

# Communicating with our growers

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## 1.0 Executive Summary

This report was written with the aim of finding out how we can communicate more effectively with our suppliers. By 'we' I mean Trevelyan's Pack and Cool Ltd, a kiwifruit and avocado post harvest company based in Te Puke, with approximately 330 suppliers.

The research methods included

- 1 – a literature review
- 2 – an interview of four other primary industry based operations
- 3 – an online survey of our existing suppliers
- 4 – an interview of four existing suppliers

Key findings included

- A need for our company to revamp our website offering to growers
- A need to be concise with the information we provide
- High performing companies have a focus on reporting and payment of quality of product supplied, not only quantity of product supplied.

This report was compiled with the help of many different people from throughout primary industries within New Zealand.

## 2.0 Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the following people for their contributions to this report

- Luke Jellett, National Supply Manager Bee Products, Comvita
- Larnie Muirhead, Supply Services Coordinator, Comvita
- Anna Cudby, Sales and Marketing Coordinator, Havelock North Fruit Co (Rockit Apples)
- Pernell Hartley, Project Manager, Havelock North Fruit Co (Rockit Apples)
- Steve Birnie, Production/ Marketing, Crusader Meats
- Paul Van Boheeman, Supply Services Manager, Tatua
- Terry and Susan Fowler, kiwifruit growers, Te Puke
- Wilson and Barbara McGillivray, Avocado growers, Katikati
- Andre and Helen Hickson, kiwifruit and avocado grower, dairy farmer, Te Puke
- Peter Klaassen, Business Manager Sheep, Beef and Horticulture, Craigmere Group
- Rachel Brodie, Operations Support, Trevelyan's Pack and Cool Ltd
- Midge Munro, Communications Manager at NZ Avocado

### 3.0 Introduction

The way the world communicates has changed immeasurably since the turn of the century. Landline phones and the traditional post have largely been replaced by a range of technological methods, including text, email and Facebook. These changes have been the instigator of this project.

What I wanted to look at was how other companies in the rural sector interact with their suppliers. These interviews with high performing companies gave some insights into how they interact in general, and it also uncovered a few 'gems'. These 'gems' are specific examples that I will be able to tailor for my own company, Trevelyan's Pack and Cool.

For some background and context, Trevelyan's Pack and Cool is a privately owned post-harvest company based in Te Puke. In 2016 we packed 15.5m trays of kiwifruit (approx. 11% of the industry). The same year we will pack around 750,000 trays of avocados (again around 11% of the industry). We have around 180 kiwifruit growers and 150 avocado growers. We interact with our growers in a number of ways, this project is about

- How other primary industry companies interact with their suppliers
- How our growers like to interact with us
- How would some of our more technologically savvy growers want to interact with us

### 4.0 Methodology

This report has been compiled using four methods.

Firstly, a literature review was completed.

Secondly, I interviewed four companies involved in the NZ primary industry.

- I wanted to get a range of businesses from different industries, and identified 'high performing' businesses in their respective industries. Comvita from the bee industry, Rockit Apples from pipfruit, Tatua from the dairy industry and Crusader meats from the sheep and beef sector.
- I wanted to avoid interviewing companies from the same industry we are involved in (kiwifruit and avocado). This is because I was hoping to pick up some ideas that we may be able to implement, and once again enhance our service offering to our growers. By using interviews with companies from other industries I hoped they would be more open than if I had interviewed our competitors. Also, I made sure that my interviews were not just one way, and that I offered the companies information about our business and how we operate. This report will also be shared with the companies I interviewed. The four companies interviewed were
  - Comvita, as it is in the same geographical area as Trevelyan's (the Bay of Plenty). The number of suppliers they interact with are similar to Trevelyan's Pack and Cool. They are also a value add business and vertically integrated.
  - Rockit Apples. They interested me because of their unique product. Also, their website stated they have growers overseas, so I was interested in how they communicate with them. Trevelyan's Pack and Cool have a number of overseas based growers.
  - I chose Crusader Meats to interview from the sheep and beef sector. The MBIE (2015) Investors Guide to the New Zealand Food and Beverage Industry report, states

Crusaders have revenue of \$90-\$100m per annum, and are privately owned. The same report states Trevelyan's has turnover of \$50m. Trevelyan's is also privately owned, so there are similarities there. My father Steve Birnie also works at Crusaders in Production and Marketing.

- Tatua are viewed as being one of the premium dairy companies in New Zealand. Their annual report stated they have 118 suppliers in 2014/15 season (Tatua annual report 2015). This is a similar number to Trevelyan's.
- The third method was completing a grower survey of our own suppliers. This was completed using Survey Monkey. The survey was sent to our email distribution lists for both kiwifruit and avocado. The survey ran for 14 days. Approximately 330 growers received the survey (180 kiwifruit growers and 150 avocado growers). There were 117 responses to the survey (35%), up from 53 (16%) on the previous survey (Nov 2015).
- The fourth method was interviewing 4 of our growers. These growers are high performers, and high users of internet resources. I chose a range of kiwifruit and avocado growers, from owner operators to a large corporate.

## 5.0 Literature Review

The way we communicate with each other has changed immensely over the past generation, and it looks as though there will be massive change experienced for the next generation as well. We have moved from a largely hard copy based system (which could take days for information to be shared if via post), to an online system where information can be shared instantly. This comes with many opportunities, but also a number of challenges.

Information sharing is continuing to change, with positive and negative impacts for people living and working in the rural sector.

The KPMG Agribusiness-Agenda-2016 talks about the opportunity rural broadband offers. 'Fast connectivity into rural communities is a game changer. It enables faster health care services to be delivered to remote regions; it enables students to connect to education resources around the world; and it removes a barrier to young people contemplating moving to rural areas.... It also delivers the ability for farming businesses to utilise data to enhance productivity and reimagine their value chains'.

However, some of the opportunities of technology are instigating change that has negative impacts. From the New Zealand Post website recently. 'Changes to the Deed of Understanding with the Government in 2013 allowed New Zealand Post to move to five-day delivery in rural areas. From 1 November, more delivery runs will move from six to five days a week. Currently around 15% of rural customers are on a five-day delivery and this will increase to around 25%'. The fact it has taken this long to go to five day delivery is somewhat surprising, and it would not be surprising to see this rate of decreasing postal services accelerate. In five years' time will we be seeing three day per week postal delivery? Or maybe in ten years will it be once a week postal delivery? Or no post at all?

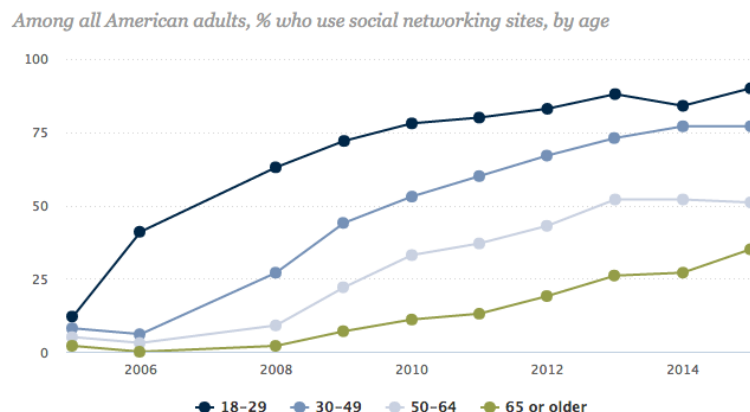
Banks are another provider that are changing the services they offer, as more and more transactions are completed online, away from bricks and mortar offerings. In August it was reported that nineteen rural Westpac branches - from Kamo to Ranfurly - could be set to close, putting 72 jobs at risk, according to the bank workers' union. 'Currently, more than 85 percent of service transactions with us take place outside of a branch. In addition, over the last five years, online transactions increased by

61 percent and in the last year online logins via a mobile device have increased by 33 percent' (Radio NZ website 2016)

As part of this Kellogg paper I wanted to look at social media trends and whether we as a business should be embracing this as a way of communication with our suppliers. Looking at some recent statistics in the year to January 2016 there was a 12% growth in the number of active internet users in the Asia Pacific area, and a 21% increase in the number of active mobile social users (Smart Insights Website 2016). The trend to internet usage and mobile usage continues.



When looking at social media use by age demographic, the graph below shows that the younger demographic has started to plateau, and it is now the 65 year and up age group starting to accelerate. This is important to note when we look at the age demographic of our growers. (Smart Insights Website 2016)



Source: Pew Research Center surveys, 2005-2006, 2008-2015. No data are available for 2007.

There is much commentary on how the world is changing with regards to information sharing. This report looks to identify firstly how some other companies share information, and secondly how our suppliers view our performance in this area, and how we could improve.

## 6.0 External Case Studies

As part of my project I interviewed people from four companies from the primary sector in New Zealand. Below is a summary of those meetings. A brief introduction and overview of each company is followed by a summary of the key findings in relation to how they interact with their suppliers.

### 6.1 Comvita

Comvita is a global natural health company committed to the development of innovative products, backed by ongoing investment in scientific research. Comvita is a world leader in Manuka (leptospermum) honey and fresh-picked Olive Leaf Extract, which are core to the company's product range. With more than 500 staff located in New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, the United Kingdom and the USA, Comvita sells into more than 18 countries through a network of branded retail locations, seven country specific e-commerce websites and third-party outlets. [www.comvita.com](http://www.comvita.com)

#### 6.1.1 Overview

Myself and a colleague (Rachel Brodie) met with:  
Luke Jellett. National Supply Manager, Bee products.  
Larnie Muirhead. Supply Services Coordinator

Comvita have 158 suppliers in 2016 (up from 80 three years ago). 30% of supply comes from hives owned by Comvita. They are involved in a number of JV's with landowners and iwi groups. Comvita haven't profiled suppliers by age, but have a sense that there is a younger profile coming through. Apiarists are spread geographically spread from Far North to bottom of South Island, with some product sourced offshore.

#### 6.1.2 Supplier Interactions

Supplier Interactions include:

- Annual report (listed company) – 60 suppliers are shareholders.
- Quarterly newsletter to suppliers
- Once a month general newsletter.
- Apiculture conference wrap up.
- Luke meets suppliers Face to face (usually meet in smoko room/ house/ extraction site)
- Smaller suppliers would meet once a year.
- Key suppliers would meet twice a year.
- One person based in South Island.
- Tech advice is delivered with a 'gently gently' approach.
- Comvita trying to create best practice.
- ApiNZ has only just been formed, (was previously two industry groups)
- Beekeepers are competing with each other. Instead of kiwifruit and avocado growers who seem to be more unified. Seems to be more tension now that prices for honey have risen significantly
- Comvita have an annual survey on their propolis suppliers. This is delivered both electronically and posted.

- Have completed a survey recently of all suppliers.
- Comvitas preferred method of communication is email. One advantage is it ensures there is a written record.

#### Field days

- Have held field days. Usually based around MPI regulations, Pricing or health and safety. Comvita would like to run more field days, but there are challenges around spread of suppliers. There are thoughts of having a pilot group, and having clusters around extraction sheds.

#### Website Based Supplier Portal

- Comvita have recently (June) rolled out a website based supplier portal
- Comvita surveyed their supplier base to find out what they wanted on website, then interviewed 14 suppliers to get more in depth information. Some feedback included that there was a lag between supplying honey and getting feedback.
- Used a pilot programme to trial system.
- Half of supply base is now using it
- Includes a dashboard reporting system where suppliers can see results including
  - Payments, results, grading, specifications.
  - Results of last 3 deliveries
  - Where suppliers product is in the process
- Another feature is 'chatter', where suppliers can engage with each other in a closed forum.
- Updates every 24 hours
- Website supplier portal should be industry leading and a competitive advantage

#### Other information.

- When visiting suppliers, Luke asks questions as to what information they would like to see on website
- Not using social media too much to engage with supplier base, but are using Facebook to engage with customers
- Comvita has a café onsite that is open to the public. It has a range of products on show for customers to purchase. Also has a 'Comvita experience' tour.
- Café is also a place to meet suppliers. Can show them through plant then meet in the café to go over any business matters. Café is an asset to both Comvita and its suppliers, and local community.

## 6.2 Rockit Apples

Rockit is the world's first specially bred miniature 'high quality' apple, positioned as a health snack. <http://rockitapple.com/> Rockit Apples is the product and brand of the Havelock North Fruit Company. The apple is unique, so too is the packaging and marketing. The apples are sold in a plastic tube.

### 6.2.1 Overview

This company is a fully integrated business, involved in the production, orchard management, packing, distribution and marketing of Rockit Apples. On Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August I met with Anna Cudby (Sales and Marketing Coordinator) and Pernell Hartley (Project Manager) in Havelock North.

- Phil Allison (founder) brought rights to this variety in 2010.
- Initial markets were NZ, Taiwan, and Marks and Spencer's in England.
- Investors include Steve Saunders, Neil Craig, Rob Craig, Murray Denyer, John Loughlin (chairman)



- 2 investment groups investing in orchards, they contract Havelock North Fruit Company to manage those orchards.
- There are 5 external growers in NZ. Also have growers in France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Spain, AUS, US and other countries
- Market is 2% domestic, 98% export

#### 6.2.2 Supplier Interactions

- Fruit Logistica in Berlin (February) all European growers attend that.
- Fruit Logistica in Hong Kong (all growers attend)
- Emails are preferred method of communication. Dropbox is used a bit (not allowed to use this in China, distributors not growers)
- Overseas growers pack their own fruit. Little tech transfer at this stage as it is still developing
- Hoping to use website to upload documents.
- Grower overseas is often distributor.

### 6.3 Crusader Meats

Crusader Meats is a privately owned sheep and beef processing company, based in Bennydale in the Central North Island. Crusaders have over 600 farmer suppliers who supply stock year round. Farmers are based in the Wairapapa, Manawatu, Taranaki, Hawke's Bay, Gisborne, King County, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, south Auckland and sometimes from Northland.

#### 6.3.1 Overview.

I had a number of conversations, and email communications, with Steve Birnie, who is in production and marketing for Crusader Meats.

#### 6.3.2 Supplier Interactions

With the diverse spread geographically of Crusaders suppliers, it is felt that phone is the best method of communication. Crusaders do not hold field days as such but hold farmer meetings around 5 times a year. This is in the form of a dinner where farmers are invited along for a meal and a presentation is given about the company from the Plant Manager and Marketing Manager, it is usually an overview of operational results from the previous year and how they see the season going forward. It also gives the suppliers a chance to ask questions and interact with plant people other than the Livestock manager.

As well as the above, the livestock Manager is only a phone call away. He deals directly with 35% of suppliers, the remaining 65% of suppliers use a local agent who in turn communicates with our Livestock manager.

Other methods of methods of communication include

- Website
- Weekly price schedule Fax or e-mail
- Fortnightly newsletter Fax or e-mail
- Daily kill sheets when the farmers process stock
- Farmer Meetings
- Livestock manager personally making farm visits
- Farmers are welcome to visit the plant and watch their stock being processed
- No use of social media, and no intention to use social media in the future

## 6.4 Tatua

Founded in 1914, the Tatua Co-operative Dairy Company is the oldest independent dairy company in New Zealand. Today, Tatua exports more than 94% of its products to more than 60 countries worldwide each year and has sales offices in three countries, Japan, USA and China.

### 6.4.1 Overview

I met with Paul van Boheemen who is Supply services manager. He has been with Tatua for 22 years. Environmental management background.

Tatua have 113 supply farms, from 86 farming families (Some farmers have multiple farms). All farms are located within 12km of the Tatua factory. Milk collection costs are the lowest in the country. There are 370 staff (20 based offshore). The factory operates 7 days a week 24 hours a day 365 days of the year. Turnover is in the region of \$285m (annual report 2015)

### 6.4.2 Supplier Interactions

- Every day from every farm a sample is collected and tested, results come back the following day, these results are summarised and sent via text message to farmers. The full report (called a daily docket) is sent with the tanker driver to the farm the following day (two days after milk collection)
- The daily docket includes a variance from the previous year. Every day on this docket there is a reminder about quality. The milker usually gets this docket (often different from the farm owner), so the message is targeted at the milker.
- There is a monthly newsletter (posted out) that also includes comparisons of the top 10 farmers based on the milk quality, this list creates a lot of discussion and farmers aspire to be on this list, (often the same farmers appear on this list – top performers)
- This monthly newsletter is mailed out with the Buyer Created Tax Invoice (BCTI)

#### Website

- Information on the farmer portal includes
- 10-day historical report
- Payment summary
- Access to all forms farmers need for compliance
- Historical letters to farmers
- Comparative report compared with average

#### Challenges/ Opportunities

- Farmers receive so much information
- Need to be precise, short and frequent
- how to move regulatory information via an app. E.g. how to record a load of palm kernel rather than have to keep a docket.
- How to use info sharing – e.g. Dairy NZ, Tatua, LIC, try and remove the need for farmers to duplicate information
- Upcoming environmental requirements – need to discuss this with farmers one on one, so Tatua are looking at employing someone in this area
- 40% of milk into value add, heaps of room for growth
- Farmers have a quota system; this quota must be purchased – if they exceed quota they get a lower price for that milk supplied. Focus on quality of milk rather than volume.
- Tatua have a TV screen at entrance, it has dairy industry news on it
- There are also screens in smoko rooms – has info on whats going on onsite – HR manage it – H&S, production

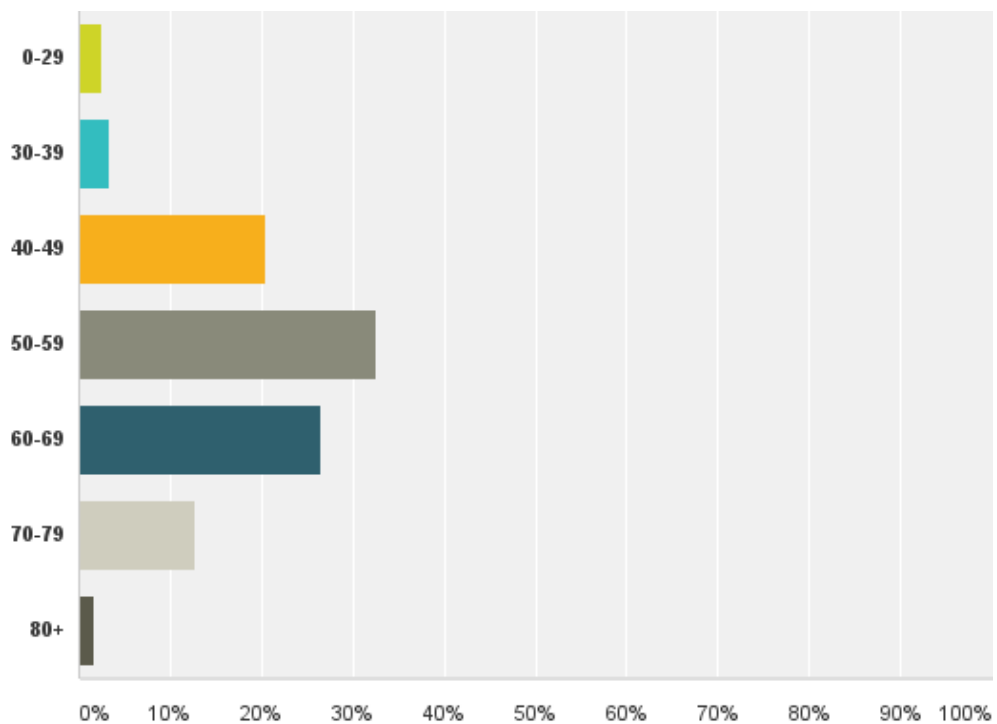
- Supplier loyalty – very low turnover, Tatua have never lost a supplier due to unhappiness with company.
- Milk can be downgraded and penalties applied, high standard of milk will get a premium

## 7.0 Grower Survey

A survey of our growers was carried out using survey monkey. Whilst it was sent to 567 email addresses, there are a number of industry contacts, ex growers and potential clients who are on our email distribution lists. Actual growers receiving the email would be approximately 180 kiwifruit growers and 150 avocado growers. Total 330 growers. There were 117 responses to the survey (35%), up from 53 (16%) on the previous survey (Nov 2015).

Our grower survey traditionally focusses on sustainability issues, this year because of my Kellogg project we asked a number of questions to do with communications. The results are as follows

Figure One: Age Bracket of respondents



A wide age spread of respondents, with the majority being in the 50-59 year age group. Angela Halliday's Kellogg Project of 2016 had 40% of growers in the 60+ age group, so these results are in line with her statistics.

Figure Two: Gender of respondents

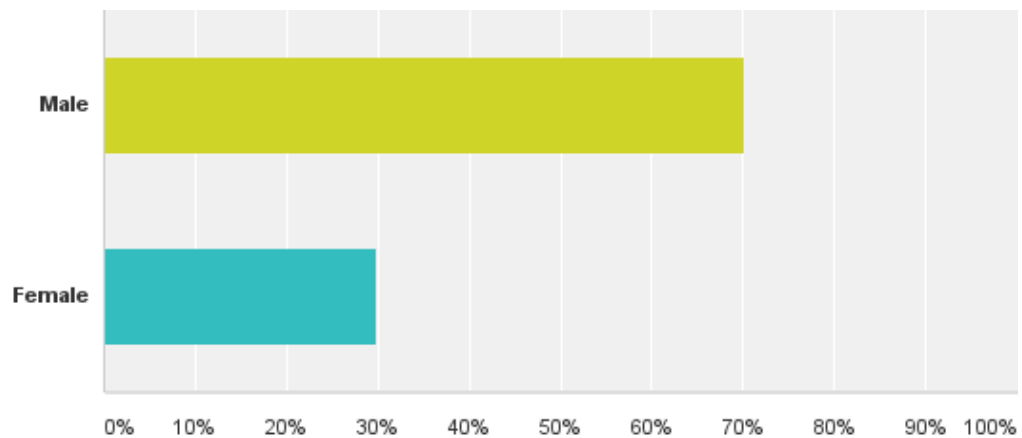
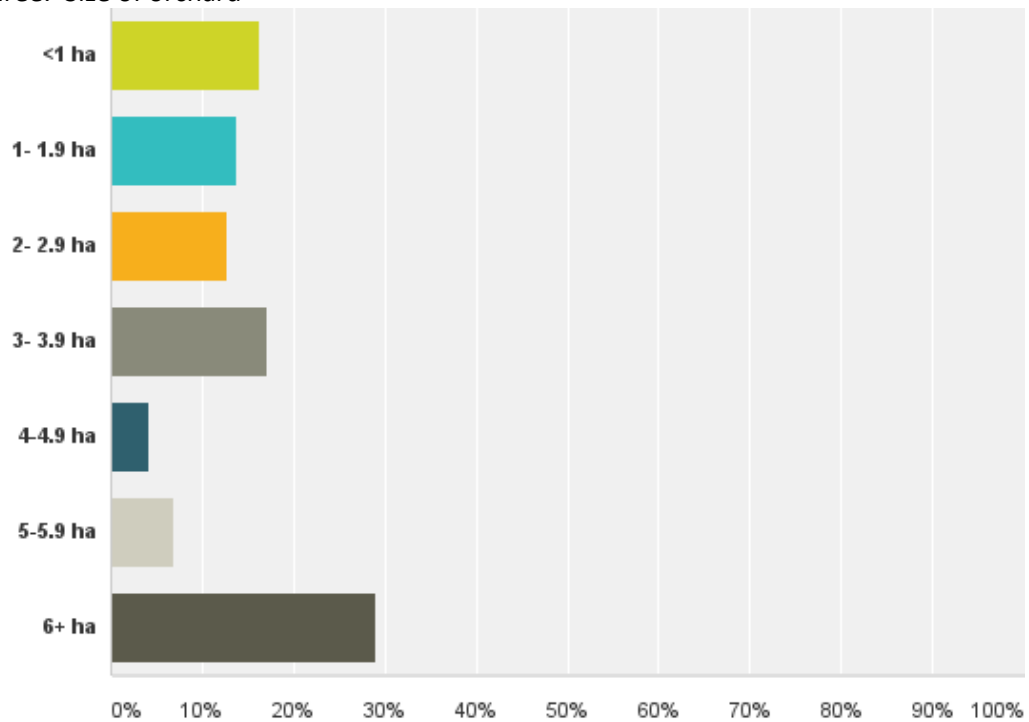
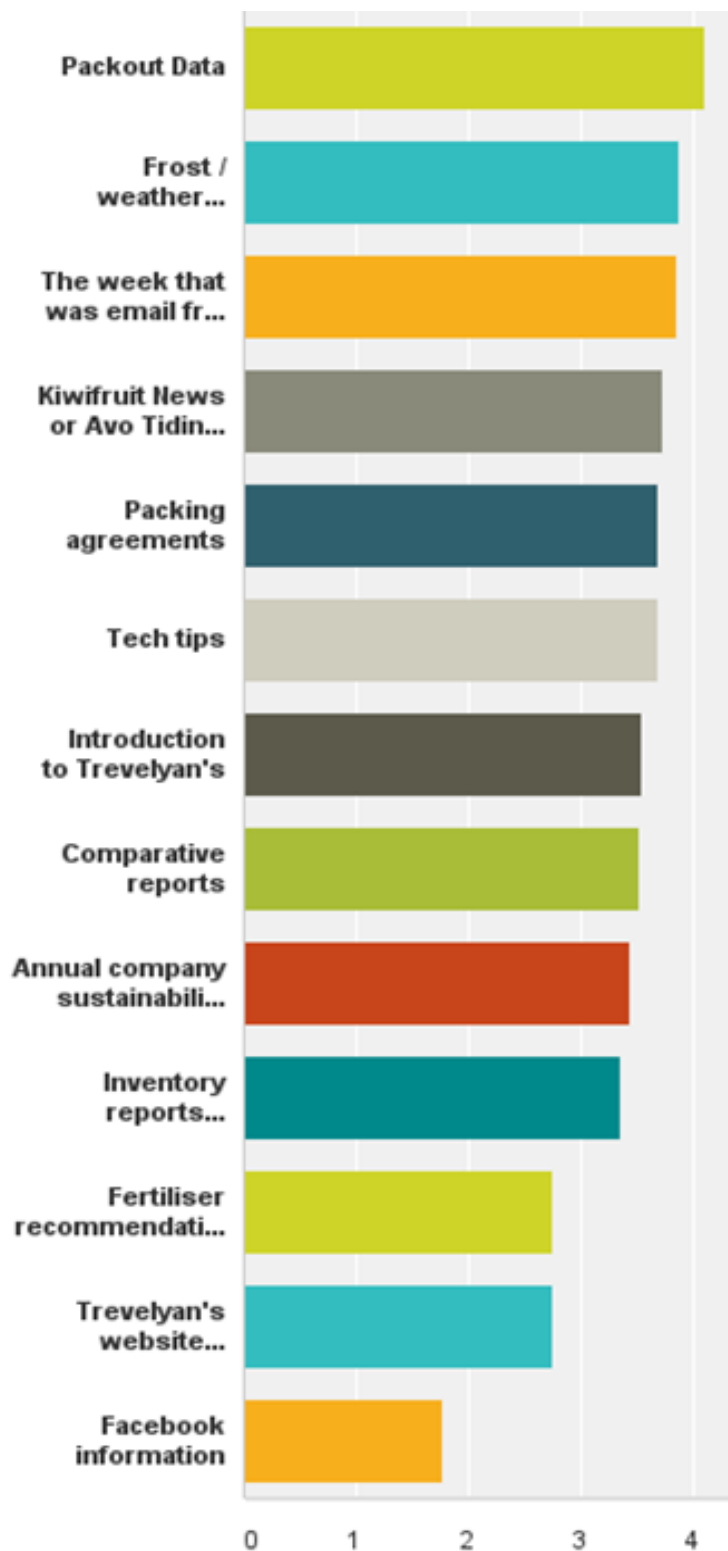


Figure Three: Size of orchard



The above answers illustrate that we had good spread of orchard sizes. The 6ha + orchards will be the more commercial growers who are reliant on their orchard as a primary source of income, and it is pleasing to see they made up 30% of respondents.

Figure Four: How do you rate the content (including relevance and quality) of the following publications?



1 = Poor, 2 = Adequate, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent

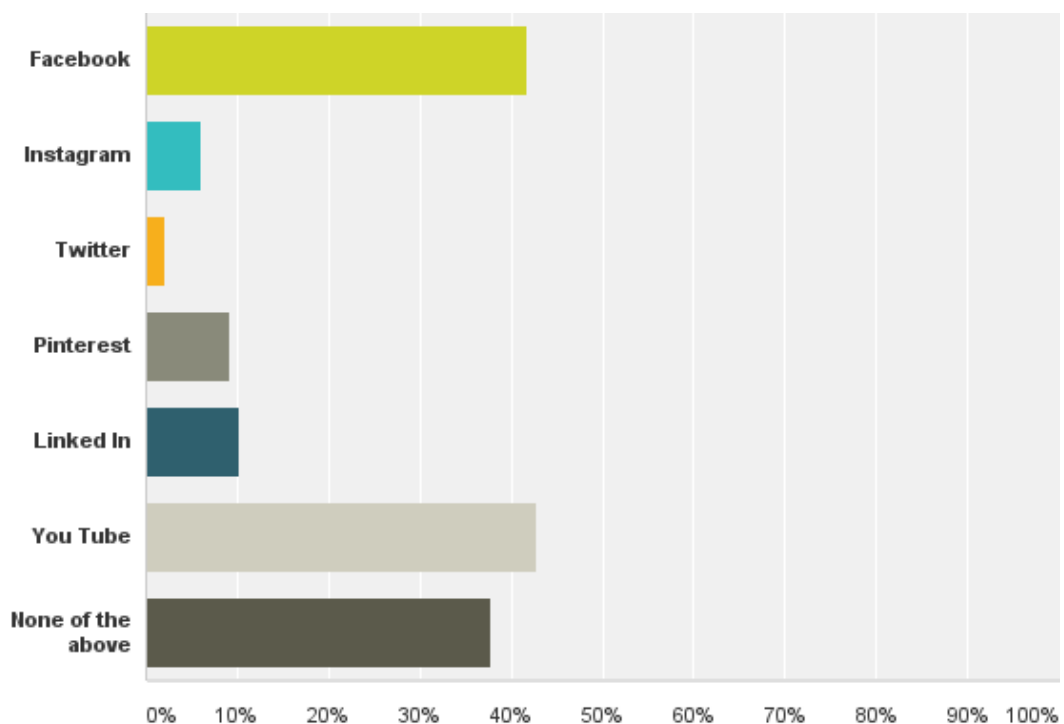
Packout data is a one pager that summarises their packing information (reject rate, average size, kg packed and trays per bin). Frost forecasts are an email that arrives in their inbox warning of a frost. It splits the Bay of Plenty into 6 geographical regions and gives the predicted low temperature, and the percentage chance of a frost. The week that was email is a concise 3-4 liner that is emailed out at the end of the week by James Trevelyan. It summarises the previous week, and highlights any issues or events coming up the next week.

Facebook information has the lowest rating, along with our website.

Growers were invited to comment on the above publications, some of the comments included

- Can the website have more grower specific data, a repository with all the info related to each PPIN (avos)
- Don't use your website the things I've looked for are not there or it's so out of date.
- Website not up to date, poor menu layout. Should not put financial data on a website
- Trevelyan's website not always up to date
- I would really appreciate more information and search ability on your Website I feel it lets you down

Figure Five: Which social media platforms do you use?



This is the first time we have asked this question. I think we will continue to ask this over time, to see if there are any trends in increasing uptake with social media. Over 40% of our growers are using Facebook, which indicates to me we could utilize it more to communicate with them.

Figure Six: Have you visited our Facebook page in the past year?

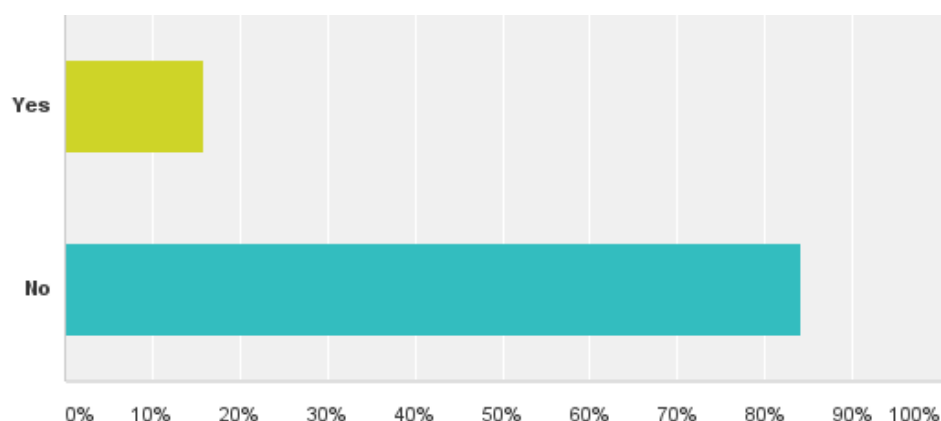
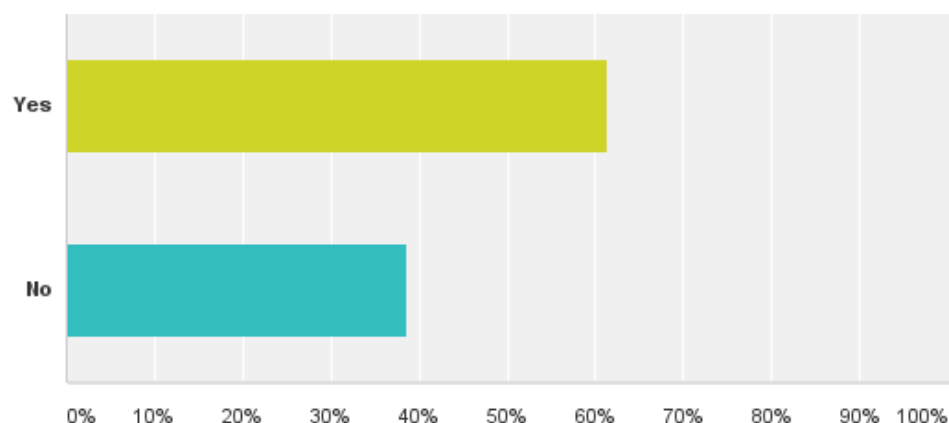


Figure Seven: Have you visited our website in the past year?



Over 60% of respondents have visited our website over the past year. When asked what information or resources growers would like to see, answers included:

- Access to all my data like packout reports, OGR forecasts, fruit loss, payment documents
- What's happening with other growers, information on fruit size measuring - things not on the AIC website.
- Field days information
- Historical data of ALL reports we receive at any time on any issue
- Handouts and video from field days; meaningful comparative reports; Kiwifruit Newsletter; Trevelyan's publications.
- Include industry links and information, Canopy, NZKGI, KPG, KVH, other resources 12 maps and industry links
- Cashflow budget spreadsheet
- Comparative packing information on a weekly and geographic basis for avocados.
- Real time inventory during harvest real time harvest issues and info
- As a grower I would like to see historical reports under one heading for each category e.g. Comparative reports
- Season Trends Tech tips Orchard management suggestions collated and searchable-good search engine
- Data collected by Trevelyan's on the website for my own orchard-bud/flower counts, packout reports maps
- comparison year by year
- General Industry information and any comparative measurements between Suppliers

## 8.0 Internal Case Studies

The final part of my research involved interviewing four of our suppliers. Below is a summary of these meetings. A brief overview of their background is followed by a summary of the key findings with regards to how they view our interactions, and any areas of opportunity for Trevelyan to improve.

### 8.1 Wilson and Barbara McGillivray

Wilson and Barbara McGillivray are avocado growers just north of Katikati. They are experienced growers, and have been involved in kiwifruit as well (as shareholders of Waimapu packhouse in Oropi). I asked them what they would like to see on our website

- Dry matter results ('we haven't seen our figures, and going to Ag First all seems a bit of an effort – would be great if we could get them from Trevelyan's website')
- Dry matter trends – preseason relating to geographical areas
- Pack out records – would be wonderful to get early access to packout info for our orchard and comparative packhouse figures for that period
- Field day notification/ follow up
- Technical reports
- Avo green monitoring and trends
- Market updates
- Relationships e.g. with Innovative Machinery Companies, Fertilizer companies, Riversun etc
- Compliance (GAP) issues
- Recipes – social media interaction

### 8.2 Terry and Susan Fowler

Terry and Susan Fowler have a 6ha green and gold kiwifruit orchard in Te Puke. They are owner operators, and are out in the orchard doing most of the orchard tasks themselves. They are also very computer literate and are hungry for more information available online.

I asked them about what they would like to see on our website

- Packout reports, and historical packout reports (they had a need to retrieve the last 4 years of packout data, and had to ring Trevelyan's to get the data)
- Forecasts
- Payment advices
- Kiwigreen pest monitoring reports

### 8.3 Andre and Helen Hickson

Andre and Helen are successful kiwifruit and avocado growers in Te Puke. They supply two post-harvest companies with kiwifruit. They are also dairy farmers supplying Fonterra.

- DMS have an app that reports how much fruit the grower has left in store, trays shipped, shipped percentage, trays lost and percentage loss. This is very simple and concise, very easy to access. Whilst lacking in too much detail, its simplicity is what makes it a winner for Andre.
- Would like to see on our inventory reports the level of exposure compared with previous years (Andre was very complimentary of our inventory report)
- Andres comments about how to compare with previous years were repeated throughout our conversation
- Put variety and maturity area at the top of each page of inventory reports
- Would like packing data via app or text, Core packing statistics reported.
- DMS have a fortnightly inventory report via email, just reporting facility statistics.
- Growers want different information via different methods, it is hard to cater for everyone, but that is the challenge.
- Andre is a heavy user of the Fonterra website, LIC (Minda), Dairy NZ, Zespri Canopy.



- Andre's comments on the design of a website
  - Have good titles and drop down boxes
  - Keep it simple
  - Use the whole screen
  - The less clicks the better
  - Make it so we don't have to reenter the password every time
  - Make use of a 'click here to read more' option
- The Fonterra 'week that was' is now an app that you get on your phone. It has commentary from John Wilson as per normal, but also has financial information, forecasts and industry updates.
- Incidentally, Andre is the grower who suggested to James Trevelyan to start a week that was email. It is now our 2<sup>nd</sup> most popular form of information received.
- The kiwifruit industry is not very good at websites (opportunity!) for example the Zespri Canopy website has too small text. Its hard to access old technical information

#### 8.4 Peter Klaassen

Peter Klaassen is the Business Manager Sheep, Beef and Horticulture, for Craigmore Group, based in Christchurch. Craigmore owns a number of farms in New Zealand, including dairy, sheep, beef, and squash. They also are in a joint venture with Trevelyan's Pack and Cool in two large kiwifruit orchards in the Bay of Plenty. I had a phone interview with Peter Klaassen who is based in Christchurch.

Craigmore would like more information on

- Benchmarking information – how do Craigmore farms compared with everyone else.
  - Trays per ha
  - Taste
  - Fruit loss compared with others
  - KPI for profit

They would like to see concise comparative reporting.

- Peter does like our inventory report
- How do we compare to the high performers? It's OK to be better than average, but we need to be in the top 10% of growers.
- How do we compare to other similar sized orchards?

Craigmore has two orchards at the moment, and would like to see consolidated information from across the orchards

- Start at maturity area level, then KPIN level, then farm level, then total business level

As a comparison with Fonterra,

Traditionally Fonterra have sent reports out, now Craigmore go straight into Fonterra's database. They can see all their production details, it is real time and seamless and timely.

Other comments include,

Don't duplicate information

- Zespri are putting out tech tips
- Use our partners to use their information (Zespri)

## 9.0 Analysis

- There is a wide variety of methods of interacting with suppliers.
- High performing primary industry based organisations have comprehensive website based offerings for their suppliers
- Email is the preferred method of communication for Comvita and Rockit Apples
- Personal interaction is seen as important by all companies. As Rockits suppliers are worldwide personal interaction is difficult, so they ensure they catch up twice a year at global fruit logistica's (annual trade shows).
- Information regarding quality metrics is passed back to suppliers (Comvita, Tatua). This is a very important point, as it shows that quality is more important than quantity. If New Zealand is to attract a high value return from the market, it has to start with the producers, and we need to reward high quality, not just high productivity.
- Growers/ Farmers receive lots of information (quote from Paul from Tatua – just look at the average dining table of a farmer to see how much information they are receiving through the post). So we need to be precise and accurate with information we are sharing. Andre alluded to this as well.
- There were a number of comments about the Trevelyan website that leave us with some opportunities. A common answer was that it is out of date, and also that the documents growers want are not available. Also a better search function was requested.
- Common themes to emerge from grower commentary on our website were
  - Comparative reporting (how do I compare to my peers)
  - Historical reporting (how do I compare to last year)
  - Cashflow budgeting
- Suppliers are more likely to visit our website than our Facebook page

## 10.0 Discussion

The Purpose of this report was to investigate how we as a company could communicate more effectively with our suppliers. There were some common themes that came across from all the fields of research, including

- A need for our company to revamp our website offering to growers
- A need to be concise with the information we provide
- High performing companies have a focus on reporting and payment of quality of product supplied, not only quantity of product supplied.

Some of the limitations in applying these recommendations include

- Not all our suppliers have access to computers (although this group is becoming smaller and smaller every year)
- The grower survey only went out to those suppliers with computers (and/ or email address).
- The importance of face to face meetings for all suppliers should not be underestimated.

Further analysis should be compiled. When looking at the grower survey, some areas to look at in more detail could include

- Almost 40% of respondents said they didn't use social media. Some statistical analysis with respect to age of respondent and orchard size would be useful
- Over 40% of respondents said they use YouTube. We should find out what our suppliers use You Tube for and whether we can utilize this from an operational point of view
- Over 60% of our suppliers had visited our website in the past year, we should ask them how often they visited it.

In the grower survey, we asked what they would like to see on our website. There are some themes that came through, and these are outlined in the recommendations section below.

## 11.0 Recommendations

After analyzing all the data that has been compiled, some recommendations can be drawn. These are listed below.

- Have a website portal that can be accessed by our growers via a login. On the portal they should be able to access (this list is not exhaustive)
  - Maps
  - Packout Reports
  - Frost reports (or other weather information)
  - Reject Analysis Reports
  - Payment information
  - Pest monitoring reports
  - Residue test results
  - Comparative reports
  - Newsletters
  - Weekly emails
  - Weekly technical tips
  - Field day handouts
  - Inventory reports
  - Library tray data
  - Orchard management plan
  - Orchard management budgets (vs actual)
  - Crop estimates
    - Kiwifruit (winter bud counts, flower counts, fruit counts)
    - Avocados (crop estimates)
- All grower information should be able to be accessed by grower services staff. When with the grower (either at orchard or onsite at Trevelyan's), this portal could be opened and all information discussed. It should be completed in a structured manner.
- Similar to Comvita, there could be a 'Chatter' offering, where growers can post questions and photos. This should be driven by Trevelyan's and involve weekly one minute videos with our management providers, to showcase what is happening on orchards, the challenges, and how they are dealing with it. It should showcase best practice.
- When visiting suppliers, part of the conversation should include what they would like to see on our website
- Tatua have a system where they name the top 10 suppliers for quality in any given month. Being on this list is highly sought after. Can we report our top 10 suppliers in any given month (the metric reported on could change depending on the time of year)
  - Kiwifruit
    - Eg packing time it could be reject percentage
    - Coolstore time it could be fruit loss
  - Avocados
    - Top export packout
    - Top yield per ha
    - Lowest reject rate

- Use Twitter/ Facebook to capture all visitors who come on site (take a photo and upload to twitter/ Facebook). This will enable Trevelyan's to have an online history of who comes on site. Also it will be another way we can interact and share with our suppliers and customers through social media
- Use 1 min videos with growers to broadcast new innovations and ideas. This could be shared via facebook and twitter.
- Have a place onsite where suppliers can interact with staff (primarily grower services). Similar to Comvita we should have a place where coffee and food can be offered, and everything to do with their business can be discussed. Have a nespresso machine in an area where we can interact with growers. Also good wifi.

One question that needs to be asked and considered, is should we try and satisfy every growers needs for information, or just focus on what suits us? The answer to that question is complex. To be truly world class we need to cater for all requests. But if we were to do that, we would have so many different ways of communicating the same message that it would be incredibly hard to manage. I think we need to gently guide growers in the direction which makes sense for us, and for me that direction includes a comprehensive website based offering.

One of the key thoughts from here is now that these ideas have been formulated is how best to implement them. There is a quote by Guy Kawasaki, Alltop Co-founder and Entrepreneur "Ideas are easy. Implementation is hard." My challenge from here is how to put some of these ideas into practice, to enable us as a company to become industry leaders in the way we communicate with our suppliers.

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