

# An Unintentional Use of a Competency Management System

*This Fortune 50 company manufacturing plant found that a competency management solution was valuable far beyond its original intent.*

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## Business Overview and Challenge

A Fortune 50 technology manufacture aimed to improve quality levels of its products by expanding the development of employees at one of its factories. However, the company faced unique challenges in assessing training needs. The factory floor did not resemble a typical office space. Employees did not have easy access to computers and were not comfortable with using computers. Employees also depended on working at a pace as to keep up with the rest of the factory and so did not have ample time during the day to take assessments and complete training courses. In addition to these organizational challenges, the client desired a genuine commitment from its employees but was unsure of how to portray the system in an inviting manner. The client wanted detailed and accurate assessments, but didn't want to detract from manufacturing needs such as employee time commitments and product quality.



## Solution

In order to meet some of the unique characteristics and integrate the solution into corporate culture while not disrupting manufacturing production, several steps were taken. To facilitate an inviting and fun assessment environment, the user interface was customized to have friendly, graphical characters invite employees to log in. To overcome the lack of computer access and time, kiosks were set up throughout the factory so that employees could voluntarily take a skill assessment and view existing training resources. In less than fifteen minutes an employee could contribute to the skill database by taking a brief, focused survey of job-related skills. Based upon the survey results, training was made available for employees to expand their skills for their current and future positions at the plant.

## Result

With the employee-focused approach, the assessments were not threatening but were viewed as a necessary and valid piece to personal and corporate development. Because of this view, assessments were accurate and everyone contributed voluntarily. In addition, the company created a corporate culture in which employees owned their development paths and made competency development a priority. An accurate and useful skills database was created and training practices were aligned according to business objectives.

## The Unexpected Result

Within a year of starting the program and seeing the aforementioned successes, the changing business environment required the plant to significantly reduce its employees. Management realized that the competency levels for each employee could be useful beyond training needs; the competency profiles could aid in locating alternative employment options. Actions were taken to place workers in other plants as well as help them find employment outside of the company. Management communicated with other locations within the company and used the skill sets to place qualified workers in appropriate positions. They also used the kiosks throughout the facility and attached printers so employees could take their own competency profiles and use them when applying for other positions. The majority of the employees, who would have otherwise been laid off, found work within the company. Although the primary purpose of this competency management solution was training and development, competency profiles still mattered and proved valuable when the business environment and business objectives changed.

## About Avilar, Inc.

Avilar, Inc., The Competency Company™, provides web-based competency management and learning solutions for the corporate, government and academic sectors. With its Smart, Strategic and Proactive solutions, Avilar offers a competency-based approach to workforce development to help organizations build a competency framework that will support efforts in training, performance management, career planning, succession planning, and recruiting. Formed in 1997, Avilar was a pioneer in the e-Learning marketplace. The flagship WebMentor® product line, originally introduced in 1998, includes a complete suite of affordable, easy-to-use, and full-featured competency development and management tools. Avilar is the recipient of the Excellence in E-Learning for Customer Satisfaction award from Brandon Hall and E-Learning Magazine, and was cited by Training Magazine as a top "Price-to-Value" provider.

## Contact Avilar

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