

Queensland Transport's Journey to a New Strategic Future

Industry: Transportation

Queensland Transport is a government agency aimed at making Queensland's transport environment safer, easier, more environmentally friendly and cost-effective for both people and goods. The agency prides itself on providing quality service and infrastructure delivery, system stewardship and transport leadership throughout the state.

Given the diversity of Queensland Transport's responsibility, the agency is divided into seven departmental divisions and agencies, which work autonomously to manage and deliver its strategies and actions. This presents a challenge for strategic organizational initiatives such as strategic workforce planning.

Queensland Transport approached Aruspex in 2005 with the desire to develop a new strategic workforce planning approach. According to the Manager of Workforce Strategy and Planning Mark Goldworthy, they were inspired to workforce plan after attending a Aruspex workshop.

"We realized we were just reacting to what was going on around us," he said. "The penny dropped that we had to start thinking about the future in a meaningful way."

They were primarily attracted to the qualitative and quantitative balance of the Aruspex model, as well as the focus on both external and internal factors.

Queensland Transport's unique structure meant that the main problem was uniting the different parts of the organization. The main strategy thus consisted of integrating workforce planning throughout the organization rather than trying to control it through a central back office chessmaster. To do this, Aruspex facilitated decentralized workforce plans within each business unit, which were then consolidated into an aggregate plan governing the whole organization.

"Given the history and immediate future of QT with divisions operating separately, to optimize and maximize the success of workforce planning it made sense to develop a decentralized plan based on the individual divisions in the organization," Goldworthy said. "This produced real, living documents to better achieve integration with business planning processes, which enabled us to then identify common themes to address at the corporate level in the aggregate workforce plan."

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**Mark Goldworthy,
Manager of Workforce
Strategy and Planning**

Queensland Transport

Queensland Transport was able to find the right balance between getting rich business and workforce information from the workplace and the centralized planning and environment scanning skills from HR. These were combined, taking the best of both worlds to create an overall workforce plan which takes into account all parts of the organization.

The plan included central workforce planners who aggregated and reported for the whole organization while also helping balance the tension between needs of individual business units and corporate policy. Organizational units were encouraged to participate in the roll-out of the workforce planning methodology by preparing a workforce plan for themselves.

The flexibility of the Aruspex process meant that Queensland Transport was able to specify how it would fit into the overall system, improving only the areas that needed improvement. Decentralization and aggregation allowed the separate units to customize the plans to fit their specific needs, which meant that the plans were better able to cover the whole organization and the diversity within it.

According to Goldsworthy, the focus on decentralization and aggregation also taught the organization how important it is to have an organization-wide strategy.

"Having these decentralized plans helps to identify common themes that can be addressed at the corporate level," he said. "That way we can identify common themes in terms of attracting, retaining, developing people, and the sort of strategies we've put into place will be able to address our workforce challenges across the board."

The decentralized divisions were all encouraged to undertake environment scanning, which analyzes an organization's internal and external environment. This was Queensland Transport's first venture into environment scanning, and it enabled the organization to understand external trends and reinforced the importance of doing workforce planning.

According to Goldsworthy, the best part of the process was Aruspex's focus on building internal capability, which allowed Queensland Transport to maintain their independence. Employees were provided with all the skills and tools necessary, empowering them to create their own plans and understand the system rather than rely on external consultants.

"That really improved the level of ownership, so we're pretty happy with the level of engagement from divisional teams, by integrating them into workforce planning," Goldsworthy said.

The Aruspex framework thus makes Queensland Transport's journey real and long lasting: a workforce planning legacy to inform their future.

For more information about how Aruspex can help your organization workforce plan, visit www.aruspex.com.

"We need to be thinking about the people who actually do the jobs."

Mark Goldworthy