

ANALYSIS OF PEOPLE MANAGEMENT BY COMPETENCIES AND ITS IMPACTS ON OPERATIONAL PROCESSES: A CASE STUDY IN A GAS STATION NETWORK



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ABSTRACT

This article explores the crucial role of competency-based people management in modern organizations, highlighting how this approach directly impacts organizational performance and financial results. The research was carried out in a network of gas stations based in Goiânia/GO, covering five Brazilian states. The study shows how the inadequate selection of professional profiles can compromise the efficiency of processes, generating high costs and high turnover. Tools such as the PDCA cycle and the Pareto Chart were used to identify failures and propose improvements in the people management process, demonstrating that the correct implementation of a competency-based model promotes significant gains in efficiency, reduction of errors and continuous improvement.

Keywords: People management, Competencies, Training, PDCA Cycle, Pareto Diagram.

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INTRODUCTION

Growing global competitiveness imposes significant challenges on organizations, requiring them to implement robust people management practices that align employees' skills with strategic business objectives. In this context, competency-based people management is not limited to hiring and firing employees, but involves a continuous process of developing and adjusting the skills necessary to ensure that organizational goals are achieved efficiently.

According to Chiavenato (2014, p. 85), "people are the greatest asset of organizations, and their proper management is a determining factor for organizational success". Thus, competency-based management is a strategic tool that aims to develop employees' technical and behavioral skills, allowing organizational processes to flow more effectively. In addition, as Fleury and Fleury (2001) point out, "organizational competence is built from the combination of individual competencies, which must be aligned with the company's long-term objectives".

The present research uses a network of gas stations as a case study, focusing on the billing department, which suffered from problems related to poor people management. The study demonstrates how the application of continuous improvement methodologies, such as the PDCA cycle, can reverse these negative impacts, providing measurable and sustainable results.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In recent years, people management has undergone a profound transformation, becoming an essential component of organizational strategy. For Dutra (2012), competency management is "a systemic approach that connects human development to business strategy, maximizing the organization's intellectual capital". This view is corroborated by Oliveira (2014), who highlights the importance of the correct allocation of human resources as a key to productivity and innovation in organizations.

In addition, as Chiavenato (2014) and Marras (2011) point out, the lack of alignment between the skills required by the market and those available in employees can lead to high turnover costs and a drop in productivity. These authors emphasize that, in a scenario of increasing complexity, the efficient management of human capital becomes an indispensable competitive advantage.

Management by competencies is defined by Le Boterf (1995) as "the ability to mobilize knowledge, skills and attitudes in concrete work situations, allowing the employee to act effectively in complex and dynamic environments". In this sense, simple technical qualification does not guarantee the success of an employee, and it is necessary that he knows how to apply such skills in a strategic and practical way.

When analyzing the integration between human development and organizational strategy, they argue that "competency-based management should be seen as a dynamic process, adaptable to changes in the market and the company's internal demands". Thus, the application of this methodology provides a virtuous cycle of development, aligning the growth of employees with strategic business objectives. Fleury and Fleury (2001),

In the case study addressed, the absence of effective competency management directly impacted the billing department, generating inconsistencies that, ultimately, harmed the organization's financial performance. As observed by Limongi (2005), "the correct management of competencies not only corrects failures, but also enhances results, adding value to the production process".

MANAGEMENT TOOLS: PDCA AND PARETO CHART

The PDCA cycle, widely described by Paladini (2012) as "a systematic and continuous approach to problem solving", was applied in this study to structure the training and skills development process in the billing department. PDCA allowed not only the correction of failures, but also the continuous monitoring of the implemented improvements, resulting in a cycle of organizational improvement.

At the same time, the Pareto Diagram revealed that most of the problems were concentrated in a small portion of collaborators, which corroborated the 80/20 principle described by Pareto (1906). The application of this tool directed training and development efforts to the most critical points, optimizing the resources invested and maximizing results.

For Chiavenato (2014, p. 102), "the continuous training of employees is the key to adaptation and innovation in an ever-changing market". Training, in this sense, is an essential investment to ensure that employees are able to deal with daily challenges and use their skills effectively. Marras (2011) complements this view by stating that "people management should be an integrated and continuous process, aiming not only at the development of technical skills, but also behavioral and leadership skills".

The network of gas stations studied demonstrated significant flaws in the training process, resulting in recurrent operational errors. The implementation of a continuous training plan, aligned with the PDCA cycle, was essential for correcting these problems and optimizing processes.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed methodological approach, combining bibliographic research and case study in a network of gas stations present in five Brazilian states, with corporate headquarters in Goiânia/GO. This methodological choice aims to provide a comprehensive analysis, uniting the theoretical foundation with the empirical investigation on the application of people management by competencies and its implications on organizational performance.

The research was exploratory and descriptive in nature. Gil (2008) points out that the main objective of exploratory research is to offer greater familiarity with the problem, making it more explicit and building initial hypotheses. Thus, the exploration of the concept of competency-based management and its practical implementation in the organizational environment was essential to understand the impact of poor people management on business results.

On the other hand, the descriptive aspect sought to accurately map the consequences of the absence of effective people management, including the impacts on the billing department of the gas station network. As defined by Lakatos and Marconi (2003, p. 106), "descriptive research is concerned with observing, recording and analyzing facts and phenomena without manipulating them, aiming to describe characteristics of a given population or phenomenon".

The case study was chosen as a research strategy because it is an appropriate approach to examine phenomena in depth in their real context. Yin (2015) argues that "the case study is the best strategy when one intends to investigate contemporary phenomena within their context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly defined".

The work was conducted in a network of gas stations with operations in several locations, allowing us to observe how management by competencies or the lack thereof impacts operational efficiency and productivity. The focus was directed to the billing

department, due to the criticality of its processes for the operation of the company as a whole.

Data collection was carried out in two stages, the first consisted of a literature review on people management by competencies. To this end, books and scientific articles by recognized authors in the area, such as Chiavenato (2014), Dutra (2012) and Fleury and Fleury (2001), as well as recent publications on the use of management tools, such as the PDCA cycle and the Pareto Diagram, were consulted. The bibliographic research provided the necessary theoretical support for the analysis and interpretation of the data collected in the case study.

In the second stage, a direct observation was carried out in the company's billing department, for a period of 15 days. During this time, operational processes were monitored in real time, with the aim of identifying the main failures related to people management and how these deficiencies affected the organization's performance. The information collected included the survey of operational errors, the analysis of employee turnover and the lack of adequate training.

DATA ANALYSIS

For the analysis of the collected data, widely recognized management tools were used, such as the SWOT Analysis and the 5W2H Action Plan, with the objective of structuring and proposing practical solutions to the problems identified. was used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the company's billing department. The SWOT analysis made it possible to map the operational deficiencies and the points that needed to be improved, especially with regard to the training of employees and the correction of failures in the entry of data.

The 5W2H Action Plan was the tool applied to detail the steps necessary to correct the problems detected. The action plan defined the measures to be taken, specifying what would be done, why, where, when, who would be responsible, how it would be executed and what would be the cost involved, as recommended by Oliveira (2014).

The practical implementation of the PDCA Cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) was essential to plan and execute the training and skills development actions of employees. PDCA was used to ensure that improvements were applied continuously, enabling necessary adjustments throughout the process.

At the same time, the Pareto Chart allowed the identification of the main causes of errors in the billing department. This tool, based on the 80/20 principle, showed that most of the problems were caused by a small group of employees. Based on this diagnosis, efforts were directed to the specific training of these professionals, resulting in the reduction of errors and the improvement of the department's performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the limitations of the study, the fact that the research was conducted in a single network of gas stations stands out, which may limit the generalization of the results to other companies or sectors. In addition, the analysis focused on the billing department, failing to consider other sectors of the company that could also face challenges related to people management by competencies.

The results obtained demonstrate that the application of people management tools by competencies positively impacts the efficiency of processes, especially in large companies, with the network of gas stations analyzed. As observed by Marras (2011), continuous training not only improves employee performance, but also decreases turnover and new hire costs.

The SWOT analysis revealed that the main weaknesses of the organization were related to the lack of adequate training and qualifications. The implementation of the 5W2H action plan and the PDCA cycle brought significant improvements in employee performance, which directly reflected on the financial results and efficiency of the billing department.

The Pareto Chart highlighted that most operational errors were concentrated in a small group of employees. Based on this, specific training efforts were directed to these professionals, resulting in a considerable reduction in errors and an improvement in the quality of the services provided by the company.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

People management by competencies proved to be a crucial strategic tool for organizational success, especially in large companies that operate in several locations and depend on integrated processes, as is the case of the gas station network analyzed. As **Marras (2011)** points out, people management is no longer just an administrative function

to become an essential component of the strategic planning of organizations, aiming to align human capital with the company's objectives.

The present study showed that the absence of effective competence management can generate serious operational problems, such as failures in data entry and inconsistencies in financial reports, which directly affects decision-making and the organization's competitiveness.

The adoption of management tools such as SWOT Analysis, the 5W2H Action Plan, the PDCA Cycle and the Pareto Diagram was essential to identify the main causes of problems in the billing process and propose corrective actions. According to **Oliveira (2014)**, the use of analysis and diagnostic tools allows not only the correction of immediate problems, but also the creation of an environment of continuous improvement, ensuring that the organization is always adjusting its processes to achieve greater efficiency and quality.

The **Pareto Chart** revealed that most errors were concentrated in a small group of employees who had not received adequate training, highlighting the importance of a continuous and structured training policy. In addition, the **PDCA Cycle** provided a solid basis for the implementation of a continuous improvement process, with constant adjustments and monitoring of results, as recommended by **Oliveira (2014)** and supported by **Limongi (2005)**, which reinforces the importance of active people management to ensure that human capital is in constant development.

The results of this study show that competency management, when combined with effective management tools, can bring significant benefits to companies, both in terms of operational efficiency and in terms of reducing costs and increasing productivity.

Marras (2011) argues that continuous employee training not only improves performance, but also decreases employee turnover, strengthening talent retention and creating a more stable and productive work environment. **Limongi (2005)** also reinforces that, by creating a favorable environment for the development of employees' skills, organizations are able to ensure that individual and collective performance is aligned with their strategic objectives.

While the results are positive, it is important to consider the limitations of this study, which was conducted in a specific context and in a single organization. The tools and methodologies applied, however, can serve as a basis for future research or for implementation in other companies facing similar challenges. As **Oliveira (2014)** and

Limongi (2005) point out, the adoption of well-structured management practices is a determining factor for the success and longevity of organizations.

Finally, this study reaffirms the importance of an integrated approach in people management, where the alignment of employees' skills with the company's strategic objectives is continuously monitored and adjusted. The success of an organization, as suggested by **Marras (2011)**, **Oliveira (2014)** and **Limongi (2005)**, depends directly on its ability to manage its human capital in an effective, strategic and constantly improving way.

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