

## **Key messages and edits for Scott Hansen's Podcast**

### **Changing role of HR: Partnering with the business to identify, develop and execute workforce strategies**

#### Key messages:

- Has observed that HR has moved from a 'corporate function' that exists to resolve procedural issues to a business partner who provides strategic advisory and general counsel service to the business and to executive leaders
- Scott has learnt that an HR business partner is only as valuable to you as what you give them in terms of context - why you are asking them to do something, what do you need them to do. HR business partners have become an intrinsic part of their business decisions and executive discussions around their workforce and seek their advice on how they need to transition from where they are now to the future.
- In an organisation which has experienced significant ongoing challenges the HR business partners has been crucial to assisting leaders manage a highly stressed and dispersed workforce who are having to absorb the stress and pressure of their local communities experiencing drought, towns running out of water, extreme temperatures, fish deaths, bushfires and now the pandemic. The HR business partners have developed a strong understanding of the business through being a part of executive meetings and have provided valuable support and assistance to staff dealing with tragic stories and traumas.
- Core capabilities required of effective HR business partners are that they are really open to learning, understand the business and understand the 'why' we do and 'what' we do, understand the diverse range of staff and the workforce – knowing it is not homogenous, relate to everyone from entry level staff to staff who have been with the organisation for 30 years, demonstrate empathy and provide trusted tailored solutions, open frank communicators, technical HR capabilities to ask the right questions and provide a key source of information.
- Spending a day in an employee's shoes is an excellent way for HR business partners – observe and walk alongside the workforce to build understanding and to build relationships.
- Importance of getting down from the high level 'numbers' from surveys like People Matters and developing a detailed understanding of what it really means to the individual, teams, clusters and what it means to be engaged. Crucial to build the trust.
- Values the monthly data snapshot and insights gained through conversations with the HR business partner in relation to the data around recruitment, vacancies, and remedying work health and safety issues – working through solutions together.
- Have started the digital transformation of staff responding to the disruptions of the bushfires and the pandemic – their workforce is experienced at working anywhere and they are doing this more broadly across the organisation and the State. They are focused on providing the digital tools to enable their employees to work wherever they need to. They are a decentralized agency which is spread broadly and they are currently participating in a pilot program to work more flexibly around the hours of work that meets the needs of the work they are doing as well as their family requirements. They are agnostic now about the work hours.
- Have responded to the pandemic through regular, at times daily, contact with their HR business partners to gather intel in relation to risks and opportunities of the workforce and the remainder of the public service to ensure the organisation was

able to respond effectively and ensure business continuity. Asking the right questions so that they could respond to complex issues. What to keep doing and not stop doing post pandemic – such as ongoing conversations, connections and access to their colleagues and managers.

- The HR business partner identified individuals who were either struggling with the isolation or assisting staff who needed to return to Covid safe work solutions and continue to operate - through their trust and understanding of their workforce.
- A tip for coaching managers to manage performance of remote staff set up early conversations to establish clear expectations about the outcomes, timeframes and operating procedures they are working towards – otherwise is it hard to either measure performance or to set directional activities for staff to undertake. It is also important to report back on milestones.

#### References:

- Listening to podcasts to keep you up to date.
- HBR Idea Casts – 30 min/120 min – interviews
- TED Talks in relation to what's happening around the globe