non-managerial and managerial groups. Similarly with communicating and presenting information to others, there was an almost equal importance between the two groups. Thinking and acting on a strategic and conceptual level ('Formulating Strategies and Concepts') seems somewhat more important for the managerial group, requiring them to think broadly, approach work strategically and develop strategies and visions. Working with People had a similar importance for both groups with only a small, practically insignificant difference between them, making it clear that interpersonal sensitivity, respectful interaction and supporting others are important for both levels.

In relation to the factor level of UCF™, table 9 displays how the important competencies as identified in the research link to the eight factors of the UCF™.

Table 9: Important Factors Based on Competency Requirements for HR Professionals

Factor level	Competency (Dimension)
Organising and Executing	Planning and Organising
Leading and Deciding	Leading and Supervising
Analysing and Interpreting	Applying Expertise and Technology
	Analysing
Interacting and Presenting	Presenting and Communicating Information
Creating and Conceptualising	Formulating Strategies and Concepts
Supporting and Co-operating	Working with People

It is evident in table 9 that only six of the big eight competency factors were identified as important for the role of HR professionals. Taking into account that the factor level of the UCF™ represents the broad domain of human behaviour, the two factors that were not identified are ‘Adapting and Coping’, as well as ‘Enterprising and Performing’.

As displayed in table 1, ‘Adapting and Coping’ encompasses the potential to adapt to changing circumstances, adapting interpersonal styles to suit different people or situations, working productively in a pressurised environment, dealing with ambiguity and making positive use of the opportunities, as well as handling criticism well and learning from it. ‘Enterprising and Performing’ relates to accepting and tackling demanding goals with enthusiasm, identifying business opportunities for the organisation, demonstrating financial awareness, controlling costs and thinking in terms of profit, loss and added value, as well as working hard and putting in longer hours when necessary. The omission of these two factors from the identified set of important HR competencies presents serious implications for the future existence and value-add of the HR Management discipline to the world of work. With several authors, such as Ulrich (1997), Wilson (2000) and Schoonover (2003), having proposed ideal HR competency models that incorporate and emphasise aspects of flexibility and delivery amongst the range of required competencies, it becomes evident that the views and beliefs of the majority of the HR professionals utilised in this research are still in line with earlier HR models relating to Personnel Management and not HR Management.

CONCLUSION

From the above analyses and interpretations of the research data, it is clear that there are some behavioural competencies that are more relevant to non-managerial HR professionals and some that are more important for managerial HR roles. It is also evident from the research that the majority of the HR professionals have not yet made the transition to a more strategic and delivery-focused HR Management, as their focus seems to still be on what should be done and not on what should be delivered.

Table 10 presents a final list of important behavioural competencies with the respective components that constitute the individual competencies.

Table 10: Conclusion – Important Behavioural Competencies for HR Professionals

Competency (Dimension)	Competency Definition	Components
Planning and Organising	Sets clearly defined objectives; plans activities and projects well in advance and takes account of possible changing circumstances; identifies and organises resources needed to accomplish tasks; manages time effectively; monitors performance against deadlines and milestones.	Setting Objectives
		Planning
		Managing Time
		Managing Resources
		Monitoring Progress

Table 10: Continued

Competency (Dimension)	Competency Definition	Components
Leading and Supervising	Provides others with a clear direction; motivates and empowers others; recruits staff of a high calibre; provides staff with development opportunities and coaching; sets appropriate standards of behaviour.	Providing Direction and Co-ordinating Action
		Supervising and Monitoring Behaviour
		Coaching
		Delegating
		Empowering Staff
		Motivating Others
		Developing Staff
		Identifying and Recruiting Talent
Applying Expertise and Technology	Applies specialist and detailed technical expertise; uses technology to achieve work objectives; develops job knowledge and expertise (theoretical and practical) through continual professional development; demonstrates an understanding of different organisational departments and functions.	Applying Technical Expertise
		Building Technical Expertise
		Sharing Expertise
		Using Technology Resources
		Demonstrating Physical and Manual Skills
		Demonstrating Cross Functional Awareness
		Demonstrating Spatial Awareness

Table 10: Continued

Competency (Dimension)	Competency Definition	Components
Analysing	Analyses numerical data, verbal data and all other sources of information; Breaks information into component parts, patterns and relationships; Probes for further information or greater understanding of a problem; Makes rational judgements from the available information and analysis; Produces workable solutions to a range of problems; Demonstrates an understanding of how one issue may be a part of a much larger system	Analysing and Evaluating Information
		Testing Assumptions and Investigating
		Producing Solutions
		Making Judgements
		Demonstrating Systems Thinking
Presenting and Communicating Information	Speaks fluently; expresses opinions, information and key points of an argument clearly; makes presentations and undertakes public speaking with skill and confidence; responds quickly to the needs of an audience and to their reactions and feedback; projects credibility.	Speaking Fluently
		Explaining Concepts and Opinions
		Articulating Key Points of an Argument
		Presenting and Public Speaking
		Projecting Credibility
		Responding to an Audience

Table 10: Continued

Competency (Dimension)	Competency Definition	Components
Formulating Strategies and Concepts	Works strategically to realise organisational goals; sets and develops strategies; identifies, develops positive and compelling visions of the organisation's future potential; takes account of a wide range of issues across, and related to, the organisation.	Thinking Broadly
		Approaching Work Strategically
		Setting and Developing Strategy
		Visioning
Working with People	Shows respect for the views and contributions of other team members; shows empathy; listens, supports and cares for others; consults others and shares information and expertise with them; builds team spirit and reconciles conflict; adapts to the team and fits in well.	Understanding Others
		Adapting to the Team
		Building Team Spirit
		Recognising and Rewarding Contributions
		Listening
		Consulting Others
		Communicating Proactively
		Showing Tolerance and Consideration
		Showing Empathy
		Supporting Others
		Caring for Others
Developing and Communicating Self-knowledge and Insight		

In comparison to Schoonover's model (2003, p. 6) of three main HR roles for the new century, the similarities with the above conclusion are very evident. According to Schoonover, 'HR Specialist', 'HR Generalist' and 'HR Strategist' are the three main roles HR professionals would need to play in the new century. The first role of 'HR Specialist', seems to link to the competency of 'Applying Expertise and Technology', focusing on the utilisation and application of key technologies, product and service development as well as delivery. 'HR Generalist', which relates to the interaction and relationship management with internal and external clients as well as the development and delivery of HR solutions links mainly to the competencies of 'Analysing' as well as 'Working with People'. The third role of 'HR Strategist' clearly relates to the 'Formulating Strategies and Concepts' competency. However, the six factors identified as being important in this research do not sufficiently cover Schoonover's model. There are elements of flexibility, change management, service delivery and commercial awareness found across the three roles that are not clearly related to the six factors identified as important. The seventh factor of 'Adapting and Coping' from the UCF™, relating to managing change and dealing with different customers, is largely associated to the 'HR Generalist' role. In addition to this, the eighth factor of 'Enterprising and Performing' has aspects represented in all three HR roles and should also be incorporated in the research findings to be more in line with Schoonover's model.

A further comparison to other HR models, such as the one developed by Ulrich (1997) (figure 1) also makes the relationship between what Ulrich saw as important HR domains and six of the eight factors from the UCF™ evident. What Ulrich termed *strategic capability, innovation and transformation* in his model relates to the 'Creating and Conceptualising' factor, where focus is placed on strategy formulation, conceptual thinking, creation as well as innovation. His domain of 'HR Practice Knowledge' consisting of staffing, development, appraisal and rewards seems related to the 'Analysing and Interpreting' factor, which encompasses the application of specialist HR knowledge and expertise, planning, organising as well as problem solving. Within the third domain, a link between what Ulrich termed 'Relationship influence' and 'Role influence' and the UCF™ 'Working with People' is also clear. However, similar to Schoonover's model (2003) referred to above, Ulrich's vision of value-add and change management, focusing not on what HR must *do* but rather on what HR must *deliver*, would not be supported by the research findings due to the factors of 'Adapting and Coping' and

'Enterprising and Performing' not be represented in the research findings as important competency factors.

From this comparison, the direct link between the identified behavioural competencies and the technical HR knowledge, processes as well as skills is evident. If one assumes that the research sample represents current thinking applied by HR professionals in practice, it becomes clear that, due to the missing factors of 'Adapting and Coping' and 'Enterprising and Performing', HR role-players might not clearly understand their future role within organisations. Similarly, it is also evident that the transition from the traditional Personnel Management to the more strategic and integrated Human Resource Management is still a reality within the profession and not yet something of the past.

In order for the broader HR discipline to address the challenges of flexibility, change management, organisational value-add and prized service delivery, this paper recommends that the competency factors of 'Adapting and Coping' and 'Enterprising and Performing' be incorporated in the ideal competency model for HR professionals.

With the relevant behavioural competencies for HR professionals being identified above and with various viewpoints from different authors being incorporated and expressed in this paper, it is important to always remember that there could never be an absolute or final model, which would represent and summarise the HR profession in totality. Various internal and external, as well as micro and macro influences and forces, such as globalisation, the prevalent organisational context and culture, market competition and technological advances have a continuous effect on what the end-user requirements are from the HR profession. The services delivered will have to be adapted continuously to meet these changes and in order to ensure that, as Ulrich (1997) proposed, HR does not merely 'do', but rather 'delivers' to its clients and adds value. One should never allow the discipline to fall into the trap of not allowing change and time to inspire and enthuse growth and excellence.

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