

Competencies for Business Development Professionals

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Abstract:

The Indian consumer durables sector has been growing with a very fast pace and seen a lot of steep competition. It has also been observed that customers have enough of information and with social media, as one of the most common channels for communications, most of the organisations are promoting their products on the social media platforms. Customers' loyalties for brands and organisation have also seen a dip in the past few years. With the above given changes in the market place, the challenges of business development team are on rise. Business development is one of the strong pillars for most of the organisation. With the above challenges of the market place, it is expected by the top management of the organisations that business development teams perform as per the goals of the organisation. With the increase in the challenges of acquiring businesses for the organisation, the researcher decided to undertake a study of the competencies required for performing the business development role in the consumer durable sector. It is expected that the study would help to develop business development to deal with the changes in the marketplace, goals of the organisation and also to align with the changing behaviour of the customers. The study may serve as a guide to increase levels of effectiveness of business development professionals.

Keywords: *Competency, Business Development Professionals, Consumer Durables Market*

1. Introduction:

The role of business development team is of utmost importance for most of the business organisation (Pedersen, E., Earley, R., & Andersen, K. 2019). It is of strategic importance and most of the heads of organisation have an eye on business development side. With the changing business landscape, most of the organisations are becoming more 'customer centric' with the objective of developing long term relationships with customers (Johnson, M., Roehrich, J., Chakkol, M., & Davies, A. 2021), as their functional strategy. The change in the strategic approach of the organisation has an impact on the role of business development professional. The effective implementation of the strategic objectives of the organisation may have a direct impact on the role of the business development profession (Drew, S. 2011). To cope up with new customer centric strategic approach, it is possible that certain competencies are identified or acquired by business development team and human resources department of the organisation. The effectiveness of the strategy of being customer centric depends on the quality of the professionals an organisation has in its business development team (Drew, S. 2011) which faces the customer. It is expected that the business development team must possess the required competencies in order to be effective. The senior members of the business development team need to understand which are the different competencies required in the business development team so that they are effective in the field. They may also need to understand along with their human resource department types of competencies which can help their business development grow as desired by the top management of the organisation. There is a need for identifying and developing these competencies not only with few business development professionals however with the entire business development team. Sales competencies are based upon the sales person's performance on a task or in the sale job or role. (Cuevas, J., Critten, P., Squire, P., & Speakman, J. 2014). Developing required competencies by way of investment may provide incentive to both the business development professional and the organisation. Organisations who have realised the need for people development focuses on conducting relevant training programs for the growth of the organisation. Though other business functions like marketing, finance, human resources management have made advancement in identifying the desired competencies however the business development function has failed to keep pace with the developments (Kieran, S. 2018).

2. Literature Review:

Researcher has also done a lot of literature review however a very clear well defined competencies, necessary in the consumer durable industry for business development professional, were available in descriptive form not very specific competencies to the roles have been identified. The most important focus of this research is to identify competencies required for a business development professional. This may help the organisations to be more effective in the competitive market place. This may also help leaders and managers to be clear as to what kind of competencies are required to be able to take the performance of the business development to the next level. The aim of this study is to find out relevant competencies required in the consumer durable market for business development professional to take the performance to the next level. The study will also help human resources managers in recruiting right type of professionals for business development. The next section is focussed on literature review wherein efforts are made to understand and identify

competencies required for business development professionals. Understanding competence allows the recruiter or the leader to assess and reflect upon the work in an efficient way and also give responsibility of work in a more meaningful way.

Competencies may include traits, motives, self-concept, skills, behaviour and knowledge (McClelland 1973; Boyatzis 1982; Mitrani et al 1992) by which professionals or individuals act successfully or efficiently in the organisation (Education Council Nassaulam 1993; Spencer and Spencer 1993; Baum 2008; Arthur and Defillipi 1994) defined competencies as individual characteristics that an individual demonstrates in an organisation where he/she is working. There are various definitions as seen above however the competency sets should be adjusted by a professional based on working environment provided by the organisation and it is very difficult to have a very standard set of competencies that may fulfil the needs of all the organisation though industry sector may be same. Business development professional is a combination of competencies which include motivation, patience, ability to listen, emotional intelligence, capability to project the organisation and the product or services as the case may be. The most important competency a business development professional must possess is the ability to put oneself in their customer's shoes and then build relationship with the customer.

Businesses have been continuously thinking about business strategy over the last few decades particularly regarding competencies which help them compete in a specific environment. The core team including the top management have been working on corporate core competencies and the human resources development department is expected to develop competency based models that ultimately drive business results.

The research questions to be addressed are:

1. Is it possible to identify the competencies required for business development professionals in a consumer durable industry?
2. Is it possible to develop people with competencies required by the consumer durable market?
3. What kind of investment is required by business development professionals to develop with competencies required for the market?

Strategies can only be effectively implemented if organisations have a competent force of employees.

HR functions today focus on challenges as never faced before. (Gale, A. and Brown, M. 2003) defined competency as "Competencies are the characteristics of a manager that lead to the demonstration of skills and abilities which results in effective performance within an occupational area." Kulkarni (1921) defined competency as underlying characteristics of a person which results in effective and / or superior performance on the job. It is also defined as a cluster of related knowledge, skills and attributes that affects a major part of one's job (a role or responsibility) that co-related with performance on the job, that can be measured against well accepted standards and that can be improved via training and development.

As per Ganie and Saleem (2018), competency is defined as "an underlying characteristics of an individual that is casually related to criterion – referenced effective and / or superior performance in a job situation."

4. Research Gap and Research Problem:

It is observed based on the literature review that front line business development professionals often face the challenge of performance due to their reaction to the business environment. It is important that they must have certain competencies in order to be effective. The major challenge is to identify competencies that are required for performing as a business development professional in consumer durable sector. It is also important that business development managers, team leaders and human resources professionals should figure out the competencies required by a business development professional. Thus, this study aims to define the competencies required for optimum performance of business development professionals for the consumer durable sector in the area of Thane.

5. Objectives of Study:

- a. To understand the existing approach of developing business development professionals in consumer durable industry.
- b. To find out a comprehensive list of key competencies required for business development professionals for optimally performing in consumer durable sector.
- c. To help the selection process and to enhance the quality of initial training imparted to the fresh business development professionals.

6. Research Methodology:

The research gap identified during literature reviews shares that defining competencies itself is a challenge and hence semi-structured in-depth interviews were adopted to collect data from various key stakeholders. Along with experienced sales people, managers and HR managers were also interviewed to understand the expectations from business development professionals. Opinions of the professional were also collected to understand shortcomings and motivation of business development professionals.

The questionnaire with 5 point Likert scale was administered either in person or through email to 85 respondents. Interview was administered through phone or in person with managers and human resource officers. Both manager and human resource professional had some experiences with consumer durable either directly by way of direct role or indirectly as a supporting role.

Hypotheses:

Ha 1: - There is significant impact of personality on BDP.

Ha 2: - There is significant impact of ability on BDP.

Ha 3: - There is significant impact of knowledge on BDP.

Ha 4: - There is significant impact of skills on BDP.

A statistical analysis was done on the data using SPSS software for test hypotheses testing.

7. Data Analysis:

Table No. 1

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.946 ^a	.894	.885	5.17199

Table No. 2

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16071.771	6	2678.629	100.137	.000 ^b
	Residual	1899.216	71	26.750		
		17970.987	77			
a. Dependent Variable: BDP						

Table No. 3

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.235	2.246		3.221	.002
	Q1. PERSONALITY: a. BDP demonstrates the ability to take leadership during face-to-face situations while displaying appropriate tact and diplomacy.	2.441	.875	.177	2.789	.007

Q2. PERSONALITY: b. BDP demonstrates desire to win and to achieve and surpass goal.	3.372	.769	.265	4.387	.000
Q3. PERSONALITY: c. BDP works independently and maintain oneâ€™s motivation.	3.372	.789	.097	1.786	.078
Q4. PERSONALITY: d. BDP can focus and be effective even under stressful conditions.	3.180	.926	.217	3.435	.001
Q5. PERSONALITY: e. BDP demonstrates fast pace in most of the activities.	2.649	.920	.187	2.880	.005
Q6. PERSONALITY: f. BDP has desire to interact with others; projecting warmth; relating to a wide variety of people.	2.304	.797	.186	2.890	.005
a. Dependent Variable: BDP					

- Q1. PERSONALITY: BDP demonstrates the ability to take leadership during face-to-face situations while displaying appropriate tact and diplomacy **P- Value :0.007**
- Q2. PERSONALITY: BDP demonstrates desire to win and to achieve and surpass goal **P- Value :0.00**
- Q4. PERSONALITY: BDP can focus and be effective even under stressful conditions. **P- Value :0.01**
- Q5. PERSONALITY: BDP demonstrates fast pace in most of the activities **P- Value :0.05**
- Q6. PERSONALITY: BDP has desire to interact with others; projecting warmth; relating to a wide variety of people **P- Value 0.05**

Table No. 4

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.928 ^a	.861	.855	5.80756

Table No. 5

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15475.129	3	5158.376	152.941	.000 ^b
	Residual	2495.858	74	33.728		
		17970.987	77			
a. Dependent Variable: BDP						

Table No. 6

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	9.286	2.445		3.798	.000
	Q. 1. ABILITY: a. BDP can deal with multiple issues at a time and demonstrates eagerness to learn.	4.801	.867	.321	5.538	.000
	Q. 2. ABILITY: b. BDP has the ability to see and think beyond the existing horizons along with the potential for identifying original solutions.	3.992	1.083	.283	3.687	.000
	Q. 3. ABILITY: c. BDP analyses logically and arrives at meaningful conclusions.	5.357	.914	.436	5.864	.000
a. Dependent Variable: BDP						

Q1. ABILITY: BDP can deal with multiple issues at a time and demonstrates eagerness to learn. **P- Value :0.00**

Q2. ABILITY: BDP has the ability to see and think beyond the existing horizons along with the potential for identifying original solutions **P- Value :0.00**

Q3. ABILITY: BDP analyses logically and arrives at meaningful conclusions. **P- Value :0.00**

Table No. 7

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.943 ^a	.890	.884	5.20540

Table No. 8

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15992.965	4	3998.241	147.557	.000 ^b
	Residual	1978.022	73	27.096		
		17970.987	77			
a. Dependent Variable: BDP						

Table No. 9

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.358	2.374		1.414	.162

	Q. 1. KNOWLEDGE: a. BDP has understanding of financial implications of decisions on the business, customerâ€™s satisfaction and the organisation.	4.242	.825	.285	5.142	.000
	Q. 2. KNOWLEDGE: b. BDP is digital savvy for application to marketing programmes.	4.412	.919	.286	4.801	.000
	Q. 3. KNOWLEDGE: c. BDP has relevant knowledge of products and services as well as other crucial aspects of the business.	3.404	.853	.253	3.992	.000
	Q. 4. KNOWLEDGE: d. BDP is updated on the competitorâ€™s front.	3.605	.784	.271	4.599	.000
a. Dependent Variable: BDP						

Q1. KNOWLEDGE: BDP has understanding of financial implications of decisions on the business, customers satisfaction and the organisation. **P- Value :0.00**

Q2. KNOWLEDGE: . BDP is digital savvy for application to marketing programmes. **P- Value :0.00**

Q3. KNOWLEDGE: BDP has relevant knowledge of products and services as well as other crucial aspects of the business. **P- Value :0.00**

Q4. KNOWLEDGE: BDP is updated on the competitors front. **P- Value :0.00**

Table No. 10

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.964 ^a	.928	.925	4.19702

Table No. 11

ANOVA ^a						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16685.095	4	4171.274	236.803	.000 ^b
	Residual	1285.892	73	17.615		
	Total	17970.987	77			
a. Dependent Variable: BDP						

Table No. 12

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	6.275	1.864		.001

Q1. SKILLS: a. BDP establishes rapport, determines customer needs, relate benefits to product features, handles objections and does closing.	3.434	.686	.222	5.006	.000
Q2. SKILLS: b. BDP anticipates problem, inviting ideas, distinguishes symptoms from causes, modifies proposals and implements solutions.	6.013	.732	.437	8.213	.000
Q3. SKILLS: c. BDP communicates with large and small groups, establishes rapport with the group, read group cues, articulates ideas, effectively uses visual aids and maintains a commanding presence.	3.525	.746	.272	4.724	.000
Q4. SKILLS: d. BDP assesses training needs, closes customers knowledge gaps, simplifies information, ensures understanding, reinforces desired behaviours and motivates the learner.	2.004	.683	.152	2.933	.004
a. Dependent Variable: BDP					

- Q1. SKILLS: BDP establishes rapport, determines customer needs, relate benefits to product features, handles objections and does closing **P Value :.000**
- Q2. SKILLS: BDP anticipates problem, inviting ideas, distinguishes symptoms from causes, modifies proposals and implements solutions. **P Value: .000**
- Q3. SKILLS: BDP communicates with large and small groups, establishes rapport with the group, read group cues, articulates ideas, effectively uses visual aids and maintains a commanding presence. **P Value: .000**
- Q4. SKILLS: BDP assesses training needs, closes customers knowledge gaps, simplifies information, ensures understanding, reinforces desired behaviours and motivates the learner. **P Value: .004**

8. Conclusion:

R squared value for regression analysis is 0.894 (Table No.1) which depicts that model explains 89.4 % of the variance. Since the p value for Anova table (Table No2.) is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 which signifies that regression model is significant. Also P values for Q1, Q2, Q4, Q5,,Q6 (Table No. 3) for Ha 1 less than 0.05 Hence it is significant and we reject null hypothesis and it can be concluded there is significant impact of personality on BDP. R squared value for regression analysis is 0.861 (Table No. 4) which depicts that model explains 86.1 % of the variance. Since the p value for Anova table (Table No. 5) is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 which signifies that regression model is significant. Also P values for Q1, Q2, Q3 (Table No.6) for Ha 1 less than 0.05 Hence it is significant and we reject null hypothesis and it can be concluded there is significant impact of ability on BDP

R squared value for regression analysis is 0.890 (Table No. 7) which depicts that model explains 89.0 % of the variance. Since the p value for Anova table (Table No. 8) is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 which signifies that regression model is significant. Also P values for Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 (Table No.9) for Ha 1 less than 0.05 Hence it is significant and we reject null hypothesis and it can be concluded there is significant impact of knowledge on BDP. R squared value for regression analysis is 0.928 (Table No. 10) which depicts that model explains 92.8.0 % of the variance. Since the p value for Anova table (Table No.11) is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 which signifies that regression model is significant. Also P values for Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 (Table No.12) for Ha 1 less than 0.05 Hence it is significant and we reject null hypothesis and it can be concluded there is significant impact skills on BDP

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