

LEADING FROM THE EDGE: EXPLOITING TALENT FOR COMPETITIVE SERVICE ADVANTAGE

Most organisations have strategic plans with vision and mission statements. Most also have action and operational plans to carry out their mission critical objectives and aims. However, few have defined future oriented career development plans for staff who are expected to understand, internalise, participate and deliver services successfully as our world and user expectations evolve. Personnel factors cannot be underestimated as people and their behaviors govern the speed and success for service delivery and change.

Three leaders from the University of Western Australia, Bond University and Griffith University highlight the work they are doing collaboratively to lead their organisations to deliver services at the edge in the next three to five years. Being prepared to deliver the services that are required in the future means we need to start now to understand services and potential demand, the possibilities for how those services will be delivered (cloud, local, hybrid) and the roles that will be needed operationally. This presentation focuses on our combined efforts to bridge the future to the present and to create the pathways for managers and staff to follow to ensure our organisations are well ahead of the curve.

The presentation will refer to the combined career development pathway tool we are creating (based on the CAUDIT career pathing tool). The focus is on the high-level business case for why we are collaborating, what we are learning and our projected outcomes using a use case approach to describe the sample pathways.

Key points include:

- Review of the 360 context for our organisations, our customers and the services they require, and our staff
- Here to there: the leadership challenges for senior managers in our universities including funding, human resources and service delivery models
- Sample pathways for two key roles: Senior Consultant and Metadata Analyst

We will present the persona of a Senior Consultant who has progressed through a career ladder to prepare them for an eResearch role in Health. The skills required are business analysis, technical and subject domain expertise with very advanced consulting/liaison capability. This role joins the researcher (customer) to the rest of the IT and information management services of the university and links the customer to

information and technological resources beyond the university. The position operates as an internal consultant connecting the customer to what he needs and prefers in the most effective and efficient manner.

The second sample pathway is a story to explain a technical back of house career ladder. This case describes the journey of a former cataloguer who retrain over time to become a metadata analyst. The kind of work needed by the organisation, the specialist skills required in the role and the overlap between past and future are described. The core skills from the original cataloguer role are not dissimilar to the new metadata analyst position but they are applied differently. The standards applied, technology utilised and the end work product have all evolved. Research data is part of the universe of content and the end product involves metadata schema, not just a record in a relational database. The proposed skills development pathway for this example is outlined.

Finally, the presentation concludes by reinforcing why leading from the edge requires deep preparation and attention to the talent and staff resource investment already present in our universities. Without moving people forward, we cannot lead from the edge. In Australia making the most of the talent we have and investing in the development of those staff already present is both common sense and a sound business decision. This collaboration and jointly created career toolkit is only a means to an end. We are empowering our staff to choose and prepare for their individual career pathways and supporting managers and leaders to carry out workforce planning effectively, thus ensuring our organisations will be ready and prepared to deliver modern services at the edge.

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