

ISSUE 7, JUNE 2005

Welcome to the seventh issue of Nexus News, the newsletter focusing on issues facing the public sector.

This newsletter, we thought we'd give some background on one of the latest challenges facing those of us involved in any kind of organisational planning – and this time it's a challenge thrown out by NSW Treasury.

RESULTS AND SERVICES PLANS

The Treasurer introduced Results and Services Plans (RSPs) in 2004-2005, when all agencies were required to produce RSPs as part of the budget process. High level plans, the RSP helps agencies demonstrate the relationship between their services and the results they are working towards.

The RSP process is designed to produce:

- better resource allocation, with all agencies providing information about their services and the results they are achieving for the NSW community in a consistent format
- better resource management, through improved reporting
- a basis for better discussion about performance, making communication up as well as down clearer and focusing on agreed parameters.

LOGICALLY THINKING

The basic building block of RSPs is Results Logic. A Results Logic table depicts how an organisation's services contribute to results for the community and line up with government priorities.

To start to generate a Results Logic for your organisation, you need to ask:

- what services your agency provides?
- what results you are trying to achieve for the community?
- how are these results linked to the government's priorities?
- how will your agency know it's doing a good job?

ADDING VALUE

At Nexus Management Consulting, we assist organisations to change for the better through a range of services:

Strategic & corporate planning, creating and implementing the blueprint

Program evaluation, measuring the outcomes and keeping goals and strategies on track

Management review & organisation development, aligning systems, business processes and structures

Group facilitation, adhering to a relevant agenda and producing meaningful results

Strategic management training, transferring skills to develop the internal capacity to create enduring change. □

The answers lead to a table that looks like this:

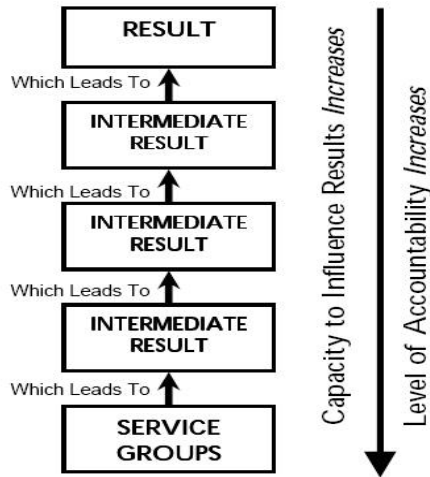


Figure 2: Results Logic

Figure 1: Results Logic – from 'What you do and why - an agency guide to defining results and services', NSW Treasury, October 2004

THE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTION

As you progress from the first to the second to the third (and so on) results level, the agency's capacity to influence results decreases, along with their level of accountability. Dedicated Nexus News readers will note the fit here with the distinction Mark Friedman makes in his Results Based Accountability (see **Nexus News Edition 5** and **Edition 6**) between results for the community and service achievements.

Just as Friedman argues that individual programs cannot be held accountable for change at the population level – but are responsible for results affecting their customers or clients, NSW Treasury, in the RSP documentation, draws a distinction between *being accountable for results* and *managing for results*.

Agencies should not be held accountable for high level results which are subject to many factors beyond their control – for example, broad natural resource outcomes, crime levels, life expectancies – but are accountable for demonstrating how their services contribute to those results.

A good example of this distinction is the Department of Community Services' Results Logic (which you can view on their website), which includes as a results indicator child abuse levels. DoCS is not accountable for the population level of child abuse, but it is accountable for what happens to children within its direct care.

GETTING RESULTS, FINDING ANSWERS

As well as fulfilling Treasury's RSP process, agencies now also need to ensure that their corporate and strategic plans reflect their Results Logic. Nexus has been commissioned by NSW Treasury and IPAA NSW to develop a workshop in developing Results Logic.

Nexus runs public programs and inhouse workshops, and Greg has been engaged to run inhouse programs by agencies including The Audit Office, the Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability and Corrective Services. For more information on workshops, please contact either NSW IPAA on 9228 5225 or **Nexus Management Consulting** on (02) 9559 2468.

Nexus also works with individual agencies to help them develop their Results and Services Plans, most recently with the Department of Juvenile Justice.

FOR MORE DETAILS ON RESULTS AND SERVICES PLANS:

- Contact Greg Masters of Nexus (gmasters@nexusmc.com.au Tel. (02) 9559 2468)
- See NSW Treasury's website at www.treasury.nsw.gov.au
- Contact the NSW Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) on (02) 9228 5225 if you are interested in attending workshops on developing Results Logic. These will be delivered by Greg Masters and can be customised to your agency's needs.

CONTACT US

Please continue to direct your ideas and comments to gmasters@nexusmc.com.au. If you'd like to see an article covering a particular issue, please let us know.

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ABOUT NEXUS MANAGEMENT CONSULTING

Established by Greg Masters in 1996, Nexus Management Consulting solves complex problems in public and community organisations. Nexus helps organisations develop practical strategies that clarify direction and make successful implementation more likely.

With substantial public sector expertise and a responsive approach, Nexus works with clients to assess management challenges and design processes to solve them. Nexus's services include:

- Strategic and corporate planning
- Program evaluation
- Management review & organisational development
- Group facilitation
- Strategic management training.