



COMPETENCES

A MATTER OF MATCHING

One of the most important problems in any organisation is to find the right competences to perform specific tasks. Often tasks are not adequately analysed and we have no clear view of the required competences; sometimes tasks have changed gradually over time resulting in a mismatch of available and required competences. A mismatch of competences and tasks lies at the basis of most problems that occur.

What is really required?

To find out what competences really are required we need to analyse the tasks at hand. Normally we should perform a decent process analysis to find answers to this question, but that is a time consuming activity and is not part of the scope of the Pandora-project. So we will allow ourselves some shortcuts.

1. Identify the risk

We can safely assume that this part of the job has been dealt with extensively during the previous modules.

2. Analyse the activity

A risk does not 'just occur'. It is related to a specific activity. So what is happening during that specific activity? What are people doing?

3. Analyse the actions

During an activity various actions are performed. What is required from the actors to mitigate the risks?

4. Lining up the competences

Now we know what triggers the risk, we need to employ the right competences to get things done correctly.

5. Analyse the gap

Having lined up the required competences, you will probably find that there are gaps between 'required competences' and 'available competences'.

6. Filling up the gap

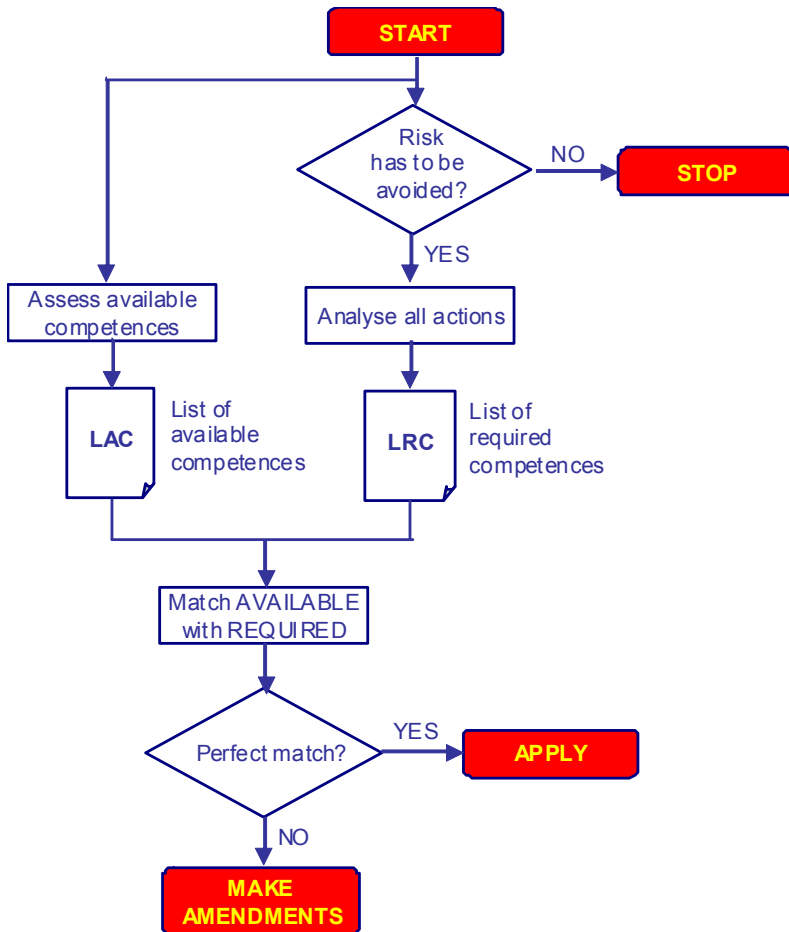
IF you have decided that the risk has to be avoided, you need to fill up the gap between available and required competences.



Not all risks are in plain sight

Finding your match

As the work changes over time, so do the requirements. But do the people change at the same time? Often they do, but there is no certainty that they will keep up with the changes in the production process. So here we have a problem. So, if you want to make sure that the right competences are available at the right spot, you need to monitor the technical development in your organisation as well as the individual development of your employees. At any time you want a good reliable match between the required competences and the competences actually offered by the employees. How do we do that?



Actually, we are facing two different types of analyses.

Analysis 1

What competences are available. You will have to make a simple inventory of the competences offered by the employees. Those competences do not only consist of what they learned at school etc. You also need to have insight in what has been learned 'on the job'.

Analysis 2

For each action that may constitute a not-acceptable risk, you need to find out what competences are required by the job to be performed safely.

Now you have to match the results of both analyses. This may result in a rather problematic situation.

In some cases the available competences will match perfectly with the required competences.

In some cases you will find that specific competences are available in such abundance that you will not be able to allocate them.

And, worst case scenario, you will find that some of the required competences are not available at all.

Speaking in terms of controls, this means:

Available competences = required competences
Some available competences you have no need for

Some required competences are dearly missed

Controls are sufficiently available.

You have controls, which cost money, for which you have no need. They tend to be a waste of capital.

Some controls you need are not available, which constitutes a serious problem.

The missing competences

We see roughly three ways to solve the problem of the missing competences:

- Adjustment of the production;
- Training
- Hiring other staff

Adjustment of the production

These options are limited. You could decide on redesigning the production process but the results are questionable. It may work in case you change equipment that helps to overcome the identified risks. But you have to consider that replacement of equipment is an expensive exercise which may lead to just other deficiencies that need consideration. It also seems a waste of money if the present equipment is regarded as 'state of the art'. But if you are using equipment which can be labelled as 'outdated' this option may turn out to be the right solution.

Outsourcing may be a solution that you have to consider.

Note:

Outsourcing may result in the loss of jobs in the company.

Training

In this field we will find numerous varieties. Some training will be offered by external organisations. In that case you don't have to invest too much in the training apart from the usual fees and the time needed to study. There is of course the disadvantage that the training content will always remain outside your company. But that does not have to be a problem, as we work in a turbulent environment the content is likely to become obsolete after some time anyway.

Larger companies may resort to their own internal classroom training activities. Experienced co-workers teach their colleagues.

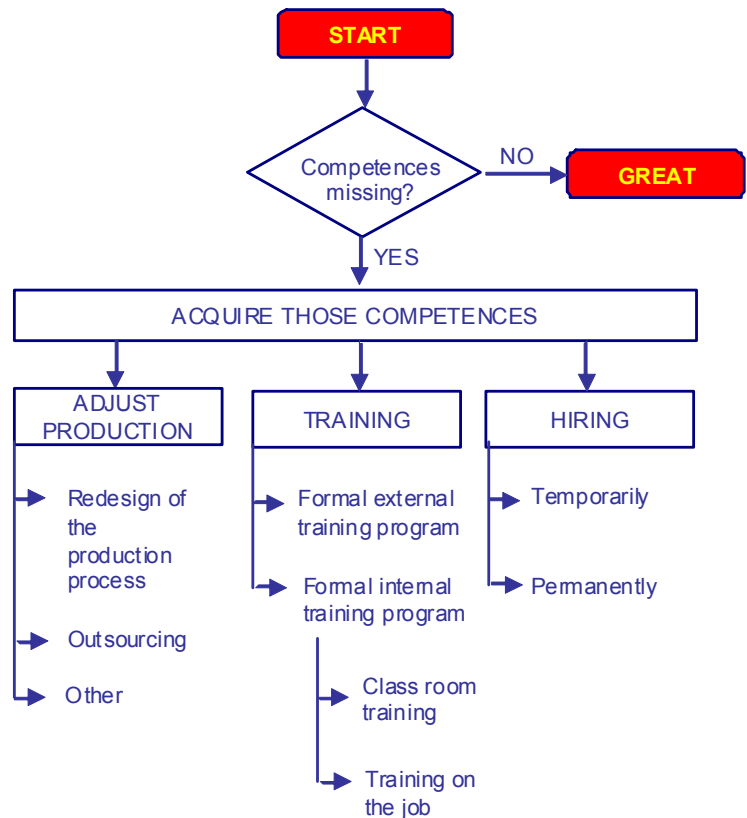
A form of training that is often seen is called training-on-the-job. Just to avoid misunderstandings: training-on-the-job is not the same as learning by trial and error. Experienced employees train their co-workers while executing the job.

Please keep in mind that all training activities require a formal registration of the results. How else could you decide on the availability of required competences later on?

Hiring

Here we see a wide range of options which, for the sake of the argument, have been reduced to temporarily or permanently hiring staff. Temporarily hiring is usually done when specialist activities are wanted for a short period. For instance: the company hires an expert to help them on their way to an ISO certificate. Once the job is done, the expert leaves.

Permanent hiring of expertise/competences usually occurs when a company starts something new. Once a company starts with office automation, it is very likely that they will start looking for a specialist who keeps the machines going. Maybe not for five days per week; but definitely for a longer period. Hiring (new) competences because the company starts something new, usually leads to an increase in staff. Hiring competences because the company finds out that she has been missing that specific competence often results in a replacement within the staff.





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Competences and motivation

Additional attention paid to competences usually increases motivation on the work floor. When people find that management pays attention to the difficulties of their task, they automatically feel appreciated. Yet, it all becomes a quite different story the moment people start fearing that they will eventually be replaced by experts from outside the company. Therefore we think it important that you primarily focus on finding solutions within the already available team.

Solutions 'from outside' are usually more expensive, so if risks can be mitigated without external threats, the better it will be for your profit and their peace of mind.



It will take several years before we know if this was a risk or an opportunity

Products you can download freely from our website

An overview of the method

The Pandora project uses part of the PARIS methodology for process management.

An outline of the training program for managers

Managers play a key-role in risk management in their organisation. Therefore we offer a training program that supports every step in this process. This outline gives you a detailed overview of the training activities.

A training program for managers

This program supports the manager to increase risk awareness in the organisation and to capitalise on the results. It offers a combination of theoretical background information, implementation strategies and practical tips.

A risk assessment card

These cards should be freely distributed in the organisation. They are considered to be an important tool for the identification and assessment of risks. These cards come with comprehensive instructions for their use.

The Pandora Risk Manager

This is a simple, stand alone software tool that helps with the assessment of risks, their primary consequences (for people, environment, assets and reputation) and the secondary consequences: money, money and money. It also helps with the comparing the costs related to the incident with the costs related to the development, implementation and maintenance of controls.

This tool comes with a detailed learning manual.

