

MODEL FOR WORKPLCE PRODUCTIVITY

- Universal application (*every participant in every organisation*)
- Simple, effective, coherent.
- Cost effective = \$0

A look at almost any organisation will reveal that the most common factor affecting productivity is human decision-making. Various organisations have strategies to improve workforce productivity but, from a global perspective, the Australian workforce does not have a cohesive productivity culture. Organisations have mission, vision, and philosophy statements to describe their goals or purpose, and some organisations have codes of behaviour, but these seldom address productivity. There is little expectation of how people should approach their decision-making at work. Improving productivity is about making effective decisions and having the capacity to embrace change to increase the human output within the workplace. And the individual needs to realise a personal outcome to feel more motivated, valued and satisfied.

Individuals need clear and credible expectations of how to approach their job, and that is typically demonstrated in the form of tasks. Machines are also good at tasks, but its people who make decisions. So, we need to provide expectations about how individuals make decisions in the workplace. Where behaviour follows thinking, productive behaviour will follow productive thinking. Ergo, we need to establish a culture of productive thinking in the workplace that allows the individual to feel proud about their workplace activity. Workplace practices such as risk management, quality assurance and quality improvement have exist to improve outcomes, but they have previously been codified for limited areas of application, with the result that individuals do not have ownership of these practices or the thinking behind them.

A properly articulated service culture statement which is actively and universally applied throughout the workforce can encourage individuals to take ownership of the principles of productive decision-making and apply them to their daily workplace activity. This has the potential to dramatically improve workplace culture, and individual's personal and professional development, because productive thinking has the potential to impact every aspect of an individual's life. The individual benefits by learning to think critically and creatively, and the organisation benefits from the increased productivity and improved outcomes. With the explicit expectation that every employee thinks critically at work, the employer also has an objective management tool for monitoring individual performance. A service culture statement makes it easier to encourage personnel performance from induction and throughout their term of employment.

Importantly, the service culture principles must apply equally to every person in the organisation, from top to bottom. Any people, policies or procedures that do not facilitate innovation and quality improvement, present a barrier to productivity, and need to be critically reviewed. When an organisation decides to implement the suggested service culture statement, they must ensure a process for genuine quality improvement and innovation is identified.

(Draft) SERVICE CULTURE STATEMENT

(XYZ) engages a dynamic team of personnel to service a client cohort that has (diverse health) needs. Every person who works for (XYZ) contributes to positive outcomes for the client. A strong professional service culture is essential to overcome the obstacles presented by (often isolated, resource challenged, culturally diverse environments,) and to deliver consistent and effective services. All workplace decisions and activities can be optimised by four key elements that contribute to job satisfaction for employees and positive, productive outcomes for (XYZ) and our client cohort.

Risk Management:	<i>What could possibly go wrong?</i>
Quality Assurance:	<i>What can I do to prevent it from going wrong?</i>
Quality Improvement:	<i>How can I do it better?</i>
Communication:	<i>How do I share information?</i>

Risk management forms the foundation approach or attitude to our activities. Risk management means always asking ‘what if?’ before something happens, then putting quality assurance measures in place to ensure that nothing does go wrong. Identifying a problem is the first step toward preventing it. Contingency planning for identified risks underpins all critical activities to mitigate the consequences if something does go wrong.

Quality Assurance is the range of activities that ensure a specific outcome or standard is achieved every time. Quality assurance activities can range from a simple checklist to a complex formal audit process. Effective quality assurance is the next level of risk management.

Continuous Quality (Productivity) Improvement is the natural progression from risk management & quality assurance, only this time the focus is on creativity as well as process. XYZ promotes a culture of excellence where personnel are always looking at how to do things better. Better may mean easier, more efficiently, more consistently, more reliably, more cost effectively, or to a higher standard. Quality improvement initiatives must address the needs of all stakeholders.

Communication is the fourth element of a strong service culture. The quality of workplace communication has a direct and proportional effect on productivity. Professional communication is clear, concise & complete. Protocols and pathways often form standards to ensure that written information is presented in a consistent and professional manner that optimises the effectiveness of communication and reduces misunderstanding. Verbal communication must also reflect these professional standards and be free from jargon, emotional nuances, and conflict. Individuals must take full responsibility for their communication in the workplace to ensure that personal issues and idiosyncrasies are managed in objective and accountable terms, and do not obstruct professional communication.