



Learning & Development
Specialist Group

Enabling the
information society

Using SFIA in the Commercial Training World

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Commercial Training



Just to put discussion into context...

Providers offer short courses (scheduled, onsite or virtual) or e-learning.

- (Not concerned, here today, with choices of learning format or location)

Curricula typically cover:




- QA and its competitors offer learning solutions in all above areas.
- In context of both SFIA and QA, focus is on skills around Business Change and IT Services. Principles apply to other professional fields.
- So how are QA's clients using SFIA?

What is SFIA used for?



Strategic



- to support organisational development
 - to ensure full functional coverage, no overlaps, no gaps.
- to align skills in equivalent roles across teams in UK, Europe, US, India, and the Far East.

Medium-term



- to identify skills gaps and shortfalls across all IS/IT (“Skills Audit”)
- to integrate SFIA into an LMS, to provide an ongoing self-assessment mechanism for individuals; or to manage skills using BCS SFIAPlus
- to identify relevant curriculum to be circulated or advertised internally

Short term



- For guidance in conducting personal development reviews

Role-based analysis



- Longer-lasting than ‘snapshot’ Training Needs Analysis
- SFIA-based **Skills Profiles** – formed of:
 - SFIA skills / levels (descriptions) Technology specifics
 - Personal skills Domain specifics

1. Derive skills from role descriptions and organisational context:

- Purpose & Accountabilities
- Interfaces (to business and with other technical teams / roles)

2. Validate each profile with role ‘owner’



- Line manager / Head of Dept
- (generally not a role holder)

- SFIA **Skills matrix** provides overview of skills for team or department ...

Example skills matrix

- Actual example conducted for local authority
Application Support teams (2x c.20 staff)
- Columns show skills for each role in function
- Highlighted skills used in JD as Purpose of role
- Skills-levels increase from junior to senior team roles
- But different range of skills in more senior roles, not higher levels of same skills
- Danger of number-chasing

Application Support SFIA Skills				
	Manager	Team Leader	Senior S/officer	Support Officer
IT management	6			
Application Support	5	4	4	3
Change management	6			
Innovation	6	=		
Business risk management	6	=		
Service level management	6			
Configuration management	5	4		
Stakeholder relationship mgt.		5		
Service desk & incident mgt.		4	3	2
Software porting/integration		5	4	
Supplier relationship		4		
Project management		4		
System software			4	
Business analysis			4	3
(skill at two levels for Senior SO)			3	
Testing			3	3
Prog/software development			3	3
Average level:	5.71	4.29	3.50	2.80

Challenges ...



- Training is seen as the mechanism to moving ‘up a level’
 - “What courses do I need to take, to get me to level 5?”

SFIA skills descriptions are multi-dimensional, reflecting real-world experience and organisational awareness.

- SFIA skills are **too generic** to identify any practical day-to-day skills
 - “I’m a Java programmer. This doesn’t tell me what training I need.”

SFIA descriptions are vendor-, product- and language-neutral. **Skills Profile** must translate to specific criteria.

For example:

Programming Level 4 := JEE 6 to level of OCP

Project Management Level 4 := specified credential

- SFIA skills are **too complex** to identify practical learning goals ...

Identify Learnable skills

- Skills Profile is built based on SFIA descriptions
- Break down these compound descriptions → learnable skills elements

Business Analysis SFIA Level 4

Investigates ... requirements ...
seeking effective business solutions
... new or changed processes.

... analysis of stakeholder
objectives ... into business
requirements and problems.

Identifies potential benefits, ...
options for consideration.

Works with clients/users ...
defining acceptance tests.

Understand stakeholders' roles

Analysing & managing requirements

Business process modelling

Planning Acceptance testing

Interviewing skills

Facilitation skills

Report writing & Presenting

Cost Benefit Analysis

Focused Learning

Mapping to SFIA?



- Some SFIA skills are practiced but not available as training
 - (Innovation, Research, Emerging technology monitoring)
- Foundation, Overview and Awareness courses don't develop SFIA skills
- Product feature-oriented courses don't change SFIA skills
- Most skills courses don't 'map' cleanly to a SFIA skill
 - Need to identify courses with relevant content or supporting skills for SFIA Level

For example (Service level management - SLMO)

Code	Level	Course Title	
SLMO	6	ITIL® Intermediate certificate in Managing Across the Lifecycle	Relevant content
SLMO	5	BCS Specialist Certificate in Service Level Management	Direct hit!
SLMO	5	ITIL® Capability Certificate in Service Offerings and Agreements	Relevant content
SLMO	5	Influencing Skills	Supporting skill
SLMO	5	Effective Vendor Relationships	Supporting skill
SLMO	5	ITIL® Lifecycle Certificate in Service Design	Relevant content
SLMO	3	ITIL® Foundation Certificate in IT Service Management	Relevant & PREREQ

SFIA in commercial training



- Potentially powerful aid to identifying well-targeted learning
- Management must have adopted SFIA before trying to align learning
 - SFIA based skills profiles
- SFIA philosophy needs to be understood by managers
 - Generic skills descriptions aligned to practical benchmarks for assessment
- Many SFIA skills descriptions are compounds of learnable skills
 - Learning providers need to map solutions to SFIA skills
- Commercial benefits to Learning Services companies of investment in SFIA partnership
 - Alignment of learning solutions to clients' genuine skills needs
 - Consultancy to assist clients implementing SFIA
 - Briefings and training in SFIA itself



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