

REPORT
COMPETENCY TEST

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Report Competency Test

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Competency test report

1. Introduction

'Competency' has become an important term in professional organizations and subsequently in secondary and higher vocational education over the past 15 years. There are plenty of definitions being circulated. For the purposes of this competency test, a synthesis of the most common definitions has been used, one in which a competency is conceived of as 'a combination of knowledge and insight, mindset and skill that is perceptible in one's behavior and which is used to achieve goals in practice'. The present report indicates how you have rated yourself on 16 fundamental competencies compared to the working population in Western Europe.

1.1 Interpretation

You should bear three things in mind whilst reading the report. Firstly, a high or low score in terms of a competency does not imply any form of value judgment. For certain roles it can in fact be important to have certain competencies to a greater degree than other people, and for other roles it may well be the opposite.

Secondly, you must be aware that this test will not reveal your competencies directly as it involves self-assessment of your competencies. Such assessments are always subjective.

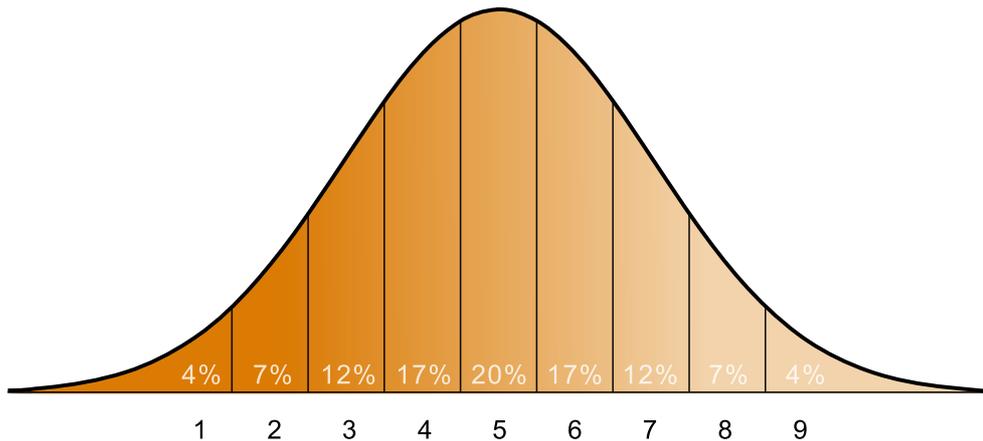
Finally, your scores are relative to those of the reference group. You could (for example) have plenty of competencies and get high scores yet struggle in your work, because your job is harder than the average job in the world of work requiring intermediate-level vocational education or above. Another example could be that you score low, not because you are less competent than others but because you are more modest in your self-assessment than others.

1.2 Report

The present report indicates how you rate yourself on each of the 16 competencies. This is relative to how other people rate their own competencies. Each competency is provided with a definition indicating what the competency entails and means. Furthermore, each competency also has a short name in order to make it easy to talk about the report with other people. Nevertheless, the meaning of a competency should be steered primarily by the definition provided.

1.3 Interpretation of scores

The figure below presents an example of the distribution of scores for the reference group for a random competency. This distribution has been divided up into nine boxes (stanine scores), each containing a certain percentage of people. The fifth box represents 20% of the people who had an average score. In the case of score 1, then, 4% of the people are achieving this score, with 96% of the people from the reference group stating that they have the competency to a large extent.



The textual scores below are used in the report. If (for example) you have a score for a competency which corresponds to position 4 in the distribution above, then the result will specify that you score 'slightly below average' on this scale compared to the reference group.

Position	Textual category
1	extremely low
2	low
3	below average
4	slightly below average
5	average
6	slightly above average
7	above average
8	high
9	extremely high

Please find below a graphic representation of your score on each of the 16 competencies. The competencies on which you give yourself the highest rating point to your strengths. Vocations and roles in which these competencies are important will offer a relatively

significant chance of success. The competencies on which you give yourself the lowest rating can provide points for attention, e.g. for the purposes of improvement plans within the compass of your Personal Development Plan.

For each competency, the scores are followed by an explanation of the competencies and what they mean in terms of work and career.

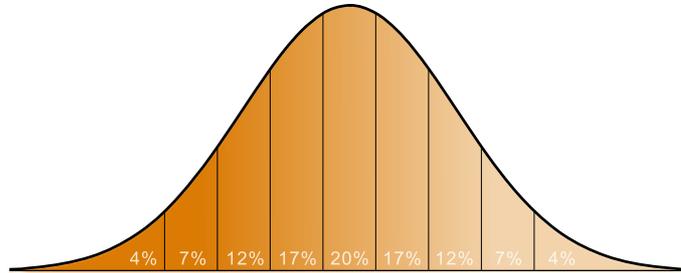
PERSONAL COMPETENCY PROFILE

Fig. 1
COMPETENCY SCORES

★: YOU

GENDER: MALE
AGE: 41

SCORES OF WORKING
POPULATION OF
WESTERN EUROPE



Competency	Score (★)
NOTICING	4
TAKING THE INITIATIVE	8
ANALYZING	5
DECIDING	2
CREATING	9
PLANNING AND ORGANIZING	4
PERSEVERING	8
REACTING FLEXIBLY	8
FUNCTIONING UNDER PRESSURE	4
COMMUNICATING VERBALLY	5
COMMUNICATING IN WRITING	8
HELPING	10
NETWORKING	9
CHECKING	5
LEADING	8
SELF-MANAGEMENT & -DEVELOPM.	4

2. Competencies and your career

With regard to competencies and career interests, it can be simply stated that people often (but not always) do (or want to do) things they are good at. After all, doing work that fits in with your competencies obviously increases the chances of reciprocal satisfaction than when there is a mismatch. In terms of the possibility of developing competencies, when someone is genuinely keen to develop a competency and works purposively towards doing so, preferably with a plan and/or a coach, then some of them can indeed be developed to a large extent. In contrast to such things as intelligence (for example).

This chapter looks in detail at the meaning of the competencies, how you scored and what it means to score 'high' or 'low'.

For each competency you will find successively:

- A definition of the competency and two sample questions to illustrate
- Your score compared to the reference group
- What a low or a high score could mean
- The type of work and tasks to which the competency is relevant, illustrated by a few prototypical sample groups
- An estimate of the extent to which the competency can be developed
- Concrete tips for development

Noticing

Picking up on and using signals from people, organization, and society. Sample questions include: Is quick to notice if there is something up with someone and “Has a thorough knowledge of what is going on around him/her”. You score **just above average** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will frequently find themselves surprised by what is going on around them or going on with other people, because they do not see it coming. They might also be referred to as inattentive or careless. People with a high score will be capable of reacting in an alert manner, as they notice early on that something is happening or sense it coming. One disadvantage can sometimes be that they are easily distracted.

This competency is useful when it comes to work for which it is important to be able to notice subtle changes. For example, a shift in someone’s mood, the fact that it is getting colder, or the fact that a meter on a control panel is rising. For example, in roles such as relationship therapist, bodyguard, process operator, or trend-watcher. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is average.

Development tips:

- consciously direct your attention from time to time to the non-verbal cues people are giving
- keep abreast of what is going on around you (by TV, Internet, newspapers, etc.) and ask affected people questions
- do not be overly single-minded, instead interrupting your work regularly

Taking the initiative

Being a self-starter, making the most of opportunities, taking things on even if they entail risk. Sample questions include: Often takes the initiative and “Is the first one to raise a problem for discussion”. You score **above average** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will often be slightly hesitant and therefore miss out on opportunities or let others take the lead. People with a high score will be self-starters, without needing to be prompted to action or to have an example set by someone else. One disadvantage that can sometimes present itself is that they can be too quick, take excessive risk, or not allow others to have enough of a say.

This competency is useful when it comes to work in which taking the initiative is important in order to make the most of opportunities and get results. For example, in roles such as entrepreneur, salesperson, or activity leader. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is low.

Development tips:

- ask yourself regularly whether the work could be better or more fun, and if it could be then take appropriate steps
- remember that successful initiatives bring plenty of recognition

Analyzing

Understanding complex information, making connections, drawing conclusions. Sample questions include: When faced with a difficult problem, is quick to understand the crux of the problem and “Manages to draw astute conclusions from muddled information”. You score **average** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will sometimes get confused if they find themselves faced with complex problems or stories: what’s it actually about? Why are they telling me this? What’s the connection? People with a high score will be capable of making connections and drawing conclusions, even if the situation and the information are muddled. They are capable of splitting up a complex problem to make it remediable. One disadvantage can be that they sometimes operate excessively from the perspective of reason rather than on instinct or action.

This competency is useful when it comes to work in which a great deal of complex information has to be processed and understood. For example, in roles such as researcher, detective with the police, or systems architect. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is low.

Development tips:

- ask yourself questions about the material
- distinguish between facts and opinions
- make a habit of drawing interim conclusions on subtopics and checking these, postponing final conclusions
- ask yourself afterwards where the error or blind spot was

Deciding

Weighing things up and reaching a decision. Sample questions include: "Manages to make the right decision in complex situations and 'Is careful and yet resolute when making decisions'". You score **low** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will have trouble weighing up complex issues and making a decision. They will sometimes have persistent doubts and ultimately make a decision they go on to regret. People with a high score will be careful and yet resolute when making decisions. They use the available information in a balanced manner. Sometimes they might take on or be given excessive responsibility.

This competency is useful when it comes to work in which important and complicated decisions have to be made. For example, roles such as judge, director, or interim manager. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is high.

Development tips:

- use both your reason and your feelings, but look out for irrational arguments
- seek out a devil's advocate who will cast a critical eye over those arguments
- evaluate your decisions

Creating

Coming up with new ideas, approaches, or solutions. Sample questions include: Often comes up with new ideas and "Is regarded by others as creative". You score **high** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will find it difficult to come up with something new. They are mired in a particular thinking pattern, as a result of which they only come up with existing solutions or ideas. People with a high score will be regarded by others as creative, witty, or original. They have ideas that others would not be so quick to come up with. One occasional disadvantage is that they are not readily satisfied with the familiar. Sometimes they do not think ideas through enough, meaning they ultimately do not come to fruition.

This competency is useful when it comes to work in which it is important to come up with new ideas, approaches, or solutions. For example, in roles such as advertising designer, industrial designer, or interior designer. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is low.

Development tips:

- occasionally solve fun puzzles or brainteasers
- use your imagination to imagine completely different possibilities or worlds
- develop an interest in one or more forms of art
- ask creative types how they come up with their ideas

Planning and organizing

Scheduling activities, resources, and people so as to achieve an objective. Sample questions include: Is capable of properly estimating what is required in order to implement a plan and “Draws up plans and budgets that are accurate”. You score **below average** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will find it difficult to see what needs to be done and in place in order to achieve an objective. For example, they incorrectly estimate how long a task will take, who is best placed to do it, and what it will cost. People with a high score will make plans that can also genuinely be implemented. They are capable of thinking ahead properly and deploy themselves, other people, and resources effectively. Occasionally they will struggle if something unexpected scuppers the plan.

This competency is useful when it comes to work in which people’s efforts and resources have to be coordinated in order to achieve objectives. For example, roles such as congress or event organizer or traffic controller. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is high.

Development tips:

- devote time to thinking ahead and discussing plans with others
- do be aware of the measurability of objectives
- anticipate setbacks and critical moments
- ensure agreements are recorded clearly
- keep an eye on how the implementation is going, evaluate planning retrospectively, do so well, and learn from it

Persevering

Keeping going, even if setbacks occur. Sample questions include: Perseveres, even if setbacks occur, and “Is capable of performing tasks that require protracted, hard effort”. You score **above average** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will tend to give up if setbacks occur or results are not forthcoming. They are easily discouraged by other people’s skepticism or by obstacles. People with a high score will keep going, even if setbacks occur, if people are saying “give up”, or if things are more difficult or are taking longer than anticipated. One occasional disadvantage of persevering can be that people dig their heels in when faced with a goal that is no longer achievable, which ends up in serious disappointment.

This competency is useful when it comes to work in which overcoming setbacks is essential or it takes a long time to get results. For example, roles such as professional cyclist or social worker in an addiction clinic. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is average.

Development tips:

- do work that you are genuinely motivated to do (which makes persevering much easier)
- avoid people who are discouraging, instead seeking out people who are encouraging
- keep the end goal and its achievement in sight

Reacting flexibly

Doing something in a different way to what you are used to or what was intended, if the situation calls for this. Sample questions include: Manages to adapt if the circumstances change and “Reacts flexibly to surprises, both pleasant and unpleasant”. You score **above average** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will easily become confused if things get into unfamiliar territory. They often have trouble functioning in new situations or adapting to unusual circumstances or people who are “different”. People with a high score will react flexibly to surprises, both pleasant and unpleasant. They adjust their plans or way of doing things if circumstances change. Sometimes they are too ready to relinquish their goals.

This competency is useful when it comes to work in which people are often faced with new or unexpected situations and have to think on their feet. For example, in roles such as travel guide, stand-up comedian, or doctor in emergency medicine. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is low.

Development tips:

- introduce variety into your day-to-day habits
- brainstorm with others without criticizing each other’s ideas
- put yourself in other people’s shoes (imagine you were born elsewhere, had different parents, etc.)
- relativize your own goals and approach

Functioning under pressure

Being effective in situations of pressure, e.g. time pressure, risk, emotions. Sample questions include: Stays in control of himself/herself in chaotic situations and “Stays calm in confrontations with aggressive people”. You score **just below average** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will have problems keeping a cool head in chaotic situations. Under high pressure they will sometimes not know what they have to do or could end up panicking. People with a high score will remain calm and effective in tense situations, e.g. emergencies. One potential disadvantage is that such people need a degree of stress to feel comfortable and struggle if “nothing” is happening.

This competency is useful when it comes to work in which people are under pressure, e.g. work requiring a lot to be done within a short period of time, work entailing a high risk of important things going awry, or work involving a considerable degree of emotion. For example, roles such as police officer, fighter pilot, or referee in professional soccer. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is low.

Development tips:

- use relaxation techniques (e.g. yoga, some martial arts)
- set clear limits with regard to responsibilities and workload

Communicating verbally

Understanding and being understood in verbal communication. Sample questions include: Properly intuits what another person means and “Speaks clearly so that everyone understands”. You score **average** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will often struggle to understand exactly what it is other people are trying to say or to express clearly what they mean. For example, having difficulty finding the right words, faltering, or not speaking clearly. People with a high score will be good listeners, be capable of properly intuiting what others mean and ensuring that others are able to understand them properly.

This competency is useful when it comes to work that involves talking with other people. For example, roles such as attorney, interviewer, or psychotherapist. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is average.

Development tips:

- learn to ask open questions by asking and listening
- try to put yourself in the other person’s shoes, see things from his/her perspective
- do something with the non-verbal signals you are picking up on
- prepare a meeting report and get the other person to check it

Communicating in writing

Understanding and being understood in written communication. Sample questions include: Is capable of communicating well in writing, even with people who are very different and “Manages to write in such a way that other people are keen to read it”. You score **just above average** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will often struggle to understand exactly what it is other people are trying to get across in writing or to express clearly what they mean in the written medium. For example, having difficulty finding the right words or making lots of typos. People with a high score will be competent readers and will be more than capable of intuiting what other people mean. They can write in such a way that others are keen to read what they have written and readily understand it.

This competency is useful when it comes to work in which written communication plays a significant role, e.g. in roles such as journalist, editor, or literary critic. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is high.

Development tips:

- read a guide to or book on writing or take training in writing skills
- use computer facilities (layout templates, spellcheck, etc.)
- ask others to comment on your writing

Helping

Offering resources and effort in order to help others achieve their goals. Sample questions include: Properly understands what other people need and tries to offer these things and “Manages to give others a feeling of satisfaction”. You score **extremely high** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will often struggle with being helpful to others and putting their goals or wishes above their own interests. People with a high score will derive satisfaction from helping other people. They understand what others need and gladly make the effort to offer it. One disadvantage can be that they be too self-effacing and lose sight of their own interests.

This competency is useful when it comes to work in which other people’s interests are paramount. For example, roles such as social worker, personal coach, or physiotherapist. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is high.

Development tips:

- regularly think about what the other person’s objectives will be
- regularly check whether the other person has been assisted and is satisfied

Networking

Building, maintaining, and making the most of a network of business associates. Sample questions include: Knows a lot of people and “Finds it easy to strike up relationships with people he/she doesn’t know”. You score **extremely high** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will often find it difficult to strike up a relationship with people they do not know or to keep in touch with a lot of people. They themselves are seldom approached for help or information. People with a high score will know plenty of people and find it easy to put people in touch with one another. They will (for example) know the right person to approach for information or help or will quickly manage to find such a person. One disadvantage can be that maintaining such a network of contacts can occasionally take up so much time that one’s own work suffers.

This competency is useful when it comes to work for which it is important to build, maintain and make the most of a network of business associates. For example, roles such as estate agent, headhunter, or lobbyist. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is average.

Development tips:

- ensure that your dealings with contacts are not one-sided and that they benefit too
- be careful when making promises and fulfilling them

Checking

Checking whether other people's or one's own actions or products are satisfactory. Sample questions include: Regularly checks whether work is running according to schedule and "Sees to it that promises are fulfilled". You score **average** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score often do not enjoy checking themselves or others or do not see the point of doing so. Consequently, they are prone to delivering work with shortcomings. People with a high score regularly check whether work is being done in line with the schedule and specifications and whether any errors are being made. One disadvantage of lots of checking is that this can slow the pace, with excessive attention to detail.

This competency is useful when it comes to work for which it is important not to make any mistakes or in which a high degree of circumspection is required. For example, roles such as accountant, inspector, or technician in banks or the aerospace industry. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is average.

Development tips:

- deliberately dwell on the possible consequences of errors
- think in advance about how and when the state of affairs and their results will be checked

Leading

Exerting influence and exercising control. Sample questions include: Is persuasive and “Often spontaneously takes charge or is appointed by others as a leader”. You score **above average** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will often find it difficult to persuade people of something, to exert influence, or to get other people to do something. People with a high score will often exude a natural authority. They often spontaneously take charge or are appointed by others as a leader.

This competency is useful when it comes to work in which a person, team, or company requires leadership. This competency is important for such roles as managers, union leaders, and politicians. In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is average.

Development tips:

- scrutinize how other people lead and persuade
- make clear what you expect from other people and check whether they understand and give their assent
- be aware of the effect of body language and non-verbal communication on your powers of persuasion
- ensure that you understand and dovetail with other people’s motives, views, and arguments
- pay attention to providing feedback, both positive and negative

Self-management and self-development

Learning from experiences and steering one's own development process. Sample questions include: Works on own development purposively and "Reflects upon how things have gone in order to work out how things could be done better next time". You score **just below average** on this competency compared to the reference group.

People with a low score will not have a clear idea as to what they want and what they are capable of. They will lack goals, or have unrealistic goals, in life and in their career, or they will leave their fate to other people or to circumstances. People with a high score will reflect upon their experiences and have a clear vision of themselves and the future. Thus enabling them to set clear, realistic goals and always steer and adjust things so as to achieve these goals. One disadvantage can be not being open to unforeseen opportunities.

This competency is useful when it comes to work for which people have to steer their own career development, making it prominent in an increasing number of jobs and organizations! In general, the capacity for this competency to be developed is average.

Development tips:

- regularly ask others for feedback
- regularly take time to reflect quietly upon your experiences
- set long-term goals but remain open to unforeseen possibilities

Competency profiles

A profile is formed by a specific score pattern on the competencies. Although each and every human being is unique, which makes any mix of scores possible, there are nevertheless competencies that often turn out to be correlated. This enables three clear profiles to emerge from the competency test:

- the entrepreneur (being flexible, taking the initiative, having leadership, networking, functioning under pressure, and creating)
- the commercial (planning and organizing, monitoring, deciding, persevering, and self-development)
- the communicator (verbal communication, noticing, helping, and written communication)

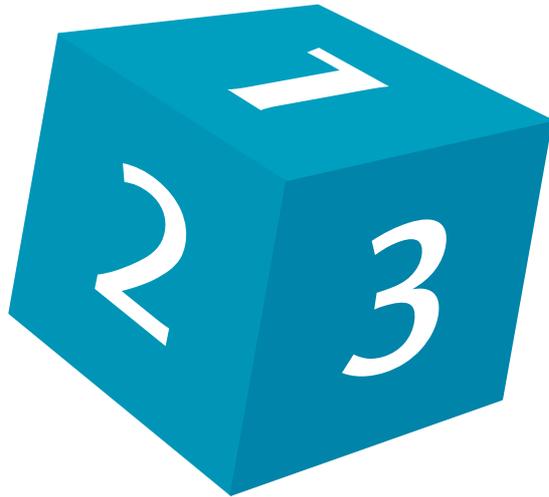
Nobody will perfectly match a profile. The trick is to be aware of your own profile and perhaps improve so as to subsequently select activities that best fit it.

Your own profile is presented below by sorting the competencies from highest score to lowest score. Thus enabling you to see the competencies in order from your strongest one to the competencies that perhaps require attention.

Competencies in order of score

Below you will find a table containing your competencies in order of your score (from high to low). This will enable you to outline your own competency profile or compose a concise summary of your strong and not-so-strong competencies for yourself. In terms of competencies for which your self-assessment clearly differs from other people's opinion, you might choose to discuss these with the feedback providers. You could also indicate for yourself what follow-up steps you could consider to make yourself more competent. Do bear in mind that career development is a continuous process in which you are playing the lead role!

1. Helping
2. Networking
3. Creating
4. Taking the initiative
5. Persevering
6. Reacting flexibly
7. Leading
8. Communicating in writing
9. Noticing
10. Communicating verbally
11. Analyzing
12. Checking
13. Functioning under pressure
14. Self-management and self-development
15. Planning and organizing
16. Deciding



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