

2018 Peter Williams HR Technology Award

WINNER: Telstra

My Career

Origins and principles

Telstra's vision is to become a world class technology company that empowers people to connect. To ensure Telstra was prepared with the skills and roles required it needed

- a consistent way to understand the existing skills and roles across the global workforce,
- a consistent way to define the future state skills and roles, and
- to empower employees through the transition.

Telstra identified that their employees felt overwhelmed. Digital disruption and constant business change meant many people were feeling overwhelmed and disempowered in their career-planning and skill development. Employees needed an easy way to navigate the changing organisation toward a future career and leaders needed to feel supported to help them. Employees needed to know what was expected of them in the future and how to develop the skills required. Telstra understood the need for different skills, but couldn't consistently define the shift.

Becoming a world class technology company requires a significant shift in the skills that are in place and at scale today. Providing customers outstanding digital experiences with increasingly more connected products, enabled by a software defined network meant significant changes in work and skills across a large workforce.

There were a series of challenges:

- Capability transitions were being defined locally and inconsistently, limiting visibility and alignment.
- Telstra didn't have good understanding of what their employees could do as there was no consistent way of understanding their skills and the career experiences in place.
- It was difficult to identify what skills employees were using in their current roles and what additional skills they had through previous roles or outside interests.

Telstra could see they were being slow to adapt and over-spending to develop capability.

The lack of a consistent career framework and low visibility of people's skills was having considerable commercial impacts, hindering the speed and agility to deliver to customers as well as leading to reactive and isolated decisions being made with regard to talent acquisition, development and retention.

It was identified that employees needed a simple, engaging way to navigate the complexities of the future of work and the existing technology solutions were found to be underwhelming and difficult to navigate.

Implementation

To address the challenge, Telstra identified the need for:

- visibility of the capability of employees, particularly in the areas that drive Telstra's competitive advantage,
- an ability to mobilise people based on their capability to deliver, and
- People empowered to take ownership of their career at Telstra.

Telstra believed they could create visibility and mobility by developing a consistent way of defining talent segments, roles, skills and proficiency levels and the relatedness of these things across the enterprise, along with a way for people to share their skills and understand the skills required in their role and all other roles across Telstra.

The biggest challenge they faced was creating a solution that would engage and empower employees. To be successful the solution needed to work for people, not just for the organisation. Telstra leveraged human-centred design and asked employees and leaders what they needed to successfully transition their skills and build a robust career at Telstra. This allowed definition of the moments that mattered most to them across the employee lifecycle. Five of these moments were prioritised and became the key design criteria:

1. "I can see where I fit in and how my skills match the roles I'm interested in"
2. "I know what is expected of me to be great in my role "
3. "Learning and development is a big deal here "
4. "I feel that I'm making progress"
5. "I can build a career at Telstra"

The initiative included several key elements delivered as a connected experience for employees. A Career Model defined all roles and skills across Telstra. It included

- The career framework which organises the workforce into talent segments and aligns people to a role group and role based on 'like' capabilities and skills.
- The capability framework which consistently defines the skills and proficiency levels required to perform all current and future roles in Telstra.

The combination of these two elements resulted in the data framework that underpins and drives what an employee sees in My Career (the new tool) as well as the workforce and talent metrics we can assess, measure and track.

Solution

My Career is a digital platform designed to put employees in the driver's seat of their career at Telstra. It's a place to share their story, get their skills noticed and discover new career possibilities tailored to them. Features of My Career include:

Personal Profiles: Employees are able to tailor their My Career profile to show others across the organisation who they are, what experiences and skills they have and whether they are interested in relocating to other regions for work. They can review and self-assess the skills that are considered essential to their role against the expected level of proficiency required for each skill. They can also add other skills that they have and would like to be found for, to their profile.

Career Pathways: Employees are presented with roles that may be suitable for them based on their current role, as well as roles that may be very different from the role they are in today but suitable based on transferrable skills. They can also search every role in the organisation and see their

personal compatibility. An algorithm within My Career provides employees with a view of their level of compatibility to every role in Telstra and outlines any skill gaps that may require development. Available career opportunities that match an employee's skill or role profile are also presented to the employee's via their My Career profile to increase visibility of internal roles and encourage internal movement.

Learning Pathways: Where skill gaps exist, My Career provides one-click access to tailored learning pathways which have been curated and validated by industry experts and Telstra's leaders. This allows employees to self-direct development towards the skills and roles they aspire to.

My Search: The search function in My Career allows any user to search for and connect with others across the organisation based on multiple criteria such as what people are up to, their skills, interests, role, technical expertise or location. For example, it can be used to pinpoint experts, find people that want to be asked about hot topics, locate others with experience in project work and discover people to collaborate with. Our Human Resources and recruitment teams use this feature to locate individuals for open roles or projects.

The project was undertaken as a continuous delivery agile project, with weekly production updates inside a two-week sprint cycle (2 releases per sprint). Continuous backlog grooming meant that important user feedback was prioritised and the customer experience and user experience were the paramount considerations for feature selection and work prioritisation. Separation of project leadership (governance, budgets) and technology leadership (UX, features & sprints) meant that the technology delivery could take place with maximum velocity. All user-interface mocks were developed in hi-fidelity. Being pixel-perfect, it was possible to test the customer experience (as well as demonstrate the value of the system) from mock-ups long before production software was available. The system front-end was developed using AngularJS to ensure a rich interactive UI derived from Google's Material Design framework and elements and the back-end was built utilising RESTful APIs, maximising re-use and efficiency of the database queries underpinning the application.

Benefits and Outcomes

The impact of the solution was maximised by aligning the deployment with other related initiatives and embedding in business as usual activities and touchpoints across the employee lifecycle. As described, employees can use My Career to promote themselves, explore a range of roles that match their skills, identify skills they want to develop and access learning to enable development.

Leaders can use My Career to support the development and career planning for their teams. My Career enables leaders to grow teams for the future by identifying opportunities for their people and supporting conversations about skill and career development. It enables leaders to provide better quality career coaching as they have clearer visibility of suitable career pathways for their employees.

Human Resources can better understand the capability across the organisation and what strategies are needed to deliver on our corporate strategy. My Career has allowed the business to baseline capability and provide a view of capability across strategic focus areas. It allows the business to target development interventions where they are needed most and disproportionately invest in the areas most critical to achieve Telstra's vision.

My Career has also been used to help accelerate turning strategy into reality for the Our Ways of Working (OWOW). To deliver for customers and win in the market Telstra needed the business agility to move and respond quickly. To simplify the way Telstra works and enable employees to do extraordinary things for customers, meant new skills and roles were needed that were never required before. My Career has been used to connect directly with the people motivated and excited by this change. Employees can easily indicate they want to work on OWOW allowing Telstra to learn about their skills and work history and connect with them. A recent campaign identified over 400 people motivated to be part of this change to the organisation. Many will transition into roles while some will be involved as a side hustle.

My Career is promoted internally but the use of it is optional. Based on global benchmarking Telstra set an aggressive target of 50% adoption by June 30th 2018. This target was achieved early, by mid-April 2018 with over 16,000 employees having accessed My Career. Using skill-matching in My Career Telstra have been able to retain approximately 400 employees by matching them to new roles and moving them within the organisation. This equates to a cost saving of approximately \$18M. This functionality is now in the hands of all employees, so when things change people feel empowered to understand roles that closely match their skills. This helps retain employees with skills required for the future.

Summary

- Telstra's ambitious vision to become a world class technology company that empowers people to connect, coupled with automation, AI and changing work models, left employees struggling to navigate our changing organisation and plan their future careers. My Career was designed to improve Telstra's future skill resilience by empowering people. A digital experience was created which places people in the driver's seat of their career. The future of work is daunting, so Telstra have enabled their people to take control.