

Competency Frameworks – what library workers do now

Brimbank City Council made some changes to their library service to enhance the social and economic outcomes of individuals and the community by providing services and programs that support learning, lifestyle, and leisure. The transformation included rezoning and upgrading spaces in the library buildings, using technology to release staff from low value tasks, and the reallocation of staff time to value added tasks such as designing and developing programs.

One of the keys to repositioning the library service was to ensure staff roles and responsibilities were clearly defined and documented. Naturally position descriptions were rewritten and a Competency Framework was developed in consultation with staff. This review required an assessment of the classifications of the position description to determine appropriate band levels and resulted in a band levels increase.

The Competency Framework provides a higher level of detail than the position descriptions on the skills, behaviours, and attributes required for proficient performance in each of the roles. The Competency Frameworks links to Council's organisational 'Values & Behaviours', and it supports the recruitment and selection processes, the staff training plan, and the performance review process. The Competency Framework can be used by staff to determine the skills and competency required to move between roles and therefore provide clarity for career paths.

The Competency Frameworks has four sections: self management, results, team work, and leadership. Each of these section has sub categories as outlined:

I manage mySELF: Understanding others, Resilience, Adaptability

We work together for RESULTS: Procedures, Systems and Standards, Learning and Professional Growth, Customer Service, Innovation Problem Solving and Planning

We work with OTHERS: Teamwork, Communicate, Adaptability,

We LEAD: Leadership, Program Design and Implementation, Managing Performance, Coaching

The framework sets out the behavioural competencies required at various levels. For example, in Learning and Professional Growth, a level one example is 'I ask questions and learn from mistakes', while a level 4 example is 'I am recognised as an expert in discipline'.

Each level has a description of the behavioural competencies required to perform successfully at that level and at the request of staff each also has examples of ineffectual behaviour.

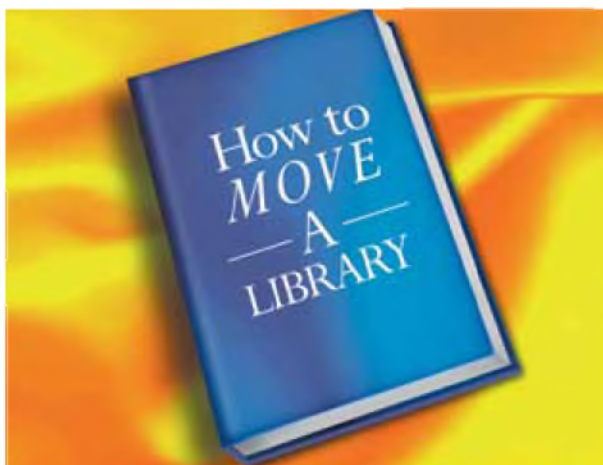
The framework is prefaced by a matrix that lists the positions and the behavioural competencies, and maps the level of each of the competencies required of each position.

The Draft Competency Framework was launched 12 months ago and the document finalised in August 2009. All supervisors were trained to ensure they had the confidence and skills to use the framework with their teams. All staff participated in discussions lead by their supervisors to ensure that people understood the competencies and how they applied to the work environment.

The process of re-establishing staff roles in line with the repositioning of the library service has been very successful and I believe that the Competency Framework and supporting documentation have played a significant role in this success.

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