

## 5 solutions to help agencies workforce plan

by Andrew Simon and Tess Walton

As stated in the ANAO Report, 'all agencies rely on specialist skills in certain areas and organisational capability may be adversely impacted if appropriately skilled staff is not available'. In essence, agencies missions are threatened by not being able to articulate plans for ensuring they are developing and retaining the workforce they need. This paper lists just five solutions that you can action right now to enhance or start Workforce Planning.

### Be focused on workforce planning drivers not outputs

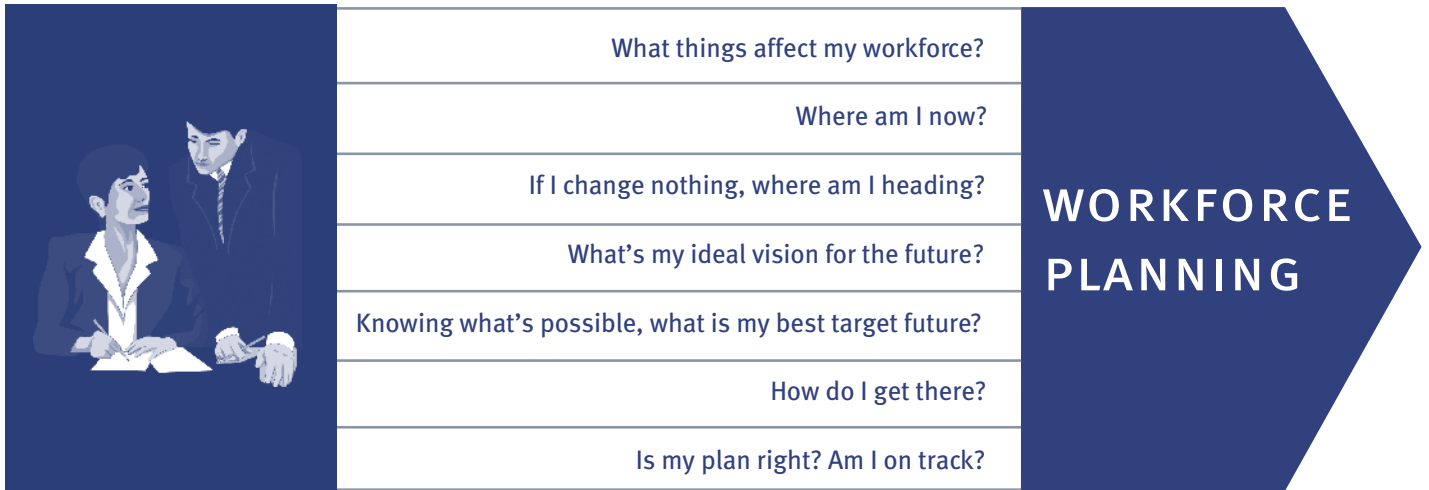
More often than not, organisations focus on the process of Workforce Planning but not the drivers. The work produced in Workforce Planning have titles of supply and demand, current and future, internal and external impacts, forecasts and even scenarios. These are rarely directly asked for by managers. Workforce Planning needs to be related to management drivers to compel action. Being focused on what actions can be undertaken with what is produced will ensure management engagement.

### Give insight not data

The typical demographic data categories of age, level, gender etc. are common examples of workforce planning related outputs. While these are useful in providing macro supply information they are less useful in surfacing workforce performance, capability, capacity and motivational aspects. Data sets and categories really need to deal with the 'intellectual factors of production'. For example, cutting, presenting and thus interpreting staffing data by performance levels or capability levels or by technical specialisations, mission critical roles, project requirements, functions or tenure intentions can provide supply information that is managerially meaningful and relate to factors of production, to work and to organisational performance.

*Never before has workforce planning been so critical for agencies. Skills are short, the baby boomers are about to retire and the recent ANAO Workforce Planning Audit has just been tabled in Parliament highlighting challenges agencies are experiencing with workforce planning.*

## Manager's workforce planning drivers



*Workforce planning is not a solution unless managers can see what the issues are and what actions they can take.*

## Re-thinking demand can create new supply sources

Some supply issues can be addressed by re-thinking the demand side of the equation. When work is re-imagined and re-designed well, potential new talent catchments are uncovered and different work configurations and resourcing arrangements made possible. Re-thinking and re-designing work so that organisational outcomes and goals can still be achieved in the context of current or even dwindling supply is a part of the supply-demand equation that workforce plans should help formulate and balance.

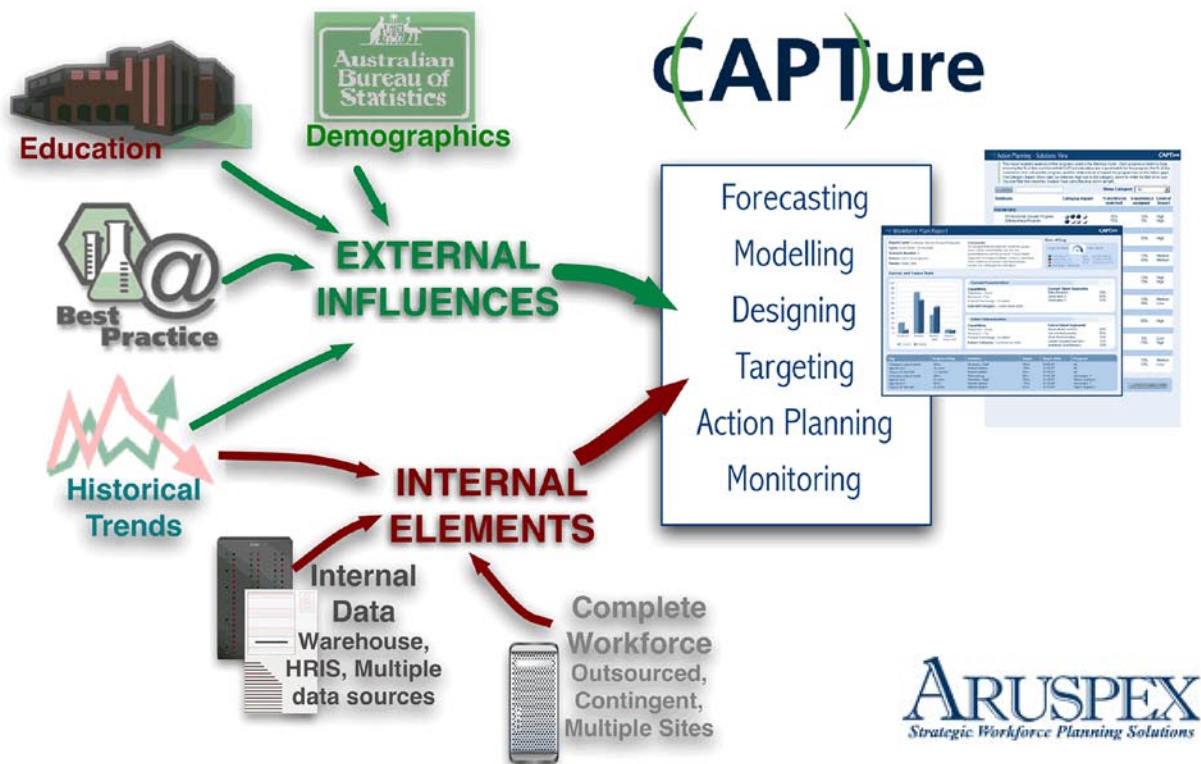
## Nurture relationships with talent sources

Nurture close bonds with potential sources of talent supply, through universities, scientific and professional institutions, community groups, physical and virtual special interest networks, hobby clubs, communities of practice and alumni. These sources can provide organisations with a viable talent pipeline and extra workforce capacity.

They also mitigate risk within the organisation's supply environment by providing diversified and complementary sources of talent supply lessening the burden on traditional primary sources.

## Invest in dedicated workforce planning experience and solutions

Workforce planning uses a wide range of information from a wide range of sources. Depending on agency size and circumstance, trying to approach this without some level of automation ranges from difficult to impossible. A solution such as Aruspex's CAPTURE™ enables the loading of necessary data from multiple disparate sources and empowers agencies to monitor and respond to changes in circumstance. You can test different scenarios, pushing buttons and pulling levers to find the ideal balance, and then re-pushing them as your circumstances change. The flowthrough results of changes can be seen across your workforce, enabling you to compare multiple scenarios and choose the best path forward. You can ask 'what if', get automated suggestions of the most appropriate solutions, roll up your plans from individual departments to the entire organisation, develop comprehensive action plans, and automatically ensure that your progress meets your goals.



Yellow Edge and Aruspex's workforce planning consulting experience, along with CAPTURE's power ensures agencies can integrate and clarify the complex forces affecting your future workforce.

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