Hong Kong Competency Set for Management Consultants (CMC) 2003

Competencies listed below are in descending order of priority as suggested by respondents in the study, so are the behaviours expected to be exhibited under each competency.

Technical/Job Competencies

1. *Analysing the Problem Situation*

    The management consultants who can analyse the problem situation are expected to be able to exhibit these types of behaviours:

    - Identify the root causes of a management problem, separating symptoms from the roots.

    - Obtain information and critical data from clients and others from face to face discussions and conversations without offending, using robust information gathering tools.

    - Help the clients recognise the problems.

    - Analyse a situation or problem by breaking down into its constituent parts and reassembling them to achieve improved performance.

    - Structure the major tasks to be undertaken to deal with the management problems.

    - Use the right diagnostic tools to determine the current position of your client, linking improvement interventions to client's problems.

    - Possess a proactive in solving messy problems.

    - Be familiar with the industry and speaks the language of the industry.

    - Formulate and find pattern.

2. *Planning the Approach/Methodology*

    To plan effective approaches/methodologies, the consultant needs to be able to:

    - Scope out the problem and formulate a realistic course of action with tools and models to solve problems, with principles defined.

    - Set realistic plan with agreed timelines and consideration for reaction.

    - Get the clients' buy-in for any changes to the work plan,

    - Put together persuasive proposals and project reports to clients, in logical sequence, with no grammatical mistakes.

    - Build and maintain cohesive team spirit (even with subcontractors) for achieving team results throughout a project.

    - Provide critical evaluation of members without undermining team spirit.

    - Use established and new methodology in conducting one's project.

3. *Possessing Relevant Interpersonal Skills*

Having relevant interpersonal skills enables the consultants to be able to:

- Handle conflict situations in a positive way and sustain a good relation with people.

- Get message across to clients clearly and concisely in the local language.

- Build on the initial rapport created with the clients to produce a professional working relationship throughout the term of the assignment.

- Show patience when dealing with the clients and clients' staff.

- Build a network of connections and relationships outside of the consulting firm.

- Do not panic under prolonged pressure.

- Be Critical but non-judgmental.

- Get message across to clients with the effective use of body language.

4. *Managing the Project*

To effectively manage a project, the consultants need to be able to:

- Identify key individuals and organisations likely to be useful for establishing a relationship and remaining sensitive to the power pyramid and network.

- Understand the requirements of ethical consulting and abide by the Codes of Professional Conduct.

- Keep the project to its time schedule.

- Manage clients' expectations according to the agreed intervention plans.

- Identify and manage risks over the course of the project.

- Ensure all the assignments' objectives have been met in full.

- Market and sell consultancy service through contractual arrangement, approach new clients and develop mutual understanding with a potential clients, and work out an appropriate level of intervention.

- Explain, establish and monitor the systems, processes and methods necessary for completion.

- Successfully manage project withdrawal with the client.

- Assess own performance continuously during the assignment of the intervention.

5. *Implementation with the Client*

The consultants are also expected to work effectively with the clients, and they are most expected to be able to:

- Make timely and sound decisions in the face of constraints.

- Produce implementation or action plans that will be acceptable to the clients.

- Get the project delivered on time and within budget.

- Develop options and recommendations for clients on taking on any one option.

- Manage the change intervention process for the clients and prepare contingency plans in case of need.

- Lead and motivate consultant team members - laterally and vertically, including clients'.

- Close the project and transfer ownership to the client.

- Enable clients to take ownership of the development which he/she has introduced in the course of the intervention.

- Convince the client where to draw the line between implementation and advisory.

- Have strong foundation and knowledge of change models.

6. *Presenting the Case*

- Exercise effective interpersonal influence with clients, enabling the clients and the various stakeholders to share his/her perception of the situation.

- Present proposals or project results that sells the recommendation or gets management buy-in in front of senior management.

- Handle questions diplomatically during the presentation.

- Make effective and appropriated contributions to meetings.

- Communicate the findings and the recommendations to the client for approval.

- Write professional report.

- Assure the client of his integrity and competence as a consultant and inform the client which area is outside his/her expertise.

- Understand when to lead a meeting or make contribution to a meeting when it is the more appropriate role to adopt.

- Create a win-win situation with the clients on new territories - budget, methods of inquiry, and deliverables and record details of the agreement.

- Agree contractual arrangement and fee basis with the client without any problem.

7. *Being Cultural Aware and Sensitive*

- Build high levels of trust between self and the client.

- Demonstrate awareness of 'face' issues.

- Identify and is sensitive to interpersonal politics in the organisation.

- Show understanding of the socio-political situation in the environment that he/she is working in (Mainland China, HK, etc).

- Is ' street-wise' in dealing with the day-to-day issues arising in the assignment.

- Coach local staff during any assignment.

- Provide significant amounts of detail and reassurance to client and client's staff to deal with risk aversion in Mainland Chinese organisations.

8. *Working with Information*

- Have never disclosed clients' information without their consent.

- Find useful and reliable information.

- Make a clear and appropriate analysis of information which is used in the recommendation and write-up process.

- Understand the source material in its original language.

- Carefully check and verify the information given by the clients. Never assume they are correct.

- Observe individuals and groups for their interaction and provide consultation with professional competencies.

- Select and put into place systems for recording, storage and retrieval of information.

- Take advantage of computer software (e.g. Excel) to analyse and compile useful information.

- Demonstrate the techniques and information needed for solving the problems.

9. *Planning and Deploying Resources*

- Put together a convincing proposal.

- Make sufficient and appropriate consultancy hours available to fulfill the requirements of the intervention.

- Ensure sufficient client/staff resources with appropriate skills to meet the objectives of the assignment.

- Convert a proposal into a project.

- Find contractor for the project team (resourcefulness).

- Use appropriate techniques to manage consultancy budgets.

- Plan the use of physical resources with the client to meet the objectives of the assignment.

- Meet out-of-pocket requirements on projects.

- Put together a winning proposal within 3 hours.

General Competencies

General competencies are those applicable to all consultants. That is, behaviours or competencies that should be demonstrated by all consultants whether operating in Mainland China or not. In descending order of priority, they are:

- Exhibit a high level of accountability in getting the job done.

- Demonstrate self-confidence and the ability to cope with hostility.

- Take a broad view of the organisation and its place in its competitive environment.

- Encourage personal and professional growth among the members of the project team.

- Believe in the importance of the individual.

- Demonstrate trust in people and the democratic process in economic activities.

- Demonstrate belief in technology and efficiently as means and not ends.

Personal Competencies

Organisation politics

- Identifies the power structure and political situation in the client's organisation at the beginning of the assignment.

- Works on the assignment with a staff member nominated by the client who is sensitive to political issues in the organisation.

- Takes action to identify any 'hidden agendas' in the assignment at the beginning of the project.

- Does not get personally involved in any 'political' struggles in the client organisation.

- Ensures that recommendations take account of the political realities in the client organisation.

Managing local staff

- Demonstrates a paternalistic leadership style.

- Builds groups of staff into effective work teams.

- Coaches staff to help them meet their development needs.

- Acts to help staff prioritise both the issues and action to be taken in an assignment.

- Checks the detail of work produced by staff.

Dealing with uncertainty

- Develops robust plans that can accommodate changes in the situation.

- Anticipates possible changes to client plans and requirements as the project moves forward.

- Shows flexibility in handling any failures by the client to meet agreed schedules.

- Able to react quickly and effectively to unforeseen problems.

- Deals effectively with changes of plan by the client.

Emotional resilience

- Demonstrates high levels of self-awareness.

- Manages stress during an assignment without undue cost to self.

- Remains calm when faced with unanticipated problems or changes.

- Assertive but not aggressive in conflict situations.

- Polite but persistent when seeking information.