



Make Skills-Based Routing Happen

Has this ever happened in your call center?

One of your good customers calls to ask a question about her account. She is a bit agitated because she believes there is a significant error. The telephone system routes the call to the first available representative. Unfortunately, the first available representative is new and not very experienced with this type of call. He bungles the call and you lose customer.

How many times does that happen? How can it be prevented?

Skills Based Routing (SBR) was created to prevent this from ever happening. Thanks to this call routing computer technology, call centers can route their calls to the representatives with the training and know-how to handle the call. Representatives can be segmented according to expertise in different products and services, or complaint types or by “special” vs. standard customers. When one of your best customers calls, the call routing system knows who is qualified to handle the call. Customers are routed to a skilled and competent representative whom you can be sure will provide outstanding service.

The telecommunication and CRM firms that provide the computer hardware and software for SBR would have you believe that the success of SBR in your call center is based upon the computer technology you purchase from them. But, for the biggest impact, an organization must have an accurate method to know who has the skills required to handle each call type. Few organizations have this information. And that is where AS&K can help.

AS&K provides consulting and outsourcing services to develop and implement certification and training programs to make skill-based routing a reality. AS&K provides traditional delivery methods or web-based assessments and training. AS&K ensures that your investment in skill-based routing increases the efficiency and utilization of your call center resources.

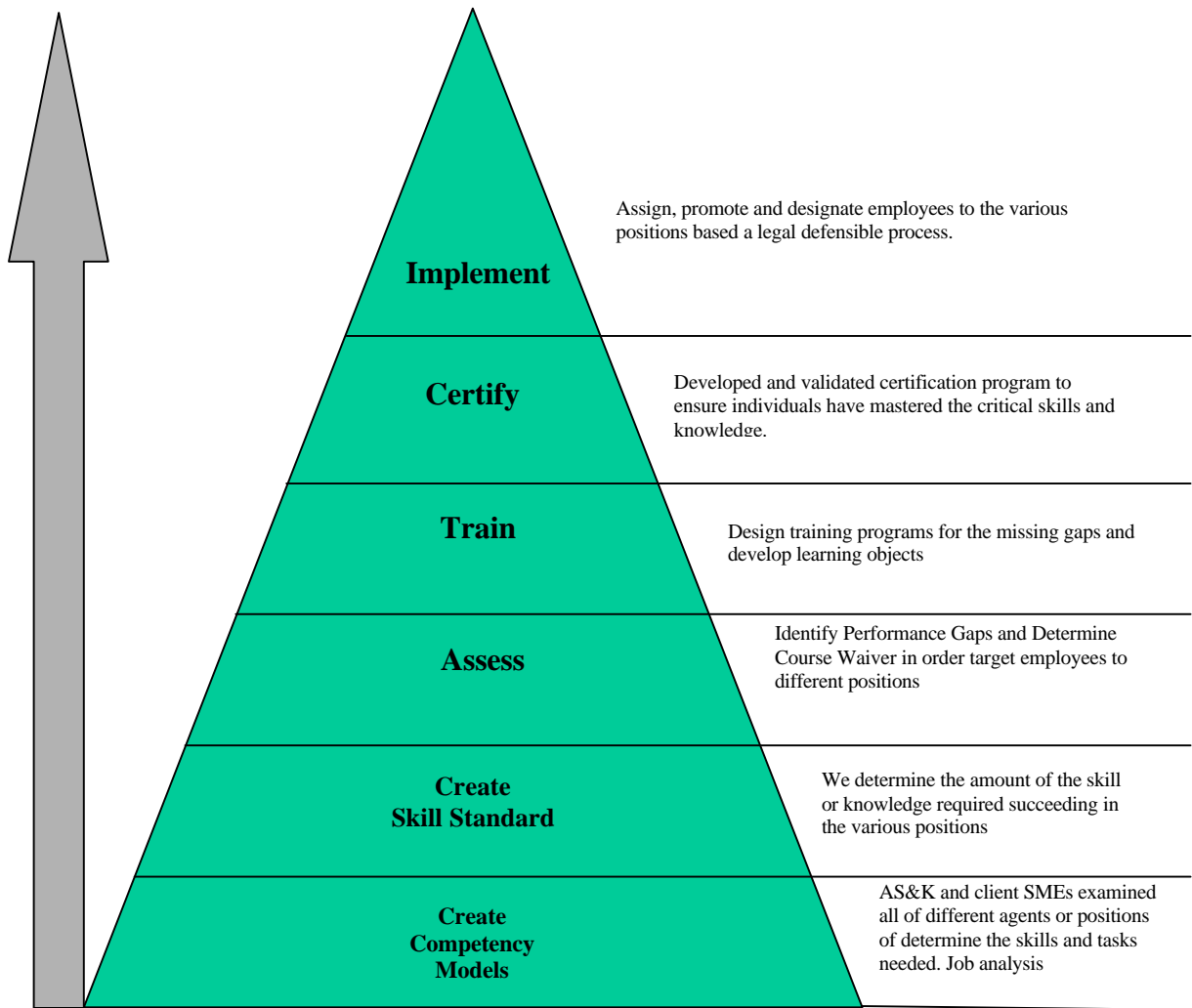
AS&K's Skills-Based Routing Approach

Illustration A depicts our approach to building a training and assessment program that makes skill-based routing truly happen. As is apparent from the illustration, the solution is built upon a foundation of competencies and the remaining elements are developed on that foundation.

Illustration A

Develop Competency Model

The first step is to define the skills and knowledge required to perform the representative job successfully. This step is the key to a successful skill-based routing process. AS&K



has the expertise to develop competency models. AS&K works with client organizations to identify the critical skills and knowledge that comprise a competency model. This

information is gathered in many ways, including by conducting interviews, holding focus group and administering surveys.

Establish Skill Standards

Once the skills and knowledge that form the competency model are identified, the *amount* of the skill or knowledge required to succeed is determined. With the assistance of AS&K, subject matter experts (e.g., managers, supervisors, and representatives) set these levels or standards. The standards become the target, expected level of performance for all representatives. Representatives should not take calls that require competency standards they have not met.

Assess and Certify Representatives

Once the competency models and standards are established, AS&K develops methods to assess the representatives against the standards. The assessments may take the form of an objective test, a skill gap survey¹, or a work simulation. AS&K works with the client organization to develop valid and practical assessments tied to training programs. AS&K ensures that the assessments are fair, valid and legally defensible.

A properly developed and validated assessment serves as the basis of a certification program that ensures the representatives have mastered the critical skills and knowledge identified in the competency model and required for success.

The assessments can be used as “waiver tests” to identify those who do not require training. Waiver tests can save significant amounts of time and money. Or the assessments can be used after training to ensure required competencies have been mastered. Because the assessments and learning objectives are both based upon the competency models, success on the assessments ensures that the test-taker has mastered the training content.

Training

Competency models are used to design instruction. The competency model, properly constructed, contains a complete list of the skills and knowledge needed to perform successfully on the job. Therefore, the competency model serves as a blueprint for the instructional designer to create the learning objectives and guide the development of the training content. AS&K designs and delivers training, either web-based or in a traditional classroom setting. AS&K also develops training that client organizations deliver.

¹ A skill gap survey is based upon a competency model. It is a simple method to gather information about the representatives and how their skills and knowledge compare to the standards. Ratings for each skill and knowledge in the competency model are gathered from the supervisors and others and the results are used to identify those who meet the standard and those who do not - the skill gaps.