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Competencies for the HR Professional

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Today's Content

- Define competencies
- Discuss the importance of competencies for HR professionals
- Review HR competency models from SHRM, Gartner, McLean & Co, and Dave Ulrich
- Preview how to use HR competencies to link HR's work to business strategy and measurable outcomes





What are competencies?

Competencies are the knowledge, skills, abilities, attributes and behaviors that drive individual and organizational success.

Discussion Question

Why are competencies important?



Importance of competencies for HR

1. Ensure Consistent, High-Quality HR Practices

Competencies establish clear standards for how HR work should be done — from hiring and training to employee relations and compliance. This consistency helps ensure fairness, professionalism, and alignment with organizational values.

2. Drive Strategic Contribution

Modern HR isn't just administrative — it's strategic. Competencies like business acumen, data-driven decision-making, and consulting skills enable HR professionals to partner with leadership, influence organizational direction, and improve business outcomes.

3. Build Credibility and Trust

Strong competencies in ethics, communication, and relationship management help HR professionals build trust with employees and executives alike. Credibility is essential for HR to function as a trusted advisor rather than a transactional function.

Importance of competencies for HR

4. Support Professional Development

Competency frameworks give HR professionals a roadmap for career growth. They help identify strengths, pinpoint skill gaps, and guide training, mentoring, and certification efforts.

5. Improve Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

Competencies like critical evaluation, consultation, and leadership enable HR professionals to make data-informed, equitable, and legally sound decisions — essential for mitigating risk and maintaining compliance.

6. Enhance Organizational Performance

When HR professionals demonstrate strong competencies, they help attract, develop, and retain talent more effectively. This creates a more engaged, productive, and adaptable workforce — directly impacting organizational success.



HR Competency Models

A review of research-backed, trusted models

SHRM

- As the trusted authority on all things work, SHRM is the foremost expert, researcher, advocate, and thought leader on issues and innovations impacting today's evolving workplaces.
- With nearly 340,000 members in 180 countries, SHRM touches the lives of more than 362 million workers and their families globally.



SHRM 2025 HR Competency Model



Discussion Question

Which SHRM competency most resonated with you...and why?



Gartner

- We deliver actionable, objective business and technology insights. Our expert guidance and tools enable faster, smarter decisions and stronger performance on an organization's mission-critical priorities.
- Research and advisory services for the C-Suite



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HR Professionals Competency Model

Business acumen

- Industry knowledge
- Organizational knowledge
- Financial knowledge



Data judgment

- Data foundations
- Data interpretation
- Data storytelling



Strategic consulting

- Consultative problem solving
- Project management
- Risk management



Talent management

- Strategic HR expertise
- Employee experience management
- Change management
- Technological savviness



Relationship management

- Collaboration and networking
- Persuasion and influence



Agility

- Growth mindset
- Innovation and iteration



Discussion Question

How does your HR function display digital capability?



McLean & Company

- McLean & Company is the trusted partner of HR and leadership professionals around the world.
- Our memberships are designed to provide what you need to drive the organization forward – from full-service assessments to practical action plans, impactful training, and more.



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McLean & Company HR Competency Framework



McLean & Company HR Sub-Competencies

Program Planning and Development
Needs Analysis
Conflict Management
Facilitation
Managing Through Change and Uncertainty
Customer Focus
Dynamic Learning Mindset
Branding and Marketing
Technology Enablement
Influence
Relationship Building

Business and Financial Acumen
Data Literacy
Organizational Awareness
Communication
Inclusion
Problem Solving and Decision Making
Coaching
Project Management
Technical HR Expertise

Discussion Question

Strategic Contribution +
HR Expertise +
Business Knowledge +
Personal Credibility = ?

*share a one or two-word answer



Dave Ulrich

- David Ulrich is a university professor, author, speaker, management coach, and management consultant. He is a professor of business at the Ross School of Business, University of Michigan and co-founder of The RBL Group.
- The Father of Modern HR

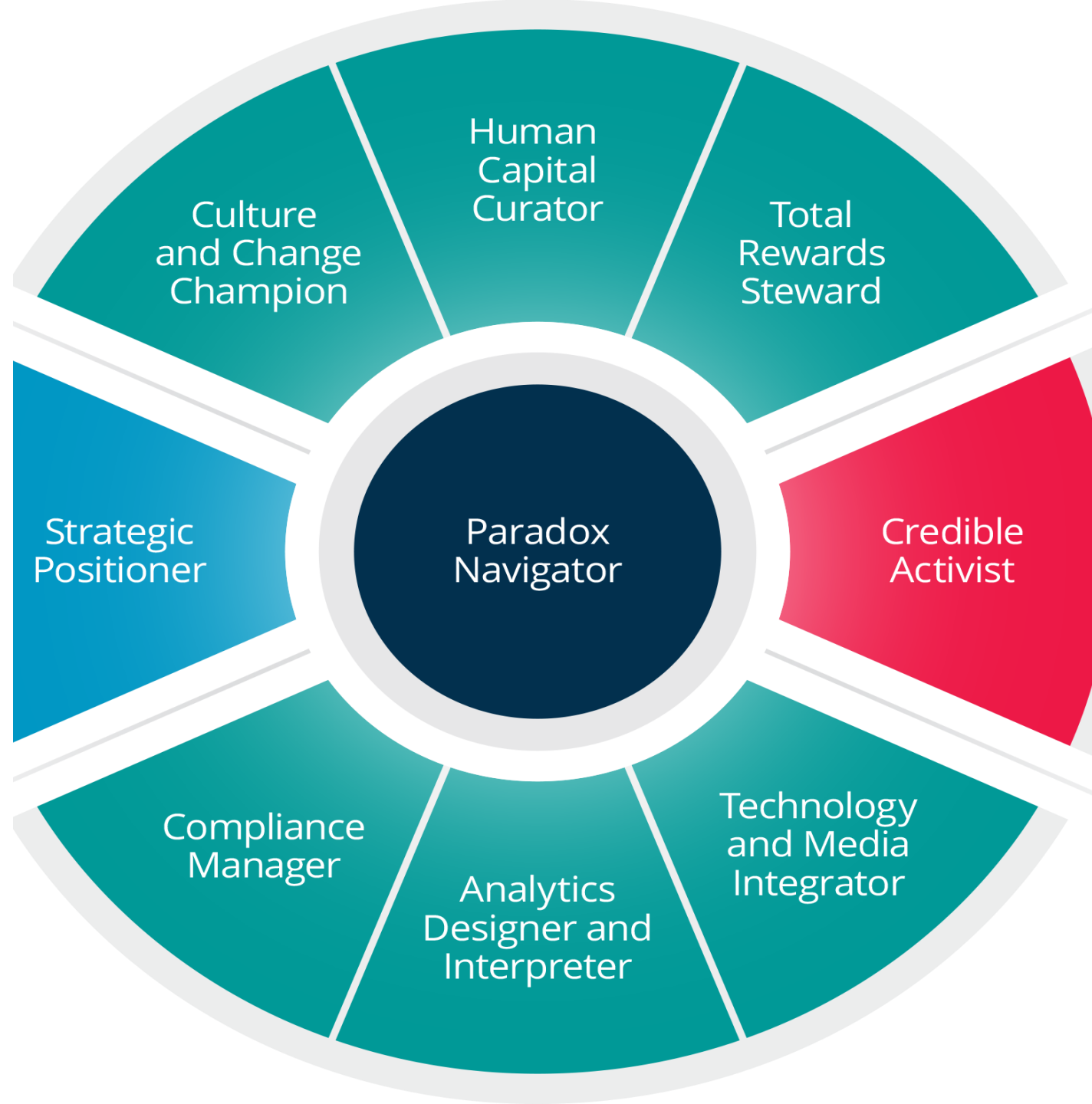


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Dave Ulrich HR Competency Model

At the core of the model lies the **Paradox Navigator**, a competency that enables HR professionals to manage and balance competing demands and tensions inherent in organizations.

This includes navigating between short-term and long-term goals, individual and organizational needs, and stability and change.



Comparative View

Overlapping Competencies Across Models

Competency Theme	SHRM	Gartner	McLean & Co	Ulrich
Strategic Alignment	✓	✓	✓	✓
Credibility & Influence	✓	✓	✓	✓
Change Leadership	✓	✓		✓
Data & Analytics	✓	✓		
Digital/Technology Integration	✓	✓		
Compliance & Ethics	✓			

Embed Competencies into HR Practices (HR Domains)

Talent Acquisition



Recruitment,
selection and
employer
branding

Performance Management



Annual
evaluations
and periodic
check-ins

Learning & Development



Onboarding,
L&D strategy
and
compliance
training

Culture



Engagement,
wellbeing and
belonging

Embed Competencies into HR Practices (HR Domains)

Talent Management



Talent review,
succession
planning and
workforce
management

HR Tech & Analytics



Dashboards,
HR Ops and
data-based
decision
making

Organizational Effectiveness



Organizational
design, change
management
and HR
strategy

Total Rewards



Compensation
strategy,
benefit design
and
recognition

Discussion Question

Which HR competency model feels right for your organization?



Build Your Own HR Competency Model



References

- SHRM HR Competency Model (shrm.org)
- Gartner HR Professionals Competency Model (gartner.com/en)
- McLean & Company HR Competency Framework (hr.mcleanco.com)
- Dave Ulrich's HR Competency Model (rbl.net)



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