

Competencies You Can't Afford to Ignore

Competencies fall into two categories: Technical competencies are the knowledge and skills that you use to accomplish a specific task. They describe *what* you do. Behavioral competencies are the beliefs, values, and work habits that dictate *how* you do your job. Most executives have acquired the necessary technical competencies; it is their lack of proficiency in behavioral competencies that trips them up.

To explore this issue, the Morgan Executive Development Institute asked 200 CEOs to choose the behavioral competencies that are imperative in today's healthcare environment. Surprisingly, MEDI learned the most by noting the behavioral competencies that survey respondents did *not* select. According to MEDI president Donald H. Hutton, FACHE, these senior leaders do not value the behavioral competencies that are desperately needed—potentially explaining why many hospitals and health systems are struggling. Following are the behavioral competencies that were undervalued by survey respondents. If you want to be a top performer, make sure that you can demonstrate these competencies.

Collaboration

Collaboration is the ability to share authority, responsibility, and control. This competency enables you to access additional capital, human talent, and technology resources—all of which are in high demand in today's healthcare marketplace.

Innovation

Innovation is the ability to generate new or different processes, create unique solutions to problems, or think outside existing paradigms. Since the systems and processes employed in today's healthcare environment will not be sufficient to address future issues of cost, quality, or service, this competency's value is incalculable.

Continuous Learning

The competency of continuous learning involves two steps: seeking opportunities to expand your knowledge or skills and then applying learned principles to your workplace environment to improve organizational effectiveness or efficiency. In the constantly changing healthcare field,

the top-performing executives and organizations will be the ones that learn to adapt. And continuous learning is the key to adapting.

Risk Taking

Risk taking is the ability both to take reasonable risks in pursuit of performance improvement and to be comfortable with the possibility of failure. As your organization tries new strategies and processes, the possibility of failure is always present. But if you lack the risk-taking competency, you will be hampered in your efforts to apply the results of innovation and continuous learning.

Work/Life Balance

Work/life balance enables you to juggle work and personal responsibilities, participate in activities outside of your job, and control the nonstop demands of work. How does this competency relate to your job performance? Achieving work/life balance allows you to sustain the energy level that is required to be an effective leader on the job.

Source: Donald H. Hutton, FACHE, president, Morgan Executive Development Institute, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL; (904) 543-0235; dhutton@medi-leadership.org; www.medi-leadership.org.

“Unless you try to do something beyond what you have mastered, you will never grow.”

—C. R. Lawton