Identifying competency-based training needs of insurance sales agents

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요 약

This study identifies and prioritizes competency needs of insurance sales agents in Korea for training development, for which it applies a set of analyses including t test, Borich method and the Locus for Focus model. Considering the importance of job and context specific competencies and prioritization with the limited time and resource in organizations, this study uses the competency model originally developed for the given target and prioritizes a group of competencies that should be taken precedence over others for training. The findings show that the top five competency needs are strategic orientation, relationship building, planning, activeness and preparedness. Insurance sales agents perceive their competence levels of those competencies are lower compared to their perceived level of importance. And other competencies are listed in ranking for further decision making. Application of these analytic and statistical approaches should be practiced in organizations where training decision is apt to change easily depending on new superiors. Finally implications and strategies are suggested.

주제어: Borich model, competency needs, insurance sales agents, needs assessment, the Locus for Focus model

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I. Introduction

As business environment rapidly changes, companies are actively responding to those changes by requiring capacity of individuals as members of the organization to be appropriately developed or improved. As success factors in various business areas do differ from one to another, competencies required to bring success to each business are not the same at all. This has led many companies to strive to identify and develop their own set of competencies of their members (Delamare Le Deist & Winterton, 2005) and only job-specific and context appropriate competencies can bring true success in a given organization (Bae, Park, & Kim, 2012; Busch, 2013; Chen & Naquin, 2006).

Identifying competencies in a specific context is only the first step. To gain the high level of proficiency of the members, it should be lead to the effective interventions, among which is to identify competency needs and develop training programs based on the needs. Especially as training programs in organizations strongly tie to job-related performance outcomes, trainees’ needs should be identified as a major factor of competency based training programs (Kim, 2014; Oh, Jun, & Park, 2014). However in most organizations, knowledge and skills are injected and trainees’ needs are easily disregarded in the process of developing training programs. It is same for insurance industry that is heavily dependent on the high level of competencies of the sales agents for its success.

Taking the importance of competency based training programs for insurance sales agents, the purpose of this study is to prioritize the competency needs for training by using the competency model targeted for sales agents and applying needs analysis to identify a gap between current status and importance of competencies. This data-based analytical process will facilitate the decision making in the development of actual competency training program, as it produces objective reference points bringing validity and consistency to the decision-making process of organizations.

II. Review of literature

1. Competency and competency needs based training

*Competency* can be generally defined as individuals’ ability and intrinsic characteristics that