

# TELSTRA

CULTURE AND  
CHANGE  
MANAGEMENT:  
PREPARING FIELD  
WORKERS FOR  
MAJOR  
TRANSFORMATION

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FIELD SERVICE  
MANAGEMENT SUMMIT  
2018



# FIELD SERVICE MANAGEMENT

## SUMMIT 2018

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Telstra is enroute to implementing a new workforce management platform to improve the efficiency of its 4,650 field workers. With a large workforce, in all corners of Australia working on a variety of simple and complex products in a rapidly changing industry, the need to integrate cohesive, organisation-wide processes that ensure synchronicity across the board has never been more important.

Ahead of the **Field Service Management Summit 2018** we chat to **Digby Wilson**, General Manager of Field Service Delivery, Eastern at **Telstra**. In this Q&A article Digby chats to us about new management systems at Telstra that are transforming culture and delivering optimised results for staff, the business and their customers.



17th - 18th  
April



Dockside, Sydney.  
Australia





# 1

## WHAT NEW PROCESSES HAS TELSTRA BROUGHT IN TO OPTIMISE FIELD SERVICE MANAGEMENT?

As General Manager of the Eastern Region, my teams cover an area from Broken Hill to Dubbo, to Taree, all the way down the far south coast to Narooma and inclusive of Canberra, Wollongong, Sydney, Newcastle, and all other regional towns in between. To service these areas we have some 1,420 technicians and we're working to ensure that the experience for technicians, and for customers most importantly, is standardised across the board.

It is not easy but very possible. To achieve our customer and business needs, we've recently introduced a new management system. This is not any system, it isn't a system you need a login and password for. The system is a holistic approach to changing the way we work and designed to change the culture within the organisation to make us more agile and team managers more effective across the board by meeting the same standards. We have five regions at Telstra covering the country (Northern, Eastern, Southern, Western and South Australian & Northern Territory) that are now aligned, and being managed the same way, to the same standards and towards the same goals, is key, as they are in any team. We have created a 'movement' of change.

By transforming our culture we're able to aligning the sights and capability of each team and each region with Telstra's broader objectives, purpose and vision of being a world class technology company empowering people to connect.



# 2

## WHAT CHALLENGES WAS THIS CHANGE A RESPONSE TO?

It's important to note that we didn't just choose to change, we needed to change. We are a 100-year-old company. There is a lot of history, experience and culture that, quite frankly, would have been happy to manage tomorrow like today.

Before embarking on any sort of transformation we need to understand the opportunities – have a clear vision and reason for change. We found, for us, the opportunities were only a few but huge in size, being: improve the customer experience, improve team interworking, capitalise on the experts (our staff IP) for the answers. Gaining insight and understanding to these three nuggets were key to developing a holistic change program that would positively impact the way we worked. Real felt practical changes.

From there we planned then worked to implement our change programme within our teams by creating a consistent way of disseminating information, as well as creating an avenue for consistent back and forth interaction with other teams, team managers and members. It sounds simple, and basic however there were many challenges.

For example, previously we had little communication rigour and no consistency in leading, people just did their own thing - 'this is how I run my team, I'll go and visit my team members when I feel it's suitable, I run my meetings this way because I think that works best,'- so guess what? The inconsistency created inconsistent results.

To solve this issue across the board we designed and implemented our new management system, which has many parts, in a standard way which then allowed us to more consistently manage interactions, performance and results. By standardising leadership practises we were also able to develop a cohesive and comprehensive governance system.





# 3

## WHY IS CULTURE SO IMPORTANT TO THE OVERALL PRODUCTIVITY OF AN ORGANISATION?

While all regions across Australia cut over to the new management system back in April 2017, there is still one piece of work, a workforce management dispatch tool introduction, which we've not yet fully rolled out. This time I'm talking about a workforce management tool with a login and password.

We want the culture to be right first. We needed the way we worked to hum before any new dispatch tool came into play. It is important to have your staff committed to our company's aspirations. To put it more simply, culture eats strategy for breakfast so we had to get the culture piece right! So, we needed our teams to be aware of how the business is tracking, and to provide them with insights into what is and isn't working to really emphasise the need for change. That way when the new tool does come along, then teams can see the upside and the benefit, and additionally it encourages their confidence in the investment, as opposed to simply having something rammed down their throats.

While embedding a positive culture and working to strategically manage change is great from a system integration perspective, it has benefits beyond as well. For example, with the emergence of NBN Co., we at Telstra have seen direct competition emerge. Where traditionally our technicians had little choice, now with NBN they do.

So, that means two things. Firstly, we get attrition - if people aren't happy, they leave. The other thing is IP (Intellectual Property), in the technical nous and knowhow that they've got in their brain, can leak away from us and then we can lose a competitive advantage. So by embedding a positive culture that supports and encourages staff we're able to retain the brightest and best talent. Now who doesn't want that?



# 4

## WHAT BENEFITS HAVE YOU SEEN AS A RESULT OF NEW PROCESSES AND IMPROVED CULTURE?

Since bringing in all but one of the new management system elements, we've already seen a number of tangible improvements in culture and engagement as well as in production and efficiency.

Nationally all performance indicators are up since April with customer experience improving, our appointment performance improving, and our productivity improving, all by single, if not double digits.

Along with KPI improvements we've further seen employee experience and engagement improvements which, as I already mentioned, is key to ensuring you retain talent, technical knowhow and practical knowledge out in the field. This helps to differentiate us from the competition by allowing us to create superior outcomes, better products, better processes for our ultimate passion of better experiences for our customers and our staff.





# 5

## WHAT DO THE NEXT 12 MONTHS HOLD FOR TELSTRA?

We certainly aren't in the state of nirvana yet. Customer experience and tech capability needs to improve. Reading customer feedback and verbatim makes that obvious. We need to change, we will transform.

As I have shared, we've an organisational vision of becoming a world class technology company that empowers people to connect, and we're doing a number of things to ensure we achieve this goal. It won't just happen.

We're going to continue to exploit technology, especially new technology, which will help our systems and processes be much more effective. We're also looking to lean out and streamline a number of operational processes by removing waste and offering our customers an experience far superior to any we've been able to do before.

Over and above that, we are investing in our people from a technical aspect to grow the intellectual property that we currently have. That technical knowledge we can then apply to technology and get even greater outcomes.

So these, coupled with a renewed culture and leadership training, are really what we believe will help us improve capability and achieve our goals. Important to note, however is that none of what we are doing is a 'set and forget' strategy.

While we've brought in this new management system, we're continuously changing and continuously improving – you've always got to be looking at what's coming up next on the horizon otherwise we'll get left behind, and we won't have that. I believe it is every leader's role to help their people reach their full potential in an ever changing environment. That means tapping into what is important to them, supporting them but also continuously driving change that betters them and their job. Sitting still is to stagnate, to stagnate is to perish in business. Evolve, adapt and make the journey count.



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## SUMMIT 2018

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If you're interested in hearing more from Digby about Telstra's new management systems and how they've worked to embed a culture that supports field service staff for improved employee experience, customer experience and overall organisational performance, then join us at the **Field Service Management Summit 2018**.

The event, held in Sydney on the 17th - 18th of April brings together over 25 field service experts from the likes of **TasWater, Boral, Optus, Queensland Urban Utilities, Essential Energy, Airservices Australia, the CSIRO** and **Yarra Valley Water**.

To secure your ticket to the event and for special early bird pricing simply download the **registration form** and email to **[registration@iqpc.com.au](mailto:registration@iqpc.com.au)**.



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