# Step One: Identify the Future State

## Recording the Data

There are a wide variety of templates and tools available to help you track the information gathered during the training analysis process. The tool that you choose will depend on the complexity of your analysis.

Here is a simple template that we will work through.

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| **Future State** | **Current State** | **Gap** | **Action Plan** |
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## The First Step

The first step in your analysis process is to identify your future state. What do you want the results to look like when the skills gap has been bridged and training is complete? An easy place to find the ideal future state is to look for competency statements in a job description or job analysis conducted by your HR department. A good future state summary is objective, realistic, and quantitative, just like a competency statement.

## Case Studies

Sample future state/competency statements for someone working in a contact center, for example, could include a general competency statement that is further broken into individual competencies. Let’s look at some examples.

Competency Group: Contribute to an environment that focuses on customer value.

*Competencies required:*

* Manage knowledge of the customer and the market
* Create value with every sales opportunity
* Communicate the value to customers
* Create and manage a customer retention plan
* Measure the value of the transaction

Competency Group: Maintain up-to-date product and technical knowledge.

*Competencies required:*

* Take learning and professional development opportunities to keep up to date
* Acquire up-to-date technical skills and demonstrate proficiency every four to six months
* Be a lifelong learner
* Conduct product and marketplace research to stay current

## Defining the Future State

You may also choose to use industry benchmarks, best practices, or standardized guidelines to help set your future state. For example, if you are performing a training needs analysis on your organization’s project management processes (a helpful tool when your workforce is being grouped into project teams but has never done any project management training), you might use a project management framework as your target.

In either case, here are some questions that can be used to narrow down the characteristics of the desired future state.

* What would the ideal outcome of this training be?
* What metrics and results will help us measure the success of this future state?
* How will activities, processes, and employee tasks look in this state?
* What will business results look like in this state?

Sample Project: Improve Response Times to Customer Inquiries

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| **Future State** | **Current State** | **Gap** | **Action Plan** |
| Customer e-mail inquiries will be replied to within 24 hours on average |  |  |  |
| Customer telephone inquiries will be answered within 5 minutes on average |  |  |  |