

Getting the People Right

Workforce Planning for Business Success

Agribusiness owners usually have a plan to invest in assets such as machinery, technology and buildings, but they can often forget about investing in the right people.

Why is this so important?

People can make or break a business and good people can be the key to success. It's important to build a productive workforce that functions efficiently to ensure your business is resilient, no matter what the future holds. By intentionally planning ahead, you can improve your:

- Profitability;
- Productivity;
- Efficiency;
- Resilience;
- Preparedness for long-term change.

So where do you start?

- Make a plan for the structure of your workforce – now and into the future;
- Put goals in place;
- Ensure that you have a Communication Plan so the entire team is working together to achieve productivity;
- Identify the needs of your business and its team members.



BENEFITS

- Ensures you have a written plan and a clear direction.
- Supports sound decision making.
- Identifies clear goals that can be aligned with your decision making.
- Reduces exposure to risk.
- Supports business resilience.
- Strengthens your ability to withstand challenges.

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Your Farm Business Plan



"Get the right people on the bus first, then decide the direction."

(Jim Collins)

Risk is part of being in business and something all businesses are exposed to. By planning ahead and investing in your people, you can help to reduce your exposure to some of the risks and ensure your business is **resilient** enough to withstand any likely risks.

Workforce Planning

A resilient business needs to have a **clear plan** on how it will handle the future, and consider situations that may arise so they are prepared to overcome them.

A Business Plan is extremely valuable for setting your intentions for the operation of the business and ambitions for the future. This plan can be basic or complex.

Workforce Planning can be one element of a Business Plan and focuses on the **people** within the business.

WHAT SHOULD IT LOOK LIKE?



Assess where you're at, define where you're going, and plan how you'll get there. Key elements include:

- **Vision Statement** - focuses on the future and where you want to be.
- **Mission Statement** - who you are, what you do, and how you do it.
- **Goals** - identify short and long-term goals that are 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound).
- **Strategies** - identify how you are going to achieve your goals and vision.
- **Actions** - tasks to achieve goals ensuring accountability.

Your Workforce Structure



The structure of your workforce, who's in it, and how they are employed can have a significant impact on the way your team functions and if any gaps exist.

This is where efficiency can be lacking and profitability adversely impacted.

To ensure you have a strong workforce, it's critical to assess:

- Where you're at;
- How things are currently functioning;
- If you have a plan for improvement in the future.



Try and retain good staff. Losing staff members and training new ones can cost you 20-30% loss in efficiency.

✓ Skills analysis

- Identify the skills you have in your team and where the team needs to improve.
- Consider how these gaps can be filled (eg. find a new staff member, contract the job out, re-train, or up-skill).

✓ Training

- Be tactical and considered when hiring new staff.
- Look for a good attitude and work ethic.
- Hire people with similar values and morals that align with those of your team and business.
- Teach skills on the job or provide training externally.

✓ Hiring new staff

- Provide opportunities for learning and upskilling.
- Invest in skills and knowledge training, as this will benefit your business.

✓ Looking Ahead

- Where are you aiming to grow your business?
- Do you have the staff to do this or will you need to hire someone new?
- Develop networks through work experience to create links that could pay off in the future.

Communication is Key



It's very important to have the whole team on the **same page** with the direction the business is heading, and to be working towards the same vision and goals.



Workplace health and safety should underpin every decision that is made in your business. Providing an inviting workplace is important for attracting and keeping quality workers. Give staff the chance to provide input on improvements.

✔ Look at the big picture

- Discuss with the team your long-term vision, mission and goals.
- Involve staff in setting the goals.
- Display your vision, mission and goals where they can be seen and be front of mind.
- Strive for continuous improvement.

✔ Meet regularly

- Hold weekly and/or monthly meetings to touch base, plan for the week, and update calendars.
- Diarise these meetings and lock them in.
- Meetings can be in person or online.
- Take meeting minutes with action items.

✔ Develop a reporting structure

- Have a clear hierarchy in larger teams so people know who to report to.
- This avoids double handling or assumptions.
- Ensure accountability.

✔ Review progress

- What went well, what could have gone better?
- Give credit where it's due and make your people feel valued to build team morale.
- Enable two-way communication and act on feedback.
- Schedule regular performance reviews.

"The most important characteristic of a good manager is that they clearly communicate where we are going and give honest feedback on how I'm going."

(Leadership Management Australia report)

Keeping Records

Having templates ready that work for your business makes the 'paperwork' side of your workforce management much more efficient.

Ensure employment contracts are clear and precise. Seek professional advice, if needed from a reputable organisation.

Make sure any relevant health information is collected. Team members should be aware of any health issues, including allergies and any relevant medications.

Have emergency contacts of all staff easily accessible. Keep them stored in your phone and vehicles for quick access.

Ensure all new staff members go through a comprehensive induction process. Site induction is important. They may have worked on a farm before but not on your farm.

Keep records of all important conversations. Whether formal or informal – document them.



Have a good template for each of these documents

- **Job description:** Clearly define role, expectations and responsibilities.
- **Employment contract:** Comprehensive enough to avoid misinterpretations.
- **Induction checklist:** Farm map, list of useful contacts and emergency numbers.
- **Safety induction:** Focus on relevant items to the job/task/enterprise/farm.
- **Financial details form:** Bank account, superannuation, Tax File Number.
- **Personal details form:** Contact details, emergency contacts, drivers license etc.

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