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Handbook

Workforce Planning

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Preface

In May 2003 Standards Australia formed Committee MB-009, Human Resources and Employment. The Committee recognises that workforce planning is rapidly emerging as a discrete specialist discipline and an essential element in the achievement of business strategies and corporate objectives.

The Australian business community operates within a dynamic and complex economic, legislative and industrial environment. Businesses (of all sizes), government agencies, professional associations and peak bodies have also been dealing with, and will continue to deal with, the raft of challenges arising from globalisation and the shift in Australia's population demographics. As well as learning how to accommodate an increasingly diverse and mobile workforce they need to plan for an ageing workforce with diverse needs and flexibilities.

Workforce planning is not just an imperative for expanding workplaces or those that need to replace workers, it is also critical when downsizing or undergoing restructures, mergers and acquisitions.

These guidelines on workforce planning have been prepared to further inform business managers on the topic. They provide an overview of a simple and proven approach to incorporating workforce planning into normal business practice. They are supported with current references and a step-by-step guide to implementing a workforce planning project.

The guidelines are applicable for all size businesses including: industry peak bodies, organisations, associations, government agencies and industry skills groups. It is anticipated these guidelines will be updated regularly and will become a staple resource for all business managers.

This document is not a Standard and it is not intended to be prescriptive.

Standards Australia would like to thank Julie Sloan (director of Julie Sloan Management Pty Ltd.), who was the principal author of these Guidelines, for sharing her extensive knowledge, experience and insights into the topic. Standards Australia would also like to thank Committee MB-009, Human Resources and Employment, for assistance in refining the guidelines.

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Foreword

Why is there a global shortage of engineers? Is it caused by a shortage of people wanting to be engineers, the availability and cost of training, the bundling of work into jobs requiring engineers, the resources boom and or geographic issues? In some developed countries there is a surplus of people qualified to teach but unfillable job vacancies for teachers and nurses. What is going on?

As changing demographics and attitudes towards work, coupled with capitalism as the global economic model, and the rapid development of China, India and South America, workforce planning takes on a whole new meaning.

In the past, organisations created work packaged into jobs designed around the outcomes they wanted and needed. The future looks different. More and more organisations, including governments, public, private and not-for-profit organisations are struggling to achieve the outcomes they want and need from their workforces.

In this new environment, workforce planning takes on a new significance. In the past, it has been dominated by complex numerical modelling. However changing demographics and attitudes towards work require more sophisticated multi-disciplinary models that collect, analyse and use qualitative and quantitative data including social information on worker's motivations and attitudes. This broader approach complements growing interest in sustainability in its broadest sense.

This workbook is our first on the topic and we hope to follow with more as interest in the topic grows.

Ann Whyte

Chair

Committee MB-009, Human Resources and Employment

Standards Australia



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