



Civic, Professional and Other Interest Groups

This industry comprises a range of organisations established to support industry professionals and interest groups, and to advocate for the rights of WA workers.

Industry Developments and Workforce Issues

Technology. Technological advances enable automation of business processes, digitisation of data collection, cloud based processing and data storage. Increasingly, industry needs to adopt these to gain operational efficiencies and reduce overall cost, critical to sustainability and competitiveness. Benefits span end-to-end processes from administrative functions, payroll and finance through to member management, data analytics and provision of services. Digitisation of products, platforms and services enable organisations to respond to changing customer expectations, improve customer experience and add value. While user friendly websites can showcase a business, social media platforms, on-line and mobile friendly systems improve client connectivity, communication and ease of access. Low membership numbers and increased competition from subscription-based memberships and loyalty programs are forcing industry associations and trade unions to assess business practices, systems and value propositions. Where subject-matter expertise and information provision may once have been a core service, many individuals now source this online. This means organisations need to continue to reinvent themselves to maximise their capacity and relevance to the end user. While well-resourced companies will have greater scope for implementation, smaller players will not have the same capacity. They will need to find affordable, relevant solutions to streamline processes, maximise their capability and gain business efficiencies. To this end, adoption of technology will be unevenly distributed across various industries and organisations.

Marketing Focus. A greater focus will be needed on marketing due to increased competition, depreciated growth and challenging economic conditions. Coupled with growing consumer expectations and push for interactive experiential consumption organisations need to implement holistic and targeted approaches. Digital and mobile-friendly strategies are increasingly important with emerging products, automating campaigns and simplifying email marketing. Organisations may need to explore how to diversify and increase the provision of complementary, adjunct services in response to member needs to remain competitive.

Organisational Capability. While organisations in WA continue to look to automation and off-shoring to mitigate costs, smaller organisations may lack the knowledge and expertise to engage offshore workers or implement new technologies and digital strategies. The competitive environment requires organisations to stay connected with their clients in order to maintain communication and be responsive to their needs. Social networking and social media marketing are effective ways to promote and differentiate a business, inform clients and connect to new growth opportunities. Service providers need to foster interactive relationships with existing clients and utilise a breadth of communication platforms to market themselves. Knowledge of global and regional trends as well as local factors are important if local businesses are to take full advantage of the most appropriate suite of marketing strategies and tools for their products and services. Lack of marketing expertise among the micro-business can be a barrier to growth. While internal capacity is limited for small organisation, it is important they provide flexible, bite-sized learning opportunities for staff to develop new skills to integrate into their day-to-day work. Micro-credentialing, using short pieces of training delivery, provide skill-set acquisition to address skill-gaps.¹ SMEs will need to look at blending innovative learning solutions such as podcasts and TED-

¹ PwC Skills for Australia, [Industry Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work: Business Services](#), March 2019.



talks with these targeted skilling modules to support changing work environments. In order for businesses to support up-skilling and cross-skilling of current staff, relevant micro-credentialing needs to be both flexible, affordable and timely.

Enterprise Skills. While employees are required to adapt to and implement use of changing technologies, there is a growing demand for a combination of technical, multi-disciplinary and enterprise skills. Increasingly organisations are requiring skills elasticity to navigate a changing landscape. Membership retention, lead generation and customer value are requiring a growing hybrid set of skills around advanced communication and reasoning, emotional intelligence and networking capability. Employers seek the ability to understand and advocate for their clients, guide and resolve conflicts, build and sustain client relationships, respond to growing expectations and requirements, and improve client value. Roles are becoming more complex relying on technical capability and resilience to the changing pace and ways of working. Increasingly people are needing the ability to engage, have a problem solving mindset and rely on their emotional intelligence to assess and address changing member needs. Strong business acumen and business development skills enable people to recognise and adapt to emerging business needs, including trend analytics, leadership, diagnosis of needs and strategic planning. These higher level skill and capability requirements are continuing the trend towards tertiary qualified and experienced employees (particularly in roles with legal or financial functions).

Talent Acquisition. Evolving work demands and skill requirements are creating a new capability frontier beyond a combination of technical and soft skills within a given role. Deloitte point to an emerging formation of *superjobs* which combine responsibilities from multiple traditional jobs and use technology to expand scope of work performed to encompass a number of work domains. These *superjobs* rely on increasingly complex technical and human skills, shifting the way companies are approaching talent acquisition.² Capability requirements are becoming so diverse that companies are finding it difficult to hire people with the relevant experience as well as the broad adjunct skills and capabilities being sought. This will see companies needing to look for people in alternative workforces and apply more flexible hiring practices towards those who have an aptitude and desire to learn in order to add value as the needs of the organisation change. A combination of mentoring and the freelance and gig economy may provide affordable skills gap solutions for under-resourced and smaller organisations. This is particularly important for SMEs who are increasingly relying on hybrid skill sets to support business growth and transformation.

Staff Retention. It is increasingly difficult to entice people to enter and remain in the sector. While the industry employs a wide range of business, finance, advocacy, management and administrative professionals, it is not a high profile industry and sourcing quality candidates can be problematic when other industries associated with these professions are able to provide superior employment conditions and recognised career progression pathways. Those moving into worker-facing union roles are typically qualified blue or white collar professionals in their field who may return to their own profession/industry when better opportunities arise. To improve staff retention it is imperative industry can provide long term career paths, improved employment conditions, flexible work arrangements and adequate remuneration to sustain financial commitments. Provision of training and opportunities for skills development would benefit those working in the sector to support change as specific skills needs, knowledge acquisition and processes shift.

WA Plan for Jobs. Trade unions view the Plan for Jobs and specifically new policies and legislation around local content and procurement as favourable opportunities to gain new members. For business associations this could also offer new opportunities to build membership bases as local businesses seek to take advantage.

² Deloitte Insights, 2019 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends, [Leading the social enterprise: Reinvent with human focus.](#)



Industry Workforce Priorities

Digital Disruption. There is a continued reliance on proficient use of current technologies and systems. Industry needs to ensure adequate training and support to ensure people are skilled across multiple web, cloud software and management systems. The need to develop analytical skills and ability to interpret data to inform business decisions and respond to member needs is on the rise. Flexibility and adaptability to apply knowledge and broaden capability across emerging technologies and processes is a must.

Database Management. Membership and financial database maintenance and management are critical to the effectiveness and survival of membership organisations. It is imperative transforming organisations select appropriate membership systems for an organisation and have the appropriate infrastructure, talent and training available to roll them out, use and maintain them. Workers skilled in this area are highly valued and recognised as being critical to organisational efficiency, effectiveness and growth.

Business Development Skills. Business acumen and business development skills continue to be in demand as membership organisations and unions seek to grow often declining membership bases. Critical to business success (particularly in a tight operating market) is the ability to understand key business needs and indicators, the ability to adapt to change and be responsive to changing member/client needs. The ability to identify, develop and communicate value is important as individuals increasingly make use of free online tools to source information, previously only available through a membership as a core value-add supplied by membership organisations. Skills to develop new business propositions based on emerging trends, technology and business analytics will innovate and shape operating models into the future.

Conveying Complex Information. As companies advance their research capabilities and broaden data and membership collection methods, including online, SMS and social media, companies will be able to access more telling data to inform decision making and business direction. However, rather than simply sourcing and curating information, organisations need the capability to sift through copious amounts of information and synthesise it into quality content that saves members time. The ability to concisely convey key content using digital platforms and technology such as blogging, video and content development is increasingly important. Many organisations function in the policy space. They advocate and advise on legislative and regulatory changes, requiring staff to work with and critically analyse complex information.

Marketing Skills. Increasingly complex campaigns, roll-out of marketing technology, digital trends, cloud computing and automated artificial intelligence Customer Relationship Management platforms are changing the world of marketing and demanding a growing hybrid set of skills for marketers. The ability to move organisations into the digital space and to create digital materials and campaigns for business development, advocacy and member benefit are critical for both membership growth and retention, as well as achievement of benefit and outcomes for members. The ability to craft a strong brand and an online social media presence will enable organisations to differentiate, promote, inform, connect, interact and respond to member needs.