

New Zealand Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust



Staffing Solutions for Primary Industries

Managing People and Change to Grow a Successful
Agribusiness

Murray King
Nelson, New Zealand

2003

Table of Contents

<u>Executive Summary</u>	3
<u>Acknowledgments</u>	5
<u>Study Goals</u>	5
<u>Introduction</u>	6
<u>The Situation and Primary Industries</u>	7
<u>The Global Farm Employment Situation</u>	7
<u>Rural Exodus</u>	7
<u>Perceptions of Agriculture</u>	8
<u>The Cost Price Squeeze</u>	8
<u>International Trends in Employment</u>	9
<u>What Will Future NZ Agriculture Look Like?</u>	10
<u>Challenges to NZ Agriculture</u>	10
<u>The Right People</u>	11
<u>Sourcing and Retaining the Right People</u>	11
<u>The Cost of Turnover and Retaining Intellectual Property</u>	14
<u>Getting the Most Out of the Right People -</u>	17
<u>Creating and Maintaining a High Performance Culture</u>	17
<u>Reward and Recognition</u>	20
<u>Non-Cash Remuneration</u>	21
<u>Devolved Responsibility</u>	22
<u>Career Pipelines -Talent Management</u>	22
<u>Training and Education</u>	22
<u>Leadership</u>	23
<u>Employer/Employee Relationship Training</u>	24
<u>Consequence Management</u>	24
<u>Mentoring and Coaching</u>	24
<u>Labour Enhancement</u>	25
<u>Once a Day Milking</u>	25
<u>Contracting Out</u>	25
<u>Labour Replacement</u>	26
<u>Robotics</u>	26
<u>Contract labour</u>	26
<u>Staffing Solutions for NZ</u>	27
<u>Conclusion</u>	30
<u>Recommendations</u>	32
<u>Appendix 1:</u>	33
<u>Collins Hierarchy of Leadership</u>	33
<u>Appendix 2:</u>	34
<u>Secrets of the Worlds Best Employers</u>	34
<u>References:</u>	35

Executive Summary

The wide degree of anticipation for the completion of this report by many people suggests to me that the problems of getting the job done whilst maintaining harmonious employment relationships are greater than first envisaged.

The human (social) component of triple bottom line reporting has only recently become acknowledged as part of sustainable business management.

The race for talent has begun; the statistical projections for where future employees will come from are compelling. All industries are competing for fewer available and skilled people.

People have been leaving agriculture for years and the job has still got done. However the quality of output, level of productivity and lost opportunities does have a cost. The real labour shortage in agriculture is in the area of middle management and people who can manage people.

Supply chains are being shortened, product specifications more defined and margins squeezed. If employers cannot compete as producers of high quality low cost food and fibre, then production will be exported to countries with lower costs of labour.

There are no simple answers to harmonious employment relationships. No one size fits all. Even the very best people people can get it wrong despite spending vast amounts of time in communicating with their people and upgrading their skills.

In agriculture we will see a bigger gap between those who think and those who do. In the past we have had to be able to do the whole job. Future farm size will prohibit this. Scale and specialisation will dominate world agriculture in the future.

Agribusiness has to adopt a professional approach to Human Resource management. As employers we must upgrade our skills and be seen as employers of choice for an ever decreasing talent pool, rather than last resort.

There are only three essential elements that we need to get right; Recruit, Motivate and Retain. Recruitment is the only time we can truly influence the outcome, if in doubt, don't hire. Recognition and achievement are real motivators and remember to say thanks. People will stay with the business if they think they own it, devolve responsibility but maintain accountability.

Best practice in employment can be summed up as:

- Full and honest communication with employees about each individuals performance and about the companies prospects,

- Involve employees in developing the business and invest in growing their skills.
- Treat employees fairly and with respect

Leadership in farming requires more than just being technically sound. Leaders of people require an understanding of self combined with a positive and disciplined approach.

We have a very good set of points of difference and positive lifestyle factors to leverage off. There is nothing like prosperity to raise the profile. As society changes new types of employee will emerge, particularly from older lifestyle changers.

Once a day milking shows real promise in fitting into the changing needs of society. This would fit the NZ style of pastoral farming more than any other. A mindset change is required away from production to productivity and profitability.

Adoption and adaptation of new technology to farm systems needs to continue. Measures of milk produced per person compared to twenty years ago would suggest that this would continue. Robotic milking is a limited option. Labour is not eliminated but still required to manage and interpret information.

There is opportunity for groups of farms to engage a specialist HR consultant. Also to share labour across enterprises.

Sectors of agriculture such as “dairy farming” need to be re branded to get away from some of the current negative connotations. Everyone has a duty to lift the image.

Development of simple modulated systems that are well documented and easily replicated will assist in improved productivity. Roles are likely to become more specialised and tasks based on rostered systems. More shift type work will prevail.

Recruitment of immigrant labour to fill low skilled and seasonal positions is a very real option. These people are very keen to work and are often well qualified. They do not need to be looked upon or treated as slave labour. Some may be displaced farmers from other modern countries.

The result of socially influenced policies of work life balance and reduced work hours will necessitate agribusiness becoming more flexible to accommodate the needs of their employees.

As employers we have very real competition for competent skilled staff and must walk the talk to attract and retain sufficiently skilled and motivated employees. If we want a good reputation then we have to do a good job.

Acknowledgments

I am compelled to express my sincere gratitude to the New Zealand Nuffield farming scholarship trust and their funding bodies for affording me such a privileged opportunity.

To the international Nuffield scholars and industry people to numerous to mention whom I had opportunity to meet, I am extremely grateful for your time, open discussion and challenging comments.

Thanks to Ravensdown fertiliser cooperative and Livestock Improvement Corporation for assistance and sponsorship.

Final and ultimate expression of thanks must go to my wife Sarah, my family, friends and staff for keeping the show on the road in my absence.

Study Goals

To investigate how leading agribusiness and other companies manage people and change to grow a successful business:

The key points of investigation are:

- How do we attract competent people to our industry over others?
- What are the key success factors in selecting new recruits?
- What motivates staff
- How do we get the most out of employees?
- How do we retain people to add real value to the agribusiness?
- What do exceptional people managers do differently?

Introduction

“People aren’t just a piece of the puzzle, they are the puzzle” - Colin Powell

The right people are any organisations greatest asset. The key purpose of my study tour and this report was to learn how other agribusinesses identify and retain such people in order to grow and thrive. Within the New Zealand dairy industry in particular it is commonly accepted practice that in order to get ahead employees must constantly move from employer to employer in order to achieve the ultimate prize of farm ownership. The ability to realistically achieve this goal is now stretching beyond the limits of many aspiring future farmers.

The decision to choose the subject of people and their management in relation to the agricultural sector was based on first hand experience associated with missed opportunities and sleepless nights largely brought about by the wrong people being placed in positions in which they are not really suited. This is significant because after debt servicing the cost of labour is often one of the biggest farm operating costs.

Employment rates have reached unprecedented levels in recent years. This coupled with renewed prosperity in the primary sector has created a new environment of perceived staff shortages. The Tasman district now has an unemployment rate of just 2.2%; a level, which economists would argue is below the hard-core unemployment level. The district is also prominent in New Zealand’s production of commercial fishing, plantation forestry and fruit production. These industries all rely heavily on physical labour.

If New Zealand’s primary industries are to be taken seriously in the future knowledge economy, then they need to be able to show that we are truly professional in the running of a modern business. To this end new management programmes need to be embraced. One such regime is in the area of business sustainability through triple bottom line reporting (Financial, Environmental & Social). It is only in very recent times that employers have started to look beyond profit to employee welfare and the environment.

My study tour involved an intensive six-week international core tour with other scholars from New Zealand, Australia, France and Canada. This tour took in a brief time in South East Asia, followed by longer periods in the UK, Belgium, France, Canada and USA. This core tour incorporated on farm visits with high-level meetings with industry leaders and political representatives to discuss international trade and related agricultural issues. Following this tour I spent an additional fifteen weeks touring many of the same countries along with Denmark and Ireland looking more specifically at factors contributing to excellence in people management.

I have attempted to look at the big picture of employment in regard to agriculture by looking to other industries for additional ideas. Many of my meetings and discussion gravitated back toward the dairy industry, as this is where many of my contacts and interests lie. It is evident many of the labour related issues are universal.

The Situation and Primary Industries

While reference is made to agriculture, the situation and issues are synonymous for all primary industries.

Recent prosperity and expansion in several sectors over recent years has highlighted a shortage of skilled and competent people to work on farms and orchards. This situation in New Zealand arose as part of the aftermath of the political reforms, which occurred in the mid 80's. Retrenchment induced by the abolishment of subsidies and deregulation of financial markets lead to a difficult operating environment. As a result most sectors from production to servicing industries discontinued to hire and in some cases laid off staff. Undergraduates sought out alternative career avenues. The period from the mid 80's to the late 90's saw this trend continue. The difficult trading conditions and sheer resilience of producers saw new technology adopted and efficiencies adopted in order to survive. The turn of the century saw a revival in many primary industries brought about by a combination of factors such as improved efficiency, strong product prices, and a low exchange rate relative to our trading partners. All this resulted in a perceived staff shortage. It was only perception because cows still got milked and fruit still got picked. However the cost cannot easily be reconciled of lost opportunities and reduced productivity.

The Global Farm Employment Situation

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), about 40 percent of the worlds three billion strong labour force, some 1.2 billion workers are employed in agriculture as self-employed farmers, unpaid family workers and waged workers. The ILO puts the number of waged workers at 450 million, 38 percent of all persons employed in agriculture.

What is most interesting is that a large proportion of these waged workers are migrants working in third world countries or moving around developed countries. These are people often exploited and denied even the most basic employment rights of adequate income and prevention from sickness and injury. The ILO suggests that some 70 percent of the worlds child workers are employed in agriculture and that the majority of farm workers are at the bottom of the earnings scale.

Rural Exodus

The international production of food has seen a major shift in employment practices over the last century. I was under the impression that the exodus of agricultural employees was a recent thing whereas it has in fact been occurring for years. The Irish potato famine is a major case in point where 2,000,000 people died of starvation as a result of poor agricultural practices. Today many parts of rural America complain of rural exodus, and many operators are forced to seek off farm employment to supplement farm income. This is primarily a result of delayed change brought about by farm aid and price support distorting good business practices.

Areas such as rural North Dakota are strewn with abandoned farmsteads, a legacy of the depression. In order to populate the post Indian state, settlers were encouraged to move to the state and take up farming. They were given their 150 acres if they

farmed it for three consecutive years. Many failed and were forced off by the banks and now only the derelict buildings remain.

It is interesting to note that South Dakota is now actively encouraging dairy farmers from Europe to move to the state and establish new dairies, buoyed by large areas of cheap land.

Rural England has a new trend emerging where the countryside is seen as a desirable place to live. The result is an appreciation in property values thereby leading to a shortage of accommodation for lower skilled workers.

Rural exodus has played a role in labour shortages. By comparison to the mid western states of America, New Zealand is in a good position as the relative isolation of farming communities is nowhere near as great.

Perceptions of Agriculture

The urban /rural divide has been a factor in the failure to attract the required numbers of applicants to agriculture, and misconceptions about rural life are prevalent throughout the world. As a counter to this I saw active programs running in both Denmark and UK to educate and re educate the general public as to what actually happens in the countryside. Also, these programmes show that the rural environment is not only great to look at, but also looks the way it does because it is the source of food and other products.

As mentioned earlier there is widespread worker exploitation in third world agriculture. This perception is often assumed to extend throughout developed countries also.

The Cost Price Squeeze

As can be seen in most western countries, the proportion of household budget allocated to food purchases is diminishing. Food now accounts for approximately 45% of retail sales in Europe. People are expecting better quality and greater food safety yet at a reduced price. This is set against a background of higher wage demands from local people so in order to supply local produce, agribusiness managers must improve the sum of efficiencies and price decline at a faster rate than that of increasing wage demands. Where this cannot be achieved, food production will end up being concentrated in countries with lower wage rates and production costs.

This is evident where produce requires a high labour content yet attracts no or very little premium. Examples include Boc choy and other salad vegetables imported into the more affluent countries of South East Asia from China, (although traceability and management practices may be questionable) and fresh produce and cut flowers produced in Kenya and air freighted to Europe.

International Trends in Employment

There are some startling trends emerging in employment practices in the developed world. OECD research indicates that in the next 25 years, 70 million people in member states will retire. Just 5 million people will replace them. This shift in demographics will impact in several ways. Increased wage rates will be expected in order to assist in supporting these retirees. The 65 million vacant jobs will need to be filled either by immigrants or displaced by new technology. It is interesting to note that the advent of the computer age was said to lead to a paperless economy and more leisure time. It is widely argued that the reverse has probably occurred.

- Wage inequality has grown. Only 40% of income earners had real wage growth through the 90's
- Just over half of the workforce is employed on a permanent basis
- The net increase in jobs in the 90's is mostly in casual and part time positions
- Approximately half of all employees work overtime and 60% are not paid for it
- The standard work model no longer exists. "Only 7% of employees work the standard 9.00 to 5.00"
- Most people who work over 45 hours per week would prefer to work less hours
- Stress related worker compensation has risen from 5% to 19% in the last ten years
- 55% of large companies engage specialist labour hire companies
- Half of casual workers (mostly female) have been in the same job for over one year

Source: The future of work in Australia report 2003

The end result is most likely to be a fiercely competitive global labour market, not limited by country borders. More open immigration policies are likely to emerge particularly for higher skilled employees. A highly skilled transient labour market is likely to result and not be tolerant of poor employment practices. Low value, labour intensive food products will be produced principally in countries with the lowest wage rates.

The comment, which was made to me more than any other during the course of my travels, was "local people just don't want to work". This may be the case but the underlying reason is more likely to be that they actually have alternatives and the basic needs of survival i.e. food and shelter, are very easily met in a modern world.

This race for talent will necessitate some changes in agriculture and our approach to work; we will only attract the people that we deserve. *If we want a good reputation, then we have to do a good job.*

What Will Future NZ Agriculture Look Like?

There is little doubt that production units will be larger, utilising the latest technology and economies of scale. It is conceivable that many will have multiple ownership rather than traditional family ownership. Work routines will be quite different, very specific roles rather than a situation of multi skilled personnel. As a result many work routines will be based on rostered systems.

If advances in the next twenty years continue at the same rate as the last twenty (in balance we would expect it to be greater), then the farm of the future will be virtually unrecognisable today. Wherever possible, laborious and mundane jobs will become mechanised. This will be driven not only by the cost of labour but also by quality assurance programs aimed at eliminating human intervention in the food chain. Advances within the meat processing industry illustrate this well. A practice such as robotic pelting not only improves labour productivity, but also consistent product quality.

Farms of the future are also likely to become more specialised, with many of the non-core activities contracted out. Examples would include: the supply of replacement stock, growing of feedstuffs, sowing and harvesting of crops. This will be particularly the case where producers are tied into preferred supplier status and have to meet very stringent product specifications. Demands of our customers are only likely to increase. In view of food safety scares producers will need to be able to show robust methods of production that cause no harm to society or the environment. This will further require specialised management. An example of this is the situation since the Foot and Mouth epidemic in the UK. Many farms that were once multi species mixed farms are now concentrating on only one livestock enterprise.

As a net exporter of food with no price support and competing in a global market with barriers to entry and a fluctuating exchange rate we are well poised to act and react. If nothing else the events of the mid 80's have created a very responsive environment for change compared to our competitors. This rate of change and responsiveness is only likely to accelerate.

Challenges to NZ Agriculture

The Thirty-five Hour Week

Legislation in the EU looks set to ensure that employees work no more than thirty five hours per week. The NZ business community would choke on such a suggestion. Of even more significance to agriculture is the suggestion that tractor drivers should be restricted to a three hour driving time limit. The implications are enormous.

The “Work - Life Balance”

International trends suggest that we are working longer hours and this is placing increased pressure and stress on family life. As outlined above we have developed more complex and less rigid work practices.

The idea of more balance infers fewer hours. This may not be possible for some organisations. For many people work is a very important part of life and success at work is part of achievement. Creating a better culture and making work more enjoyable may be a better solution. Agriculture has the unique feature of allowing work and family life to coexist, yet another key driver to lever off.

Key Points

- People leaving agriculture is nothing new
- World agriculture is dominated by low skilled work
- We have a perception of poor employment practices
- All businesses are facing an ageing labour force and ever decreasing talent pool
- We will have more competition for skilled and competent staff
- There are new trends emerging in the way we work
- Product specifications will become more stringent
- Farm businesses of the future will be bigger and more complex

The Right People

To obtain the right people agriculture needs to become an employer of choice. We must learn how to recruit, develop and retain people.

In his 2001 book *Good to Great*, Collins studied the most successful companies on the Fortune 500 over a sustained 15-year period to identify the common traits. He then compared these companies with their contemporaries to determine precisely which characteristics made the successful companies different. The result was the identification of six key operating principles synonymous to all the successful companies in the study.

The right people are one of these principles. “The good-to-great leaders began the transformation by first getting the right people on the bus and sitting in the right seat (and the wrong people off the bus) and then figured out where to drive it”- (Collins).

Sourcing and Retaining the Right People

Lifestyle Marketing

For too long we have as an industry allowed our primary industries to be ridiculed. Post September 11, New Zealand has seen a resurgent increase in population from both returning expatriates and skilled affluent immigrants looking for a safe and pleasant place to live and raise a family.

We have a very good set of lifestyle conditions on which to leverage off and create our own point of difference.

Who – Generations XYZ

Human resource (HR) professionals are now focusing more on the different character traits associated with different age groups, often described as generation's xyz. This is important because it appears that the gaps between generations in view of roles and expectations are widening. Similarly the relationships between them need to be understood.

Veterans: Born 1920 – 1940

This generation has experienced war and significant hardships. They are past orientated, disciplined, law abiding and consistent. Their wisdom and experience in the work force is valuable. It is interesting to note that they can have a very close relationship with generation Y due to their wisdom and knowledge.

Baby Boomers: Born 1940 – 1960

The largest generation in history, born just after the Second World War. They have been exposed to prosperity and tend to be optimistic. They pursue promotion by demonstrating loyalty, long hours and ruthlessness. They tend to focus on the process rather than the outcome.

Generation X: Born 1960 – 1980

Often the products of workaholic parents, they tend to be self-reliant and individualistic, yet value family and relationships in the workplace. They can be casual toward authority, lack trust and sceptical about the future. They accept diversity and are willing to “live on the edge”. They are highly outcome focused and expect specific constructive feedback on performance.

Generation Y: Born 1980 – 2000

They have grown up in a global world through access to television and the Internet. They have been at school longer, travelled further, had access to more information than any other generation and they think differently. Rather than process or outcomes, these people focus on what they can get along the way. They are thirsty for skills and intellectual challenge. These people are also keen to use work as an experience and are constantly looking for new experiences. It would appear that they are “sensation seekers” and prepared to live on the edge as personal responsibility is of low value. Consequently this generation needs a suite of compensation packages to attract them to a job and due to their transient nature will be hard to retain. They may have their resume registered with numerous recruitment firms via the Internet even though they are happy in their current position.

Generation Z: Born 2000 +

Still too early to define.

An understanding of the above and their relationships is important in structuring the modern farm business. For example generation Y's will not be as accepting of structured hours as Baby boomers. Similarly they will have different expectations of the rewards from work.

ASDA supermarkets, one of the UK's biggest supermarket chains and a subsidiary of the world's biggest retailer, Wal-Mart, was voted the best place in the UK to work in

2003. They had followed the Wal-Mart model prior to being acquired by the American superstore, which is centred on a culture of openness, where employees are referred to as colleagues. The organisation also realises the value of experience and actively recruits grey (older) workers, especially to positions involving customer service and assistance. Sixteen percent of their people are aged over 50, and 200 are aged over 70.

Who – Immigrant Labour

Not surprisingly, a lot of agricultural practice is still very labour intensive and of low skill requirement. Use of immigrant labour is an obvious solution for the following reasons:

Advantages

- Pay rates are many times greater than in home countries, making these jobs very desirable
- Agricultural work can be regarded as a desirable job (compared to other industries such as working in a meat packing plant)
- Immigrants appear grateful for the work and want to earn as much as possible, therefore long hours are seen as desirable
- Prefer repetition rather than wide variation in work
- Can be highly educated and skilled workers
- Hold realistic perceptions of work
- Will often find and train their own replacements

Disadvantages

- Risk of workers being illegal aliens and the corresponding problems they may attract
- Large extended families may have to be supported
- Language and cultural barriers
- Cultural and racial problems, particularly where many different nationalities are employed
- Time consuming bureaucracy in satisfying authorities
- They expect long hours of work and may leave if they don't get it

In America it was suggested that 40% of US cows are milked by immigrant (mostly Hispanic) labour, the majority of whom are probably illegal. There is a huge potential risk to the business if these people were caught and deported.

Some employers minimise the risk from foreign workers through the use of contract gangs, where the contractor (gang boss) takes the risk. Alternatively, by using programs such as Harvesting Opportunity Permits (HOPS) in the UK, who assist growers in legally sourcing and placing temporary foreign workers.

Immigrant agricultural labour doesn't have to come from the third world. There is real opportunity for NZ farms to source young immigrant farmers from places such as the UK. They do not have the same opportunities for advancement or have been displaced by changes to UK agriculture.

Recruitment

“Business is booming and we’re hiring. We have all the ingredients for the perfect job except one – you”! - Pizza Hut

It is necessary to know what we want when employing. Competency, skill, behaviour and attitude are top of the list but note that it may be a mistake to hire for experience.

Clearly defined position descriptions form the basis of good recruitment practice. These are important for laying out the requirements of the position and thereby creating a sound set of measures for future performance assessment.

There appears to be a trend emerging where recruitment is conducted more and more through specialist recruitment agents often specialists in a particular industry. These firms often cover both permanent and temporary positions and also provide other services such as training and personal development. One such firm, Jobhog has been instrumental in establishing a pan agriculture workshop designed to address the agricultural staff shortages in the USA.

The recruitment phase more than any other is the time where we can fully seek to control and influence the desired outcomes. That is to say, if in doubt, don’t hire.

The only way to gain a deeper insight into prospective employees ability, is to test them through the normal interview situation. A series of what if questions such as what would you do in a certain situation or how would you go about undertaking certain tasks are assessed.

There are options to further testing of intelligence and personality. Such as numerical and verbal critical reasoning tests and personality tests. Personality can be assessed from the simple DISC model to the more complex Myers Briggs test. Most are quite complex and need professional knowledge to accurately interpret the information. In the wrong hands the results can be misleading, although applied correctly they have been proven to be beneficial.

We should look to the recruitment process as an opportunity to enhance our business, not with dread and fear of getting it wrong.

Jobs on line

The Internet has not been used to recruit for agricultural as much as other industries. However with a more computer literate generation Y there is room to not only source from a new talent pool but also better market the industry. Shortlists can easily be created through question and answer screening sites.

The Cost of Turnover and Retaining Intellectual Property

It is widely accepted in Human Resource circles that the cost of recruitment, engagement and training of new staff can range from one, to as high as two and a half times the annual salary of the new recruit. This cost takes into account the recruitment process along with reduced productivity until the new staff member is established.

In the NZ dairy industry it is widely accepted that in order to get ahead you must keep moving from employer to employer in order to advance. The first year recruits are

carried in terms of development and cost recovery, the second year they become worthwhile as productive employees, and the third year they contribute real benefits to the business. However, once someone has been trained and understands the individual farm system they are already either emotionally or physically preparing to leave. Therefore this appears to be a high hidden cost to the industry.

However, it is also necessary to look at the bigger picture and understand the other reasons why people leave a job.

What drives people to leave a job?

REASON	RANKING
Unhappy with management	1
No recognition	2
Limited opportunity for advancement	3
Inadequate salary and benefits	4
Bored with the job	5
Other reasons	6

Source: NZ small business assn. '2000

The inference from this is that *“people don’t leave jobs, they leave people”*

As a contrast I was keen to see what happens in other industries. I looked into the fast food business as it is perceived to be suited to low skilled people, has irregular hours, low pay, repetitious and unpleasant working conditions. These companies counter these challenges by maintaining simple systems and procedures that are easy to train. It is interesting to note that an annual staff turnover of 400% p.a. is the industry norm.

One fast food company did however prove an exception to the rule and had an annual staff turn of less than 100%. Looking for such exceptions to the rule is likely to highlight different practices we can emulate. **Pret A Manger** is a very rapidly expanding fast moving consumer food business (FMCG). From one store in London fifteen years ago, used as a pilot to perfect their processes, they now have over 130 stores internationally. They operate in a fiercely competitive market but with very high quality, safe, animal and environmentally friendly food, prepared fresh all day long and on site by the very people who sell the product at the counter of that store. The company is so successful it now leads the world in fast food retailing leaving McDonalds, the previous industry leader, holding a minority shareholding.

So how do they do it? They operate in teams of highly energetic young people who all want similar things and want to enjoy work. *“Lets have fun and get the job done”* is an unofficial slogan. Their recruitment slogan states we, don’t work nights, we wear jeans and we party. Regular staff parties are held and every one is invited. Above all else the company is passionate not only about what they do and their food, but also about their people. As a result they have been ranked by Fortune magazine as one of the top 10 places to work in Europe.

Pret A Manger is a classic example of an employer who understands the type of people they need to employ and created an environment that delivers.

Whilst the above has focused on staff retention it should be noted that the wrong people can be as counter productive as no or transient people. It is just as important to shed the wrong people as retain the right people. If they are not meeting performance standards, then we need to reinforce the high performance culture and assist them to reach suitable levels. If people don't fit then they should probably be assisted out. As a gentleman in the USA stated *"Well you cull your poorest performing stock don't you? - Staff should be no different"*. Obviously the correct protocols and employment law have to be followed.

Key points

- The right people with the right skills in the right job
- The cost of turnover is one to two and a half times a persons annual salary
- Understand the type of people you need then create the culture and environment to deliver
- Challenge tradition, older and immigrant staff may be the answer
- School leavers may fit the budget but little else

Getting the Most Out of the Right People -

Creating and Maintaining a High Performance Culture

Values roadmap

The first thing that should be addressed at the induction stage is a clear picture of how we want to operate. What are our expectations, our values and how do we want to work together to maintain a high performance culture. The following symbolises the key principles that should be considered:

Teamwork
Ownership
Achievement
Simplicity
Trust

(Source: Andrew McLachlan)

Doing Ordinary Things Extraordinarily Well

As producers we need to acknowledge two things: firstly we have to accept that someone else can do the job and often do it better than we can, secondly we cannot do everything ourselves. This is most evident nowadays as less work is undertaken by paid non-family labour. A prominent UK agri-businessman describes the situation as '*the sum of the parts is greater than the individual*', that is collective strength will achieve more than we can on our own.

It is important to *focus on the right things rather than everything*.

Productivity

You can lead a horse to water but you cannot force it to drink; it will drink only if it's thirsty. So too with people, they will only excel if motivated to do so.

Nucor Steel builds its entire system on the idea that you can teach farmers how to make steel, but can't teach a **farmer work ethic** to people who don't have it in the first place. Their whole system did not aim to turn lazy people into hard workers but to create an environment where hard working people can thrive. They place greater weight on character than on skills, employment history and experience.

This attitude trait is seen by many as being of upmost importance when selecting a prospective employee. These are often the most talented people who will thrive in any career field.

Find Out What They Want

There is no point in climbing the ladder if it is against the wrong wall.

In order to fully motivate a person we first need to find out what buttons to push. Possibly two of the most widely referred to studies are Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Motivation Factors.

There are broadly five strategies for motivation:

- Positive reinforcement / expectations
- Effective discipline
- Treating people fairly
- Satisfying employees needs
- Setting work related goals

Aghelpwanted have looked at the conditions under managers control that charge up or drain down employees.

<u>Charges (+)</u>	<u>Drains (-)</u>
+ Variety of work, drawing on skills & abilities	- Lack of trust
+ Independence & responsibility	- Inadequate pay
+ Being listened to and informed	- Confusion
+ Participation in decision making	- Unsafe working conditions
+ Tasks that involve learning and growth	- Poor or inadequate equipment
+ Training	- Vague instructions
+ Being trusted	- Not being listened to
+ Seeing the result of your work	- Someone solving problems for you
+ Recognition and praise for work	- Conflict with co workers / supervisor
+ High occupational status	- Not knowing if you are succeeding
+ Good pay	- Boredom
+ Interesting work	- Perception of unfair treatment

If we can focus on the positive and are aware of the negative then we are well on the way to achieving a harmonious working environment.

The following is what our own organisation has adapted from the above to try and understand what new employees are driven by. New recruits are asked to rank this list in order of importance from 1 – 12.

What a person wants from a job?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job security • Sympathetic help on personal matters (employee assistance program) • Full appreciation of work done (recognition) • Good working conditions (a company to be proud of) • Promotion within the company (career opportunity) • Being included on company matters • Good wages (rewards) • Tactful disciplining (performance feedback) • Work that keeps you interested and motivated • Flexible working conditions/hours • Personal development opportunities (skills development and training) • Role responsibility (empowerment)

NB: This is in no particular order

Once the basic survival needs such as food and shelter are met, achievement and recognition are often the key drivers. Interestingly, provided that remuneration is fair

it is often ranked at number 3 or 4, that is, money doesn't necessarily motivate and while it may be an important factor in accepting a position, it is rarely the reason to leaving an employer. Remuneration should be based on what you want your compensation package to say, not how much do you have to pay.

If we can restructure our organisations to allow a certain degree of flexibility to accommodate the above we are well on the way to a productive workforce.

Communication

Free and honest communication forms the basis of a sound and stable work relationship. This is necessary to convey the individual's performance and their relationship with the company's plans and prospects. Focusing on employee's strengths can increase performance by over 30% whereas emphasising their weakness's can reduce productivity by a similar amount.

Structured meetings between management and staff should be conducted in a formalised manner rather than part of a casual discussion.

Communicating with humour is an underestimated method that can maintain a relaxed working atmosphere. Laughing also helps people think more broadly in problem solving.

With over 70 staff, Evergreen Farms has a photo all staff taken and placed on the staff room wall. This allows everyone to put a name to a face and assists the team in communicating with one another.

Changing Work Time

As agriculture is heavily influenced by seasonal and climatic factors we have greater limitations to adjusting work time. When the crop is ready it has to be harvested. Long and unsociable hours are seen as undesirable yet work cannot be deferred for the convenience of the labour force.

I was interested to observe when assisting a team of farm workers in the UK cover a silage stack that they were in very high spirits, despite the fact they had been working all day and this was late in the evening. The reason was due to fact it was an irregular event and was based on a lot of camaraderie and fun and led by a very motivated and positive team leader. They all possessed a farmer work ethic i.e. when the works there it has to be done.

As we are forced to compete head on with other industries for staff the concept of **Annualised hours** should be considered. Whereby we contract staff for a set number of hours per year, anything over and above is treated as a separate payment but not necessarily overtime. There is a wide variation in hours worked on NZ farms with most falling between 2000 and 3000 hours pa. (Dexcel use 2400 hours pa. as equivalent to one labour unit)

A large arable operation in the UK is successfully using this system. Salaries are based on a 39-hour week plus 650 hours accumulated overtime pa. The system is

based on trust where staff keep a record of their own hours, extra hours worked over the contract amount are paid as a lump sum at Christmas.

In New York State a dairy operation milking 4200 cows is structured around city hours. Milking crews operate a milking roster of 11 days on 3 days off and apart from very busy periods operate on a 40-hour week. The operations manager was from a banking background and a condition of his employment was that he wouldn't work more hours than his previous job and neither would his 90 employees.

The seven-day weekend is a concept devised by Ricardo Semler, CEO of Semco, one of Brazil's fastest growing companies. Essentially workers have a high degree of freedom as to their own work hours that suit them and their lifestyle. They are also given a lot of authority as to who is employed and are given an open book of the company's finances. The benefits are empowered and motivated staff.

The ability to have some flexibility in work hours can lead to large savings in absenteeism.

Operating systems

Well documented farm systems are essential, especially as the complexity of farm businesses increases and as larger numbers staff are employed. These primarily consist of standard operating procedure (SOP) manuals and charts detailing best practice.

Reward and Recognition

There are various ways employees can be provided with financial incentives as part of their employment package such as the following examples.

Match funding of superannuation payments to employees whilst not common does occur in larger farm businesses. Where the employee contributes \$1 to a scheme that is matched by \$1 from the employer. As the fund grows the benefits of remaining with the scheme do also, thereby giving staff an added incentive to remain with the firm. In effect a golden handcuff.

Medical insurance can be given to long serving employees as part of a remuneration package.

Supply of branded work clothing with the company's logo is used on many farms and helps in instilling a sense of pride in the organisation.

Incentives and Bonuses

Incentives are offered as a reward for achieving some pre-determined future event, whereas bonuses are usually a result of achieving a milestone. This is an area of widely divergent views. Some suggest that use of such inducements should be limited while others are strongly in favour of them. It seems that the greater the proportion of remuneration the more focus there is on only achieving the bonus thereby taking the focus off other items of best practice. Some say why should we pay an incentive for someone to do the job they are paid for anyway.

A large dairy in the US had an attendance bonus program. All staff were on a flat hourly rate, for example \$6.00/hr plus \$0.50/hr for turning up. If they were late or missed work at all in a two week period they lost their entitlement to the bonus. The weighting was adjusted for some employees, for example, an unreliable staff member would have a lower base rate and a higher bonus value.

Profit Share

This can be done in a number of ways. The most common is for managers to be given a share, for example, 5% of tax paid profits. Research shows a percentage any higher and people tend to focus on the wrong things.

One vertically integrated agribusiness gives all staff, from the GM down to the gardener, a share of the annual post tax profits. This is based on a series of bands, so if for example the firm makes a net profit of \$100,000, they each receive a profit share distributed on a pro-rata basis relative to their salary.

Equity and Risk Sharing / Stock Options

After a defined period of time senior or key staff may be given ghost stocks / shares. These are a reward for performance and while they may appreciate (or decline) in value they carry no voting rights.

Non-Cash Remuneration

“There are two things that people want more than sex and money... Recognition and Praise”. – Mary Kay Ash

Genuine thanks

Most importantly a genuine “thank you” can generate real benefits. This can be as simple as a handwritten note, which reinforces behaviour and shows that the employee is on track.

The number of employers who cannot even express a simple please and thank you to their staff surprised me. As expressed earlier, feedback and recognition are key drivers in satisfying peoples basic needs and wants.

“It’s a real pleasure to work for someone who appreciates me” – Truck driver, GHB Agriculture

‘Red-letter days’.

This is a company based in the UK, which assists in rewarding other organisations employees. ‘Red-letter days’ are based on the concept of giving experiences as gifts. They currently offer over 300 experiences. These can be as adventurous as hot air ballooning and motor racing, to indulgences such as wine tasting and health spa days. These are perks, which are given to people as a result of ABCD (above and beyond the call of duty) and are usually taken up during work time.

Understand people’s interests and give personal recognition appreciated by that person. The reward to the employer for even relatively minor gifts can have a huge

payback. It shows that individuals are appreciated and valued and as a consequence they feel compelled to perform.

Devolved Responsibility

Delegate to the lowest level and leave people to manage the detail of the business parts. The best people are hungry for a challenge and to prove themselves, they need room to express themselves.

“Identify the correct people and coach them to get going. Often the only thing lacking is confidence. Once established make them king of the column”. (John Alvis)

We need to work hard at looking for the positives when it is often easier to focus only on negatives. People don't go to work to do a poor job. When people are empowered they don't want people looking over their shoulder.

Career Pipelines -Talent Management

There are no road blocks on the extra mile.

If we come across the right person with the right attitude and values we then find a job for them even if we don't have that job right away. An employer is always looking for people with extra drive and enthusiasm. The benefit for the employee in the right organisation is fast tracked career advancement with no roadblocks.

In larger agri-businesses a clearly defined career path can be outlined and it is possible to progress through the organisation. In smaller farm businesses the same could be developed through farmer collectives or clusters of farms. These are strategic alliances where a group of farms with common values agree that if they are ever stuck they can provide advancement for various staff.

Training and Education

The real shortage of skilled workers means that we are compelled to train. Farmers need to see staff as an asset rather than an expense. In order to get a better return from their asset, an annual allocation for training should be budgeted.

There are a surprising number of agri-businesses who are accredited as education providers. Through their staff training programs, members can gain recognised qualifications. These are often larger and vertically integrated businesses.

Others have in house certification programs where staff are signed off as being competent at a particular job.

Training in time management and organisational skills may show some of the greatest benefits, particularly to line managers.

A potential problem identified, is in the non-coordinated approach to training. There is a proliferation of training providers and employers have real difficulty in assessing what the qualification really means in relation to the employees ability to do the job.

Key Points

- Find out what buttons to push
- Achievement and recognition are key drivers
- Focus on the positives
- Money doesn't necessarily motivate
- Small rewards and acknowledgement often most cherished
- Devolve responsibility to the lowest level and ensure accountability
- Take courage to delegate
- Develop people and advance by increments
- Become or use accredited training providers
- Communicate with humour

Leadership

"Leaders aren't born they are made. They are made just like anything else, through hard work and that's the price to pay to achieve any goal"

– Vince Lombardi, Green Bay Packers '59-'67

The importance of good leadership cannot be understated. Kotter of Harvard Business School suggests, *"Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with the vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles"*. It has been suggested that fifty percent of all strategies fail on implementation, and eighty percent of these failures are due to people related problems.

Before being able to understand others we need to be able to understand our skills, our shortcomings and ourselves.

Essential to creating a high performance culture is a positive and disciplined attitude. We won't get good performance if the crew think that the ship is sinking.

"Success is measured by your ability to maintain enthusiasm between failures"

- Winston Churchill

Leaders determine the culture of the business, which usually takes 5 to 7 years to change.

If we as managers can aspire to what Collins refers to as '**Level 5 Leadership**' (refer appendix 1) we are well on the way to extracting maximum value from our people. The key traits of these people are that they show personal humility and strong professional will for the good of the organisation and put employee's needs above their own. They tend to be self effacing and modest. 'When things are going well they look out the window and attribute success to their people, when things are going badly they look in the mirror and take full responsibility'.

Leadership in farming is more than just being technically sound. We need to be able to market ourselves as being good at leading people.

Employer/Employee Relationship Training

*“You can achieve anything in life, provided that you don’t mind who gets the credit”
- Harry S. Truman*

Empathy and emotional intelligence are powerful traits Daniel Goldman has identified. This includes understanding people's feelings and concerns and taking their perspective, appreciating the differences in how people feel about things, and looking at things from others' perspectives.

Make people feel good about themselves, and make them think that they own the business. This can be as simple as giving employee's acknowledgement and recognition for their importance in the business through job titles. A Penn State dairy uses titles such as Lead Milker, Cow Flow Director and Barn Controller to describe what could be considered quite ordinary roles, although these titles acknowledge the contribution to the success of the business.

Consequence Management

*‘Admit your failures before someone else exaggerates them’
- Spenards Lumber Supply Coy, Alaska*

Where breaches of expectations occur or where results fall short of expectations it is critically important that immediate corrective action is taken. Otherwise the situation becomes the norm or accepted standard. In other words problems must be nipped in the bud before this leads to a downward spiral of employer/employee relations and increased frustration.

Clear and concise job descriptions and expectations are necessary to provide the basis for comparison. People must be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and understand the consequences if they fail.

“The Peter Principal” is a process where people are promoted to their own level of incompetence. That is, they have found their natural limit when they begin to make mistakes. A basic understanding and implementation of this process could be used as a tool in consequence management.

Mentoring and Coaching

“I’m just a ploughhand from Arkansas, but I have learned how to hold a team together. How to lift some men up, how to calm down others, until finally they’ve got one heart beating together as a team. There are just three things I’d ever say as a leader:

*‘If anything goes bad, I did it’
‘If anything goes semi-good, then we did it;
‘If anything goes real good, then they did it’*

- Coach Bear Bryant

A problem shared is a problem halved.

Murray King

Staffing Solutions for Primary Industries

Key Points

- Lead by example. It is easier to pull the chain than push it
- Know yourself and your limitations
- Be positive
- Be disciplined
- Look above the midden.
- Focus only on what's important
- Farmers should market themselves as good leaders of people

Labour Enhancement

Using labour more efficiently enables limited staff to be spread further.

Once a Day Milking

Once a day milking (OAD) is a very good example of labour enhancement. Progressive farmers in both England and France are successfully using this system even though their reasons for doing so differ.

A large-scale operator in the UK uses the system as part of his drive for low cost milk production. Wages however are still his highest cost.

In Brittany, France, there are several factors driving the decision to move to once a day milking. There are strong social requirements to reduce work hours to less than a thirty-five hour week, therefore this practice helps managers to conform to the social expectations of their employees.

These farmers also have difficulty getting high yielding Holstein type cows in calf, so cows are milked from calving until the end of mating once a day, and then revert to twice a day once pregnant. Local restrictions on milk quotas provide another driver.

One young farmer was using the extra time generated to find a wife!

This OAD system opens new possibilities in employment practice where a whole new labour pool can be created, for example mothers could milk cows after the children have gone to school.

Contracting Out

Tasks which traditionally are performed by farm employees can be performed by a neighbour or other local farmer thereby releasing the farm labour for other activities, and only needing to retain or pay for the actual labour as and when required. An example of contracting out is the feeding of supplements using somebody else's equipment and labour. This can also mean contracting labour for short periods or specialist tasks.

Labour Replacement

Robotics

Used extensively in parts of Europe to milk cows. These confined housed cow systems suit robots well and while total labour replacement is not possible, different labour is. Management by exception is the new requirement for this farming method and requires many new and different skills from the current norm.

New robotic technology is being developed to provide low cost multi unit systems to the more extensive grazing systems such as New Zealand's.

It is only a matter of time before new real time technology is developed to test for mastitis, milk components, condition score etc.

Contract labour

Being used more in parts of the UK where machinery rings have moved to supplying and co-ordinating a pool of labour alongside their traditional sourcing and supply of machinery from members.

Staffing Solutions for NZ

Become an employer of choice

Evidence would suggest that people are attracted to employers of good reputation. To the extent that these employers have waiting lists of prospects. Whilst their reputation has been earned there are tools to assist in becoming an employer of choice such as the ‘Investors in people’ program in the UK. Essentially a quality assurance audit program where employers evaluate their work practices and are audited to ensure that they are in fact walking the talk.

Constantly trying to Improve employer/employee relations is essential and is centred on a healthy respect for people.

Don’t hire

When first discussing the topic with a number of people, the first comment was often “oh that’s easy just don’t employ anyone”. Obviously this is limited to smaller family operations and may be a viable option rather than stepping up production.

Decide what we want

The division between what those who think and those who do is getting bigger. Previously the farm manager did the lot. Roles have become more specialised and will continue to do so. Unskilled process workers versus skilled line/middle managers.

Both have different requirements and expectations from work.

Immigration

Possibly the simplest short term solution to sourcing labour for NZ farms.

Technology

One of agricultures greatest revolutions in labour saving technology was Cyrus McCormack’s promotion and sale of the reaper in the 1830’s.

There have been exponential advances since the days of Cyrus McCormack’s day. There is no reason to doubt that they will continue.

Electronic animal identification, heat detection and drafting systems are common in many places. New advances in no till and machinery traffic management also significantly reduces work time.

Biotechnology will have a huge impact on advances in plant and animal breeding and performance.

Scale

In the USA herds with more than 500 cows account for just 3 percent of operations but almost 42 percent of milk supply. Having a greater influence in the supply chain is critical.

Scale also provides a career path for employees due to the number of positions potentially available within the organisation.

Cross sector labour exchange

A pan agriculture view is required. Due to the seasonal and varied work load on NZ farms there may be opportunity to use labour from other sectors. For example once market gardens finish picking vegetables, those same people could milk cows in the afternoon.

The same can be applied to sharing of seasonal labour between countries. Some agricultural contractors are successfully doing this.

Re branding

The NZ dairy industry has been hammered by negative publicity particularly regarding the environment. As a result dairy farmers are viewed by the general public as being greedy big businesses with little or no regard for the environment or their communities.

New terminology should be considered Eg. Lactation coordinators, agri-business personnel, natural resource directors.

Farmer HR collectives

A group HR function could operate where a series of farms preferably of differing size and type collectively hire an HR professional to assist in recruitment, training and trouble shooting. The key here is that problems are dealt with professionally and outside family circles.

This could operate on a retainer basis of say 20 hours per week to ensure all employment on OSH requirements are up to date with additional trouble shooting consultancy as and when required.

Shift management

As work becomes more specialised there is no reason why greater use cannot be made of shift work. For example milk harvesters working three days on then three days off and alternating between AM and PM milkings. This will inevitably be driven by scale.

Work smarter not harder

Concentrate on the right things rather than everything and delegate wherever possible. Constantly look to question the past and innovate for the future.

Proactive rather than reactive

Industries need to have a better picture of the future in order to anticipate the changes and future labour requirements.

Responsiveness to change

Look for new ways of doing the same old job and challenge convention. It is easier to think outside the square if you don't even know what the square looks like.

This is where the real benefits of non-traditional and older lifestyle change employees are gained.

Benchmarking

Establish world's best practice and key performance indicators against other industries, as they are our competitors for staff.

Conclusion

As my study has evolved it has become evident that the whole subject of labour and labour management is hugely complex. In larger businesses there are large teams devoted solely to the management of people, yet for the average small/medium sized business the role may be undertaken by the owner/manager as part of their other managerial obligations. Often with no or little HR training, yet the problems and expected outcomes are no different.

The problems we face are synonymous with most other small/medium-sized businesses worldwide, yet we have a good set of different lifestyle factors that we can use as a point of difference in which to lever off.

People have been leaving agriculture for years; staff shortages vary as much as the seasons. Yet the job usually gets done but at a cost in lost productivity and opportunities.

Agriculture and dairying in particular has faced negative publicity. When coupled with perceived long hours and unpleasant conditions it is no surprise that people are not attracted to the industry.

There is nothing like success or a positive profile and prosperity to attract attention.

As employers we need to follow principles of employment best practice. Rod Oram has summarised this as ***“full and honest communication with staff about each individuals performance and about the companies prospects: treating them fairly; involving them in developing the business; and investing in growing their skills”***.

We get what we employ. There is no greater factor in ensuring the success of our labour force than making sure we recruit the right people at the outset. This is the most important job we will ever do. We are only as good as our weakest person.

Having recruited we then need to walk the talk. Above all else the power of delivering positive industry leadership and high performance are inextricably linked. If we tell the world the ship is sinking then how can we expect anything other than sub standard recruits.

Flexibility and responsiveness to change are essential to the changing requirements of our modern consumer. Price is no longer the only driver, with buyers more discerning to the methods and practices employed in producing food, taking into account the environment and social factors. Perceived exploitation of labour is not tolerated.

We have forgotten the value of the sharemilking system. Aspiring overseas farmers are very envious of the opportunities this affords. The evolution of equity partnerships goes part way to addressing the situation, however the first step on the ladder is still critical to attract the people with drive and enthusiasm to ‘do there own thing’.

Farms of the future will become larger and more specialised requiring managers to possess professional HR skills.

Nobody gets it right all of the time. Sometimes we've got to make mistakes to learn and get it right. Even the best people people are constantly trying to understand their employees and spend vast amounts of time on people management.

Sometimes no matter what we do, its never enough. The more we give the more that is expected. In the race for talent we may need to accept this and move on.

Food production will be exported to the lowest cost producers. If we want to maintain our competitive edge in a high labour cost economy we must continue to drive other costs out of our systems.

There is no greater asset than people if we want to grow our businesses, "Whose packing our parachutes"

Recommendations

1) A clear picture of future needs - As an industry we need to decide on what we want. We need a much clearer picture of what future agribusinesses will look like through good forecasts of future needs. From this we need to become proactive rather than reactive. This reactive situation has been highlighted in the NZ dairy industry in recent years where expansion has caught us out and we have placed people who are not right. A similar situation has occurred in the US pig industry which has seen rapid expansion to a point where the industry is held back due to a lack of skilled staff.

2) Become employers of choice - The race for talent will gather pace, we must show that we are professional and aim to become an employer of choice rather than last resort. Perception of long hours and unpleasant conditions must be changed. Every farmer has a duty to lift the standard. Success should be actively promoted and celebrated. Be flexible and creative by providing opportunities to non-traditional staff eg. Women with school age children

3) Appeal to the mid life career changers - Selling the positives of the lifestyle to people who have life skills and a work ethic.

4) Immigrant labour - Need to take a close look at the current immigration system and to where improvements can be made particularly to short-term seasonal work. There is real opportunity to fill jobs such as milk harvesting with foreign staff.

5) Continue to improve farm systems - The drive toward further cost effective technology and its application should continue to be encouraged. Leading farmers will adopt labour reducing and labour replacing technology.

6) Professional environment - Tools to train employers in best practice HR management and leadership need to be addressed. A code of best practice is required to measure ourselves against.

7) Retention - Look to providing creative rewards (golden handcuffs) from work Eg. Profit share, medical insurance, superannuation, share issues, childcare etc. after a pre specified period of time.

Appendix 1:

Collins Hierarchy of Leadership

Level 5 Level 5 Executive

Builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.

Level 4 Effective Leader

Catalyses commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision, stimulating higher performance standards

Level 3 Competent Manager

Organises people and resources toward the effective and efficient pursuit of pre determined objectives

Level 2 Contributing Team Member

Contributes individual capabilities to the achievement of group objectives and works effectively with others in a group setting

Level 1 Highly Capable Individual

Makes productive contributions through talent, knowledge, skills and good work habits.

Appendix 2:

Secrets of the Worlds Best Employers

J.M.Smucker a US family food company with 3000 employees and 100% stock return over the past 5 years has just been named by Fortune as the best company to work for. Their corporate values consist of:

- Listen with full attention
- Look for good in others
- Have a sense of humour
- Say thank you for a job well done and celebrate success

A **Wisconsin dairy** milking 300 cows has 9 part time high school staff and 1 full time staff member. Their best practice principles consist of:

- Flexibility
- Clear expectations
- Good communication
- Standard protocols
- Respect
- Performance bonuses

ASDA supermarkets, voted one of the top 10 best places to work in Europe in each of the last three years. One of their slogans is “ordinary people given opportunity to do extraordinary things”. Their core values are:

- Will to win
- Team work with impact
- Knowing and satisfying customers
- Clarity of thinking
- Brilliant delivery
- New ideas and approaches
- Leadership
- Passion for learning
- Planning and organising work
- Timely decision making

Express Personnel and Express Ranches, Bob Funk

- Possess farmer work ethic
- Lead through personal hard work
- Operate ‘Intrapenurially’, each department operates as a mini business
- Maximise good people skills

References:

Collins, J. (2001) Good to great, Random House

Goleman, D. (1995) Emotional intelligence, Bloomsbury

Christian, J. (2002) The most important thing you'll ever do, Piatkus

Semler, R. (2003), The seven day weekend, Random house

Aghelpwanted (2002) Guidelines for managing agricultural labor, Western farm extension committee

Unlimited, Jan 04

Billikopf, G (2003) Labor management in agriculture: cultivating personal productivity, University of California