

ASTD COMPETENCY MODEL

"A defined set of competencies is a hallmark of the true profession" and today more than ever, the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) is supporting its members and the field of workplace learning and performance with a new model designed to mold the future of the profession. ASTD's new landmark study defines the landscape of the training and development profession and concomitantly, is preparing the profession formerly known as "training," for the next generation of practitioners.

This new model for our dynamic and complex profession will enable practitioners to provide their organizations with an even higher level of value and service. It defines the profession in the context of learning and performance, and tries to balance the strategic, financial, and business goals of institutions with the welfare of the people who are doing the work. The study also includes a look at the trends and drivers that influence the profession.

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR SUCCESS

The model was built using a data-driven approach with content validated by thousands of learning and performance professionals. The competencies encompass clusters of skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviors required for people to succeed in the workplace learning and performance field. The model is based on three layers of successive building blocks and is shown in the pyramid depiction below:

- Foundational Level: Competencies
- Focus Level: Professional areas of expertise
- Execution Level: Roles in the profession



Foundational competencies are those supporting level competencies linked to successful performance in the field, and are desirable regardless of an individual's area of expertise or role. The model divides the foundational competencies into three clusters: interpersonal, business/management, and personal.

Areas of expertise (AOE) is the second tier of the model and comprises specific technical and professional areas required for success across various jobs in the field. These AOE's are specialized areas that build and rely upon the focused application of the foundational competencies.

There are nine AOE's:

- Designing learning
- Improving human performance
- Delivering training
- Measuring and evaluating
- Facilitating organizational change
- Managing the learning function
- Coaching
- Managing organizational knowledge
- Career planning and talent management

Roles is the top tier or execution level of the model. Roles are not the same as job titles—they are much more fluid depending on the work or project, and can best be defined as the broad area of responsibility within the profession that requires a select group of foundational competencies (bottom tier) and select group of AOE's (second tier) to successfully execute. There are four defined roles in the model:

- Learning strategist
- Business partner
- Project manager
- Professional specialist

PUTTING THE MODEL TO WORK

Professional development is the key to personal success.

The ASTD model provides an important and useful tool to guide individual development by describing what it takes for you as a contributor and professional in the field to successfully navigate your career. In the future, the key will be to align a career path with the needs of organizations and their leaders to achieve business results. The model also provides a common language that can be used to discuss what the organization needs from the profession by answering the question: What competencies should people possess to be thriving in the field, while at the same time, supplies a roadmap of success that charts performance against a valid set of descriptors.

Organizational applications of the ASTD competency model can serve as an integrative framework for an organization's HR system. It can help align the HR system vertically with the organization's strategic objectives, organizationally with other HR functions, to ensure harmony and consistency across the many facets of HR activities that impact human performance.

Education and academic programs can base their curriculum to actively support employer expectations for new and continuing professionals in the field. The ASTD model serves as a blueprint to guide academic curriculum development.

Credentialing workplace learning and performance professionals is one of the highest achievements available to recognize individuals who have met certain predetermined qualifications. The ASTD model and research study provide a basis for a competency-based certification program on the core knowledge, skills, actions, and behaviors judged most critical for successful performance. The ASTD sponsored certification pilot program will roll out starting in June 2005, with full program launch in 1st quarter 2006.