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# CHANGING COMPETENCIES IN WORK LIFE: EXPECTATIONS?

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COVID-19, which has been affecting the world recently, has caused great changes in both our private and business lives. The rapid increase in the dependence on technology has led to a change in the way of doing business and working environments. In addition to all these, Z generation, who grew up with technology, started to enter business life, forced companies to change their usual way of doing business.

These changes have revealed the necessity not only for institutions, but also for young people and business professionals who want to work in these institutions to develop some of their competencies and skills. All these differences have caused a question mark in the minds of everyone who is in the process of looking for a job, who has not entered the business life yet, and who wants to give a different direction to their career.



Figure 1. 21st century skills framework (P21)

In recent years, it is seen that different skills and competencies have emerged in the studies carried out by many institutions such as OECD on 21st century competencies. It is seen that different skills and competencies have emerged in the studies they have done on the competencies of the century. As can be seen in the image below, the important titles

within these skills and competencies are; learning and innovation skills (early creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration) life and career skills (resilience and adaptability, initiative and self-management, social and intercultural skills, productivity and accountability, leadership and responsibility) knowledge, media and technology skills (early learning information and media literacy) (Ültay, N., Dönmez Usta, N., & Ültay, E. (2021). Descriptive Content Analysis of Studies on 21st Century Skills.. SDU International Journal of Educational Studies, 8(2), 85-101. DOI: 10.33710/sduijes.895160)

We conducted a short interview with Mr. Gökhan Ergut, who has been working in the field of human resources for many years, on the subject of what skills and competencies people who want to direct their careers need to have in order to be happy and successful in the new world order.

### 1. Could you briefly introduce yourself? (In which sectors do you have experience?)

I graduated from Anadolu University, Faculty of Communication Sciences, Department of Educational Communication and Planning in 2006. I have undertaken managerial and individual responsibilities in global companies for many years in the field of human resources in different sectors (automotive, retail, production, technology). For the last 7 years, I have been working as “Head of HR” at ZEISS Turkey, the Turkish subsidiary of Germany-based ZEISS Group, one of the world’s leading optical and opto-electronics manufacturers.

### 2. When you consider your career process, what do you think are your personal competencies that stand out? Do you follow any path to achieve these competencies?

In my own personal experience and journey, the culture of the companies I work for has always been decisive. The dynamics, challenges, and opportunities of the sector I work in have shaped my competencies. For example, while my problem-solving skills became more prominent in the automotive sector, my human development skills became more important in the retail sector. In my technology experience, I can talk about speed, cultural and digital transformation. There can of course be many ways to develop or gain a competency. I also try to improve my current or future competencies by following the developments and trends in my field through trainings, various feedback tools, mentoring programs.

### 3. What are the competencies you care about the most in recruitment?

Many companies are trying to measure or monitor their corporate competencies in recruitment (or even talent management processes). Competencies may vary according to role/position. In managerial roles, we see that competencies such as effective leadership, change management, high-performance team building & management, developing others, and determination come to the forefront. The culture/DNA of the company also plays an

important role in the formation and development of these competencies. In general, if we look at competencies, cooperation, effective communication, result-orientedness, adaptation to change and learning agility come to the forefront. Here, as well as competencies, the candidate's adaptation to the role and the company (cultural fit) is a feature that must be taken into consideration.

**4. When you think about the team you work with, what generations of colleagues do you have? When you observe these friends, can you tell us a little bit about what differences (differences in competence) you see between generations?**

In fact, we are working with a highly heterogeneous generation or team. Different generations from different experiences, different cultures, different levels of education, different age groups work together. Even within the same section, two different generations can be found. This is actually an indication of the diversity goal of many companies. In other words, it is aimed to bring the differences to the forefront more and to get more experience / sharing from these differences. We need to work together with generations that shape the past and the future. From the silent generation to the Alpha generation, our approach to events/situations, our ways of doing business, our preferences, our sources of motivation, our learning styles, the way we access information, process information and use information have changed. The competencies we have are differentiated accordingly. For example, digital competencies are the most prominent feature of today's generation. They access information very quickly. They are not fed from a single source. They want to work in environments where they can feel freer. They want to be included, heard and seen. They place a lot of emphasis on digital skills. They are quite ready to take their talents beyond borders.

**5. What would you expect from the teammates you would consider working with? (What is the significance of the competencies you expect for you or your company?)**

I think cultural harmony and willingness are essential. You can teach the job over time. You can gain new knowledge and skills. If the person is not culturally able to adapt to your company's DNA, speed, values, and way of doing business, perhaps they may not be a suitable candidate. Personal motivation to the company (the company's technology, products, past achievements, contribution to society, etc.) and the role (new challenges/ opportunities, development opportunities, etc.) is also very decisive.

**6. What are the competencies that you previously cared about in recruitment but thought were no longer necessary?**

A similar competency can have different meanings for each company. The important thing here is to be able to capture the set of candidates for the relevant competence and the hermit in terms of the company. Competencies will differ according to today's conditions because competencies are not actually static. It may vary according to mega trends and the growth

and development strategy of the company. The definition and sub-breakdowns of competence may change over time. For example, expectations of leadership competence may differ over time. When we think about today's generation in the digital age we live in, we can list the expectations of leadership competence as inclusion, innovation, change management and adaptability and communication. In fact, we expect the leader to lead the transformation journey.

**7. What competencies do you think will be discussed in the future? What are your views on this?**

No matter what job you do, the digital journey/ transformation will never stop. We will always talk about digital capabilities and competencies. Our concepts of workforce, workplace and work will constantly change. The pandemic we are experiencing is actually a good example of this. It has completely changed the way we do business and the meanings we attach to these concepts. In short, what are our workforce options (full-time, part-time, independent workers, gig workers, crowds, machines, etc.), how will we achieve job transformation (robotics, artificial intelligence, cloud-based technologies, etc.), and are our workplaces (where and when we will work, co-production, high-performance culture, collaboration tools, etc.) ready for this?

We will hear so much more about Design Thinking, Agility, Objectives and Key Outcomes (OKO) VUCA, Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP), Empowerment, Feedback, and Digital Transformation

EMLT+AI Project is a platform established to support young people and business professionals who want to shape their careers in this rapidly changing and developing world. By combining technology with human knowledge and experience, it aimed to create a structure with high interaction. Thank you very much for reading the first of our bulletins, which we aim to publish with different topics at certain time intervals.

Hope to see you in our other issues...





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