

# Competency Profile

*BOOK PUBLISHERS*

*A Competency Analysis*

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# **Recommended Skills for**

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# Book Publishers

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## **COMPETENCY PROFILE**

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...AND TO ACCOMPLISH ALL OF THE ABOVE, **A BOOK PUBLISHER** MUST BE ABLE TO...

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## INTRODUCTION

This document presents the outcomes of an occupational analysis (1) for **BOOK PUBLISHERS**. It identifies the combined competencies that make up the work of **BOOK PUBLISHERS**.

This exercise has been initiated and coordinated by the Cultural Human Resources Council (CHRC) thanks to the financial support of the Government of Canada's Sector Council Program.

The Cultural Human Resources Council ([www.culturalhrc.ca](http://www.culturalhrc.ca)) is a national organization dedicated to strengthening Canada's cultural workforce and improving the HR environment within the cultural sector. It strives to be at the centre of vision and forward thinking in the area of cultural human resources development. CHRC members include self-employed artists, cultural workers and arts organizations from the many disciplines which comprise the sector.

This **Competency Profile** is to be used in conjunction with the **Chart of Competencies for BOOK PUBLISHERS**.

The **Competency Chart** and **Profile** can be used by individuals to evaluate their own skills and to determine areas where they should pursue additional training. On a corporate level, this material can be applied in defining job profiles, developing competency-based professional development programs, negotiating and customizing training programs, developing career planning programs, recruitment profiles and individual position descriptions.

**To order CHRC publications, including *The Art of Managing Your Career*, visit <http://www.culturalhrc.ca>, or write to: [info@culturalhrc.ca](mailto:info@culturalhrc.ca)**

(1) The expressions 'occupational analysis' and 'competency profile' are used interchangeably in this document

## BACKGROUND

The occupation of Book Publisher covers a wide range of possibilities – from the independent writer who self-publishes to the head of a large publishing company with hundreds of employees. It also includes those who are publishing traditional print editions of books and those who are trying out new ways of content distribution such as publishing on the web and converting the content for use in any number of existing or future devices. Publishers, after all, are in the business of distributing content, and books are only one means of doing that. They must know about the complexities of rights, and understand distribution and marketing; and they must know the global environment with its vast opportunities and challenges.

The Expert Working Group of practicing publishers who joined CHRC in identifying the competencies in this chart had all of these ideas in mind. They asked themselves the question: what competencies does one need to have – or to hire – to publish a traditional book; and what competencies will one need in the near future as the publishing industry evolves, indeed explodes, into new territory shaped by new technologies and globalization?

## METHODOLOGY

The Cultural Human Resources Council has chosen the DACUM (Developing A CURriculum) model to conduct this analysis. One of the key features of DACUM is to rely on a group of expert practitioners to review all the competencies required to function effectively in a given occupation.

The combined **Chart of Competencies** and **Profile** present four levels of analysis:

1. A series of **General Areas of Competence**, more commonly called **GACs**. A GAC describes a major function or responsibility of a particular profession, trade or position. There are two types of GACs: **General Areas of Professional Competence** (GACs A to L inclusively) and **General Areas of General Competence** (GACs M and N).
2. Each GAC is further defined into **skills** (competencies). The skills, as well as the GACs, are identified in behavioral terms and thus begin with an action verb depicting the applied behavior.
3. Each skill is further analyzed into **subskills**. A subskill is an intermediate step between the whole skill and the detailed actions associated with practicing the skill.
4. A (non-exhaustive) series of **important actions** and **key general competencies** has been identified; these may be used as performance indicators, providing the criteria by which competence can be assessed.

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## SUMMARY – CHART OF COMPETENCIES

## A BOOK PUBLISHER MUST BE ABLE TO:

## PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

**A. DEFINE THE VISION AND BUSINESS STRATEGY**

1. Articulate a mandate and a vision
2. Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)
3. Set objectives
4. Determine a decision-making process
5. Develop a financial strategy
6. Develop a human resources plan
7. Produce a business plan
8. Present a business plan
9. Assess performance

**B. DEVELOP BOOKS AND PUBLISHING PACKAGES**

1. Assess proposals
2. Coordinate manuscript submission process
3. Assess manuscripts
4. Commission manuscripts
5. Acquire rights to titles from other publishers
6. Develop a per title profit and loss study (P&L)
7. Develop a manuscript
8. Develop a book or a series
9. Acquire rights to books from authors or their agents
10. Set publishing list and schedule
11. Supervise publishing projects
12. Develop partnerships and sponsorships
13. Perform post-production assessment (post-mortem)

**C. EDIT BOOKS**

1. Select book title / subtitle
2. Create bibliographical data
3. Perform substantive edit
4. Perform review against standards
5. Perform copy edit
6. Proofread page layout
7. Add supplementary materials
8. Collect / capture modifications for reprints and new editions

**D. PRODUCE BOOKS**

1. Determine specifications
2. Establish and maintain production schedules
3. Design book interior
4. Design book cover
5. Lay out books
6. Perform pre-press operations
7. Print books
8. Archive production files
9. Arrange shipping logistics
10. Produce electronic editions
11. Coordinate reprints

**E. PROMOTE BOOKS**

1. Design sales and marketing strategy
2. Solicit reviews
3. Create catalogues
4. Place excerpts
5. Develop partnership promotions
6. Develop and execute alternative / guerrilla marketing strategies
7. Advertise books and authors
8. Create promotional materials
9. Create and maintain Web site content
10. Create sales materials
11. Arrange industry promotional events
12. Arrange author events
13. Prepare authors for promotion
14. Arrange media coverage
15. Submit authors and titles for awards

**F. SELL BOOKS**

1. Determine target customer list
2. Implement sales strategy
3. Solicit orders
4. Analyze sales trends and performance

**G. DISTRIBUTE BOOKS**

1. Establish terms of trade
2. Maintain inventory level
3. Receive inventory
4. Store inventory
5. Process orders
6. Pick, pack and ship orders

**G. DISTRIBUTE BOOKS (CON'T)**

7. Provide special services and packaging
8. Deliver orders
9. Process returns
10. Service distribution clients
11. Distribute e-books

**H. MANAGE INFORMATION**

1. Create and maintain a computer infrastructure
2. Complete and maintain bibliographic data
3. Create and maintain rights and contracts database
4. Create and maintain production database
5. Create and maintain sales and marketing database
6. Create and maintain editorial and content database
7. Distribute and monitor structured bibliographic data
8. Create and maintain administrative and financial database
9. Analyze information
10. Interface with external information systems
11. Gather information from outside sources
12. Create and maintain Web sites

**I. MANAGE RIGHTS AND CONTRACTS**

1. License translation rights
2. License broadcast / dramatization rights
3. License territorial rights
4. License electronic rights
5. Acquire book contracts
6. License special format editions
7. License merchandising rights
8. License partial content rights
9. Negotiate contracts with suppliers and service providers
10. Negotiate contracts with clients

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES  
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

## SUMMARY – CHART OF COMPETENCIES

## A BOOK PUBLISHER MUST BE ABLE TO:

**J. MANAGE HUMAN RESOURCES**

1. Create and maintain job descriptions
2. Recruit staff and free lancers
3. Orient staff and free lancers
4. Supervise staff and free lancers
5. Provide professional development
6. Motivate staff and free lancers
7. Review performance
8. Plan succession
9. Administer and maintain employee records and compensation
10. Develop and maintain HR policies
11. Comply with workplace safety laws and regulations
12. Comply with employment standards regulations

**K. MANAGE FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

1. Develop a budget
2. Acquire funding
3. Acquire insurance
4. Negotiate credit with suppliers
5. Establish and administer customer credit policy
6. Create and maintain an accounting system
7. Administer payables and receivables
8. Control finances

**L. MANAGE PHYSICAL RESOURCES**

1. Establish an office / a warehouse space
2. Secure goods, services and supplies

## GENERAL COMPETENCIES

**M. DEMONSTRATE COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**

1. Practice active listening
2. Speak in a clear and concise manner
3. Make presentations
4. Communicate in writing
5. Communicate visually
6. Use communication tools and technology
7. Give and receive feedback
8. Persuade
9. Demonstrate credibility
10. Work as a team member
11. Negotiate
12. Network
13. Provide guidance and training

**N. DEMONSTRATE PERSONAL SKILLS**

1. Think strategically
2. Demonstrate analytical skills
3. Demonstrate thoroughness and attention to details
4. Exercise leadership
5. Make decisions
6. Delegate
7. Solve problems
8. Exercise initiative and resourcefulness
9. Conceptualize
10. Demonstrate time management skills
11. Work under pressure
12. Adapt to changes
13. Demonstrate sensitivity to regional / cultural differences
14. Stay current
15. Educate and advocate

COMPETENCY PROFILE

A **BOOK PUBLISHER** MUST BE ABLE TO ...

A BOOK PUBLISHER MUST BE ABLE TO:

**A. DEFINE THE VISION AND BUSINESS STRATEGY**

SKILLS	SUBSKILLS	IMPORTANT ACTIONS	GENERAL COMPETENCIES
<b>1. Articulate a mandate and a vision</b>	<b>1.1</b> <u>Mandate</u> Specify / review purpose		Most critical interpersonal and/or personal skills associated with the competency as a whole  • THINK STRATEGICALLY (N1) • COMMUNICATE IN WRITING (M4)
	<b>1.2</b> Specify / review core business or main activity		
	<b>1.3</b> Specify / review values (principles / Beliefs		
	<b>1.4</b> <u>Vision</u> Develop statement of vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a draft version based on the organization’s mission</li> </ul>	
	<b>1.5</b> Test vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek input from staff</li> <li>• Seek input from trusted colleagues</li> <li>• Consider using a consultant</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)</b>	<b>2.1</b> Decide who to involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify key participants</li> <li>• Consider using a consultant</li> </ul>	• DEMONSTRATE ANALYTICAL SKILLS (N2)
	<b>2.2</b> Brainstorm the issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze organization’s history and achievements</li> <li>• Review external environment to identify trends, opportunities, threats and issues</li> <li>• Review human and financial potential of organization to identify strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• Update conclusions from any previous SWOT analysis</li> </ul>	
	<b>2.3</b> Evaluate the significance of the identified issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess whether strengths (or weaknesses) represent a sustainable competitive advantage (or disadvantage)</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Set objectives</b>	<b>3.1</b> Set long-term strategic objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure link with the organization’s mission and vision</li> <li>• Comply with the S.M.A.R.T. principle (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-based)</li> </ul>	• THINK STRATEGICALLY (N1)
	<b>3.2</b> Set short-term strategic and operational objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure link with the organization’s mission, vision and long-term objectives</li> <li>• Apply the S.M.A.R.T. principle</li> </ul>	