



TALKING ABOUT TALENT

The continuing
importance of
competencies



The challenges in our ever-changing world of work

As the saying goes, the only constant is change.

In today's world of work this is truer than ever before, and it presents a significant challenge for organizations when managing their most important resource: **their people.**

To survive and thrive in this volatile climate it is more important than ever to get the right people with the right skills into the right roles. Talent Management professionals have a key role to play to ensure both the current and future success of the organization.

And yet when talent managers survey the landscape of thought pieces, models and tools around helping talent thrive, it is more confused than ever.

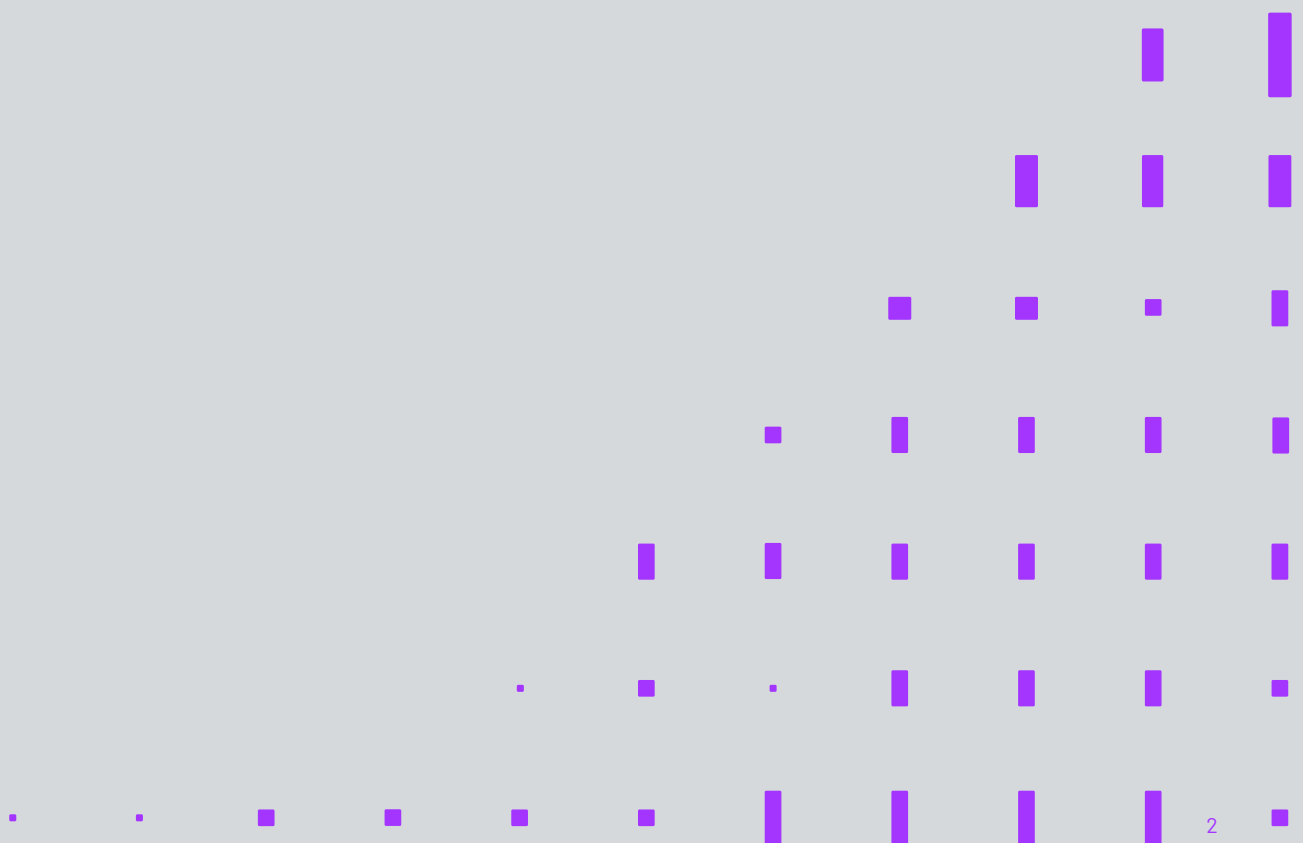
Talking about talent is, at times, a polarizing subject.

There are those shouting about the future of work, the need for digital skills and an agile workforce. It's out with the old and in with the new. Embrace the future because it's here now. Get on board or get left behind.

Meanwhile, the discussion around evidence-based practice continues to be of critical importance. There are plenty of theories about what the future will look like, but it remains unknowable and uncertain. The skills being promoted as critical for tomorrow's workforce aren't necessarily new, and research is steadily investigating whether their increased attention is warranted and supported by data.

And other voices in the mix are reminding us about the people in the middle, the applicants and employees, whose lives are affected by decisions made about their potential to perform. Whatever approach to understanding talent is ultimately adopted, it must be managed fairly, person-centered, and ultimately rewarding – whatever the outcome – to the individuals involved.

It is no wonder then that many organizations struggle with their people strategy. Trying to get a workforce in place which is effective right now and also future-ready is hard enough without the confusion of how it should best be done.



The key to a **future-ready** talent strategy

Creating a future-focused talent strategy sounds a daunting task, but the fundamental focus areas are not new. Organizations need to:

- screen and select the right people to maximize productivity and profitability
- develop and engage people to meet their potential and drive organic growth
- optimize the talent pipeline and build leadership capability to overcome future challenges.

In short, organizations still need to understand what makes people successful and be able to find this out quickly and accurately. To do that, there needs to be a clear and meaningful way of talking about talent across the employee lifecycle: by adopting the language of Competencies.

Talking about talent is, and will continue to be, best done in the form of Competencies.

Competencies refer to groups of specific and related behaviors which are observable and important for people to perform successfully in their role. Work outputs and results tell you what people need to deliver in a role to be successful; competencies describe how they can do this.

They are influenced by underlying characteristics of an individual such as their personality, ability, motivation, values, knowledge and skills. While these can be considered individually, they come together in the behavior we observe and classify in competencies.



Competencies provide the building blocks of talent measurement that can be used across the employee lifecycle in different contexts: recruitment, selection, performance management, development, career progression, and talent analytics.

Competencies tend to be organized into a framework which provides context and meaning, as well as links between competencies.

Some thought leaders refer to other ways of organizing behavior into a meaningful framework, such as using strengths, skills or capabilities. While these may appear different and distinct from competencies, when they are done well, they tend to have a lot more in common with competency models than the terms would suggest.

Effective use of competencies in talent management ultimately boils down to understanding:

- what behaviors are important for successful performance now
- what behaviors are likely to be important in future
- what behaviors an individual is likely and willing to demonstrate, or is currently demonstrating, in the role
- how these behaviors cluster together and relate to one another, to make identifying trends and making predictions easier.

Competencies therefore continue to be the most effective methodology for grouping key work-related behaviors for use in talent management.



Three essential criteria for an effective competency framework **for today and for tomorrow**

Understanding the pattern of performance for an individual across key competencies is like unlocking their 'talent fingerprint'. When done well, competencies provide clear, actionable insights into current performance levels and guide ongoing development.

A successful competency framework will go through many stages of development and validation to ensure it is both fit for purpose and provides meaningful and usable talent insights to the organization across the employee lifecycle.

Sadly, some organizations find out too late when their framework does not meet their needs, leading to ill-informed talent decisions. This can then quickly lead to skepticism amongst users of the framework, reducing adoption and driving less effective approaches.

Three common reasons why a competency framework will fail are:

1

Not clear or comprehensive

Poorly defined competencies that conceptually overlap or cause confusion make goal setting extremely challenging, as people don't know what is expected of them or get confused between different competencies. Similarly, competency frameworks which are too narrow in focus and don't reflect the full scope of a role will fail to drive successful performance in certain key areas of the role.

2

Not scientifically based or meaningful

Not being data-driven and evidence-based can ultimately lead to focusing on the wrong behaviors and overlooking what actually drives potential and underpins performance. If behaviors are not observable or are not relevant, they are unhelpful for reaching fair and objective conclusions about current or future performance.

3

Not future focused

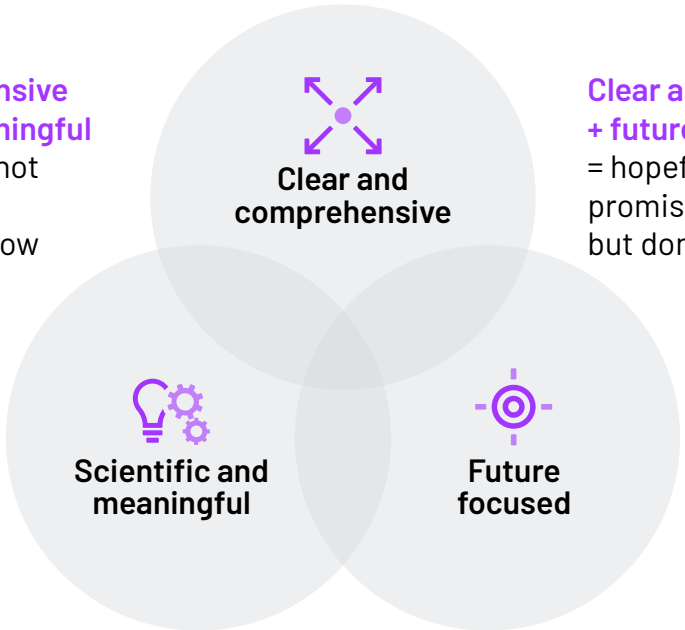
It is important that organizational competency frameworks capture what is key for success now as well as what is likely to be required in the near future. A competency framework that doesn't factor in the new and innovative ways that people perform key tasks at work, particularly those enabled by technology, will eventually become obsolete.

Failing to apply these key principles in a competency framework will result in sub-optimal talent management outcomes. It could result in hiring someone who isn't a good fit for the role or the organization, or overlooking someone in a talent pool with higher potential. It could lead to a breakdown of trust between management and employees who feel misunderstood and unrecognized.

For a competency framework to identify talent fairly and objectively, and effectively facilitate growth and development in key areas that underpin success at the individual, team and organizational level, it must be clear and comprehensive, scientific and meaningful and future focused.

**Clear and comprehensive
+ scientific and meaningful**

= good for today but not
preparing you for the
challenges of tomorrow



**Clear and
comprehensive**

**Clear and comprehensive
+ future focused**

= hopeful but hollow
promises which sound good
but don't bring results


**Scientific and
meaningful**


**Future
focused**

**Scientific and meaningful
+ future focused**

= ideas and methods that
work in theory but not
in practice

**Clear and comprehensive
+ scientific and meaningful
+ future focused**

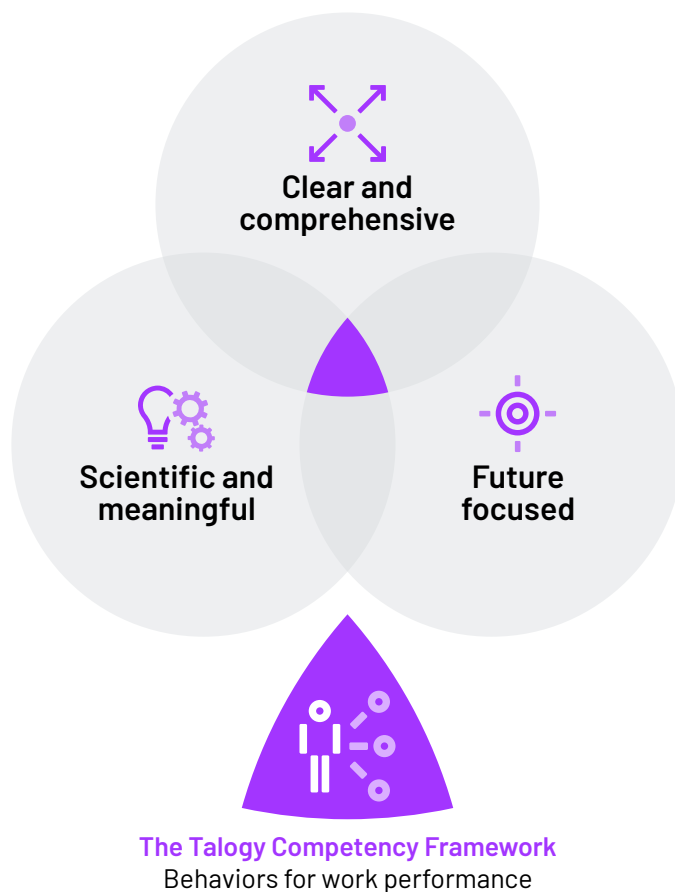
= makes talking about talent simple and
effective today as well as preparing you
to meet the challenges of tomorrow, to
effectively drive individual, team and
organizational success.

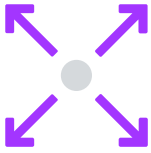
**Using a competency framework which applies these
three key principles will help an organization to
deliver effective and sustainable talent management.**

Introducing the Talogy Competency Framework

The Talogy Competency Framework is a brand new, holistic competency framework, developed by Talogy's team of I/O Psychologists, Data Scientists, and HR Consultants to support organizations around the world to achieve success with their talent management activities through measuring behaviors for work performance. It brings together decades of experience with the latest scientific theories and expertise to create an industry leading competency framework. The result is a competency framework which will meet the talent management needs of organizations both today and into the future.

Throughout the design and development of the Talogy Competency Framework, checks and reviews were done by leading psychologists worldwide to ensure that it remained clear and consistent, scientific and meaningful and future focused.





Clear and comprehensive

The Talogy Competency Framework is practical and easy to apply. It is comprehensive and covers all job roles, levels and contexts with globally relevant, configurable and customizable competencies within a clear hierarchical structure. Each competency is clearly linked to practical applications across the Talogy assessment portfolio.



Scientific and meaningful

The Talogy Competency Framework includes fundamental and differentiating competencies that have been consistently supported in research and practice. It covers major domains of work performance and links to major established and credible models of work behavior and personality, such as the Big 5, HEXACO and the Great 8.



Future focused

The Talogy Competency Framework is future focused, covering many of the more reputable future of work skills and behaviors, such as those published by the World Economic Forum. Given the future is always uncertain, it also captures key foundational competencies that will help individuals be agile in response to whatever demands occur in future.



The design and background of the Talogy Competency Framework

Structure and Content

The Talogy Competency Framework covers three major domains of work performance: **Connecting**, **Transforming**, and **Achieving**.

Each domain of work performance is divided into two clusters, which are further broken down into 44 competencies. The full structure and list is shown below:



Connecting	
Relating & Collaborating	Communicating & Influencing
Building Relationships ■ Concern for Others ■ Embracing Diversity ■ Teamwork ■ Integrity ■ Customer Focus	Communication ■ Demonstrating Confidence ■ Influencing ■ Negotiating ■ Organizational Agility

Communicating ideas, gaining support and working productively with people.



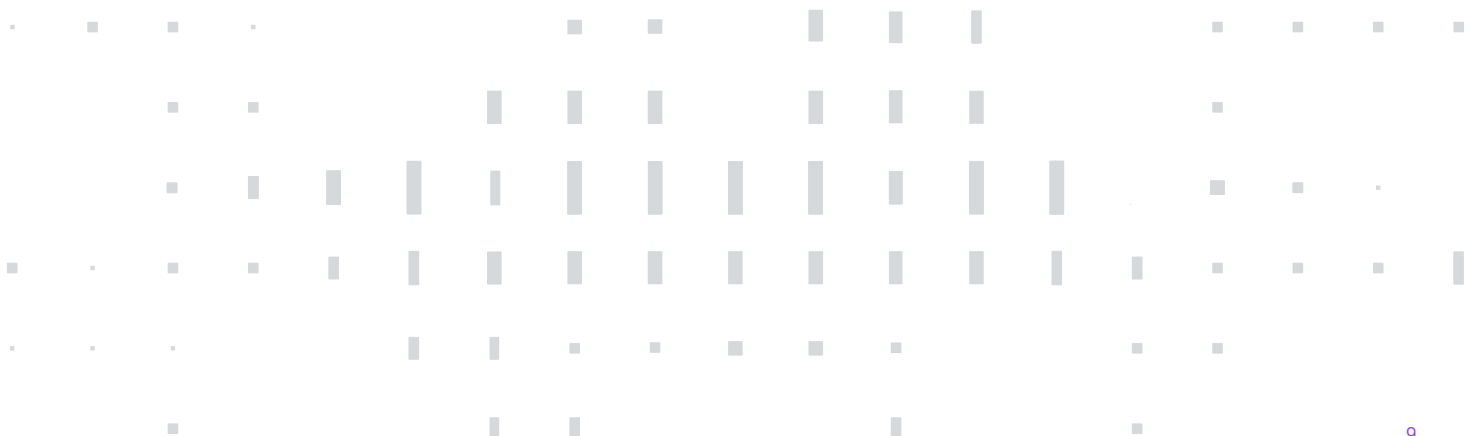
Transforming	
Leading & Inspiring	Analyzing & Exploring
Directing & Guiding ■ Delegating & Empowering ■ Motivating & Engaging ■ Coaching & Developing ■ Building Teams ■ Courage ■ Leading Change ■ Managing Conflict	Breadth of Perspective ■ Creativity & Innovation ■ Strategic Thinking ■ Business Sense ■ Critical Thinking ■ Problem Solving ■ Judgment ■ Decisiveness ■ Learning Agility

Creating change, making decisions and providing inspirational leadership.



Achieving	
Delivering & Executing	Adapting & Developing
Accountability ■ Initiating Action ■ Prioritizing & Planning ■ Organizational Commitment ■ Drive for Results ■ Digital Dexterity ■ Quality Focus ■ Compliance ■ Safety Focus	Change Orientation ■ Composure ■ Self-Awareness ■ Adaptability ■ Resilience ■ Self-Sufficiency ■ Personal Development

Delivering results, overcoming obstacles and adjusting to change.



Each competency is well defined with unambiguous language referring to objective and observable behaviors. To further aid clarity in use and interpretation, example behaviors are also provided for each competency.

The result is a comprehensive and flexible framework that covers the major underpinnings of successful performance and which is also easy to navigate and use in day to day applied practice both today and into the future.

Scientific background

Development of the framework drew on established best practice thinking about competency modeling.¹

The hierarchical structure of the framework has been mapped to established scientific constructs about individual characteristics at work:

- The Big Five personality dimensions – Emotional Stability, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Openness/Intellect²
- Cognitive ability (g)
- Personality meta-traits – Stability and Plasticity³
- More specific Big Five facets⁴
- The alternative HEXACO model of personality⁵
- The Great Eight Competencies⁶
- Future of Work Top 10 Skills for 2025⁷

Development and validation

The Talogy Competency Framework underwent a thorough development and validation process.

The development was led by a team of organizational psychologists with substantial experience in competency models, with input from a range of global experts. The whole process took over two years from conception to completion, and consisted of the following major stages:



1. e.g. Campion, Fink, Ruggeberg, Carr, Phillips & Odman, 2011; Shippmann, Ash, Battista, Carr, Eyde, Hesketh, Kehoe, Pearlman & Sanchez, 2000).
2. e.g. Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1993.
3. DeYoung, Peterson & Higgins, 2002.

4. DeYoung, Quilty, Lena and Peterson, 2007.
5. Ashton & Lee, 2018.
6. Bartram, 2005.
7. World Economic Forum, 2020.

1

Scoping

At the outset, the overall objectives for the framework were defined and specified our design methodology. Our approach was shared and verified with Talogy's Scientific Advisory Board, a group of leading independent academic experts in Industrial-Organizational Psychology.

2

Consolidation

Established competency libraries from across six consultancies acquired by Talogy were reviewed and consolidated. Numerous competency frameworks from leading organizations that Talogy has worked with around the world were also reviewed and incorporated. Related competencies were grouped together into themes based on a thorough content analysis.

3

Validation

The existing competency themes were verified in scope and market relevance against latest research and other publicly available competency frameworks. Possible new or emerging themes that should be added or given additional emphasis were identified based on sources such as World Economic Forum (WEF) Future of Work competencies. The framework accordingly emphasizes forward-looking themes such as Learning Agility, Digital Dexterity, Embracing Diversity, Creativity and Innovation, and Critical Thinking.

4

Content creation

The identified themes were then formalized into competencies. Definitions and behavioral indicators were written, drawing on existing, proven content while also ensuring they reflected the modern workplace and were relevant globally. Considerable effort was also spent at this stage to ensure competencies were sufficiently differentiated from each other.

At this stage the Framework Structure was also created. The competencies were grouped into a logical, easy to understand hierarchical structure, which is linked to well-established scientific research and theories about competencies and personality traits.

5

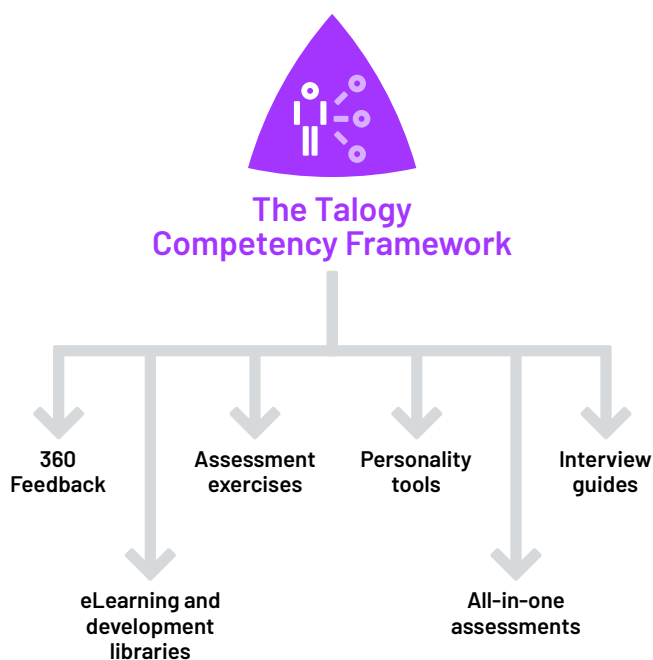
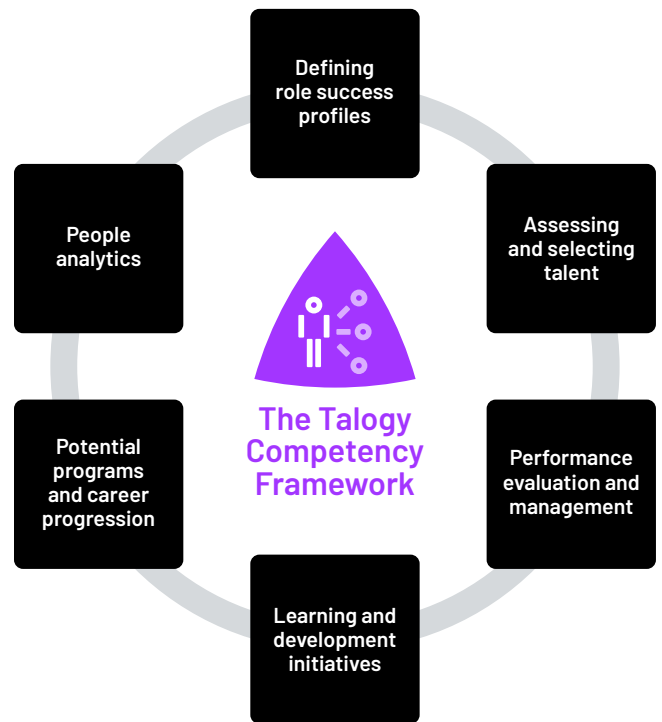
Globalization

To ensure global relevance and remove possible issues of cultural bias not already identified, a wider review of the competency names, definitions and behavioral indicators was conducted with experts from 11 international locations (China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Malaysia, Netherlands, Sweden, UAE, USA and UK). Many subtle and significant revisions were made to ensure the final list of competencies are ready to be used around the world.

The Talogy Competency Framework in practice

The robust and future-proof Talogy Competency Framework provides a common language and solid foundation for key talent management activities. Using it, organizations can define, measure and interpret the critical behaviors for successful performance in different roles and apply these to support their key talent selection and development processes.

The framework can be applied to Talent Management activities throughout the employee lifecycle:



The framework is the common denominator for Talogy's globally recognized range of psychometric assessments, which can all be connected to the same underpinning competencies for a truly holistic, and comprehensive picture of someone's competency potential using multiple methods of assessment.

Talk the language of talent in your organization: Learn more about the Talogy Competency Framework

The Talogy Competency Framework truly provides a common language for talking about talent today and tomorrow. It leads the way in talent assessment throughout the employee lifecycle, bringing consistency to pre-hire and post-hire processes. It supports individuals with their personal and professional growth as well as organizations with improved productivity and profitability through the current challenging and uncertain times and beyond into the future.

Visit the Talogy website and get in touch to learn about our Client Success Stories and find out more about our market leading assessments which support you in making data-driven talent decisions.



