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# **How Positive is Your Work Environment?**

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# The Big Picture

## Why Do We Need a Positive Work Environment Toolkit?

We spend a large portion of our life at work. So it's not surprising that the quality of our relationships with managers, colleagues and clients is important both to our wellbeing and our sense of connection to the workplace.

When we feel positive about work we can be our most productive and innovative. We can concentrate on the work at hand; not be distracted by minor irritations and shortcomings in the workplace.

This toolkit provides a quick check of your workplace from three perspectives; organisational, management and individual. It then gives practical tips on how you can improve your workplace by changing ten strategic and operational aspects of work. These range from leadership to performance management.

We have all heard of cases where an organisation has good employment policies but they are unsupported by managers and not taken up by employees so have little practical effect on the workplace. However we also know of excellent managers who encourage their staff to work to the best of their ability despite having fairly standard employment practices. And we also know of individuals who work collaboratively in the best interests of the organisation even though there are daily pressures. This is why it is important to look at the workplace from all three perspectives; organisational, management and individual.

This toolkit is based on research undertaken both here in the Victorian public sector as well as internationally<sup>1</sup>. It provides a strong basis on which to act.

## What is a Positive Work Environment?

A positive work environment is productive, rewarding, enjoyable and healthy for everyone concerned. By everyone we mean managers, employees and clients.

The most successful workplaces are those in which everyone works well together to create a positive work environment. There is recognition that:

- our beliefs and behaviours can affect others

- building our own and others' strengths and abilities is the right focus
- each individual is unique and has the right to be treated with dignity and respect; and a person's motivation for being in a workplace can influence their expectations of it.

A positive work environment is characterised by:

- a high degree of trust and respect between all levels of staff
- a climate in which colleagues feel valued, and have a strong sense of loyalty to the organisation
- high quality leadership and management
- open discussion that leads to resolution of conflict
- a measure of self-determination over how work is undertaken
- a culture where diversity is respected and valued
- a lack of exclusive 'clubs' and cliques
- opportunities for personal development and career progression
- a high level of creativity and job satisfaction, arising from teamwork and cooperation.

However a positive work environment does not mean that no one ever leaves. Career advancement and change of role are signs of a work environment that encourages growth.

## Introducing the Positive Work Environment Toolkit

This toolkit is intended to help you create a positive work environment in your organisation. It sets out practical steps and questions for getting started, supporting processes for maintaining the momentum, and links to other helpful resources.

We each contribute to the organisational life we experience through our behaviour, our interactions with colleagues and clients, and the systems we have in place. Whether that is a positive or negative experience will depend on ten elements:

### Strategic Elements

- 1. Vision and Values:** inspiring staff to work towards a compelling shared goal
- 2. Leadership and Accountability:** influencing others' behaviour, decisions and actions and

accepting responsibility for outcome

**3. Organisational Communication:** freely sharing relevant information about work with colleagues.

## Operational Elements

**4. Recruitment and Selection:** selecting those with the right skills and organisational fit

**5. Learning and Development:** keeping skills and knowledge up to date and preparing for career advancement

**6. HR Policies and Strategies:** employing work practices that balance organisational and individual needs

**7. Workflow Management:** having the right mix of skills, support and resources to complete tasks to the right standard

**8. Performance Management:** agreeing on what is to be achieved during the year and how it will be achieved

**9. Risk Management:** identifying, evaluating and minimising risks

**10. Workplace Dispute Systems:** resolving conflict between individuals fairly and promptly.

The toolkit invites us to look at how well the ten elements are operating in our work environment from three perspectives: organisational, managerial and individual (Figure 1). This helps us to determine our priorities for change. The people who view the work environment from these three perspectives are:

### Figure 1: Model of a positive work environment from three perspectives



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## Strategic Elements

1. Vision and Values
2. Leadership and Accountability
3. Organisational Communication

## Beginning

1. Recruitment and Selection
2. Learning and Development
3. HR policies and Strategies
4. Workflow Management
5. Performance Management
6. Risk Management
7. Workplace Dispute Systems

## Organisational

Senior decision-makers of the organisation: those charged with ensuring that the organisation has appropriate structures, processes, policies and systems in place to establish and nurture a creative and productive work environment. Typically, this will be roles such as the Chief Executive Officer, Departmental Secretary, Director, Executive Manager or General Manager.

## Managerial

Line managers: those responsible for the operational performance of the organisation's mission and services, and of translating organisational policies and strategies into operational actions. Typical roles include Manager or Team Leader. It generally does not include those roles with responsibility for day-to-day running of workflow tasks.

## Individual

This is every employee of the organisation, whether in full-time or part-time, permanent or casual employ, and includes leaders and managers alongside subordinate staff. As individuals we have personal responsibility for our behaviour towards others, and for complying with organisational policies.

Viewing the workplace from three different perspectives may give us a different impression of its culture. For example an organisation that is just beginning to think about its culture may accept negative behaviour as normal. One that has an established positive work environment will view any negative behaviours as an organisational problem (Table 1). Negative behaviour is inherently unprofessional and unacceptable.

**Table 1: Characteristics of a positive work environment from**

<b>PERSPECTIVE</b>	<b>STAGE</b>		
<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Consolidating</b>	<b>Established</b>



<b>PERSPECTIVE</b>	<b>STAGE</b>			
<b>Organisation</b>	A negative work environment is accepted as part of the culture and not seen as a problem	A recognition that the environment is negative causes concern, but the overall approach is passive and focused on the individual	The value of a positive work environment is recognised with coherent and well articulated policies but the focus remains on the individual	Consistent and coherent, well articulated policies, procedures and practices are in place. Any negative behaviours are seen as an organisational problem
<b>Managers</b>	Managers consistently reinforce negative behaviours through inaction, complacency or neglect	Managers occasionally take positive action but generally ignore or avoid problems	Managers take some responsibility and action to achieve a positive work environment	Responsibility for achieving and sustaining a positive work environment starts with the managers
<b>Individuals</b>	Individuals reinforce negative behaviours through inaction, complacency or neglect	Individuals take action but only when there is a problem	Some individuals take responsibility for achieving a positive work environment	All individuals take responsibility for achieving and sustaining a positive work environment

## Is the toolkit right for my organisation?

People are more likely to want to join and remain employed in an organisation known to have a positive work environment. The toolkit enables you to choose what is appropriate for your organisation – whether it is to affirm the policies you already have in place, or to help you focus attention on what needs to be changed.



Creating a positive work environment will need commitment from everyone, and support from people skilled in change management. The toolkit is most useful in situations where there is a readiness for change both at the leadership and team level. Teams are able to use resources from the toolkit to help them think about their workplace, and to identify practical steps to develop more positive workplace relations. For example destructive behaviours may be symptomatic of a poor workplace culture.

When used to initiate a conversation within teams, the toolkit can help transform the organisation's workplace culture. The toolkit is particularly useful for:

- leaders and managers who want to improve their workplace culture
- human resource and organisation development practitioners who seek a benchmarking tool to support other processes for monitoring cultural change
- facilitators who deliver workshops on cultural change.



## Best employer in town

The chief executive of a small regional hospital wants to strengthen his organisation's reputation as a great place to work. The hospital is situated in a small community suffering from the drought.

Over the last three years there has been a lot of change, a new vision, new functions and restructuring. Staff are feeling grumpy about the changes at work and the effect of the drought on their community.

The chief executive thought he knew what some of the problems might be but wanted to test his assumptions using the Positive Work Environment Toolkit. He offered a good natured incentive for people on the morning shift to complete the quick check tool – 'have a cappuccino on the boss'. This gave him the perspective of a horizontal slice through the hospital.

Leadership and modelling the vision and values have emerged as the priorities for change. This is similar to other hospitals in the region. Working on these priorities will build on earlier initiatives. One of the primary reasons for re-working the vision and developing behaviourally based values was to address destructive behaviours at work.

The hospital is now thinking about ways of progressing. So their focus is very much on the future. They have plans to use the quick check tool each year to supplement their performance appraisal cycle, and to include it in the quality program for achieving accreditation.

## What is in the toolkit?

The toolkit has three sections that take you through the theory behind the toolkit (above), show you how to assess your organisation's workplace culture, and suggest ideas for planning your strategy for change.

### The big picture

- describes the characteristics of a positive work environment from three perspectives
- how the toolkit can be used to bring about cultural change.



## Taking a quick check of the work environment

- a self-assessment questionnaire to help you quickly identify areas in your organisation that merit deeper investigation and attention
- for use by groups to stimulate discussion about your organisation's stage of development according to three strategic and seven operational elements
- when managers, human resource and organisational development practitioners, or teams want to respond to feedback about the work environment gathered from surveys, such as the People Matter Survey
- can help surface the bigger questions that may need to be explored.

## Delving deeper into the ten elements

- presents the ideal situation or potential goals for each element to help you reflect on your responses to the quick check tool
- a set of litmus test or important questions for each element to assist deeper exploration of your organisation's workplace culture
- a case study to illustrate successful ways for developing organisational capabilities in each element; and
- resources to help you plan your strategy for change.

## How do these resources relate to introducing change?

**change = (dissatisfaction)(vision)(first steps) > resistance<sup>2</sup>**

Change is more likely to happen when people are dissatisfied with the present situation, can imagine a better future, and have decided on the first steps they'll take. If any of these elements is missing or collectively they are less powerful than the resistance to change, then change won't happen.

The toolkit provides the three elements needed for successful change:

- the quick check tool can be used to confirm areas of dissatisfaction with the present situation
- the ideal situation describes the vision for a better future
- the litmus test questions and resources provide the first steps for reaching the vision.



Having a good plan for using the toolkit will reduce the likelihood of resistance to the proposed change. Use of the toolkit is covered in the next section.

## Using the Toolkit to Bring About Cultural Change

### Getting Started

The following questions are to help you plan your use of the toolkit. You may discover that you do not have all the information, capabilities or resources you need for a comprehensive change program. We recommend you 'start small', and work with what you can do now.

#### Current organisational climate: identify the case for change

- What do you know about your culture from workforce data, surveys or other HR metrics?
- What additional information do you need to obtain?
- Is there a change (positive or negative) in staff satisfaction surveys?
- Are there any unusual events affecting the organisation that you need to consider?
- What are the systemic influences on the organisation?

#### Fit with strategies and business plans

- Do you have a strategic planning framework for your business in place?
- Does this include a people and culture strategy?

#### Sponsorship

- Is there a sponsor at the highest level for leading cultural change?
- Which roles have responsibility for the cultural change strategy and processes?

#### Capabilities

- Readiness for change ? have you tried this before and what did you learn from it?
- What is the level of your employees? skills for dealing with interpersonal relations and group dynamics ? i.e. their emotional literacy and ability to facilitate group discussion?

#### Resources

- What resources do you have internally?

- What do you need to acquire?

## Practical Steps

If you have decided that the timing is right to embark on a major change program and you have the right resources available to you, consider these more detailed steps. They provide a checklist for the approach you might want to take.

Build a common picture of where you are right now

**Establish and authorise a planning group** to manage the change program. Pay particular attention to communications: who will communicate with whom, the rationale for the initiative, how confidentiality will be treated, what will be done with the results, and what (if anything) to say to parts of the organisation not involved. Try not to use language that reminds people of past events and initiatives.

**Consider the realities of work** such as the availability of staff who work part-time or on shifts, and the differences in roles, skills, education, and personal biographies amongst staff.

**Manage the emotions and anxieties** that may get stirred up by asking questions about people's behaviours, managers' actions and the workplace culture. Some actions to take include:

- managers answer questions and clarify concerns in person
- a neutral person, such as a human resource or organisational development practitioner or an external facilitator works with teams on their self-assessment.

**Review the quick check tool prior to administration** to identify any language that might appear too generic or could be taken in different ways by your respondents. Agree to in-house clarifications where appropriate.

**Administer the quick check tool** either individually as a survey or at the team level as part of a workshop to scan the health of your workplace culture. Collecting data as part of a workshop enables people to clarify what was on their minds when responding to statements.

**Make sense of the results:** the more specific to a group the better able you are to make sense of the data. When teams analyse their own results the discussion can be more focused and relevant.

**Use the litmus test questions** to extend the group's enquiries on specific elements.

**Put results into context** for your organisation:

- service sector (e.g. the human services, welfare and health services sector may experience higher levels of anxiety because of interactions with vulnerable people)
- organisational history, size (number of employees), financial stability, prior experiences of change;
- employee demographics and length of service
- relationship with the local community (e.g. rural communities are tied much more closely to their local public and community services than in metropolitan Melbourne)
- recent events in the external environment, such as changes in government policy, sectoral reform, drought and bushfire.

Explore and agree on where you must be in the future

**Identify priorities** for the organisation or team from the ten elements. Don't attempt all ten elements at once. Choose what is relevant for now, and what will be relevant for later on.

**Develop an appropriate organisational or team response**, and plan of action that focuses on organisational development processes and development of people.

**Be realistic** about the capacity of the organisation or the team to undertake systemic cultural change, or people's capabilities to manage the dynamics of a change process.

For example, to mobilise action in a team, it often helps to clarify things team members can do themselves, things the team cannot control but can influence, and supporting things it can refer to management for broader change, such as policies.

Agree on what you need to do differently, individually and collectively to get there

**Assign tasks and responsibilities** for the planned interventions.

**Set some measures of success** for short-term and long-term actions. These might be selected from the Victorian Public Sector Commission's People Metrics.

**Review achievements, assess trends against benchmark data or goals**, such as the 'ideal situation' described in the toolkit, the People Matter Survey, or other organisational or team data (qualitative and quantitative). Consider linking the toolkit to the annual performance development process.

**Keep people informed**, so that for example the planning group has progressive feedback and reflection on how well their plans are being implemented, managers who answer questions and clarify concerns are briefed and subsequently debriefed, and teams reconvene to reflect on the progress of their initiatives.

## Supporting processes and resources

The extra things that will help you achieve long-term change include:

**Link the toolkit** into a broader suite of organisational development processes and interventions.

**Develop or make available skilled facilitators** of group discussion.

**Hold peer forums** for sharing good practices and case stories about experiences and interventions.

**Develop your managers** to become skilled in transforming experiences of destructive behaviour into understanding and insight about the organisation and individual behaviours.

**Develop the interpersonal skills of all staff** so that robust disagreements do not escalate into experiences of personal attacks.

**Appoint contact officers** to act in the role of 'neutral adviser' and first point of contact for staff who wish to speak confidentially and informally about any personal experiences of destructive behaviour in the workplace.

**Encourage staff to think about what is going on in the organisation** and to become aware of other ways of seeing things (for example, a 'problem individual who exhibits destructive behaviour' may be an expression of a 'problem in the way we do things around here').

**Focus on the evidence of destructive behaviour** as being symptomatic of the workplace culture, and for what might need to be explored and understood, and ultimately changed within the work environment.

## Taking a long term view

A health care service with long term residential patients wants to improve its culture. They need a resilient, stable workforce to best meet the needs of their patients.

The HR Director initiated the project. So she had to spend time winning the support of senior management and finding work units willing to be involved.



She presented the toolkit to the Council. They were pleased about the longitudinal approach being taken to managing change. They would be able to measure their progress over a number of years.

The focus groups validated the People Matter Survey results. Staff said they felt less valued than the patients they were caring for and left out of important organisational information.

The four unit managers are responding to the ideas staff have raised. They have organised a wellbeing expo and now regularly communicate with staff on matters of importance to them.

The HR Director plans to incorporate the toolkit in the strategic plan. She thinks it could be used for benchmarking with similar organisations

## Footnotes

1. See the publications and websites listed in further reading, and particularly research undertaken by Prof Charlotte Rayner in the UK.
2. R Jacobs, Real Time Strategic Change: How to Involve a Whole Organization in Fast and Far-Reaching Change, Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc, CA, 1997



# Taking a Quick Check of Your Work Environment

## Ten Elements, Three Perspectives and Four Stages

The quick check tool allows you to quickly assess your work environment. It has ten tables covering the three strategic and seven operational elements that influence culture:

### Elements

1. Vision and Values
2. Leadership and Accountability
3. Organisational Communication
4. Recruitment and Selection
5. Learning and Development
6. Human Resource Policies and Strategies
7. Workflow Management
8. Performance Management
9. Risk Management
10. Workplace Dispute Systems

### Perspectives

Each table asks you to look at the work environment from three perspectives:

1. Organisation
2. Managers
3. Individuals



## Stages

Within each table there is a description of the type of practices to be found at four different stages of development of a positive work environment:

1. Beginning
2. Emerging
3. Consolidating
4. Established

## Take a Quick Check

Your task is to rate your environment from the three perspectives for each of the ten elements and then transcribe the results onto the summary sheet to indicate your priorities for change.

In the next section you will be given resources to improve your work environment.

### 1. Vision and Values – Inspiring, Inclusive and Genuine

**Definition:** An organisation’s vision inspires staff to work towards a compelling shared goal. The values support the vision. They reflect the organisation’s beliefs and guiding philosophy. In the Victorian public sector the values and employment principles in the Public Administration Act 2004 underpin the relationship employees have with the Government, community and each other.

Perspective	Stage		
Beginning	Emerging	Consolidating	Established



Perspective	Stage			
<b>Organisation</b>	Vision and value statements are in corporate publications, but not widely known or actively promoted.	The vision and values are displayed at reception and on business cards but are not yet drivers of policy and practices on unacceptable behaviour.	The vision and values of respect and dignity at work influence decision making in the organisation and provide a point of reference for policy makers.	The vision and values are organisational reality. Respect and dignity at work are practised in all aspects of organisational life.
<b>Managers</b>	Managers regard the vision and values as organisational propaganda and adopt a 'wait and see approach'.	Managers recognise the importance of the vision and values but their behaviour is not always consistent with them.	Managers use the vision and values to guide their decisions and promote them to staff.	Managers model the vision and values every day and refer to them when making decisions. They encourage their staff to support the vision and values.
<b>Individuals</b>	Individuals regard the vision and values as organisational propaganda and await evidence of a real commitment to them.	Individuals can recall the vision and values but don't necessarily see the relevance of them to their work.	All individuals attempt to put the vision and values into practice every day.	All individuals act in line with the vision and values in all aspects of their work.



## 2. Leadership and Accountability – Strong Role Models

**Definition:** Leadership is the ability to influence others’ behaviour, decisions and actions. Accountability is the willingness to accept responsibility for the impact of your decisions and those of your staff, and not to blame others or your circumstances when things go wrong. Accepting responsibility for things that go wrong is the first step towards making improvements.

Perspective	Stage			
	Beginning	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
<b>Organisation</b>	Leadership and accountability are not evident in the organisation. The focus is on getting tasks done not on how they are done.	Leadership and accountability may be evident in some pockets of the organisation.	Leadership and accountability are evident at senior levels of the organisation or in particular business units only.	Leadership and accountability are evident at all levels of the organisation in behaviours, decisions and actions. The organisation has a strong reputation in the community for integrity.



Perspective	Stage			
<b>Managers</b>	Managers are autocratic and either unconcerned about or unaware of their impact on others. They may also be inconsistent in their decisions or behaviour. They are primarily interested in staff completing tasks to their requirements.	Managers support staff to complete tasks by providing them with sufficient resources and guidance. They may adapt their style of management to suit different staff members' needs. Accountability is clear in most cases.	Managers help staff to understand the work of the organisation beyond their particular role by sharing information about future plans. They are interested and involved in their staff's career development. Accountability is usually clear.	Managers are strong role models and inspire trust and respect. They invite staff to participate in decisions and give them encouragement and clear direction. They take responsibility for their actions and decisions. Accountability is always clear.
<b>Individuals</b>	Individuals lack good role models and focus on completing tasks on time and to agreed standards. They may be unclear about accountabilities within the organisation.	Individuals may sometimes participate in decisions and development opportunities but the primary focus is on completing tasks. They are held accountable for only some decisions and actions.	Individuals often participate in decisions and may also develop their skills. Their relationship with their manager is positive and open. They are held accountable for the results of their decisions and actions.	Individuals trust and respect their managers and one another. They participate in decisions and develop their skills to complete tasks better. Accountability is clear at all levels of the organisation.

GO TO Leadership and accountability

### 3. Organisational Communication – Effective Networks

**Definition:** Organisational communication is the myriad of ways in which information about the organisation and its environment is shared between members. Communication can be formal or informal. Formal communication will normally be part of a well thought out communication strategy that includes forums, workshops and publications. Informal communication is the daily conversations that people have with their managers and colleagues in different parts of the organisation.

Perspective	Stage			
	Beginning	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
<b>Organisation</b>	Communication about unacceptable behaviours takes place predominantly between individuals and groups but only as necessary.	Information about the organisation and what is acceptable and unacceptable is communicated to staff as necessary. Feedback is encouraged on specific issues.	Discussion including information sharing and feedback is encouraged between different levels of the organisation.	Effective formal and informal networks throughout the organisation mean that staff communicate freely with others and report unacceptable behaviours.
<b>Managers</b>	Managers give staff formal direction on how to complete their tasks. They speak to their peers at scheduled meetings on work related matters.	Managers encourage staff to discuss work related matters and give feedback at scheduled meetings.	Managers regularly meet with staff both formally and informally to share organisational information and invite open discussion.	Managers are members of effective formal and informal networks which they use to deal with unacceptable behaviours at an early stage.



Perspective	Stage			
<b>Individuals</b>	Individuals speak to others when they need information to complete their tasks. Communication is most often within their business unit rather than between business units.	Individuals are confident that their suggestions and feedback on particular issues will be seriously considered.	Individuals freely discuss and share organisational information with their manager.	Individuals are members of effective formal and informal networks and feel comfortable speaking to anyone in the organisation.

**GO TO Organisational communication**

## 4. Recruitment and Selection – The Right Skills and Attributes

Definition: Organisations compete with others for applicants. A recruitment and selection campaign that promotes the organisation’s positive work environment could lead to the attraction and retention of staff who have the right skills and ‘fit’ the workplace culture. It could give the organisation a competitive advantage

Perspective	Stage			
<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Consolidating</b>	<b>Established</b>	



Perspective	Stage			
<b>Organisation</b>	The organisation seeks to attract staff with the right professional skills but ignores applicants' other attributes.	The organisation seeks to attract staff with the right professional skills and the right values. It considers whether the applicant's values are incompatible with the organisation.	The organisation differentiates itself from other employers by promoting its values and positive work environment.	The organisation is known for its positive work environment and for being an employer of choice.
<b>Managers</b>	Managers are selected on the basis of their professional skills rather than also on their values or ability to manage staff well.	Managers are primarily selected on the basis of their professional skills but some weight is also given to their values and ability to manage staff well.	Managers have a good knowledge of the unique characteristics and needs of the organisation and translate these into effective recruitment strategies.	Managers are selected on the basis of their professional skills, values and ability to manage staff well. They see the skills and values they and their staff possess as being important for career development and progression.



Perspective	Stage			
<b>Individuals</b>	Individuals are selected on the basis of their professional skills only rather than also on their values.	Individuals are primarily selected on the basis of their professional skills but some weight is also given to their values.	Individuals think about how well their values fit with the values of the organisation before deciding to apply for jobs that match their skills. Where the fit is poor they decide not to apply.	Individuals are selected on the basis of their professional skills and values. They see both their skills and values as being important for career development and progression.

**GO TO Recruitment and selection**

## 5. Learning and Development – Supporting Change

**Definition:** Organisations offer staff professional development to keep their skills and knowledge up to date, improve their work performance and prepare them for career advancement. Development can range from formal studies to mentoring programs. Of particular importance is the transition to management, where an individual must learn how to encourage good staff performance and positive work relationships.

Perspective	Stage		
<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Consolidating</b>	<b>Established</b>

Perspective	Stage			
<b>Organisation</b>	<p>Most training is ad hoc or unplanned although the organisation may also offer mandatory training in OHS or other legislated areas. Few are skilled in dealing with unacceptable behaviours.</p>	<p>The organisation has systems in place to develop professional skills. No attention is given to reinforcing the organisation's values.</p>	<p>The organisation offers a broader and more systematic development program. However the main focus is still on professional skills rather than on values or behaviours.</p>	<p>An equal focus on values and professional competencies ensures the organisation is sustainable and innovative. Workplace behaviours are a feature of all development programs.</p>
<b>Managers</b>	<p>Managers seldom attend training sessions to develop their professional skills.</p>	<p>Managers sometimes attend training sessions to develop their professional skills.</p>	<p>Managers recognise the importance of developing both their professional skills and their ability to manage staff well and reinforce the organisation's values.</p>	<p>Managers develop their leadership capabilities through a system of course work and mentoring, coaching and buddy systems. They become skilled in reinforcing the organisation's values and dealing with unacceptable behaviours.</p>



Perspective	Stage			
<b>Individuals</b>	Individuals seek permission to attend training sessions that are of interest to them or relevant to their current projects or role.	Individuals identify training sessions relevant to developing their professional skills in discussion with their manager.	Individuals work with their manager to identify a broad range of options for developing their professional skills and reinforcing the organisation's values. These include courses, work assignments and job rotations.	Individuals discuss their skills, values and career aspirations with their manager to prepare a comprehensive development plan. The plan is reviewed each year.

**GO TO Learning and development**

## 6. Human Resource Policies and Strategies – Relevant and Flexible

**Definition:** Human resource policies and strategies define the relationship between the individual staff member and their organisation. At their best they help to create a positive, safe and supportive work environment. They enable staff to balance their work and private commitments by removing unnecessary restrictions.

Perspective	Stage			
<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Consolidating</b>	<b>Established</b>	

Perspective	Stage			
<b>Organisation</b>	The organisation has a 'one size fits all' approach to HR policies. These cover standard pay and conditions for individuals rather than having a broader organisation development focus.	The organisation is more willing to support HR because of its potential benefit to workplace culture and productivity.	The HR manager reports to the senior management group in recognition of the importance of HR to achieving organisational objectives.	The HR manager is an important member of the organisation's senior management group. Critical indicators of HR performance are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.
<b>Managers</b>	Managers have little or no involvement in the development, implementation or review of HR policies. This role is performed by HR alone.	Managers have some involvement in the development and implementation of HR policies. They may provide feedback to HR on their use.	Managers regularly consult HR on the development or application of HR policies and see them as responsive to their needs.	Managers have the freedom to develop, implement and review local HR policies and strategies in partnership with HR.
<b>Individuals</b>	Individuals have standard pay and conditions. They may apply for different forms of leave but there is little flexibility to adapt policies to their particular needs.	Individuals have a growing awareness of HR policies but no involvement in their development, implementation or review.	Individuals are encouraged to pinpoint HR pressure points or areas of concern as a means of developing or reviewing HR policies and strategies.	Individuals are confident that HR policies and strategies are sufficiently flexible to meet their needs and assist them to perform their work.



## 7. Workflow Management – Autonomy and Participation

**Definition:** Workflow management is about having the right skills, support and resources to complete tasks to the right standard. Tasks may provide staff with a personal challenge to extend their skills and experience in areas that are of interest to them and relevant to their career goals. Staff work autonomously and are able to vary their day-to-day activities to meet deadlines and respond to changing circumstances. They can talk about workflow problems with their manager and colleagues.

Perspective	Stage				
Beginning	Emerging	Consolidating	Established		
<b>Organisation</b>	The standardised, quantitative and centrally controlled process for managing workflow discourages a positive work environment and encourages negative behaviours.	Standard workflow processes are informally adapted in some areas of the organisation to address special needs or demands. Negative behaviours may be known but are largely ignored because of the quantitative measures used.	Qualitative and quantitative measures are formally adopted to provide an overview of organisational workflow patterns and demands.	A formal, continuous improvement process is in place to encourage participation and innovation at all levels of the organisation. Effective use is made of qualitative and quantitative indicators.	

Perspective	Stage			
<b>Managers</b>	Managers have little or no ability to make changes to the work program at the business unit level. The use of quantitative measures may encourage them to focus on outputs and ignore negative behaviours.	Managers have some ability to make changes to the work program dependent on organisational needs. They listen and respond to their staff's concerns.	Managers have the skills and authority to vary the work program at the business unit level to match staff skills and organisational resources and needs.	Managers are skilled in the principles and processes of continuous improvement and innovation. They vary the work program to suit the business unit.
<b>Individuals</b>	Individuals cannot vary their work program. They may be working to tight timeframes with limited resources. The tasks may not be a good match for their skills, either too hard or unchallenging.	Individuals may raise issues and concerns about their work program. They are sometimes invited to contribute their ideas at planning and review sessions.	Individuals are often invited to participate in planning and review processes. They help to identify the skills and resources required to complete tasks to a good standard.	Individuals work autonomously on interesting tasks that extend their skills. Managers and colleagues provide them with support as needed. They raise issues and contribute ideas for improvement through planning and review processes.

**GO TO Workflow management**

## 8. Performance Management – Reinforcing Behaviours

**Definition:** Performance management contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams. It establishes a shared understanding of what is to be achieved during the year and an approach to leading and developing staff to ensure that it is achieved.

Perspective	Stage			
	Beginning	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
<b>Organisation</b>	Performance management is a mandatory annual activity completed in an ad-hoc manner with cursory attention given to personal development or behaviours.	Performance management has the potential to reward, develop and retain good staff and reinforce positive behaviours.	Performance management is an important element for recognising and rewarding good performance and positive behaviours.	Performance management is crucial to developing staff and reinforcing positive behaviours. Formal and informal processes operate throughout the year.



Perspective	Stage			
<b>Managers</b>	<p>Managers see performance management as an onerous task and do the minimum necessary to comply with its requirements. They pay primary attention to outputs and ignore personal development or behaviours.</p>	<p>Managers annually review the performance and behavioural standards of their staff and agree on a development plan. They recognise the process can lead to improved results for the organisation.</p>	<p>Managers set their staff challenging but achievable goals to develop their skills and further their careers. They value the opportunity to discuss performance and behavioural standards with their staff.</p>	<p>Managers are adept at assessing the performance, potential and skill development needs of their staff. They are comfortable providing staff with feedback at formal meetings or in spontaneous conversations.</p>
<b>Individuals</b>	<p>Individuals see performance management as an unrewarding and irrelevant process. They see no link between the process and their personal career aspirations, development or behaviours.</p>	<p>Individuals see performance management as a routine activity. They have input to the process but are sometimes sceptical about the long term results.</p>	<p>Individuals use the performance management process as an opportunity to discuss all aspects of their work life including their skills, interests and career aspirations.</p>	<p>Individuals welcome feedback on their performance throughout the year and particularly upon reaching major milestones in their work. They see the feedback as an opportunity to develop their skills and advance their career.</p>



## 9. Risk Management – Identifying Risks and Opportunities

**Definition:** Risks are anything that stands in the way of an organisation achieving its goals. Risk management is about identifying, evaluating and minimising those risks. It helps the organisation to take advantage of opportunities while also taking calculated risks based on an analysis of their likelihood and impact.

Perspective	Stage			
	Beginning	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
<b>Organisation</b>	The organisation annually assesses risk at a corporate level but is largely risk averse. The assessment has little impact on daily operations or thinking.	The organisation is aware of the need to manage risks on a daily basis but tends to concentrate on minimising risks rather than on looking for opportunities for improvement.	The organisation promotes the importance of managing risks to its staff as a means of improving results, and provides them with training.	Risk management is an integral part of daily work. Mistakes when they do happen are regarded as an opportunity to learn and make improvements.

Perspective	Stage			
<b>Managers</b>	<p>Managers encourage staff to apply standard techniques well and assume any mistakes are due to negligence. Opportunities for the team to identify and try better ways of doing things are lost.</p>	<p>Managers identify risks and approve some 'safe' risks being taken when there are opportunities for reward, or mistakes are unlikely to be punished.</p>	<p>Managers identify and manage risks while also seeing them as an opportunity to find better ways of doing things.</p>	<p>Managers encourage their staff to identify and address problems before they occur while also encouraging them to find better ways of doing things.</p>
<b>Individuals</b>	<p>Individuals avoid taking risks because they are afraid of making mistakes. They may attempt to blame others for their mistakes. Opportunities for trying new and better ways of doing things are lost.</p>	<p>Individuals see risks as something to be avoided and will only take them when there are limited alternatives, or clear benefits for doing so.</p>	<p>Individuals identify and manage their risks. They begin to accept that innovation is dependent upon taking calculated risks.</p>	<p>Individuals manage the risks inherent in their work and accept responsibility for the decisions they make. They learn from their mistakes and this leads to innovation.</p>

**GO TO Risk management**



# 10. Workplace Dispute Systems – Resolving Issues Fairly

**Definition:** Workplace dispute systems provide a fair and effective means of resolving overt and covert conflict between managers, staff and clients. While conflicts and differences of opinion are a natural part of life and can result in new ideas and improved practices, some conflict is destructive and reduces productivity. Such conflict should be dealt with quickly.

Perspective	Stage			
	Beginning	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
<b>Organisation</b>	The organisation's basic workplace dispute policies and practices fulfil a legal requirement. Complaints are seen as negative and therefore something to discourage.	Workplace dispute policies and practices are publicised and therefore quite well known in the organisation.	Workplace dispute policies recommend informal local resolution of problems is tried before embarking on more formal processes. The policies are well understood by staff.	Workplace dispute policies and practices reflect the values of respect and dignity for all. Complaints are viewed as problems needing resolution and are therefore accepted as a normal part of work life.



Perspective	Stage			
<b>Managers</b>	<p>Managers feel uncomfortable dealing with staff complaints. They may ignore evidence of problems in the workplace or refer complainants to HR and formal processes. They have some knowledge of policies and practices.</p>	<p>Managers have adequate knowledge of workplace dispute policies and practices. They cooperate with HR to resolve disputes.</p>	<p>Managers have good knowledge of workplace dispute policies and practices. They appreciate the benefits of resolving problems locally and informally before more formal processes are followed.</p>	<p>Managers respond quickly to any sign of problems in the workplace. They encourage their staff to raise concerns with them and seek to resolve their complaints sensitively. They fully support workplace dispute policies and practices.</p>



Perspective	Stage			
<b>Individuals</b>	Individuals are reluctant to raise concerns either because they will not be taken seriously or they may suffer negative consequences for doing so. They may not know who to talk to or how to lodge a complaint.	Individuals have some knowledge of the workplace dispute policies and practices in place. They may lodge a formal complaint if they have a concern.	Individuals are willing to discuss their concerns first with their manager before deciding to lodge a formal complaint.	Individuals confidently discuss their concerns with their manager. Most concerns are resolved locally and informally. Those requiring further investigation are handled sensitively through a formal process.

**GO TO Workplace dispute systems**

**Summary Sheet: What should your priorities be?**

Elements	Perspective		P	G
Organisation	Managers	Individuals		
<b>S T R A T E G I C</b>	1. Vision and values			⊙
	2. Leadership & accountability			⊙
	3. Organisational communication			⊙



Elements	Perspective	P	G	
O P E R A T I O N A L	4. Recruitment & selection		Ⓞ	
	5. Learning & development		Ⓞ	
	6. HR policies & strategies		Ⓞ	
	7. Workflow management		Ⓞ	
	8. Performance management		Ⓞ	
	9. Risk management		Ⓞ	
	10. Workplace dispute systems		Ⓞ	
	Legend (Stage towards becoming a positive work environment): <b>Beginning   Emerging   Consolidating   Established</b>			
	<b>P</b> = Priority; <b>G</b> = Go to link (click on Ⓞ)			



# Delving Deeper into the Ten Elements

## Delving Deeper into the Ten Elements

If you have completed the quick check tool and determined your priorities you will be ready to plan and implement your strategy for change. For each of the ten elements that contribute to a positive work environment we look at:

- the role of the organisation, manager and individual in the ideal situation
- some litmus test or important questions to ask about your organisation
- a case study
- further resources.

1. Vision and Values
2. Leadership and Accountability
3. Organisational Communication
4. Recruitment and Selection
5. Learning and Development
6. Human Resource Policies and Strategies
7. Workflow Management
8. Performance Management
9. Risk Management
10. Workplace Dispute Systems



# 1. Vision and Values

**Fact:** 72% of employees say that behaviour consistent with the values is acknowledged and rewarded in their organisation – *People Matter Survey 2010*

## Understanding the Visions and Values

### The organisation's role in vision and values

In the ideal situation:

- The organisation fosters a positive work environment that encourages respect for others and acceptance of difference.
- The organisation's values are integrated with strategy to allow values-based decisions to cascade throughout all planning and performance management activities.
- Information about the vision and values is covered in induction programs.

### The manager's role in vision and values

In the ideal situation:

- Managers demonstrate a strong commitment to the vision and values.
- Managers reinforce the importance of having a positive work environment to staff.
- Managers model the vision and values every day and refer to them when making decisions.

### The individual's role in vision and values

In the ideal situation:

- Individuals support and model the values.
- Individuals understand the values that reflect respect and dignity at work.

### The litmus test for vision and values

Some important questions to ask about your organisation:

- Does the organisation have a clear vision statement and values?

- Are the vision and values used to guide organisational behaviour at all levels?
- Do managers model the vision and values to encourage positive workplace behaviours?
- Do individuals feel part of a positive work environment?

#### *Measures*

*Measures that may be useful for confirming the quick check tool results or monitoring cultural change could include:*

- Employment brand strength
- Employee commitment index

Source: [A Dictionary of People Metrics](#)

## **Case study: Sharing the Vision and Modelling the Values**



The claims team had a long history of getting rid of managers they didn't like. Their tactics were well known to senior managers who felt unable to stop them from doing so. That was until a consultant suggested the senior managers had played a role in fostering the situation themselves.

The consultant's independent cultural audit and employee survey revealed a cynical and unhappy workforce who had seen a lot of change in the workplace but felt unengaged in it themselves. With three name changes in the last eight years and the constant threat of restructure, demand for improved services remained high but real results were poor. The

reasons soon became clear with staff interviews being typified by 'old hand' Daniel who had begun in the office as a processing clerk over 20 years ago. He dismissed the 'fancy words' of the vision and values as 'meaningless mumbo jumbo because they only look out and never in'. What did he mean? Staff felt the vision and values were only about serving customers well. They were not about staff. The demands for better service were imposed

on staff, became increasingly more demanding and were never based on their feedback.

The appointment of Peter, a new senior manager, was used to herald a 'new' style of participative management. Two years later the norm is for everyone, from senior managers to the newest recruit, to openly discuss and debate new options for improvement. It is now well understood that quality customer care begins with caring for each other and that the frontline culture depends on a strong and supportive workplace environment.

Both staff and customer satisfaction levels are high and still rising. As a leader, Peter focuses on building a positive work environment for everyone. He involves staff, customers and suppliers alike in working to achieve this goal.

## Further Resources for Vision and Values

- Public sector values and employment principles in the [Public Administration Act 2004](#)
- [Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees](#)
- [Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees of Special Bodies](#)
- [Directors' Code of Conduct and Guidance Notes](#)



- Employment Principles and Standards



# 2. Leadership and Accountability

**Fact:** 71% of employees say senior managers provide clear strategy and direction. – *People Matter Survey 2010*

## Understanding Leadership and Accountability

### The organisation's role in leadership and accountability

In the ideal situation:

- The organisation gives priority to developing a positive work environment. The organisation focuses on leadership development for all staff.
- The organisation involves staff in developing strategies for achieving the vision.
- The organisation promotes a shared understanding and commitment to the vision and values.
- The organisation encourages accountability at all levels of the organisation.

### The manager's role in leadership and accountability

In the ideal situation:

- Managers share their understanding of the organisation's vision with staff. They develop leadership strategies that they and their staff implement.
- Managers develop their leadership skills to keep up with changing employment trends. They show leadership and lead by example. They adapt their leadership style to suit the needs of their staff.
- Managers are clear about levels of accountability within the organisation. They trust their staff and encourage them to be involved in decisions that affect their roles and responsibilities.
- Managers are aware of the impact of their decisions and actions on staff. They accept responsibility for both the positive and negative results of their decisions and actions.

### The individual's role in leadership and accountability

In the ideal situation:

- Individuals understand and work towards achieving the organisation's vision.



- Individuals accept their level of responsibility and have authority to decide and act.
- Individuals provide their manager with regular feedback on performance.
- Individuals' length of time in the organisation, understanding of their tasks and career objectives determine how they will be managed.

## The litmus test for leadership and accountability

Some important questions to ask about your organisation:

- Does the organisation promote leadership by example?
- Is a system of accountability in place and communicated to all levels of the organisation?
- Are managers and staff clear about their own level of accountability?
- Is everyone in the organisation held accountable for the impact (both positive and negative) of their decisions and actions?
- Do managers have confidence in their staff to delegate decision-making responsibility?
- Do managers trust staff to make decisions on issues about their roles and responsibilities?
- Does the organisation encourage everyone to develop leadership?

### Measures

Measures that may be useful for confirming the quick check tool results or monitoring cultural change could include:

- Employee satisfaction with leadership
- Manager quality index

[A Dictionary of People Metrics](#)

## Case study: From Manager to Leader



Laura had been a manager at Tour Victoria for three years already when a restructure brought her small team under Simone's leadership.

Laura had always been a very productive worker and had received numerous commendations and performance bonuses for her efforts. However, leadership was a challenge for her. She had received no leadership training. In fact the only feedback she had received from her former boss was about what she was doing wrong. Laura constantly tried to prove herself in meetings by answering every question raised, not giving her staff a chance to answer. She also criticised individual staff members in front of others.

Her new manager, Simone spent her first few weeks simply observing Laura's leadership style. Then one day she asked Laura 'do you enjoy being a manager?' The response was, 'Yes, but?' The meeting continued and soon revealed that Laura behaved the way she did because, without any training or guidance, being tough and holding people accountable was what she thought was expected of her and what she would be rewarded for. The first step Simone took was to appoint Jeff, a senior manager from another part of Tour Victoria to mentor Laura.

Jeff was well known as an excellent people manager and, although due to retire in another year, as a person deeply committed to Tour Victoria. Jeff taught Laura to relax during meetings, to hold back and let her staff come up with solutions and to share their knowledge and expertise. With Jeff's help and further leadership development, Laura went from being the 'dragon' no one wanted to work with to being promoted because of her people as well as her technical skills.

## Further resources for Leadership and Accountability

- Leadership is a public sector value in the [Public Administration Act 2004](#)
- Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees
- Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees of Special Bodies
- Developing Leaders: Strengthening Leadership in the VPS Directors' Code of Conduct and Guidance Notes
- Ethics Framework: chapter on ethical leadership
- Ethics Framework Planner: how to provide ethical leadership

- Great Managers, Great Results
- Leading the Way: a component of the Ethics Resource Kit
- Welcome to Management



# 3. Organisational Communication

**Fact:** 70% of employees say senior managers keep them informed about what's going on.  
*People Matter Survey 2010*

## Understanding Organisational Communication

### The organisation's role in organisational communication

In the ideal situation:

- The organisation gives priority to developing a positive work environment where open respectful communication is the norm between hierarchical levels and business units. All staff members are encouraged to communicate freely with others.
- The organisation develops and assesses the effectiveness of communication strategies that support the organisation's vision.
- The organisation has strong formal and informal communication networks. It develops formal networks to ensure organisational goals are reached. It encourages informal networks to share ideas, information and feedback.

### The manager's role in organisational communication

In the ideal situation:

- Managers communicate freely across all business units and hierarchical levels of the organisation.
- Managers promote and practice open, respectful communication.
- Managers seek input and confidential feedback from their staff.

### The individual's role in organisational communication

In the ideal situation:

- Individuals communicate respectfully with one another. They communicate freely with all staff including senior managers.
- Individuals participate enthusiastically in formal and informal communication networks to share ideas and information.

## The litmus test for organisational communication

Some important questions to ask about your organisation:

- Is communication with others in the organisation generally open, friendly and positive?
- Is corporate information such as changes to policy, organisational structure or processes communicated effectively to staff?
- Does the organisation involve staff in developing and evaluating the communication strategy?
- Does the organisation encourage formal and informal communication amongst staff?
- Is open and informal communication evident across all levels of the organisation?
- Is individual communication broader than with others as needed to perform daily tasks?
- Are staff members able to freely seek information and feedback from people throughout the organisation without first going through formal reporting lines?

### Measures

Measures that may be useful for confirming the quick check tool results or monitoring cultural change could include:

- Manager quality index
- Employee engagement index

Source: A Dictionary of People Metrics

## Case study: Caring about Communication



Rural Community Care Victoria had a very high incidence of workplace conflict. Staff worked almost alone in residential units and felt isolated from one another. The same problems continuously arose but were never properly addressed. They were either ignored until they became very serious or were escalated too quickly to a formal complaint.

Meredith's response in the past was to tell managers what they must do to change staff behaviour. But this time, she took a different approach. She recognised the problem was one of communication and that everyone had an active role to play, particularly managers. She engaged a consultant to tailor a program called 'courageous conversations' for all her managers.

The initial response was one of open hostility. Nicole's response was typical: "I'll be honest. I thought the program would be too 'touchy feely'. I'm a social worker, I wouldn't benefit from this type of training and anyway surely it is others who are at fault, not me. I'm not the trouble maker."

The two-day residential program used a diverse range of techniques from role-play to individual counselling sessions to give managers the skills and confidence to talk to their staff about problems in a constructive way. It also established a support network amongst managers and so had a positive effect both on relationships and workplace culture.

The next round of reports from the Employee Assistance Program showed a marked reduction in workplace conflict. Open communication had brought about a very positive cultural change. People were happier and felt a greater connection with their colleagues. They looked for opportunities to interact both professionally and socially.

## Further Resources for Organisational Communication

- [Developing Conflict Resilient Workplaces](#)
- Ethics Framework: section on building commitment
- Ethics Framework Planner: how to build commitment
- Fair and Reasonable Treatment Standard and Guidelines Feedback Matters: Effective Communication is Essential Talking Performance
- Tips for Sustaining an Ethical Workplace: a component of the Ethics Resource Kit



# 4. Recruitment and Selection

**Fact:** 88% of employees say they would recommend a career in the Victorian public sector to their friends. – *People Matter Survey 2010*

## Understanding Recruitment and Selection

### The organisation's role in recruitment and selection

In the ideal situation:

- The organisation regards a positive work environment as key to a productive and cohesive workplace.
- The organisation recognises that a positive work environment is critical to its long-term strategy of attracting and retaining the best staff.
- The organisation uses its positive reputation in the community to increase the size and quality of its applicant pool, improve staff morale, and minimise complaints, disruptions and legal disputes.
- The organisation has fair selection processes.

### The manager's role in recruitment and selection

In the ideal situation:

- Managers are selected on their people-management capabilities as well as their task-related skills.
- Managers draft job descriptions for their vacancies that accurately represent the skills and experience required for the job.
- Managers encourage and genuinely consider applicants from diverse backgrounds.
- Managers enable all short listed applicants to demonstrate their skills and experience, and provide constructive feedback to unsuccessful applicants upon request.
- Managers comply with and exceed the minimum requirements of equal opportunity law.
- Managers assist staff to overcome any career barriers and monitor promotion trends within their business unit.



## The individual's role in recruitment and selection

In the ideal situation:

- Individuals choose to apply for jobs in the organisation because of its reputation for having a positive work environment.
- Individuals act as 'ambassadors' for the organisation. They feel they understand and match the core tenets of the organisation.
- Individuals are aware of their rights and responsibilities with respect to equal opportunity and diversity in the workplace.
- Individuals are confident that selection decisions are fair and merit based.

## The litmus test for recruitment and selection

Some important questions to ask about your organisation:

- Do the recruitment materials feature images demonstrating the organisation's openness to recruiting people from diverse backgrounds?
- Do recruitment consultants understand the organisation's positive work environment employment strategy?
- Have the people who are involved in recruitment been trained in how to avoid bias in the selection process?
- Is a range of recruitment techniques used to reach a diverse audience?
- Are job applicants monitored to check that the organisation is attracting those interested in the organisation's positive work environment?
- Does the organisation give equal weight to skills and personal attributes?
- Would the organisation consider recruiting for the right personal attributes and providing skills training at work?

## Measures

Measures that may be useful for confirming the quick check tool results or monitoring cultural change could include:

- New hire performance satisfaction
- New hire failure factor

Source: [A Dictionary of People Metrics](#)

## Case Study: Positive Recruitment

Owen is HR director of the Council of Community Education. His challenge is to simultaneously nurture relationships with business and maintain superior customer service in an upbeat, professional and positive work environment. He must achieve this within a tight labour market and even tighter cost constraints.

How to recruit quality staff and, even more difficult, retain them?

His solution has been to talk to staff about what makes the Council a positive place to work and what would make it even more attractive. He has used this information to develop a positive work environment vision and values, one that everyone can identify with and support. He has then incorporated the values in the Council's recruitment and selection processes.

The Council has lost few staff since adopting Owen's strategy and in fact has attracted very strong applicant fields for any jobs that are advertised. Owen attributes much of this to 'our employees knowing we care about them and their career paths. We now provide access to resources to help them develop professionally and advance in their career. They don't feel as though the Council is a 'nowhere to grow place, and we enjoy a steady supply of evolving talent ready to accept greater challenges and responsibilities. How do you put a figure on employee satisfaction?

'Changing the focus of our recruitment and selection strategy did not cost much in time or energy but has had remarkable results.'

## Further Resources for Recruitment and Selection

- Merit and equal employment opportunity are public sector employment principles in the [Public Administration Act 2004](#)
- [Attracting and Retaining an Ageing Workforce](#)
- [Attracting and Retaining Staff: A Guide for the Public Sector in Rural and Regional Victoria](#)
- [Best Practice Recruitment and Selection Toolkit](#)
- [Careers with the Victorian Government](#)
- [Employment Principles and Standards](#)
- [Succession Risk Management Toolkit](#)
- [The Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework: An Introduction for Public Sector Agencies](#)
- [The VPS Employment Capability Framework: Strengthening the Professionalism and Adaptability of the Victorian Public Service](#)
- [Victorian Public Sector Workforce Planning Resource Kit](#)
- [VPS Employment Capability Framework Card Set: A Tool for Managers](#)



# 5. Learning and Development

**Fact:** 81% of employees say their organisation is committed to developing its employees.  
– *People Matter Survey 2010*

## Understanding Learning and Development

### The organisation's role in learning and development

In the ideal situation:

- The organisation has established a clear business case for learning and development. Everyone understands that the learning and development initiatives are connected to an overarching strategy, leading to a better work environment and higher productivity.
- The organisation's induction is the first opportunity to reinforce the culture, values and behavioural expectations placed on all staff. The organisation follows up this message in other learning and development initiatives.
- The organisation uses learning and development initiatives to influence culture. Everyone knows about the organisation's values and code of conduct that outline their responsibility to behave appropriately.
- The organisation offers a wide variety of learning and development initiatives to suit different audiences and situations.

### The manager's role in learning and development

In the ideal situation:

- Managers place importance on encouraging positive work relationships and strong performance from their staff.
- Managers have buddies, mentors or coaches to support their formal training sessions. This gives them the confidence to apply their new knowledge and skills.

### The individual's role in learning and development

In the ideal situation:

- Individuals regard learning and development as the cornerstone of a supportive working environment. They commence the process by examining their own attitudes and behaviours.

- Individuals develop confidence through playing different roles, analysing case studies and practising their skills in a safe environment.

## The litmus test for learning and development

Some important questions to ask about your organisation:

- Do learning and development initiatives promote a culture of respect?
- Does everyone understand they must behave respectfully towards their colleagues and clients?
- Does everyone know how individuals and the organisation are going to deal with inappropriate behaviours?
- Do staff members have ready access to guidance and support?

### Measures

Measures that may be useful for confirming the quick check tool results or monitoring cultural change could include:

- Internal movement rate
- Development program saturation rate

Source: [A Dictionary of People Metrics](#)

## Case study: Learning Respect



The Brighton Bay Authority had a problem with disputes. Rather than deal with them on a case-by-case basis, Stuart thought an extensive development program on negotiation skills would be more effective and long lasting.

Twenty staff members attended the first workshop. The most noticeable benefit was their increased confidence in joint-problem solving skills. Staff now realised there was another way of doing things and they were capable of bringing about a positive change in the way they worked together.

Jerry, one of the managers, spoke about the benefits both for himself and his staff. 'The workshop has benefited me both professionally and personally. Understanding a person's communication style, how to deal with their objections to your ideas and endeavouring to find common ground, however small that may be at first, has been instrumental in resolving many disputes. I had two employees who were at loggerheads and one of them really didn't know why. He didn't realise that his tone and body language were sending a different message to his words. Once the two sat down in my office and I encouraged them to talk about how they interacted with each other and how this was affecting their professional relationship, they began to understand the reason for their conflict. By assigning them to the same project I hoped they would learn to appreciate each other's unique skills and abilities. It worked and their relationship improved dramatically into one of mutual respect.'

## Further Resources for Learning and Development

- Career public service is a public sector employment principle in the [Public Administration Act 2004](#)
- Developing Leaders: Strengthening Leadership in the VPS Ethics Framework: chapter on developing ethical skills Ethics Framework Planner: developing ethical skills
- Ethics Resource Kit: ethics workshops and development guides
- [Great Managers, Great Results](#)
- [Employment Principles and Standards](#)
- [Succession Risk Management Toolkit](#)
- The Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework: An Introduction for Public Sector Agencies
- The VPS Employment Capability Framework: Strengthening the Professionalism and



## Adaptability of the Victorian Public Service

- Victorian Leadership Development Centre website
- Victorian Public Sector Workforce Planning Resource Kit
- VPS Employment Capability Framework Card Set: A Tool for Managers
- [Welcome to Management](#)



# 6. Human Resource Policies and Strategies

**Fact:** 81% of employees say their organisation offers practical employment arrangements and conditions to help them achieve a work-life balance. – *People Matter Survey 2010*

## Understanding Human Resource Policies and Strategies

### The organisation's role in human resource policies and strategies

In the ideal situation:

- The organisation invites its HR director to be part of the senior management group. The organisation has HR policies and strategies founded on the principle of fairness.
- This means fair rules, procedures and decisions that are applied fairly in each individual staff member's case. Interpersonal communication is characterised by honesty, respect, dignity and politeness.
- The organisation develops, implements and evaluates HR policies and strategies that are intended to create a positive work environment. Leadership underpinned by effective HR policies and strategies is a driving force in creating a positive work environment in the organisation.
- The organisation promotes the importance of HR policies and strategies, particularly those relating to work relationships and acceptance of diversity, to all levels of the organisation.
- The organisation regularly monitors and reviews critical HR performance indicators including the quality of work relationships, staff wellbeing, organisational justice, openness to diversity and emotional climate.
- The organisation undertakes research to evaluate, monitor and develop staff.

### The manager's role in human resource policies and strategies

In the ideal situation:

- Managers implement fair HR policies and strategies with the support of HR specialists.
- Managers use the performance management system to develop and evaluate their team's ability to form positive work relationships.

- Managers use training as a means of cultivating, motivating and retaining quality staff and promoting positive work relationships, acceptance of diversity and fair practices.
- Managers interact with their staff fairly. They are polite, honest and treat staff with respect and dignity.

## The individual's role in human resource policies and strategies

In the ideal situation:

- Individuals negotiate flexible work arrangements with their manager to balance their work and private commitments. They believe processes and decisions are fair.
- Individuals conform to the HR policies and procedures that cover interactions with colleagues and clients, such as the code of conduct.
- Individuals have trust and confidence in their colleagues, managers and the organisation. They feel included in the team, treated the same as others, and able to raise their concerns safely. All interactions with colleagues and managers are respectful.
- Individuals feel that rewards for good performance are meaningful.

## The litmus test for human resource policies and strategies

Some important questions to ask about your organisation:

- Is the HR Manager a valued member of the senior management group?
- Do the HR policies and strategies contribute to a positive work environment or have unintended consequences?
- Does feedback from managers and staff inform the regular development and review of HR policies and strategies?
- Are the HR policies and strategies sufficiently flexible to accommodate differing situations and circumstances?

## Measures

Measures that may be useful for confirming the quick check tool results or monitoring cultural change could include:

- Flexible work hours rate
- Gender staffing breakdown

[A Dictionary of People Metrics](#)

## Case Study: Why is Status Important?

The team of 15 cleaners had worked for their entire career at the one hospital and, while not the best job in the world, they felt happy that their work was an integral part of the hospital's successful operation. However, all that changed with the Mitchell Hospital's decision to contract out the cleaning services. While the cleaners remained the same, their employers changed as the hospital went through a series of different contractors. With each contract change, the cleaners felt more distanced and less a part of the hospital.

When the cleaners were employed as staff, they were treated as an integral part of the hospital and everyone knew their names and spoke to them. With the move to being employed as contractors, they were treated as outsiders to the hospital. This affected their attitude to the hospital. They were the same people, performing the same role but with a different status in the hospital. The employment status affected how they were treated and how they saw themselves.

Elizabeth, the new HR director, reflected on the hospital's decision and what must be done next. 'In a positive work environment, both the decision to outsource and the consequences of this on everyone in the workplace has to be considered. The difference in treatment, in expectations and in status between staff and contractors should not occur. I will need to specifically address this within the hospital's HR policies and strategies.'

## Further Resources for Human Resource Policies and Strategies

- [A Dictionary of People Metrics](#)
- [Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees](#)
- [Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees of Special Bodies](#)
- [Directors' Code of Conduct and Guidance Notes](#)
- [Employment Principles and Standards](#)

- Ethics Framework: section on written guides to acting ethically
- Ethics Framework Planner: how to write guides on acting ethically Fair and Reasonable Treatment Standard and Guidelines
- Good Practice Guide on Governance for Victorian Public Sector Entities
- [Welcome to the Board](#)



# 7. Workflow Management

**Fact:** 81% of employees say they are provided with the opportunity to work to their full potential. –

*People Matter Survey 2010*

## Understanding Workflow Management

### The organisation's role in workflow management

In the ideal situation:

- The organisation invites staff to regularly participate in planning and review processes and encourages their ideas for improvement.
- The organisation consults staff on issues such as job role, workload, working hours, level of autonomy and the impact of organisational change.
- The organisation has formal, continuous improvement processes in place to encourage innovation. Each business unit has qualitative and quantitative indicators of success.

### The manager's role in workflow management

In the ideal situation:

- Managers apply the principles and processes of continuous improvement and innovation.
- Managers direct, monitor and control the workflow of their team and provide guidance and support when problems arise.

### The individual's role in workflow management

In the ideal situation:

- Individuals have the skills, resources and time to complete tasks to a satisfactory standard.
- Individuals work autonomously but can also seek support or guidance when needed.
- Individual's tasks match their skills and interests.

### The litmus test for workflow management

Some important questions to ask about your organisation:

- Has the organisation audited its workflow processes to optimise efficiency and encourage improvement and innovation?
- Do managers and their staff work together to identify and resolve workflow problems that do not contribute to a positive work environment?
- Are customers getting what they want, when they want it?

## Measures

Measures that may be useful for confirming the quick check tool results or monitoring cultural change could include:

- Unscheduled absence days
- Unscheduled absence rate

[A Dictionary of People Metrics](#)

## Case Study: Sharing the Workload



Hepburn Research Institute was well known for being a positive place to work but this had not always been the case. The evolutionary change in workflow, job assignment and organisation during the past four years had occurred not through an administrative mandate but through staff initiative. They had seized the opportunity to work more collaboratively both within the institute and with associates in other organisations. This meant that work was more streamlined, more focused and more fun. Staff got to work with different colleagues

on new research projects. They learnt new skills and gained a broader understanding of the institute's functions. They were less stressed at work because of a fairer sharing of the workload and always having someone to help out with any difficult problems. Sometimes just talking about a problem would lead to new and innovative solutions.

The manager, Martin echoes the views of his staff when he says: 'Everyone here helps to foster trust, dedication and loyalty by recognising each other's valuable contribution. This has created a work environment that allows us to deliver quality research products and services to our customers.'

By acquiring new professional skills, staff members remain at the leading edge of research while also fulfilling their personal ambitions. The institute holds planned and impromptu special events to reward employees for reaching goals and acknowledges their achievements at monthly meetings. Staff members understand how their contribution has had a positive impact on the institute's work.

## Further Resources for Workflow Management

- Fair and Reasonable Treatment Standard and Guidelines
- [Succession Risk Management Toolkit](#)
- Victorian Public Sector [Workforce Planning Toolkit](#)



# 8. Performance Management

**Fact:** Employees who receive informal feedback (or both informal and formal feedback) are more likely to be positive about their jobs, managers, senior leaders and organisation.

– *Feedback Matters 2010*

## Understanding Performance Management

### The organisation's role in performance management

In the ideal situation:

- The organisation accepts that performance management is an important way of guiding, developing and rewarding staff.
- The organisation's performance management system is integrated with other business planning processes and is focused on longer-term goals.
- The organisation has established a culture in which individuals and teams take responsibility for the continuous improvement of business processes and of their own skills, behaviour and contribution.
- The organisation encourages a shared expectation of what will be achieved during the year by listing objectives in business plans.
- The organisation measures standards of performance informally throughout the year and formally at least once a year.

### The manager's role in performance management

In the ideal situation:

- Managers use the performance management system to achieve a positive work environment. They encourage individual staff members and the team to behave in a way that fosters better work relationships. They regularly review staff performance and provide them with training that will lead to improvements in their standard of work.
- Managers inform staff of what they are expected to accomplish over the next year.
- Managers praise staff on their accomplishments. They give them timely, constructive feedback when their work needs improvement.



## The individual's role in performance management

In the ideal situation:

- Individuals regard performance management as an effective way of achieving a positive work environment.
- Individuals contribute to the discussion of individual and team goals. They discuss their career goals, development needs and work preferences with their manager.
- Individuals understand what is expected of them over the next year, have the capacity to undertake the work and are supported with training.
- Individuals are praised and rewarded for their accomplishments. They receive timely, constructive feedback from their manager when they need it.

## The litmus test for performance management

Some important questions to ask about your organisation:

- Does the organisation integrate performance management with other aspects of the business?
- Does the organisation recognise that performance management is an important way of achieving a positive work environment?
- Does performance management incorporate performance improvement, skill development and behaviour assessment?
- Are employees actively engaged in managing their own performance?

### Measures

Measures that may be useful for confirming the quick check tool results or monitoring cultural change could include:

- Career path ratio
- Retention rate

[A Dictionary of People Metrics](#)



## Case study: The Power of a Positive Plan

Dale, the newly appointed manager of the Overseas Business Unit was failing miserably in his role. Rather than disciplining him as he'd expected, Dale's boss Noel sat him down to talk about what he thought was going wrong and why. Together, they worked out that Dale just didn't have a plan of action, so they developed one with assistance from the

HR director. They first looked at Dale's natural strengths. He had always been good at identifying and promoting business opportunities for Victoria in Asia but now he had a much broader brief. He had tried the same strategies without success in America and Europe. He had not listened to advice from people who had been working in these markets for some time.

So Dale's performance improvement plan identified a number of challenging goals that he was to achieve over the coming year. He needed to improve his knowledge of other markets, become more open to other viewpoints, be more adaptable to changing circumstances and establish new business networks in America and Europe.

Noel and Dale agreed on how his performance in these areas would be measured and on the support he would receive. Dale worked hard during the year to improve his performance. He met regularly with Noel to discuss his progress and get further tips and advice from him.

Dale succeeded beyond everyone's wildest dreams. All he had needed was a little direction and this had been provided through a well-planned, positively focused and measurable plan and his manager's support and encouragement.

## Further Resources for Workflow Management

- Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees
- Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees of Special Bodies
- [Directors' Code of Conduct and Guidance Notes](#)
- Ethics Framework: chapter on reinforcing ethical behaviour
- Ethics Framework Planner: how to reinforce ethical behaviour
- Ethics Resource Kit: Implementation Guide (a: performance management) Feedback Matters: Effective Communication is Essential



- Merit in Employment Standard and Guidelines
- [Talking Performance](#)
- The Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework: An Introduction for Public Sector Agencies
- The VPS Employment Capability Framework: Strengthening the Professionalism and Adaptability of the Victorian Public Service
- Victorian Public Sector Workforce Planning Resource Kit
- VPS Employment Capability Framework Card Set: A Tool for Managers



# 9. Risk Management

**Fact:** 88% of employees say that people in their workgroup are honest, open and transparent in their dealings. –

*People Matter Survey 2010*

## Understanding Risk Management

### The organisation's role in risk management

In the ideal situation:

- The organisation regards every employee as a risk manager.
- The organisation has a risk management policy, strategy plan and committee with senior membership.
- The organisation reinforces its risk management philosophy through the chief executive's endorsement and inclusion of risk management principles in learning and development programs.
- The risk management policy outlines in simple terms the acceptable level of risk and gives direction on how to identify, evaluate, control and report risks.

### The manager's role in risk management

In the ideal situation:

- Managers comply with risk management policies and procedures.
- Managers identify risks and develop, implement and evaluate risk management plans in collaboration with their staff. They help to define acceptable levels of risk for the organisation and their team.
- Managers inform their staff about risk management policies and procedures and guide them in identifying risks and potential opportunities.
- Managers encourage their staff to take calculated risks based on open communication, collaboration and informal strategies.

### The individual's role in risk management

In the ideal situation:



- Individuals openly discuss and report on potential risks and opportunities.
- Individuals feel their ideas and opinions are valued by others. They take responsibility for the outcome of their decisions.
- Individuals have sufficient skills, understanding and support to manage risks. Those who manage risk well are recognised and rewarded.

## The litmus test for risk management

Some important questions<sup>1</sup> to ask about your organisation:

- Has the organisation agreed what types and levels of risk are unacceptable? Has the risk policy been reviewed and approved in the last year?
- Has a senior manager or similar 'champion' (or team) been appointed to lead and sponsor risk management initiatives?
- Has the executive team provided guidance on what information they would like to see in risk reports?
- Do managers know that they are responsible for managing risk in their areas of responsibility?
- Are staff comfortable to report risk or suggest risk reduction strategies?
- Are risks identified during compliance audits always added to the risk register?

### Measures

Measures that may be useful for confirming the quick check tool results or monitoring cultural change could include:

- Employee engagement index
- Manager quality index

[A Dictionary of People Metrics](#)

## Case Study: Managing the Risk of the Unfamiliar



As it matures, an organisation faces the risk of losing its creativity and openness to new ideas. It often settles into a comfortable groove and develops a set way of doing things.

So when someone new joins an organisation with completely different ways of thinking and working, this can be very challenging both to managers and staff. Take Mandy's case for instance.

Mandy has just started her new job with Eco Green and is finding it a bit hard to settle in. She is used to working very flexible hours with very little direction but now it seems she must comply with some very specific rules. Mandy doesn't agree with her manager that she needs to be at the office to work effectively. 'If I am getting the job done on time and to budget, why does it matter when or where I work? Doing some of my work at night allows me to complete my part-time studies. I then like to start the working day a bit later.'

The question is how do you harness Mandy's energy, drive and enthusiasm to best suit the organisation? Roz, the HR director, understands Mandy more than most: 'Mandy tends to focus on results rather than processes. She really does want to get the job done, but she wants to do it in her own way.'

'The flexibility Mandy seeks is not unique to her. Many of our staff members are looking for the opportunity to work more flexibly and our technology makes this possible. They can work virtually anywhere or at any time that is convenient to them. Managers just need to have confidence that this will work. If we do not provide flexibility we risk losing people like Mandy. She has already had five quite distinct jobs, giving her broad experience, and she has just turned 30. Her career has generally been unhampered by concerns for hierarchy and unnecessary compliance. Mandy is great at asking the 'dumb' questions that actually turn out to be the ones that reveal our short-comings and that make us think about why we do things a certain way.'

## Further Resources for Workflow Management

- Ethics Framework: section on reporting breaches and evaluating organisational performance
- Ethics Framework Planner: how to report breaches and evaluate organisational performance
- Good Practice Guide on Governance for Victorian Public Sector Entities



- People Matter in Action: Making the Most of the People Matter Survey People Matter Survey Main Findings Report



# 10. Workplace Dispute Systems

**Fact:** 87% of employees say they can approach their manager to discuss concerns and grievances. –

*People Matter Survey 2010*

## Understanding Workplace Dispute systems

### The organisation's role in workplace dispute systems

In the ideal situation:

- The organisation considers conflict to be a natural part of life rather than the product of individual 'trouble-makers'. Working through differences of opinion can result in better analysis of problems and strategies.
- The organisation views conflict as an organisational concern rather than an individual problem. It has consistent and coherent policies, procedures and practices to deal with negative behaviours.
- The organisation identifies and resolves conflict quickly and fairly. The parties work together to achieve mutually agreeable solutions.
- The organisation promotes respect and trust between all staff members.

### The manager's role in workplace dispute systems

In the ideal situation:

- Managers model and encourage cooperation and positive work relationships in their team. They tell staff what is expected of them and take their work preferences into account.
- Managers encourage open communication and informal resolution of conflicts.
- Managers inform their staff about the dispute resolution resources available to them including policies, processes and counselling.
- Managers don't tolerate negative behaviours. They act quickly to resolve any situations that do arise.

### The individual's role in workplace dispute systems

In the ideal situation:



- Individuals enjoy respectful and productive work relationships with others in the organisation. They feel their views and opinions are valued by others.
- Individuals regard most disputes as an opportunity to analyse problems or strategies more thoroughly rather than a failure to agree.
- Individuals clarify their manager's expectations of them and report any problems or conflicts without fear of discrimination. They are aware of the workplace dispute systems in place and can obtain any supporting resources.
- Individuals don't tolerate negative behaviours and act quickly to address situations that do arise.

## The litmus test for workplace dispute systems

Some important questions to ask about your organisation:

- Can managers recognise the difference between positive and negative conflict?
- Does the organisation have both informal and formal workplace dispute procedures in place?
- Is the effectiveness of workplace dispute policies and procedures regularly evaluated?
- Does the organisation promote workplace dispute policies and procedures to all staff?
- Can individuals confidentially discuss their problems at work?
- Do managers encourage staff to collaboratively resolve disputes?
- Are individuals involved in collaborative decision-making and negotiation when engaged in conflict?

### Measures

Measures that may be useful for confirming the quick check tool results or monitoring cultural change could include:

- Unscheduled absence rate
- Separation rate

[A Dictionary of People Metrics](#)



## Case Study: Subtle Resolution

Donna complains to her boss Carrie that her colleague Mel has intimidated her on several occasions. She says Mel has stood behind her desk in a menacing way, crowded her out in the lift and made rude gestures at her.

Carrie finds the claims hard to believe. Mel is a good worker, though somewhat of a loner. Carrie has never seen Mel intimidate anyone but she agrees with Donna to monitor the situation over the next week and also not to raise the matter with Mel herself. While Carrie doesn't witness any of the behaviours Donna described, she becomes aware of some tensions in the team. She tells Donna she will consult the HR director for advice on what to do next.

The next day a meeting is held between Carrie, a counsellor and a conflict resolution officer to discuss options. One option is to initiate an immediate investigation into Donna's complaint, which would involve interviewing Donna, Mel and any witnesses. A second option is to arrange a conflict resolution workshop for the entire team. This second option is preferred because of Donna's reluctance to speak up about her complaint and the opportunity to observe the teams dynamics during the workshop and possibly identify the cause of tension between team members. Additionally the organisation regularly holds such workshops.

At the workshop it becomes clear that Donna's behaviour contributes significantly to her conflict with Mel and other colleagues. While Mel reacts assertively to Donna's jibes and taunts, it is never out of proportion with the situation.

The team gets on better after the workshop. Donna accepts she has contributed to tensions at work, seeks the counsellor's help in changing her behaviour and begins to interact better with her colleagues. She appreciates getting the situation resolved in a low-key way that did not cause her embarrassment. Mel never learns about the original complaint against her, but does learn about more constructive ways to deal with conflict.

## Further Resources for Workflow Management

- Reasonable avenue of redress is a public sector employment principle in the [Public Administration Act 2004](#)
- [Developing Conflict Resilient Workplaces](#)

- Fair and Reasonable Treatment Standard and Guidelines
- **Managing Poor Behaviour in the Workplace**
- Reasonable Avenue of Redress Standard and Guidelines



# Resources and Further Reading

## Resources

### Measures of Workplace Culture<sup>1</sup>

Measure	How is it measured	What it indicates
Age Staffing Breakdown	Age / Headcount x 100	The age mix of employees
Average Annual Salary per FTE	Total annual salary / FTE	The average salary of a full time employee
Career Path Ratio (Promotion Rate)	Promotions / Transfers	The ratio of promotions to transfers
Compensation Satisfaction Index	Survey	Satisfaction with wage package
Development Program Saturation Rate	Participants / Eligible for development x 100	Rate of participation in development activities
Employee Commitment Index	Survey	Commitment to the organisation
Employee Engagement Index	Survey	Engagement in work

<b>Measure</b>	<b>How is it measured</b>	<b>What it indicates</b>
Employee Retention Index	Survey	Intention to leave the organisation
Employee Satisfaction with Leadership	Survey	Satisfaction with the organisation's leadership
Employment Brand Strength	Survey	Organisation's attractiveness to current and potential employees
Employment Level Staffing Breakdown	Employment level / Headcount x 100	The proportion of employees in various job classifications or salary bands
External Hire Rate	External hires / Average headcount x 100	The proportion of new employees joining the organisation
Flexible Work Hours Rate	Flexible workers / Headcount x 100	The proportion of employees working flexible hours
Gender Staffing Breakdown	Gender / Headcount x 100	The proportion of male and female employees



<b>Measure</b>	<b>How is it measured</b>	<b>What it indicates</b>
Internal Movement Rate	Internal movements / Average Headcount x 100	The proportion of employees who were promoted, transferred or demoted
Involuntary Termination Rate	Involuntary terminations / Average Headcount x 100	The proportion of employees who were fired or laid off work
Manager Quality Index	Survey	Satisfaction with direct manager
New Hire Failure Factor	Short tenure separations / External hires x 100	The proportion of new recruits who left the organisation after a short time
New Hire Performance Satisfaction (Progression)	Survey	Managers' satisfaction with the (performance of new recruits
Organisation Tenure Staffing Breakdown	Tenure / Headcount x 100	The proportion of employees who have worked in the organisation for various periods of time



<b>Measure</b>	<b>How is it measured</b>	<b>What it indicates</b>
Rehire Rate	$\text{Rehires} / \text{Hires} \times 100$	The proportion of former employees rejoining the organisation
Retention Rate	$\frac{\text{Headcount} + \text{External Hires} - \text{Terminations}}{\text{Headcount} + \text{External Hires}} \times 100$	The proportion of employees remaining with the organisation
Separation Rate	$\frac{\text{Separations}}{\text{Average headcount}} \times 100$	The proportion of employees leaving the organisation either voluntarily or involuntarily
Separation Reason Breakdown	$\frac{\text{Separation reason}}{\text{Separations}} \times 100$	The proportion of employees leaving the organisation for various reasons
Staffing Rate – 50+ Years Old	$\frac{50+ \text{ age}}{\text{Headcount}} \times 100$	The proportion of employees who are 50 or older
Staffing Rate – Managerial	$\frac{\text{Manager}}{\text{Headcount}} \times 100$	The proportion of employees who are managers
Staffing Rate – Part Time	$\frac{\text{Part time}}{\text{Headcount}} \times 100$	The proportion of part-time employees



<b>Measure</b>	<b>How is it measured</b>	<b>What it indicates</b>
Staffing Rate – Temporary	$\frac{\text{FTE temporary}}{\text{FTE}} \times 100$	The proportion of temporary employees
Staffing rate < 1 Year	$\frac{\text{<1 year tenure}}{\text{Headcount}} \times 100$	The proportion of employees with less than one year's service
Unscheduled Absence <sup>2</sup> Days	$\frac{\text{Unscheduled absence days}}{\text{Average FTE employee}}$	The number of days of unavoidable leave taken by the average employee
Unscheduled Absence Rate	$\frac{\text{Unscheduled absence days}}{\text{Workdays}} \times 100$	The proportion of days lost through unavoidable absence
Voluntary Separation Rate	$\frac{\text{Voluntary separations}}{\text{Average headcount}} \times 100$	The proportion of employees who resigned or retired

## Summary of VPSC Resources



Resource	What is it?	How can it help
A Dictionary of People Metrics	A dictionary of items HR practitioners can measure to monitor organisational culture, succession planning, leadership development, recruitment and talent management.	Enables HR managers to identify and respond to workforce trends.
Attracting and Retaining an Ageing Workforce	A guide to thinking about the role workforce culture, job design, recruitment, learning and development reward and recognition, and health and wellbeing play in the attraction and retention of mature staff.	Creates a workplace in which people of all ages feel welcome.
Attracting and Retaining Staff: A Guide for the Public Sector in Rural and Regional Victoria	A guide to attracting and retaining professional staff in regional Victoria through strategies such as skilled migration, relocation support and other incentives.	Creates a workplace that is attractive to professional staff in regional Victoria.



Resource	What is it?	How can it help
Best Practice Recruitment and Selection Toolkit	A set of resources comprising information sheets, a research report, a training program and templates to implement best practice in recruitment and selection	Results in well designed jobs and career development plans.
Capability Framework: Card Set; Victoria Public Employment; VPS	A card set and accompanying guides that describe the personal qualities, knowledge and skills typically needed to perform public sector roles.	Results in well designed jobs and career development plans.
Careers with the Victorian Government	A website that advertises job opportunities in the Victorian public sector	Matches jobs to potential employees.



Resource	What is it?	How can it help
Code of Conduct: Victorian Public Sector Employees; Victorian Public Sector Employees of Special Bodies	A guide to demonstrating the public sector values of responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership and a commitment to human rights.	Guides staff behaviour in interactions with government, the community and each other.
Developing Conflict Resilient Workplaces	A guide to using non-adversarial approaches to resolve disputes more quickly and with less associated cost.	Enables staff to resolve conflict themselves.
Developing Leadership: Strengthening Leadership in the VPS	A research report considering challenges in public sector leadership, international trends, and action the VPS could take to ensure strong leadership.	Develops the leadership skills of staff.



**Resource****What is it?****How can it help**

Directors' Code of Conduct and Guidance Notes

A code expressing the public sector values in terms that are most relevant to the special role and duties of board directors.

Guides board directors' behaviour.

Ethics Framework (and Planner)

A guide and associated workbook for creating an ethical culture. They describe good practice and typical organisational strategies; ask some diagnostic questions and list further reading.

Establishes a cohesive set of policies, procedures and practices to reward ethical behaviour and guard against ethical risks.

Ethics Resource Kit including: Implementation Guide; Leading the Way; Tips for Sustaining an Ethical Workplace; Workshops

A comprehensive learning and development resource that employers can customise to their organisation to help make the values and employment principles meaningful for their staff.

Develops ethical decision making skills.



Resource	What is it?	How can it help
Feedback Matters: Effective Communication is Essential	A report analysing the effect that feedback has on employee attitudes to their organisation and relationships at work in the Victorian public sector.	Reinforces the importance of informal feedback
Good Practice Guide on Governance for Victorian Public Sector Entities	A guide explaining the environment in which public entities exist and the department, board, chief executive and stakeholders.	Clarifies the roles and responsibilities of board directors.
Great Managers, Great Results	A self assessment and planning tool for managers to help strengthen their management capacity.	Develops the skills of managers.
Making Flexible Work a Success	A guide promoting the adoption of flexible work arrangements.	Shows how mutually beneficial flexible work arrangements can provide better work outcomes.



Resource	What is it?	How can it help
Managing Poor Behaviour in the Workplace	A guide to investigating poor behaviour and disciplining the staff member concerned.	Enables managers to respond constructively to staff who behave poorly.
People Matter Survey: Main Findings Report and People Matter in Action	An annual report of how well employees believe the Victorian public sector values and employment principles are being applied in their organisation. In People Matter in Action, three organisations share their experience of using the survey to make improvements at work.	Identifies the values and principles that are being applied well and where change is needed.
Public Administration Act 2004	Legislation providing a framework for good governance in the Victorian public sector.	Defines the public sector values and employment principles.



**Resource****What is it?****How can it help**

Standards and Guidelines:  
Equal Employment  
Opportunity; Fair and  
Reasonable Treatment;  
Merit in Employment;  
Reasonable Avenue of  
Redress

A set of binding standards on application of the public sector employment principles The guidelines build on the minimum requirements specified in the standards.

Results in fair employment policies, processes and practices.

Succession Risk  
Management Toolkit

A set of fact sheets, checklists and templates to aid discussion of succession risk and mitigation.

Considers whether current employees have the skills and aspirations to undertake critical roles.

Talking Performance

An e-learning resource and book on performance management that covers setting goals, providing feedback, having difficult conversations and responding to individual differences.

Enables managers to effectively coach staff to better performance.



Resource	What is it?	How can it help
The Values Report	Qualitative research on the benefits and challenges of embedding values	Tips for creating a values-based culture in a number of organisational settings.
Victorian Leadership Development Centre	A body established by the State Coordination and Management Council to foster a culture of leadership in the public sector.	Supports good practice in leadership development and talent succession management.
Victorian Public Sector Workforce Planning Resource Kit	A set of publications covering all facets of workforce planning in the Victorian public sector.	Enables employers to get the right number of people with the right skills in the right jobs at the right time.
Welcome to Management	A guide for new managers.	Gives new managers the confidence to manage staff.



Resource	What is it?	How can it help
Welcome to the Board	An introduction to public sector governance for board directors. It explains key roles and functions.	Clarifies the role and obligations of board directors.

## A Closer Look at the VPSC Resources

Resource	V	C	Lp	Rt	Lg	Hr	W	P	Rk	D
A Dictionary of People Metrics						②				
Attracting and Retaining an Ageing Workforce				②						
Attracting and Retaining Staff: A Guide for the Public Sector in Rural and Regional Victoria				②						
Best Practice Recruitment and Selection Toolkit				②						
Careers with the Victorian Government				②						
Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees	②	②				②		②		
Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees of Special Bodies	②	②				②		②		



Resource	V	C	Lp	Rt	Lg	Hr	W	P	Rk	D
Developing Conflict Resilient Workplaces			?							?
Developing Leaders		?			?					
Directors' Code of Conduct and Guidance Notes	?	?				?		?		
Equal Employment Opportunity Standard and Guidelines				?		?				
Ethics Framework and Planner	?	?	?		?	?		?	?	
Ethics Resource Kit	?	?	?		?			?	?	
Fair and Reasonable Treatment Standard and Guidelines	?		?	?		?	?			?
Feedback Matters: Effective Communication is Essential			?					?		
Good Practice Guide on Governance for Victorian Public Sector Entities						?			?	
Great Managers, Great Results		?			?					
Making Flexible Work a Success						?				
Managing Poor Behaviour in the Workplace										?
Merit in Employment Standard and Guidelines				?	?	?		?		



Resource	V	C	Lp	Rt	Lg	Hr	W	P	Rk	D
People Matter in Action									?	
People Matter Survey Main Findings Report									?	
Public Administration Act 2004	?	?		?						?
Reasonable Avenue of Redress Standard and Guidelines						?				?
Succession Risk Management Toolkit				?	?		?			
Talking Performance			?					?		
The Values Report	?									
The Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework				?	?			?		
The VPS Employment Capability Framework				?	?			?		
Victorian Leadership Development Centre					?					
Victorian Public Sector Workforce Planning Resource Kit				?	?		?	?		
VPS Employment Capability Framework Card Set				?	?			?		
Welcome to Management		?			?					
Welcome to the Board						?				
<b>V</b> = Values; <b>Lp</b> = Leadership; <b>C</b> = Communications; <b>Rt</b> = Recruitment; <b>Lg</b> = Learning; <b>HR</b> = Hr policies; <b>W</b> = Workflow; <b>Pv</b> = Performance; <b>R</b> = Risks; <b>D</b> = Dispute										



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## Footnotes

1. Adapted from Victorian Public Sector Commission, *A Dictionary of People Metrics*, Victoria, 2010
2. Unavoidable absence includes sick leave, carers leave, compassionate leave, parental leave, jury duty etc

# Acknowledgements

The Victorian Public Sector Commission acknowledges the contribution that Monash University's Social & Economic Interface Research Network (SEIRnet), Innovative Practice and Victorian public sector organisations have made to this toolkit.

