

A close-up photograph of a hand with a black watch strap, overlaid with a white circuitry pattern. The circuitry consists of lines, nodes, and various icons such as a laptop, a thumbs up, a magnifying glass, a network diagram, and a clock. The background is a soft-focus image of a person's face.

## COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

### **ANALYSING**

**(to support problem solving & decision making)**

# HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This competency development guide is designed to take a closer look at yourself, **help you explore strengths and development opportunities** for a particular competency that is important for successful performance in a work environment, and provide practical guidance and tasks to help you develop a particular competency.

Whether you are at the start of your career, exploring opportunities for promotion within your current organisation, or in a period of career transition, this guide will to **help focus and guide your efforts**. It provides you with a **structured approach to increase your self-awareness** and to craft a personalised action plan.

## Competency

### Analysing

This competency refers to methodically evaluating, differentiating, comparing, linking and contrasting data or information to find the interrelationship; or to systematically compare alternatives to determine the source of a problem, reach a conclusion, and provide a suitable solution.

## Behaviours

- ✓ Analyses and examines information
- ✓ Spends time thinking, contemplating, reflecting
- ✓ Analyses issues from different perspectives
- ✓ Identifies key issues and relationships
- ✓ Identifies and distinguishes core issues
- ✓ Demonstrates ability to systematically work through problems
- ✓ Diagnoses problems following well-structured frameworks using appropriate knowledge, procedures and techniques
- ✓ Uses enquiry to obtain information when analysing a problem
- ✓ Applies integrative thinking by pulling together multiple strands from different perspectives
- ✓ Applies critical reasoning
- ✓ Makes sensible recommendations
- ✓ Logically and rationally analyses problems to distil information
- ✓ Draws logical conclusions after weighing all the facts

## Self-Assessment

Self-awareness is the first step in proactive career management. This process starts with a **sound assessment of your development needs**. You will benefit from acknowledging your own weaknesses so that you can actively plan for how you intend to overcome them. Use the questions below to guide your thinking and reflection.

How relevant is this competency and how does it apply to your job/role/career?

How does this competency contribute to success in your job/role/career?

	Rating Scale				
	1 – Limited (needs significant development)	2 – Basic (development area)	3 - Competent	4 - Potential Strength	5 - Clear Strength
Based on the above behaviours, what rating would you give yourself for this competency, and why? Try to identify specific practical examples for each behavioural indicator in your work environment, or even in your private life.					

Reflecting on the above examples in demonstrating this competency, what behaviours are supporting you in achieving success and which behaviours might be sabotaging your success with this competency?	

Based on a recent performance review, assessment results or other feedback you received, what observations and/or recommendations were made in relation to this competency?	

If you have not received feedback recently, it may be helpful to ask a trusted advisor for constructive feedback and ask them to clarify and elaborate on their observations. It is **important to understand and learn from their feedback to help guide your future development**, rather than to challenge it. The aim here is to learn how your behaviour is perceived by others. Remember that input from others which challenges your own self-perceptions can be extremely valuable in opening you up to new developmental opportunities that you have not previously recognized. During this discussion, consider asking the following kinds of questions:

- ✓ Can you tell me exactly what your impression is of my ability in relation to this competency?
- ✓ What is this observation based on?
- ✓ What do I do that you feel is less effective?
- ✓ Why do you feel that it was less effective?
- ✓ What do you feel I could have done instead?
- ✓ How do you feel that I could best develop my competence in this area?

## Self-Reflection

Following on your self-assessment you will now conduct further reflection to enhance your self-awareness and to establish a clear mental image of your accomplishments in relation to this competency. It serves to **identify your strengths**, to celebrate your achievements **and to give you clarity and direction about what you need to develop**.

Think of a time you had a complicated problem to solve. - Briefly outline the problem. - Describe your approach to solving it. - What was the outcome?	

Give a recent example where you had to analyse something to propose a recommendation or action plan

- What was the purpose of your analysis?
- What conclusions did you draw?
- What was the outcome?

Think of a time you had to conduct an analysis (e.g. benefit analysis, trend analysis, market analysis or financial analysis).

- Why was it necessary?
- What analytical methods did you use?
- What was the outcome?

Give an example when you had to find several solutions to a single problem to test the most viable.

- What tools did you use (e.g. brainstorming, research or trend analysis)?
- How did you find the most effective solution?
- What was the outcome?

What is the most difficult problem you had to solve in the last year?

- What made it difficult?
- What processes did you use to solve it?
- Who else did you involve?
- What was the outcome?

## Practical Development Tips and Actions

Now that you have a better idea of the specific aspects relating to this competency that may be an area of development you can **start exploring some practical tips and actions**. The majority of the recommendations in this guide are self-directed. However, if you have any questions about how any of these activities may be undertaken within the context of your work environment, **we encourage you to consult your manager, mentor or coach**.

**Tip number ①**

You must resist premature closure when analysing information. You must therefore not jump to conclusions, but rather stay open to analysing the finer nuances of problems. Challenge yourself to explore information in more depth than you normally do.

**Tip number ②**

Ask yourself what it is that you are not seeing / understanding about an issue when you accept information at face value. Find appropriate ways of involving experts / detail-driven people in your environment to help you gain a more in-depth understanding of information and problems to improve your analytical skills.

**Tip number ③**

When analysing problems, it is important for you to not only address the symptoms of problems, but to also, by means of a careful analysis of all relevant detail, focus on the root causes of problems. This will enable you to save time, make better quality decisions and will improve your ability to respond proactively and strategically to the situation. By addressing the root cause and not just the symptoms you can address problems in the longer term.

**Tip number ④**

Familiarise yourself with Edward De Bono's Six Thinking Hats. In analysing a problem, you should imagine yourself putting on each of these hats in a process to do a thorough comparative and investigative analysis of the problem. Unpack the problem using each Thinking Hat to determine the best approach to solve the problem after considering all the possible angles.

- ✓ White hat (Facts, Information, Data)
- ✓ Red Hat (Feelings, Hunches, Intuition)
- ✓ Yellow hat (Logic, Positive benefits, Value)
- ✓ Black hat (Risks, Cautions, Problems, Difficulties)
- ✓ Green hat (Ideas, Possibilities, Alternatives)
- ✓ Blue hat (Manages the thinking process, Facilitates)

**Development Activity number ①**

Think about a time when a reactive course of action was decided upon without proper analysis.

- Why did you have such a sense of urgency to respond?
- What was the quality of the decision?
- What consequences did you have to deal with?
- What impact did it have on you, others and/or the business?
- What would have been a more appropriate course of action?

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**Development Activity number ②**

In the next problem you face or analysis you need to conduct, use the 6 Thinking Hats method.

- Describe what you did.
- What was the outcome?
- What impact did it have?
- How did it make you feel?
- What was your learning?

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### Development Activity number ③

Refer to the recommended reading resources below and read the article *How to Analyse Information*.

- In the context of your current role or phase in your career, when should you conduct an in-depth analysis of the information presented to you?
- When would it be appropriate to rely on your intuition?
- What would the risk be in taking reactive decisions?

### Development Activity number ④

Using the article *The Five Whys Technique*:

- List 5 things you can do to improve how you analyse information.
- List the kind of information you need in your current role or in your current phase in your career. Consider the obstacles or problems you typically face with this and practice using the Five Whys Technique.
- Explain how this information will help you improve your ability and competence and how the technique worked for you.

## Preparation for Interviews

It can be difficult to answer a question like “what is your greatest weakness?”—especially when you expected to be discussing your strengths and what makes you better qualified or suitable for a particular role than others.

Although re-framing your weaknesses into a positive light can be challenging, in regularly conducting self-reflection and combining self-awareness with a clear plan of action, you will be able to deal with these difficult questions with ease.

The key to preparing for this question is to identify aspects that could be perceived as a weakness but could also still communicate strength. This will show the interviewer you are self-aware enough to acknowledge your weakness, know your areas of development, and appreciate the opportunities it presents too.

The following are examples of typical interview questions for this competency. Spend some time reflecting on each and make notes of specific examples to prepare for these curveball questions and ensure you can frame your weaknesses in a positive light and showcase how you are improving in each area.

Tell me about a time when you had to analyse information to provide recommendations where there were errors or inconsistencies in the information which resulted in incorrect conclusions/decisions.

- What approach did you take and why?
- What type of information (such as checklists, guideline processes etc.) did you include or exclude from the process?
- What was your reasoning behind your decision and recommendation?
- What was the outcome?
- What value did you gain from this experience?

① **Situation:**

② **Task:**

③ **Action:**

④ **Result:**

Solving a problem often require evaluation of multiple sources of information. Give me an example of a time when you were overwhelmed by the amount of information you had to analyse in order to find a solutions to a complex problem.

- What was the purpose of the analysis?
- Why was this particularly difficult or challenging to do?
- What were some of the analytical methods you have used?
- What conclusions did you draw from the analysis?
- What was the outcome?
- What would you do differently next time?

① **Situation:**

② **Task:**

③ **Action:**

④ **Result:**

## Recommended Resources

### Learning by Reading

- ✓ How to Analyse Information – Avil Beckford
- ✓ <https://theinvisiblementor.com/how-to-analyze-information>
- ✓ Six Thinking Hats – Edward de Bono
- ✓ Article: “The Five Whys technique” by Olivier Serrat, Asian Development Bank
- ✓ The Psychology of Problem Solving; (2003) by Janet E. Davidson and Robert J. Sternberg (eds); Cambridge University Press
- ✓ Decision Making & Problem Solving Strategies; (2007) by John Adair; Kogan Page –
- ✓ Instant Creativity: Simple Techniques to Ignite Innovation & Problem Solving; (2007) by Brian Clegg and Paul Birch; Kogan Page

- ✓ Problem-Solving; (2002) by Team Publications; Human Resource Development Press
- ✓ Step-by-Step Problem Solving: A Practical Guide to Ensure Problems Get (And Stay) Solved; (1993) by Richard Y. Chang and P. Keith Kelly; John Wiley & Sons
- ✓ Breakthrough Thinking: The Seven Principles of Creative Problem Solving, Second Edition; (1996) by Gerald Nadler, Ph.D. and Shozo Hibino, Ph.D.; Random House

## Learning by Watching or Listening

- ✓ Edward De Bono – Sic Thinking Hats
- ✓ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHiwpz7r4wY>

## Personal Reflections

Reflection helps create and clarify the meaning and value of your learning experiences. You have an opportunity now to review your learning and progress. This section is about turning the learning and insight into actionable steps to support your personal development goals. Answer these questions before you create your individual development action plan.

**Which of the above activities or resources did you find the most useful and why?**

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**Briefly describe what you learned that was new, insightful, and gave you new thoughts and ideas.**

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**Make a list of things you can do based on your newly acquired knowledge, insights, thoughts and ideas.**

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**Make a list of things you still need to focus on.**

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# Development Action Planning

Without a clear plan, it is difficult to track progress and measure your successes and accomplishments in relation to your career aspirations. Focus initially on your short and medium-term plan.

Consider specific work experiences, activities, actions that can be taken within the context of the current role that will enhance this competency. , relationships to leverage, other self-development strategies, including formal development solutions. Note 1) specific actions (2-3), timeline and milestones to maintain momentum and 2) concrete expected outcomes.

<b>Identify the opportunity</b>  <i>List the development opportunity that will enhance performance in your current role in relation to this competency</i>	

<b>Identify why it is important</b>  <i>State the reason why this particular development opportunity will make a difference in your career</i>	

<b>Identify what good looks like</b>  <i>State what you would like to accomplish and achieve with this competency. This should be aspirational and what you would like to achieve over the medium-term</i>	

<b>Identify learning experiences</b>  <i>List activities, assignments, and meaningful experiences that you pursue that will offer an opportunity to develop you develop, enhance, and apply this competency</i>	

<b>Identify your stakeholders</b>  <i>Identify those people in your life and relationships you can leverage to provide you with honest feedback, support, information on what is required, and help you along the way in developing this competency</i>	

**Identify training courses**

*Identify any other training courses, further relevant reading, podcasts or blogs that can provide the knowledge base that one can then apply to strengthen this competency*

**Identify support required**

*State what support you need and who you need it from in order to successfully develop and apply this competency*

**Identify support required**

*State what support you need and who you need it from in order to keep you on track, successfully develop and apply this competency*

**Identify tracking methods**

*Define your goal clearly, especially how you will know when you have achieved it and then indicate specific measures you will use to monitor and track your progress*

**Identify accountability**

*State who you can I share your goals with. Sharing your goals with someone will help you stay on track and help you stay accountable*

**Identify possible derailers**

*Consider what challenges you may face in trying to achieve your goal and define how you will manage possible setbacks to ensure sustained effort and perseverance*