

# HR Strategies to Retain Employees and Building Their Competency

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## ABSTRACT

The search for best ways to attract, develop and utilize organizational people; the deliverable from the management of strategic human resources is strategy execution. HR practices help accomplish business objectives among the wide range of organizational processes relating to developing, retaining and utilizing high-performing employees is employee operational and functional competencies. HR strategies modified hiring practices and career paths to ensure multi-competence. The deliverables from management of contribution are increased employee commitment and competence, but also its influence to change, meet employee expectations, and increase financial performance. The principal thrust of this study therefore is to review prior literature with the aim of unraveling such employee competencies that significantly impact the management of talent in the workplace. Using a non-empirical approach, the review of extant studies reveals that the skills, knowledge and abilities of employees influence on individual and organizational objective. In this study reveals recruitment and selection, training and development, workforce planning and career paths, compensation and succession planning for employee sustainable. The paper concludes that tying core competencies with concept of HR strategies and retention means of upgrading and retaining their valuable workforce. To achieve this, the paper recommends the building of competency, the identification and possession of high-performing behaviors; the development of competency related researches.

**KEYWORD:** HR Strategies, HR Practices, Employee Retention, Building Competency

## INTRODUCTION

HR Competency is an important strategic area of organizations and it will have an influence on employer's ability, capability, skills these are to attract retain employees, and ensure optimal levels of performance from employees to meeting the organization's HR strategic objectives. Organizations must reward employees because they are in turn looking for certain kinds of behaviour; they need competent employees who agree to work with high level of performance, loyalty and commitment with multi-skills. Individual employees expect in return for their contribution to the organization, rewards in the form of a good compensation which satisfies them. Competency-based human resources serve as a link between human resources management and the overall strategic plan of an organization. Competencies are defined as observable abilities, skills, knowledge, motivations or traits defined in terms of the behaviours needed for successful job performance in the organization. Properly designed, competencies explain the strategic vision and goals for the organization into behaviours or actions employees must display for the organization to be successful.

## Review of Literature

**Ben Wuim-Pam (2014)**<sup>1</sup> in their articles discussed how the search for best ways to attract, develop and utilize

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**Rehema C. Batti (2014)**<sup>2</sup> in her research elucidation about Human resource management challenges facing local NGOs. Therefore the management of human resources in local NGOs is crucial as it contributes to the performance and sustainability of the organizations. However many local NGOs face diverse challenges in the area of human resource management. Many local NGOs due to the size of the organization and scope do not have a human resource (HR) unit or a human resource manager and therefore they appoint staff to oversee staff issues who often do not have the required human resource skills and competencies to manage the employees. Another area that is challenging local NGOs is the fact that many depend on donor funds that are tied to funding cycles that are short term in nature. This affects the NGOs human resource capacity in terms of the number and type of staff to recruit and employment duration. This paper seeks to highlight human resource management challenges local NGOs encounter and the importance of considering HRM as a strategic process that can contribute to sustaining an organization's performance.

**Bidisha Lahkar Das1 and Dr. Mukulesh Baruah (2013)**<sup>3</sup> in their study about Employee Retention: A Review of Literature. Researcher find how most of the organizations are now a days, found to be technology driven, yet human resources are required to run the technology. They are the most vital and dynamic resources of any organization. With all round development in each and every area of the economy, there is stiff competition in the market. With this development and competition, there are lots and lots of avenues and opportunities available in the hands of the human resources. The biggest challenge that organizations are facing today is not only managing these resources but also retaining them. Securing and retaining skilled employees plays an important role for any organization, because employees' knowledge and skills are central to companies' ability to be economically competitive. Besides, continuously satisfying the employees is another challenge that the employers are facing today. Keeping into account the importance and sensitivity of the issue of retention to any organization, the present study tries to review the various available literature and research work on employee retention and the factors affecting employee retention and job satisfaction among the employees.

**Ans De Vos, Sara De Hauw and INE WILLEMSE (2011)**<sup>4</sup> in their research evaluation could have discussed on the subject of Competency Development in Organizations: Building an Integrative Model through a Qualitative Study. The prominent role of competency development in enhancing the success of employees and organizations has drawn the attention of practitioners leading them to introduce competency development as a central part of their human resource practices. Unfortunately, the strong managerial interest in competency development was not fully translated into the academic world, creating a gap between theory and practice. The main purpose of this study was to fill this gap by unraveling the process of competency development in organizations. To this end, we adopted a longitudinal multiple case study design, gathering information from 22 Belgian organizations through organizational records, semi-structured interviews with HR managers and focus groups. By using a grounded theory approach, a framework emerged mapping out the different

steps of competency development in organizations. Hence, this study can be an important first step towards closing the existing gap between practice and theory concerning competency development in organizations.

**Dr. K. Aparna Rao**<sup>5</sup> in his research discussion on EMPLOYEE RETENTION-A REAL TIME CHALLENGES IN GLOBAL WORK ENVIRONMENT. Researcher continue his research on Employee retention is most critical issue facing corporate leaders as a result of the shortage of skilled labor, economic growth and employee turnover. Retaining employees involves understanding the intrinsic motivators of them which many organizations unable to identify. Retention strategies should not be orchestrated in isolation but must form part of the overall strategies for strengthening the pull on the talent while this augurs well for employees, it means employers need to up the ante on Employee Retention, one of the most critical issues organizations face today. Looking carefully into many organizations-Retention strategies are very competitive, companies try to provide their best to retain the employees of their competitors. In this conceptual paper the author has attempted to bring out employee retention approaches, strategies for knowledge workforce, for achieving competitive advantage. The Author has given some suggestion to improvise the procedure of employee retention.

**Manjunath VS and CNB Rajesh**<sup>6</sup> in their research comprehensive discussion on A good compensation system must be based on "Pay for the person", which can be based on actual performance levels exhibited by the employees. Competency based compensation can help the organizations to determine compensation on the basis of actual performance levels through the process measuring the actual competencies exhibited by the individuals while performing their jobs. This system can be used design the compensation on the basis of person's capabilities and experience and by taking into account the market demand for unique skills and experience. Competency based system can also help in designing a fair and equitable system through an objective evaluation of competencies which contributes for an individual's performance. This paper focuses on development of a competency based compensation system. The paper discusses how a competency based model can be developed in organization which can be used for designing a competency based compensation system. This paper is based on the author's experience in developing a competency model with few organizations and its applications.

**A thorough review** of literature shows that the studies observed above places focus of understanding the need for the HR Strategies by the organization but no study places a specific focus on how the HR strategies, employee retain programmes, building competency these practices adopted by the organization are building strategic competencies and from the perspectives of the employees to explore the issues that are concerning or deterring them form realizing the potential benefits from the programmes initiated towards them. Hence this study

#### **Objective of the study**

The study serves the following specific purpose

1. To Study HR strategies and Building the Competencies.

2. To explain conceptual model of HR Strategies to Mobilize Functional Competencies within the Organizational Resources.
3. To elucidate HR Strategies, practices and programmes to retain employees for their work feasibility.

### HR Strategies, Employee retention and Competency

Good culture is usually typified by quality of excellence, openness in communication, participation in decision-making, high standard of safety, good corporate citizen. Employee retention involves taking measures to encourage employees to remain in the organization for the maximum period of time. Hiring knowledgeable people for the job is essential for an employer. But retention is even more important than hiring. There are many organizations which are looking for such employees. If a person is not satisfied by the job he's doing, he may switch over to some other more suitable job. In today's environment it becomes very important for organizations to retain their employees. Retention is not only important just to reduce the turnover costs or the cost incurred by a company to recruit and train. But the need of retaining employees is more important to retain talented employees from getting poached. They may be the turnover cost which includes hundreds of thousands of rupees to the company's expenses. Employee retention involves a systematic effort by the organization to create an environment that addresses diverse employee needs so employees will stay with the company.

The combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities, capabilities and personal attributes that contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately individual result in organization success. To understand competencies, it is important to define the various components of competencies.

- Knowledge is the cognizance of facts, truths and principles gained from formal training and/or experience. Application and sharing of one's knowledge base is critical to individual and organizational success.
- A skill is a developed proficiency or dexterity in mental operations or physical processes that is often acquired through specialized training; the execution of these skills results in successful performance.
- Ability is the power or aptitude to perform physical or mental activities that are often affiliated with a particular profession or trade such as computer programming, plumbing, calculus, and so forth. Although organizations may be adept at measuring results, skills and knowledge regarding one's performance, they are often remiss in recognizing employees' abilities or aptitudes, especially those outside of the traditional job design<sup>7</sup>.

**Employee retention** refers to the ability of an organization to retain its employees. Employee retention can be represented by a simple statistic (for example, a retention rate of 80% usually indicates that an organization kept 80% of its employees in a given period). However, many consider employee retention as relating to the efforts by which employers attempt to retain employees in their workforce. In this sense, retention becomes the strategies rather than the outcome.

A distinction should be drawn between low-performing employees and top performers, and efforts to retain

employees should be targeted at valuable, contributing employees. Employee turnover is a symptom of deeper issues that have not been resolved, which may include low employee morale, absence of a clear career path, lack of recognition, poor employee-manager relationships or many other issues. A lack of satisfaction and commitment to the organization can also cause an employee to withdraw and begin looking for other opportunities. Pay does not always play as large a role in inducing turnover as is typically believed.

In a business setting, the goal of employers is usually to decrease employee turnover, thereby decreasing training costs, recruitment costs and loss of talent and organisational knowledge. By implementing lessons learned from key organizational behavior concepts, employers can improve retention rates and decrease the associated costs of high turnover. However, this isn't always the case. Employers can seek "positive turnover" whereby they aim to maintain only those employees whom they consider to be high performers. Retention Programs It is important to first pinpoint the root cause of the retention issue before implementing a program to address it. Once identified, a program can be tailored to meet the unique needs of the organization. A variety of programs exist to help increase employee retention.

- A. Career Development**– It is important for employees to understand their career path within an organization to motivate them to remain in the organization to achieve their personal career goals. Through surveys, discussion and classroom instruction, employees can better understand their goals for personal development. With these developmental goals in mind, organizations can - and should - offer tailored career development opportunities to their employees.
- B. Executive Coaching** – Executive coaching can be used to build competencies in leaders within an organization. Coaching can be useful in times of organizational change, to increase a leader's effectiveness or to encourage managers to implement coaching techniques with peers and direct reports. The coaching process begins with an assessment of the individual's strengths and opportunities for improvement. The issues are then prioritized and interventions are delivered to target key weaknesses. Assistance is then provided to encourage repeated use of newly acquired skills.
- C. Motivating Across Generations** - Today's workforce includes a diverse population of employees from multiple generations. As each generation holds different expectations for the workplace, it is important to understand the differences between these generations regarding motivation and engagement. Managers, especially, must understand how to handle the differences among their direct reports.
- D. Orientation and On boarding**– An employee's perception of an organization takes shape during the first several days on the job and continues throughout their first six months, with 90% of employees still deciding whether or not to stay at the organization during this time. It is in the best interest of both the employee and the organization to impart knowledge about the company quickly and effectively to integrate the new employee into the workforce. In addition, providing continual reinforced learning through extended on boarding over the first year can increase new hire retention by 25%. By implementing an

effective on boarding process, new hire turnover rates will decrease and productivity will increase.

- E. Women's Retention Programs** – Programs such as mentoring, leadership development and networking that are geared specifically toward women can help retain top talent and decrease turnover costs. By implementing programs to improve work/life balance, employees can be more engaged and productive while at work.

### Retention Tools and Resources

1. **Employee Surveys** – By surveying employees, organizations can gain insight into the motivation, engagement and satisfaction of their employees. It is important for organizations to understand the perspective of the employee in order to create programs targeting any particular issues that may impact employee retention.
2. **Exit Interviews** – By including exit interviews in the process of employee separation, organizations can gain valuable insight into the workplace experience. Exit interviews allow the organization to understand the triggers of the employee's desire to leave as well as the aspects of their work that they enjoyed. The organization can then use this information to make necessary changes to their company to retain top talent. Exit interviews must, however, ask the right questions and elicit honest responses from separating employees to be effective.
3. **Employee Retention Consultants** – An employee retention consultant can assist organizations in the process of retaining top employees. Consultants can provide expertise on how to best identify the issues within an organization that are related to turnover. Once identified, a consultant can suggest programs or organizational changes to address these issues and may also assist in the implementation of these programs or changes.

### Employee Retention Best Practices

By focusing on the fundamentals, organizations can go a long way towards building a high-retention workplace. Organizations can start by defining their culture and identifying the types of individuals that would thrive in that environment. Organizations should adhere to the fundamental new hire orientation and on boarding plans. Attracting and recruiting top talent requires time, resources and capital. However, these are all wasted if employees are not positioned to succeed within the company. Research has shown that an employee's first 10 days are critical because the employee is still adjusting and getting acclimated to the organization. Companies retain good employees by being employers of choice.

1. **Recruitment**- Presenting applicants with realistic job previews during the recruitment process have a positive effect on retaining new hires. Employers that are transparent about the positive and negative aspects of the job, as well as the challenges and expectations are positioning themselves to recruit and retain stronger candidates.
2. **Selection**- There is plethora of selection tools that can help predict job performance and subsequently retention. These include both subjective and objective methods and while organizations are accustomed to

using more subjective tools such as interviews, application and resume evaluations, objective methods are increasing in popularity. For example, utilizing biographical data during selection can be an effective technique. Bio data empirically identifies life experiences that differentiate those who stay with an organization and those who quit. Life experiences associated with employees may include tenure on previous jobs, education experiences, and involvement and leadership in related work experiences.

3. **Socialization**- Socialization practices delivered via a strategic on boarding and assimilation program can help new employees become embedded in the company and thus more likely to stay. Research has shown that socialization practices can help new hires become embedded in the company and thus more likely to stay. These practices include shared and individualized learning experiences, activities that allow people to get to know one another. Such practices may include providing employees with a role model, mentor or trainer or providing timely and adequate feedback.
4. **Training And Development**- Providing ample training and development opportunities can discourage turnover by keeping employees satisfied and well-positioned for future growth opportunities. In fact, dissatisfaction with potential career development is one of the top three reasons employees (35%) often feel inclined to look elsewhere. if employees are not given opportunities to continually update their skills, they are more likely to leave. Those who receive more training are less likely to quit than those who receive little or no training. Employers that fear providing training will make their employees more marketable and thus increase turnover can offer job specific training, which is less transferable to other contexts. Additionally, employers can increase retention through development opportunities such as allowing employees to further their education and reimbursing tuition for employees who remain with the company for a specified amount of time.
5. **Compensation and Rewards**- Pay levels and satisfaction are only modest predictors of an employee's decision to leave the organization; however organizations can lead the market with a strong compensation and reward package as 53% of employees often look elsewhere because of poor compensation and benefits. Organizations can explicitly link rewards to retention (i.e. vacation hours to seniority, offer retention Bonus payments or Employee stock options, or define benefit plan payouts to years of services) Research has shown that defined compensation and rewards as associated with longer tenure. Additionally, organizations can also look to intrinsic rewards such as increased decision-making autonomy. Though this is important, employers should not
6. **Effective Leaders**- An employee's relationship with his/her immediately ranking supervisor or manager is equally important to keeping to making an employee feel embedded and valued within the organization. Supervisors need to know how to motivate their employees and reduce cost while building loyalty in their key people. Managers need to reinforce employee productivity and open communication, to coach employees and provide meaningful feedback and inspire employees to work as an effective team. In order to

achieve this, organizations need to prepare managers and supervisors to lead and develop effective relationships with their subordinates. Executive Coaching can help increase an individual's effectiveness as a leader as well as boast a climate of learning, trust and teamwork in an organization. To encourage supervisors to focus on retention among their teams, organizations can incorporate retention metric into their organization's evaluation.

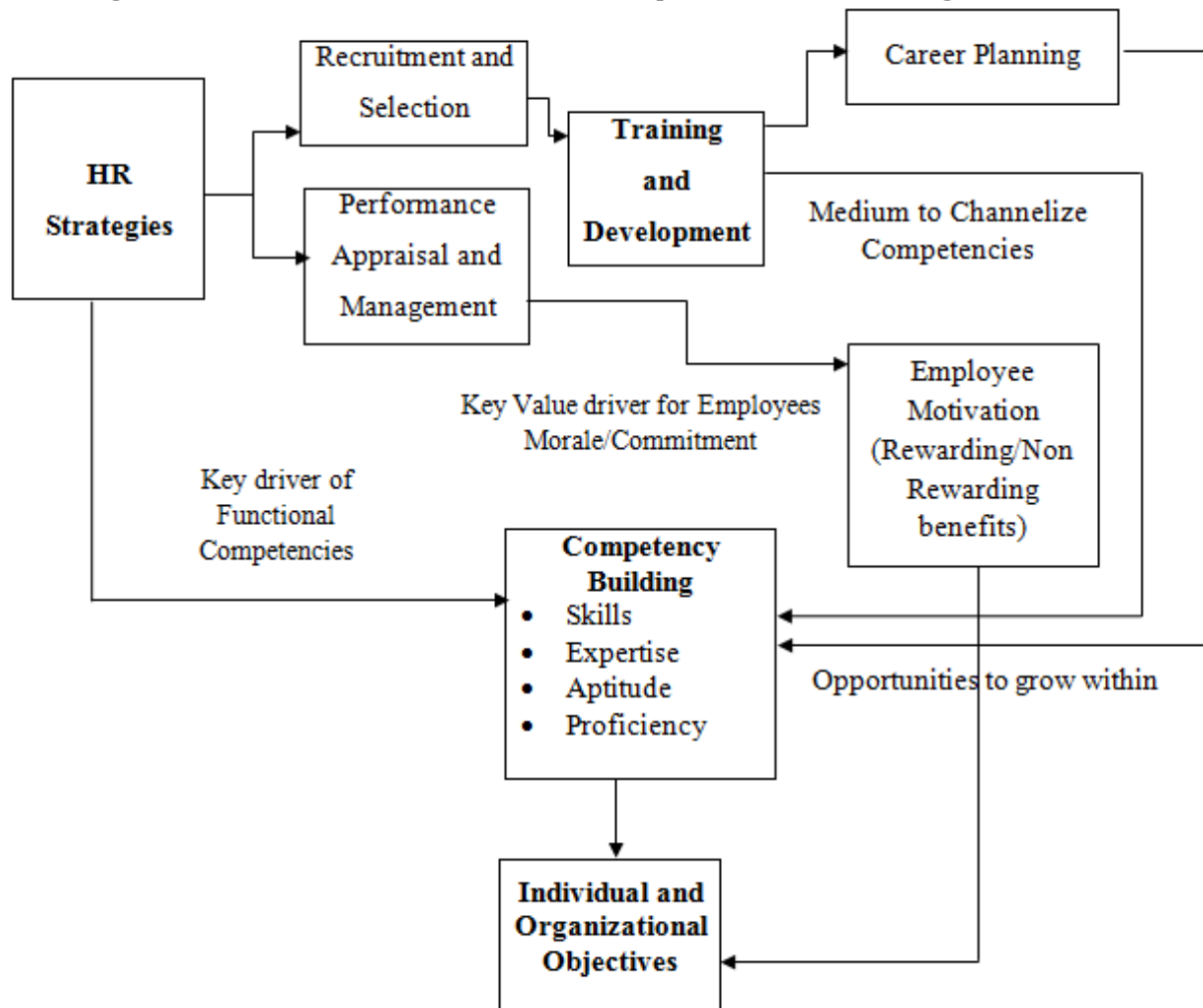
- Employee Engagement-** Employees who are satisfied with their jobs, enjoy their work and the organization, believe their job to be more important, take pride in the company and feel their contributions are impactful are five times less likely to quit than employees who were not engaged. Engaged employees give their companies

crucial competitive advantages, including higher productivity and lower employee turnover<sup>8</sup>.

**Benefits of HR Strategies and Competencies**

Competency models can help organizations align their initiatives to their overall business strategy. By aligning competencies to business strategies, organizations can better recruit and select employees for their organizations. Competencies have become a precise way for employers to distinguish superior from average or below average performance. The reason for this is because competencies extend beyond measuring baseline characteristics and or skills used to define and assess job performance. In addition to recruitment and selection, a well sound Competency Model will help with performance management, succession planning and career development.

**HR Strategies as a Medium to Mobilize Functional Competencies within the Organizational Resources**



**Recruitment and Selection**

Recruitment is the process of identifying that the organisation needs to employ someone up to the point at which application forms for the post have arrived at the organisation. Selection then consists of the processes involved in choosing from applicants a suitable candidate to fill a post.

Selection is a process of recruitment based on the ability of candidates to produce about their professional experience which can be used as evidence that the candidate has a given competency. Candidates demonstrate competencies on the application form, and then in the interview, which in this case is known as a competency-based interview.

The process is intended to be fairer than other recruitment processes by clearly laying down the required competencies and then testing them in such a way that the recruiter has little discretion to favour one candidate over another; the process assumes high recruiter discretion is undesirable. As a result of its perceived fairness, the process is popular in public services. Competency-based recruitment is highly focused on the candidates' story-telling abilities as an indication of competency, and disfavors other indications of a candidate's skills and potential.

The use of behavioral interviewing and testing where appropriate, to screen job candidates based on whether they possess the key necessary job competency profile:

- A. Provides a complete picture of the job requirements
- B. Increases the likelihood of selecting and interviewing only individuals who are likely to succeed on the job
- C. Minimizes the investment (both time and money) in people who may not meet the company's expectations
- D. Enables a more systematic and valid interview and selection process
- E. Helps distinguish between competencies that are trainable after hiring and those are more difficult to develop

### Training & Development

Training is a process that attempts to improve employee performance on currently held on job by providing the employee with the knowledge and skills needed for their present job. It is designed to bring about in specific knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior. An ideal training effort is one that meets the goals of the organizations well as those of the employees.

Development of individual learning plans for individual or groups of employees based on the measurable "gaps" between job competencies or competency proficiency levels required for their jobs and the competency portfolio processed by the incumbent.

- A. Focuses training and development plans to address missing competencies or raise level of proficiency
- B. Enables people to focus on the skills, knowledge and characteristics that have the most impact on job effectiveness
- C. Ensures that training and development opportunities are aligned with organizational needs
- D. Makes the most effective use of training and development time and dollars
- E. Provides a competency framework for ongoing coaching and feedback, both development and remedial

### Performance Appraisal and Management

Performance Appraisal is the systematic evaluation of the performance of employees and to understand the abilities of a person for further growth and development. Performance management process sets the platform for rewarding excellence by aligning individual employee accomplishments with the organization's mission and objectives and making the employee and the organization understand the importance of a specific job in realizing outcomes. By establishing clear performance expectations which includes results, actions and behaviors, it helps the employees in understanding what exactly is expected out of their jobs and setting of standards help in eliminating those jobs which are of no use any longer. Through regular feedback and coaching, it provides an advantage of diagnosing the problems at an early stage and taking corrective actions.

Provides regular measurement of targeted behaviors and performance outcomes linked to job competency profile critical factors.

- A. Provides a shared understanding of what will be monitored, measured, and rewarded
- B. Focuses and facilitates the performance appraisal discussion appropriately on performance and development

- C. Provides focus for gaining information about a person's behavior on the job
- D. Facilitates effectiveness goal-setting around required development efforts and performance outcomes

### Motivation

Motivated workforce can be a significant factor in organizational success. When employees are motivated to work at higher levels of productivity, the organization as a whole runs more efficiently and is more effective at reaching its goals. This is in contrast to an unmotivated workforce, who can negatively disrupt an organization and distract employees from their work. For this reason, it is imperative that managers understand the power of reward and non rewarding systems and how they are used to influence employee behavior.

### Career Paths:

Development of stepping stones necessary for promotion and long term career-growth, HR Strategies are the key points to building competencies likewise without competency it would not in-depth employee career path because; its only parameter to proper planning to employees further growth and proper decision making. If you find these competencies like skills, abilities, knowledge and proficiency for who required bases to elucidate regarding career planning and development.

- A. Clarifies the skills, knowledge, and characteristics required for the job or role in question and for the follow-on jobs
- B. Identifies necessary levels of proficiency for follow-on jobs
- C. Allows for the identification of clear, valid, legally defensible and achievable benchmarks for employees to progress upward
- D. Takes the guesswork out of career progression discussions

### Succession Planning:

Careful, methodical preparation focused on retaining and growing the competency portfolios critical for the organization to survive and prosper.

- A. Provides a method to assess candidates' readiness for the role
- B. Focuses training and development plans to address missing competencies or gaps in competency proficiency levels
- C. Allows an organization to measures its "bench strength"—the number of high-potential performers and what they need to acquire to step up to the next level
- D. Provides a competency framework for the transfer of critical knowledge, skills, and experience prior to succession – and for preparing candidates for this transfer via training, coaching and mentoring
- E. Informs curriculum development for leadership development programs, a necessary component for management succession planning<sup>9</sup>.

### Conclusion

Strategic Human Resources and its competency initiatives which gives positive influence on employees to retain to organizations by more strategically aligning and the strategic goals of the organization and implicitly enhance the

relationship of employees and the building their competency, strengthen the HR Strategies and competencies to provide greater efficiency and productivity, The commitment HR strategy is characterized as focusing on the internal development of employees' retain programmes, competencies and outcome control. These strategies indicated quite clearly the critical success factors of competence, commitment, performance, contribution and quality that drive the HR strategy. Develop performance management processes that enable financial and non-financial rewards to be related to competence and skills; ensure that pay levels are competitive Bundling implies the adoption of a holistic approach to the development of HR strategies and practices. No single aspect of HR strategy should be considered in isolation. The links between one area and other complementary areas need to be established so that the ways in which they can provide mutual support to the achievement of the overall strategy can be ascertained. The synergy that can result from this process means that the impact of the whole bundle on organizational effectiveness can be greater than the sum of its parts. Thus, a job family pay structure can be associated with competence frameworks and profiles and the definition of career paths as a basis for identifying and meeting development needs. This may mean identifying integrating practices such as the use of competence based processes and performance management. They must have the competencies required to create HR systems that produce strategically relevant employee behaviors. They need to understand the strategy formulation process.

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