

Workforce Planning Connect

Right Skills. Right Time.

A workforce planning toolkit for
small and medium-sized enterprises
in the agriculture industry



FURTHER ENQUIRIES

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Jobs Queensland would like to acknowledge the valuable input of Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, Queensland Farmers' Federation and Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance toward the development of this resource.

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Contents

WELCOME	4
STAGE 1: GET STARTED	10
STAGE 2: GATHER INFORMATION	16
STAGE 3: IDENTIFY ISSUES AND FIND SOLUTIONS	24
STAGE 4: DEVELOP, IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR	30
TOOLKIT RESOURCES: FACT SHEETS AND TEMPLATES	33
Fact sheet 1: Workforce planning: A summary guide	36
Fact sheet 2: Calculating your workforce turnover	37
Self-assessment tool: Workforce planning inventory: Am I ready?	38
Template 1: Who should be involved? Stakeholder planning	39
Template 2: Knowing your business and workforce	40
Template 3: Current workforce data and profile	42
Template 4: Workforce supply, future demand and gap analysis	43
Template 5: Risk assessment worksheet	45
Template 6: Detailed workforce plan	46
Template 7: Workforce action plan on a page	47
GLOSSARY	49



Welcome

Workforce Planning Connect is a suite of materials designed to support employers, industries and regions to access the skills and workforce they need.

Jobs Queensland, in collaboration with the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF), has developed this workforce planning toolkit for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Queensland agriculture industry. It is designed to help Queensland SMEs to:

- understand the benefits and advantages of workforce planning
- build knowledge and understanding of workforce planning
- grow capability and skills in workforce planning.

The toolkit provides practical tips and tools on how to develop and implement a workforce plan for your business so you are better positioned to respond to your workforce needs, now and into the future.

It can be used by people who have never undertaken workforce planning before, as well as those who may have done some workforce planning previously.

To find out more, visit the Workforce Planning Connect website at www.qff.org.au/resources

Introduction

Queensland's agriculture industry boasts a global reputation for being safe and reliable, and offering a vast and diverse selection of produce. The state's renowned biosecurity standards, food safety, supply chain systems and traceability ensure that highly reliable products reach consumers.

As the agriculture industry changes in response to global and national markets, forecasts indicate that shifts in the sector's workforce are imminent. These shifts can include consumer demand for varied products, food security, biosecurity, market supply, workforce capability, new technologies, policy,

climate change and sustainable management across the supply chain. These factors are both challenges and opportunities facing the agriculture sector and your business.

These industry changes may impact on your business through growth or decline in markets, changes in your customer base, and an increase in competition. All of this is likely to have an impact on your workforce and should be considered as part of your business planning. The path towards business resilience, positive economic outcomes and long-term sustainability is through a strong, diverse and flexible workforce. This is underpinned by a workforce strategy that is soundly based on your business direction and needs.

Workforce planning, when done effectively, can deliver many benefits and positive outcomes.

Most businesses, whether they are actively planning or not, are already doing some elements of workforce planning as part of their regular business operations.

You may find this includes developing new skills in your workforce or needing to recruit new employees to meet increased production demands. Having a systematic approach to collecting and analysing your workforce data means that you can make informed decisions based on actual workforce performance.

When you have worked through the stages and resources contained within this toolkit, you will have a detailed workforce plan for your business, as well as a one-page summary of your workforce actions.

No matter where you are on your workforce planning journey, you can use this toolkit in a way that best meets the needs of you and your business.

STARTING OUT

For those who are new to workforce planning, you may like to work your way through each of the stages in this toolkit in order. This way you can familiarise yourself with the process and then focus on the aspects most important to you (e.g. retaining your existing workforce).

ALREADY ON THE WORKFORCE PLANNING JOURNEY?

If you already have experience with workforce planning, you may like to use the toolkit and resources to improve your existing processes or to update the relevant stages.

This toolkit includes:



TOOLKIT RESOURCES

Toolkit resources are a range of documents that you can use to develop your workforce plan. They can provide you with additional information to assist your preparations or develop a workforce plan.



KEY ACTIVITIES

The key activities for each section of the toolkit are outlined at the beginning of that section.



CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the toolkit are questions to consider. These questions act to guide your thinking and inform your actions.



SCENARIOS

The scenarios within the toolkit have been developed by your industry and reflect typical events that a business may face.



SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions act as prompts to assist your thinking and actions as you develop your workforce plan.



CHECKLISTS

At the completion of each section, you will find a checklist. These checklists are designed for you to check your understanding of the material within that section.

How to use this toolkit

The toolkit is structured to step you through the workforce planning process. It will follow these four key stages:

- 1. Get started**
- 2. Gather information**
- 3. Identify issues and find solutions**
- 4. Develop, implement and monitor.**

The framework on the following page identifies the information and resources that can be adapted to your business. You can use the steps outlined in this toolkit to develop a complete workforce plan or to address a specific workforce challenge, opportunity or need in your business.

FOUR KEY STAGES

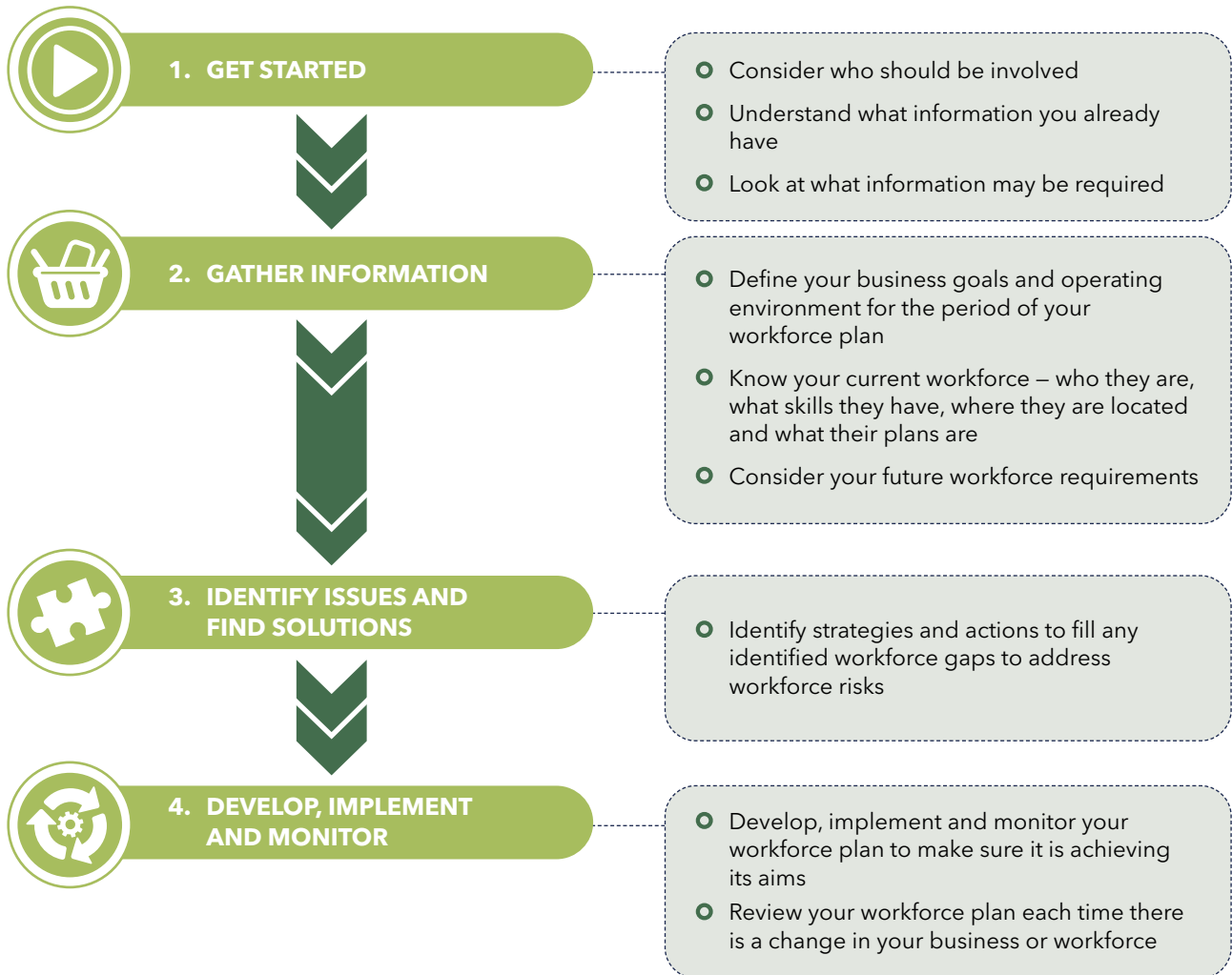


Figure 1: Workforce planning stages

TOOLKIT RESOURCE

FACT SHEET 1: Workforce planning: A summary guide

This fact sheet provides an overview of the four stages of workforce planning.

What is workforce planning?

Workforce planning is about having the right people, at the right time and place, doing the right things to achieve your business goals. Similar to business planning, it is a continuous process of identifying the existing skills of your workforce (where you are now), desired future skills (where you are going), workforce gaps, and strategies and actions to close those gaps (how you will get there). These strategies and actions can include training and development, recruitment and improving workforce performance.

The purpose of workforce planning is not to decide what you will do in the future, it is about determining what you can do now to be best prepared for the future.

Workforce planning can help your business be more resilient to economic, environmental, social and technological change.

These goals can range from growing or selling your business, to just simply wanting to achieve another successful year of operation. Along with your business plan, your workforce plan will get you and your workforce ready to respond to any changes in your business environment. Your workforce plan should be regularly reviewed as changes and challenges occur within your business.

What does workforce planning involve?

Workforce planning is about planning for the people who will help your business deliver its products and services to your customers. There are four dimensions to workforce planning:

- **Who:** securing, fostering and retaining the right **people**
- **What:** identifying the right **skills**, training and development required
- **Where:** aligning people to the right **roles** and responsibilities
- **When:** ensuring that these components come together at the right **time**.

There are different levels of workforce planning:



Operational

Focus of <1 year



Tactical

Focus of 1-2 years



Strategic

Focus of >2 years

Benefits of workforce planning

A good workforce plan will give you a solid understanding of your current workforce and how to prepare your workforce for the future.

Small business often relies on the knowledge and skills of a small number of employees. The departure of any one of these employees (through resignation or retirement) can be costly and result in the loss of important business knowledge. New opportunities can also emerge for your business that require your workforce to change.

Workforce planning can help your business to better compete for employees and skills, now and into the future. This is especially important during times of change.

Workforce planning that is integrated with business planning (see Figure 2) can help your business to:

- respond quickly and strategically to change, as business managers can recognise emerging challenges in the market, workforce and business
- link your workforce initiatives to your finance and business planning to ensure they are aligned to plans and budgets
- improve efficiency, effectiveness and productivity (your employees possess the right skills and are a good fit for the job)

- identify and manage people with the knowledge critical for effective and efficient business operations
- identify where you are most at risk of productivity and continuity losses, and where you need to train employees to ensure you have a consistent supply of talent
- plan for future workforce requirements (identify staffing needs in a timely manner, monitor turnover and ensure replacements are available to fill key vacancies)
- identify whether or not you need to improve your retention strategies. If key skilled people are regularly leaving, how can you prevent this from continuing to occur?
- engage your workforce, increase job satisfaction and foster goodwill through improved employee relations
- build workforce skills to support business activities and achieve business goals
- plan for new and emerging skills or roles through specific recruitment, training activities or collaborating with other businesses
- know who is in your workforce, what they do, the skills they have and the skills they need to develop or improve.

Your workforce plan should be regularly reviewed to ensure your business is well positioned to achieve its goals. You can update it as often as you like, especially when there are key changes happening in your business.

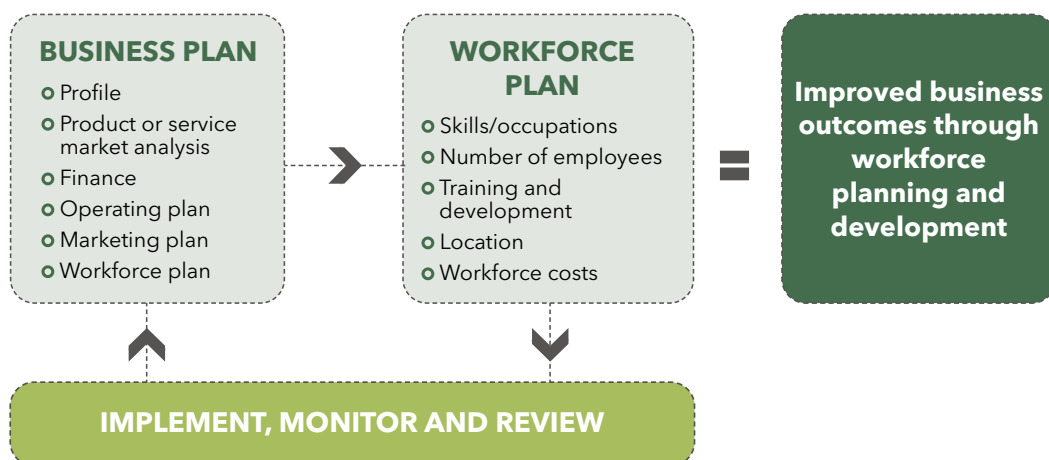


Figure 2: Integrated business planning





STAGE 1

GET
STARTED





KEY ACTIVITIES IN THIS SECTION

1. Consider who should be involved
2. Understand what information you already have
3. Look at what information may be required

Where do I start?

Undertaking workforce planning for the first time can feel like a daunting process. It doesn't have to be. In fact, instinctively you may already be undertaking some workforce planning activities, such as developing new skills or recruiting additional employees.

Workforce planning is a more systematic approach that can be successful in businesses of any size. It does not need to be complicated. However, it does require thought and engagement with your staff.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

- What is your current business strategy? The strategy of a business will provide guidance on its key functions and activities, including products and services to be delivered. This will be very important in developing your workforce plan as it will provide insights into your business goals.
- Who will be doing this? Will this be the business owner, a manager or an external person?
- What do you consider is your current workforce? Is it only your direct employees (i.e. people for whom you pay superannuation, deduct tax)? Or does it include people who are engaged through a third party or provide services to your business?
- Regardless of the size of your workforce, segmenting your workforce into different types of roles, functions and skills will help you best understand and focus on the most important workforce aspects of your business.
- What workforce information do you already have?
- What workforce information can you collect relatively easily?
- What is the best way to communicate to your workforce and stakeholders?



To help guide you through this toolkit, examples are provided using a fictional agribusiness.

THE GREENS' AGRIBUSINESS

This multigenerational farm has experienced growth over the past 25 years. The workforce now consists of:

Simon: Farm owner/manager **Mary:** Farm owner/admin manager

20 employees (full-time) including:

Colin: Farmhand (20 years service) **Josh:** Farmhand (5 years service)

* **Variety of staff** (administration, business development, sales, farmhands)

* The Greens employ **up to 60 people during peak season** who have been supervised by Liz for the past 20 peak seasons.

1. Decline or maintain: Succession planning

Simon and Mary are in their 60s. They would like to scale back their involvement in the business with the view of passing it on to a family member or selling it within the next 5 years. Simon and Mary have three children, all of whom have professional careers and are not involved in the agribusiness.

2. Diversify: Expand into new markets

Simon and Mary's youngest son Tony has recently returned from working and travelling abroad. He has some ideas to diversify the business.

3. Grow: Purchase new technology

Simon and Mary are contemplating the purchase of new technology to enable productivity gains, financial viability and growth of the farm. It will also make the farm less reliant on casual and contract labour. Different skills will be required to use the new technology.

All three scenarios require workforce planning to support the agribusiness plan for the future and the workforce they employ.

Who should be involved?

It is important that you consider who should be involved in workforce planning for your business. Your workforce planning team is a core group who will be involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of your workforce plan.

It is important to have commitment and support from these key people to ensure that there is alignment between the workforce plan and the business direction.

It is beneficial to include any supervisors or managers and employees to capture their knowledge and input where possible.

Clearly define roles and responsibilities for workforce planning activities and set realistic deadlines. **Template 1** will assist in this process.

When discussing the workforce plan, clarify how you are going to reach your end goal, as well as who is committed to making this goal happen.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Who are you going to involve in this process, based on the scope and scale of your workforce planning?
- What is their role in relation to workforce planning? Who are the key decision-makers?
- How can they be best involved and what time can they commit?



SUGGESTIONS ON WHO COULD BE INVOLVED

Small enterprises	Medium-sized enterprises
May only have two people involved in the running of the business and the management of staffing	A diverse mix of management and employees who represent various business levels, functional areas and locations
In some enterprises, all staff may also be family members	Line managers who oversee areas with critical hiring needs
Dedicated and knowledgeable staff	Line staff, including both new hires and those employees with more experience
Peak industry body or Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network (QAWN) officer	Dedicated and knowledgeable staff
Advisors/consultants who provide your business with advice (e.g. new products, new farming practices, environmental changes) as these external influences may impact skills needs	A mix of age, gender, cultural background and declared disability
	Staff with specific expertise needed to implement the workforce plan (e.g. HR, IT, Finance)
	Employee representatives
	Peak industry body or QAWN officer
	Advisors/consultants who provide your business with advice (e.g. new products, new farming practices, environmental changes) as these external influences may impact skills needs



TOOLKIT RESOURCE

TEMPLATE 1: Who should be involved? Stakeholder planning

This template will assist you to identify who you should include in your workforce planning activities.

Successful workforce planning – you can do it

Successful workforce planning outcomes can be achieved through a simple process, and with limited experience, resources and data, or workforce planning capability.



THE PROCESS IS THE SAME FOR ANY SIZE BUSINESS IN ANY INDUSTRY

The process of workforce planning is relevant to any organisation of any size. Support for workforce planning is available to SMEs from a range of organisations: industry bodies, your local chamber of commerce, regional development boards or through government resources.



START WITH THE END IN MIND

Be clear about what you are trying to achieve by undertaking workforce planning. Clearly articulating the outcome can help you identify a tailored process that aligns with timeframes and capability levels. Additionally, when evidence-based workforce planning is undertaken, the information gathered can be used to qualify and quantify the outcomes the business is seeking. Collectively, these provide a benchmark to review, assess and amend strategies and actions for future success.



ENGAGEMENT OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS IS CRITICAL

The value of engagement with key stakeholders cannot be underestimated, particularly when introducing workforce planning into your business. Key stakeholders can include your business managers, business advisors, employees and employee representative groups, such as unions. The implementation of workforce strategies and actions is most effective if all stakeholders are engaged in the process, particularly those employees who will be affected.



WORKFORCE PLANNING CAN BE SUCCESSFUL WITHOUT BEING COMPLICATED

Consider the capacity and capability in your business to implement workforce planning. Identify where external support can be sourced locally within your industry or the region in which you are located.



DATA COLLECTION DOES NOT HAVE TO BE COMPLEX

Workforce planning can be effective without sophisticated metrics or HR systems. Managers generally have the answers to workforce planning but can struggle to articulate what is required. Asking the right questions will enable you to draw out from managers the information that is being sought. If you currently have limited workforce data, you can commence collecting new data that will increase your available workforce information over time.



INCORPORATE WORKFORCE PLANNING INTO YOUR NORMAL BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

Workforce planning works best when it is integrated with your normal business planning processes. Businesses that align strategic, business and workforce plans are better placed to identify current and future workforce requirements. Aligning these will ensure the workforce plan is future-focused and incorporates prioritised outcomes within budget constraints. It also provides an opportunity to review the relevance and currency of the workforce plan in line with demand-driven business or industry changes. This creates a workforce planning environment that is continuous and not static.



WORKFORCE PLANNING SUPPORTS THE RIGHT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Workforce planning supports an evidence base for decisions about workforce requirements, in particular workforce development strategies. It is a way of managing workforce risk. Workforce development can include recruitment and retention strategies, building capability through learning and development, job redesign, and strategies to diversify the workforce.



WORKFORCE PLANNING CAN IDENTIFY RISKS TO THE BUSINESS

A key consideration of workforce planning is to identify and understand workforce risks and the potential impacts on the business. Being able to identify workforce risks effectively allows for risks to be managed and mitigated through appropriate workforce strategies to lessen potential negative consequences for the business.



A WORKFORCE PLAN IS NOT A STATIC DOCUMENT

It should be a live, active process supported with regular workforce insights and annual reviews in alignment with your normal business planning activities.



STAGE 1 CHECKLIST

I understand:

- what workforce planning is (refer to **Fact sheet 1: Workforce planning: A summary guide**)
- why workforce planning is important to small business
- who I should include when undertaking workforce planning (refer to **Template 1: Who should be involved? Stakeholder planning**).



STAGE 2

GATHER INFORMATION





KEY ACTIVITIES IN THIS SECTION

1. Review and understand your business goals
2. Review the profile of your current workforce
3. Identify where you might want to be in the future
4. Identify your workforce gaps

Introduction

Workforce data collection does not have to be complex, and workforce planning can be successful with limited data. Consultation with managers, business advisors and your workforce can be just as effective as collecting data from the system, if not more.

When gathering the information needed for workforce planning, you will need to consider the quality and reliability of your workforce information systems. Much of this can be found in the payroll system, though you will need to consider the quality and reliability of that information when using it to inform decisions on your workforce plan.

If you are lacking confidence in your current workforce data, develop a plan to increase the accuracy and integrity of the data for the future.

Undertaking a self-assessment can assist you in identifying what information you already have, what information you can easily source and who you can potentially source it from. It can also assist you to identify future sources of information that you can use when reviewing your workforce plan.



TOOLKIT RESOURCE

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL: Workforce planning inventory: Am I ready?

This document can assist you in determining whether you are ready to commence workforce planning in your business.

What are your business goals?

Workforce planning is about your workforce - understanding the people who will deliver your products and services to your customers.

To ensure you are best positioned to have the right people, right skills, right numbers, at the right time and place, doing the right things, you need to be clear about your business goals.

Capturing this information upfront (**Template 2**) helps to articulate the linkage between your business and workforce requirements.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

- What are the products or services that your business produces or provides?
- What are your business goals over the relevant time period (e.g. 12 months)?
- What are the key challenges in achieving these goals?
- What are the skills that the workforce needs to deliver these products and services so that your business goals are achieved?



TOOLKIT RESOURCE

TEMPLATE 2: Knowing your business and workforce

This template will help you understand your business direction and workforce considerations.

What does your workforce look like now?

The current state of your workforce can be referred to as workforce supply and can be shown through workforce data. The analysis should use the most recent information available, although historical workforce data is also helpful. While there is not a set period for workforce data collection, data should cover the previous 12 months as a minimum.

It is possible that some workforce data is not available at the commencement of the workforce planning process.

Where information is missing, the use of anecdotal information or assumptions should be considered. Both are viable alternatives and, if used, should be documented. It is also advisable to think about how to start capturing this new information for future use as well.

Template 3 can be used to capture this information.

Key workforce supply data that you may already collect or should be reasonably easy to collate:

? How many staff do you have?

Permanent

- Full-time
- Part-time (full-time equivalent, e.g. 0.6)

Temporary

- Casual
- Contract
- Other (e.g. labour agency)

? What are their key skills/occupations?

- Skills/current capabilities
- Qualifications

? What are your workforce segments?

- Role/job family
- Employment status
- Business unit

? What is your turnover rate?

- Resignations (anticipated turnover based on previous resignation rate)
- Retirements (workers approaching 60+ years)

? What are your current work practice arrangements?

- Fixed hours of work
- Shift work
- Flexible
- Leave (annual/sick/other)
 - How are these absences managed?

? What is the demographic profile of your workforce?

- Occupation/position
- Location (if your business has more than one location)
- Length of service
- Diversity statistics
 - Gender
 - Age profile
 - Cultural background
 - Declared disability
 - International, visa, backpacker

? What is the current workforce cost?

- Fixed costs (e.g. wages/salary including superannuation, leave loading)
 - Overhead costs
 - Variable costs (e.g. training)

The presentation of workforce data should occur in a way that allows for analysis of the information. Different ways to present this can include graphs to show how information changes over time

(e.g. workforce size, workforce age profile, turnover trends). This information is important as it provides your business with a clear view of its current position and a baseline for your future workforce analysis.



TOOLKIT RESOURCE

TEMPLATE 3: Current workforce data and profile

This template is to capture the key data of your current workforce.

FACT SHEET 2: Calculating your workforce turnover

This fact sheet will show you how to calculate workforce turnover.

What does your future workforce need to look like?

Understanding your future workforce needs is about estimating the number of employees and types of skills and occupations required to deliver on your business strategy and goals.

The workforce planning process that aims to identify your future workforce is referred to as *demand forecasting*. The workforce demand forecasting process is designed to answer the following key questions in relation to the business plan timeframe.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

- How many jobs will be required for the future?
- What are the skills required for the future?
- What number of people will be required for each role?
- What roles will be hard to fill that are central to business capability and can take a long lead-in time to build the required skills?

KEY WORKFORCE DEMAND DATA THAT YOU MAY ALREADY COLLECT OR THAT SHOULD BE REASONABLY EASY TO COLLECT



What factors will drive your future workforce needs? One or more of these scenarios will fit your business plan.

Business growth – increase in demand for products and services

- What skills/occupations will be needed? Are these needed for a defined period or will they be ongoing?
- When will these skills/occupations be needed? Continuous need or requirement to cover peaks and troughs (e.g. leave)?
- What locations will they be needed in?
- How many of these skills/occupations will be required?

Maintaining current business size and operations

- Which skills/occupations will be needed?
- Will there be any changes to these skills/occupations?

Business downsizing or shift into new areas – a decrease in a product line or service

- Which skills/occupations will be affected?
- What is the timing of the impact?
- How many employees will be affected?
- What locations will this occur at?



What skills and capabilities will be required?

Changed skills

- What is the level of impact on affected roles?
- Can you train existing staff?
- Do you need to recruit new staff? *Permanent [full-time/part-time]*
Temporary [casual/contract/other, labour agency]

Maintaining existing skills and capabilities

- Will this level increase, decrease or remain stable?

New ways of working required (e.g. introduction of new technology)

- Is this across the whole business?
- Is there a specific role affected?

What are the volumes and timing of these impacts?

What is the availability of these skills/occupations in the existing and external workforces?

(Note that this can be influenced by differing geographical locations.)

- Are they difficult to find?
- Are you expecting that they will be harder to find?
- Are they readily available?
- Will the cost of these new skills be competitive or come at a premium?

What are the expected workforce costs?

- Fixed costs (e.g. wages/salary including superannuation, leave loading)
- Overhead costs
- Variable costs (e.g. training)

After considering your future workforce requirements, you will now have your future workforce demand data. This information can be presented in graphical ways that will allow your business to have a clear view of its future workforce needs.

Now you can match your workforce supply data to your demand data and, in doing so, identify your workforce gaps. Using **Template 4** will assist in this activity.



TOOLKIT RESOURCE

TEMPLATE 4: Workforce supply, future demand and gap analysis

This template considers your current workforce supply against future demand and the resulting gap.

There are two main types of gaps:

1. **Workforce gap:** the number of people and composition of roles that you need to undertake the work, in comparison to the people you currently have
2. **Skills gap:** the skills that you need employees to have so they can effectively and efficiently do the work, in comparison to the skills your employees actually have.

You will need to identify strategies and actions to close these workforce and skills gaps. These strategies and actions will form the basis of your workforce plan that you will then need to prioritise, implement, monitor and review.

What are your current and future workforce gaps?

Once you have gathered your workforce supply and demand data, you are able to compare this information to provide a picture of the workforce gaps in your business. This process is commonly referred to as a gap analysis. At this stage, gathering information to better understand the skills gaps in your current workforce is crucial in identifying future skills needs that will align with your business objectives. The identification of these gaps will help to inform the basis of strategies and actions for development as outlined later on in this toolkit in Stage 3.

CONDUCT A GAP ANALYSIS

This step involves identifying current and future gaps in your workforce and the order in which the gaps should be prioritised for action. Depending on the level of workforce risk, not all gaps may need to be actioned.

You now have the information needed to identify and assess your workforce gaps through the completion of the following templates:

- **Template 3:** Current workforce data and profile
- **Template 4:** Workforce supply, future demand and gap analysis.

Along with identifying your current and future gaps, summarise the information on existing workforce strategies that your business may already have in place. Think about the ongoing relevance of the strategies against the identified gaps and how effective these strategies have been to date.

	Planned growth/decline			
Current number of employees	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total workforce gap
60	+10	+10	+10	30

	Potential resignations			
Current number of employees	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total workforce gap
60	8	10	8	26
Totals	18	20	18	56

The information you supplied earlier will help you identify the gap between what your workforce (labour) looks like now and what it needs to look like in the future.

	Planned growth/decline			
Current number of employees	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total workforce gap

	Potential resignations			
Current number of employees	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total workforce gap

Example: If your business intends to expand through diversification/new technology, your workforce may need to grow. Other workforce changes such as resignations, retirement or if someone relocates will also need to be considered.

Once the extent of the workforce gaps have been determined and prioritised, effective strategies can be developed and implemented.

Developing strategies and actions is the culmination of the workforce planning process. This step brings together the analysis, insights and directions revealed in the previous steps.

Workforce strategy development can then be considered from the following perspectives:

- themes and issues common across the whole business
- themes and issues unique to a specific part of the business.

For more detailed guidance on workforce supply and demand, you can use an alternative layout via the 'Workforce supply, future demand and gap analysis' template on the website www.qff.org.au/resources



THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Recruitment of under-represented groups is a great way to diversify your existing workforce.
- Employing people from an under-utilised cohort such as someone from a migrant community, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, or someone returning to the workforce after a career break can also bring innovative ideas and enthusiasm to a role.
- Some may require a flexible approach or support to their participation while they transition into your team.
- Don't be afraid to recruit differently to what you traditionally have.

What are your current and future skills gaps?

Your staff can be your most valuable asset. The skills and experience they bring to your business can be critical to its success. You might already have enough people working in your business, and they work well in a team doing what needs to be done, but with all changes in a business, you might find you have a skills gap.

A skills gap means there is a mismatch between the skills you need your employees to have to support your business goals, and the skills your employees actually have.

It is important to remember that needing new skills does not always mean you need to recruit someone new. It is often more cost effective to upskill your existing employees and retain good staff.

If your business is growing, this creates career opportunities for your current staff, and a pathway into the industry for someone new.

By considering what your business goals are and how your workforce will support you in achieving those goals in the future, you can plan your way out of a skills gap.

Examples of considerations	Why
Introduction of new equipment or product lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Your staff might need training in how to use the equipment or how to maintain it properly. ○ If it is a product line, do they need to know how to make, sell or distribute it?
Replacing resignations or promotions of existing team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When people take on additional or new tasks, they may need support while they gain the skills they need to be efficient.
New team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New team members require inductions and support while they learn and become familiar with your business. ○ Team members who are training and supporting other staff may need improved coaching and communication skills they don't already have.

There is more information on developing your existing workforce in Stage 3.



STAGE 2 CHECKLIST

I understand:

- what I need to do to prepare to undertake workforce planning for my business (refer to **Self-assessment tool: Workforce planning inventory: Am I ready?**)
- my business direction and workforce considerations (refer to **Template 2: Knowing your business and workforce**)
- how to calculate workforce turnover (refer to **Fact sheet 2: Calculating your workforce turnover**)
- my current workforce profile (refer to **Template 3: Current workforce data and profile**)
- what my current workforce supply against future demand and the resulting gap could look like (refer to **Template 4: Workforce supply, future demand and gap analysis**).

Next, you will need to identify strategies and actions to close these workforce and skills gaps. These strategies and actions will form the basis of your workforce plan.



STAGE 3

IDENTIFY ISSUES AND FIND SOLUTIONS





KEY ACTIVITIES IN THIS SECTION

1. Understand the risk of not addressing your workforce gaps
2. Identify potential solutions
3. Prioritise what you need to do

Introduction

Leveraging the information you gathered in Stage 2, you are now ready to assess the level of workforce risk to your business if you were to take no further action. Determine the risk to achieving your business goals so that you can identify solutions and begin taking action.

Workforce risk - setting your workforce gap priorities

A workforce gap equates to a level of workforce or business risk. Understanding the level of risk and its potential business impact will help determine whether or not to address the gap.

The objective of good risk management is to ensure optimal, balanced and sustainable business performance. Your risk management process should be simple and flexible.

Risk assessment looks at the gaps in workforce supply and demand, and considers:

- the likelihood of not being able to fill the gap
- the consequence of not being able to fill the gap - whether the risk is low, medium, high or severe.

All gaps should be risk-assessed against the impact on the business from not addressing them. Conducting a risk assessment (**Template 5**) will assist you in prioritising your workforce strategies and actions.

Example: Risk matrix

LIKELIHOOD	VERY LIKELY			Advertised position but no suitable applicants	
	LIKELY		New product line, staff have not been upskilled		Reduced productivity and employee losses
	UNLIKELY				
	RARE				Loss of key staff
		LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	SEVERE
		CONSEQUENCE			
		LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	SEVERE

Assess the gaps

Assessing workforce and skills gaps involves looking at three interdependent factors:

- workforce numbers and roles
- skills gaps
- demographic profile.

WORKFORCE NUMBERS AND ROLES

Workforce numbers and roles can be expressed in terms of headcount or FTEs (full-time equivalents). Both of these are legitimate approaches to considering the workforce, though from a financial perspective, workforce costs are normally referred to as FTEs.

Gaps often indicate an undersupply or oversupply of workers where there is likely to be turnover from resignations, retirements or planned extended leave (e.g. parental leave). Consider roles that are harder to fill, critical roles, or new types of roles that do not currently exist in your workforce or need to change to reflect new technologies. It is worthwhile including contractors, casuals and volunteers if your business relies on them to complete work.

SKILLS GAPS

Skills gaps include the skills and capabilities needed now or in the future for your business that you may not currently have. Skills gaps can be addressed by upskilling existing staff or sourcing staff externally. They can be related to technology, technical or other specific or emerging skills that can be difficult to predict.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The analysis of your current workforce may highlight trends that require addressing. These may relate to an ageing workforce or diversity imbalances in roles. It may be important to address these trends if they impact on service delivery, recruitment or retention. Having a diverse workforce can bring new ideas and efficiencies.



TOOLKIT RESOURCE

TEMPLATE 5: Risk assessment worksheet

Use this template to assess your level of risk and to prioritise and identify possible solutions.

Finding solutions – developing workforce strategies and actions

Workforce planning strategies and actions can be grouped into four key categories:

- develop your existing workforce skills and capability
- attract new employees to address skills gaps
- retain valued employees
- manage the workforce through business change.

These categories cover a range of activities to help ensure your workforce matches business requirements into the future. Yearly review of your workforce plan will ensure that the business objectives are still relevant. Strategies can also be adjusted in response to workforce and external trends.

Before developing specific solutions, review your current workforce planning strategies. Which strategies are working well, which are working somewhat and which aren't working at all? Consider each strategy and the reasons for your response. Is there a better solution?

Various resources to support you in finding working solutions are located at www.qff.org.au/resources

Develop your existing workforce skills and capability

Investing in the training and development of your workforce is a key strategy that can achieve improved productivity outcomes for your business. It can also improve employee job satisfaction and engagement. There are various approaches available to develop the skills of your workforce. These can include on-the-job training, accredited and non-accredited training, mentoring and coaching, as well as attendance at industry events.

When considering investment in time and resources required to train and develop employees, ensure you are clear on the skills and knowledge required for your business into the future.

This includes identifying skills gaps, and how and when the skills will be developed. Workforce development activities can include a focus on improving customer service and interpersonal skills, technical skills or building leadership capability.

Developing the skills of your staff can be undertaken in a variety of ways. Using the 70-20-10 rule gives your employees different ways to learn and grow their existing skills. This is also a good way to retain your valued employees or manage your workforce through change.

	70 per cent experiential learning	20 per cent social learning	10 per cent formal learning
Learn via	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job-related experiences Increased responsibility in current role so they can safely learn by doing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactions with others Coaching/mentoring Giving feedback Researching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal education Attendance at training sessions held by local training providers
Example	Josh to take on more responsibility with ordering supplies	Simon to mentor Colin and Josh on farm management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate II in Agriculture Using Microsoft office package - Advanced Excel

Information about training programs supported by the Queensland Government can be found at www.desbt.qld.gov.au/training/employers. You can also find information about workforce initiatives on the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries website at www.daf.qld.gov.au

Ensuring the skills and knowledge of employees remains current will allow your business to remain productive and competitive in an ever-changing business environment.

Attract new employees to address skills gaps

With increasing competition for skilled employees, attracting the right people is critical for the success of a business. Building, developing and maintaining a positive employer brand and employee experience is an important attraction strategy. A strong positive employer brand indicates the business is seen as a good place to work. This may include opportunities to develop and learn new skills, career prospects, good leadership, interesting work and good pay.

The employee experience is the alignment between the employer brand and how that translates in actual day-to-day activities. The working environment is increasingly important for jobseekers/potential employees, as they are looking for a workplace



Skills and capability in action:

As Simon and Mary plan for retirement, part of a succession plan may involve mentoring Colin, Josh and Liz, while also supporting them to upskill. In this way they can gradually take over operation of the farm.

where they are valued and treated with respect, have an opportunity to use their current skills and develop new ones, develop good working relationships and have input into how they do their daily work.

There are many ways to connect to potential employees. Preferred web-based recruitment and social media sites are important tools in our current environment to reach out to jobseekers. Other strategies include partnering with organisations, such as schools, vocational education providers or universities, that offer graduate or work experience programs. Offering an apprenticeship or traineeship can also be an attractive proposition, both for your business and for the new employee.

Retain valued employees

Replacing valued staff is a costly exercise. Businesses are faced with recruitment costs, as well as lost corporate knowledge, networks and experience. It takes time for new staff to become fully productive.

There are many reasons employees will consider leaving a business. Understanding the factors that influence employee decisions to stay or leave will assist in putting in place strategies and initiatives to keep valued employees. Finding out why people are leaving, what employees are thinking, and what they want can be done through staff surveys, exit interviews and regular conversations.

Employees are more likely to stay with a business if they have a working environment where they are respected and valued, have meaningful work, have good relationships with their supervisors and co-workers, and are provided with opportunities to develop their skills.

Workplace arrangements such as part-time work, job-sharing and flexible work options can also assist in retaining employees if there is a change in their personal circumstances that needs to be accommodated in the short or long term. Some of these changes can include needing to care for family members, commencing study or wanting to reduce hours as they prepare to retire.

Understanding specific workforce needs will allow the development of strategies and actions that will support the business to keep valued employees.



Retention strategy in action

Simon and Mary would like to introduce new technology to improve on-farm practices. They recognise they currently do not have the skills within their own workforce and would need to either train existing staff or attract someone new.

As part of their workforce plan discussions, it is identified that Josh is interested in transformative technology. As a retention strategy, Josh will be offered the opportunity to upskill in the new technology to meet the business future skills needs.

Josh has requested and will be provided with increased flexibility.

Job design

Now that you know what skills your team has, you may choose to rethink the way that you utilise employees' skills to find solutions to your workforce gaps and challenges.

Knowing what each position is responsible for and what tasks are required can provide an opportunity to review how things are done and who does what. This approach can support a more productive workplace, especially as a business grows and experiences change.

Utilising an employee's full range of skills can lead to higher levels of satisfaction and retention, and benefit your business.

Strategies that organisations are using to support effective job design include:

- considering employees with qualifications in other areas not being used in their current role, such as digital technology, business and economics or management, and how to integrate other responsibilities into their roles
- identifying role responsibilities that can be logically grouped together that sit across different positions in the business to improve productivity
- considering how position responsibilities can be packaged to support flexible working arrangements of the workforce or used to attract workers that may not be seeking full-time employment.

Manage the workforce through business change

Industry transitions occur across the economy, resulting in changing workforce needs for businesses. From a business perspective, this can include the introduction of new technologies, acquisition or loss of a key contract and subsequent impacts on the supply chain, as well as new competitors entering the market. These changes can result in an increase or decline in demand for products and services.

Responding to change is not a 'one size fits all' approach. To get the best outcomes for a business and workforce, anticipating and planning for any significant change is important. Once it is clear what the impact and timing of the change will be, planning can commence.

Successful change within a business can be achieved through clear communication, engaging staff in discussions on how best to implement and manage the change, identifying skilling, upskilling and reskilling requirements, and providing transitional support to those affected by job changes.

If there are negative workforce impacts, managing affected staff in a compassionate, fair and reasonable manner is important. How individuals are treated during these processes will often influence what they say about your business to family and friends.

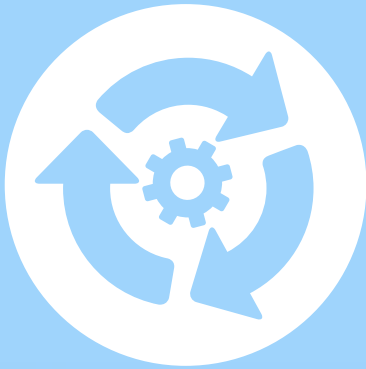
Remember, these family and friends could be your existing or future customers or potential employees. Some of your employees may also be a member of a union. If this is the case, consider engaging with their union to see if there are other short-term alternatives available that will suit both your employee and business needs.



STAGE 3 CHECKLIST

I have:

- identified my workforce gaps and understood the workforce risks
- developed potential solutions for the workforce gaps, considering options such as recruiting, on-the-job training, promoting workers and increasing working hours
- prioritised what I need to do to ensure my workforce will be ready to meet my business goals.



STAGE 4

DEVELOP, IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR





KEY ACTIVITIES IN THIS SECTION

1. Develop your workforce plan, including an action plan
2. Implement your workforce plan
3. Monitor and review your workforce plan

Introduction

Putting your workforce plan in place means recording and implementing the actions you have identified to meet your workforce needs. Workforce plans are 'live' documents, so will need to be updated over time. To achieve this, monitoring and reviewing is important.

Develop a detailed workforce plan and an action plan

A detailed workforce plan (**Template 6**) that includes timeframes for implementation will identify what needs to be done (e.g. offering more flexible working hours for staff with families or caring duties), who needs to lead it (e.g. the production manager), and when it needs to be done. There may be a need for additional resources or skills building to achieve the agreed actions (e.g. training workers in using particular software or redeploying existing staff to accommodate greater flexibility in the workplace).



TOOLKIT RESOURCE

TEMPLATE 6: Detailed workforce plan

This template will allow you develop a detailed workforce plan.

TEMPLATE 7: Workforce action plan on a page

This template will allow you to capture your workforce actions on one page.

Implement your workforce plan

Congratulations! It is time to put your workforce plan into action. Use **Template 7** to start putting the most important items into place as soon as you can to keep the momentum going. Get the relevant people involved and talk them through the action plan.

If any training was identified as part of your workforce action plan on a page, discuss with the relevant staff how this could be achieved and when could be the best time for it to happen. Participating in training (internally or externally) needs to work for the business and the employee. Timing should be discussed to get the best outcome.

Monitor your workforce plan

It is useful to set quantitative goals (i.e. goals expressed in numbers) to measure the effectiveness of your workforce plan. For example, in your workforce gap analysis (**Template 4**), you may have identified a critical job group with high turnover and discovered that staff have left (or are finding it difficult to stay) because their working hours interfere with family caring commitments. You may have developed a workforce initiative to offer flexible working arrangements to address this issue. A plan such as this to reduce workforce turnover can be evaluated by measuring turnover percentages.

Other useful ways to evaluate your initiatives include:

- **Analysis of targets and actual results:** This includes identifying reductions/increases in workforce turnover and the reasons for them, number of vacancies filled, people trained or labour costs reduced.
- **One-on-one discussions:** Checking in periodically with people in supervisory and frontline positions will give managers a first-hand understanding of how the business' plans are progressing and can help to identify where changes need to be made.
- **Informal focus groups:** This involves conducting informal group discussions regarding the business and its direction. This might be done as part of a regular staff meeting.
- **Employee surveys:** Employee surveys allow staff to give confidential feedback on the workplace and the way it functions. For example, questions may be formulated to find out how satisfied people are with their job, how their work/ workplace might be improved, and how committed they are to staying with the business in the future. This can provide managers with valuable insight on how to improve workplace structures or processes in order to retain the staff they have, and to attract the staff they may need in the future.
- **Advisors/consultants:** You may choose to involve advisors who regularly work in your business, such as people who discuss farming practices, new products, legislative changes and environmental impacts.

Regularly review the workforce plan

Your workforce plan should be reviewed and updated every year as part of the business planning process. Changes in and intentions of key staff need to be understood and reflected in the workforce plan, with consideration given to how this may influence forward business planning.

Your evaluation of workforce initiatives forms the basis for adjustments or the development of new initiatives. It may also be necessary to redesign the workforce plan in response to changes in the goals of the business or its operating environment. Like business and financial plans, the workforce plan should be a living document, and should be reviewed periodically to ensure it is being implemented, and remains current and relevant.

It is important to remember that workforce planning does not need to be complicated, but it does require thought and engagement with your staff.



STAGE 4 CHECKLIST

I have:

- developed a workforce plan (refer to **Template 6: Detailed workforce plan**)
- developed the workforce action plan (refer to **Template 7: Workforce action plan on a page**).



TOOLKIT RESOURCES: FACT SHEETS AND TEMPLATES



Toolkit resources at a glance

OVERVIEW OF TOOLKIT RESOURCES	35
FACT SHEET 1: Workforce planning: A summary guide	36
FACT SHEET 2: Calculating your workforce turnover	37
SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL: Workforce planning inventory: Am I ready?	38
TEMPLATE 1: Who should be involved? Stakeholder planning	39
TEMPLATE 2: Knowing your business and workforce	40
TEMPLATE 3: Current workforce data and profile	42
TEMPLATE 4: Workforce supply, future demand and gap analysis	43
TEMPLATE 5: Risk assessment worksheet	45
TEMPLATE 6: Detailed workforce plan	46
TEMPLATE 7: Workforce action plan on a page	49



ACCESS THESE RESOURCES

The Workforce Planning Connect website provides access to:

- an online version of this toolkit
- downloadable fact sheets, self-assessment tool and templates that can be customised to your business
- links to other practical workforce planning and development resources and tools.

To find out more, visit the Workforce Planning Connect website at www.qff.org.au/resources



Overview of toolkit resources

Toolkit resources are a range of documents that you can use to develop your workforce plan. They provide additional information, assist your preparations or develop your plan. Toolkit resources include the following.

Fact sheets are short 1-2 page documents that provide information on various activities within the workforce planning process.

- **Fact sheet 1: Workforce planning: A summary guide**

This fact sheet provides an overview of the four stages of workforce planning.

- **Fact sheet 2: Calculating your workforce turnover**

This fact sheet shows you how to calculate workforce turnover.

Self-assessment tool: Workforce planning inventory: Am I ready?

This tool will assist you in determining your readiness to commence workforce planning in your business.

Templates are suggested forms that can be used to develop your workforce plan.

- **Template 1: Who should be involved? Stakeholder planning**

This template will assist you to identify who you should include in your workforce planning activities.

- **Template 2: Knowing your business and workforce**

This template will help you understand your business directions and workforce considerations.

- **Template 3: Current workforce data and profile**

This template will help you identify and capture key data on your current workforce.

- **Template 4: Workforce supply, future demand and gap analysis**

This template considers your current workforce supply against future demand and the resulting gap.

- **Template 5: Risk assessment worksheet**

This template will assist in identifying the risk to your business that a workforce gap presents.

- **Template 6: Detailed workforce plan**

This template will allow you to develop a detailed workforce plan.

- **Template 7: Workforce action plan on a page**

This template will allow you to capture your workforce actions on one page.

Fact sheet 1:

Workforce planning: A summary guide

Workforce planning is about having the right people, with the right skills, in the right role, at the right time. Similar to business planning, it is a continuous process of understanding your current workforce skills (where you are now), desired skills for your future workforce (where you are going) and your workforce gaps, and developing strategies and actions to close those gaps (how you will get there). These strategies and actions can include training and development, recruitment and improving workforce performance.

KEY STAGES



1. GET STARTED

The purpose of workforce planning is not to decide what you will do in the future, it is about determining what you can do now to be best prepared for the future. Workforce planning doesn't need to be complicated, but it does require thought and engagement with your staff.



2. GATHER INFORMATION

Determine your current workforce

The current state of your workforce can be portrayed through workforce data. The current analysis should include the most recent data and, if it is available, historical workforce data. While there is no set period for workforce history, as a minimum, data should cover the previous 12 months.

Determine your future workforce

Understanding your future workforce and skills needs is about estimating the number and types of employees and the skills required to deliver your business plan and goals.

Identify gaps

You should be able to identify where your workforce or skills gaps are emerging by comparing your current workforce with your future workforce.



3. IDENTIFY ISSUES AND FIND SOLUTIONS

Once you have identified actions that will address your workforce gaps, these can now be put into a plan that prioritises the actions, when and how they will get done, and by whom. It will also be useful to measure the success of the plan through being clear about what success looks like. For example, Josh has almost completed his Cert III and is currently undertaking training on new technology. This will allow Simon and Mary to improve efficiencies.



4. DEVELOP, IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR

Once you have prioritised your workforce plan actions, start communicating the priorities to your workforce and commence implementation. Don't forget to track how you are going against the plan,



Workforce Planning Connect provides all the tips and resources you will need to take the next step on your business' workforce planning journey.

To find out more, visit the QFF website at www.qff.org.au/resources

Fact sheet 2: Calculating your workforce turnover

WHY MONITORING WORKFORCE TURNOVER IS IMPORTANT

Workforce turnover can have a negative impact on your business in relation to productivity, customer service, cost and efficiency. It also often means a loss of business knowledge around customer history, internal processes and customer relationships, and can result in extra workloads for remaining employees.

Most workforce turnover costs can be hidden, so it is often hard to quantify the actual cost to the business.

Costs may include:

- departing employees with accrued leave that needs to be paid out
- recruitment, including costs of advertising and recruitment agency fees
- new hires, including time spent reviewing applications, interviewing applicants and any relocation costs
- productivity losses, including work that is incomplete or delayed due to an empty role, and time spent inducting new employees.

Workforce turnover can also be helpful to your business. It provides an opportunity to identify what could be done differently across various roles and consider how new people can bring new ideas that will benefit your business.

Each industry and business has an average workforce turnover rate, and you need to consider what the right level of turnover is for your business. When you understand what your turnover rate is, you can anticipate and plan for this in your workforce plan.

For example, if seasonal workers are a known, you may choose to incorporate this annual workforce requirement within your plan. However, this will likely increase your turnover percentage. For this reason, you need to choose whether to include or exclude them when making your calculations.

To examine the cause(s) of your workforce turnover:

1. conduct an exit interview with staff who are leaving the organisation to identify any common reasons that may be easy to address in the future
2. conduct regular staff satisfaction surveys to monitor and track how staff are feeling and if they are considering leaving.

CALCULATE YOUR TURNOVER PERCENTAGE

Average number of employees	Calculations
Add the number of employees at the beginning of the period (at the beginning of a calendar or financial year) (e.g. 31) with the number at the end of the period (e.g. 25) and divide by 2	$(31+25)/2$ $= 56/2$ $= 28$
Average number of employees = (number at the beginning + number at the end) divided by 2	28
Turnover rate	
The number of employees who left your business in the same period	12
Multiply the number of people who left by 100 and then divide by the average number of employees in the same period	$(12 \times 100)/28$
Turnover rate	42.85%

Template 2: Knowing your business and workforce

Use this questionnaire to reflect on your current business state and on your existing or future workforce. This information will provide key input to the workforce plan for your business. **Business strategy and direction – where are you going?**

Questions	Responses
What are your key business goals for the next three to five years?	
What are your key priorities for the next 12 months?	
How will you know if the business is successful?	
What are the key factors that will achieve business success?	
How will you measure success?	
What major obstacles will the business face while striving to reach these objectives?	
What will need to be changed or realigned to achieve business priorities?	
What are your workforce strengths and weaknesses that are likely to influence your business strategy and objectives?	
What are the most significant changes (recent or projected) in your business or workforce?	

TEMPLATE 2: KNOWING YOUR BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE CONTINUED ...

Are any of the following likely to affect your business over the coming years (1-3+ years)? If so, what will be the effect on the workforce?

- Changes in strategy or direction
- Significant cost reductions
- Outsourcing
- Implementing new technology/technology changes
- Changing customer expectations or requirements
- New lines of business or products
- Improvements in efficiency
- Changes in government policy or legislation
- Economic trends
- Environmental issues
- Other _____ (specify)

Understanding the current business – SWOT

What are the competitive strengths of your business?

What are the major weaknesses of your business?

What are the biggest opportunities that you see today for your business?

What are the biggest threats you see today for your business?

TEMPLATE 3: CURRENT WORKFORCE DATA AND PROFILE CONTINUED ...

HOW TO COMPLETE

- Populate the table with your relevant workforce information.
- You may already have recorded some of this information elsewhere so it will be easy to locate.
- You may need to talk to your employees or their managers to gather other information.

You may decide that you only want to work with what information you know at this stage. That's okay, though you may miss an opportunity to gain knowledge about your workforce and how your business may benefit from that.

SOME NOTES ON THE DATA THAT YOU ARE COLLECTING

Location: if your business is located across multiple sites, you can identify at which site each employee is located.

Date commenced: the date the employee commenced working with your business.

Pay level: this can be used to reflect the different classification or award levels that your employees are paid at.

Employment status (headcount): understanding how you have structured your workforce is important when considering your workforce risks and potential actions. This should always be 1 under the correct type of employment.

Full-time equivalent (FTE): this is a common term from an accounting perspective. Calculating an FTE is simple. $FTE = \text{total number of hours worked at ordinary pay rates} / \text{total number of available hours at ordinary pay}$. For example, the award on which you pay your employees states that the standard working week is 38 hours. Colin is scheduled to work 38 hours, plus any overtime. Colin is 1 FTE = 38 hrs/38 hrs. Liz is scheduled to work 25 hours per week. Liz is 0.66 FTE = 25 hrs/38 hrs.

Years in role: this can be different to the years in your business. It can indicate a new role for that person, or if they have been in the same role for a while, they may be wanting a new challenge.

Job family: people can belong to the same job family even if they have different position titles. For example, your owners are both in farm management, Liz would be during peak season also. This will assist in understanding your workforce's core skills.

Qualifications: any qualifications, tickets or licences can be captured here. This will assist in identifying potential training needs, and in understanding each employee's skills and knowledge.

Diversity: people for whom English is a second language, have a disclosed disability or are from a marginalised group.

Workforce cost – wage/salary: annual wage or salary.

Workforce cost – overheads: include superannuation, leave loading, training costs etc.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

- You may choose to also track annual leave for your regular staff. Leave arrangements can impact business continuity and can be planned for.
 - Planning for relieving these staff while they are on annual leave provides opportunity to upskill your existing employees.
- Peak season when you have seasonal workers can also be tracked. If you know you regularly need a specific number of people in certain roles, you can list them as a job title rather than an individual's name.

Template 5: Risk assessment worksheet

Identified risk (e.g. *BD manager retiring*)

Likelihood of occurrence (e.g. *very likely*)

Consequence of occurrence (e.g. *high*)

Risk rating (e.g. *severe impact on business if not replaced*)

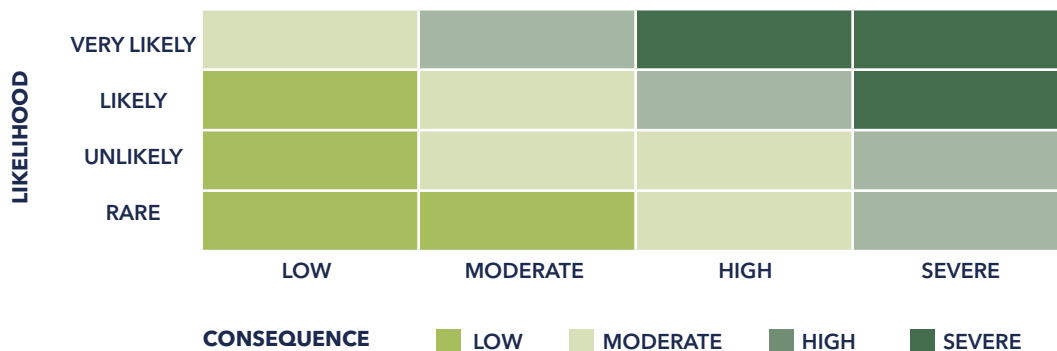
Priority for action (e.g. *1*)

Action/s (e.g. *replace/don't replace*)

Workforce strategy (e.g. *recruit a new office manager, take on a trainee, reskill an existing worker*)

Monitoring and evaluation

Risk matrix



Template 6: Detailed workforce plan

Introduction to the workforce plan

Aims and objectives of the workforce plan

Business or workforce constraints that have been identified

Assumptions that have been made

Business goals for the next ____ months/years

Business opportunities and challenges

What does success look like?

Key workforce information

Key workforce risks

Workforce strengths, opportunities and challenges

Monitoring and evaluation



A golden-hour landscape photograph. In the foreground, five cows are silhouetted against the bright light, walking from left to right. A large, leafy tree stands on the right side of the frame, its branches reaching towards the top right. In the background, a range of hills or mountains is visible under a hazy, golden sky. The overall color palette is warm, dominated by shades of orange, yellow, and brown.

GLOSSARY

Glossary of terms

Workforce segmentation

Workforce segmentation is grouping your workforce by similar characteristics.

Some approaches to workforce segmentation include:

- **Role-based or job family:** Jobs are segmented by the type of work performed (e.g. customer service officers, machine workers, administrative support) or by similar occupational groupings, such as accountants, engineers or carpenters. This approach allows you to identify and focus on the skills and capabilities that are important to your business.
- **Employee-based:** Segmentation can be by demographics such as work location, gender or age profile. This approach can inform workforce risks from potential workforce availability by these segments.
- **Business structure:** Many businesses display their workforce structure through an organisational chart, which is useful for demonstrating business units and reporting lines. However, organisational charts don't show the skills and capabilities within the business, which is essential for workforce planning.

Workforce information

Workforce information covers a range of intelligence and data that exists or can be created about your workforce.

QUANTITATIVE

- Positions: How many are filled or vacant?
- Positions: What positions have been budgeted for?
- Resignations: How many and why?
- Recruitment: How many positions, by type and reason for the particular role needed?
- Diversity information: What is the diversity of your workforce in terms of age (including youth and mature age), gender, cultural background, declared disability?
- Qualifications: What type of qualifications are required?
- Skills: What specific skills are required?

QUALITATIVE

- Learning and development needs
- Employee engagement
- Work life stage (new to the workforce, early -, mid-, end-career workers)
- Career aspirations
- Individual worker intentions to stay or leave

While this is not an exhaustive list of workforce information that a business may have available, it demonstrates the breadth of information that already exists or can be gathered to assist with workforce planning.

Workforce supply

Workforce supply is the size of your current and future workforce. It takes into consideration employee turnover through resignations and retirements, and how these affect the size of your workforce over time.



Scenario

Your business has 60 employees. There are at least eight resignations each year and you have two people planning to retire over a three-year period, therefore you would only have 34 employees left in your business.

Current number of employees	Resignations			Retirements			Year 3 total employees
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y1	Y2	Y3	
60	8	8	8	0	2	0	34

Workforce demand

Workforce demand is the number of employees you will need today and into the future to deliver against your business plan.



Scenario

Your business currently has 60 employees. If you need to increase by 10 employees every year in order to grow and meet customer expectations, at the end of the three years, you would need to have 90 employees.

Current number of employees	Planned growth			Year 3 total employees
	Y1	Y2	Y3	
60	10	10	10	90

Workforce gap

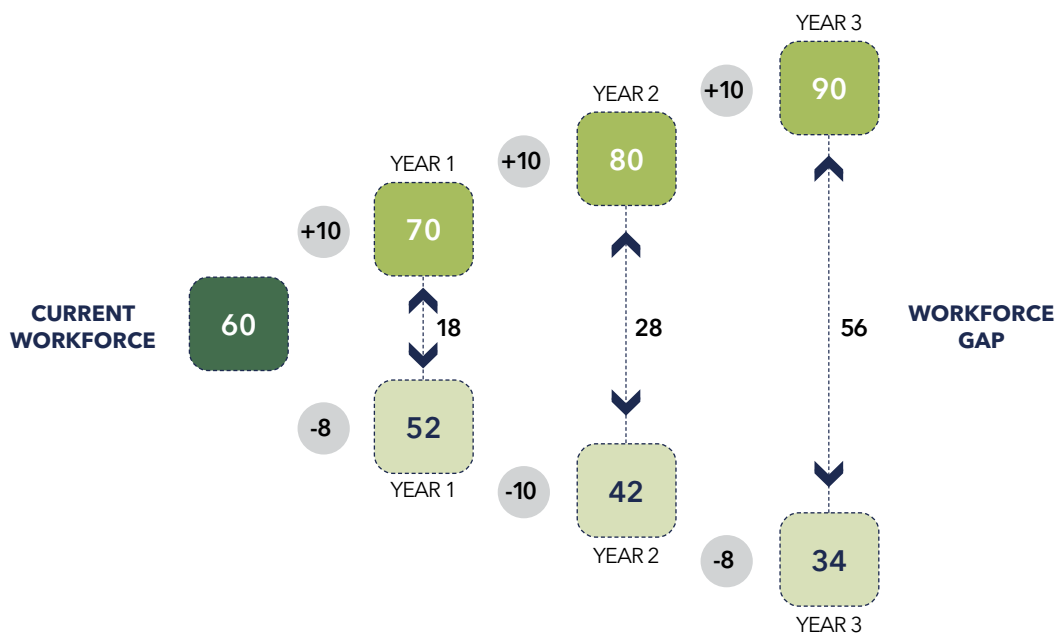
A workforce gap is the difference between what your workforce (labour) looks like now and what it needs to look like in the future.



Scenario

Your business currently has 60 employees and you need to grow by 10 people each year. Analysis of your workforce data shows that on average your business loses eight people a year to resignation or retirement. Assuming you do nothing to replace these employees at the end of the first year, you will have a gap of 18 people. In other words, you will have 52 employees instead of the 70 employees required to keep growing your business. This gap will increase to 28 at the end of the second year if you continue to take no action. You will then only have 42 workers as opposed to the 80 employees you had projected to meet your business requirements. If you do nothing by the end of the third year, when you had projected to employ 90 workers, the gap is now at 56, with just 34 employees available. Your business will be shrinking, not growing.

YEAR 1	Current number of employees	Planned growth Y1	Resignations + retirements Y1 (-)	Total workforce	Year 3 total employees
	60	10	8	52	18
YEAR 2		Planned growth Y2	Resignations + retirements Y1 (-)	Total workforce	Year 3 total employees
		10	10	42	28
YEAR 3		Planned growth Y3	Resignations + retirements Y1 (-)	Total workforce	Year 3 total employees
		10	8	34	56



Workforce risk

A workforce risk is any workforce issue that could result in an event that is detrimental to a business' outcomes and outputs. Risks may arise where there is a gap between a business' existing workforce and the workforce required to deliver its products, services and goals. You need to manage the workforce risks to your business by identifying and analysing the things that may have an adverse effect on your business, and choosing the best method of dealing with each of these identified risks.

Workforce skills gap

A workforce skills gap means there is a mismatch between the skills you need your employees to have to support your business goals, and the skills your employees actually have.

Developing the skills of your staff can be done in a variety of ways and does not necessarily mean sending someone to attend a formal training course.

Workforce risks can come from two main sources:

- internal to the business through business strategy and direction, resources, workplace culture, business structure, workplace health and safety, leadership, resignations, and workforce skills and capabilities
- external to the business through market competition, disruptive technologies, economic environment, customer behaviour, government policy, and international and industry trends.

By undertaking regular workforce planning, your business should be able to identify most workforce risks. Identifying and understanding workforce risks can involve a number of activities, including:

- monitoring and analysing relevant workforce data that will impact on business delivery, such as high workforce turnover or unplanned absences
- employee survey results that measure job satisfaction and future intentions to stay or go, number of vacant positions, including how long it takes to advertise, and for each new employee to commence and also undertake all the necessary induction activities.

The questions to ask yourself are:

- What could cause an impact?
- How serious would that impact be?
- What is the likelihood of this occurring?
- Can it be reduced or eliminated?

Committing to monitoring and reporting workforce data and regularly reviewing your workforce plan will enable you to identify emerging issues as they arise and to adequately respond.

To find out more, visit
www.qff.org.au/resources

