

Organisation-specific competency model at the BITMARCK Holding GmbH as a basis for strategic human resources development

Shortly after the foundation of BITMARCK the human resources development (HRD) faced the challenge of developing an offer that meets individual needs within the organisation, establishes common standards and enhances alignment between corporate objectives and human resources tools.

A specific BITMARCK competency model allows uniting these divergent demands. As a basis for different tools it offers a common thread for sustainable, strategic human resources development.

In an intensive process BITMARCK and meta | five jointly developed a competency model that meets the organisation's situation and provides long-term support for the HR work.

BITMARCK[®]

The background

In 2008 BITMARCK emerged from the IT-Allianz as an autonomous organisation. Various associations and health insurances, respectively their IT-organisations, contributed to the organisation in order to incorporate an independent full-service-provider in the IT market of statutory health insurances. The resulting bundling of capacities and know-how was decisive for BITMARCK's competitiveness.

Infobox

The Group (at time of project)

BITMARCK was founded in 2008 as a cooperation of different organisations from the field of statutory health insurances (SHI) and consists of a Holding and five operative subsidiaries. With over 1.200 employees and an annual turnover of approximately 250 m Euro BITMARCK is the largest full-service provider in the IT market of SHI.

The objective

As an organisation that was founded during ongoing operation, BITMARCK faced the seldom challenge of establishing the organisation-wide HR management as a central function within a short time frame. Hereby strategic objectives as well as existing practice were to be considered and an organisation-wide direction had to be ensured.

The approach

Existing values and future visions are both appreciated due to the two components of the competency model - lived values and strategic competencies. The continuous involvement of representatives from various divisions, functions and hierarchy levels ensures the integration of different perspectives into an overall picture.

The benefit

The competency model provides a uniform basis for different processes in the personnel management. Gradually implemented instruments are aligned consistently and build upon one another. Furthermore, through the competency model BITMARCK communicates clear expectations to its employees and thereby establishes transparency.

Five business units (BU) provide diverse services to BITMARCK's customers. A Holding supports them in superordinate topics like corporate strategy, marketing and human resources. Whereas the business units in the operative business benefited from successfully implemented structures, the central corporate functions were newly established. As a result, the holding faced the challenge of offering necessary services quickly and developing convincing strategies and concepts for a sustainable establishment at the same time.

One of the Holding's central tasks is to foster the integration of the former single companies with their individual cultures into one corporation.

The objective

The HRD acts as a competency centre which designs and implements uniform tools across the organisation. At the same time it provides the business units individual services and solutions for their specific needs.

In order to unite these roles, the HRD department decided to define a consistent basis for all their processes: an organisation-wide competency model. This consistent framework ensures synergistic effects between different HRD measures. Additionally, alignment between the business units is fostered while at the same time room for individuality remains.

The Concept

The first challenge was to find the optimal combination for BITMARCK among the various possibilities to generate a competency model. The decision was made in favour of a two-component-model that includes strategic competencies on the one hand and lived values on the other:

The **strategic component** ensures a focus of HR work on the competencies that guarantee BITMARCK's future entrepreneurial success. The behavioural-oriented description of these competencies conveys clear expectations, points out development perspectives and fosters an atmosphere of change in the organisation.

The integration of **lived values** has the purpose of illustrating existing commonalities within the organisation in

the course of extensive changes. The definition as values conveys continuity as a counter-pole to the competencies and emphasises positive elements of existing corporate identities.

The procedure

The benefit of an overall competency model strongly depends on its acceptance and degree of implementation in the organisation. Thus, taking into account many different perspectives and generating buy-in were central aspects in the development of the competency model. For this purpose employees from all parts of the organisation were involved in the different phases.

Strategic competencies

For the identification and formulation of the strategic competencies (fig. 1) meta | five conducted a total of 40 Interviews. In order to include as many different perspectives as possible and to ensure a high degree of involvement, employees in different positions at various locations from the business units as well as from the Holding were interviewed.

fig. 1 | Example "strategic competency"

Flexibility and open-mindedness

- | We face new tasks open-mindedly and constructively
- | We react positively to changes and advancement
- | We quickly adapt to new framework conditions
- | We improve and expand our skills and knowledge according to changing requirements
- | We think out of the box and apply sound ideas to our day-to-day work
- | We utilise freedom to realise own ideas
- | We question existing processes constructively and develop suggestions for improvement
- | We actively call for feedback and derive respective consequences from it

In the course of these interviews future challenges for BITMARCK as well as necessary skills, attitudes and employees' motives were examined. Support for structuring the interviews was given by the dimensions derived from interviews with the 7 CEOs that were conducted in advance.

The statements of all interview partners were clustered while repeating and overlapping aspects were prioritised. On the one hand this procedure allowed to highlight common priorities, while excluding a mutual influence among the interview partners. On the other hand the consistent involvement of all groups in the organisation permitted an enhanced identification of the employees with the results. This in turn fostered the perceived relevance of the model and thereby its use in day-to-day work.

Lived values

The lived values were developed in a workshop in which representatives from all parts of the organisation took part. For choosing the participants, their knowledge of the respective part of the organisation as well as their suitability to represent the associated employees was of crucial interest.

fig. 2 | Example "lived value"

Identification with the organisation

The positive attitude towards our organisation, products and tasks is the basis for our commitment. Hereby, consolidation of interests is a central element for us.

The workshop focussed on current identities and central values of the different parts of the organisation as an important complement to the future requirements that were defined in the course of the strategic competencies. The overlapping values from the different organisation parts were used to derive a common value system. By creating this step as a workshop the partic-

ipants more intensively dealt with their organisation's current values and major parallels between the different parts of the organisation were pointed out.

Thus, a consensus resulted from the workshop and important representatives of all parts of the organisation could be won over as promoters for the competency model. At the same time the intensive and thematically extraordinary exchange fostered the understanding of the parts of the organisation for each other.

The result

Concluding, meta | five integrated the interview and workshop results. Key personalities and decision makers of the organisation affirmed a good fitting and high face validity of the model in the course of a follow-up survey. In consequence, the HRD department decided to set aside a further refinement with the purpose of adapting the model to different functions and parts of the organisation and to thereby highlight the instrument's alignment function.

The final two-component model provides the employees with orientation on two levels (fig. 3). It appreciates already existing achievements to the same extent as it calls for continuous development. The formulation of the competencies and competency definitions explicitly align to the wording at BITMARCK. Thus, they enhance a personal relevance and facilitate the identification with the content.

The consequences

The fact that BITMARCK employees developed all of the competency model's content guaranteed a strong relation to day-to-day work. Due to the high relevance for work the competency model offers valuable support, e. g. for leadership, providing feedback or communication of requirements. The buy-in that was generated in the development process ensures the employees' and executives' willingness to accept this support and to use the model themselves.

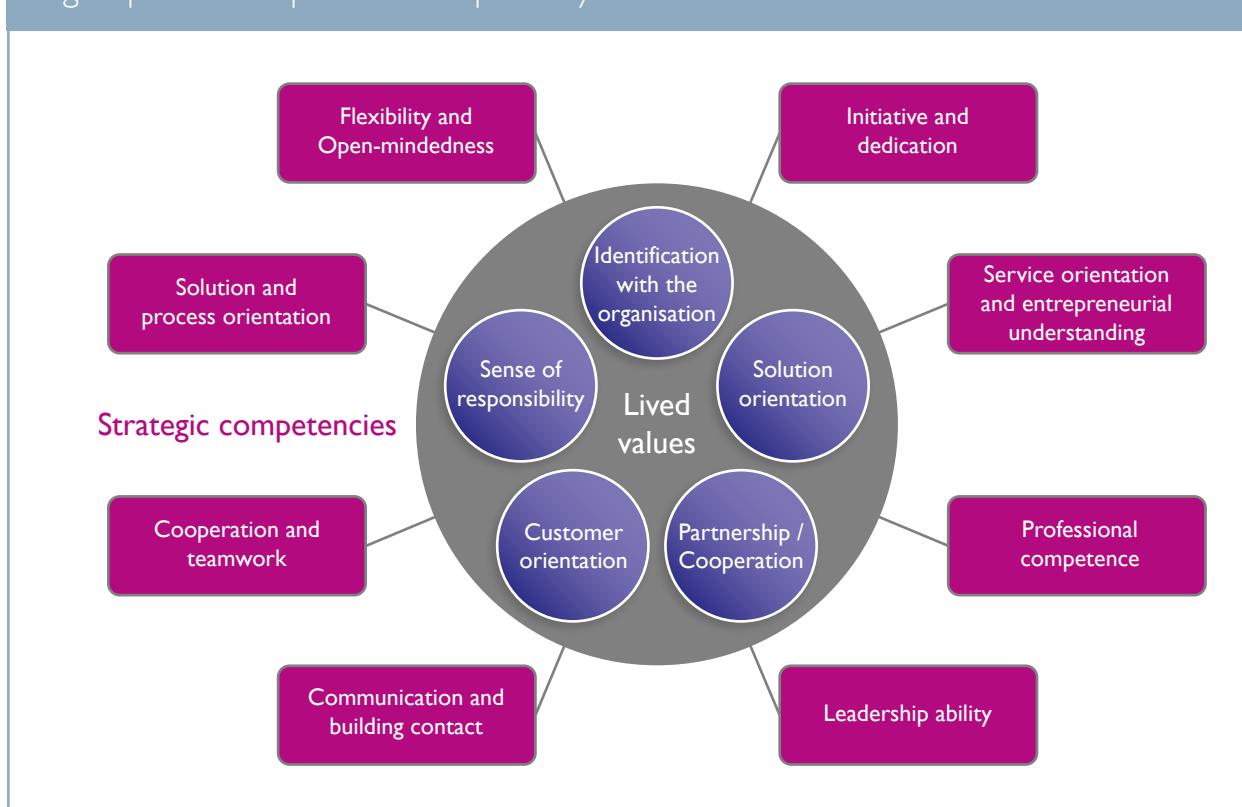
Furthermore, the HRD department successfully integrated the competency model into different tools at BITMARCK and continuously promotes the implementation.

For example, it offers a demand-driven 360° feedback for individual development to the organisation's employees, which consists of questions that picture the competency model. It also serves as an important basis for interview guidelines for personnel selection and structured feedback discussions. The defined values from the competency model were included in the mission statement in the course of a re-structuring in 2010 and will also be indicated in the employee survey.

"The specific BITMARCK competency model supports the HRD department in achieving its goal to develop and improve corporate-wide competencies that are critical for BITMARCK's success as well as to establish according leadership tools that meet practical requirements. With regards to the development, two aspects were of crucial interest for us: The consequent alignment of all activities to corporate objectives in order to form our still young common corporate culture respectively. As well as attention and thoughtfulness towards the already existing cultures in the different parts of the organisation. Regarding this, meta | five always found a good balance and gained a high degree of approval by including all organisation parts of BITMARCK ..."

BITMARCK Holding GmbH
Head of human resources department

fig. 3 | Two-component competency model



Infobox

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About us:

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