

Laying the Groundwork with Total Pro



Nicholas Igneri, SVP Education at American Management Association, answered a few questions about the Total ProfessionalSM philosophy that now underlies all of the organization's offerings. The Total Pro model

elaborates on the skills needed for successful strategy execution: Communication, Influencing, Critical Thinking, Change, Collaboration, Delegation, Financial Acumen, Customer Focus, and Managing and Mastering Data. A skills assessment based on the Total Pro model is available on AMA's website.

Why was it important for AMA to develop the Total Pro model?

Nicholas Igneri: AMA is a mature business with 90-plus years of history preparing professionals to succeed in their careers. As our breadth of offerings grew exponentially, it became increasingly obvious that we needed an overarching learning philosophy and organizing principle to capture the broad range of topics available. The Total Professional framework was created to do just this.

After assessing employees' development needs, customers are often faced with the paradox of choice, wading through a multitude of available options. The Total Professional is a logical framework for them to organize and synthesize a wide array of topic areas into domains.

How did AMA identify the four quadrants (Professional Effectiveness, Business Acumen, Analytical Intelligence, and Relationship Management)?

NI: Knowing that we wanted to have organizing principles that reflected market need, we conducted significant research which, by and large, affirmed our hypothesis that professionals needed skills in a variety of areas. Internally, at AMA, we took the position that there were four key domain areas and that they shared equal importance.

The research validated the domains but further clarified the weighting of the domains. Hence, Professional Effectiveness now resides at the center of the Total Pro model because the research respondents said that Professional Effectiveness,

as defined by AMA, weaves through the other domains and should not be a stand-alone skill set.

How does having the Total Pro model help AMA's clients, and what are the benefits to them of using Total Pro to assess their competencies?

NI: The Total Pro model gives our clients a clear, learning framework that can be overlaid with almost any company's internal competency map. Companies often identify the competencies needed at each employee level in their organization (individual contributor, manager, leader, etc.). The companies use their competency map to guide learning and development paths for their employees.

Our Total Pro model can be used to assist companies in targeting the skill set needed to achieve competence in an area. For example, if an employee takes a seminar in data analytics, then the competency you would expect them to demonstrate after taking the class is the ability to interpret, work with, and analyze data.

How has this philosophy strengthened AMA?

NI: AMA now offers a clear, market-tested learning

framework from which products, services, and delivery modalities are derived. It gives our clients an approach on how to best understand the underpinnings of our vast assortment of offerings. Once they understand the "what" of our offerings, they can then fully leverage how to access them, for whom, and in which format and/or modality they would like them delivered.

Are there more steps after Total Pro? Is AMA looking to expand on this philosophy?

NI: The Total Pro model has a pathway which starts with assessing people's skills. That assessment indicates areas that need development and, therefore, allows for a precise and more accurate prescription of a development path. Post-training assessment will ideally show an improved outcome. So the Total Pro is not the diagnostic tool but is the framework against which the assessment can be overlaid.

AMA firmly believes that once all the competencies and domains have been sufficiently addressed, the employee then becomes a prime candidate to sit for AMA's Certified Professional in Management exam, as an example. [AQ](#)

AMA's Total Professional Model Comprises 4 Domains with Multiple Competencies Contained in Each Domain



Professional Effectiveness: Mastery of personal awareness and interpersonal skills.



Business Acumen: Understanding of business operations.



Analytical Intelligence: Application of systematic thinking, analysis and data interpretation.



Relationship Management: Ability to establish and maintain professional relationships.



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