

The Talent Development Capability Model™



What Talent Development Professionals Should KNOW and DO to Be Successful



ATD's Talent Development Capability Model is a career blueprint for talent development professionals. These are the 23 capabilities that a learning and development professional should have to be successful.

The capabilities are organized in three domains: Building Personal Capability, Developing Professional Capability, and Impacting Organizational Capability. ATD's research shows that successful talent development professionals need knowledge and skills from all three of these areas to be most effective.

Across the next five pages, we have defined each of these capabilities. Use this guide to learn where you are in your career growth and prioritize your individual and team development opportunities.



Building Personal Capability

This domain of practice embodies the foundational or enabling abilities all working professionals should possess to be effective in the business world. These largely interpersonal skills, often called soft skills, are needed to build effective organizational or team culture, trust, and engagement.



Communication:

Communication is about connecting with others. Effectively communicating requires a knowledge of communication principles and techniques that allows a person to articulate the appropriate message for a particular audience. It requires active listening, facilitating dialogue, and the ability to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly, concisely, and compellingly.



Emotional Intelligence & Decision Making:

Emotional intelligence and the ability to make good decisions are paramount to professional success. Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, assess, and regulate your own emotions, correctly interpret the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of others, and adjust your behavior in relation to others. Emotional intelligence is a key strength in building rapport. Decision making requires one to determine the need and importance of making a decision, identify choices, gather information about choices, and take action on the appropriate choice.



Collaboration & Leadership:

Leadership is about influence and vision, which also helps to facilitate collaboration. Being good at collaboration requires the ability to foster environments that encourage teamwork and respectful relationships, especially cross-functionally. Both collaboration and leadership require the practitioner to communicate effectively, provide feedback, and assess the work of others. Leadership also requires the ability to effectively align people and tasks to support the organization's strategy. Effective leaders inspire trust and engagement with their employees and teams.



Cultural Awareness & Inclusion:

Cultural awareness and the ability to foster an inclusive work environment are requirements in today's global business climate. Being effective at both means conveying respect for different perspectives, backgrounds, customs, abilities, and behavior norms, as well as ensuring all employees are respected and involved by leveraging their capabilities, insights, and ideas.



Project Management:

Analyzing and prioritizing elements of a learning initiative or talent solution helps to ensure a meaningful and relevant learner experience. Effective project management requires being able to plan, organize, direct, and control resources for a finite period to complete specific goals and objectives.



Compliance & Ethical Behavior:

Compliance and ethical behavior refer to the expectation that a talent development professional acts with integrity and operates within the laws that govern where they work and live. For talent development professionals it may also require knowledge of and abiding by the regulations and laws related to content creation, accessibility, human resources, employment, and public policies.



Lifelong Learning:

Lifelong learning is sometimes called continuous learning, agile learning, or learning drive. It is marked by traits such as self-motivation, insatiable curiosity, and intelligent risk-taking. Talent development professionals should model the value of lifelong learning by pursuing knowledge for personal and professional reasons. Taking ownership for one's own professional development signals to others that they can and should do the same.



Developing Professional Capability

This domain of practice embodies the knowledge and skills talent development professionals should possess to be effective in their roles of creating the processes, systems, and frameworks that foster learning, maximize individual performance, and develop the capacity and potential of employees.



Learning Sciences:

Organizations with highly effective learning programs incorporate key principles from the learning sciences, the interdisciplinary research-based field that works to further the understanding of learning, learning innovation, and instructional methodologies. Talent development professionals applying best practice will understand and apply foundational learning theories, principles of adult learning theory, and cognitive science to design, develop, and deliver solutions that maximize outcomes.



Instructional Design:

Instructional design is an essential element of an effective learning effort. The creation of learning experiences and materials is what results in the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills. Talent development professionals follow a system of assessing needs, designing a process, developing materials, and evaluating effectiveness. Instructional design requires the analysis and selection of the most appropriate strategies, methodologies, and technologies to maximize the learning experience and knowledge transfer.



Training Delivery & Facilitation:

Training delivery and facilitation are means by which talent development professionals help individuals improve performance at work by learning new skills and knowledge. The practitioner serves as a catalyst for learning by understanding the learner's needs, creating

the right environment for learning, building rapport with participants, and using the appropriate delivery options and media to make learning engaging, effective, relevant, and applicable. Facilitating meetings means taking an objective approach to helping stakeholders discover new insights, achieve group outcomes, and work to make positive changes in the organization.



Technology Application:

Disruption via technology will continue to be a reality for organizations and talent development functions. Talent development professionals must have the ability to identify, select, and implement the right learning and talent technologies that serve the best interests of the organization and its people. Practitioners should be able to identify opportunities to adapt and leverage the right technologies at the right time to meet organizational goals.



Knowledge Management:

In a knowledge economy, lost institutional knowledge can cost organizations real money in the form of turnover, recruitment, and training costs. Knowledge management is the explicit and systematic management of intellectual capital and organizational knowledge as well as the associated processes of creating, gathering, validating, categorizing, archiving, disseminating, leveraging, and using intellectual capital for improving the organization and the individuals in it.



Developing Professional Capability



Career & Leadership Development:

Creating a culture of career development in an organization can be a competitive advantage. Being effective at career and leadership development requires the ability to create planned processes of interaction between the organization and the individual that allows an employee to grow within the organization. Understanding the specific skills and capabilities an organization needs now and in the future is important when developing assessments, programs, and pathways to advance employees within the organization.



Coaching: Coaching is a discipline and practice that is an essential capability for any talent development professional and it has the

power to catalyze breakthroughs to enhance individual, team, and organizational performance. Coaching is an interactive process that helps individuals develop more rapidly toward a preferred future state, produce results, set goals, take action, make better decisions, and capitalize on their natural strengths. Coaching requires using global listening, asking powerful questions, strengthening conversations, and creating action plans.



Evaluating Impact: Evaluating the impact of talent development programs is correlated with learning and business

effectiveness. Talent development professionals should be able to implement a multilevel, systematic method for gathering, analyzing, and reporting on information about the effectiveness and effort of learning programs. Collecting data relevant to business strategies and goals helps decision making, improves learning programs, and increases the value proposition of learning with senior leaders and business stakeholders.





Impacting Organizational Capability

This domain of practice embodies the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by professionals to ensure talent development is a primary mechanism driving organizational performance, productivity, and operational results.



Business Insight:

To add the most value to an organization, talent development professionals should understand business principles and the specific business or organization in which they work. Business insight is the understanding of key factors affecting a business, such as its current situation, influences from its industry or market, and factors influencing growth. It also includes understanding how an organization accomplishes its mission or purpose, makes and spends money, and makes decisions, as well as the internal processes and structures of how work gets done. Having business insight is essential to strategic involvement with top management and ensuring talent development strategies align with overall business strategy.



Consulting & Business Partnering:

Being seen as a valued business partner should be a goal for talent development professionals. Consulting and business partnering use expertise, influence, and personal skill to build a two-way relationship that facilitates change or improvement in the business. Clients may be internal or external. Successful consulting and business partnering requires skill in: needs assessment, data analysis, communication, systems thinking, problem solving, negotiation, facilitation, and coaching.



Organization Development & Culture:

To remain relevant, organizations must continually develop capability and capacity. Organization development (OD) is an effort that focuses on improving an organization's capability through alignment of strategy, structure, management processes, people, rewards,

and metrics. Organizational culture encompasses the values and behaviors that contribute to the social and psychological environment of a business. Understanding an organization's culture, its norms, formal and informal relationships, power dynamics, and hierarchies informs the planning of initiatives to develop systems, structures, and processes to improve effectiveness.



Talent Strategy & Management:

For an organization to realize its potential, talent development should be integrated into all components of talent strategy and management. Talent strategy and management are the practices used to build an organization's culture, engagement, capability, and capacity through the implementation and integration of talent acquisition, employee development, retention, and deployment processes, ensuring these processes are aligned to organizational goals. Depending on organizational context and structure, broad partnerships with HR and line leaders will be needed.



Performance Improvement:

Organizational competitiveness is fueled by improvement in human performance. Performance improvement is a holistic and systematic approach to meeting organizational goals by identifying and closing human performance gaps. This is a results-based effort that includes the ability to analyze root causes of performance issues, plan for future improvements in human performance, and design and develop solutions to close performance gaps.



Impacting Organizational Capability



Change Management:

Talent development professionals are well positioned to facilitate change because they connect people, process, and work. Change management is the capability for enabling change within an organization by using structured approaches to shift individuals, teams, and organizations from a current state to a future state. Once initiated, change follows its own nonlinear path in response to uncertainties, reactions, and guidance from those involved. There are tools, resources, processes, skills, and principles for managing the people side of change that practitioners should understand and implement in order to achieve preferred outcomes. Research shows that most companies don't manage change well, which makes capability in this area a differentiator for talent development professionals.



Data & Analytics:

Data and analytics are key drivers for organization performance and should be drivers for talent development. This is about the ability to collect, analyze, and use large data sets in real time to affect learning, performance, and business. Discerning meaningful insights from data and analytics about talent, including performance, retention, engagement, and learning, enables the talent development function to be leveraged as a strategic partner in achieving organizational goals.



Future Readiness:

The pace of change requires constant upskilling and reskilling of the workforce. Future readiness requires intellectual curiosity and constant scanning of the environment to stay abreast of forces shaping the business world, employees and their expectations, and the talent development profession. Monitoring emerging trends and technologies is essential to prepare for the demands of future learners. A commitment to continuous professional development is essential to ensure there is capability to handle the changes in how work is done in the years ahead. Fostering environments that promote innovation and creativity will help position organizations to become future focused.



Learn more about ATD's Talent Development Capability Model at td.org/capability-model