Creating a Workforce Development Plan
Overview: Workforce development planning

A workforce development plan is a document. The document, however, is the outcome of a planning process that is extremely valuable on its own.

Think of the saying about the journey being just as important as the destination. As you will see, the same can be said about workforce development planning.

At the heart of both the planning and the outcome are people. Your team. The individuals doing the work that keeps the business humming and information products flowing.

As a manager, you know that people are your main asset. Helping them develop the skills they need to perform at a high level is one of the most effective strategies to achieve your objectives.

Planning—Three phases

Meet the Three A’s

Workforce development planning has three phases. Planning begins with alignment, proceeds to analysis, and results in action. During each phase, you partner with an Esri training consultant to consider a series of questions. The answers will identify important information that should be included in the workforce development plan.

Fundamentally, workforce development planning is a people-centric approach to achieving strategic business objectives.

The planning process is intended to be iterative. After the initial Action phase is under way, periodically you will return to the Alignment and Analysis phases to validate that the plan is still relevant. Expect to make adjustments over time as individual staff roles and organizational priorities evolve.
Alignment phase

To earn executive buy-in and budget approval, you must demonstrate the strategic alignment of your workforce development plan with the mission and objectives that are important to decision makers. During this phase, you will explore the questions below and document the answers.

What is your organization’s mission?
Many organizational websites contain a mission statement. This is a good starting point for the workforce development planning process.

What are your organization’s strategic objectives?
Strategic objectives are often communicated in internal executive presentations and documents.

How do GIS applications support the strategic objectives?
Refer to the common GIS patterns shown below, then identify the ones used in your organization. Now list the applications associated with each pattern.

What workforce roles are in place to support the GIS applications that support the strategic objectives?
Roles may be associated with the GIS department, IT group, other business units, or a combination.

Notes
Analysis phase

During the Analysis phase, you determine which educational resources and delivery methods are most appropriate for the workforce roles identified in the Alignment phase. Timelines, priorities, and budget are discussed.

Your Esri training consultant has experience in preparing this information and will work closely with you to document it.

Think about the questions below, and jot down a few ideas.

**What knowledge and skills are required for each role?**
Refer to job descriptions posted by your organization, professional development plans, and internal documents that detail your operational workflows. Your Esri training consultant can share typical knowledge and skillsets for GIS roles.

**What resources are available to develop the required knowledge and skills?**
Esri has a wide range of learning resources, including instructor-led classes, e-learning courses, and online tutorials and videos. Your Esri training consultant can discuss the resources best suited to your needs.

**What is your budget?**
Your budget determines both the specific resources you select as well as the timeline for consuming them.
Action phase

During the Action phase, the workforce development plan is executed based on the timelines and priorities identified in the Analysis phase.

Action is considered part of the planning process because as the plan is implemented, you should continue to ask questions and review progress. Remember, the plan must remain aligned with the organization’s mission and strategic objectives. If it loses that alignment, it no longer holds value.

Are we on track with executing the plan?
Schedule time in your calendar each quarter to review the plan you created with your Esri training consultant.

Has the organization’s strategy shifted?
Have there been executive announcements about important new initiatives? Is your organization pursuing customers in new markets, expanding operations, or providing new capabilities to improve customer service?

Have we created new roles that are not included in the plan?
As your GIS program expands, your workforce development plan should include any new roles and workflows.

Does any part of the plan need to be modified?
Contact your Esri training consultant to discuss any changes that have occurred and make sure they are documented in the workforce development plan.

Is the plan still relevant?
Your workforce development plan should be dynamic. The plan will remain relevant only if it accurately documents your organization’s strategic mission and objectives, the GIS applications that support those objectives, and the workforce roles needed to create, manage, and maintain the GIS applications.
Planning for Change Management

Technology initiatives sometimes flounder because the human tendency to resist change is not fully addressed. If your organization plans technology changes that will require your team members to change how they work, it is critical to gain their acceptance and proactively prepare them for the changes ahead. Human resistance is a powerful force—fortunately, a workforce development plan is a tool that can help you overcome resistance.

By documenting how GIS applications help your organization achieve its mission and strategic objectives, a workforce development plan provides justification (and executive respect) for your ArcGIS® platform deployment and investments in a skilled staff to support the platform.

When you have both executive buy-in and a well-documented plan to train your staff for new workflows and responsibilities, your staff feels validated, valued, and motivated to perform at a high level. In other words, their resistance to change diminishes.
Looking ahead

As you reflect on what you have learned about workforce development planning and prepare for new platform initiatives in the future, here are some key points to think about:

| Take a people-centric approach. | Who are your executive sponsors and stakeholders? How do you communicate to your team members about how their work relates to organizational initiatives supported by new technology? |
| Technology changes may challenge staff with new workflows or requirements. | How do you help your individual staff members become more comfortable with new technology? How can you foster teamwork at all levels to implement change? |
| You are not alone. | Contact your Esri training consultant anytime. We are your partners in the workforce development planning process. |

My next step is to...

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Resources

Contact your Esri training consultant to

- Discuss your organization’s goals and the people who utilize the ArcGIS platform to achieve these goals.
- Identify the training options that will best help you meet these goals.
- Implement a workforce development plan to support your organization’s long-term success with the ArcGIS platform.

E-mail
GIStraining@esri.com

Phone
800-447-9778, extension 5757

Use your smartphone to access online resources related to workforce development planning.