

Strategic Workforce Planning:

**Your Guide to a
Future-Proof HR
Approach**



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How HR leads and management set the course together

Many companies are familiar with the problem: Suddenly there is a shortage of important skilled workers, knowledge is lost with the retirement of the baby boomers, and new technologies place completely different demands on the workforce. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find **suitable talent on the labour market**.

The question is no longer whether you have to deal with personnel planning, but **how strategically you do it**. Because those who only react for a short time - fill positions as soon as someone quits - will always be left behind in the long run.

Strategic personnel planning helps to act with foresight: What skills will we need in the future? Where do gaps arise? How do we develop our people? It is therefore an important building block in remaining capable of acting and attractive as a company.

This white paper offers impulses and a clear structure for tackling the topic in a targeted manner in your own company. It shows where strategic workforce planning starts, how it differs from ad-hoc solutions and what first steps can be taken. You'll also find a **handy checklist** to help you get started.

Operational vs. strategic – what does that mean in concrete terms?

In many companies, personnel planning is understood primarily in **operational terms**. Who will work next week? Who takes over on holiday? How quickly can we fill an open position? These tasks are important - but they usually only solve acute bottlenecks.

Strategic workforce planning goes beyond that. It looks ahead: What skills will we need in two, five or even ten years? How is our business model changing? Where do new requirements arise and how do we prepare our team for them?

Those who plan strategically leave the mere reaction and actively shape the **future viability of the company**. This is not about rigid plans, but about a flexible approach with clear goals and regular review.



Exemplary distinction

Operational workforce planning	Strategic workforce planning
Shift and vacation planning	Needs analysis over years
Ad-hoc replacement in the event of terminations	Succession planning and talent development
Responding to bottlenecks	Scenarios and Skill Predictions
Cost reduction in day-to-day business	Investment in competitiveness and employer attractiveness

Why strategic workforce planning is crucial

Strategic personnel planning is **not a theoretical exercise**, but a **necessity** in order to remain capable of acting as a company. Those who do not plan today often pay the price tomorrow - be it through bottlenecks, high fluctuation costs¹ or loss of know-how.

Without strategic planning, there is a risk of risks such as:

- ✗ **Surprising** staff shortages because retirees are underestimated²
- ✗ **High costs** for short-term recruitment or external solutions
- ✗ **Loss of knowledge** and **experience** without a regulated succession
- ✗ Declining employer **attractiveness** for skilled workers

Conversely, strategic workforce planning opens up great opportunities:

- ✓ Anticipate and manage staffing needs
- ✓ Targeted closure of qualification gaps, through further training instead of expensive new hires³
- ✓ Retain and develop employees in the long term
- ✓ Linking corporate strategy with HR strategy

In a world of work that is changing faster and faster, hardly any company can afford to simply react.
Strategic personnel planning is a central lever for actively shaping change and remaining visible as an attractive employer⁴.

¹ **Haufe (2023):** Costs of Fluctuation: Why Employee Retention Is So Important.

² **Federal Statistical Office (2025):** Employment in Germany

³ **IAB (2025):** Shortage of skilled workers and labour market data.

⁴ **McKinsey Global Institute (2021):** The Future of Work after COVID-19

Practical examples: Who actually does that?

Strategic workforce planning is not something that only exists on paper. Many companies and organizations have long been dealing with this in a very concrete way, and for good reason. Here are a few examples that show how differently the topic can be approached:



Deutsche Bahn: Works with age structure analyses and junior research programmes in order to provide for departing skilled workers in good time. It is even presented in the BMAS method kit as a practical example⁵.



Siemens: Describes in sustainability reports how workforce planning and targeted qualification strategies help to cushion demographic change⁶.



Bosch: Use competence planning and develop new job profiles in a targeted manner in order to be prepared for digitalization and new requirements⁷.



BMW Group: Relies on systematic qualification initiatives and succession planning so that important positions can be filled in the long term⁸.



Municipalities: Cities such as Cologne also disclose how they want to analyse age structures and develop young talent in a targeted manner⁹.

⁵ **Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS)** (BMAS)

⁶ **Siemens AG:** Sustainability Report.

⁷ **Bosch:** Sustainability and Responsibility.

⁸ **BMW Group:** Sustainable Value Report.

⁹ **City of Cologne:** Personnel Strategy.

The 5 Steps to Strategic Workforce Planning

Strategic personnel planning does not have to be a mammoth project: a clear, structured process is important. Many companies fail not so much because of the analysis itself, but because they never start it systematically. These five steps will help you get started and anchor the topic in the long term.

1 Analysis of the current situation

- What qualifications and roles are currently available in the company?
- Age structure, fluctuation trends, skills: where do we stand?
- Tools such as competence matrices help to create transparency.

2 Develop scenarios and forecasts

- What changes do we expect in the next 2-5 years?
- Market trends, technologies, order situation, demographics.
- The goal: to derive realistic demand forecasts.

3 Gap-Analyse

- Where will gaps arise in the future?
- Which key positions are at risk?
- Clearly identify skill gaps, succession needs or recruiting needs.

4 Plan measures

- Targeted alignment of further training and qualification
- Adapt your recruiting strategy
- Setting up succession planning and knowledge transfer

5 Monitoring and adaptation

- Making success measurable with key figures
- Regular reviews and adjustments
- Establish workforce planning as a continuous process

If you anchor these five steps in your company, you can't avoid all the surprises, but you can significantly reduce the risks and gain room for manoeuvre. Strategic workforce planning does not mean predicting everything exactly, but being well prepared.

Checklist: Start strategic workforce planning

If you want to get started, you can go through these points step by step and tick them off. They help to set up the process in the company in a structured way.

- Collect actual data (age structure, fluctuation, skills)
- Analyze headcount and roles
- Develop scenarios and demand forecasts
- Identify skill gaps and succession needs
- Define measures (recruiting, training, succession planning)
- Establish responsibilities and schedule
- Involve stakeholders in the company
- Define key figures and monitoring methods
- Schedule regular reviews and adjustments
- Communicate progress and results transparently

Tip: "The checklist can also be developed together in the team workshop to include all relevant perspectives."

Outlook and motivation

Strategic workforce planning is **not a one-time task**, but an ongoing process. Anyone who deals with this once lays the **foundation for more transparency**, better decisions and targeted employee development.

Companies that plan strategically can **retain skilled workers in the long term** and develop them in a targeted manner instead of having to constantly look for quick solutions on the job market. This not only saves costs, but also strengthens the employer brand and competitiveness.

Of course, not everything will go perfectly right away. But even small steps such as an initial analysis of the current situation or setting up a competence matrix can bring important aha moments and get the ball rolling.

In short, those who **think strategically** act with foresight instead of just reacting and thus **create the best conditions for remaining successful even in times of change**.

Conclusion and invitation

Strategic personnel planning is not an end in itself, but an **investment in the future viability of the company**. It helps to identify risks at an early stage, develop suitable measures and promote and retain employees in a targeted manner.

Those who follow this path make their company more **resilient** and **attractive** and ensure that they remain capable of acting even in **times of change**.

If you want to tackle the topic in your own area but don't know where to start, we will be happy to support you in creating transparency and planning concrete next steps without any complicated processes.

Teammeter offers tools that make competence management and personnel planning simple and clear. Please feel free to contact us if you would like to learn more about it.

