

**Discussion questions for Podcast 11**

**Kirsten Watson**

**Changing role of HR: the reality of what business partnering is and how it can be achieved through business acumen, ‘soft skills’ and problem solving**

1. Kirsten Watson believes it is crucial for HR business partners to be an exemplar and guardian of the aspirational culture of the organisation, playing a role in bringing it to life and guiding choices. Transport’s cultural aspiration is to have “customers at the centre, people at the heart and working together for the greater good.”

What is the aspirational culture or vision statement in your organisation, and how does it guide your practices? How do you support leaders as one of the key levers for culture?

1. Kirsten’s advice around how to be an effective HR business partner highlights the complexity of these roles and reflects the increased customer expectations of HR witnessed by Kirsten over the course of her career. One of the key capabilities as a successful business partner is business acumen, which involves understanding business outcomes, the strategic intent of the business and the value drivers.

How can you/your team enhance your business acumen to achieve business outcomes?

1. One of the learnings from Kristen’s podcast is for HR to measure their success through the achievement of business outcomes, or according to the success of the unit you support.

With this in mind, how would you measure your/your team’s success differently?

1. An effective business partner needs to understand the breadth of HR, including the legal framework and health and wellbeing, and know when to draw on experts and specialist functions across HR when required.

What can you/your team do to expand your knowledge across all areas of HR? How can you build an effective operating model in HR that involves partners, centres of excellence and services/systems?

1. Part of being a successful business partner is having an understanding of the whole organisation, it’s business strategy and context. How has this macro-view of the organisation and understanding the broader organisational context contributed to success in your HR team?