

People analytics: sourcing workplace and people insights – starting with the basics

00:00:07 - 00:00:12 Welcome back to the second podcast in the People Analytics theme. I'm Jane

00:00:12 - 00:00:16 Latimer, Principal Adviser at the Public Service Commission and I'm truly

00:00:16 - 00:00:20 excited to introduce this episode. Tanya Hammond is interviewing Richard

00:00:20 - 00:00:24 Griffiths, Executive Director Workforce Planning and Talent Development,

00:00:24 - 00:00:29 Ministry of Health, on sourcing workplace people insights starting the with

00:00:29 - 00:00:33 basics. During this interview, Richard takes the complex field of people

00:00:33 - 00:00:37 analytics and through a very professional narrative that is so easy to understand

00:00:37 - 00:00:42 , takes us on a journey covering how to build and get buy in to a people

00:00:42 - 00:00:47 analytics function, the five key capability sets required to deliver world class

00:00:47 - 00:00:52 people analytics, how to mature the function and how the recent massive

00:00:52 - 00:00:56 changes to the way we work has accelerated the importance of the people

00:00:56 - 00:01:02 analytics function and encouraged innovation and there's so much more, enjoy.

00:01:02 - 00:01:07 Hi I'm Tanya Hammond, CEO of Tailored HR Solutions. I have the pleasure

00:01:07 - 00:01:11 today of speaking with Richard Griffiths, who will be sharing with us his

00:01:11 - 00:01:16 insights in relation to sourcing workplace and people insights, starting with the

00:01:16 - 00:01:20 basics. Welcome, Richard. Thanks Tanya, it's great to be here. It's great to

00:01:20 - 00:01:25 have you. The listeners will be really curious about your background, if you

00:01:25 - 00:01:28 could provide us a short overview that have been terrific. Sure, I'm one of

00:01:28 - 00:01:33 these odd people who knew from early high school what they wanted to do as a

00:01:33 - 00:01:38 career. So I think I was in year nine and I did a business studies unit that had a

00:01:38 - 00:01:42 unit of human resources in it, personnel management. So I took an interest in
00:01:42 - 00:01:47 HR, studied business for the HSC, left school, did a business degree at
00:01:47 - 00:01:50 university majoring in human resource management. I was lucky enough to get
00:01:50 - 00:01:54 a graduate program in the New South Wales health system. So a two year
00:01:54 - 00:01:59 graduate placement, working through an area office but doing placements in
00:01:59 - 00:02:04 hospitals, relieving HR managers. That was a really good grounding. It was a
00:02:04 - 00:02:10 two year graduate rotation, but we focused on some areas of specialisation. So
00:02:10 - 00:02:14 recruitment, one of the placements was responsible for reporting on the
00:02:14 - 00:02:18 workforce performance for the area health service at the time. So it was
00:02:18 - 00:02:22 interesting, it was quite rudimentary people analytics, but it was my early
00:02:22 - 00:02:26 introduction into workforce reporting. I stayed in Health for quite a while,
00:02:26 - 00:02:30 moved into some senior roles in, as a generalist HR Manager and then a
00:02:30 - 00:02:37 Director in one of the health districts. I left Health for five years or so, I did a
00:02:37 - 00:02:42 two year stint at TAFE NSW as a Director of People and Culture and then a
00:02:42 - 00:02:46 few years at New South Wales Police as the Group Director of People and
00:02:46 - 00:02:52 Culture, and then returned to Health in January 2019. The placements outside
00:02:52 - 00:02:56 of Health were extraordinarily beneficial to me, but Health was calling me
00:02:56 - 00:03:00 back. So I decided to come back into the health system and was lucky enough
00:03:00 - 00:03:04 to get a role as an Executive Director in the Ministry of Health, which is the
00:03:04 - 00:03:09 cluster wide role responsible for workforce planning and talent. So it's been a
00:03:09 - 00:03:14 very public sector focused career, but one that I've really loved so far. That's
00:03:14 - 00:03:19 great, thanks Richard. I guess you've observed some changes in the HR
00:03:19 - 00:03:23 function over that time then. What's been your key observations of the

00:03:23 - 00:03:28 change in the HR role and the function over that time? You know, I joined Human

00:03:28 - 00:03:32 Resources at a really interesting time, actually, it was probably on that

00:03:32 - 00:03:37 transformation phase where HR was moving from a support function to a

00:03:37 - 00:03:43 strategic business unit. So it moved from that function responsible for carrying

00:03:43 - 00:03:49 out transaction functions and support functions associated with the staff. I

00:03:49 - 00:03:53 mean, obviously we did things like we recruited and we organised pay and we

00:03:53 - 00:03:58 reported against the workforce and we manage safety and things but it was a

00:03:58 - 00:04:03 little more transactional and responsive. Over the years, what I've seen and

00:04:03 - 00:04:10 thankfully have been part of, is moving that function to a real business partner

00:04:10 - 00:04:14 for the organisation and most contemporary organisations have that people

00:04:14 - 00:04:19 function at the exec table and the head of that function equivalent to their

00:04:19 - 00:04:23 executive peers and Health, thankfully, is in that space. We've got our

00:04:23 - 00:04:28 Directors of People and Culture on our executive teams and they're equivalent

00:04:28 - 00:04:33 to their executive peers. What I've observed though, in that transformation

00:04:33 - 00:04:37 where we're moving from something providing workforce support to really

00:04:37 - 00:04:42 looking at providing workforce solutions, forecasting workforce changes and

00:04:42 - 00:04:46 things, what I've really observed is that's changed the nature of the HR

00:04:46 - 00:04:51 practitioner. A HR practitioner now really doesn't operate within a narrow role

00:04:51 - 00:04:56 description. It's a fairly broad business partner role. Obviously, those

00:04:56 - 00:05:00 practitioners need some guidance around expectation of performance but I find

00:05:00 - 00:05:05 that to really thrive in HR, you need to be very adaptable and flexible and a

00:05:05 - 00:05:11 good HR function now is one that predicts workforce issues, builds workforce

00:05:11 - 00:05:15 performance, helps the business prepare for the future by disrupting BAU to

00:05:15 - 00:05:20 support innovation, ensuring that the organisation is really optimising its use
00:05:20 - 00:05:26 of the workforce. What's the kind of capabilities that you are observing now
00:05:26 - 00:05:31 that HR practitioners absolutely have to have then, to perform that role that
00:05:31 - 00:05:36 you've just described? The willingness to work and adapt, so work flexibly and
00:05:36 - 00:05:40 adapt, innovation, so they need to think outside the square now. You know, I
00:05:40 - 00:05:45 think the era that we're entering is a lot more challenging in terms of building
00:05:45 - 00:05:49 workforce performance, so new solutions are needed and you need someone
00:05:49 - 00:05:54 that's going to be really thinking outside the square and thinking quite
00:05:54 - 00:05:59 creatively and the old cliché I think you need a fair amount of resilience as a
00:05:59 - 00:06:04 HR practitioner. There is still an element of justifying our place in the
00:06:04 - 00:06:10 executive, and so I think you need to be relatively resilient to operate in that
00:06:10 - 00:06:13 environment, where that always has to be in the back of your mind, you know,
00:06:13 - 00:06:16 we're contributing to the executive, but at the same time we're also justifying
00:06:16 - 00:06:22 our place. Yeah, like it or not. I guess if we turn our, sort of, thoughts and our
00:06:22 - 00:06:27 discussion to the field of people analytics, which I believe is a very favourite
00:06:27 - 00:06:32 area of yours, Richard and I guess I'd be curious about your observations in
00:06:32 - 00:06:37 relation to how the people analytics functions are changing and the value that
00:06:37 - 00:06:42 you're seeing provided to organisation leaders and managers and I'd be also
00:06:42 - 00:06:46 interested, what you believe these functions will do more of into the future?
00:06:46 - 00:06:52 So just a whole bunch of questions there all in one. Yeah, look, I think the
00:06:52 - 00:06:56 issue with the business environment that we're operating in now is it's
00:06:56 - 00:07:01 operating in a more highly regulated environment. So business environments
00:07:01 - 00:07:06 are more challenging, consumers are more empowered, markets are generally

00:07:06 - 00:07:11 open to competition. So the labour in an organisation needs to be as efficient
00:07:11 - 00:07:15 and as productive as possible in order for them to compete and to survive in
00:07:15 - 00:07:20 that environment. In government, I mean, obviously we've got a slightly
00:07:20 - 00:07:26 different operating environment in most of our agencies, but the challenge is
00:07:26 - 00:07:32 equally there in that we are entrusted by the public to spend their money and
00:07:32 - 00:07:36 we're, we are expected to do that as efficiently and as effectively as possible
00:07:36 - 00:07:43 and those challenges around regulation and at times, some market challenges
00:07:43 - 00:07:48 exist with us as well. Leaders now need to have certainty that their business
00:07:48 - 00:07:52 units are operating optimally and seek some prediction that they will actually
00:07:52 - 00:07:57 continue to do so. So where as before we were with people analytics we were
00:07:57 - 00:08:03 looking at some of the fairly routine HR, statistics on, you know, looking at
00:08:03 - 00:08:07 the engagement costs and productive and non productive hours, leave liabilities
00:08:07 - 00:08:12 and things, safety data. Increasingly, now it's a demand for predictive analysis
00:08:12 - 00:08:17 , particularly around work of the future, emerging technologies and how we'll
00:08:17 - 00:08:23 respond to some of that changing consumer expectations. So, in order to
00:08:23 - 00:08:27 really contribute to that, people analytics functions really have to be, and
00:08:27 - 00:08:30 thankfully are increasingly being, more intrinsically linked with risk
00:08:30 - 00:08:34 management, business strategy and some of the activity functions. Where do I
00:08:34 - 00:08:38 think we're going in the future? Well, I think we need to be in that predictive
00:08:38 - 00:08:43 space a lot more. I think the function is valued when you connect it to business
00:08:43 - 00:08:48 activity, to financial functions and risk functions, and that business leaders can
00:08:48 - 00:08:53 see that that link is there but I think they need help and guidance in identifying
00:08:53 - 00:08:58 risks and identifying some of the opportunities that the workforce can provide

00:08:58 - 00:09:02 and opportunities to mitigate some of those business risks. So what that means
00:09:02 - 00:09:05 for people analytics functions obviously, then, is that our data has to be linked
00:09:05 - 00:09:10 . We can't just have standalone data source where we're reporting on workforce
00:09:10 - 00:09:15 performance. It needs to be integrated wherever it can be so that all those
00:09:15 - 00:09:20 analytics units, those financial analysis units, the activity units, that they're
00:09:20 - 00:09:25 all using one source of truth and then we get that commonality in the data. In
00:09:25 - 00:09:31 terms of how I think the functions could be even more valued in the future,
00:09:31 - 00:09:36 what I find particularly useful with analytical areas is to work with your
00:09:36 - 00:09:42 colleague functions, so those other analytical teams and run some look backs,
00:09:42 - 00:09:49 so retrospectively analyse a month reporting, for example, from each of those
00:09:49 - 00:09:53 analytical functions in the business. So pick a month, maybe or a quarter,
00:09:53 - 00:09:58 look back and have a look to see what happened in the proceeding three
00:09:58 - 00:10:02 months, and was there anything that was actually showing as an indicator that
00:10:02 - 00:10:06 if you'd work together, you might have captured as supposed to reporting
00:10:06 - 00:10:10 separately. So it's always a useful exercise, and it's quite eye opening when
00:10:10 - 00:10:14 you start to map out some of the things that you missed because you weren't
00:10:14 - 00:10:19 analysing that data together. I was really keen to see that at Police, actually,
00:10:19 - 00:10:23 because there was very early work but I was looking at if we had patterns of
00:10:23 - 00:10:28 police presence and so looking at crime geographically and then looking at
00:10:28 - 00:10:33 police presence geographically and retrospectively mapping it out, to see
00:10:33 - 00:10:36 whether or not that presence, if we'd had it in the right spot, would have
00:10:36 - 00:10:40 disrupted that crime. It was very early when I was there, but I think as that
00:10:40 - 00:10:44 technology develops, it will become more and more sophisticated. What about

00:10:44 - 00:10:47 in your current role Richard, have you got any examples of how that might
00:10:47 - 00:10:51 work then, in the Ministry of Health sphere as well? Well, we're certainly
00:10:51 - 00:10:58 looking at marrying things like patient experience data with staff experience
00:10:58 - 00:11:02 data to see whether or not there's correlations in terms of perhaps satisfaction
00:11:02 - 00:11:06 rates, for example, in staff and whether that actually translates to a better
00:11:06 - 00:11:11 patient experience. We know anecdotally that it does but what we're trying to
00:11:11 - 00:11:16 do is map that out with data. You know that's, if you actually look at that type
00:11:16 - 00:11:20 of information, you can then start to capture, you can start to look at
00:11:20 - 00:11:24 preventative measures like, you know, preventing some either poor patient
00:11:24 - 00:11:30 experience or adverse incidents, before it gets to the worst type of event. If
00:11:30 - 00:11:34 you were asked to set up a people analytics function today, what would you
00:11:34 - 00:11:39 suggest our listeners could start considering in terms of the business case, the
00:11:39 - 00:11:44 roles, the capabilities and tools that you've used to support that function? Yeah
00:11:44 - 00:11:48 , that's a great question. To be honest if I'd done it over, I'm not sure I would
00:11:48 - 00:11:53 do it exactly the same way but I'll probably start with what people analytics
00:11:53 - 00:11:58 isn't because it's not just a HR reporting, and I think a lot of people mistake
00:11:58 - 00:12:02 analytics as just a reporting function. That's only just the very beginning of it.
00:12:02 - 00:12:07 Most companies, I suppose, have a HRAS system that provides some element
00:12:07 - 00:12:12 of reporting and a lot of the government agencies have a HR reporting function
00:12:12 - 00:12:18 there, but it's whether or not it's moved across into that analytic space. So I'd
00:12:18 - 00:12:22 start with what's needed in the business. Assess the appetite within the
00:12:22 - 00:12:26 business for the data because you have to really build that case in order to set
00:12:26 - 00:12:31 up the analytics function. What I've found quite useful if you don't know where

00:12:31 - 00:12:35 to start, look for some of those challenging problems, the wicked problems in
00:12:35 - 00:12:39 the business and see whether data would assist in solving some of those issues
00:12:39 - 00:12:43 or look for some of the key strategic priorities that are struggling to gain
00:12:43 - 00:12:48 traction. Most business units have one, two key strategy areas that they just
00:12:48 - 00:12:52 can't get off the ground for whatever reason, and it might be that they don't
00:12:52 - 00:12:56 have enough information to really know where to start. So it's useful to
00:12:56 - 00:13:00 highlight to the executive what could be achieved by having access to good
00:13:00 - 00:13:04 data and analytics and how that might actually benefit some of that strategy
00:13:04 - 00:13:09 traction, and then look at the roles that you have in your function. I've been
00:13:09 - 00:13:13 lucky enough to work in large HR departments that usually have a number of
00:13:13 - 00:13:18 related HR functions like rostering systems, HR teams, HR systems, the
00:13:18 - 00:13:22 business partners, organisational development roles. Look for roles that would
00:13:22 - 00:13:27 actually benefit from having access to people analytics and where you might be
00:13:27 - 00:13:32 able to achieve some efficiencies, if you can introduce some good data. In
00:13:32 - 00:13:36 establishing some of the functions that I've previously pulled together I've
00:13:36 - 00:13:40 pulled teams together on those related functions and created some of the
00:13:40 - 00:13:45 efficiencies by automating some of the reporting so it frees up some capacity
00:13:45 - 00:13:49 within roles. I'm not someone that prescribes dashboards as a solution to
00:13:49 - 00:13:55 everything, but they do go some way to freeing up some routine, routinely
00:13:55 - 00:13:59 requested reports. I'd just caution with dashboards, though, that part of the
00:13:59 - 00:14:03 value of the analytics function is the analysis, not just the reporting. If you're
00:14:03 - 00:14:08 outsourcing your reporting by having a dashboard function, you do lose some
00:14:08 - 00:14:13 of that ability to provide some analysis. There's a really good article, it was

00:14:13 - 00:14:17 written by Samantha McLaren last year, where she interviews Benjamin
00:14:17 - 00:14:21 Borchorst, who's a Scandinavian Management Consultant. He's a bit of an
00:14:21 - 00:14:26 expert in the data analytics area, and the reason that I sought this particular
00:14:26 - 00:14:31 article out was it particularly focused on what capabilities you need in a people
00:14:31 - 00:14:37 analytics function, and Borchorst talks about five sets of key capabilities and
00:14:37 - 00:14:40 they're data collection and governance, so defining your processes and the
00:14:40 - 00:14:44 ownership of the data. Then, in order to thrive in that area, you need
00:14:44 - 00:14:49 capabilities in your team to design databases and reporting tools that will
00:14:49 - 00:14:53 capture and extract what you need. The second one is data science, and
00:14:53 - 00:14:59 obviously that's using that data to generate insights into the data. So that
00:14:59 - 00:15:05 statistical analysis and obviously to build that capability, a team need to gain
00:15:05 - 00:15:10 skills around that analysis but the various methodologies and tools as well so
00:15:10 - 00:15:15 things like Tableau and Excel. The third is behavioural science, and that's
00:15:15 - 00:15:20 where the real sort of transformation of the analytics function starts because
00:15:20 - 00:15:24 that's where you're looking at the data and throwing the HR lens over it so the
00:15:24 - 00:15:29 people lens and to build that type of capability, your team either need to
00:15:29 - 00:15:35 develop skills around organisational psych or HR or link strongly to the OD
00:15:35 - 00:15:40 function or your HR business partner teams. So that really starts to build some
00:15:40 - 00:15:45 workforce context with the data. The fourth that Borchorst talks about is
00:15:45 - 00:15:49 business acumen, and that's where you understand the business. So you start
00:15:49 - 00:15:55 to learn the context of the business challenges and from the HR context, how
00:15:55 - 00:16:00 that function's going to support business performance. So the analysis needs to
00:16:00 - 00:16:05 be relevant and aligned with overall business strategy and this is where I have

00:16:05 - 00:16:09 made the mistake in the past, as well. I think a lot of HR practitioners probably
00:16:09 - 00:16:13 do the same thing, where we're building workforce reporting frameworks and
00:16:13 - 00:16:19 analytics frameworks to suit HR's need rather than the business needs. The last
00:16:19 - 00:16:23 one is information design and change management and that's where the team
00:16:23 - 00:16:28 need to really, really develop capabilities around design, data visualisation,
00:16:28 - 00:16:33 storytelling and change management. If you can get those five capabilities
00:16:33 - 00:16:39 skill sets in the team, then you're really setting itself up for a really productive
00:16:39 - 00:16:44 analytics unit. In terms of sourcing that though, one of the lessons that I've
00:16:44 - 00:16:51 learnt is businesses often have really highly technically skilled practitioners
00:16:51 - 00:16:56 that understand the HRAS but what I've often had to buy in is that, you know,
00:16:56 - 00:17:00 like a data gun, someone who's really on the up in terms of their career
00:17:00 - 00:17:04 trajectory and you get them before they actually out price themselves from the
00:17:04 - 00:17:08 public sector, someone that tinkers with app development, reporting tools,
00:17:08 - 00:17:12 someone that's really sort of able to play in that space. You need to give them a
00:17:12 - 00:17:15 little bit of freedom so that they can play in that space and stay up to date.
00:17:15 - 00:17:20 Those types of team members, they're the team members that will innovate
00:17:20 - 00:17:24 and help you win stakeholders because they create really good looking tools
00:17:24 - 00:17:30 and reports that hit the mark with stakeholders. That's a really insightful
00:17:30 - 00:17:36 response Richard. I think what's perhaps also needed is curiosity in this space,
00:17:36 - 00:17:41 you've gotta like, you've got to be really deeply curious about, I use to drive my
00:17:41 - 00:17:46 mother crazy with the question, why? Yep. I think that's, in this situation,
00:17:46 - 00:17:50 really important as well. So it's great. You mentioned Tableau and Excel, what
00:17:50 - 00:17:56 other tools do you used or have you seen used by organisations in the public

00:17:56 - 00:18:01 and private sector? Well, the issue with the public sector is we're often limited
00:18:01 - 00:18:04 to certain procurement arrangements, and so there will be products on the
00:18:04 - 00:18:09 market that we may not be able to explore, but I'm always guided, in fact, I'm
00:18:09 - 00:18:15 always guided by that type of person, I mentioned, that person who really
00:18:15 - 00:18:21 hasn't been restricted by a thinking and bureaucracy, and often they can build
00:18:21 - 00:18:25 really good reports and reporting tools. I'm really not a technical expert
00:18:25 - 00:18:31 around, in setting up teams. I create the vision and what I need out of it but I'm
00:18:31 - 00:18:34 really guided by some of those technical experts around what product is best. I
00:18:34 - 00:18:39 probably more challenge what it can do and what I need out of it, and that sort
00:18:39 - 00:18:43 of sends them in the right direction but things like Power BI and those sort of
00:18:43 - 00:18:49 tools are often ones that the analytics teams will actually use. Okay, great.
00:18:49 - 00:18:52 Thanks, Richard. I think what our listeners would be really curious about
00:18:52 - 00:18:57 now, as well, is how you use the data and insights and the things that you're
00:18:57 - 00:19:02 actually currently utilising to make better workforce decisions within Health
00:19:02 - 00:19:06 NSW and other agencies you've worked in. Look, in Health in the business as
00:19:06 - 00:19:12 usual environment the types of data and analytics that we're using is fairly
00:19:12 - 00:19:16 routine sort of performance and activity data, but the key is getting it linked
00:19:16 - 00:19:20 into those related analytical functions so that you have the understanding of the
00:19:20 - 00:19:25 business context. What I've found, in particularly, in the health sector is that
00:19:25 - 00:19:28 the business units in the health sector really want a bit of an understanding
00:19:28 - 00:19:33 around comparative, particularly performance data. So if they're managing a
00:19:33 - 00:19:37 unit or a health agency, they want to know what other health agencies, how
00:19:37 - 00:19:40 they're going so that they can actually build on some of that better practice

00:19:40 - 00:19:47 examples but, you know, in terms of the usual type of analytics, it's obviously
00:19:47 - 00:19:50 the level of productivity in the workforce, working really closely with
00:19:50 - 00:19:55 colleague branches around the patient experience, the financial performance,
00:19:55 - 00:20:00 assistant performance. What's been really interesting, though, is in Covid,
00:20:00 - 00:20:05 and we've seen the value of people analytics function in the pandemic because
00:20:05 - 00:20:09 that has really challenged the health space, as you could imagine a 1 in 100
00:20:09 - 00:20:13 year pandemic. We haven't had this type of pandemic in our lifetime, and we
00:20:13 - 00:20:17 hope that we don't have it again. We're still in the throes of it, of course, but
00:20:17 - 00:20:22 that really challenged our, particularly our workforce planning area. We needed
00:20:22 - 00:20:25 to be sure that we were going to have a workforce that could respond to this
00:20:25 - 00:20:30 pandemic and if we didn't have enough of that workforce, we needed to find
00:20:30 - 00:20:35 ways of very quickly sourcing the workforce and seen some of that playing out
00:20:35 - 00:20:40 in Victoria to a degree with some of the challenges that their wave has
00:20:40 - 00:20:44 presented to them. So the type of data and insights that were called upon to
00:20:44 - 00:20:49 make decisions in the pandemic, really highlighted the value of the supply data
00:20:49 - 00:20:55 , so actual current capacity, total potential capacity, supply in particular
00:20:55 - 00:20:59 disciplines and specialties that would be required for the pandemic. So ICU
00:20:59 - 00:21:04 nurses, doctors, allied health staff. It was really valuable to be able to delve
00:21:04 - 00:21:08 down into geographic data in the workforce because we needed to understand
00:21:08 - 00:21:13 how that would play out in some of our regional areas. What our anticipated
00:21:13 - 00:21:17 supply requirements would be based on some of those viral projections. So
00:21:17 - 00:21:22 you saw the curve that they were regular putting up. We needed to sort of play
00:21:22 - 00:21:27 with that curve to see if it got through to some of the catastrophic areas in that

00:21:27 - 00:21:31 projections, what would that mean in terms of our anticipated supply, and we
00:21:31 - 00:21:35 needed a bit of an idea around the overall market capacity. So this sent a team
00:21:35 - 00:21:41 out from our own business to start looking at other markets and other supply
00:21:41 - 00:21:44 areas. So, for example, a private hospital workforce capacity, we needed to
00:21:44 - 00:21:48 understand what existed there because we might have needed to surge and we
00:21:48 - 00:21:53 still might need to surge that workforce if we end up with another wave, and
00:21:53 - 00:21:57 then you have to then overlay some of the things like anticipated health worker
00:21:57 - 00:22:00 infection rates and that's what's impacting in Victoria at the moment,
00:22:00 - 00:22:05 where they've got 1,000 or so practitioners out of the workforce and then, as we
00:22:05 - 00:22:09 progressed what our actual health worker infection rates look like. So we
00:22:09 - 00:22:14 started to monitor, what did we have out of the workforce at any point in time
00:22:14 - 00:22:19 ? Then project some absences associate with school closures, sick leave,
00:22:19 - 00:22:23 caring responsibilities and then vulnerable worker cohorts was really
00:22:23 - 00:22:28 challenging because this sort of throws up some challenges around the limits
00:22:28 - 00:22:32 that you have in what you can collect with your workforce. Now the
00:22:32 - 00:22:37 vulnerable cohorts with this virus obviously age is probably relatively simple
00:22:37 - 00:22:41 but then you've got other cohorts that are vulnerable to the virus that we may
00:22:41 - 00:22:46 not have been able to collect information on. Obviously, our staff, part of
00:22:46 - 00:22:51 those vulnerable cohorts. We had to start getting all of that data together so
00:22:51 - 00:22:56 that the organisation could make informed decisions about the response for the
00:22:56 - 00:23:01 pandemic. So if there was ever a time that it was challenging the analytics area
00:23:01 - 00:23:07 , the pandemic really tested how advanced our systems were at actually
00:23:07 - 00:23:11 identifying and understanding our workforce, so that's Health. In some of the

00:23:11 - 00:23:16 other agencies, Police was really interesting. Police were, they were doing
00:23:16 - 00:23:20 some really good work around workforce optimisation. The team there were
00:23:20 - 00:23:25 working really hard to review the allocation of frontline police against
00:23:25 - 00:23:29 a population and crime projections. Now it sounds like it would be logical to do
00:23:29 - 00:23:32 that but as you could imagine in a force like the New South Wales Police Force
00:23:32 - 00:23:36 , it's one of the largest police forces in the world. A lot of those allocations had
00:23:36 - 00:23:40 been historical allocations, and when you join a new organisation it sort of
00:23:40 - 00:23:44 takes a while to get your head around some of the nuances and I thought it
00:23:44 - 00:23:49 would be relatively simple to look at population growth but it's not, you know
00:23:49 - 00:23:54 , when you're looking at new populations with younger families, for example,
00:23:54 - 00:23:59 the crime kicks in 15 years down the track as those babies become teenagers.
00:23:59 - 00:24:02 So you've got, you've got to sort of allow for some of that analysis in allocation
00:24:02 - 00:24:07 . So the aim of it was really to move away from that historical police allocation
00:24:07 - 00:24:12 and put a bit of a scientific method to the workforce and the reason that it was
00:24:12 - 00:24:17 valuable is the project actually brought actual activity data together and
00:24:17 - 00:24:22 workforce data, and made some predictions on how to actually optimise that
00:24:22 - 00:24:26 workforce allocation. The other really interesting area in Police is churn rate
00:24:26 - 00:24:32 because turnover's quite low. I suppose in a lot of, in the agencies where you're
00:24:32 - 00:24:36 administering a fairly monopolistic market, so there's not a lot of, an alternate
00:24:36 - 00:24:40 employment market for those individuals, you do tend to have lower turnover
00:24:40 - 00:24:45 in those environments. So usually you'll find that in those sort of organisations
00:24:45 - 00:24:49 that 10 years is quite long, so people will join the organisation and they'll stay
00:24:49 - 00:24:53 for the extent of their career. You've then got to understand, do you have the

00:24:53 - 00:24:58 right promotional systems in place to actually open up opportunities for that
00:24:58 - 00:25:01 new workforce coming in. So if the junior workforces can't see that there's
00:25:01 - 00:25:05 promotional opportunities in the senior ranks they might exit and the churn
00:25:05 - 00:25:11 occurs in the junior ranks rather than across the organisation as a whole. So the
00:25:11 - 00:25:16 Police analytics function is then needing to look at retirement intentions, what
00:25:16 - 00:25:19 does the turnover look like at the moment, where's the churn occurring is it just
00:25:19 - 00:25:22 in the junior ranks because if it is, it might be an issue that we need to address
00:25:22 - 00:25:27 . It was an interesting exercise in looking at some of the challenges that that
00:25:27 - 00:25:31 agency experiences and to a degree, I suppose some of the other government
00:25:31 - 00:25:35 agencies would experience the same type of challenge but the use of analytics
00:25:35 - 00:25:41 was really valuable in making decisions to address some of those issues. Yeah,
00:25:41 - 00:25:46 that's a terrific response, Richard and I'm curious about what you're foreseeing
00:25:46 - 00:25:49 is going to be sustainable into the future? You know, you mentioned earlier
00:25:49 - 00:25:54 about how your team has responded to Covid and looking at that workforce
00:25:54 - 00:25:59 availability aspect of it, what things do you see will be sustainable into the
00:25:59 - 00:26:03 future that you'll just keep doing now? Well, the one thing that is challenged
00:26:03 - 00:26:08 in something like a pandemic, where you've got different ways of working is
00:26:08 - 00:26:12 industrial mechanisms. So if you're looking at public servants, for example,
00:26:12 - 00:26:16 where a lot of the public service worked from home during the period and
00:26:16 - 00:26:20 continue to work from home, then we really need to think about measuring
00:26:20 - 00:26:24 productivity. Do we need to measure productivity differently in those changed
00:26:24 - 00:26:29 environments? We probably need to look at ways of measuring output rather
00:26:29 - 00:26:34 than relying on time and attendance type indicators to measure the

00:26:34 - 00:26:38 effectiveness of the workforce and then things like vulnerable worker cohorts,
00:26:38 - 00:26:42 ways of working, sick leave and fatigue management, I think they will be with
00:26:42 - 00:26:47 us for quite a while. The virus, I'm not a clinician, but the virus looks like it's
00:26:47 - 00:26:51 going to be with us for quite a while, so we need to think about ensuring that
00:26:51 - 00:26:55 we're capturing that right, the right data. But if you look at the front line health
00:26:55 - 00:27:00 , the virus actually opened up opportunities to innovate that wouldn't have been
00:27:00 - 00:27:04 there before or that would have taken quite some time to introduce some of
00:27:04 - 00:27:08 those new ways of working. The one that instantly springs to mind is
00:27:08 - 00:27:15 Telehealth because of the pandemic we needed to but we were also able to
00:27:15 - 00:27:19 rapidly rollout Telehealth functions and now 12 months ago we would not have
00:27:19 - 00:27:23 been able to do that as quickly as we were able to. Certainly we wouldn't have
00:27:23 - 00:27:27 had such a huge take up on acceptance of Telehealth as what we've had in the
00:27:27 - 00:27:31 pandemic environment but what we need to do now is ensure that we capture
00:27:31 - 00:27:35 some of that evaluation data around its use. Clinical outcomes? Absolutely.
00:27:35 - 00:27:39 We need to be sure that it's the right two on the right approach, but also the
00:27:39 - 00:27:44 employee experiences. So for a lot of staff, moving to something like
00:27:44 - 00:27:48 Telehealth really significantly shifted their practice and it's not what they
00:27:48 - 00:27:52 anticipated their practice would look like when they joined the profession and
00:27:52 - 00:27:57 so we need to be sure that rates of Telehealth post pandemic are monitored
00:27:57 - 00:28:02 because some of those practitioners might prefer to move to more traditional
00:28:02 - 00:28:06 ways of treating patients, understandably, but we need to capture what will be
00:28:06 - 00:28:10 the rates of Telehealth in the post pandemic era. What are the comparisons
00:28:10 - 00:28:15 around productivity? So does it actually add to increasing the productivity of

00:28:15 - 00:28:19 the workforce? Is it the right outcome for patients? So the patient outcome
00:28:19 - 00:28:23 comparisons along with that and then the health and well being comparisons of
00:28:23 - 00:28:27 the workforce pre and post because, as I said, some people are really
00:28:27 - 00:28:30 challenged by that change in environment to the point that it might start to
00:28:30 - 00:28:36 impact their well being. Then it throws up challenges around our pipeline, our
00:28:36 - 00:28:41 talent pipeline because we need to assess whether this pandemic, which as I
00:28:41 - 00:28:45 said, is a 1 in 100 year event. Does that change the perception of health as a
00:28:45 - 00:28:48 career choice and New South Wales Health as an employer of choice? Is it
00:28:48 - 00:28:53 making people rethink a career as a nurse, for example, or is it attracting
00:28:53 - 00:28:57 people to the career, that to care for people at their most vulnerable stages of
00:28:57 - 00:29:01 life? We don't actually know at the moment what the impact will be on that
00:29:01 - 00:29:05 pipeline, so that's a bit of an analytics project for my branch to get its head
00:29:05 - 00:29:09 around. It's how we're going to assess that pipeline because we're obviously
00:29:09 - 00:29:12 early in the pandemic at the moment but understandably, you could appreciate
00:29:12 - 00:29:17 that some people don't necessarily want to put themselves in the line of viral
00:29:17 - 00:29:21 transfer in the health system. So that's going to present some challenges for the
00:29:21 - 00:29:26 branch, I think. What about data more generally, Richard? Just thinking
00:29:26 - 00:29:30 about what's the most value, because you talked about some really great data
00:29:30 - 00:29:35 that you're using in terms of what's the pandemic, etc, but in general, what
00:29:35 - 00:29:40 else do you think is most valuable? How, and I know this is a topic that you're
00:29:40 - 00:29:45 quite interested in terms of that moving from that compliance data to
00:29:45 - 00:29:49 performance data, I'd be curious about what you see is the difference? But
00:29:49 - 00:29:53 importantly, what's most valuable in that space? Probably need to start with

00:29:53 - 00:29:57 what are the different types of data because it sort of gives you an idea around
00:29:57 - 00:30:01 opportunities that that analytics function presents but when you're looking at
00:30:01 - 00:30:06 the types of data that are sort of emerging as analytics of value, things like
00:30:06 - 00:30:14 capability analytics, competency acquisition data, capacity churn. This is,
00:30:14 - 00:30:19 another really good author is a guy named Bernard Marr, who writes around,
00:30:19 - 00:30:23 have you heard of him, he writes around analytics. Yeah.. So he talks about
00:30:23 - 00:30:29 the different types of data in this space, and it's really pleasing to see that
00:30:29 - 00:30:32 things like corporate culture, recruitment channel analytics and leadership
00:30:32 - 00:30:38 analytics are really seen as emerging areas of value. Our reporting needs to
00:30:38 - 00:30:41 move to capture some of those areas that are traditionally a little challenging in
00:30:41 - 00:30:46 the public sector, and I don't think we're there yet, but I think a number of
00:30:46 - 00:30:51 agencies are well along the journey but you have to start somewhere to gain
00:30:51 - 00:30:55 traction. You know, as a sector we started with some compliance reporting
00:30:55 - 00:30:59 and if you don't start with the compliance reporting, you don't sort of gain that
00:30:59 - 00:31:03 traction, you know, what gets measured, gets managed. So obviously, we
00:31:03 - 00:31:07 started with linking some of that to obligations of boards, departments and
00:31:07 - 00:31:12 clusters in Health but to start, we used performance development and that was
00:31:12 - 00:31:18 an area that the PSC supported in its legislative change. So that was a good
00:31:18 - 00:31:22 place to start and the compliance elements, usually performance agreements in
00:31:22 - 00:31:26 place, performance reviews occurring, and so that was one that the GSE
00:31:26 - 00:31:30 prescribed as well, and that does give you an idea that your business is actually
00:31:30 - 00:31:35 involved in the defining of objectives and measuring and at least annually but
00:31:35 - 00:31:39 as we move and we evolve into more mature businesses, you need to move

00:31:39 - 00:31:43 beyond compliance to support and build performance and what we need to

00:31:43 - 00:31:47 identify and capture in people analytics are factors that underpin and contribute

00:31:47 - 00:31:51 to performance and that can be both human and technology supportive factors.

00:31:51 - 00:31:56 So you know what I mean by that, well it's things that assist in motivating staff

00:31:56 - 00:32:02 or demotivating staff. Obviously, one is culture. So the level of conflict in an

00:32:02 - 00:32:06 organisation, the level of employee engagement and there's lots of ways of

00:32:06 - 00:32:09 actually capturing, capturing and measuring that and obviously the Public

00:32:09 - 00:32:14 Service Commission is using the PMES survey as a tool, and that's been

00:32:14 - 00:32:19 extraordinarily valuable to give at least static data to organisations around their

00:32:19 - 00:32:23 engagement and an indication of their culture. Then, depending on what your

00:32:23 - 00:32:27 agency's, some of the agencies who looked at net promoter score that's a way

00:32:27 - 00:32:32 of actually measuring both employee and client satisfaction and then things

00:32:32 - 00:32:37 like pulse surveys. But we probably then need to start looking at measuring

00:32:37 - 00:32:41 technology augmentation impacts. So what is, for example, introduction of

00:32:41 - 00:32:45 technology in police cars or hospital theatres doing? What do you measure

00:32:45 - 00:32:49 when you put a new piece of equipment in the theatre? There's obviously the

00:32:49 - 00:32:54 outcomes for patient, but there's also the link to the people experience, the

00:32:54 - 00:32:57 staff and customer. Obviously you want accuracy, procedures, error rate

00:32:57 - 00:33:03 reduction things but it needs to link back to business value and the employee

00:33:03 - 00:33:08 experience and the businesses and the organisations need to see that those

00:33:08 - 00:33:11 business decisions are being evaluated and that they're working or they're not

00:33:11 - 00:33:18 working. So looking at prediction, predicting performance, things like

00:33:18 - 00:33:23 recruitment channel analytics. So linking data around performance to hire

00:33:23 - 00:33:27 information that can help identify, for example, in the health sector education
00:33:27 - 00:33:31 institutions that are producing our best performance. We don't actually look at
00:33:31 - 00:33:35 that at the moment. That could assist us to influence university curriculum,
00:33:35 - 00:33:40 some intakes, or at least influence ways to assess and select candidates, can
00:33:40 - 00:33:44 help to assess potential in line, assess candidate potential in line with business
00:33:44 - 00:33:49 performance needs. Then things like talent leadership data, if you assess talent
00:33:49 - 00:33:54 it allows you to map out talent and potential, you can compare teams against
00:33:54 - 00:33:58 assess potential and that allows leadership to, the leadership team to actually
00:33:58 - 00:34:03 make adjustments to optimise performance. So that type of information and
00:34:03 - 00:34:08 getting that information in the hands of leadership can be extraordinarily
00:34:08 - 00:34:13 valuable and really be seen to be adding to business performance. That's really
00:34:13 - 00:34:17 interesting. That's a great response, Richard, lots of information. I'm sure our
00:34:17 - 00:34:21 listeners will agree that there's lots of insights there that they can then walk
00:34:21 - 00:34:26 away with today and just try out, so fantastic. Thank you. I'm curious, a
00:34:26 - 00:34:30 strategic priority for NSW Government is to implement best practice
00:34:30 - 00:34:35 productivity and digital capability in the NSW Public Sector and drive public
00:34:35 - 00:34:40 sector diversity by 2025. What are your thoughts on the most useful data and
00:34:40 - 00:34:44 support that people analytics teams can provide leaders and teams to
00:34:44 - 00:34:48 accomplish this strategy? I'll start at diversity and then I'll touch on the other
00:34:48 - 00:34:54 two. Diversity is really a recording challenge, I think, and I'll just reflect on
00:34:54 - 00:35:00 younger generations and their views around being categorised, for example,
00:35:00 - 00:35:04 just reflect on when my kids were in school and really they didn't want to be
00:35:04 - 00:35:09 defined or categorised by really, as anything but certainly not by gender,

00:35:09 - 00:35:13 sexual preference and interest. Really, what they were seeking was equality,
00:35:13 - 00:35:17 so that makes it, it's going to be increasingly challenging, I think, to convince
00:35:17 - 00:35:24 our workforce that we need diversity data and really what it's meaning is that
00:35:24 - 00:35:28 success in achieving diversity isn't just measuring reported attributes or
00:35:28 - 00:35:32 workforce demographics. It's measuring commitment, perception of fairness
00:35:32 - 00:35:37 and equal opportunity and the absence of barriers to diversity. So that really
00:35:37 - 00:35:41 starts to challenge the way we've been thinking about the old EEO form that
00:35:41 - 00:35:45 you voluntarily complete when you joined an organisation and you declare
00:35:45 - 00:35:49 certain things or let the organisation know of certain things. I think we need to
00:35:49 - 00:35:54 be a lot more innovative in how we're actually going to assess the diversity of
00:35:54 - 00:36:00 our workforce. So obviously there's some clear diversity areas that we're
00:36:00 - 00:36:03 strategically addressing in the public sector, and that's through a number of
00:36:03 - 00:36:07 things, Premier's Priorities and legislative commitments, and so we're
00:36:07 - 00:36:11 capturing some data but we really need to know we can sustain that and
00:36:11 - 00:36:15 whether the talent pipeline is actually going to continue to provide that level of
00:36:15 - 00:36:20 diversity and whether we can capture and report it. So from the business
00:36:20 - 00:36:23 perspective, we need to understand how can we influence that pipeline. What
00:36:23 - 00:36:26 messages do we need to send out to the workforce or the future workforce that
00:36:26 - 00:36:31 we actually support diversity. What is the workforce market supply situation
00:36:31 - 00:36:35 look like because we need to think beyond our own organisations to see
00:36:35 - 00:36:39 whether there's diversity in the market. Digital capability is really interesting
00:36:39 - 00:36:46 because, we started a tech project in my branch, which when we started the
00:36:46 - 00:36:49 project, we were looking at how technology will affect the health workforce

00:36:49 - 00:36:54 and what we need to do in terms of preparing the health workforce for the
00:36:54 - 00:37:00 onset of technology and over the last 12 months we've sort of morphed that to
00:37:00 - 00:37:04 really something more around disruption. We've probably accepted that
00:37:04 - 00:37:09 preparing for the future is a futile exercise, really the future's here and it's the
00:37:09 - 00:37:14 degree of difference that's going to be in the organisation and really, it's now
00:37:14 - 00:37:18 getting a workforce that prepares for constant change. So we've moved away
00:37:18 - 00:37:23 from that initial definition of a project through to something that really is
00:37:23 - 00:37:28 looking more like a workforce profile of a future workforce, where staff and
00:37:28 - 00:37:33 members of that workforce are willing to work differently. So from the time
00:37:33 - 00:37:36 they commence in an organisation to the time they exit, if they were to remain
00:37:36 - 00:37:41 in the one role, that would be, if not gone, it would be entirely different and
00:37:41 - 00:37:46 so there needs to be an attribute, I think, of future workforces that they are
00:37:46 - 00:37:49 prepared to work differently and change more rapidly because I think the
00:37:49 - 00:37:54 change is going to be more frequent and more significant, as some of these
00:37:54 - 00:37:58 technologies emerge. Digital capabilities, so I think, really, I've probably
00:37:58 - 00:38:03 changed the way that I view digital capability. I probably view digital
00:38:03 - 00:38:08 capability as another capability set from the capability framework. I don't
00:38:08 - 00:38:12 think like that any more. I think it's on the employer to provide the right tools
00:38:12 - 00:38:19 from a technology perspective but the people analytics around it is really
00:38:19 - 00:38:25 trying to identify within our workforce cohorts how willing they are to work with
00:38:25 - 00:38:29 emerging technologies and to work differently and how we capture that in
00:38:29 - 00:38:34 future workforce intakes. So how do we assess and measure that as a
00:38:34 - 00:38:39 capability coming into the organisation and then in the existing workforce we'll

00:38:39 - 00:38:43 obviously, we need to identify that through other means. That's probably
00:38:43 - 00:38:46 where our catalogue of performance tools, comes into the mix. You know,
00:38:46 - 00:38:50 what can we capture and record on individual capabilities that will ensure they
00:38:50 - 00:38:55 adopt new digital solutions? How can we gain a benchmark and how can we
00:38:55 - 00:38:59 measure movement? I think these are emerging challenges and really we're
00:38:59 - 00:39:04 probably still in that early stage of understanding what that future workforce
00:39:04 - 00:39:10 looks like. I'm curious you've already mentioned Bernard Marr and Samantha
00:39:10 - 00:39:15 McLaren, are there other individuals or books or networks that you follow to
00:39:15 - 00:39:20 keep up to date on this space? Look, LinkedIn is a really valuable tool and
00:39:20 - 00:39:25 there's Communities of Practice on LinkedIn around workforce analytics and
00:39:25 - 00:39:29 business performance. So there's some close groups in LinkedIn that you could
00:39:29 - 00:39:34 join. I try to stay up to date with some of those peers and colleagues, just
00:39:34 - 00:39:39 connect with them. Obviously, Bernard Marr, I think is probably a leader in
00:39:39 - 00:39:42 the space, and I tend to, I follow him on LinkedIn, and I tend to look out for
00:39:42 - 00:39:47 his writings and his speaking around data analytics, so I keep an eye out for
00:39:47 - 00:39:52 what he's got to say. I think he's got a good balance of connection to business,
00:39:52 - 00:39:56 analytics and then its connection to the business. Yeah, that's great, thanks
00:39:56 - 00:40:01 Richard. If you could give our listeners one key takeaway for sourcing
00:40:01 - 00:40:05 workplace and people insights, starting with the basics, what would it be? I
00:40:05 - 00:40:09 think my one key takeaway would be learn the business context, and that's just
00:40:09 - 00:40:14 not in people analytics, really, I think that's in HR more generally. We really
00:40:14 - 00:40:18 need to understand the business in order to add value to the business. So gather
00:40:18 - 00:40:22 intel around strategic priorities that aren't gaining traction. Listen to the

00:40:22 - 00:40:26 stakeholders. If you've got reporting functions at the moment, find out from
00:40:26 - 00:40:30 clients whether they're even using them and if they are what they're using and
00:40:30 - 00:40:36 what the gaps are. I like to talk to business stakeholders around what they need
00:40:36 - 00:40:39 from us and what's the one thing that they would like to see from a HR
00:40:39 - 00:40:45 department and 9 times out of 10 it's some sort of analytic, some form of report
00:40:45 - 00:40:50 or data that would help make their job easier. So really, it's learn the business
00:40:50 - 00:40:55 and ask what's needed. I think that really will help build the analytics function.
00:40:55 - 00:41:00 If people can see that the analytics function is helping with the business,
00:41:00 - 00:41:04 helping to improve performance, helping make business decisions, then they
00:41:04 - 00:41:11 will absolutely support and embrace that function. Great, thanks so much,
00:41:11 - 00:41:16 Richard. I'm sure the listeners will join me in saying thank you for your really
00:41:16 - 00:41:21 comprehensive and insightful responses. There's lots to take away from this
00:41:21 - 00:41:26 interview, so I'm sure that it's going to be really interesting to watch people
00:41:26 - 00:41:29 grow from it. So it's fantastic, thank you. Thanks Tanya, it's been a really
00:41:29 - 00:41:32 great opportunity to speak to you and good luck for the rest of the podcasts
00:41:32 - 00:41:37 . Great, thanks Richard. Thank you, Richard and Tanya, for making this content
00:41:37 - 00:41:42 so accessible to all HR practitioners, whether we're just starting to develop our
00:41:42 - 00:41:46 people analytics capability or are working with a mature People Analytics team
00:41:46 - 00:41:51 . There are so many insights and suggestions on how we can do it better. I'd
00:41:51 - 00:41:55 also like to remind our listeners that we're hoping you are following up all the
00:41:55 - 00:42:00 podcasts, with challenging yourself and your teams to spark a discussion on
00:42:00 - 00:42:05 how you might think, feel and act differently as a result of listening. To
00:42:05 - 00:42:10 support your discussions, each podcast has now been book ended with detailed

00:42:10 - 00:42:15 transcripts, key themes for you to listen out for, discussion questions for you to
00:42:15 - 00:42:19 ponder and discuss with others and finally, an exceptional list of further
00:42:19 - 00:42:24 readings for you to pursue. Please check them out on The Spark website on the
00:42:24 - 00:42:27 PSC website page. See you next time.