



# Workforce Planning Connect

## Workbook

A practical guide for  
micro business and  
small enterprises



**Business  
Chamber**  
QUEENSLAND



**Jobs  
Queensland**

## **FURTHER ENQUIRIES**

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## Introduction

The Queensland workforce is evolving. External changes such as consumer demand for varied products, workforce capability, new technologies, policy, climate change and sustainable management across the supply chain are just a few of the challenges and opportunities facing Queensland businesses.

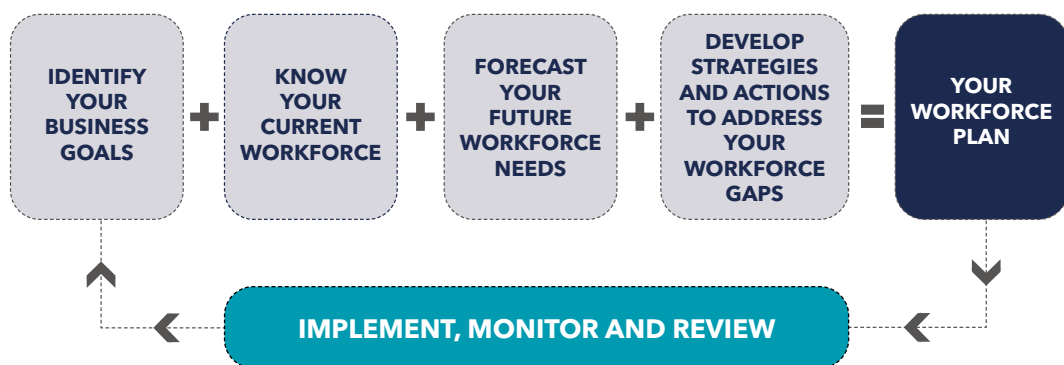
These external changes may mean a growth or decline in markets and your customer base, and an increase in competition. These changes can have an impact on your workforce needs too, and will need to be considered as part of your planning. Many businesses use workforce planning to help think ahead and manage change.

Jobs Queensland, in collaboration with Business Chamber Queensland (BCQ), has developed this Workforce Planning Connect workbook to help micro businesses and small enterprises, such as yours, to step through the key stages involved in workforce planning and develop a workforce plan that meets their business needs.

## What is workforce planning?

Workforce planning is about planning for the people who help your business deliver its products and services to your customers. It's about having the right people with the right skills, at the right time and place, doing the right things to help you achieve your business goals.

The key steps involved in workforce planning are outlined below.



There are different levels of workforce planning.



## Why is workforce planning important?

Whether you have three staff or 30, workforce planning can save you time and money.

By having a workforce plan, you will gain a solid understanding of your current workforce and how to prepare your workforce for the future. By integrating workforce planning with your business strategy and planning, your business can benefit through:

- responding quickly and strategically to change
- linking your workforce initiatives to your finance and business planning
- improving efficiency, effectiveness and productivity
- reducing employee turnover and improved retention and engagement
- attracting staff to key roles, reducing skills shortages and increasing job satisfaction.

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

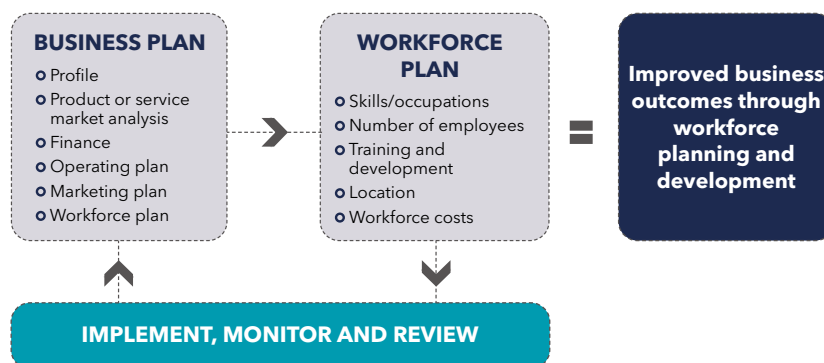
## What does workforce planning involve?

You plan your finances; you plan your products and services; and you plan your workload – workforce planning helps you plan for your people.

Workforce planning helps you think about the future of your business and how the people you employ will support you to reach your goals. 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 at the right location
- **When:** ensuring that these components come together at the right **time**.

Workforce planning works best when 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.



## How to use this workbook

This workbook provides you with the ability to work through all the stages of workforce planning, or you can just focus on a part of the workbook that you are most interested in now.

If you complete the whole workbook, you will have developed a workforce plan for your business that you can use, review and update. If you only complete parts of this workbook, you will be well on your way to developing a workforce plan.

As you complete this workbook, you will also:

- learn each stage in the process of workforce planning
- understand who needs to be involved and what information needs to be collected
- assess workforce risk and its implications for your business
- develop strategies to manage that risk
- develop a workforce plan so that you have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time, to meet your business needs.



To help guide you through this workbook, we have provided examples to get you started using a fictional business. Your answers might be different (that's okay), this is about your workforce planning journey and what is best for your business.

## INTRODUCING THE RICHMOND BUSINESS

### Small family business

- **Jason:** Business owner/site manager
- **Rachel:** Business owner/admin manager

### 2 employees (full-time)

- **Scott:** Labourer (20 years service)
- **Adele:** Apprentice (2 years service)

### Other employees

- 3 contract staff

Different business goals impact how a business would plan its future workforce. Below are some of the alternative scenarios for the Richmond business.



#### Grow

Purchasing new technology



#### Decline or maintain

Jason and Rachel may choose to sell the business, or they may hand it over to someone else when they retire



#### Diversify

Staff are discussing ideas to diversify

## You can do this!

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

Things to keep in mind:

- The process is the same for any size business, in any industry.
- Start with the end in mind.
- It doesn't have to be complicated.
- Data collection does not have to be complex.
- Workforce planning may help you retain staff and compete for the workforce you need now and into the future.
- It can support you to manage your workforce risk by helping you focus your energy in the right place.
- A workforce plan is a living document. You can update it as often as you like.
- It is recommended you review your workforce plan on a regular basis, perhaps each time there is a major change in your business. Alternatively, you might aim to review it annually to align with your business planning process.



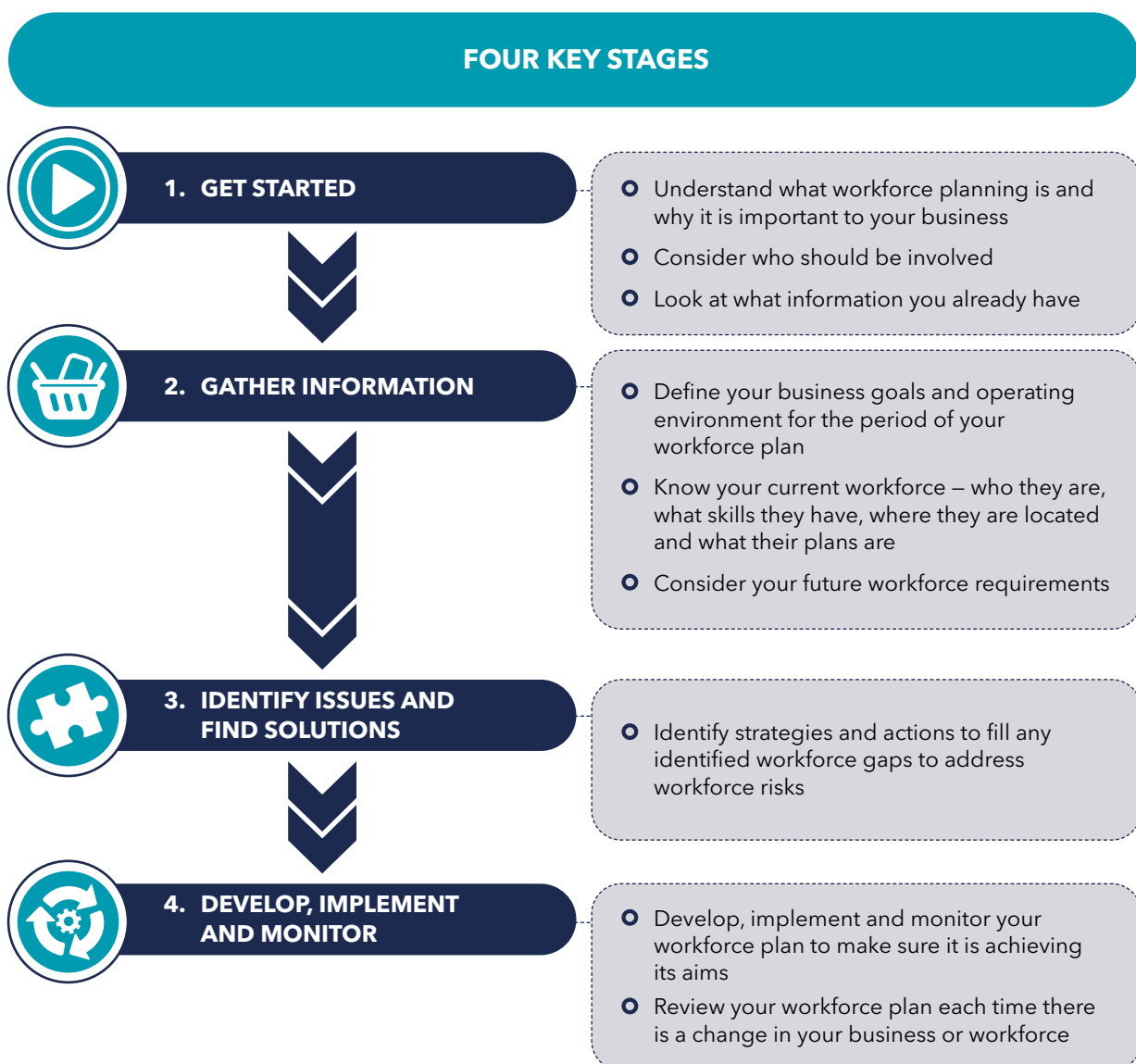
There is a one-page **WORKFORCE PLAN ON A PAGE** that you can use to create a summary of your workforce information at the end of the workbook.

# The four key stages to workforce planning

You are probably intuitively doing elements of workforce planning without realising it already! Activities like developing new skills or recruiting additional employees are all part of the process. It's not as daunting as it sounds.

The framework below identifies the information and resources that can be adapted to your business. You can use this workbook to develop a workforce plan or to address a specific workforce challenge, opportunity or need in your business.

## Workforce Planning Connect framework



It is important to remember that workforce planning does not need to be complicated, but it does require thought and engagement with your staff and other key people who may support your business (e.g. financial planner).

Now let's get started!



STAGE 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. So, let's help you prepare!



### 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

## Things to consider

- What timeframe you are planning for? (e.g. 1 year, 2 years, another timeframe)
- Who are your stakeholders that you want to include in the workforce planning process?
- Why you are including them?
- Who are the key decision-makers? How can they best be involved?
- How much time can they commit to the process?
- Will they be committed to supporting and implementing the actions?
- Aim to increase the diversity of your workforce in terms of age, gender, cultural background and declared disability.

## Timeframe and goals

It's important to consider the timeframe you are going to plan for, and the business goals you have.

It's important to think beyond the following year, so you can put things in place now that will support your business long term.

**Considering a strategic focus (two years and beyond) is often a good starting point, though sometimes a shorter timeframe may be more useful for getting started.**

## Suggestions on who you could involve

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. If you are a micro business, this may only be two key people.

Micro and small businesses	Medium sized businesses
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 Dedicated and knowledgeable staff

## Stage 1 activities



### Who could be involved?

Make a list of all the people you think should be involved and why.

Who could be involved?	Why are you involving them?
Example: Business manager	Because they have oversight of all aspects of the business and its workforce
Example: My partner	Because they are a co-owner and manage administration and recruitment
Example: Long-term employee	Because they are committed to the business and have played an important role over the years



### Is there commitment to implementing identified actions?

Yes       No       Unsure

It is important that you have commitment from the people you need to have involved in the workforce planning process.

If the answer is **No**, you may need to think about how you get buy-in to this process. Consider how you might request or encourage involvement.

If **unsure**, speaking to the individuals you listed earlier is a good start.



### What do you want to achieve through this workforce plan?

Write down your goal or outcome for the plan

Example: Have the right people, with the right skills, to meet increased production needs

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## What do you already know about your workforce?

You can use this information later to help you develop your workforce plan. This is covered further in the next stage. For now, this is to help you work out what you already have and where you can find it.

### Write down the information you already know

Example: The types of jobs you have in your business, how many employees and their employment status

Example: Overhead costs (e.g. wages/salary, superannuation, leave loading)

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## What other information do you need?

Consider what information you can collect easily and who can help you collect it.

Examples of some of the information are:

- What qualifications do people have/need to do their jobs?
- What other skills do your team members have that you may be able to use in your business?

What?	Where can I find this information?
Example: Current team skills	Each team member

It may benefit you to ask your team what they believe are their strengths. They may have developed skills outside the business that they have not had an opportunity to apply in the workplace.



STAGE 2

# GATHER INFORMATION



A clear and well thought out workforce plan will support your current and future business goals. Workforce information will help you create your workforce plan.

This section will help you identify the information you need and where to find it.



### KEY ACTIVITIES IN THIS SECTION

1. Review and understand your business goals and how your workforce will contribute to this
2. Consider what your current workforce looks like now
3. Identify where you might want to be in the future

## Stage 2 activities



### What are your business goals?

Business goals tend to fall under one of four scenarios:



**Grow**



**Decline**



**Maintain**



**Diversify**

Consider the timeframe of your plan when setting your goals.

To be in the best position to have the right combination of people, skills and employment types across your workforce, you should think about your business goals and how you will achieve them.

Business goals	Workforce implications
E.g. Grow: Purchase new technology (stock management, accounting software)	Identify the new skills or knowledge to capture required data and information, manage and run reports Recruit or train existing team

Each goal has its own challenges and barriers to success. Let's explore yours.

Goal/opportunity	Key challenges
E.g. Purchase new technology	Upskill staff to use and maintain new technology

As you go through the process of developing your workforce plan, it is important to know your workforce starting point and how well that aligns to your business goals.



## What does your workforce look like now?

What your workforce looks like now can be shown below. You should be using the most recent information available, but historical information can also be helpful. We recommend you include the last 12 months as a minimum to help you create a picture of what your own workforce supply looks like. 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.

Position	Number of employees	Employment status	Length of employment	Age	Skills
E.g. Labourer	1	F/T; P/T; casual; temporary; contract	20 years	20-50	Important for identifying current skills available and roles within your business

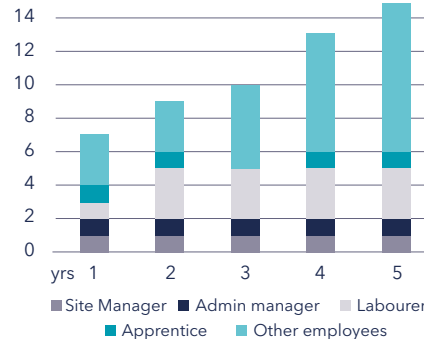
Note: To develop a more detailed workforce profile, you can use the 'Current workforce data and profile' template on the website [www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/wpc](http://www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/wpc)

Other workforce supply data you might like to consider include:

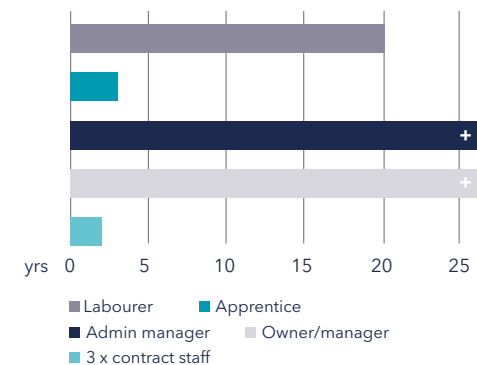
- **turnover:** resignations; retirements
- **practice arrangements:** flexible hours; leave allowances; shift work
- **costs:** wages/salaries; overheads (e.g. accommodation, phone); variable costs (e.g. training).

Sometimes using a graph or a chart makes it easier to see a trend (up or down).

**Richmond business workforce count**



**Length of employment (years)**



The skills you need today are a good starting point for planning the skills you will need tomorrow.



## What does your workforce need to look like?

The answer to this question may surprise you! Refer back to your business goals. Depending on which scenario and timeframe you chose, your workforce needs will vary.

Keep in mind potential staffing changes within your business (e.g. if someone is promoted or moves into another role, do they need to be replaced?). This can be an opportunity to consider productivity improvements within your business.

The following questions might help.

### Questions to ask yourself

Who can help you identify your future workforce needs?

Do you need more, fewer or the same number of people?

Do you need the same number of people but with different skills?

If so, what skills are needed?

Are you wanting to introduce new technology/processes/products?

If so, what skills will be needed?

When do you need these people or skills?

Can you upskill someone in your team to meet this need?

What can you do to make sure that your business goals and workforce plans all line up, so that you have the right people, with the right skills, at the right time?

Similar to the information you provided earlier (what your workforce looks like now), use the table below to outline the additional staffing you will need in the future.

Position	Number of employees	Employment status	When they should start	Skills
E.g. Labourer	3	F/T	6 months	General duties. Will upskill in new equipment as needed



**THINGS TO CONSIDER:** Recruitment of under-represented groups is a great way to diversify your existing workforce. Employing people from a migrant community, Aboriginal peoples, 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 while they transition into your team. Don't be afraid to recruit differently to how you traditionally have.



There are two main types of gaps. Let's take a look at both.

**Workforce gap:** the number of people and composition of roles you need to undertake the work in comparison to the people you currently have.

**Skills gap:** the skills you need employees to have so they can effectively and efficiently do the work in comparison to the skills your employees currently have.



## What is your workforce gap?

A workforce gap is the difference between what your workforce looks like now and what your future workforce needs to look like to help you reach your business goals.

**Example:** If your business intends to expand through diversification/new technology, your workforce may need to grow.

Current # of employees	Planned growth/ decline Yr 1	Planned growth/ decline Yr 2	Planned growth/ decline Yr 3	Total workforce gap
4	+3	0	0	3
Current # of employees	Potential resignations Yr 1	Potential resignations Yr 2	Potential resignations Yr 3	
4	2	0	1	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>

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.

Current # of employees	Planned growth/ decline Yr 1	Planned growth/ decline Yr 2	Planned growth/ decline Yr 3	Total workforce gap
Current # of employees	Potential resignations Yr 1	Potential resignations Yr 2	Potential resignations Yr 3	
<b>Totals</b>				

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.jobswesternaustralia.gov.au/wpc](http://www.jobswesternaustralia.gov.au/wpc)



## What is your skills gap?

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.

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 retain good staff and upskill your existing employees. 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 things you may consider are:

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

There is more information on developing your existing workforce in Stage 3. For now, using the table below, consider what skills your business will need in the future that you don't currently have.

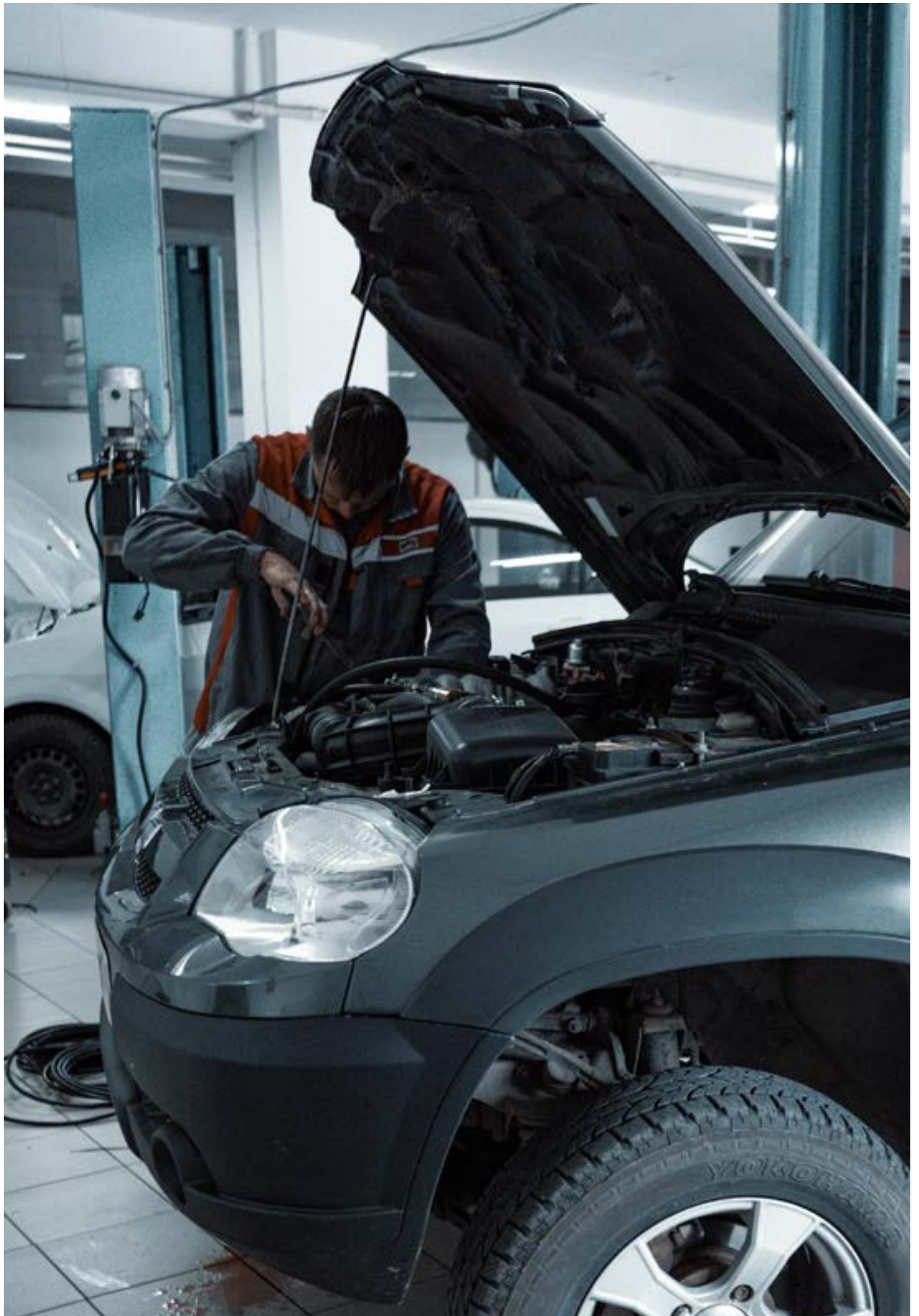


## What is your skills gap?

**My future skills needs are:** *(Example: coaching and mentoring a small team)*

Year	Skills required
1	
2	
3	

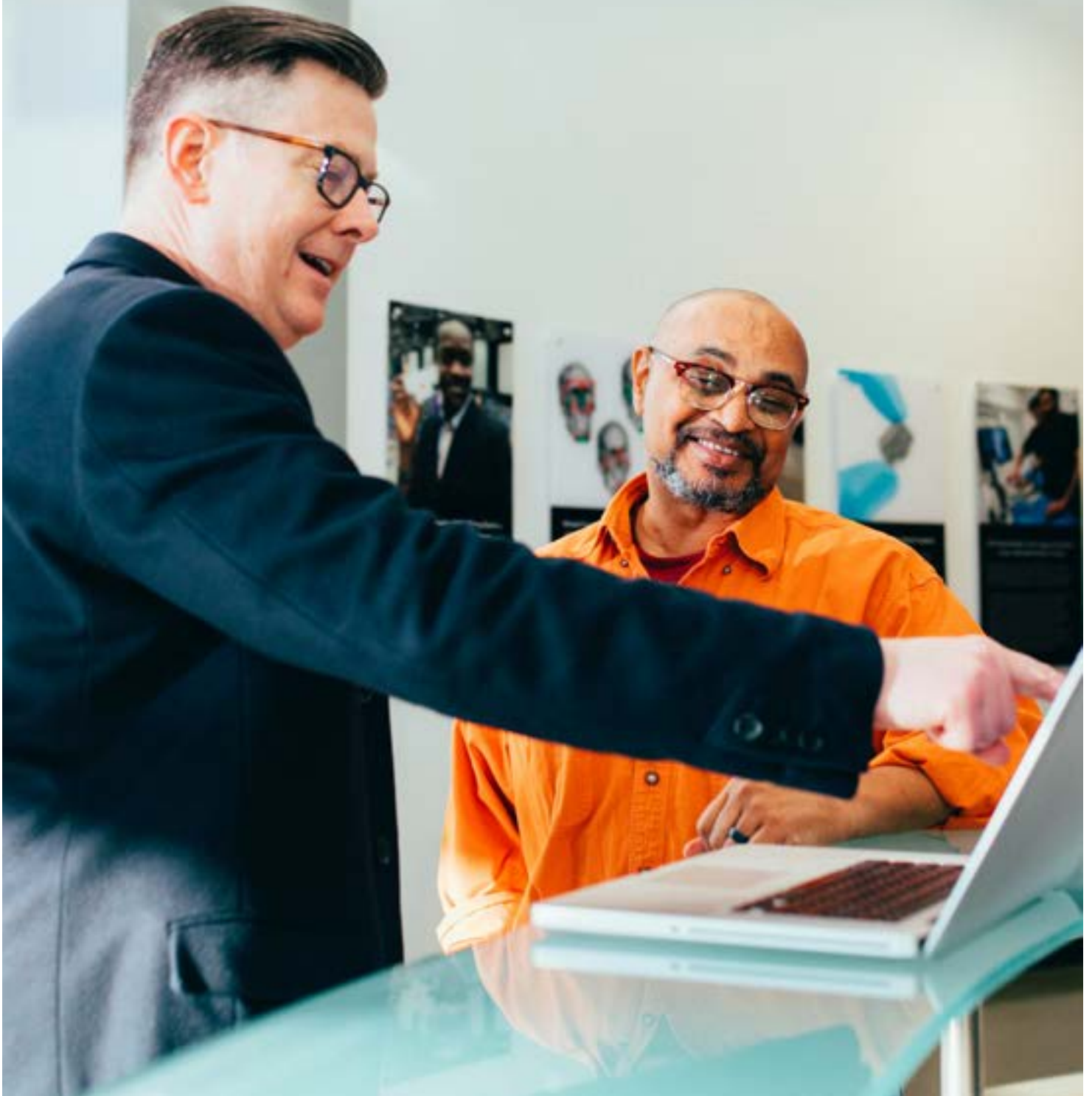
Next you will need to identify strategies and actions to close these workforce and skills gaps. These strategies and actions will form the basis of your workforce plan.





STAGE 3

# IDENTIFY ISSUES AND FIND SOLUTIONS



Let's compare what your workforce looks like now to your future workforce needs (you did this in Stage 2). This process is commonly referred to as a gap analysis and helps you create a strategy to resolve them.



### KEY ACTIVITIES IN THIS SECTION

1. Analyse your workforce gaps
2. Understand the risk of not addressing your workforce gaps
3. Identify potential solutions

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.



### Gap analysis

Thinking about the workforce and skills gaps from previous pages, there may be a few other things you need to consider as part of your gap analysis. Some of these may include the following.

Workforce gap	Yes	No
Do you have trouble recruiting or keeping people with the right skills to meet your business goals? This can include technical, trade, business, people skills.		
Are you expecting anyone to retire or leave in the time you are considering?		
Are there people in your business whose skills you are not using effectively?		
Do you have too many people or not enough people to meet your business goals?		

If you answered 'Yes' to any of these questions, you may have identified potential further workforce gaps and risks. Also refer to the gaps you identified in the previous section and update it if needed.

#### My workforce gaps are:

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## Assess workforce risk

A workforce risk can be any workforce related issue that can disrupt your business' ability to deliver on its outcomes or outputs. It's important to think about the level of risk to your business if you don't have the right skills for your future business needs, people leave, or you don't recruit the right people at the right time to achieve your goals.

Not having the right skills can sometimes be just as much of a risk as not having the right number of people.

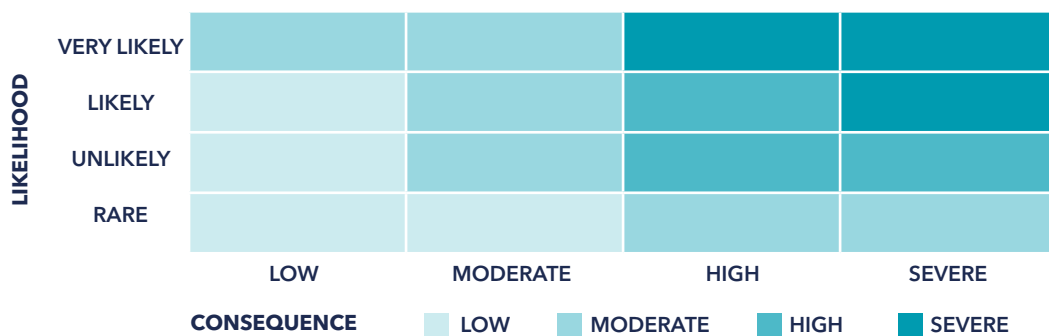
### Main sources of workforce risk may include:

Internal to the business	External to the business
Leadership	Market competition
Resignations	Transformative technology
Workforce skills and capabilities	Environmental
Workplace health and safety	Customer behaviors

Risk assessment looks at the gaps in workforce supply and demand, as well as internal and external business risks, and considers:

- the likelihood of not being able to fill workforce or skills gaps
- the consequence of not being able to fill workforce or skills gaps
- 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. Risks that have severe consequences should be the priorities for action.



Workforce risk	Likelihood	What do I need to do to manage that workforce risk?



## Finding your workforce solutions

### Solutions can be grouped into four categories:

1. Develop your existing workforce skills and capability
2. Attract new employees to address skills gaps
3. Retain valued employees
4. Manage the workforce through business change.

Each solution will provide a focus on particular workforce issues and no one solution will solve all of the identified issues. Reviewing your solutions on a regular basis (a minimum of once a year) helps you adjust the response you put in place if your workforce or external impacts change. For example:

Strategy	Positives	Need to plan for
Develop my existing workforce	Already know my business	Training budget and workforce time to undertake the training
Attract new employees	Will bring fresh ideas	Will take time to settle in and be fully productive
Retain valued employees	Retain corporate knowledge and history	Retention strategies Replacement of key personnel and knowledge transfer strategies
Manage the workforce through change	The change (e.g. new technology implementation) will support the business goals and help those involved to understand what is happening when, and what they need to do	Communication, timing and who will be impacted

Now it's time to think about your own strategies.

### The strategies I need for my workforce are:

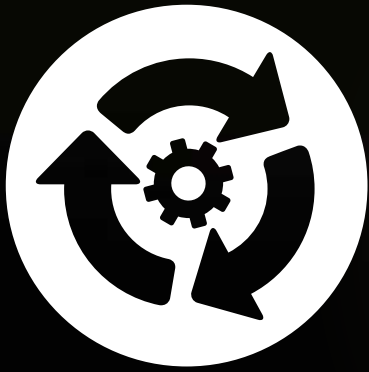
Strategy	Positives	Need to plan for

### Do you need to develop the skills of your existing workforce?

Developing your staff does not necessarily mean they need formal training. Using the 70-20-10 rule gives your employees a variety of ways to learn and to grow their existing skills. This is also a good way to retain your valued employees or manage your workforce through change.

Things to consider:

	70 per cent experiential learning	20 per cent social learning	10 per cent formal learning
Learn via	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Job-related experiences</li> <li>Increased responsibility in current role so they can safely learn by doing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactions with others</li> <li>Coaching/mentoring</li> <li>Giving feedback</li> <li>Researching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal education</li> <li>Attendance at training sessions held by local training providers</li> </ul>
Example	Scott and Adele to take on more responsibility with ordering supplies	Jason to mentor Scott on managing a business	Certificate III in Small Business Management



STAGE 4

# DEVELOP, IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR





You are now ready to develop, implement and monitor your workforce plan and its supporting action plan.

Having a clear workforce plan that states your business goals and how you propose to achieve these goals through the support of your workforce provides a focus to your actions.



### KEY ACTIVITIES IN THIS SECTION

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



### Action plan

A sound workforce action plan will identify:

- what needs to be done (e.g. implementing flexible working arrangements)
- who is responsible (e.g. general manager)
- when it needs to be addressed (e.g. as an immediate priority).

All the information you have gathered so far will enable you to put together your action plan. Once complete, it is useful to share the action plan with your team and to consider placing it where everyone can see it (e.g. staff lunchroom). This will help your team understand what is happening, who is doing what, and when. It also gives them the opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

If you are planning to develop your workforce, there are often lead times involved or other impacts on your business to consider. For example:

- A training course may take six months to complete. When identifying who the best person is to undertake this training, you will also need to consider when is the best time for them to start the training.
- A new piece of equipment will be purchased next year. If staff will be trained on the job by the supplier when it arrives, time needs to be allocated for this. The impact it has on productivity in the short and the longer term need to be considered in your return on investment.

Once you have written down your actions in the table on the next page, you can prioritise what needs to be done, by when and by whom.



### What is your priority?

Once you have developed your action plan, you need to consider the sequence of actions to support your business to have the right people, in the right place, at the right time. You cannot always do everything at once, so you will need to prioritise what you will initially focus on.

Things to consider:

- Which actions will have the greatest impact on your business?
- What items need to be implemented in each future year?

**The action plan for creating my future workforce is:**

Priority	Identified gap	Strategy/action	Resources	Outcome/measure	Who	By when
	Workforce gap due to retirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider internal promotional opportunities</li> <li>Recruit externally for position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Succession plan</li> <li>Training plan</li> <li>Recruitment plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fill workforce gap within four weeks of staff announcing retirement</li> </ul>	Business manager	In the next 6 months

For more space to write down your Workforce Action Plan, you can use the 'Workforce action plan on a page' template on the website [www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/wpc](http://www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/wpc)



## Implement your action plan

When implementing your action plan, there may be a need for additional resources, such as training and technology, or redeploying current staff to accommodate greater flexibility in the workplace.

### My additional resource needs are:

Resources needed	Who should I talk to about this?
Example: Training for new equipment	Managers (to identify appropriate staff to train) Finance (for training budget)

### I also need to think about:

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## Monitor and review

Monitoring your workforce and action plans are an important part of your business. Monitoring means checking to ensure your plans are being implemented as outlined and agreed.

It is also important to review your action plan to ensure that everything is tracking as expected and be proactive in addressing any changes before they negatively impact on business goals.

Like business and financial plans, workforce plans are living documents and should be monitored and regularly reviewed to make sure they continue to meet the needs of your business. What is your plan to monitor and review your workforce plan?

Identified gap	Strategy/action	Resources	Outcome/measure used	Who was involved?	Did it work?	What changes need to be made?

Other ways to evaluate your initiatives include:

- analysing the targets you set against the actual results
- seeking staff feedback through:
  - talking to your staff 1:1 to get a first-hand report can help you to identify if any further changes need to be made
  - team meetings, if your team is large enough
  - surveying your staff so they can give confidential feedback, if your team is large enough to do so.

# Your workforce plan on a page

Collating all of the information you developed on the previous pages of this workbook, you can now create your workforce plan onto one page.



## Get started

Key people I am involving:

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Aims and objectives of the workforce plan:

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## Gather information

Business goals for the next \_\_\_\_ months/years:

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To reach these goals, my future workforce looks like:

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## Identify issues and find solutions

The key workforce risks to reaching my goal are:

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The solutions I have identified to overcome the risks are:

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## Develop, implement and monitor

I will implement and monitor my workforce plan by:

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# GLOSSARY



# Useful workforce planning terms to know

## Workforce information

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

### Quantitative data

- **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, gender, cultural background, declared disability?
- **Qualifications:** What type of qualifications are required?
- **Skills:** What specific skills are required?

### Qualitative data

- Learning and development needs
- Employee engagement
- Work life stage (new to the workforce, early-mid career, 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.

## Workforce demand

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

## Workforce gap

**Workforce gap occurs when there is a mismatch between supply and demand.** That is, you do not have enough employees to meet your business needs or, in some cases, too many employees for your business needs.

## 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.



To find out more, visit the Workforce Planning Connect website at [www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/wpc](http://www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/wpc)

