Building a Future-Ready Workforce: 5 Steps for Strategic Workforce Planning

Start with a clear understanding of your organisation's goals over the next 1–3 years.

Ask:

- What are our top business priorities?
- Which functions or capabilities will grow, shift, or reduce?
- Are we entering new markets, launching new products, or restructuring?

Tip: Ensure your workforce planning aligns with your business strategy by engaging your leadership team early.

Conduct a comprehensive audit of your current talent landscape to understand where you are today.

Key areas to assess:

- Headcount by role and team
- Capability and skill levels
- Tenure, turnover, and engagement
- Age profile, diversity metrics, and succession risk

Tool suggestion: Use a skills matrix to identify capability gaps and overlaps across your teams.

Map the critical roles, skills, and competencies needed to deliver your future strategy.

Consider:

- New capabilities required for future products, services, or technologies
- Skills at risk of becoming obsolete
- Leadership pipeline strength and high-potential talent readiness

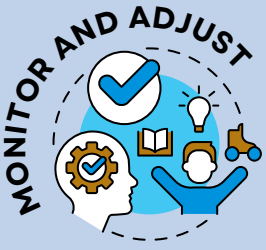
Insight: Focus on capability, not just roles, this enables greater agility and adaptability in your workforce.

Connect the dots between your current workforce and your future needs. Create a targeted plan with clear priorities.

Include:

- Strategic hires or role redesigns
- Upskilling and learning programs
- Succession planning for key roles
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives

Bonus: Prioritise workforce actions based on business impact and resource availability.



Workforce planning isn't a one-off exercise, it's a strategic process that should evolve with your business.

Track:

- Progress on recruitment, development, and retention goals
- Engagement, turnover, and workforce productivity metrics
- Emerging risks (e.g. market shifts, technology changes, regulatory changes)

Pro Tip: Embed workforce planning into your annual strategy cycle to keep your people aligned with business priorities.

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