

# WHITEPAPER

## **Decode the Human – Behavioral science demystified!**

### **BUILDING YOUR HUMAN CAPITAL ON A STRONG CATIL TALENT FRAMEWORK**

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If you don't know what you are looking for it, how will you know you found it.

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# Executive Summary

*(Abstract: Assessing Talent across a selection of criteria of all six dimensions – knowledge, technical skills and aptitude, learning ability, behavioral and managerial competencies, personality assets and motivation drives, and culture fit –provides much needed clarity and objectivity around crucial people decisions, strengthens managerial competencies to hire, develop and retain talent and bring efficiency in all Talent management activities with fairness and science. Using the talent framework means reducing wasted time and resources due to “bad” recruitment, unwanted turnover, loss of talent and sub-optimal succession plans.)*

Most managers have the responsibility to hire, develop or promote team members. Everyone has heard of the importance of “Choosing the right talent” or that one needs to recruit “the right person at the right place at the right time”. These managerial tasks can be daunting no guidelines are provided on “How to do it”. The main objective of the Talent Framework is to give you that answer. It will show you how to define what you are looking for, in order to find it.

Today’s businesses see an increase in pace of change and complexity – therefore staying up-to-date and relevant in Talent Management Processes are of paramount importance. Having great tools and processes for the entire employee life cycle becomes a critical need for businesses wishing to stay ahead of competition. With a proven methodology used for all talent management activities, companies can optimize the ROI. It is of main concern for most upper management and HR to guarantee that recruitment and promotion are efficient; but also that the companies have high-performing individuals and teams, whom are aligned with the corporate culture and values; and that succession planning is timely managed, including a strong leadership pipeline.

*The purpose of the Talent Framework is not only to help you understand the capabilities of potential talents, but also to predict who within your company will drive performance in the future.*

With over a century's history of research literature exploring how best to assess an individual for a job (Hunter and Hunter, 1984; Le, Robbins et al., 2011; Lombardi, 2012; Schmidt and Hunter, 1998, 2004), the importance of defining the job description before planning any recruitment has been shown as key to success.

Sometimes focus is put on job knowledge or on skills (Palumbo et al., 2005), some others are concentrating on intelligence (McClelland, 1973; Hunter & Schmidt, 1996; Jensen, 1998; Gottfredson, L. S., 1998, 2002), on personality (Barrick and Mount, 2005; Hogan, 2004; Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999; Ones, Viswesvaran, Dilchert, & Judge, 2007; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991), or behaviors (Bartram, 2005; Lombardi, 2012). However, they all agree that assessing someone is linked to many criteria, some being more important than others.

**The Talent Framework is a revolution in how simple it is, while it includes a century of research, multiple models, tools and assessments processes.**

In striving to create holistic and fair assessment processes, the Talent Framework offers a powerful integrated talent assessment system, which defines the most important criteria for any position, at any level, in any function of any industry. It proposes one single way to understand the most critical factors to any given position: a CEO, an analyst, a researcher, a nurse, a technician as well as an event coordinator, and to be able to assess them with one methodology. Any job will be assessed through the 6 well defined dimensions of the Talent Framework. Therefore, the 6 dimensions are used as filters to answer one of the central question of talent assessment: **what are the critical success factors for that job and how will they be assessed?**

# Definition: the Talent Framework

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Based on the literature and organization practices, it has been crucial to look at the technical capabilities and differentiate between what people know and what people can do. This builds the two first dimensions of the Talent Framework, namely the Knowledge and the Skills.



## Knowledge

The Knowledge might just be theoretical. It has been read, learned in school, or heard of, but it is possible that it has never been applied in practice. Knowledge can be defined as the facts and other information acquired by a person through education and/or experience that enables the understanding of a situation or a task. It is the abstract understanding, either theoretical or as a result of experience, of a particular subject matter. Knowledge is not a proof of learning ability nor of mastering the skills required for higher performance in that. Using an IT analogy, knowledge is the “hard drive” whereas learning ability would be the “processor”.

## Skill

A Skill can be defined as the know-how required to perform a particular task. It is the proficiency, fluency or dexterity, natural or developed through training or experience, demonstrated in performing a given task. In this sense, any skill can be easily demonstrated in practice.

A skill qualifies an individual for performing the tasks which require the skill or the know-how. One could say that a knowledge becomes a skill once you apply it with expertise and mastery. As to simplify it, the skills are about the expertise and capabilities one person has to perform a specific task.

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As an example, **Organizational design** implies both knowledge and skills:

You might have the knowledge of OD, as you have read books and articles, and you know the different steps. You know the surroundings of it. Now the question is: Do you have experience and techniques to do it yourself? Maybe the answer is “no, not entirely”, but as you know the theoretical foundations of it, you could probably put it into action and over time get mastery of it. By doing it a few times, you might become more efficient about doing it and therefore gain the relevant skills.

These two dimensions are prevailing in most job assessment[1]. However, studies have shown that these are not the most critical dimensions in assessing talent, as they can be learned quite easily if the person has the interest, the drive and the required cognitive capabilities (Hunter and Hunter, 1984; Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999; Schmidt and Hunter, 2004).

Cognitive capabilities are perceived today in a very different form than what has been used for years in regard to intelligence. Very important discoveries have been done in the last few decades linked to the study of what intelligence really means (Hally, nd; Jensen, 1998; Judge et al., 1999; Gottfredson, 1998, 2002). Classically intelligence is measured through standardized Intelligence Quotient (IQ) testing. IQ has first been defined by Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon in 1904, as to determine which students would have more difficulty in school[2].

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[1] Reading a CV does not give many other information than Skills and Knowledge.

[2] It was asked by the French state as School was mandatory and the government wanted to be able to know who would be needing more support.

Binet's objectives were to define questions on practical matters, such as attention, memory and problem solving, and not on matters that were learned in schools. IQ testing has been growing in the last century and is still often used in schools, military, and of course recruitment. Binet really wanted to create an assessment differentiating IQ from general knowledge. However, research has shown that IQ testing is very often still linked to knowledge and culture (Nisbett, 2009, Serpell, 2000; Sternberg, 2004).

In the Talent Framework, it therefore seemed very important to use a true worldwide differentiator not based on knowledge, but on the ability to learn, apply learning, deal with complexity and the capability one has to adapt to new situations. As it is simple to be mistaking knowledge or simple curiosity and Learning Ability, a specific effort has been put in this dimension.

**Learning Ability** An individual's Learning Ability reflects the broadness and depth of their understanding of the context: "catching on" or "making sense" of things, and how fast this is achieved. The learning ability is based on the concept of general cognitive ability. It's the ability to quickly absorb and process complex information, and applying it back; to learn, reason, plan and solve problems. Not to be confused with the knowledge an individual might have about things, or with the skills they might have developed to perform a given task.

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### **Concrete Case: Research Center**

For a new research center, a multinational company needed to have experts in a particular field. The recruitment focused on their skills (25 or 30 years' experience) and extensive knowledge.

The hires had it all, but when it came to working in an environment where they would not work on research, but on a product and that they would not have 20 years, but 3 years to go in the market, their ability to adapt kicked in. It ended up that only the people with a strong learning ability were able to fully capitalize on their knowledge and expertise and adapt to new context fast.

Three out of the six dimensions have now taken ground: Skills, Knowledge and Learning ability. From there, the accent is put on specificities such as values and beliefs, motivation drives and behaviors. This shapes how people behave, what makes them want to perform, as well as how that react to situation using their own moral and belief compass.

The fourth dimension uses the definition of the Behavioral and Managerial Competencies[3] as a fundamental dimension when it comes to assess talent.

### **Behavioral and Managerial Competencies**

It describes the demonstrated behavioral pattern displayed and actions taken by a person to perform successfully in a given position. This defines how someone approaches and responds to the position requirements. It is observable, measurable and related to the performance expectation of the function and the management level. Two positions might require the same set of skills and knowledge, while emphasizing on different Behavioral Competencies. It fully depends on the context of the position.

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[3] As to provide a comprehensive inventory, the content of this dimension was defined by first analyzing every kind of positions and defining the Behavioral Competencies needed. This was done by means of job mappings of more than 50 positions, 30 years of experience with headhunting and organization design, as well as the analysis of notorious other Competencies assessment tools. The competency Inventory which is used in the fourth dimension includes 18 behavioral and managerial competencies. The inventory includes eight core competencies and ten level competencies. In the mapping process, it has been made sure that every single position is related to at least one and a maximum of four core competencies. As a final step, a validity assessment was conducted through a user validation approach.

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## Looking at a sales position

One might need to know the key steps of the sales process and have an extensive knowledge of the different models. Then of course, the perfect talent would have experience in selling and proven performance track record. However, depending on the context, different behavioral competencies might be needed. A salesperson at Nespresso boutique, will need to be customer focused and building relationships, while an insurance broker might need to be more achievement oriented, compliant, and managing risk. The orientation of the behaviors are very different, even if the knowledge and skills are identical.

Having the overall capabilities to perform a job doesn't however guarantee job tenure and motivation. In order to understand why a person would want a specific job, and what will motivate him or her to stay in the role, the two last dimensions are more oriented toward the person herself or himself. This motivation is a key in performance and comes from two different angles which are included in the two last dimensions.

Firstly, the motivation will come from what is called Motivational Drives.

### **Motivational Drives**

Drives are our natural pulsions and preferences, what comes naturally and effortlessly, and in turn can define some of our natural strengths. It relates to how the person will be engaged and natural geared to take on the job – it is our personality assets. One should not however confuse motivational drives to general motivations or goals. Drives are natural responses shaped during childhood and defined at adult age, while goals are changing and conscientiously form to achieve something.



Furthermore, the last dimension answers the question of why someone would prefer to work for the UN, Nestlé or LVMH. The reasoning behind the preference in the company is linked to personal motivation, to a passion and to the fit with the company's culture.

### **Company Culture fit**

This last dimension, the Company Culture fit, defines how two people with very similar knowledge, skills, behaviors, learning agility and motivational drives, will not fit in the environment of a company in the same way. As an example, some teams will not accept people who are individualistically competitive mindset, while in other companies, competitiveness is part of the inner informal rules. Corporate Culture is generally define as "the values, beliefs, and behaviors that determine how a company's employees and management interact, perform, and handle business transactions. Often, corporate culture is implied, not expressly defined, and develops organically over time. It forms the foundation of how people are appreciated, recognized and incentivized.

In fine, assessing across a selection of criteria of all six dimensions – **knowledge**, technical **skills** and aptitude, **learning ability**, **behavioral and managerial competencies**, personality assets and **motivation drives**, and **culture fit** – not only provides a much needed clarity around crucial people decisions, but also strengthens the employer-candidate or employer-employee relationship. Benchmarking the multiple aspects of human potential in this way prompts open dialogue with colleagues and candidates about the rationale behind workplace decisions, in turn building trust and boosting employee engagement and development.

# Steps to follow

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Having access to a Framework is not enough to use it effectively and to have it predict success in the way it is intended for. There are several critical points to keep in mind, as they are the ones on which the success of the evaluation relies.

## 1. Preparation

The usage of the Talent framework aims at saving up time, upstream and downstream, as well as increasing the quality of the assessment. Through preparation using the different criteria set in the Talent Framework, one will better target what is needed and lose less time in the shortlisting process. The right preparation aims at gaining organizational efficiency in talent assessment, in retaining the best, in winning the war for talent and in building up employer's attractiveness. Using the talent framework means reducing wasted time and resources due to "bad" recruitment, unwanted turnover, loss of talent and sub-optimal succession plans. Having the right preparation is about knowing what is needed and why, while asking powerful questions and surveys and making the most out of it.

## 2. Job Profiling

Based on this, "interview the job before interviewing candidates" in order to define the critical success factors. The profiling of the job sets a benchmark and must be done in order to assess people on organisational needs. Knowing the main responsibilities of the job, the market talent supply, as well as the KPIs, will make the profiling more reliable. Profiling the job is about defining the requirements for a position, it is not about establishing a long wish list. The KPIs must focus on what is critical (must have vs. nice to have).

The requirements must be selected on the basis of KPIs and specific responsibilities.

It is important to ensure that the job requirements are targeted (what happens if the candidate doesn't have those capabilities?). As job success is defined, the capabilities and behaviors associated with it can be identified. The purpose of this step is to increase relevancy and objectivity in the evaluation process, as well as to improve rigor around equal opportunities throughout the different assessment. Starting an evaluation, whether it is for recruitment, or performance, or succession, not knowing precisely what is needed in terms of job requirement, means taking the risk of assessing people on wrong criteria, attracting candidates with irrelevant profiles, and lacking objectivity, consistency and fairness in the decision-making process.

### **3. Candidate's Assessment**

The candidate's assessment aims at evaluating whether the person has what the position requires to perform and succeed. It is therefore about the "fit" with the criteria needed for the job. The Competency Based Interview (CBI[4]) method is based on the assumption that future behaviors/performance are best assessed by assessing past behaviors. By interviewing on the relevant must have criteria instead of on sole personal attributes, the evaluation will focus on a much more objective assessment and targeted behavioral indicators which means assessors' agreement on candidate fit will more objective and will be easier to reach. The Talent Framework also suggest to differentiate competencies and motivation drives as competencies are what one "can do", and motivation drives what one "want/prefer to do".

### **4. Decision Making**

Finally, the Talent Framework is a powerful tool which will guide you from preparation to feedback. It will drive you and keep you on the right track to remain as fair and objective, by using structure and method. It will decomplexify your decision making in regards of people management, as well as give you objective arguments to refuse candidates who are not fitted for the job.

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[4] More information to be found on our Factsheet on CBI with the CATIL interview guide (March 2016).

# The Assessment

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The Talent Framework, as it names stands, is a theoretical framework including all the main dimensions needed for a comprehensive assessment of talent and potential. The Talent Framework can be used on its own as it includes inventories and best practices for each dimension. Once the need has been defined, the Talent framework provides a set of well-prepared interview questions which rely on the main criteria of each dimension.

The Talent Framework puts an emphasis on making the distinction between knowledge, know-how (skills) and how to (behaviors).

## Knowledge

Firstly, to measure the level of necessary theoretical knowledge required to do the job, it is crucial to define the use of this knowledge in the specific position. Two main differences must also be made: knowledge is not equivalent to the capacity to learn (learning ability), nor to use it (skills). Most of the time, knowledge will be “checked” in the resume with the assumption that an experience listed on the CV means it provided the candidates the experience to gain this knowledge and skills, and through the answers given on other dimensions, mainly the Behavioral and Managerial competencies.

## Skills

As skills are know-how, it is important to verify the qualitative aspect of the approach and the result. Real cases exercises are the smartest assessment to do (case study, role-plays, simulations). They must be solved on the spot to test the know-how.

Defining the set of behaviors leading to performance in a job is a critical step to assess if the candidate will perform well in the job.

## Competencies

Competencies are pillars of our sustainable performance which we can use to achieve the desired successes. This is why many organizations define their own competency model, leadership framework and other set of competencies.

The Talent Framework provides a generic model (CATIL competency inventory), which is used in many different types of assessment (recruitment, 360°, performance, leadership assessment, etc.).

Globally, as the world of work is going ever faster, the quickest way to get most of the information on these three dimensions is to first go through the resume (hard facts), and then get information through a Competency Based Interview (CBI). These types of interviews focus on actionable questions linked to specific Competencies and the ability to demonstrate the Behaviors. CBI<sup>[5]</sup> uses action oriented questions. For example, when looking at a behavior linked to Customer focus, one could ask: "Describe a past situation when you nearly lost a customer and had to turn it around". The main objective of a CBI is to understand the behaviors, the actions taken, but it is also possible, when needed, to dive into the knowledge or the skills, as they are very often complementary to the Competencies.

**The hardest part of the assessment still remains the evaluation of the Motivational Drives, Learning Ability and Cultural fit. Therefore, to prepare well and go further than impression, some specific tools can be used as to validate the "gut feeling".**

To be able to do the job does not mean that the person will enjoy doing it! Many "smart" and capable people leave their job even though they are performing well. Here lies the reason why it is important to differentiate capabilities (Knowledge, Skills, Learning Agilities and Competencies) and motivation (Motivational Drives and Culture Fit).

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[5] More information to be found on our Factsheet on CBI with the CATIL interview guide (March 2016).

The first ones give information about the performance one person will have right away, while the latter is about sustainable performance over time. However, it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between abilities and motivation.

## **Motivational Drives**

When looking at the Motivational Drives, it will provide managers with accurate, actionable data quantifying the unique motivating needs and behavioral drives of each individual.

Similarly, a company's culture and values are like the DNA which describes how things are done in the company: what is valued, believed in, and considered important; how things are approached; what is expected; how decisions are made; how things are celebrated, rewarded and punished.

## **Company Culture fit**

The Company culture fit is the match of a person's values and the corporate values. Without a structured approach, this assessment remains very subjective. Therefore, the Talent Framework sets a context in which each company has to make a summary of what is really important to them and probe the person on same items. Either the company already has a set of values or information about its culture, or the Talent Framework will provide a general guide to help defining the specifics. Only then can there be a fit gap done. Values and personality traits don't change over time or at least one could agree, not as fast as skills and knowledge. These criteria should therefore be the "price of entry" to be considered and pursue the assessment process.

## Learning Ability

Finally, the learning ability indicates how fast a person is expected to acquire new and complex knowledge and understand the implications of changes in a job context and environment, as well as to learn, solve problems and/or transform knowledge. It is one of the most important criteria in “complex” jobs and seems to be on high demand nowadays, such as for example: senior management, project leader, logistic, Business Development, etc.. [6].

On the six dimensions, Skills, Knowledge and Competencies are the “easiest” to evaluate (and the ones which are usually assessed in some ways). While, Culture fit, Motivational Drives and Learning Ability are ranking high on the pre-selection short-list yet are the most difficult to assess often left to the gut feeling of assessors, we offer testing solutions fitting in the CATIL Framework to bring reliable and scalable assessment methods

## Conclusion

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It's precisely the complementarity of these six dimensions outlined by the talent framework that increases the predictions of current and future job performance. Humans are complex. But there are ways to minimize the risk related to wrong and costly predictions. The combination of these perspectives makes the talent framework a reliable and efficient tool which relies on companies' real need: the right definition of their workplaces, for the accurate assessments of the talents they invest in.

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[6] Both the assessment of the Motivational Drive and the Learning Ability are based on scientifically validated psychometric tests.

**The purpose of the Talent Framework is not only to help you understand the capabilities of potential talents, but also to predict who within your company will drive performance in the future.**

Moreover, the strength of the talent framework relies on its applicability in every People Management Processes. The same tool can be used for recruitment, performance appraisal, succession planning, talent planning, and can even give useful information for development planning. The processes are aligned and relevant. This single methodology guaranties the optimization of the investment made in people.

**The Talent Framework gives users a comprehensive roadmap that helps steer their most important people decisions with objectivity and scientific insight, by defining current and future organizational needs, outlining precise job descriptions and assessing people on these specific requirements. In aims at maximizing the return on investment made on human capital related decisions.**

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**AFFENTRANGER KVETON + PARTNERS SÀRL**

Place de Savoie 2  
1260 Nyon  
Switzerland

**CONNECT**

[catilsolutions.net](http://catilsolutions.net)  
[info@akpartners.net](mailto:info@akpartners.net)