



# Part 3 - Frontline Management

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**P**art one presented the benefits of developing staff in the area of assessment and workplace training. Part two explored opportunities for developing staff in the areas of business administration and sales. Part three will examine the role of frontline managers in your organisation and the training opportunities that exist.

Business Services are essential to every Australian business, either as a core activity or as a support to the core activities. They hold an organisation together and connect it to its customers and the community, and they can be internal or provided externally to the business.

The focus of workplace activity around narrow job descriptions has been replaced by an expectation that employees will be able to respond to a changing work environment and assume broader roles and responsibilities. The

use of multiple and overlapping project-based teams has created a demand for individual flexibility and versatility.

In the search for a competitive edge, enterprises are producing and delivering new services in different ways with fundamental effects on the way work is organised, performed and managed. In the current labour market environment creating career pathways becomes almost exclusively an individual responsibility. People need special skills to take on these responsibilities.

The shift to recognising work in terms of services and activities rather than pre-defined occupations has required a new approach to developing competency standards. They have become broader, more customer-oriented, more contingency-based and less task-focused. The challenge of change and competitiveness has necessitated the development of units on

innovation and working smarter at every level in the Business Services Training Package. This re-emphasises the need for greater competitiveness through excellent skills and developing positive attitudes to continuous improvement.

The need to cater for an increasingly casualised workforce is directly addressed by qualifications that allow people to construct the optimal mix for thriving in this type of labour market. It is also directly picked up by new competencies and approaches to emerging issues such as teleworking, and achieving a balance between work demands and life interests and responsibilities.

The aim of the frontline management strategy is to support Australian enterprises to raise their performance by developing the competency of their frontline managers. To develop frontline managers, a set of frontline management competencies has been identified. This has occurred through extensive consultation. These frontline management competencies describe what high performing frontline managers need to do.

Frontline managers are typically involved in enterprises as co-ordinators, team leaders, supervisors, forepersons, leading hands, project or office managers. They are not usually

responsible for managing other managers, but on a daily basis they play a crucial role in co-ordinating and influencing a group of employees.

The frontline management strategy enables enterprises to develop competence in the workplace. These competencies can be assessed on the job and recognised with a formal qualification. The frontline management development strategy is different to traditional management programs. It is innovative because it locates learning in the workplace, which empowers enterprises to make their own decisions about ways to improve frontline management competence.

Special features of the frontline management development strategy are:

- Competencies linked to business goals
- Assessment occurs on-the-job
- Assessment is against the competency standards (not learning outcomes)
- Workplace learning is encouraged
- Learning takes place on various levels
- Competencies already held are recognised
- Competencies are nationally endorsed

The benefits of being involved in frontline management development are:

#### For enterprise

- Greater opportunity for enterprise driven choice of development strategies
- Improved productivity and innovation in the workplace
- Development of high performance frontline management
- Provision of a process for assessing whether individuals have achieved the Frontline Management Competencies in practice
- Linking of frontline management development to enterprise requirements
- Incorporation of a variety of ways of learning to achieve Frontline Management Competencies to match different enterprise needs and characteristics.

#### For frontline managers

- Recognition of the Frontline Management Competencies already achieved
- More options to direct own learning
- More options for career development
- A nationally recognised qualification in frontline management, which is portable across industries
- Increased productivity and satisfaction at work.

### Competencies

Workplace competency is the combination of underpinning knowledge, skills and understanding that enable a person to perform their work to a defined standard in the workplace.

The Frontline Management Competencies provide a framework against which current competencies can be assessed and development targets set. If participants can already perform the competencies, this achievement will be recognised. If not, the participant will prepare an Individual Development plan to work towards competency development. Once the competencies are developed and assessed in the workplace they may be formally recognised as a qualification.

The competencies are grouped around four main themes:

- Leading by Example
- Leading, Coaching, Facilitating & Empowering Others
- Creating Best Practice
- Creating an Innovative Culture

Each of these four themes are expanded in a series of units of competency, as follows:

#### Leading by Example

- Manage personal work priorities and professional development
- Provide leadership in the workplace

#### Leading, Coaching, Facilitating & Empowering Others

- Establish & manage effective workplace relationships
- Participate in, lead & facilitate work teams

#### Creating Best Practice

- Manage operations to achieve planned outcomes
- Manage workplace information
- Manage quality customer service
- Develop & maintain safe workplace & environment

- Implement & monitor continuous improvement systems and processes

### Creating an Innovative Culture

- Facilitate and capitalise on change and innovation
- Contribute to the development of a workplace learning environment

### Assessment

Assessment of the Frontline Management Competencies can occur at any stage of the development process. Participants may choose different times and ways of having their Frontline Management Competencies assessed. Enterprises may choose to grade the results of assessments.

Participants will initially be assessed to find out whether they already have Frontline Management Competencies. During development, participants can identify when they are ready for further assessment. This ongoing assessment will help the participant develop the competencies required for final assessment that leads to qualification.

### Qualifications

Frontline management development can lead to the following nationally recognised qualifications that are awarded on the basis of demonstrated workplace performance:

- Certificate III in Business (Frontline Management)
- Certificate IV in Business (Frontline Management)
- Diploma in Business (Frontline Management)
- Statement of Attainment for competencies achieved

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) descriptor levels describe qualifications in terms of the associated skills required of job functions. In general terms, AQF levels can be summed up as follows:

AQF level	Qualification Equivalent	General job process
1	Certificate I	Pre-vocational (industry introduction)
2	Certificate II	Entry-level job function
3	Certificate III	Supervision
4	Certificate IV	Management
5	Diploma	Planning and Development

This article will focus on AQF levels 3-5, with an outline of the training opportunities that exist at each level. To facilitate easy reading, the course and unit codes are not included. For a more specific analysis of your staff and what qualification best suits them, speak to your accredited training provider.

### **Certificate III in Business (Frontline Management)**

There are 6 units required for this qualification at AQF3 - 4 core units, plus 2 elective units.

#### **Core units**

- Organise personal work priorities and development
- Support leadership in the workplace
- Contribute to effective workplace relationships
- Support operational plan
- Maintain workplace safety

#### **Elective units**

- Participate in work teams
- Provide workplace information and plans
- Deliver and monitor a service to customers
- Support continuous improvement systems
- Support innovation and change

- Support a workplace learning environment
- Organise workplace information

### **Certificate IV in Business (Frontline Management)**

There are 8 units required for this qualification at AQF4 - 5 core units, plus 3 elective units.

#### **Core units**

- Develop work priorities
- Show leadership in the workplace
- Manage effective workplace relationships
- Implement operational plan
- Monitor a safe workplace

#### **Elective units**

- Lead work teams
- Implement workplace information system
- Implementation of customer service strategies
- Implement continuous improvement
- Promote innovation and change
- Develop teams and individuals

### **Diploma of Business (Frontline Management)**

There are 11 units required for this qualification at AQF5.

- Manage personal work priorities and professional development
- Provide leadership in the workplace
- Establish effective workplace relationships
- Facilitate work teams
- Manage operational plan
- Manage workplace information systems
- Manage quality customer service
- Ensure a safe workplace
- Promote continuous improvement
- Facilitate change and innovation
- Develop a workplace learning environment

### **Delivery Strategies**

These programs are ideally suited to flexible delivery, which can create effective training outcomes with minimal staff downtime from normal company operations. ■

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