Skills Matrix

What is a Skills Matrix?
A skills matrix is a simple tool that helps you **identify and rank the necessary skills, abilities, and characteristics you need for a particular job function**. It allows you to see the progression and difference between jobs that are in a department (as in the example A below, the HR department has a job progression from HR assistant to VP of HR), as well as same job grade/level in other departments (in example B on the next page, there's a comparison of the manager roles in the HR and marketing departments).

Example A

HR Skill Set Matrix		HR Assistant	HR Coordinator	HR Manager	HR Director	VP of HR
Technical	Accuracy	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN
	Budget/financial management	NN	LN	LN	MN	HN
	Closure/completing tasks	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN
	Collaboration/teamwork	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN
	Customer service	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN
	Detail orientation	HN	HN	HN	HN	MN
	Leadership/coaching	NN	NN	MN	MN	HN
	People management	NN	NN	LN	HN	MN
	Planning ability	LN	MN	MN	HN	HN
	Presentation skills	NN	NN	LN	HN	HN
	Problem solving	LN	LN	MN	HN	HN
	Risk/compliance management	MN	MN	HN	HN	HN
	Strategic thinking	NN	NN	NN	MN	HN
Self-Management	Concentration/focus	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN
	Conflict management	MN	MN	MN	HN	MN
	Decisiveness	LN	LN	MN	HN	HN
	Initiative	LN	LN	MN	HN	HN
	Adaptability	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN
	Time management skills	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN
Characteristics	Creativeness	LN	LN	LN	MN	HN
	Confidence/empowered behavior	MN	MN	MN	HN	HN
	Goal orientation/ambition	LN	LN	MN	HN	HN
	Influence	LN	LN	MN	HN	HN
	Sociability	MN	MN	MN	MN	MN

HN	High Need
MN	Medium Need
LN	Low Need
NN	No Need

Why use a Skills Matrix?
A skills matrix can be helpful when creating salary ranges, job descriptions, interview questions, and hiring criteria. It creates a visual that allows you to calibrate the expectations of each job within the organization, within departments, and across similar job levels. When used properly, **it helps achieve a level of consistency and equity,** by weeding out implicit biases and creating objective measures to evaluate candidates and current staff.

How is a Skills Matrix created?
There are several steps to creating a skills matrix: (see Example B on the next page)
1. **Identify the areas of abilities, skills, and characteristics.** These areas are ones you can consistently use across your organization (not just for one job or one department; other

specific job duties or requirements, like certifications, education, etc. can be captured in a properly written job description and job posting). In the graphic below, technical skills, self-management skills, and characteristics are the three big "buckets." You may choose other areas that work best for your organization.

Within each of these buckets is where the specific skills or characteristics are listed. Again, these are skills that transcend one role, or one department, even if they may not be applicable to every single role. This list should not be extreme in length…remember **you are capturing the important areas that impact the organization,** such as accuracy, budget management, leadership, etc. These may not all be applicable at the same level for every role, but they are applicable for a strong organization.

Example B

HR Skill Set Matrix		HR Coordinator	Marketing Coordinator	HR Manager	Marketing Manager	HR D...		VP of HR	VP of Marketing			
Technical	Accuracy	HN	MN	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN		HN	High Need
	Budget/financial management	LN	NN	LN	LN	MN	MN	HN	HN		MN	Medium Need
	Closure/completing tasks	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN		LN	Low Need
	Collaboration/teamwork	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN		NN	No Need
	Customer service	HN	MN	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN			
	Detail orientation	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN	MN	MN	MN			
	Leadership/coaching	NN	NN	MN	LN	MN	HN	HN	HN			
	People management	NN	NN	LN	MN	HN	HN	MN	HN			
	Planni...	MN	MN	MN	MN	HN	H...	HN	HN			
	Pr...	NN	LN	LN	LN	HN		N	HN			
	P...	LN	MN	MN	MN	HN		HN	HN			
	...nagement	MN	NN	HN	NN	HN			MN			
	S...	NN	LN	NN	LN	MN			HN			
Self-Management	Con...cus	HN	MN	HN	MN	HN		HN	MN			
	Conflict management	MN	LN	MN	MN	HN	HN	MN	HN			
	Decisiveness	LN	LN	MN	MN	HN	HN	HN	HN			
	Initiative	LN	MN	MN	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN			
	Adaptability	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN	MN	HN	MN			
	Time management skills	HN	MN	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN	HN			
Characteristics	Creativeness	LN	MN	LN	MN	MN	HN	HN	HN			
	Confidence/empowered behavior	MN	MN	MN	MN	HN	HN	HN	HN			
	Goal orientation/ambition	LN	LN	MN	MN	HN	HN	HN	HN			
	Influence	LN	LN	MN	MN	HN	MN	HN	HN			
	Sociability	MN	LN	MN	MN	MN	MN	MN	HN			

2. **List the roles.** These can be roles that are part of one department, one job grade/level, or across the organization. It is best to start out with only a few jobs at a time to avoid feeling overwhelmed by the process and to be able to create a better visual representation for later use.

3. **Decide the need for each listed skill or characteristic.** The "Needs" legend lets you weight the skills or characteristics for each role as high need, medium need, low need, or no need. This is why it is important to make your list about organization needs first and not about individual position needs.

An important consideration in this step is to have another person work with you on this so there is some level of discussion and added objectivity around the needs. Ideally, a skilled HR leader will be able to work with you to fill in your skills matrix by asking questions to understand why you believe the needs are what they are and challenge reasons that may be biased or not appropriate for specific roles.

Everyone wants a high performing team and often we get caught up in wanting them to have every skill listed. **A high performing team complements the skill sets of one another.** For example, at an executive level, you want someone who can lead and coach—that is a high need. However, the HR coordinator does not need that skill—it would be ranked "no need." (Of course, as a person progresses into roles with more people responsibilities, that skill will have a higher need.)

The Skills Matrix is complete, what's next?
Once your skills matrix is complete, **you can review or create job descriptions, job postings for roles, performance management tools, and comprehensive and consistent interview questions.** You are now on your way to building a great team and a phenomenal organization!

For assistance with how to use this tool in your recruiting and hiring strategy or your performance management process, **please contact us at** info@opchr.com **or at** 513.386.8614. If you do not have or are not happy with your recruiting and hiring strategy or performance management process, we love helping organizations find ways to attract and develop talented humans, so contact us and we'll be there to work with you!