

A PILOT STUDY OF ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES  
AS PERCEIVED BY MULTI-UNIT OPERATIONS  
AND HUMAN RESOURCES LEADERS  
IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

By

BELINDA D. BUTLER

Bachelor of Science in Business Education

Central State University

Edmond, Oklahoma

1989

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE  
July, 2006

**COPY RIGHT**

**By**

**Belinda Delia Butler**

**July, 2006**

A PILOT STUDY OF ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES  
AS PERCEIVED BY MULTI-UNIT OPERATIONS  
AND HUMAN RESOURCES LEADERS  
IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Thesis Approved:

---

Dr. Radesh Palakurthi

---

Dr. Patrick Moreo

---

Dr. Jerrold Leong

---

Dr. A. Gordon Emslie

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank my advising committee, Dr. Radesh Palakurthi, Dr. Pat Moreo, and Dr. Jerrold Leong for their guidance, support and encouragement during the completion of my thesis. I specifically want to thank Dr. Palakurthi for spurring me on with his time, effort and energy when I wasn't able to move forward in this project. Next I thank Dr. Leong for his wisdom and the Christian example in which he leads and his abiding faith which provided me with peace and calm on more than one occasion. It is with gratefulness that I thank Dr. Moreo for opening the necessary doors which brought me back to Oklahoma.

I would be remiss not to mention and thank the following individuals who helped me throughout this experience in a variety of ways. First, I thank Dr. Woody Kim, who taught my first graduate class and required us to look up articles and write a small research paper. It is the article I found for Dr. Kim's class, which provided me with a thesis topic. I also want to thank Cassi Hale and James Gordon for their help in conducting the focus group for this study. Most of all I thank Cassi and James for their friendship. I already miss the laughter and fun we had.

Lastly, I thank my parents, Nell and David Butler and my brother and sister-in-law, Denise and Brad Butler for their unyielding prayers, listening ears, encouragement and support. Words cannot express my gratitude or just how thankful I am for you to be my family. I love you so much.

To my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, thank you for hearing and answering my prayers.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	5
Background of Competence and Competency.....	5
Competency Studies.....	7
Generic versus Context and/or Industry-Specific Competencies .....	9
Dining Segments.....	12
III. METHODOLOGY .....	15
Research Design.....	15
Focus Group.....	15
Personal Interviews.....	16
Gaining Consensus on Competencies.....	16
Survey Instrument.....	24
Data Analysis.....	25
IV. FINDINGS.....	28
Main Competency Rankings.....	28
Sub Competency's Weighted Averages .....	31
Comparison of Sub Competency Weighted Averages In Rank Order .....	34
Two-Sample t-Test of Unequal Variance .....	44
V. CONCLUSION.....	47
Implications of the Study.....	50
Limitations of the Study.....	51
Future Research .....	51
REFERENCES .....	53
APPENDIX.....	61

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Competency Studies Conducted in the Hospitality Industry .....	8
II. List of Main and Sub Competencies from Focus Group and Personal Interviews .....	19
III. Competency List and Definitions .....	20
IV. Example of Coding Format Used for Each Main Competency .....	25
V. Example of Coding Format Used for Each Sub Competency .....	26
VI. Comparison of Competency Weighted Averages in Rank Order by Human Resources and Operations Leaders .....	34
VII. Comparison of Competency Weighted Average Rankings and the Differences Between Rankings by Human Resources and Operations Leaders .....	38
VIII. Weighted Average, Standard Deviation and T-Value for Each Competency .....	45

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Diagram of Focus Group Process to Obtain the Final List of Competencies.....	18
2. Diagram of the Complete Process to Obtain the Final Rank Order of Competencies .....	27
3. Main Competencies by Weighted Average in Rank Order .....	29
4. Operations Leaders Main Competency Weighted Averages in Rank Order.....	30
5. Human Resources Leaders Main Competency Weighted Averages in Rank Order.....	30
6. Top 25 Sub Competencies by Weighted Average, Listed in Rank Order.....	32
7. Bottom 25 Sub Competencies by Weighted Average, Listed in Rank Order.....	33
8. Quartile 1. Top 12 Competencies as Ranked by Operations Leaders and Their Differences from the Human Resources Leaders' Competency Rank Order .....	40
9. Quartile 2. Competencies 13-24 as Ranked by Operations Leaders and Their Differences from the Human Resources Leaders' Competency Rank Order .....	41
10. Quartile 3. Competencies 25-37 as Ranked by Operations Leaders and Their Differences from the Human Resources Leaders' Competency Rank Order .....	41
11. Quartile 4. Competencies 38-51 as Ranked by Operations Leaders and Their Differences from the Human Resources Leaders' Competency Rank Order .....	41

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Ever since the first four-year college-level program in hospitality management was established at Cornell University in the 1920s, educators have looked to industry leaders for advice and feedback regarding the main competencies that graduates need for professional success (Kay and Russette, 2000). Furthermore, to deliver high-quality, industry-relevant hospitality education, educators must continually identify and investigate those competencies that are recognized by industry professionals as being essential for successful managers (Okeiyi, Finley, and Postel, 1994).

However, the hospitality industry has voiced its complaint that educational programs have lost touch with the general managerial demands of the workplace (Rowe, 1993). Some hospitality educators have even questioned whether hotel and restaurant management programs are preparing hospitality students adequately. According to Christou and Eaton (2000), recognition of the need for wider management and information handling skills is something which has only recently dawned upon education providers for the sector. The Bach and Milman (1996) and Christou (2002) studies also support the need for university hospitality programs to recognize the competencies industry leaders are looking for in today's hospitality management workforce.

While industry leaders tend to put the onus on university hospitality programs, much debate exists among these same leaders in terms of agreeing on the definition of competency and the essential competencies individuals should possess when applying for



jobs in the hospitality industry. Regardless, the terms competence and competency, as well as the use of competency methods as the basis for human resource management has become widespread in the United States and is gaining a foothold in international human resource practice as well (Athey and Orth, 1999).

Further evidence of this widespread use is shown in various studies (Brown and Fritz, 1994; Drucker, 1999; Foster and Pikkert, 1991; Scanlon, Bruening and Cordero, 1996; Spotanski and Foster, 1989), which have been conducted to identify the generic competencies required for a variety of business and industry positions, where it is assumed that individuals gain their technical competence through education or on the job. In addition to these studies, there have been a number of studies specific to hospitality management competencies (Buergermeister, 1983; Tas, 1988; Umbreit and Pederson, 1989; Baum, 1990, 1991; Partlow, 1991; Knuston and Patton, 1992; Umbreit, 1993; Okeiyi et al. 1994; Hsu, 1995; DiMicelli, 1998; Christou and Eaton, 2000; Nelson and Dopson, 2001), yet the hospitality industry is no different in terms of trying to identify the most important technical and generic competencies required to manage effectively in the industry. The skills, which tourism and hospitality have traditionally coveted, are those within the technical domain (for job areas such as chefs and airline pilots) or in what might be called socio-emotional areas, principally concerned with the delivery of quality service (Baum, 2002). From an educational perspective, tourism and hospitality traditions lie in practical and craft-based training (Gillespie and Baum, 2000) and these origins continue to influence the culture of delivery in university classrooms.

While industry professionals and academicians agree that technical or craft-based skills were once deemed the most important to possess, research studies over the past 15

years have shown that generic competencies, which are more “soft skill” in nature, have emerged as being the most important. Thus, according to Drucker (1999), professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be able to manage using “soft skills” to relate to others in the workplace. Technical-based skills are still necessary for individuals to possess regardless of their industry; however, it is the development of value-adding skills and generic (soft skill) competencies among human resources (Baum, 1995) which adds to the comparative success of a hospitality or tourism firm (Go, Monachello and Baum, 1996).

As the competency pendulum swings toward generic competencies which are considered soft skills, and competency methods evolve to meet rapidly changing business needs regardless of the industry, the definition of what competencies represent will also continue to change. However, Boon and van der Klink (2002) state “while the competence and competency line is blurred in terms of its concept,” it is nonetheless defined as merely “bridging the gap between education and job requirements” regardless of whether an individual’s competencies are generic in scope or task and/or organizationally specific.

Given the simplistic nature of Boon and van der Klink’s definition, it is paradoxical that while management strategists emphasize competencies that are unique and firm-specific, human resource development (HRD) professionals support the philosophy of developing highly transferable generic competencies that would be required in most occupations or positions (Levy-Leboyer, 1996; Stasz, 1997). What is even more paradoxical, is while a vast amount of research has been done regarding the competencies needed to be successful within the hospitality industry, with few exceptions, most studies have been conducted within the hotel sector, not the restaurant

sector of the business. Furthermore, the studies have varied results in terms of the need for generic competencies or context and/or industry-specific competencies.

Hence, the overall objective of this pilot study was to determine if a universal set of generic competencies, which are considered “soft skill” in nature, could be identified among multi-unit restaurant operations and human resources leaders in the quick service, fast casual, casual dining and fine dining segments; thus providing a guide for restaurant leaders to use when hiring new managers into their organizations as well as giving credence to the idea of hiring managers with diverse dining segment experience.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

To gain greater understanding of the term competency and the concept of generic versus context-specific competencies, the researcher believes it is prudent to look at the background of the term competency and the competency movement and evolution.

#### **Background of Competence and Competency**

White (1959) is credited with having introduced the term competence to describe those personality characteristics associated with superior performance and high motivation. Postulating a relationship between the cognitive competence and motivational action tendencies, White defined competence as “an effective interaction (of the individual) with the environment” and argued that there is a “competence motivation” in addition to competence as “achieved capacity.” McClelland (1973) followed this approach and developed tests to predict competence as an alternative to the trait and intelligence approaches to measuring and predicting human performance. Subsequently, McClelland (1976) also described this characteristic, which underlies superior performance as “competency.”

While the definition of what a competency is has evolved significantly over the years, McClelland (1973) referred to competencies as components of performance associated with “clusters of life outcomes.” This definition views competency in broad terms as any psychological or behavioral attribute associated with success. More than 20 years later, the Hartle (1995) study also found that competency as a “characteristic of an

individual that has been shown to drive superior job performance” includes both visible competencies of knowledge and skills as well as underlying elements of competencies such as behavior, traits and motives. As the concept matured, thinking shifted to a more specific view of competencies known as “knowledge, skills, abilities, or other characteristics (KSAOs) that differentiate high from average performance” (Mirable, 1997).

Given the degree of change impacting companies today, including hospitality companies, the definition and concept of competence and competency has, by necessity, taken on even broader dimensions. Thus, a competency is a set of observable performance dimensions, including individual knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors, as well as collective team process and organizational capabilities that are linked to high performance, and provide the organization with sustainable competitive advantage (Athey and Orth, 1999; Nadler and Tushman, 1999; Agut and Grau, 2002; Delamare Le Deist and Winterton, 2005).

Regardless of the competency evolution, the underlying advantages and the reasons for its continued widespread adoption in the twenty-first century can be summarized as follows (McClelland, 1973):

1. The best way to understand performance is to observe what people actually do to be successful (i.e. competencies) rather than rely on assumptions about underlying traits or attributes such as intelligence.
2. The best way to measure and predict performance is to have people perform key aspects of the competency you want to measure, rather than administering a test to assess underlying traits or attributes.

3. Competencies can be learned and developed over time, in contrast to traits and attributes that are viewed as inherent and largely immutable.
4. Competencies should be made visible and accessible to people so they can understand and develop the required level of performance, rather than be cloaked in the veil of mystery associated with traits and intelligence factors.
5. Competencies should be linked to meaningful life outcomes that describe the way people must perform in the real world, rather than esoteric mental traits or constructs that only psychologists can understand.

### **Competency Studies**

As mentioned, there have been numerous studies conducted not only to define the term competency, but also to identify those competencies deemed essential for individuals to possess within a particular industry or work context. Inasmuch as the hospitality industry has had numerous studies conducted as well; these studies have been done either in the hospitality industry as a whole, or the studies have been specific to the hotel sector of the industry. The studies conducted in the hospitality industry as shown in Table 1 denote the author of the study, the year the study was conducted and the main competencies chosen in the study.

Table 1. Competency Studies Conducted in the Hospitality Industry

<b>Hospitality Research Studies</b>	<b>Effective Communication</b>	<b>Supervisory Skills</b>	<b>Problem Identification and Problem Solve</b>	<b>Professional Conduct</b>	<b>Ethics and Standards</b>	<b>Professional Appearance</b>	<b>Interpersonal &amp; Human Relation Skills</b>	<b>Technical/Computer Skills</b>	<b>Financial Skills</b>	<b>Creative-Thinking Skills</b>	<b>Total Quality Management</b>	<b>Guest Relations</b>	<b>Adapt to Change</b>	<b>Decision Making</b>	<b>Employee Relations</b>	<b>Leadership Skills</b>	<b>General Managerial Skills</b>	<b>Create Positive Work Environment</b>	<b>Guest Satisfaction</b>
Buergermeister 1983	x			x	x			x	x								x		
Knight & Salter 1985	x			x	x			x	x								x		
Tass-1988	x		x	x		x			x			x					x	x	
Baum-1990				x	x				x	x			x			x	x	x	
Jonker & Jonker-1990	x	x			x			x	x			x					x		x
Hsu, Gilmore & Walsh-1992	x	x	x		x			x						x	x	x		x	x
Hanson-1993	x					x				x		x			x	x			x
Okeiyi et al. 1994	x		x		x		x	x				x		x	x	x		x	x
Ashley et al. 1995	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x		x	x
Breiter & Clements-1996	x	x		x	x		x					x		x	x	x		x	x
Tas et al.-1996		x	x	x	x		x			x			x	x		x		x	
Christou & Eaton-2000		x	x	x	x		x			x			x	x		x		x	
Kay & Russette 2000		x		x	x		x			x			x	x		x		x	

The results of the studies in Table 1 illustrate how competencies which are more technical in nature were considered the most important in earlier studies; the later studies illustrate how competencies which are considered soft-skill competencies are now considered the most important to possess.

## **Generic versus Context and/or Industry-Specific Competencies**

As a result of these studies and their findings, the debate continues among researchers; those who believe the emergence of generic and/or soft-skill competencies (van der Klink and Boon, 2002; Flood and Flood, 2000; Dulewicz and Herbert, 1992) are indeed the way of the future, and those researchers who still believe competencies are context and/or industry-specific (Delamare Le Deist and Winterton, 2005; Eraut, 2000; Antonacopoulou and Fitzgerald, 1996; Fisher, Bullock, Rotenberg and Raya, 1993).

From the research supporting a generic set of competencies, Flood and Flood (2000) found that the emergence of generic competencies is a common human resource theme to help organizations cope with changing work environments and integrating an organization's human resource strategy with its business strategy. A study by Dulewicz and Herbert (1992) provided the foundation for Flood's theory on generic competencies. Dulewicz and Herbert created a Job Competence Survey where the results showed that the skill needs of managers are sufficiently generic to permit generalizations across occupations. Despite differences in the managerial function in different contexts, Dulewicz (1989) found that firm-specific competencies represented only 30 percent of the total competencies basket, while the remaining 70 percent were common to a wide range of organizations.

Furthermore, van der Klink and Boon (2002) agree that in relation to the generic competence approach, it is important to integrate education and training, aligning both with the needs of the labor market and promoting mobility for individuals, i.e. vertical as in career progression, lateral as in movement between sectors, and spatial as in geographical terms. The tradition remains in the United States of competencies being



defined in terms of underlying characteristics of people that are causally related to effective or superior performance in a job, which can be generalized across various organizations and/or industries and endure for reasonably long periods of time (Boyatzis, 1982; Spencer and Spencer, 1993).

Gangani, McLean and Braden, 2004; Green, 1999; Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999; Naquin and Wilson, 2002; Nitardy and McLean, 2002; Russ-Eft, 1995 also found in their studies that even within the predominantly behavioral approach, many conceptions of competency now include knowledge and skills alongside attitudes, behaviors, work habits, abilities and personal characteristics, adding value to the concept of generic competencies.

However, Antonacopoulou and Fitzgerald (1996) warn that the fact that many organizations use the same terminology to describe a set of managerial characteristics is not a strong argument for claiming it is possible to identify a set of universal management competencies. Since competencies are centered on the individual, they are viewed as independent of the social and task-specific context in which performance occurs; yet skill level is a characteristic not only of a person but also of a context (Delamare Le Deist and Winterton, 2005). Thus, according to Fisher et al. (1993), people do not have competencies independent of context.

The Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) study used an interpretative approach to investigate competence among pilots and others, and found that attributes used in accomplishing work are bound to the work context regardless of the level of competence attained, and in the work situation, individuals acquire situational or context-dependent knowledge and skills. Other interpretative studies with nurses (Benner, 1984) and police

officers (Fielding, 1988a, 1988b) have equally demonstrated that attributes acquire context-dependency through individuals' experience of work. One of the advantages of the interpretative approach is that it acknowledges workers' tacit knowledge and skills (Polanyi, 1967), which can be overlooked if competencies are treated as context-free, since the way people work in practice seldom accords with the formal job description. Tacit competencies, not only of professionals (Eraut, 2000) but also of so-called "unskilled workers" (Kusterer, 1978), can have a determining impact on the success of an enterprise.

Regardless, from an epistemological perspective, Haddadj and Besson (2000) note that the logic of competence is polarized into two distinct directions: an individual approach, centered on individual behaviors, and a collective approach, centered on building the required competence in an organization.

Consequently, the answer to which competencies (generic or context specific) individuals need to possess to be effective in various work industries, or specifically in the hospitality industry continues to be the question. As mentioned, there has been a vast amount of research conducted regarding essential competencies deemed important for success in the work force. Specific to the hospitality industry, the most recent research studies (the last 10 years) have addressed either the hospitality industry as a whole or were specific to the hotel sector. With few exceptions, Ley's (1978) study, a study by DeMicco, Palakurthi, Sammons and Williams (1994) and Reynolds' (2000) study, research identifying the essential competencies that restaurant multi-unit human resources and operations leaders deem important for managers to possess is very limited.

Furthermore, in addressing the question of generic versus context and/or industry-specific competencies, no research has been done to answer the question “are the essential competencies food-service managers possess transferable among the restaurant dining segments?” Given this lack of research within the restaurant industry, the researcher believes it would behoove not only the industry, but also researchers and academicians alike to explore which essential competencies are needed to be successful in the restaurant industry; and are those competencies transferable among the different dining segments (quick service, fast casual, casual dining and fine dining). To adequately answer this question, it is important to first understand the overall restaurant industry and second, understand what defines each dining segment and the characteristics that make each segment unique to the industry.

### **Dining Segments**

According to Nation’s Restaurant News (2006) the restaurant industry as a whole generated more than \$476 billion (U.S.) in annual sales in 2005. Furthermore, the restaurant business employed 12.2 million people in 2005 and there were 900,000 restaurant locations.

What is the definition of the dining segment called Quick Service? Quick service, also known as “fast food,” generally refers to the type of restaurants that sell quick, inexpensive take-out food. These restaurants can be found almost everywhere and have indoor seating as well as drive thru service. The most commonly known quick service restaurants include McDonalds, Burger King, Taco Bell and KFC. The average check for the quick service segment is less than \$6 (National Restaurant Association, 2005).

As the name suggests, the Fast Casual dining segment, also known as quick casual, occupies that space between quick service and casual dining (Chili's, Red Lobster, Applebee's). Fast casual restaurants (Baja Fresh, Panera Bread, Cosi) are more upscale and expensive than quick service, but less so than casual restaurants (National Restaurant Association, 2005). The fast casual restaurant industry is expected to exceed \$70 billion in sales in 2006. According to one widely accepted industry definition, fast casual restaurants have a check average between \$8 and \$10, innovative and sophisticated food prepared to order, and highly developed décor. Beyond that definition, fast casual is also a good way to describe the vibe that is driving quick foodservice everywhere; which explains why it is sometimes difficult to draw a line between quick service and fast casual (National Restaurant Association, 2005).

Casual Dining is a market segment of the U.S. restaurant industry between fast casual and fine dining. It is usually characterized by seating assistance from a host or hostess and table service, where a wait staff oversees the dining experience at the table. Casual dining restaurants have a fully stocked and full service bar, and a check average between \$11 and \$20 for an evening meal and slightly less for lunch.

Fine Dining is the pinnacle of all dining segments. Fine dining restaurants are characterized by their elegant yet comfortable white tablecloth dining rooms, as well as having a full service staff to ensure an excellent dining experience. Staff at fine dining restaurants typically include a Maître d', host or hostess, wine sommelier, dining room captain, headwaiter or waitress and ancillary service staff. Fine dining restaurants have a fully stocked and full service bar and most have a private wine cellar. The average check

at a fine dining restaurant is a minimum of \$40 according to the National Restaurant Association (2005).

Regardless of the dining segment, two questions remain. What are the essential competencies for managers to possess to be successful in the restaurant industry, and are those competencies transferable among the four different dining segments.

Thus, the purpose of this pilot study was (1) from the perspective of multi-unit restaurant human resources and operations leaders, identify a list of competencies necessary for restaurant managers to possess to be successful within their respective dining segments, (2) if possible, have the multi-unit human resources and operations leaders come to a consensus regarding the competencies that are common across all four dining segments, and (3) have the multi-unit restaurant human resources and operations leaders rank in order of importance the main and sub competencies that managers should possess to be successful across the four dining segments.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

Exploratory, qualitative research design was used for this pilot study. A focus group was conducted to identify an initial list of competencies. A total of six people participated in the live focus group. Three of the participants were multi-unit restaurant human resources leaders and three of the participants were multi-unit operations leaders; these participants represented the fast casual, casual and fine dining restaurant segments. Due to scheduling conflicts, the multi-unit human resources and operations leaders from the quick service dining segment were not able to participate in the focus group. Consequently, they were interviewed in person by the researcher at a later date. All participants had been in their position as a multi-unit human resources or operations leader for a minimum of five years.

#### **Focus Group**

The focus group was held in Dallas, Texas in a meeting room at the Hampton Inn. The meeting room had a central area where participants from the dining segments worked as one large group and a separate portion of the meeting room was broken into three separate areas where participants worked in breakout groups by dining segment. The focus group was led by one moderator when participants worked as a large group and three facilitators, one for each dining segment, led the breakout sessions. The focus group session was audio taped and the facilitators used flip charts to scribe the

competencies as participants brainstormed a complete list they deemed important for managers to possess within their dining segment.

Unlike traditional focus groups, once the breakout sessions by dining segment were completed, the entire group came together and was asked if they could gain consensus on a list of competencies they felt managers should possess within all four dining segments. The focus group identified 11 main competencies and 48 nested or sub-competencies that fell under the 11 main competencies. The main competency, “capacity to learn” is the only competency in which none of the participants identified any sub-competencies for this category. The participants felt that capacity to learn and its definition were self-explanatory and could stand on its own as a competency.

### **Personal Interviews**

Due to last-minute scheduling conflicts, the multi-unit restaurant human resources and operations leaders from the quick service segment were not able to participate in the focus group. The researcher scheduled one-on-one live interviews with the participants and met with them one week following the date of the focus group. The researcher followed the outline from the focus group, asking each participant to orally list the competencies they believe managers should possess to work within their segment. The researcher captured their list by tape recording the live interviews.

### **Gaining Consensus on Competencies**

After compiling the quick service participant’s lists, the researcher compared their competencies to the list of competencies from the focus group. There were two nested or sub-competencies that were new from meeting with the quick service participants. They

were “business acumen” and “commitment to quality.” The researcher sent each focus group participant the list of main and sub competencies from their focus group session and asked if they agreed with adding business acumen and commitment to quality to the list; if so, which competency category should these additional sub competencies fall under. All participants not only concurred that business acumen and commitment to quality be added, but they also agreed on the competency category in which the new sub competencies should fall under. At the conclusion of the focus group and personal interviews, the participants agreed upon a total of 11 main competencies and 50 nested or sub competencies.

The next step was for the researcher to listen to all of the audio tapes, and based on the feedback from the participants, write a definition for each competency and sub competency. This list was then sent to all participants asking for their verification of the definitions or to recommend any changes. Again, all participants concurred with the definitions for each main and sub competency; thus no changes were made concerning the competency definitions.

The focus group process depicted in Figure 1 illustrates the steps taken to ultimately identify and define the 11 main competencies and the 50 nested or sub competencies. The depiction shows the focus group participants, the brainstorming session by segment, and the compilation of a final list of competencies and competency definitions for this pilot study.



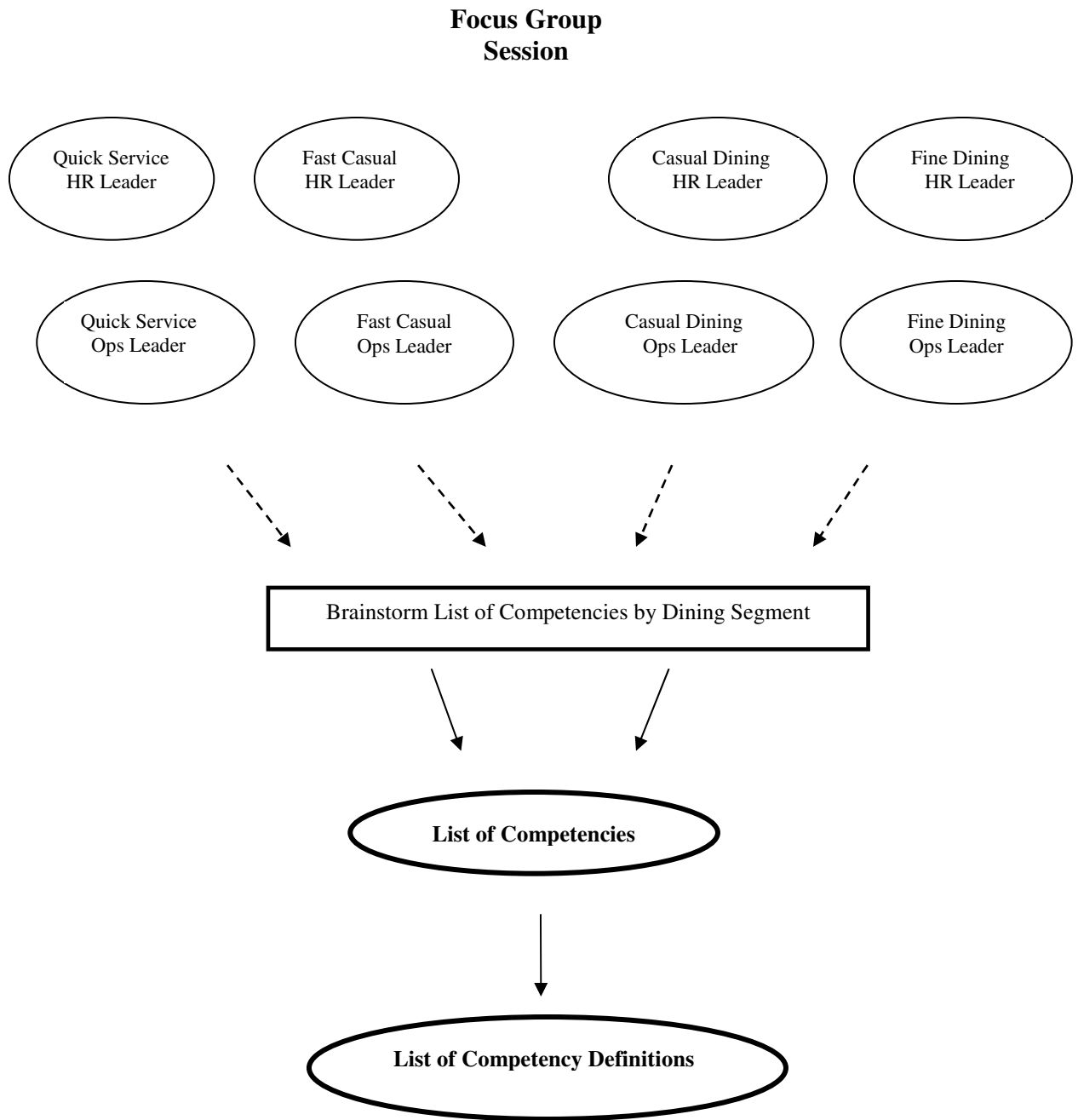


Figure 1. Diagram of Focus Group Process to Obtain the Final List of Competencies

## Final Competencies

The main and sub competencies as shown in Table 2 reflect the final list the participants agreed upon as a result of the focus group and personal interviews.

Table 2. List of Main and Sub Competencies from Focus Group and Personal Interviews

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Training and Coaching</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop Teams/Individuals</li> <li>○ Influence/Motivate Teams</li> <li>○ Identify Obstacles</li> <li>○ Remove Barriers</li> <li>○ Maximize Productivity</li> <li>○ Manage conflict to a Win / Win Scenario</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Service</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Concern for others</li> <li>○ Caring</li> <li>○ Genuine</li> <li>○ Hospitality</li> <li>○ Desire to Serve Others</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Work Ethic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Commitment to Quality</li> <li>○ Hardworking with a Purpose</li> <li>○ Sense of Urgency</li> <li>○ Hands-on Teamwork</li> <li>○ Do What it Takes Mentality</li> <li>○ Assertiveness</li> <li>○ Motivated</li> <li>○ Self-Starter</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Leadership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Resilience</li> <li>○ Flexibility</li> <li>○ Focus</li> <li>○ Awareness</li> <li>○ Humility</li> <li>○ Open Mindedness</li> <li>○ Self-Confidence</li> <li>○ Vision</li> <li>○ Ability to Instill Vision in Others</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Capacity to Learn</b></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Analytical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attention to Detail</li> <li>○ Problem Solving</li> <li>○ Business Acumen</li> <li>○ Understand and Analyze Data</li> <li>○ Identify and Analyze Strengths and Weaknesses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Organization and Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Goal Setting</li> <li>○ Delegation</li> <li>○ Effective use of Time</li> <li>○ Establishing Direction</li> <li>○ Ability to Manage Projects</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>❖ <b>Interpersonal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Effectively Build Relationships</li> <li>○ Compassionate</li> <li>○ Shows Empathy</li> <li>○ Able to Give and Receive Constructive Criticism</li> </ul>	<p>❖ <b>Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Listening</li> <li>○ Clear and Effective Oral and Written Communication</li> <li>○ Ability to Communicate to all Levels</li> </ul>
<p>❖ <b>Core Values and Ethics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Professionalism</li> <li>○ Sense of Responsibility</li> <li>○ Honesty</li> </ul>	<p>❖ <b>Commitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Experience</li> <li>○ Loyalty</li> <li>○ Integrity</li> <li>○ Sense of Respect</li> </ul>

Once all of the participants agreed upon the final list of competencies and sub competencies, the researcher listened to the audio tapes to develop a definition for each competency. A list of the competencies and their definitions are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Competency List and Definitions

<p><b>Training and Coaching</b> – To instruct and/or develop a person’s knowledge, skills and abilities to achieve personal and/or organizational goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Develop Team/Individuals</u> – One’s ability to identify an individual or team’s strength(s) or areas of opportunity(s) according to their job responsibilities; then define a development plan of steps/actions to be taken to either enhance a strength or improve in a particular area.</li> <li>● <u>Influence/Motivate Teams</u> –One who takes or performs an action which produces the desired outcome of an individual/team to accomplish the intended objective. Can inspire others toward a common goal or value.</li> <li>● <u>Identify Obstacles</u> – An individual’s ability to look at a specific or entire piece of a business operation and be able to identify what is hindering the operation from functioning correctly.</li> <li>● <u>Remove Barriers</u> – A person who takes action to remove obstacles that keep the business from operating correctly.</li> <li>● <u>Maximize Productivity</u> – The ability to make the most of every facet of a business operation.</li> <li>● <u>Manage Conflict</u> – One who is able to manage conflict to a win/win resolution.</li> </ul>
--

**Work Ethic** – An individual’s ability to perform their job responsibilities based on an underlying set of moral principles or values.

- Commitment to Quality - An agreement or pledge to do something with the highest degree of excellence.
- Hardworking with a Purpose – A person who displays unyielding effort (hard work) to accomplish a task or get the job done. A person who not only works hard, but accomplishes something out of their hard work.
- Sense of Urgency – The ability to identify situations that occur on the job that call for immediate attention.
- Do What it Takes Mentality – An individual who understands what it takes to achieve a goal and is willing to participate in accomplishing that goal.
- Assertiveness – A person who is bold and confident in running their operation and pursuing operational and/or personal goals.
- Motivated – One who possesses an internal need or desire that causes them to take action in their work to achieve a particular goal(s).
- Self-Starter – A person who takes initiative on their own to accomplish a goal(s) without having to be asked.

**Capacity to Learn** – An individual who is intellectual and open enough to learn new things on the job.

**Analytical** – The ability to separate a whole idea or unit of information into its component parts.

- Attention to Detail – An individual’s ability to selectively narrow or focus in on a particular item.
- Problem Solving – The ability to identify an issue(s) in a business operation that needs to be questioned or corrected and be able to provide an explanation or solution to the issue.
- Business Acumen – One who possesses a keenness and discernment for a business operation in which they are responsible for maximizing its efficiency, productivity, and profitability.
- Understand and Analyze Data – The ability to study or determine the nature and relationship of factual information pertaining to a business operation such as numeric calculations, measurements or statistics which an individual can use as a basis for reasoning, discussion, or justification.
- Identify and Analyze Strengths and Weaknesses - A person’s ability to recognize strengths (i.e. a person or thing that performs above expectation) and weaknesses (i.e. a person or thing lacking necessary factors to perform adequately); then determine the specific element(s) which cause a person or thing to be a strength or weakness in order to improve or further enhance the business.

**Interpersonal** – An individual’s ability to relate to people.

- Effectively Build Relationships - Uniting and partnering with the appropriate individuals to achieve success within a business operation and the organization.
- Compassionate – The ability to be conscious of and sympathetic to individuals when they show signs of pain or sorrow; one who demonstrates a willingness to work with the individual to alleviate the distress.
- Shows Empathy – A person who is aware of and shows understanding to individuals by vicariously experiencing their thoughts, feelings and experience regarding a situation, without actually having the feelings, thoughts, and experience.
- Able to Give and Receive Constructive Criticism – A person who is able to express an opinion (oral/written) on a matter which is unfavorable using honest yet supportive feedback, but also be able to accept honest yet supportive feedback from another whose opinion (oral/written) is not favorable regarding a matter related to oneself.

**Core Values and Ethics** - The internal and central part of an individual which defines and guides their philosophy of life, sense of moral duty and obligation, and personal worth.

- Professionalism – A person who exhibits a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike manner in a business operation and organization.
- Sense of Responsibility – One who demonstrates a conscious awareness of their conduct, obligations and accountability related to their position, business operation, and organization.
- Honesty – An individual who is straightforward in their conduct, displays an uprightness in their actions and character, and refuses to lie, steal, or deceive in any way.
- Integrity – One who adheres to and leads by a code of moral conduct and values, and does not compromise their value system.
- Sense of Respect – A person who has a conscious awareness for giving particular attention or special regard to individuals within their business unit or organization.

**Service** – Performing helpful acts of kindness that do not necessarily produce a tangible commodity and contributing to the welfare of others.

- Concern for Others – An individual who is thoughtful, considerate and shows regard for the well being of individuals within their business unit.
- Caring – A person who is helpful, thoughtful and considerate of an individual’s needs.
- Genuine – A leader who shows sincerity, honesty, gratitude and devotion to all individuals associated with their business operation and organization.

**Service (cont.)**

- Hospitality – An individual who understands the importance of creating a warm and inviting ambiance, and providing an experience of high quality as it relates to service and satisfaction.
- Desire to Serve Others – One who possesses an inherent need to perform acts of kindness for individuals.

**Leadership** – To serve as a channel for directing and/or guiding people, activities or operations to achieve performance and/or accomplish goals.

- Resilience – The ability to recover from or adjust easily to change, mishap, misfortune or the unexpected.
- Flexibility – Characterizing a readiness and capability to adapt to new, different, or changing requirements.
- Focus – The ability to give specific attention, concentration or effort to a business operation in order to accomplish the operation's goals.
- Awareness – A person who has or shows realization, perception, or knowledge of something as it pertains to their business operation.
- Humility – An individual who is not arrogant and demonstrates a non-proud, non-haughty demeanor with individuals.
- Open Mindedness – A person who has no enclosing or confining barriers in their thought process, which allows them to be receptive to ideas and/or arguments.
- Self-Confidence – One who shows assurance in themselves and their abilities when running all facets of a business operation.
- Vision – An individual who has the ability to conceive and/or see ideas, options and possibilities to achieve a specific goal or goals.
- Ability to Instill Vision in Others – An individual who possesses the ability not only to convey and communicate the business unit or organization's vision, but gain buy-in from team members regarding that vision.

**Organization and Planning** – To set up and adhere to a detailed structure or method for achieving an end result.

- Goal Setting – The ability to define and accomplish something through direct effort.
- Delegation – One who is able to empower individuals to accomplish a specific task or goal within a business operation.
- Effective Use of Time – One who handles or directs the point or period of time when an action or process occurs within their business operation.
- Establishing Direction – A person who is able to introduce and provide guidance or supervision on an action, conduct, or instruction within a business operation.
- Project Management Skills – The ability to outline and organize projects with time commitments.

**Communication** – The process of conveying or exchanging a thought, feeling or information so that it is satisfactorily received or understood.

- Listening – A person who is able to hear something with thoughtful attention and consideration.
- Clear and Effective Oral and Written Communication – The ability to speak or write in a manner that is free from obscurity, ambiguity or undue complexity in order to produce a result.
- Ability to Communicate to all Levels – One who possesses a natural aptitude or proficiency in communicating (oral/written) to all levels of individuals within a business unit and/or organization.

**Commitment** – An agreement or pledge to do something or the state of being obligated or emotionally inclined to do something.

- Experience - A person's practical knowledge, skill, or practice derived from direct observation of or participation in events or activities, (i.e. something personally encountered, undergone or lived through) which the person applies to their current business operation and responsibilities.
- Loyalty –Steadfast faithfulness to an obligation, trust or duty (i.e. values, ethics, organization, business operation and team members).

### **Survey Instrument**

The survey instrument was comprised of three sections. The first section asked the focus group and interview participants to identify what position they held, operations or human resources, and what dining segment they represented. Section two asked the respondents to rank the 11 main competencies in order of importance based on their dining segment, with 1 being the most important and 11 being the least important. Section three provided a list of the main competencies with the sub competencies listed underneath. The respondents were asked to rank each set of sub competencies in order of importance regarding their dining segment, with one being the most important (see Appendix for the survey ranking form).

## Data Analysis

All eight participants returned an accurately completed survey instrument to the researcher. An Excel workbook was created with multiple worksheets to store and analyze the data. First, a code sheet was set up assigning each main competency a code such as M1, which represents the main competency analytical. The letter M stands for main competency and the number 1 represents the order in which the competency was listed on the survey form. An example of the coding format as shown in Table 4 was used in this data analysis.

Table 4. Example of Coding Format Used For Each Main Competency

<b>Code</b>	<b>Competency</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Competency</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Competency</b>
M1	Analytical	M5	Core Values & Ethics	M9	Service
M2	Capacity to Learn	M6	Interpersonal	M10	Training & Coaching
M3	Commitment	M7	Leadership	M11	Work Ethic
M4	Communication	M8	Organization & Planning		

Next the researcher assigned a code to the sub competencies within each main competency. For example, the main competency “Analytical (M1)” had five sub competencies which fell within the category. The sub competencies were assigned a code such as M1\_An1, which represents the main competency “analytical,” and “attention to detail,” which was the first sub competency on the survey form. M1\_An2, “problem solving,” represented the second sub competency within the analytical category. An example of the coding format as shown in Table 5 was used to code the sub competencies in this data analysis.



Table 5. Example of Coding Format Used For Each Sub Competency

<b>Code</b>	<b>Main Competency</b>	<b>Sub Competency</b>
M1_An1	Analytical	Attention to Detail
M1_An2	“	Problem Solving
M1_An3	“	Business Acumen
M1_An4	“	Understand & Analyze Data
M1_An5	“	Identify & Analyze Strengths & Weaknesses
M2_Commit 1	Commitment	Experience
M2_Commit 2	“	Loyalty

Once all the data was coded and input by competency, the rank of the main competency was used as the weight for each sub competency by taking the product of the rank of the main and sub competencies, which was used as the weighted rank for the new ranking order for all 51 sub competencies. Lastly, the 51 total competencies representing all participants were sorted in ascending rank order. This same calculation process was repeated after separating the data by the respondent’s position - human resources or operations; then the 51 competencies for each group (human resources and operations) were sorted in ascending rank order.

The complete process of this pilot study as depicted in Figure 2 shows who participated in the focus group, the process for identifying the final list of competencies and definitions, and the data analysis which led to the weighted average rank order for each competency and sub competency.

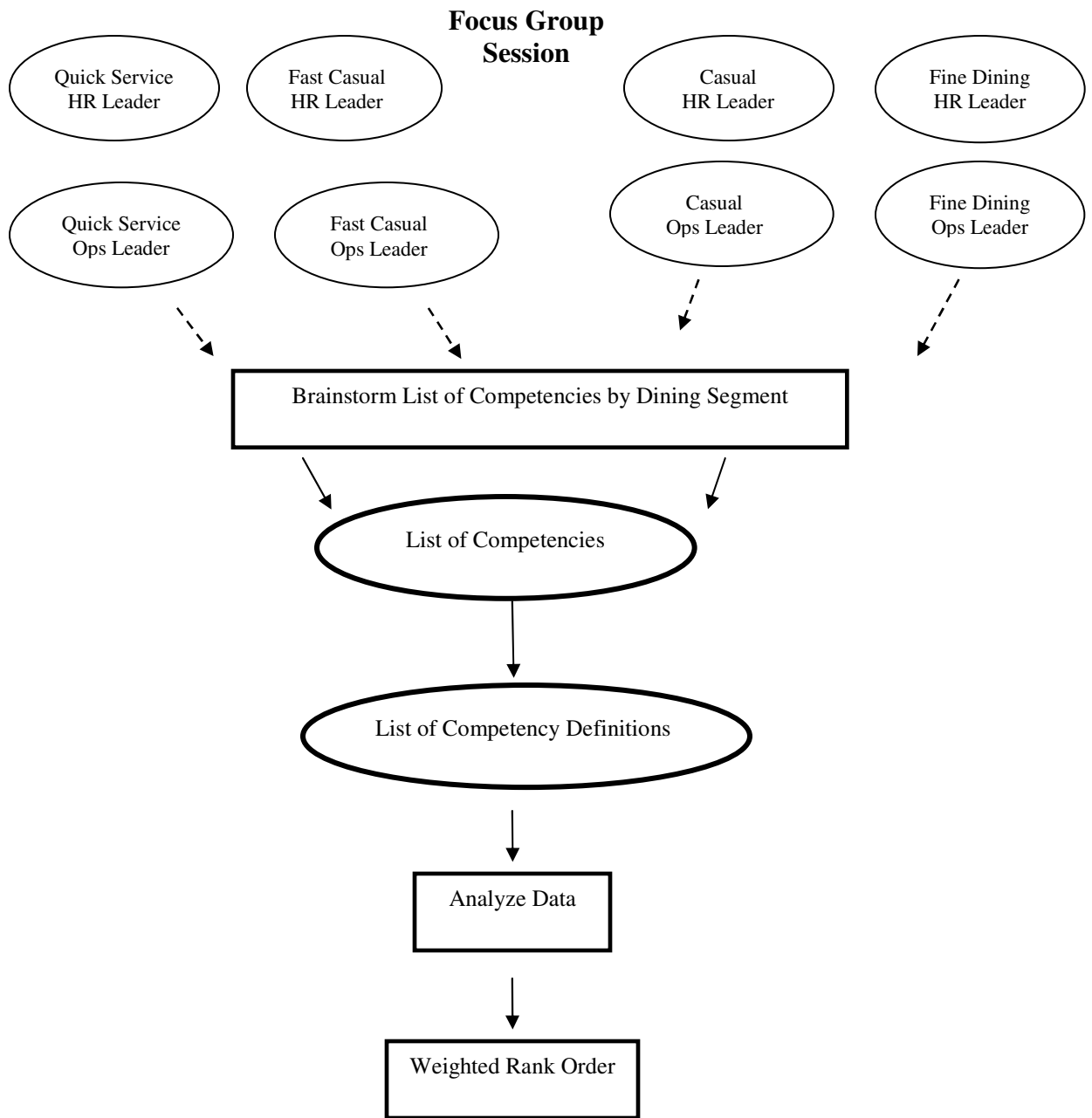


Figure 2. Diagram of the Complete Process to Obtain the Final Rank Order of Competencies

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

For the purpose of looking at the results for this pilot study, it is important to recall that when participants were asked to rank the main and sub competencies, they were asked to rank them in order of importance with the most important being ranked as number 1. As a reminder, the rank of the main competency was used as the weight for each sub competency by taking the product of the rank of the main and sub competencies, which was used as the weighted rank for the new ranking order for all 51 sub competencies.

#### **Competency Rankings**

The main competency rankings from both the human resources and operations leaders who participated in the pilot study, as shown in Figure 3, shows the overall weighted average for the 11 main competencies in rank order with number 1 on the scale representing the most important competency and number 11 representing the least important competency. The “core values and ethics” competency was considered the most important with a weighted average of 2.25, followed by “leadership” which had a weighted average of 3.25 and “work ethic” which had a weighted average of 4.12.

Furthermore, when looking at the rank order, it is worth noting that the top seven competencies are considered soft-skill competencies according to the literature; whereas the “training and coaching,” “organization and planning,” and “analytical” competencies,

which were ranked least important, are more technical in nature and are the type of competencies found in the earlier studies of the literature.

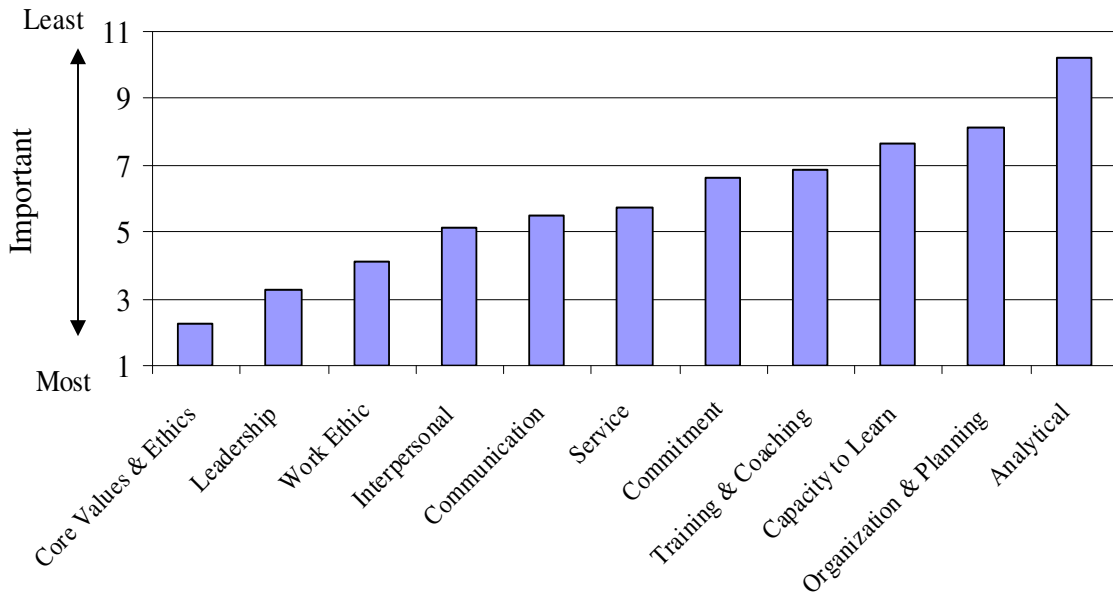


Figure 3. Main Competencies by Weighted Average in Rank Order

To further explore the main competency weighted averages, the researcher compared the rank order of each competency’s weighted average between the operations and human resources leaders as shown in Figures 4 and 5. The operations and human resources leaders’ overall weighted average for the 11 main competencies as shown in Figures 4 and 5, is in rank order with 1 representing the most important competency and number 11 representing the least important competency.

When comparing the weighted averages in rank order between the operations and human resources leaders, a direct correlation of 0.98 was found, thus proving there was no disagreement between these two groups. Conversely, it is important to note there is a bias in these results as the focus group participants discussed the list of competencies at length and were asked to come to a consensus on the final list of competencies.

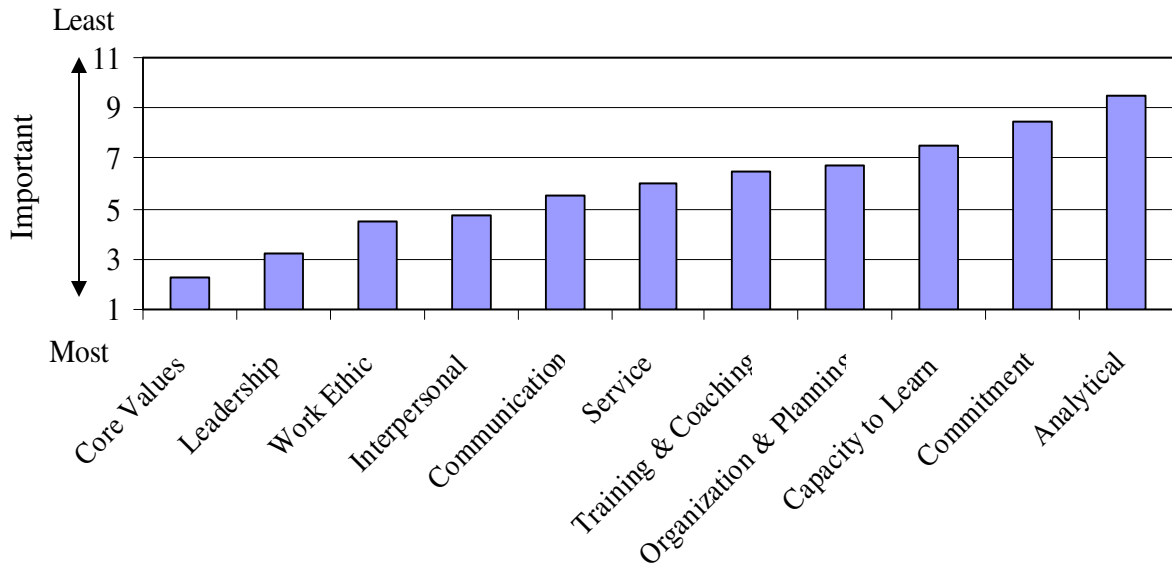


Figure 4. Operations Leaders Main Competency Weighted Averages in Rank Order

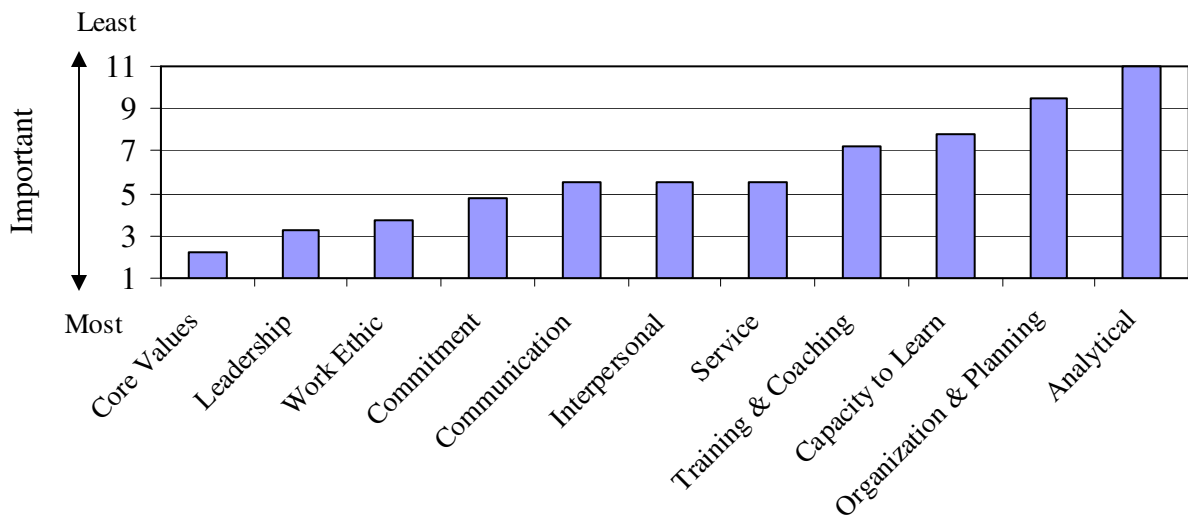


Figure 5. Human Resources Leaders Main Competency Weighted Averages in Rank Order

The operations and human resources leaders ranked the main competency “core values” as the most important competency with a weighted average of 2.25 as shown in Figures 4 and 5. Both groups ranked “leadership” the second most important with a

weighted average of 3.25 followed by “work ethic” with a weighted average of 4.5 from the operations leaders and 3.75 by the human resources leaders. As noted earlier, competencies such as core values, leadership and work ethic are considered soft-skill competencies, thus the rankings continue to support the literature and those researchers who are proponents of the generic, soft-skill competency movement.

However, it is interesting that both the human resources and operations leaders ranked “analytical” as the least important competency to possess. This is interesting because during the focus group discussions, the operations leaders spoke at length on the importance of analytical skills, yet the operations leaders believed that analytical skills could be taught to an individual. The “analytical” weighted average of 11.00 and its ranking reflects this thinking from the operations leaders. Furthermore, the human resources leaders showed no disagreement with the operations leaders’ position regarding the importance of analytical skills and their belief that analytical skills can be taught. In fact, their weighted average and ranking for the analytical competency supports the operations leaders’ opinion, as the human resources leaders also ranked it as the least important.

### **Sub Competency Weighted Average**

To gain an overall perspective of the competencies and their weighted averages, Figures 6 and 7 show all 51 sub competencies’ weighted averages from both the human resources and operations leaders. Shown in Figure 6 are those competencies which had a weighted average rank order from 1 through 25, with 1 being the most important competency.

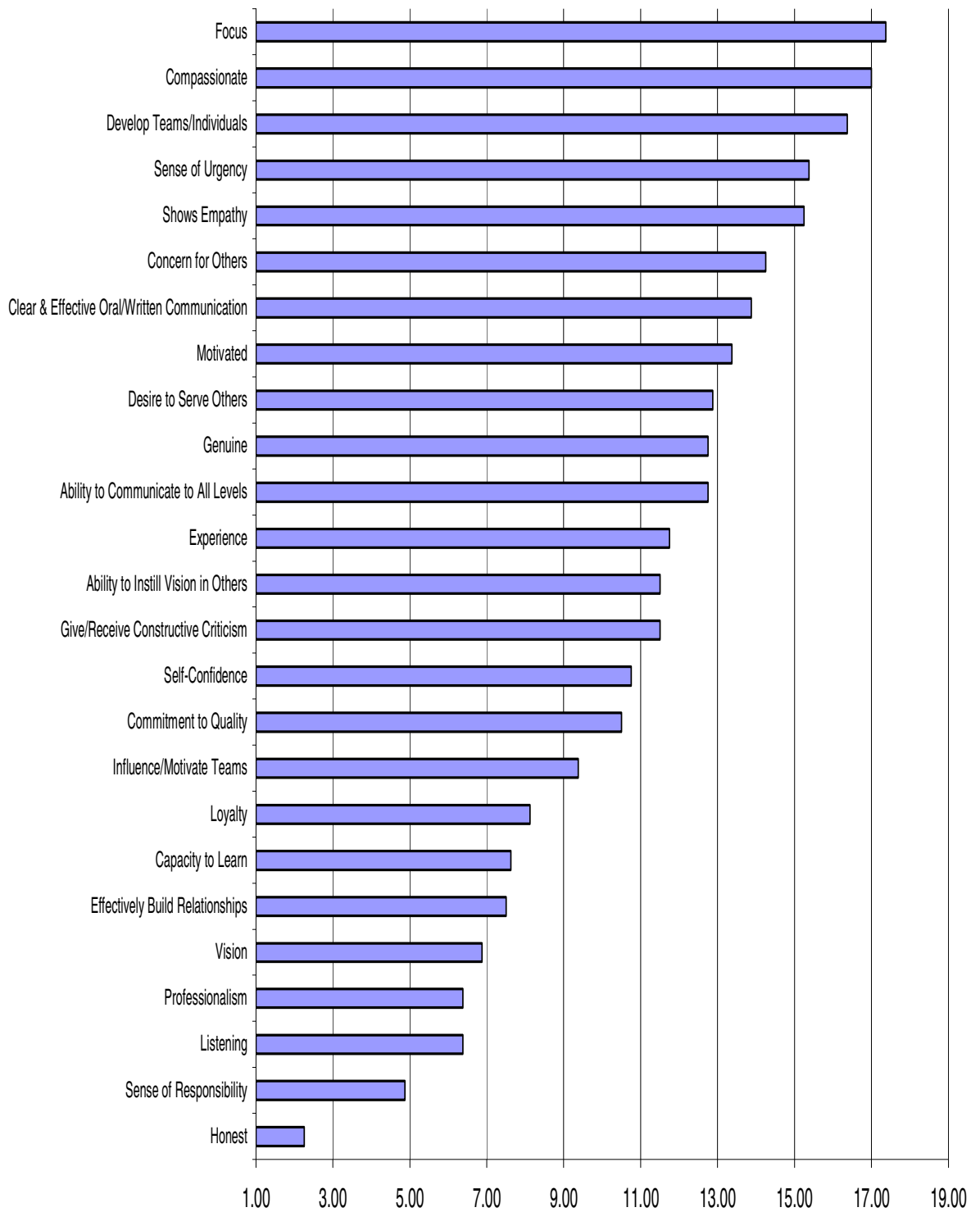


Figure 6. Top 25 Sub Competencies by Weighted Average, Listed in Rank Order

The remaining sub competencies from both the human resources and operations leaders as shown in Figure 7 are those sub competencies which had a weighted average ranking of 26 through 51.

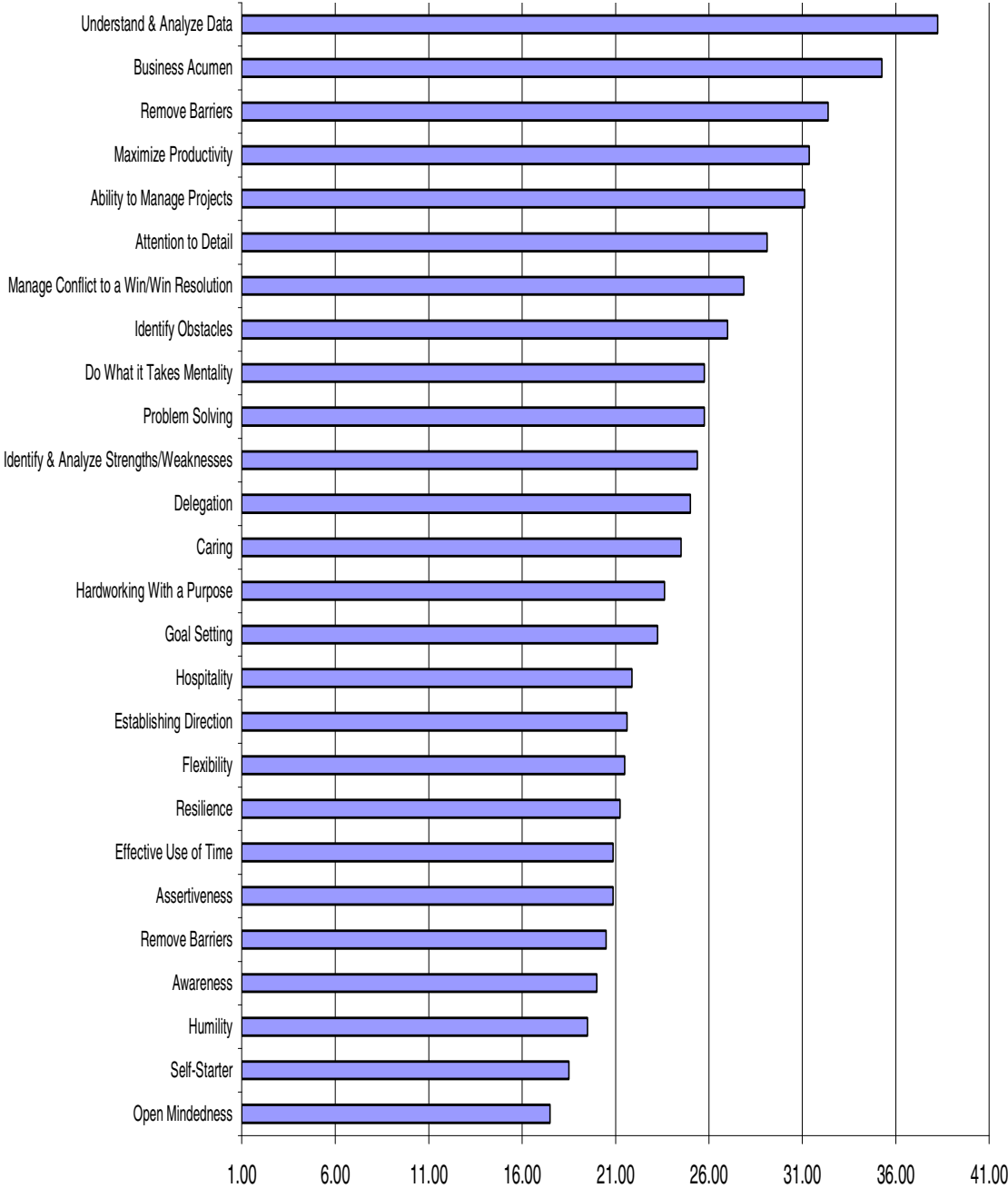


Figure 7. Bottom 25 Sub Competencies by Weighted Average, Listed in Rank Order



## Comparison of Sub Competency Weighted Averages in Rank Order

A comparative view of all 51 sub competencies in rank order as shown in Table 6 explains each sub competency's weighted average in rank order comparing the human resources leaders and the operations leaders' rankings. For the purpose of analyzing the data in Table 6, the focus of the analysis was on the top five (5) and bottom five (5) competencies.

Table 6. Comparison of Competency Weighted Averages in Rank Order by Human Resources and Operations Leaders

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Human Resources Leaders</b>	<b>Operations Leaders</b>
1	Honesty	Honesty
2	Sense of Responsibility	Vision
3	Listening	Sense of Responsibility
4	Professionalism	Effectively Build Relationships
5	Loyalty	Capacity to Learn
6	Capacity to Learn	Professionalism
7	Experience	Listening
8	Influence/Motivate Teams	Motivated
9	Effectively Build Relationships	Self-Confidence
10	Vision	Loyalty
11	Genuine	Influence/Motivate Teams
12	Commitment to Quality	Commitment to Quality
13	Ability to Instill Vision in Others	Give/Receive Constructive Criticism
14	Focus	Develop Teams/Individuals
15	Self-Confidence	Ability to Communicate to All Levels
16	Desire to Serve Others	Ability to Instill Vision in Others
17	Give/Receive Constructive Criticism	Establishing Direction
18	Sense of Urgency	Goal Setting
19	Clear & Effective Oral/Written Communication	Humility
20	Concern for Others	Open Mindedness
21	Ability to Communicate to All Levels	Desire to Serve Others
22	Shows Empathy	Clear & Effective Oral/Written Communication
23	Hands-on Teamwork	Concern for Others
24	Assertiveness	Identify & Analyze Strengths & Weaknesses
25	Effective Use of Time	Genuine
26	Motivated	Experience
27	Resilience	Compassionate
28	Compassionate	Shows Empathy
29	Awareness	Sense of Urgency
30	Self-Starter	Self-Starter
31	Flexibility	Awareness

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Human Resources Leaders</b>	<b>Operations Leaders</b>
32	Hardworking With a Purpose	Hospitality
33	Hospitality	Identify Obstacles
34	Open Mindedness	Flexibility
35	Problem Solving	Focus
36	Develop Teams/Individuals	Caring
37	Do What it Takes Mentality	Ability to Manage Projects
38	Delegation	Resilience
39	Caring	Effective Use of Time
40	Humility	Hands-on Teamwork
41	Manage Conflict to a Win/Win Resolution	Assertiveness
42	Maximize Productivity	Delegation
43	Attention to Detail	Hardworking With a Purpose
44	Establishing Direction	Attention to Detail
45	Identify Obstacles	Do What it Takes Mentality
46	Goal Setting	Remove Barriers
47	Remove Barriers	Manage Conflict to a Win/Win Resolution
48	Business Acumen	Problem Solving
49	Identify & Analyze Strengths/Weaknesses	Business Acumen
50	Ability to Manage Projects	Maximize Productivity
51	Understand & Analyze Data	Understand & Analyze Data

The competency “honesty” was the only competency in which both groups not only ranked the competency equally, but also derived a weighted average of 2.25. The human resources leaders ranked “sense of responsibility” second in order of importance with a weighted average of 5.00, followed by “listening,” “professionalism” and “loyalty” rounding out the top five with weighted averages of 5.50, 6.25 and 6.50 respectively. The operations leaders ranked “vision” as the second most important competency with a weighted average of 4.0, “sense of responsibility” was ranked third with a weighted average of 4.75, “effectively build relationships” and “capacity to learn” rounded out the top 5 for the operations group with weighted averages of 5.50 and 6.75 respectively. It is noteworthy to mention that the top five competencies for both the operations and the human resources leaders were competencies that are more soft-skill types of competencies as well as generic in nature.

When looking at all 51 competencies’ weighted averages for the human resources group, it is also interesting to note that 2.75 is the largest difference between two

competency weighted averages. Even more interesting is the fact that this difference of 2.75 was between the top two competencies that the human resources leaders deemed the most important. “Honesty” had a weighted average of 2.25 and “sense of responsibility” had a weighted average of 5.00 thus reflecting a difference of 2.75.

However, the operations group actually had two competencies with a larger difference between their weighted averages. “Self-starter” had a weighted average of 18.50 and “awareness” had a weighted average of 21.75, which reflects a difference of 3.25. Unlike the human resources leaders whose number one and number two competencies had the greatest difference in weighted averages, the operations leaders ranked “self-starter” and “awareness” as number 30 and 31 in order of importance out of the 51 competencies.

When comparing the human resources and operations leaders’ bottom five (5) competency weighted averages, the “understand and analyze data” competency was the only one in which both groups ranked it as number 51, the least important competency. In spite of this, the two groups did not have the same weighted average for “understand and analyze data.” The human resources leaders’ weighted average for “understand and analyze data” was 41.25; whereas the operations leaders’ weighted average for the same competency was 35.25, thus reflecting a difference of 6.00 between the two groups. Based on the discussions during the focus group, it is not surprising that “understand and analyze data” is the least important competency, as both the human resources and operations leaders felt that understanding and analyzing data could be taught to an individual.

The human resources leaders' remaining bottom four competencies were "remove barriers" which had a weighted average of 35.50 and was ranked number 47 out of the 51 competencies followed by "business acumen" which was ranked number 48 and had a weighted average of 35.75. The human resources group ranked "identify and analyze strengths and weaknesses," which had a weighted average of 35.75, as number 49 and "ability to manage projects," which had a weighted average of 37.50, was ranked 50 out of 51 total competencies.

The operations leaders ranked "manage conflict to a win/win resolution" as number 47 out of 51 competencies. This competency's weighted average was 29.25. The "problem solving" competency's weighted average is 29.50 and was ranked number 48 by the operations leaders. "Business acumen" and "maximize productivity" were ranked numbers 49 and 50 out of the 51 total competencies and they both had a weighted average of 34.75.

### **Difference in Rankings Between Operations and Human Resources**

Additional understanding of the results can be gained by further analyzing the weighted average rankings for each competency between the operations and human resources groups. The results as shown in Table 7 show each competency, its weighted average ranking from each group and the difference in each ranking between the two groups. The difference was calculated by subtracting the human resources leaders' weighted average ranking from the operations leaders' weighted average ranking.

Table 7. Comparison of Competency Weighted Average Rankings and the Differences Between Rankings by Human Resources and Operations Leaders

<b>Competencies</b>	<b>Operations Ranking</b>	<b>Human Resources Rankings</b>	<b>Difference in Rankings</b>
Honesty	1	1	0
Vision	2	10	-8
Sense of Responsibility	3	2	1
Effectively Build Relationships	4	9	-5
Capacity to Learn	5	6	-1
Professionalism	6	4	2
Listening	7	3	4
Motivated	8	26	-18
Self-Confidence	9	15	-6
Loyalty	10	5	5
Influence/Motivate Teams	11	8	3
Commitment to Quality	12	12	0
Give/Receive Constructive Criticism	13	17	-4
Develop Teams/Individuals	14	36	-22
Ability to Communicate to All Levels	15	21	-6
Ability to Instill Vision in Others	16	13	3
Establishing Direction	17	44	-28
Goal Setting	18	46	-28
Humility	19	40	-21
Open Mindedness	20	34	-14
Desire to Serve Others	21	16	5
Clear & Effective Oral/Written Communication	22	19	3
Concern for Others	23	20	3
Identify & Analyze Strengths & Weaknesses	24	49	-25
Genuine	25	11	14
Experience	26	7	19
Compassionate	27	28	-1
Shows Empathy	28	22	6
Sense of Urgency	29	18	11
Self-Starter	30	30	0
Awareness	31	29	2
Hospitality	32	33	-1
Identify Obstacles	33	45	-12
Flexibility	34	31	1
Focus	35	14	21
Caring	36	39	-3
Ability to Manage Projects	37	50	-13
Resilience	38	27	11
Effective Use of Time	39	25	14
Hands-on Teamwork	40	23	17
Assertiveness	41	24	17
Delegation	42	38	4
Hardworking With a Purpose	43	32	11

<b>Competencies</b>	<b>Operations Ranking</b>	<b>Human Resources Rankings</b>	<b>Difference in Rankings</b>
Attention to Detail	44	43	1
Do What it Takes Mentality	45	37	8
Remove Barriers	46	47	-1
Manage Conflict to a Win/Win Resolution	47	41	6
Problem Solving	48	35	13
Business Acumen	49	48	1
Maximize Productivity	50	42	8
Understand & Analyze Data	51	51	0

The operations leaders' top 12 competencies by weighted average ranking as shown in Figure 8, represents Quartile 1, which depicts the difference in each competency's weighted average ranking between the operations and human resources leaders. A competency with a negative difference means that operations leaders ranked that competency higher than the human resources leaders. Thus, the farther away from zero (0) the competency difference was, the greater the disagreement was between the two groups.

For example, both operations and human resources ranked the competency "honesty" the same in weighted average rank, thus the difference between the two groups' ranking was zero (0). Consequently, the rank difference for "honesty" is shown as zero (0) of the scale. For the competency "vision," there was a difference of negative eight (-8) since operations ranked it as number two and human resources ranked it as 10, thus the rank difference for "vision" as shown on Figure 8, fell between negative five and negative 10 on the scale. Within the top twelve competencies represented in Quartile 1, the competency "motivated" had the greatest difference in average weighted rank order, which was (-18) and "commitment to quality," the number 12 competency of Quartile 1,

was ranked equally between operations and human resources; thus reflecting a difference of zero (0) on the scale.

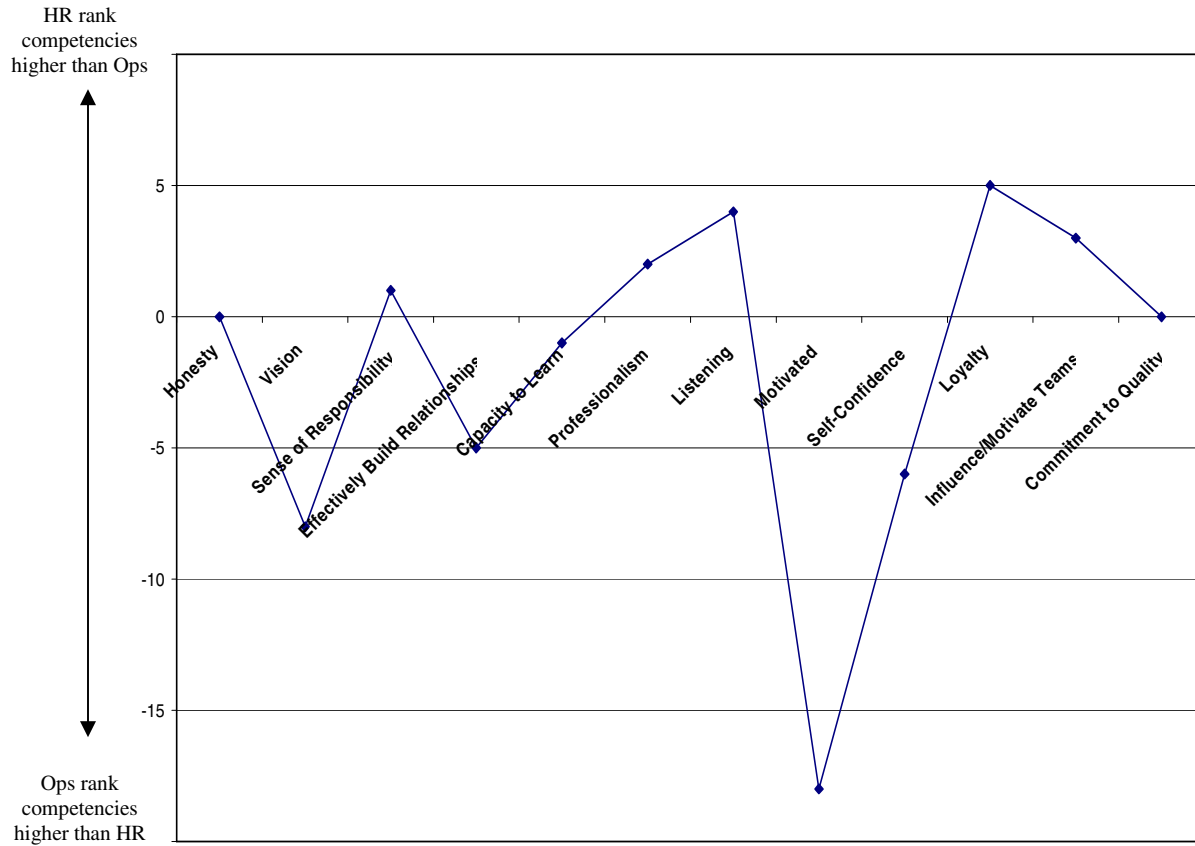


Figure 8. Quartile 1. Top 12 Competencies as Ranked by Operations Leaders and Their Differences from the Human Resources Leaders' Competency Rank Order

The next 12 competencies the operations leaders ranked by weighted average, as shown in Figure 9, represent Quartile 2. The same premise applies to these 12 competencies in terms of Figure 9 depicting the differences in the rankings between the operations and human resources leaders. Those competencies with a negative difference referred to instances where operations ranked the competency higher than the human

resources group; thus, the farther away the competency data point is from zero (0), the greater the disagreement on the importance of the competency between operations and human resources.

The operations leaders' ranking of the competencies "establishing direction," "goal setting" and "humility," whose differences were negative (-28), (-28) and (-21) respectively, reflect some of the largest disagreement in terms of competency importance between operations and human resources. "Identify and analyze strengths and weaknesses" is the only other competency which had a large difference in the competency ranking between operations and human resources. This competency and its difference are part of Quartile 3, as shown in Figure 10.

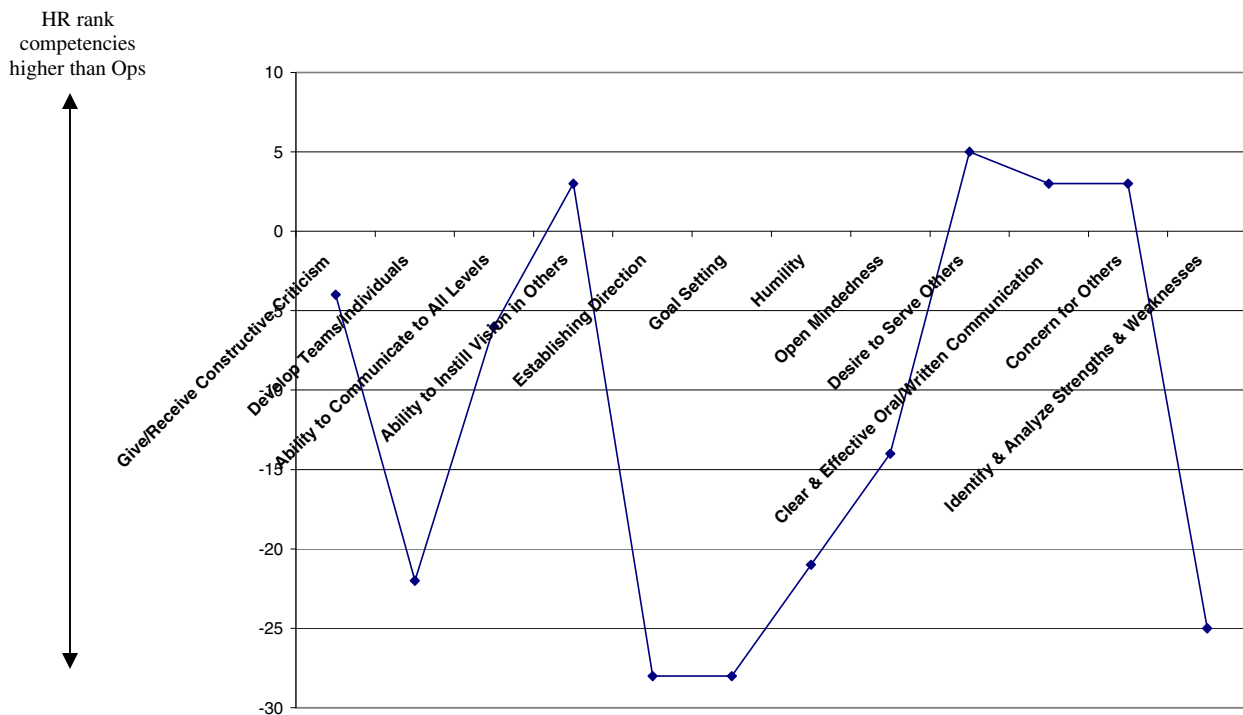


Figure 9. Quartile 2. Competencies 13 - 24 as Ranked by Operations Leaders, and Their Differences from the Human Resources Leaders' Competency Rank Order



The competencies which represent Quartile 3, as shown in Figure 10, were those competencies the operations leaders ranked 25 through 37 in order of importance. It is interesting to note that as the operations leaders ranked these competencies lower in importance, the human resources leaders ranked these competencies more important in most instances. Thus, Figure 10 reflects the same philosophy as Figures 8 and 9 (i.e. the greater the difference from zero, the greater the disagreement between the two groups). However, Figure 10 shows the reverse affect in terms of the differences being positive instead of negative numbers on the scale, meaning the human resources leaders ranked these particular competencies higher in importance than the operations leaders did.

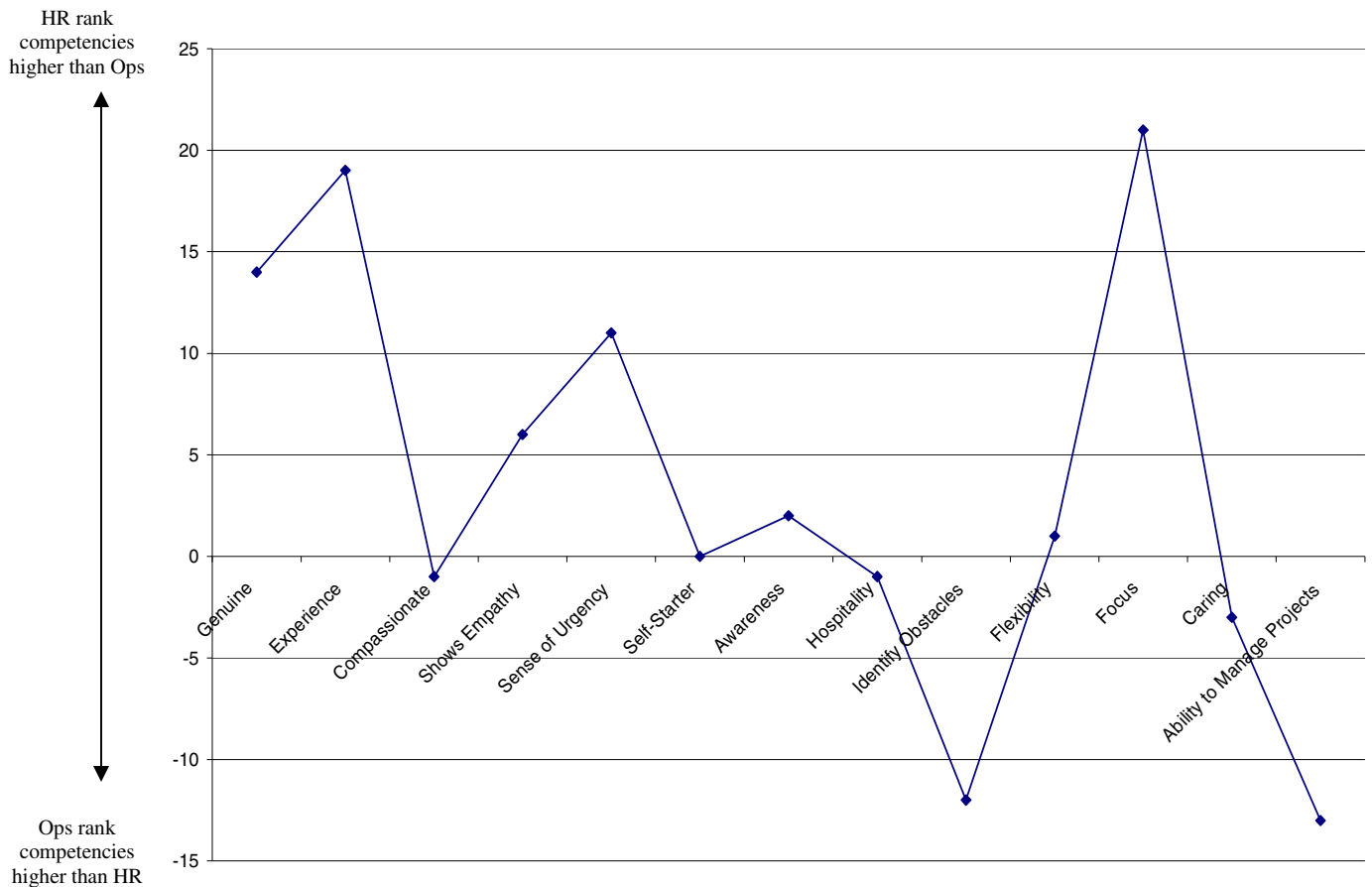


Figure 10. Quartile 3. Competencies 25 - 37 as Ranked by Operations Leaders, and Their Differences from the Human Resources Leaders' Competency Rank Order

The competencies representing Quartile 4, as shown in Figure 11, were those competencies which the operations leaders ranked as 38 – 51 in terms of importance. In this quartile, there was only one competency -“remove barriers”- in which the operations leaders ranked it more important or higher than the human resources leaders. All the other competencies in Quartile 4 were rated higher by human resources, thus reflecting the positive, greater than zero (0) data points in the graph.

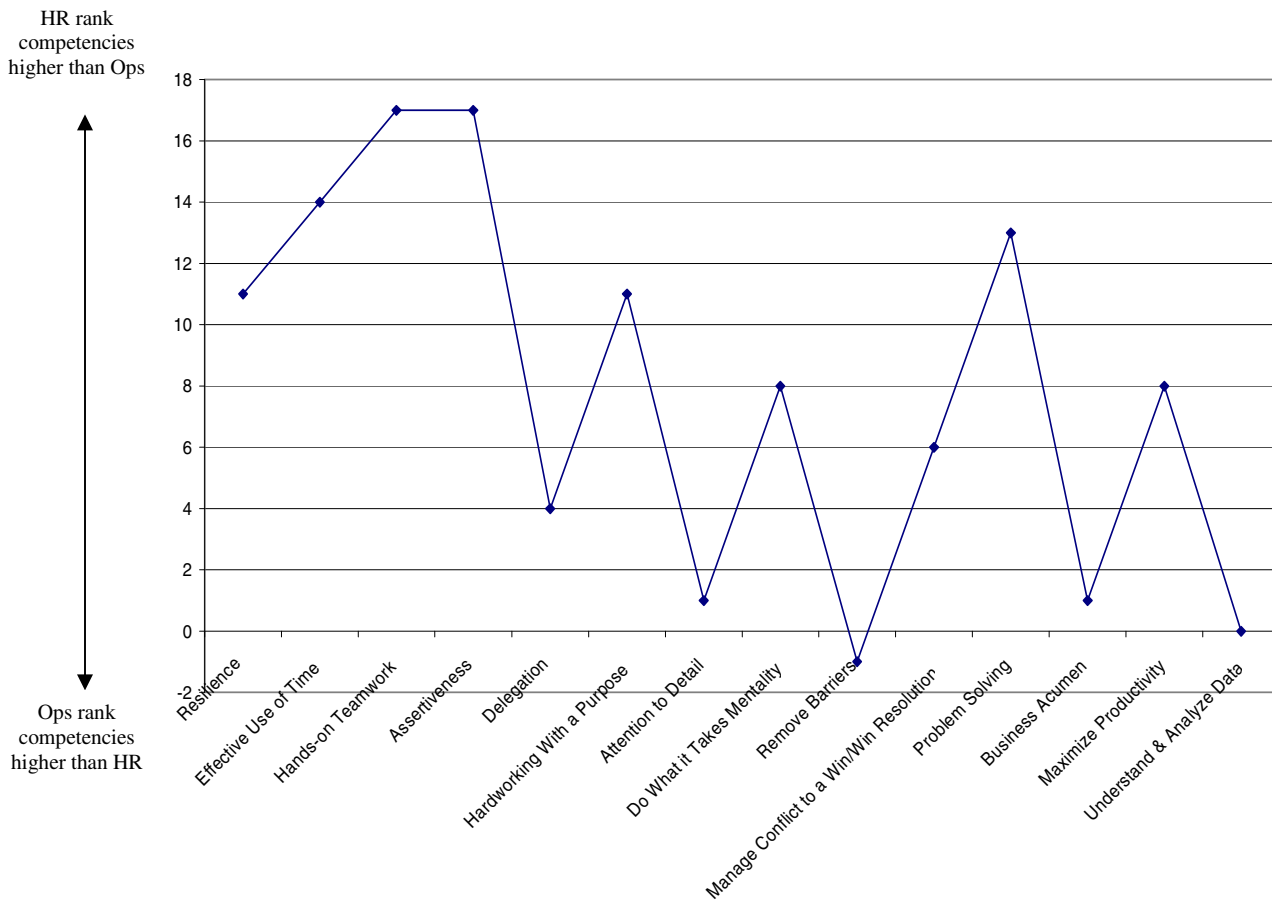


Figure 11. Quartile 4. Competencies 38 – 51 as Ranked by Operations Leaders, and Their Differences from the Human Resources Leaders’ Competency Rank Order

## Two-Sample t-Test

The final statistical test run on this data was a two-sample t-test of unequal variance to determine if there was a significant difference between the mean weighted average rank for each of the 51 sub competencies among the human resources and operations leaders. An alpha value of .05 was used as the significance criterion.

Thus the hypothesis that was tested was:

$$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$$

$$H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$$

Where,

$\mu_1$  = each competency's weighted average rank for human resources leaders, and  
 $\mu_2$  = each competency's weighted average rank for operations leaders.

Two competencies were found to be significant as shown in Table 7 which were “establishing direction”  $t(5)=2.57$ ;  $p=0.003$  and “identify and analyze strengths and weaknesses”  $t(5)=2.57$ ;  $p=0.049$ . The significant difference in the mean weighted average rank for “establishing direction” is a reflection of the fact that operations leaders value a restaurant manager's ability to establish and give direction in order to run a successful shift and/or overall operation. On the other hand, human resources leaders place greater value on skills which are related to the integrity, compliance and employee relations aspects of the restaurant operation.

The significant difference in the mean weighted average rank for “identify and analyze strengths and weaknesses” is also explained by the fact that restaurant operations leaders use metrics as the premise for evaluating all aspects of the restaurant operation. Thus, for a restaurant operator to be able to maximize all facets of their operation, they

must continually be looking at how to capitalize on their strengths and develop in the areas which there are opportunities to improve. From the perspective of the human resources leaders, they typically address strengths and weaknesses in terms of an individual's work performance, which they identify either during the interview process before a candidate is hired or during the performance management process for a particular individual. Identifying strengths and weaknesses would not necessarily be a competency which human resources leaders focus on in their day-to-day responsibilities where operations leaders do.

A complete list of sub competencies as shown in Table 8 reflects the average and standard deviation for each competency by the human resources and operations leaders as well as the t-value for each competency.

Table 8. Weighted Average, Standard Deviation and T-Value for Each Competency

Competency	Human Resources		Operations		T- Value
	Average	Standard Deviation	Average	Standard Deviation	
Ability to Communicate to All Levels	14.00	6.164	11.50	6.856	t(6)=2.44; p=0.607
Ability to Instill Vision in Others	11.00	11.832	12.00	11.045	t(4)=2.77; p=0.878
Ability to Manage Projects	37.50	11.902	24.75	15.218	t(6)=2.44; p=0.234
Assertiveness	16.00	16.330	25.75	12.816	t(6)=2.44; p=0.383
Attention to Detail	30.25	22.677	28.00	14.810	t(5)=2.57; p=0.874
Awareness	18.25	8.732	21.75	10.782	t(6)=2.44; p=0.631
Business Acumen	35.75	22.677	34.75	19.363	t(6)=2.44; p=0.948
Capacity to Learn	7.75	0.500	6.50	5.916	T(3)=3.18; p=0.902
Caring	25.00	12.083	24.00	20.461	t(5)=2.57; p=0.936
Clear & Effective Oral/Written Communication	13.50	5.447	14.25	7.411	t(6)=2.44; p=0.875
Commitment to Quality	11.00	5.292	10.00	4.619	t(4)=2.77; p=0.882
Compassionate	18.25	15.196	15.75	6.652	t(4)=2.77; p=0.778
Concern for Others	13.75	2.630	14.75	17.076	t(3)=3.18; p=0.915
Delegation	24.00	17.739	26.00	9.522	t(5)=2.57; p=0.850
Desire to Serve Others	12.00	11.195	13.75	17.858	t(5)=2.57; p=0.874
Develop Teams/Individuals	22.25	18.661	10.50	4.655	t(3)=3.18; p=0.309

Competency	Human Resources		Operations		T- Value
	Average	Standard Deviation	Average	Standard Deviation	
Do What it Takes Mentality	23.25	5.123	28.25	19.120	t(3)=3.18; p=0.648
Effective Use of Time	16.50	8.583	25.25	10.372	t(6)=2.44; p=0.241
Effectively Build Relationships	9.50	4.509	5.50	1.000	t(3)=3.18; p=0.181
Establishing Direction	30.75	3.775	12.50	5.745	*t(5)=2.57; p=0.003
Experience	7.75	7.228	15.75	7.588	t(6)=2.44; p=0.177
Flexibility	19.50	15.780	23.50	15.864	t(6)=2.44; p=0.732
Focus	11.25	7.805	23.50	16.503	t(4)=2.77; p=0.250
Genuine	10.50	9.037	15.00	7.071	t(6)=2.44; p=0.462
Give/Receive Constructive Criticism	12.75	8.617	10.25	6.344	t(6)=2.44; p=0.656
Goal Setting	33.75	17.519	12.75	9.069	t(5)=2.57; p=0.086
Hands-on Teamwork	15.25	8.461	25.75	19.015	t(4)=2.77; p=0.370
Hardworking With a Purpose	20.50	8.062	26.75	21.030	t(4)=2.77; p=0.608
Honesty	2.25	2.500	2.25	1.893	t(6)=2.44; p=0.1.00
Hospitality	21.25	14.728	22.50	22.038	t(5)=2.57; p=0.9.28
Humility	25.75	21.077	13.25	5.737	(3)=3.18; p=0.335
Identify & Analyze Strengths/Weaknesses	35.75	13.841	15.00	8.124	*t(5)=2.57; p=0.049
Identify Obstacles	31.25	15.945	22.75	3.403	t(3)=3.18; p=0.373
Influence/Motivate Teams	8.75	3.403	10.00	5.888	t(5)=2.57; p=0.728
Listening	5.50	1.915	7.50	3.697	t(4)=2.77; p=0.548
Loyalty	6.50	4.796	9.75	1.258	t(3)=3.18; p=0.281
Manage Conflict to a Win/Win Resolution	26.50	9.434	29.25	21.469	t(4)=2.77; p=0.826
Maximize Productivity	28.00	17.359	34.75	14.773	t(6)=2.44; p=0.575
Motivated	17.25	13.451	9.50	5.196	t(5)=2.57; p=0.354
Open Mindedness	21.50	19.416	13.50	9.469	t(4)=2.77; p=0.500
Problem Solving	22.00	8.981	29.50	12.503	t(5)=2.57; p=0.374
Professionalism	6.25	7.848	7.25	4.992	t(6)=2.44; p=0.961
Remove Barriers	35.50	18.358	29.25	5.737	t(4)=2.77; p=0.551
Resilience	17.25	12.312	25.25	12.816	t(6)=2.44; p=0.422
Self-Confidence	12.00	9.092	9.50	8.888	t(5)=2.57; p=0.653
Self-Starter	18.50	14.549	18.50	7.371	t(4)=2.77; p=1.000
Sense of Urgency	13.25	5.852	4.75	3.594	t(4)=2.77; p=0.652
Sense of Responsibility	5.00	4.690	17.50	16.462	t(6)=2.44; p=0.935
Shows Empathy	14.50	10.630	16.00	5.657	t(5)=2.57; p=0.813
Understand & Analyze Data	41.25	5.500	35.25	15.196	t(4)=2.77; p=0.498
Vision	9.75	6.238	4.00	2.160	t(4)=2.77; p=0.156

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

The overall objective of this pilot study was to determine if a universal set of generic competencies, which are considered more “soft skill” in nature versus technical or context specific, could be identified among multi-unit restaurant operations and human resources leaders in the quick service, fast casual, casual dining and fine dining segments. While the objective of this study was met, perhaps the more interesting outcome was in comparing the top ranking competencies from this study with the previous studies conducted in the hospitality industry which were referenced in the literature review.

The top five overall competencies for this pilot study were core values and ethics, leadership, work ethic, interpersonal skills and communication respectively. Ten of the thirteen studies referenced in the literature review also identified communication as an essential competency. It is also interesting to note that the leadership competency was not considered an essential competency in some of the earlier studies, but was found to be an essential competency in later studies such as the Baum (1990), Ashley et al. (1995), Breiter and Clements (1996), Christou and Eaton (2000) and Kay and Russette (2000) studies; thus, once again giving credence to the generic competency movement which has emerged in the past 15 years.

Further evidence supporting the emergence of generic competencies was found regarding the interpersonal competency in which the first study to deem it an essential competency was the 1995 study by Ashley et al. Later studies by Tas et al. (1996), Christou and Eaton (2000) and Kay and Russette (2000) also found interpersonal skills to

be among the essential competencies necessary for individuals to possess to be successful in the hospitality industry.

However, it was the work ethic competency, the number one ranking competency of this study, which has sustained through the decades as an essential competency. The studies of Buergermeister (1983), Knight and Salter (1985), Baum (1990), Jonker & Jonker (1990), Okeiyi, Finley and Postel (1994), Hsu, Gilmore and Walsh (1992), Breiter and Clements (1996), Tas et al. (1996), Christou and Eaton (2000) and Kay and Russette (2000) also found the work ethic and standards competency to be a leading competency in their respective studies. It is the longevity of this type of competency and the emergence of so many other soft-skill competencies found in this pilot study and other current research studies that spurs new ways of thinking in terms of competencies, not only in the restaurant industry but also in the workforce in general.

Despite these results, the viability they present in terms of the competency movement and the possibilities for future studies, the researcher would be remiss not to further consider some of the similarities and differences in the results between the human resources and operations leaders. As shown in Table 6, there was similar agreement between the human resources and operations leaders in terms of the top 10 competencies. With the exception of “honesty,” which was ranked the same in both groups and had the same weighted average between the two groups, there were seven additional competencies that both groups ranked within the top 10; yet the rankings were slightly different between human resources and operations.

These competencies included “vision,” “capacity to learn,” “listening,” “sense of responsibility,” “professionalism,” “effectively build relationships,” “loyalty.” For

example human resources leaders ranked “sense of responsibility” number two whereas the operations leaders ranked “sense of responsibility” as number three. Another example would be the competency “capacity to learn” where human resources ranked it as number six and operations ranked it as number five. The human resources group included “experience” and “influence/motivate teams” in their top 10; whereas the operations leaders’ included “motivated” and “self-confidence” in their top 10 competencies. However, there were three additional competencies besides “honesty” in which both groups ranked the competency the same in order of importance even though the weighted averages for the competencies were not the same between the two groups. These competencies were “commitment to quality,” “self-starter” and “understand and analyze data.”

The results of the t-test provided addition support regarding the differences in the results between human resources and operations. There were two competencies which had a significant difference in their mean weighted average ranks: “Establishing direction”  $t(5)=2.57$ ;  $p=0.003$  and “identify and analyze strengths and weaknesses”  $t(5)=2.57$ ;  $p=0.049$ . The significant difference in the mean weighted average rank for “establishing direction” is a reflection of the fact that operations leaders value a restaurant manager’s ability to establish and give direction in order to run a successful shift and/or overall operation. On the other hand, human resources leaders place greater value on skills which are related to the integrity, compliance and employee relations aspects of the restaurant operation.

The significant difference in the mean weighted average rank for “identify and analyze strengths and weaknesses” is also explained by the fact that restaurant operations



leaders use metrics as the premise for evaluating all aspects of the restaurant operation. Thus, for a restaurant operator to be able to maximize all facets of their operation, they must continually be looking at how to capitalize on their strengths and develop in the areas which there are opportunities to improve. From the perspective of the human resources leaders, they typically address strengths and weaknesses in terms of an individual's work performance, which they identify either during the interview process before a candidate is hired or during the performance management process for a particular individual. Identifying strengths and weaknesses would not necessarily be a competency which human resources leaders focus on in their day-to-day responsibilities where operations leaders do.

### **Implications of the Study**

One implication of the study is found in the rank order of the remaining competencies between the two groups, which reflects the human resources group placing a higher value on competencies related to team members, team member development and interpersonal competencies such as compassion or empathy. The restaurant leaders placed a higher ranking on competencies related to running an operation such as establishing direction, goal setting and identifying strengths and weaknesses. These findings support the traditional role and responsibilities of the human resources leader, as well as support the traditional role and responsibilities of the operations leaders regardless of the industry they work in.

A second implication of this study is the existing paradox between human resources and operations leaders, who for this study did identify and agree upon a generic

set of competencies. Yet their rankings, while close in terms of weighted averages, still reflect a mindset that operations leaders look more favorably upon those competencies that drive the overall operation and human resources leaders look more favorably upon those competencies which focus on the individual and their development.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While the benefit of conducting a live focus group is invaluable in terms of obtaining leading edge ideas from industry professionals, one limitation of this pilot study is the small number of participants, thus not having a true representation of the population. Furthermore the limited number of participants in a pilot study such as this also limits the types of statistical tests and analysis which can be run.

### **Future Research**

Apart from the small number of participants in the pilot study, the results of this study and the continued debate of generic verses technical competencies pave the way for various avenues of future research. In particular, the results of this study provide the foundation for the next phase of research to be conducted by this researcher, which will include a nation-wide data sample. Similar to this study, another beneficial study in the future would be to conduct a focus group of unit-level restaurant managers who are responsible for developing on-the-job technical skills; thus identifying the current technical competencies that are essential for individuals to possess in the restaurant and/or hospitality industry. Using the results of a focus group such as this, an industry-

wide study would be beneficial to hospitality industry leaders and academicians alike. Ultimately, a future study which compares and evaluates both technical and generic competencies that are deemed essential in the hospitality industry would behoove not only industry leaders, but also researchers, hospitality educators and universities offering hospitality programs.

## REFERENCE LIST

- Antonacopoulou, E. P. & Fitzgerald, L. (1996). Reframing Competency in Management Development. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 6(1), 27-48.
- Ashley, R. A., Bach, S.A., Chesser, J.W., Ellis, E. T., Ford, R.C., LeBruto, S.M. Milman, A., Pizam, A., & Quain, W.J. (1995). A Customer-Based Approach to Hospitality Education. *The Cornell Hotel & Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 26 (4), 74-79.
- Agut, S., & Grau, R. (2002). Managerial Competency Needs and Training Requests: The Case of the Spanish Tourist Industry. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 13 (1), 31-51.
- Athey, T. R., & Orth, M. S. (1999). Emerging Competency Methods for the Future. *Human Resource Management*, 38 (3), 215-226.
- Bach, S. A. & Milman, A. (1996). A Novel Technique for Reviewing a Hospitality Management Curriculum. *Hospitality and Tourism Educator*, 8 (1), 37-40.
- Baum, T. (1990). Competencies for Hotel Management: Industry Expectation of Education. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 2 (4), 13-16.
- Baum, T. (1991). The U.S. and the U.K.: Comparing Expectations of Management Trainees. *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 2 (4), 13-16.
- Baum, R. (1995). *Managing Human Resources in the European Hospitality Industry: A Strategic Approach*. London: Chapman & Hall.

- Baum, T. (2002). Skills and the Hospitality Sector: A Review of Issues. Paper given at the Labor Process Conference, Glasgow.
- Benner, P. (1984). From Novice to Expert: Excellence and Power in Clinical Nursing Practice. California: Addison-Wesley.
- Boon, J. & van der Klink, M. (2002). Competencies: The Triumph of a Fuzzy Concept, Academy of Human Resource Development Annual Conference, Honolulu, HA February 27 – March 3, in: Proceedings, Vol.1, 327-334.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1982). The Competent Manager: A Model for Effective Performance. New York: Wiley.
- Breiter, D., & Clements, C. J. (1996). Hospitality Management Curricula for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. *Hospitality & Tourism Educator*, 8 (1), 57-60.
- Brown, F. W. & Fritz, S. M. (1994). Determining the Breadth of Leadership and Human Resource Management/Development Offerings in Post-Secondary Departments of Agriculture Education. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 25(3), 1-5.
- Burgermeister, J. (1983). Assessment of the Educational Skills and Competencies Needed By Beginning Hospitality Managers. *Hospitality Education and Research Journal*, 8 (1), 38-53.
- Christou, E. (2002). Revisiting Competencies for Hospitality Management: Contemporary Views of the Stakeholders. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 14 (1), 25-32.
- Christou, E. & Eaton, J. (2000). Management Competencies for Graduate Trainers of Hospitality and Tourism Programs. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27 (4), 1058-1061.

- Delamare Le Deist, F. & Winterton, J. (2005). What is Competence? *Human Resource Development International*, 8 (1), 27-46.
- DeMicco, J. F., Palakurthi, R. R., Sammons, G. & Williams, J. A. (1994). Nutrition Education and Food Service Management Training Needs of School Food Service Professionals. *School Food Service Research Review*, 18(2), 80-88.
- DiMicelli, P. (1998). Blending Theory and Practical Experience: A Hands-on Approach to Educating Hospitality Managers. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*, 10 (1), 32-36
- Dreyfus, H.L. & Dreyfus, S. E. (1986). *Mind Over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer*. New York: The Free Press.
- Drucker, P. F. (1999). *Management challenges for the 21st Century*. Massachusetts: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Dulewicz, V. (1989). Assessment Centers as the Route to Competence. *Personnel Management, November*, 56-59.
- Dulewicz, V. and Herbert, P. (1992). *Personality, Competences, Leadership Style and Managerial Effectiveness*. Henley Working Paper, 14(92). London: Henley.
- Eraut, M. (2000). Non-Normal Learning and Tacit Knowledge in Professional Work. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 70, 113-136.
- Fielding, N. G. (1998a). Competence and Culture in the Police. *Sociology*, 22, 45-64.
- Fielding, N. G. (1998b). *Joining Forces: Police Training. Socialization and Occupational Competence*. London: Routledge.

- Fisher, K. W., Bullock, D. H., Rotenberg, E. J. & Raya, P. (1993). The Dynamics of Competence: How Context Contributes Directly to Skill: R.H. Wozniak and K. W. Fischer (Eds) *Development in Context: Acting and Thinking in Specific Environments*, 93-117. New Jersey: Erlbaum.
- Flood, H. & Flood, P. (2000). An Exploration of the Relationships between the Adoption of Managerial Competencies, Organizational Characteristics, Human Resource Sophistication and Performance in Irish Organizations. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 24 (2, 3, 4), 128-136.
- Foster, R. M. & Pikkert, J.J. (1991). Perceptions of Agriculture College Faculty Regarding Integration of Higher Order Level Skills in Curriculum. *NACTA Journal*, 25(4), 23-25.
- Gangani, N. T., McLean, G. N. & Braden, R. A. (2004). Competency-Based Human Resource Development Strategy. Academy of Human Resource Development Annual Conference, Austin, TX March 4 – 7 in: Proceedings, Vol 2 1111-1118.
- Green, P. C. (1999). *Building Robust Competencies*. California: Jossey-Bass.
- Gillespie, C. & Baum, T. (2000). Innovation and Creativity in Professional Higher Education: Development of a CD-Rom to Support Teaching and Learning in Food and Beverage Management. *The Scottish Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 6 (2), 147-165.
- Go, F.M., Monachello, M.L., & Baum, T. (1996). *Human Resource Management in the Hospitality Industry*. New York: Wiley.
- Haddadj, S. & Besson, D. (2000). Introduction a' la Gestion Des Competences. *Review Francaise de Gestion*, January – February, 82-83.

- Hanson, B. (1993). Executive Creativity. *Lodging Hospitality*, 49 (9), 28.
- Hartle, F. (1995). How to Re-engineer your Performance Management Process.  
London: Kogan Page.
- Hsu, C.H.C. (1995). Computer Skills Needed and Demonstrated by Hospitality Management Graduates: Perceptions of Hotel Operators. *Hospitality and Tourism Educator*, 7 (2), 25-29
- Hsu, C.H.C., Gilmore, S.A., & Walsh, T.E. (1992). Competencies Needed and Demonstrated by Hospitality Management Graduates: Perceptions of Employers. *National Association of College and University Food Service Journal*, 16, 34-42.
- Jonker, P., & Jonker D. (1990). What do Hospitality Graduates Really Need? An Industry Perspective. *Hospitality & Tourism Educator*, 3 (1), 12-13.
- Kay, C., & Russette, J. (2000). Hospitality-Management Competencies. *The Cornell Hotel & Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 41 (2), 52.
- Knight J.B., & Salter, C.A. (1985). Some Considerations for Hospitality Training Programs. *The Cornell Hotel & Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 25 (4), 28-43.
- Knutson, B. J. & Patton, M.E. (1992). How Prepared Am I to Succeed in the Hospitality Industry? What the Students are Telling Us. *Hospitality and Tourism Educator*, 4 (3), 38-43.
- Kusterer, K. C. (1978). Know-How on the Job: The Important Working Knowledge of Unskilled Workers. Colorado: Westview.
- Levy-Leboyer, C. (1996). La Gestion des competences. Paris: Les Editions d'Organizations.



- Ley, A. L. (1978). An Empirical Examination of Selected Work Activity Correlates of Managerial Effectiveness in the Hotel Industry using a Structured Observation Approach. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Michigan State University.
- Lucia, A. D. & Lepsinger, R. (1999). The Art and Science of Competency Models: Pinpointing Critical Success Factors in an Organization. California: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.
- McClelland, D. (1973). Testing For Competence Rather Than Intelligence. *American Psychologist*, 28, 1-14.
- McClelland, D. (1976). A Guide to Job Competency Assessment. Massachusetts: McBer.
- Mirable, R. (1997). Everything You Wanted To Know About Competency Modeling. *Training and Development*, 73-77.
- Nadler, D. A., Tushman, M. (1999). The Organization of the Future: Strategic Imperatives and Core Competencies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. *Organizational Dynamics*, 27 (1) 45-58.
- Naquin, S. S. & Wilson, J. (2002). Creating Competency Standards, Assessments and Certification. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 4 (2), 180-187.
- National Restaurant Association 2005, Restaurant Industry Operations Report. Retrieved November 1, 2005, from <http://www.restaurant.org>.
- Nation's Restaurant News 2006, Growth Chains 2006 Top Movers and Shakers. Retrieved March 9, 2006, from <http://www.nrn.com>.

- Nelson, A. & Dopson, L. (2001). Future of Hotel Education: Required Skills and Knowledge for Graduates of U.S. Hospitality Programs Beyond the Year 2000 – Part One. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*, 13 (5), 58-67.
- Nitardy, C. N. & McLean, G. N. (2002). Project Management Competencies Needed by HRD Professionals: A Literature Review. Academy of Human Resource Development Conference, Honolulu, HA, February 27 – March 3 in: Proceedings, Vol. 2, 956-963.
- Okeiyi, E., Finley, D., & Postel, R.T. (1994). Food and Beverage Management Competencies: Educator, Industry, and Student Perspective. *Hospitality and Tourism Educator*, 6 (4), 37-40.
- Partlow, C. G. (1991). Identification of Graduate Level Competencies in Hospitality Management. *Hospitality Research Journal*, 14 (2), 223-229.
- Polanyi, M. (1967). *The Tacit Dimension*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Reynolds, D. (2000). An Exploratory Investigation into Behaviorally Based Success Characteristics of Food Service Managers.
- Rowe, M. (1993). Hard Times in the Ivory Tower. *Lodging Hospitality*, 49(11), 59-62.
- Russ-Eft, D. (1995). Defining Competencies: A Critique. *Human Resources Development Quarterly*, 6(4), 329-335.
- Scanlon, D. C., Bruening, T. H. & Cordero, A. (1996). An Industry Perspective on Changes Needed in Agricultural Education Curricula. *Journal of Agriculture Education*, 37(2),17-23
- Spencer, L. & Spencer, S. (1993). *Competency at Work: A Model for Superior Performance*. New York: Wiley.

- Spotanski, D. R. & Foster, R. M. (1989). Agribusiness Skills Required by Agriculture Students as Perceived by Nebraska Vocational Agriculture Instructors and Agribusiness Managers. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 30(3), 2-7.
- Stasz, C. (1997). *Do Employers Need The Skills They Want? Evidence from Technical Work*. *Journal of Education and Work*, 10(3), 205-233.
- Tas, R.F. (1988). Teaching Future Managers. *The Cornell Hotel & Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 27 (3), 90-96.
- Tas, R. F., LaBrecque, S. V., & Clayton, H.R. (1996). Property-Management Competencies for Management Trainees. *The Cornell Hotel & Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 27(3), 90-96.
- Umbreit, W. T. & Pederson, D. (1989). A Survey of Hospitality Education Graduate Schools. *Hospitality and Tourism Educator*, 2 (1), 14-45.
- Umbreit, W. T. (1993). Essential Skills: What the Graduates Need to Succeed. *Hosteur*, 3 (1), 10-12.
- van der Klink, M. & Boon, J. (2002). The Investigation of Competencies within Professional Domains. *Human Resource Development International*, 5(4), 411-424.
- White, R. (1959). Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence. *Psychological Review*, 66, 279-333

## APPENDIX

### Competency Rankings

\_\_\_\_\_ **HR** \_\_\_\_\_ **Ops**

Place an X beside your position

Please rank the following ELEVEN main competencies in order of importance with 1 being most important. Type your ranking on the line before each competency.

- |                         |                               |                             |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| _____ Analytical        | _____ Core Values and Ethics  | _____ Service               |
| _____ Capacity to Learn | _____ Interpersonal           | _____ Training and Coaching |
| _____ Commitment        | _____ Leadership              | _____ Work Ethic            |
| _____ Communication     | _____ Organization & Planning |                             |

Within each main competency category, please rank the sub-competencies in order of importance with 1 being the most important. For each category, you will start the ranking over with the #1, representing the most important for that category. Type your ranking on the line before each competency.

#### Analytical

- \_\_\_\_\_ Attention to detail
- \_\_\_\_\_ Problem Solving
- \_\_\_\_\_ Business Acumen
- \_\_\_\_\_ Understand and analyze data
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify and analyze strengths and weaknesses

#### Communication

- \_\_\_\_\_ Listening
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clear and effective oral and written communication
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ability to communicate to all levels

#### Commitment

- \_\_\_\_\_ Experience
- \_\_\_\_\_ Loyalty

#### Core Values and Ethics

- \_\_\_\_\_ Professionalism
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sense of Responsibility
- \_\_\_\_\_ Honest

#### Interpersonal

- \_\_\_\_\_ Effectively build relationships
- \_\_\_\_\_ Compassionate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shows empathy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Give/receive constructive criticism

#### Organization and Planning

- \_\_\_\_\_ Goal Setting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Delegation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Effective use of time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Establishing direction
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ability to manage projects

#### Work Ethic

- \_\_\_\_\_ Commitment to quality
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hardworking with a purpose
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sense of urgency
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hands-on Teamwork
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do what it takes mentality
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assertiveness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Motivated
- \_\_\_\_\_ Self-Starter

#### Leadership

- \_\_\_\_\_ Resilience
- \_\_\_\_\_ Flexibility
- \_\_\_\_\_ Focus
- \_\_\_\_\_ Awareness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Humility
- \_\_\_\_\_ Open Mindedness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Self-Confidence
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vision
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ability to instill vision in others

#### Service

- \_\_\_\_\_ Concern for others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Caring
- \_\_\_\_\_ Genuine
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hospitality
- \_\_\_\_\_ Desire to serve others

#### Training & Coaching

- \_\_\_\_\_ Develop teams/individuals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Influence/Motivate Teams
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify Obstacles
- \_\_\_\_\_ Remove Barriers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Maximize Productivity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Manage conflict to a win/win resolution

**Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board**

Date: Friday, March 24,  
2006

IRB Application No HE0654

Proposal Title: A Pilot Study of Highly Important Competencies as Perceived by  
Restaurant  
Leaders

Reviewed and Exempt  
Processed as:

**Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 3/23/2007**

Principal  
Investigators

Belinda D. Butler  
2121 N. BurdickSt.  
Stillwater, OK 74075

Radesh Palakurthi  
210EHES  
Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu)

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs,  
Chair Institutional Review Board

## VITA

Belinda D. Butler

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A PILOT STUDY OF ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES AS PERCEIVED BY MULTI-UNIT OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RESOURCES LEADERS IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Major Field: Hospitality and Tourism Administration

### Biographical:

Education: Received an Associates degree in Secretarial Science from Tulsa Junior College, Tulsa, Oklahoma in July 1987; received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Education from Central State University, Edmond, Oklahoma in May 1989. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Hospitality and Tourism Administration at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July, 2006.

Experience: Employed with American Airlines as an administrative assistant, financial analyst and software trainer from 1989 through 1995 respectively; employed by Metromedia Restaurant Group from 1995 through 2001 in training, leadership development and human resources; employed by Brinker International in training and human resources from 2001 to 2003; employed by Oklahoma State University, Department of Hotel and Restaurant Administration as a public relations assistant and a teaching assistant, 2004 to present.

Certifications: Blanchard Situational Leadership II; Carlson Dimension of Leadership Profile; Carlson DISC Personal Dimension Profile System; Myers Briggs Type Indicator.

Academic Organizations: Member, CHRIE - International Council on Hotel, Restaurant & Institutional Education; Member, Oklahoma State University, College of Human Environmental Services, Kappa Omicron Nu; Vice President, Oklahoma State University, School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration - Graduate Student Association.

Name: Belinda D. Butler

Date of Degree: July, 2006

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: TYPE A PILOT STUDY OF ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES AS  
PERCEIVED BY MULTI-UNIT OPERATIONS AND HUMAN  
RESOURCES LEADERS IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Pages in Study: 61

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Hospitality and Tourism Administration

Scope and Method of Study: The overall objective of this pilot study was to determine if a universal set of generic competencies, which are considered “soft skill” in nature, could be identified among multi-unit restaurant operations and human resources leaders in the quick service, fast casual, casual dining and fine dining segments; thus providing a guide for restaurant leaders to use when hiring new managers into their organizations as well as giving credence to the idea of hiring managers with diverse dining segment experience.

Findings and Conclusions: First, the objective of this study was met in that operations and human resources leaders from the quick service, fast casual, casual and fine dining segments were able to identify and agree upon a generic set of competencies they deemed important for individuals to possess in the restaurant industry. The main competency rankings from both the human resources and operations leaders showed that the “core values and ethics” competency was considered the most important with a weighted average of 2.25, followed by “leadership” which had a weighted average of 3.25 and “work ethic” which had a weighted average of 4.12.

When comparing the weighted averages in rank order between the operations and human resources leaders, a direct correlation of .98 was found, thus proving there was no disagreement between these two groups. Ten of the thirteen studies referenced in the literature review also identified these same top five competencies as essential, thus giving credence to the generic competency movement.

The final statistical test run on this data was a sample t-test of unequal variance to determine if there was a significant difference between the mean weighted average rank for each of the 51 sub competencies among the human resources and operations leaders. Two competencies were found to be significant “establishing direction”  $t(5)=2.57$ ;  $p=0.003$  and “identify and analyze strengths and weaknesses”  $t(5)=2.57$ ;  $p=0.049$ .

ADVISER’S APPROVAL: Dr. Radesh Palakurthi

---