EMPLOYER REFERENCE INFORMATION HANDBOOK

(Companion to the Guide for Developing a B.C. Agriculture Employee Handbook)

FALL 2012

Canada

Growing Forward
A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Introduction

This handbook provides companion material to the *Guide for Developing a B.C. Agriculture Employee Handbook* http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/busmgmt/labour_mgmt.htm It also provides additional information in HR management included in such areas as regulations, personnel planning, hiring, supervising, performance management, communication, conflict, discipline, and dismissal. It has been written in an easy to read format which includes farm stories, case studies, and samples forms that illustrate how farms can manage HR challenges.

DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this Employer Reference Information Handbook has been provided as a non-commercial resource for educational use with agriculture businesses. It was created as a result of recent information that has identified human resource (HR) challenges in agriculture. These challenges are due to many factors and have resulted in a shortage of general and skilled farm workers.

This material is meant to provide easy to use information and to assist farmers to be more competitive through effective HR management practices, by allowing them to recruit, manage, and maintain employees using a formal process. It has been designed to be applicable to a wide range of organizational structures, including small farms employing mostly family members, medium sized farms with a blend of family and non-family employees, and very large, complex farms with hundreds of employees. This resource is also applicable to different kinds of operations, such as livestock, dairy, or horticulture.

These materials are intended to introduce basic-level human resource (HR) management concepts and practices, and to encourage agriculture businesses to take steps towards implementing quality HR management practices. These materials are not intended to serve as solutions to complex or serious HR problems that may exist within a business. It is not legal advice. If your business has a complex or serious HR issue, you should consult with a professional who has appropriate qualifications and expertise in HR or consult with a lawyer or legal service agency, especially if you have any legal problems.

Reasonable efforts were made to ensure that information furnished herein is accurate, but this does not guarantee that it is accurate or current. Links and references to any other resources and websites are provided for information only and don't imply any endorsement or guarantee of any of the organizations or information found on their respective Web sites. Under no circumstances is the Government of Canada, BC Ministry of Agriculture, or Community Futures Development Corporation of South Fraser Incorporated (consulting author of this material) or any other contributors or non-profit organization that introduces these materials liable to any person or business for anything that may result from the use of any of the materials contained in these resource materials.

CAUTION

Employment standards and HR legislation differ between provinces/territories. Each organization or business using any of these materials must follow all applicable laws (Federal, Provincial, Municipal, etc.) within their geographic region. The materials contained in this Employer Reference Information Handbook is not intended as a substitute for any governmental or otherwise official information regarding applicable legislation, labour standards, etc. Since legislation can change from time to time, it is essential that whoever works with these materials regularly consult with a lawyer or legal service to confirm that all the HR policies and guidelines adopted by the business are fully compatible with such laws.

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REGULATIONS

1

1.1 Complying With Regulations

A number of laws regulate certain aspects of employee and employer relationships. It is essential that as an employer you comply with these laws. In the long run, such regulations benefit both the employee and the employer.

The following provides a brief overview of the basics. It is important that you consult with an accountant or lawyer with specific expertise in these areas to obtain additional information and learn more about your responsibilities and obligations.

Regulations Checklist

The following is a list of some, but not necessarily all, of the acts and regulations BC employers need to comply with.

- ☐ Payroll Deductions and Remittances
  - ☐ Income Tax
  - ☐ Canada Pension Plan
  - ☐ Employment Insurance
- ☐ BC Employment Standards
- ☐ BC Personal Information Protection Act
- ☐ BC Human Rights Code
- ☐ BC Workers Compensation Act
  - ☐ Occupational Health and Safety Regulations
- ☐ BC Residential Tenancy Act
- ☐ BC Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act
- ☐ Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act

1.2 Payroll Deductions and Remittances

The following information was adapted from Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) publication RC4070(E) Rev. 08 – Guide for Canadian Small Businesses, pg. 27-30. For the most current information, please refer to the **Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)** website at www.cra.gc.ca/

If you are an employer, you must make regular deductions from your employees' remuneration. You are an employer if:

- You pay salaries, wages (including advances), bonuses, vacation pay, or tips to your employees, or
- You provide certain taxable benefits or allowances such as board and lodging to your employees.

An individual is an employee if the employment arrangement between the worker and the payer is an employer-employee relationship. Although a written contract might indicate that an individual is self-employed (working under a contract for services), we may not consider the individual as such if there is evidence of an employer-employee relationship. For more information on employment status, see Guide RC4110, *Employee or Self-Employed?*

1.2.1 Do you need to register for a payroll deductions account?

You need to register for a payroll account if you:

- Pay salaries or wages,
- Pay tips and gratuities,
- Pay bonuses and vacation pay,
- Provide benefits and allowances to employees, or
- Need to deduct and remit amounts from other types of remuneration (such as pension or superannuation).

If you need a payroll account and you already have a BN, you only need to add a payroll deductions account to your existing BN. However, if you don't have a BN, you must request one and register for a payroll account before your first remittance due date.

Payroll deductions can be complicated. If you are having trouble, visit: **Payroll - Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)** at http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/menu-eng.html or call 1-800-387-1193

1.2.2 What to deduct from your employees' remuneration

You're responsible for deducting Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions, Employment Insurance (EI) premiums, and income tax from your employees' remuneration. You are also responsible for remitting this money at regular intervals usually on or before the 15th day of the month following the month in which you deducted it.

For example, if you make your deductions from an employee's remuneration on May 10th, you then have to remit the money on or before June 15th. If June 15th falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, the remittance is due on the next business day.

If your payment is late, a late-remitting penalty may apply.

Canada Pension Plan (CPP)

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) came into effect as a way to provide financial assistance to Canadians when they retire from the workforce. Every person who works in Canada is eligible to get benefits when he or she retires.

Both employees and employers contribute to the CPP. But you, as an employer, are responsible both for deducting CPP contributions from your employees' pensionable earnings and for matching those contributions yourself.

Employees fall into many different categories, which determine how and when you should deduct CPP. For more information on: **Canada Pension Plan (CPP),** visit http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/clcltng/cpp-rpc/menu-eng.html

How to Calculate CPP contributions

To calculate CPP contributions, you can use the: **Payroll Deductions Online Calculator (PDOC)** available at http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/esrvc-srvce/tx/bsnss/pdoc-eng.html or the **Tables** available at http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/t4032/menu-eng.html or consult the payroll deductions publications mentioned above.

These publications can help you determine how much CPP to deduct from your employees' pensionable earnings, depending on their salaries and pay periods.

The **Contributions Rates for CPP** may vary from year to year. Visit http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/clcltng/cpp-rpc/hstrc-eng.html for the most current rates.

Note: *You must contribute the* ***same amount*** *that you deduct from your employees' remuneration. This means that if you deduct $100 from an employee's salary, you must also contribute $100. You must then send $200 for that employee.*

To find out when you should deduct CPP contributions from your employees' pensionable earnings and remit them for your province or territory visit: **Remitter types and due dates** http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/pymnts/rmttr/menu-eng.html or see **Guide T4001, *Employers' Guide – Payroll Deductions and Remittances*** http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/t4001/README.html and **Guide T4032, *Payroll Deductions Tables*,** *http://www.craarc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/t4032/menu-eng.html*

Types of employment for which you do not deduct CPP premiums

There are certain types of employment which are not considered pensionable and for which you do not deduct CPP contributions.

For example, you do not deduct CPP contributions for the employment of a spouse or common-law partner if you cannot deduct the remuneration paid as an expense under the *Income Tax Act,* or for the employment of your child or a person that you maintain if no cash remuneration is paid.

For more information, see: **Guide T4001, *Employers' Guide – Payroll Deductions and Remittances*** http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/t4001/README.html

Employment Insurance (EI)

Employment insurance is a federally administered insurance program that gives financial assistance to people who are unemployed. It also helps people get training for jobs.

How to calculate EI premiums

As an employer, you are responsible for deducting EI premiums from your employees' insurable earnings. To calculate EI premiums, use the **Payroll Deductions Online Calculator (PDOC)** available at http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/esrvc-srvce/tx/bsnss/pdoc-eng.html , or the **T4032 Payroll Deductions Tables** available at http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/t4032/jn12/menu-eng.html , or consult the payroll deductions publications mentioned on this page. These publications can help you determine how much EI to deduct from your employees' insurable earnings, depending on their salaries.

The rates for EI premiums may vary from year to year. Visit **EI premium rate and maximum** at http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/clcltng/ei/hstrc-eng.html for the most current rates.

Note: *You must also make your own contributions to EI on behalf of your employees. Generally, the employer's contribution will be slightly more than the employee's.*

To find out your share of EI premiums and when you should deduct EI premiums from your employees' insurable earnings and remit them, see **T4001 Employers' Guide - Payroll Deductions and Remittances** at http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/t4001/ and **T4032 Payroll Deductions Tables** at http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/t4032/menu-eng.html for your province or territory.

Types of employment for which you do not deduct EI premiums

There are certain types of employment which are not considered insurable and for which you do not deduct EI premiums.

For example, you do not deduct EI premiums when you and your employee do not deal with each other at arm's length. This includes individuals connected by blood relationship, marriage, common-law relationship, or adoption. However, an employee who does not deal with you at arm's length can be in insurable employment if you would have negotiated a similar contract with a person that you deal with at arm's length.

This decision is based on the terms and conditions of employment, and the remuneration paid for the work done.

For more information, see Guide T4001, *Employers' Guide – Payroll Deductions and Remittances.*

Income tax

As an employer, you are responsible for deducting income tax from the salaries, wages, or other remuneration you pay your employees. Since employees fall into various categories (such as fishers, employees who get paid commissions and claim expenses, etc.), you need various forms, such as federal and provincial TD1 forms, to help you decide what to deduct from their remuneration. For more information on these forms, see CCRA Guide T4001, *Employers' Guide – Payroll Deductions and Remittances.*

How to calculate income tax deductions

To calculate income tax deductions from your employees' remuneration, you can use the **Payroll Deductions Online Calculator (PDOC)** available at http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/esrvc-srvce/tx/bsnss/pdoc-eng.html or the **T4032 Payroll Deductions Tables** at http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/t4032/menu-eng.html for your province or territory,or consult the payroll deductions publications for your province or territory. These publications can help you determine how much income tax to deduct from your employees' remuneration, depending on their salaries and pay periods.

Workers' compensation

As an employer, you may be required to make payments, and be subject to certain regulations under workers' compensation legislation. For more information, see Guide T4001, *Employers' Guide – Payroll Deductions and Remittances.*

How to report payroll deductions

The T4 slip

You report your employees' salary, wages, and taxable benefits, as well as any deductions, on the T4 slip, *Statement of Remuneration Paid.* You can get a copy of **T4 Statement of Remuneration Paid** at http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pbg/tf/t4/README.html by calling the Forms line at 1-800-267-6999 or from the nearest tax services office.

You have to fill out and give your employees their copies of the T4 slip no later than the end of February following the calendar year to which the slip relates.

File your T4 information return electronically

You can choose from four convenient and secure options to file your original T4 information returns and amendment information electronically. Your choice will depend on the number of your T4 slips. If you file **more than 500 various information slips,** you **must** file the return electronically in extensible mark-up language (XML) format.

- If you file 1 to 3 original or amended T4 slips, use the T4 Web Forms application.
- If you file 1 to 70 original or amended T4 slips, use the T4 Desktop application.

- If you use payroll, commercial, or in-house developed software to manage your business, you can file 1 to approximately 3,500 slips (up to 5 MB) over the Internet via Internet File Transfer (XML). or
- If your file is more than 5 MB, you must file electronically in extensible mark-up language (XML) on electronic media (DVD or CD).
- If you file 501 to approximately 3,500 various information slips (up to 5 MB), you must file electronically in extensible mark-up language (XML) by Internet File Transfer (XML) or on electronic media (DVD, CD, or diskette).

Internet File Transfer is available for the following information returns: T3, T4, T4A, T4A-NR, T4E, T4RIF, T4RSP, T5, T5008, T5007, T5018, NR4, and RRSP Contribution Receipt. Taxpayers will require a payroll Business Number and Web Access Code (WAC) when filing these returns with the CRA.

Quarterly Remittances

Most employers are required to remit withholding amounts on a monthly basis; large employers remit more frequently. As a small business employer, you may be able to make quarterly remittances of taxes and payroll deductions.

The CRA will automatically notify you if you qualify for this program. No application is required. You can continue to remit monthly if you prefer. For more information on **Remitter types and due dates** visit http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/pymnts/rmttr/menu-eng.html

Do you have a computer?

If you have a computer, you can use it instead of the paper tables to calculate your employees' payroll deductions.

The CRA provides a computerized version of Guide T4032, *Payroll Deductions Tables,* and Guide T4008, *Payroll Deductions Supplementary Tables,* called T4143, *Tables on Diskette (TOD).* This is a stand-alone computer program that calculates payroll deductions for any pay periods, provinces (except Quebec), and territories.

The **Payroll Deductions Online Calculator** is available at https://apps.cra-arc.gc.ca/ebci/rhpd/startLanguage.do?lang=English.For more information, call 1-800-959-5525.

If you would like to create your own payroll deductions calculations, a guide containing the formulas you need is available. See **Payroll Deductions Formulas for Computer Programs - 95th Edition - Effective January 1, 2012 Guide T4127at** www.cra.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/t4127-jan.

In summary, your responsibilities as an employer are to:

- Deduct CPP contributions, EI premiums, and income tax from amounts you pay to your employees,

- Remit these deductions along with your share of CPP contributions and EI premiums that you have to pay throughout the year on your employee's behalf, and
- Report the employees' income and deductions on the appropriate information return and give information slips to your employees by the last day of February following the calendar year to which the information return applies.

For more information:

- Form TD1, Personal Tax Credits Return
- T4001, Employers' Guide – Payroll Deductions and Remittances
- T4032, Payroll Deductions Tables
- T4008, Payroll Deductions Supplementary Tables
- T4143, Tables on Diskette (TOD)
- T4127, Payroll Deductions Formulas for Computer Programs
- RC4110, Employee or Self-Employed?

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) Web sites:

Canada Revenue Agency www.cra.gc.ca

Canada Revenue Agency – Payroll www.cra.gc.ca/payroll

Electronic E-PD7A, Statement of Account for Current Source Deductions
www.cra.gc.ca/epd7a

Filing on electronic media www.cra.gc.ca/electronicmedia

Payroll Deductions Online Calculator (PDOC) http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/esrvc-srvce/tx/bsnss/pdoc-eng.html

T4032 Payroll Deductions Tables http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/t4032/menu-eng.html

Automobile Benefits Online Calculator: www.cra.gc.ca/autobenefits-calculator

T4 Desktop application: www.cra.gc.ca/t4desktop

T4 Web Forms: www.cra.gc.ca/webforms

1.2.3 Legislated Employment Standards

As an employer you are required to comply with the BC *Employment Standards Act* and regulations that establishes standards for:

Hours of work:

- Minimum wage,
- Overtime pay,
- Vacation pay,
- Public/statutory holidays,
- Leave;
  - Pregnancy Leave,
  - Parental Leave,
  - Family Responsibility Leave,
  - Compassionate Care Leave,
  - Bereavement Leave,
  - Jury Duty Leave, and
  - Reservists' Leave.
- Termination of employment,
- Severance pay, and
- Record keeping.

More information regarding the BC Employment Standards Act and Regulations and certain exemptions for farm workers can be found at the following web sites

A guide to the BC Employment Standards Act
http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/esaguide/welcome.htm

Farm Workers Factsheet - Exemptions for farm workers
http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/facshts/farm_worker.htm

Statutory Holidays in British Columbia Factsheet
http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/facshts/statutory_holidays.htm

Annual Vacation Factsheet http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/facshts/annualfact.htm

Other Unpaid Leaves and Jury Duty Factsheet
http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/facshts/leave.htm

1.2.4 Payroll Records

Good payroll management is vital to the establishment and maintenance of a good working relationship with your employees. A payroll statement should accurately account for all hours worked, is on time and reports the mandatory deductions of Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan and Income Tax.

The BC *Employment Standards Act* requires that employees receive such a statement showing gross and net wages and the amount of all deductions must be kept in English at the employer's principal place of business in British Columbia for two years after the employee's employment ends.

More information on mandatory record keeping requirements is available at: **Keeping Records Factsheet** http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/facshts/records.htm

From a manager's point of view, there are several reasons to maintain accurate payroll records.

- To determine with accuracy the amounts owed and previously paid to employees each pay period,
- To determine the proper amount that must be withheld from the earnings of each employee,
- To meet government labour regulations e.g. minimum wage, holiday pay etc., and retention of records for up to 5 years,
- To meet Revenue Canada requirements, and
- To settle potential disputes.

To decide if your payroll records are adequate, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the information I am keeping vital?
- What will occur if I don't have the information?
- Is the information used?
- What is the cost (dollars and time) to maintain my system?

Many computerized accounting systems are set up to manage your payroll and can save considerable time. Whether you use a computer or do your payroll by hand, you need to produce a statement for your employee(s) that shows the earnings and the deductions.

Sample Employee Earnings Statement (Full-time and Seasonal Employees)

Name ____Social Insurance No.____________

Address ____ Net Claim code __________

Pay Period____

Hours Worked/Pay Period________________________ _________________________________

	Rate/Particulars	**Amount**
Basic Pay (Regular Hours)	_________________________	_________________________
+ Overtime Hours	_________________________	_________________________
+ Bonus, Incentive Pay	_________________________	_________________________
+ Housing, Room and Board	_________________________	_________________________
+ Other Taxable Benefits	_________________________	_________________________
+ Vacation Pay	_________________________	_________________________
+ ________________	_________________________	_________________________
= Gross Earnings		_________________________
Less Deductions		
- C.P.P.	_________________________	_________________________
- Employment Insurance	_________________________	_________________________
- Income Tax	_________________________	_________________________
- Housing, Room and Board	_________________________	_________________________
- Pay Advance	_________________________	_________________________
- Other Deductions	_________________________	_________________________
= Net Pay		_________________________

Record of Days Not Worked

Sick Days Taken _____________________

Vacation Days Taken _____________________ Dates_________________________

Work Days Off _____________________ Dates_________________________

Statutory Holidays days _____________________ Dates_________________________

Time Bank

Time taken _____________________ Dates_________________________

Amount Paid _____________________

Amount Remaining _____________________

- The dates of the statutory holidays taken by the employee and the amounts paid,
- The dates of the annual vacation taken, the amounts paid, and the days and amounts owing, and
- The dates taken and amounts paid from the employee's time bank, and the balance remaining.

1.3 The BC Personal Information Protection Act

The BC *Personal Information Protection Act* governs the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information in a manner that recognizes both the right of individuals to protect their personal information and the need of organizations to collect, use, or disclose information, as required in an appropriate manner. It is also the responsibility of the employer to ensure that personal information is stored and disposed of in a safe and secure manner.

All personal information is confidential. Non-confidential information is basically limited to anything that could be found on a professional business card (e.g. name, job title, work contact information).

Additional information is available at the following web addresses:

Personal Information Protection Act
http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_03063_01

Keeping Records Factsheet http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/facshts/records.htm

1.4 BC Human Rights Code

Human rights are the basic standards of treatment to which all people are entitled, regardless of factors such as nationality, gender, race, and economic status. They affect every aspect of employment as a matter of law. Accordingly, all employers in the BC agricultural sector must confirm, support, and enforce the applicable human rights legislation in their workplace.

This section summarizes some human rights principles relevant to agricultural employers in BC. It gives information only, not legal advice. Compliance with this section is not necessarily compliance with the law. Employers should review the applicable legislation directly and consult with a lawyer to determine legal obligations.

1.4.1 Non-Discrimination

Discrimination is treatment of a person or group that is adverse as compared to others. The *BC Human Rights Code* (the "*Code*") prohibits discrimination in employment in certain cases. In particular, the *Code* makes it illegal for employers to discriminate against employees based on any of the following things:

- Race
- Ancestry
- Religion
- Colour
- Place of Origin
- Sex
- Citizenship
- Ethnic Origin
- Family Status

- Age (19 or older)
- Physical or Mental Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Record of Offences Unrelated to Employment
- Marital Status
- Retaliation for Human Rights Complaints

These things do not have to be the sole basis for the adverse treatment. If at least one of them is a factor in the treatment, it will be illegal discrimination. This means employers cannot use any of these things, directly or indirectly, wholly or in part, to

- Fire an employee,
- Not hire an employee,
- Not promote an employee, and/or
- Discriminate in some other way against an employee in her job.

These restrictions cannot be avoided, even by agreement. Accordingly, employers should assure employees that discrimination will not be tolerated. Developing a written workplace human rights policy is the recommended way of doing so. The **BC Human Rights Coalition** has released **A Checklist for Developing Workplace Policy** http://www.bchrcoalition.org/files/HRPolicyChecklist.pdf.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. Discrimination is complex and evolving. Employers should seek legal advice in all circumstances that may involve discrimination.

1.4.2 Accommodation

Employers have a legal responsibility to accommodate employees who experience hardship in the performance of their employment duties due to one of the things listed in the *Code*.

- Race
- Ancestry
- Religion
- Age (19 or older)
- Physical or Mental Disability
- Colour
- Place of Origin
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Record of Offences Unrelated to Employment
- Citizenship
- Ethnic Origin
- Family Status
- Marital Status
- Retaliation for Human Rights Complaints

The duty to accommodate can arise at any stage throughout the employment relationship. It applies to hiring and dismissal decisions, terms and conditions of employment, and implementation of workplace policies. The duty to accommodate means the employer must implement whatever measures necessary to allow employees to work to the best of their ability. An employer must accommodate an employee up to the point of undue hardship. Failure to accommodate to this extent may lead to legal liability for the employer.

The steps and actions required for the employer to satisfy the legal duty to accommodate will vary from situation to situation. Satisfying this duty requires employers to be attentive, flexible and where appropriate, to seek legal advice. The employer may have a duty to accommodate in the following situations:

- An employee who is a single parent with childcare responsibilities requires a flexible work schedule to accommodate her family needs,
- An employee requests to wear certain clothing items required by his religion, to be able to pray at particular times, or attend religious services on a particular day, and/or
- An employee with a medical condition, addiction to alcohol, prescription or non-prescription drugs requires special equipment and/or a technical aide at his workstation to accommodate his medical need.

The duty to accommodate is a process in which the employer and the employee share responsibilities. The employer's responsibilities include:

- Initiating the process as soon as it is aware there may be a need to accommodate the employee,
- Seeking information from the employee regarding his or her limitations and needs,
- Sharing the necessary information with other participants and involving them in the process,
- Moving the process in a timely way,
- Exploring possible accommodations, and
- Offering the employee one or more accommodations that are reasonable in light of the employee's needs, short of undue hardship.

The employee's responsibilities include:

- Providing relevant information to the employer about the needs related to the condition,
- Participating in the process in good faith, and
- Taking actions that are reasonably necessary to achieve the accommodation, such as attending and participating in a treatment program.

The employer must do everything it can to accommodate the needs of the employee, up to the point of undue hardship. What constitutes undue hardship depends on all of the circumstances. Hardship is "undue" where the employer would encounter significant difficulty in the workplace in doing anything more to accommodate the employee. Factors which are relevant in determining whether an accommodation constitutes an undue hardship are the size of the operation, health and safety risks to the employer and/or co-workers, cost, impact on the rights and interests of other employees, and negative effect on workplace productivity.

Where a policy, practice, or other aspect of the workplace creates an undue hardship for an individual or protected group, you, the employer, must seek a reasonable solution that will allow them to resolve the problem without jeopardising the financial sustainability of the business. Issues of accommodation can be controversial. Therefore, it is crucial for employers to fully document their actions in relation to accommodation.

The extent of an employer's duty to accommodate in specific circumstances is a complex legal question, the answer to which is constantly evolving. Therefore, again with this section, employers are strongly encouraged to seek current legal advice.

1.4.3 Harassment

Employers have a legal responsibility to provide a harassment free work environment. Generally speaking, harassment is any improper conduct directed at someone, that the person finds offensive and harmful and that a reasonable person would view as unwelcome or offensive. It may or may not be based on one of the things that the *Code* prohibits discrimination on the basis of.

Harassment may take many forms, including physical, verbal, or other communication. Some examples of what generally constitutes harassment are as follows:

- Use of derogatory or insulting language,
- Unwelcome physical contact including touching or patting,
- Unwelcome attention of a sexual nature including questions or remarks about sex life and/or physical appearance,
- Offensive remarks, jokes, innuendo or threats,
- Display of pornographic, racist, sexist, or otherwise offensive material through electronic media,
- Social invitations that are unwelcome or would reasonably be perceived to be unwelcome, and
- Retaliation for bringing a complaint under a workplace policy.

Employers should promote a harassment free workplace by developing a policy that promotes the prevention of harassment and focuses on the prompt resolution of harassment. Harassment must be addressed with sensitivity, promptness, discretion and the benefit of legal advice.

1.5 Workers Compensation Act

All farms employing full-time, part-time, or seasonal workers are required to register and submit workers compensation payments to WorkSafeBC.

Workers compensation provides two-way protection. For the worker, the system seeks to improve job health and safety and helps soften the financial consequences of an industrial injury or disease. For the employer, it removes the threat of a lawsuit and possible heavy settlement if an injured worker sues for damages and it provides a mechanism for sharing of costs in industrial injuries and disease.

For details on how to register and submit payroll returns and assessment payments, contact the nearest WorkSafeBC office.

Additional Information is available at the following web address:

Work Safe BC Employer Service Centre

http://www.worksafebc.com/employers_and_small_business/employers_help/employer_service_centre/default.asp

1.5.1 Occupational Health and Safety Regulations

WorkSafeBC oversees *the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* (OHSR) under the Workers Compensation Act and employers are expected to provide reasonable care, exercising due diligence to ensure employee safety. Due diligence simply means taking all reasonable measures to protect the well-being of employees or co-workers.

The OHSR stipulate that every workplace in British Columbia that employs workers must have a health and safety program; however, the type of program will depend on the expected hazards present and the number of workers. Larger workplaces with 20 or more workers must have a formal written program, as well as a health and safety committee. Smaller workplaces with 19 or less are required to have a safety program; however they do not require a formal written program. While a formal written policy is not required for smaller operations for both risk mitigation and worker safety it is recommended that smaller operations have one to ensure that employees are aware of farm safety polices. Farms with between 10 and 19 workers must also have a designated worker health and safety representative. Workplaces with fewer than nine workers can involve everyone in health and safety through regular meetings and presentations.

BC OHSR state that when all farm workers (including seasonal and temporary workers) start employment, they must receive orientation training on how to perform their jobs safely. It is important that you present health and safety information in a manner that your employees can understand. If English is not their first language, it should be translated. If they are not literate, it should be presented verbally.

Under provincial legislation workers may refuse any unsafe activities that might pose a threat to their physical health and safety.

General information on Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulations is available at: http://www2.worksafebc.com/Publications/OHSRegulation/Home.asp.

Additional information for agriculture operations is available at the following sites:

WorkSafe BC - Part 28 Agriculture
http://www2.worksafebc.com/publications/OHSRegulation/Part28.asp.

The Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association (FARSHA) http://www.farsha.bc.ca/ can provide health and safety programs, and training that meet OHS regulations and can be used on any agricultural workplace in BC.

1.6 BC Residential Tenancy Act and BC Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act

On-farm housing is a benefit that many farms provide. Remember that if you provide employee housing you are a landlord as well as an employer and are required to comply with the BC *Residential Tenancy Act* and/or the BC *Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act.*

More information is available at: **Residential Tenancy Branch** http://www.rto.gov.bc.ca/.

A sample **Residential Tenancy Agreement is** available at:
http://www.rto.gov.bc.ca/documents/RTB-1.pdf

1.7 Temporary and Seasonal Agricultural Workers from Foreign Countries

You may hire employees who are neither citizens nor permanent residents of Canada under a number of different immigration programs including:

- The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP),
- The Agricultural Stream of the Pilot Project for Occupations Requiring Lower Levels of Formal Training, or
- The Temporary Foreign Worker Program

It is essential you make sure that they are legally entitled to work in Canada and that you are in compliance with both the federal and provincial requirements of the specific program that they are registered with.

It is important to provide an orientation for all foreign workers that will help them to adjust both to your farm and to the community. Keep in mind that your farm and your community become a second home for your guest workers.

It is also recommended that you provide a separate handout/handbook in their language that includes information about your farm, the living arrangements, as well as information about your community e.g., places of worship, hospitals, shopping, banks, etc.

A letter welcoming your new employees provides an opportunity for you to set a friendly tone for the rest of the handbook, while telling your employees a little bit about your operation and the reasons they should read the handbook. This is your chance to show enthusiasm about your operation and to demonstrate to your employees that it is a great place to work.

You can add some detail about your company if you would like, but try to keep it brief. Try not to make promises to your employees that could be interpreted as implied contracts.

Information to be included:

- Housing and Everyday Living,
- Labour Relationships,
- Safety,
- Administrative Requirements,
- Wages and Deductions,
- Medical Coverage,
- Benefits, and
- End of Employment Agreements and Early Return to Home Country.

For details, the Mexican Consulate provides a guide to Best Management Practices for employers of SAWP Employees:

Consulate General of Mexico's Guidelines for the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program 2010
http://www.bcfga.com/files/2010%20Best%20Practices%20for%20SAWP.pdf

Additional information:

Temporary Foreign Worker Program
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/index.shtml

Temporary Foreign Worker Program Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/sawp.shtml

Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) Requirements in British Columbia
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/SAWPSheets/BC.shtml

Agricultural Stream for Occupations Requiring Lower Levels of Formal Training:
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/communications/agstream.shtml

Temporary Foreign Worker Program Agricultural Stream - Questions and Answers
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/questions-answers/agricultural.shtml#cn-tphp

Temporary Foreign Worker Program – Agricultural Workers – Comparison of Program Options and Criteria
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/agriculture/table.shtml

PERSONNEL PLANNING

2

This material describes the personnel planning process, a process which helps you decide how many and what type of employees you require.

2.1 Deciding to Become an Employer

The following story illustrates the importance of personnel planning:

The farm was not making an adequate return so I expanded. I borrowed more money and hired more labour but it didn't seem to help much. It just gave me more to do and more to worry about. When I got tightness in the chest I went to a doctor who said I was a prime candidate for a heart attack and he said I must slow down and lower the stress level. I went back to the books, considered alternatives, but nothing looked promising.

Then one night when I couldn't sleep, I lay there pondering the problems and a thought hit me: I am not a producer, I am an employer of people and those people produce the product. I am wearing the wrong hat. The next morning I got up and went out and actually purchased a new hat, then went to the library and checked out books on personnel management, business organization, and business relations.

That was five years ago. Now, the farm is making big profits and I have very few problems. On the contrary, my employees are a real source of enjoyment. Of course, I haven't thrown out my producer hat, I just wear it a lot less often and my health has returned, not because of more sleep but because of low distress and good sleep.

Deciding to become an employer requires careful consideration. Being a successful manager of farm labour may require changing how you operate on a day-to-day basis. Many owners do not consciously decide to become employers. They see themselves as business people first, employers second. As demands upon their time overwhelm them, they hire additional labour without carefully planning the process of who to hire and how to manage their personnel.

The creation of a new position must benefit both you and your employee. If the employee's needs are not met, you will suffer high turnover and training costs. Consider both economic and non-economic benefits when determining whether or not to hire a new employee.

Economic benefits might include:

- Increased operational efficiency,
- More of your time for marketing, pricing and financial activities,
- Increased likelihood of completing tasks on time,
- More efficient use of capital and overhead,
- Increased production for profit, and
- More opportunities for growth.

Non-economic benefits could be:

- Reduced stress and pressure,
- Increased flexibility of time for leisure, health, family activities, etc., and
- Safe work environment often created by trained skilled workers.

Questions to Ask Yourself

Your objectives in hiring should be carefully thought out and written down so you can refer to them when you evaluate the results.

Some questions you should ask yourself before hiring are:

What type of help do I need?

- A short-term employee to perform specific projects such as yard cleanup, a construction project, stone picking, harvesting hay or grain, or similar tasks,
- A part-time employee to perform specific tasks on a regular basis, for example, someone who does morning feeding only,
- A full-time seasonal employee to perform specific or a wide range of duties throughout the production season, or
- A permanent employee to perform a wide range of duties on a year-round basis.

Do I have sufficient cash flow to maintain the type of employee I need?

Will the job keep the interest of a highly motivated employee?

What is the payback associated with the addition of hired labour to me, my business, my family?

Do I have sufficient people skills and patience to train, supervise, and evaluate an employee?

What personal characteristics are best suited to the job?

Are you aware of and complying with current employment Acts and Regulations?

2.2 The Personnel Planning Process

Effective personnel management creates a work environment where workers can fulfill their needs while meeting the objectives of the farm.

Planning provides a basis for seeking out employees who have the skills and personal characteristics that best meet the needs of your business. Whether you already have employees or whether you have just made the decision to hire an employee, careful and detailed planning is needed. The planning process should result in the employment of the correct number of staff, with the necessary talents and skills, doing the appropriate job, performing the right activity and above all working as a team towards the achievement of objectives.

By taking personnel planning seriously and giving the process the time and effort it requires, you will reduce problems that can arise if the most effective employee isn't hired. Not having the most effective person or team employed can have high costs, including accidents and injuries, costly repairs, lost time, high employee turnover, lower yields, and a variety of other problems which any manager would rather not have to handle.

Taking Stock

Taking stock of where you are is an important first step. Many agricultural managers start to diagnose problems only after feeling a symptom of pain in their organization – or in their family. Taking stock regularly, however, contributes most to identification and reduction of labour-related risks. Whether routinely scheduled or triggered by an alarming event, conducted as a structured audit or an informal collection of data and perceptions, the process is key to planning in any organization. Its essence is answering questions about results from the business operation such as:

- What was our net income or loss last year, and how does it compare to previous years?
- Did we incur any large expenses that could have been avoided?
- How do our labour costs per unit compare to other local growers?
- Do our products command a market price corresponding with high quality?
- Are employees clear about what we expect of them and what they can expect of us?
- Is every employee capable of performing his/her job?
- How often are employees absent from work?
- Are our wages comparable with similar employers?
- How long does it take for us to fill job vacancies when they occur?
- How many constructive suggestions did we receive from employees last year?
- How well do people generally get along with each other here?
- Is anything impeding better performance by individuals or crew?
- Can workers here meet their own needs while serving our business objectives?
- Is it worth our personal time to be in this business?

Available indicators of business status and performance are both quantitative (e.g. sales volume, profit-loss statement data, insurance claim experience, absenteeism and turnover rates), and qualitative (e.g. casual conversations with employees or a sense of harmony or hostility in the family).

In general terms, the organizational planning process is a cycle of taking stock, assessing adequacy, setting goals for stability, or change, devising strategy, acting on it and taking stock again. Creation and maintenance of the "business plan" naturally accompanies this process. Information on preparing a business plan is available from a number of sources including the Smart Farm BC website http://www.smartfarmbc.ca/

Additional assistance and resources are available through the Farm Business Advisory Services program, (http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/busmgmt/FB_Advisory_Services.html) and Growing Forward programs (http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/apf/)

Example – Ian and Melanie Smithers

Take Stock

The Smithers' family dairy had done well since Ian took it over from his father 10 years ago. Along with his wife Melanie, their daughter, and his brother, Ian successfully expanded the operation from 200 to 750 head over the last several years, adding hired employees as the growth progressed. He would like to milk as many as 1500 cows within four years to realize more economies of scale.

While cow productivity at the dairy is above average for the region and the Smithers' profits are good, Ian and Melanie have a number of concerns. They have had difficulty keeping new staff, especially the milkers on the night shift. Two of their longer-term employees are having trouble supervising new hires and coping with the additional responsibilities that they have taken on during expansion. Also, it seems that not a day goes by without Ian noticing a dairy worker and supervisor in a heated disagreement about something.

Last year Ian and his family placed their expansion plans on hold until they could get these issues sorted out. They decided to follow his father's longstanding advice to "get better first, before getting bigger." Getting better had usually meant improving the herd and controlling the cost of feed, but in this situation, it meant doing a better job of managing the workforce and Ian and Melanie knew that their businesses growth and success depended on the number of people they could effectively manage.

Ian and Melanie's first step was to take stock of their organization and to look critically at the content, application, and result of their management policies. After a three-week period of observation, casual conversations with individual staff members, and a review of records in the office, they took a day off to discuss and write down the most important things they discovered. Among these findings were:

- Multiple supervisors were assuming responsibility for some of the same tasks and employees, while none felt in charge of employees performing certain other tasks,
- Several employees had received conflicting instructions from different supervisors and often felt that they were caught in the middle,
- Pay for the milkers was less than for field equipment operators, even though Ian thought that milking involved more responsibility and required more training,
- Long-term employees who had been placed in supervisory roles, although very good at the production part of their jobs, had little prior experience managing others, and felt uncomfortable giving directions. Some supervisors were "letting this slide," not giving any performance feedback or trying to maintain discipline, while other supervisors tended to "jump all over employees" about minor issues,
- Supervisors had very different understandings about what the rules were, how to deal with problems, and even who could take disciplinary action,

- Employees were not aware of the plans and goals that Ian had for the business. They were also uncertain as to how they were doing at their jobs and what kind of future they might expect working at Smithers, and
- Ian and Melanie did not know much about the interests, abilities, and goals of most of their employees and how this could compliment their farm goals.

Fortunately in this case Ian and Melanie contacted an HR professional who helped them to:

- Formalize the organizational structure and reporting,
- Develop written job descriptions,
- Prepare equitable pay grids for each position based on experience and responsibilities,
- Provide human resource management training for supervisors,
- Prepare an employee handbook,
- Initiate regular performance reviews that included development and training plans, and
- Start holding regular staff meetings.

Within a few months of implementing these changes they noticed significant changes in their operation and were able to move ahead with their expansion plans.

Personnel Planning in 3 Steps

PERSONNEL PLANNING PROCESS
Assess your current situation
Goals
Yourself
Labour Needs
Workforce
Working Environment
Is There a Match?
Are New Employees Needed?

Step 1 - Assess your current situation:

Assess your goals

Know where you want your farm or horticultural operation to go. What is your vision for your business; one year, five years, or ten years from now? Do you plan to expand, improve, change, or stay the same?

The more specific you are about your goals, the more accurately you can determine your personnel needs. For example, “I want to increase my dairy herd to 65 cows” will offer much more guidance than “I want my herd to grow.”

Write down your specific goals and a time when you want to achieve them.

Assess yourself

Self-analysis isn’t easy and often isn’t accurate, but it is an important start. What are your personal characteristics? What experience and supervisory skills do you have? What are your attitudes toward employees? How are you going to accommodate cultural and gender diversity within your workforce?

Having an employer and employee who are compatible is essential, but it is unlikely to happen by chance. Start by asking yourself the following questions. You may wish to have your spouse or another person involved in the review.

- What are my strengths and weaknesses?
- Am I a good teacher?
- How am I going to develop and train staff?
- Do I have patience to work with people with no farm background or little farm experience?
- Am I a good listener?
- Do I trust my employees?
- Do I have biases which could get in the way of developing a good relationship with my employees? (e.g. tobacco, alcohol, politics, breed of livestock, race, religion)
- Am I a perfectionist?
- Do the current employees respect and like me?
- Do I tend to be a pessimist or an optimist?
- Do I delegate well?

Think about your answers to the above questions and imagine the effect they may have on a person who works for you.

Assess your labour needs

How much labour do you need and when? How much do you need during various seasons? Use a Labour Estimate Worksheet as a guide to determining your personnel needs. You’ll end up with a statement of the kind and amount of work to be done.

The first section, Task Analysis, of the worksheet will help you analyze the types of tasks that need to be done, when they need to be done and how long they take. Use a separate worksheet for each department (e.g., animals, crops, etc.).

Type of Work and When	Length of Time	Total Hours	People Required

The third section, Total Farm or Business Requirements, will give you an hourly total of your farm or business requirements. Be sure to include time for management.

Type of Work and When	Length of Time	Total Hours	People Required

The fourth section, Employee Schedule, will help you determine how many employees you need. Your own business records will be useful in completing a labour estimate worksheet. Remember, work conditions and worker skill level will affect your labour needs.

Employee	# of Normal Daily Hours	# of Normal Weekly Hours	# of Daily Hrs. Including Overtime	# of Weekly Hrs. Including Overtime	# of Possible Overtime Weeks

Assess your current workforce

As you take this inventory of your current workforce, include yourself and any family members who are actively involved in the business. First, describe the job each of these people does. To help you with this, an abbreviated job description form is shown below. For more assistance in doing this, refer to the section on “Job Description”. Secondly, think about your individual employees and assess their past experience and performance as well as their personalities, needs and desires.

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: ____

SUMMARY JOB DESCRIPTION: _____________________

KEY TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: _________________

REPORTS TO: ___________________________________

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES: ___________________

QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS: _________________________________

EXPERIENCE: _____________________________________

TRAINING: ____________________________________

SALARY RANGE: ___________________

WORK HOURS: _________________________________

BENEFITS: _____________________________________

Assess your working environment and labour practices.

To attract good employees, your working environment needs to be attractive to the workers; it needs to be a place where your prospective employee might want to work. Efforts need to be taken to create an environment where employees are appreciated and recognized.

How many of these advantages can you offer?

- Competitive wages,
- Flexible work schedule,
- Opportunity for training,
- An appealing incentive program,
- A good work environment,
- Good people to work with,
- Good equipment in safe condition, and
- Future potential - chance for growth and responsibility.

The more items you were able to check, the greater your chances of attracting good employees. Look at the features you didn't check. How many of these could you incorporate into your workplace?

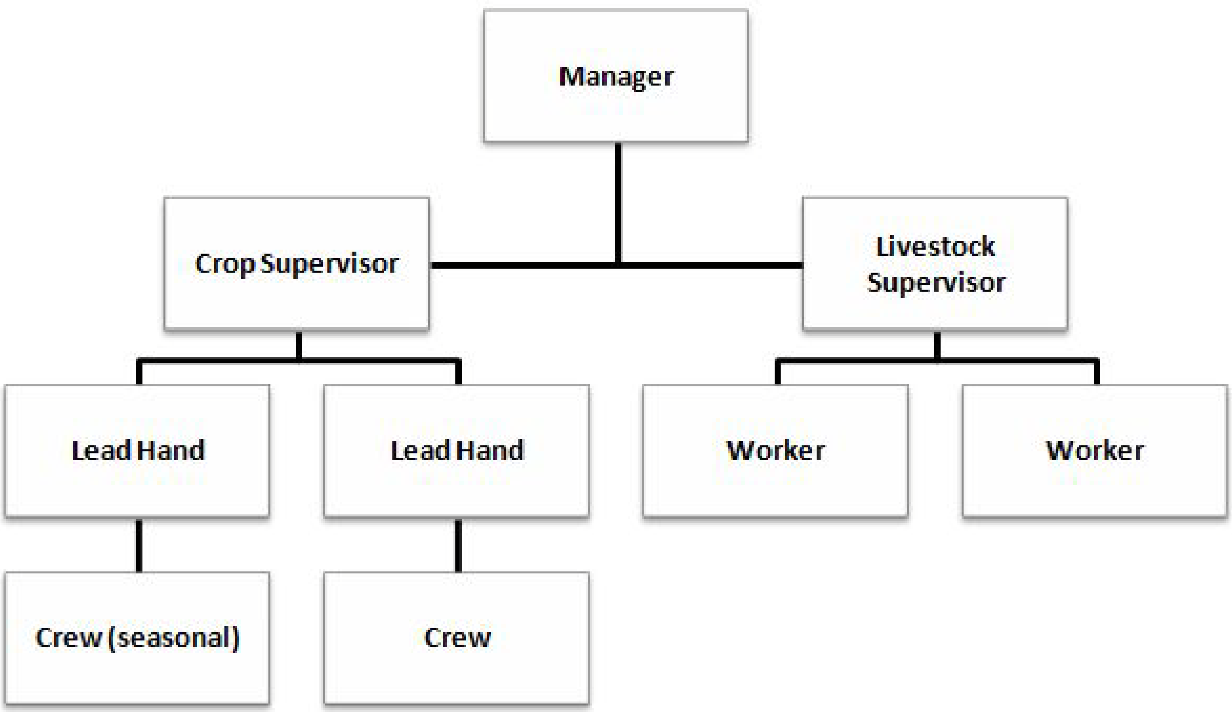
Think about your organizational structure. Who is the boss? Who reports to whom? Are employees expected to report to multiple supervisors? What can each employee decide on his or her own? These questions are especially important in a family operation. Having to report to two bosses is very difficult. It can be very frustrating to employees and is one of the major reasons employees leave.

Organizational structure must be dealt with. No two farms are organized alike because managers, employees, families and the work involved vary from one business to another.

Keys to effective organizing include:

- Proper planning of the organization,
- Clear relationships among the people in the organization,
- Delegation of authority,
- Clear limits to delegation,
- Authority accompanied with responsibility, and
- A structure that is not too complex or too simple.

Organizational structure can often be easily understood if it is charted. An example of an organizational chart follows.



Step 2: Decide if your needs and your current workforce match

Now that you've taken a look at your skills, your labour requirements, your current workforce, and your work environment, you can see if your needs and your current workforce match. Look again to the labour requirements you outlined and at the abilities and skills of your current employees. There are a variant of findings your assessment might produce.

Possible Findings:

1. You have a good match. Your current employees have the skills and desire to do all the jobs your operation requires. If so, your employees will likely continue in their present jobs.
2. You have the right number of good employees but some changes in the jobs they do would work better. Spend some time assessing your employees and developing new job descriptions that would match your needs and their talents.
3. You have too many employees or the wrong employee for the job you need done. Consider if an employee could be retrained. Or, you might consider expanding your operation to make use of valued employees. If neither of those options works, the dismissal of an employee may be necessary. This might be the outcome of a major change in your business where you no longer require an employee's particular skills, or it may be the result of previous unsatisfactory employee performance. Read the section on "Dismissal and Termination" in Section 9 of this reference material.

4. You don't have enough employees to do the work that needs to be done. If your assessment shows finding number four, proceed with the next step in the personnel planning process.

Step 3: Decide if new employees are needed and proceed with hiring

Before you hire a new employee, you will want to assess the job that you need done and think carefully about the qualifications an employee would require to do the job. The key is to hire employees who fit the job description in the essential areas.

A Case Example

James Brown is a 39-year-old dairy farmer. He is married to Nancy and has two children, Robert, who is 16 years old and Shannon, who is 12 years old. James enjoys good health and has to this point been able to run his operation with his wife, one full-time employee, one part-time milker, and seasonal labour. His son does some work on the farm during the summer and occasionally on weekends.

James is looking to expand his operation by purchasing a 40-cow dairy operation about two kilometres away. The purchase would include land, buildings, cows, and quota. James realizes that the expanded operation would be too big for him to run with his current staff and must decide what his labour requirements will be, should the purchase go through.

Here's how James Brown could use the Personnel Planning Process.

Step 1: Assess Current Situation

Goals

One of James' goals is to expand his herd, currently consisting of 90 purebred Holsteins with 15 dry cows, as well as heifers and calves. He knows his farm buildings and equipment are in good repair. Another of his goals is to maintain a well-kept and run operation. He aims at harvesting three cuts of hay in a good season and one crop of silage with his 80 hectares (200 acres) in crop (hay and grain).

The farm he is looking to purchase is a 40-cow herd with only four dry cows and calves. There are 24 hectares (60 acres) of land, the farm buildings are in need of repair and the equipment is in fair shape. If he were to purchase this farm, he would move the operation to his present location.

Self-Assessment

As James thinks about his strengths and weaknesses, he sees himself as being a competent and caring employer but realizes that he may lack assertiveness. He thinks he would be a good teacher but also can see that his tendency to be a perfectionist may make him impatient with an inexperienced employee. At times in the past, he has tried to delegate jobs but has often ended up doing them himself because he thinks he can do them better. He knows he's a good listener and certainly understands the need to treat an employee well.

Labour Needs and Workforce

As James considers the implications of expanding his operation, he asks himself some questions:

- Will my current staff be adequate or will I have to hire more people?
- If I hire more staff, what jobs will I assign to them?
- Will I need to re-assign some duties to my current staff?
- How will this change affect my family?
- Should I bring my son into the operation?
- Is he interested in taking a more responsible role in the operation?

James starts by analyzing his current labour needs and current workforce.

1. Jeff Anderson, the one full-time employee, does one milking a day, 5 days per week. The rest of the time he does general farm work including feeding. He gets two days off per week, and works long days during haylage and silage harvest time without any time off. This is usually for 8 to 10 days.
2. James' wife, Nancy, does one milking a day 5 days per week. James has a part-time milker, Ken Norton, who comes in to do milking 2 days per week. Nancy would like to quit doing the one milking per day should they decide to expand the operation.
3. James himself looks after all the management duties and all of the herd health-care duties as well as assisting Jeff with some of the general farm work. He does the field preparation and planting for the grain crop. He also does all of the hay and silage cutting.

Extras: During the hay season, James hires 5 casual employees to help bring in the hay.

Using his current situation, James completed the Labour Estimate Worksheet. His figures are shown in Illustration 1.

Illustration 1

Task Analysis - Crop - Currently 200 Acres Hay and Grain

Type of Work and When	Length of Time	Total Hours	People Required
Haylage June, July	3 days; 10 hrs./day	160	2 - James and Jeff
Hay 8000 Bales June, July, August	3 days; 10 hrs./day 2 times per year	60	1 - James
Hay 8000 Bales June, July, August	3 days; 6 hrs./day 2 times per year	180	5 – casual employees
Field Preparation April, early May	4 days; 10 hrs./day	40	1 - James
Seeding – grains and oilseeds May	4 days; 10 hrs./day	40	1 - James
Silage July, August	8 days; 10 hrs./day	160	2 – James and Jeff

Task Analysis - Animal - Currently 90 cow herd

Type of Work and When	Length of Time	Total Hours	People Required
Milking twice/day 3 hrs./shift	6 hrs./day x 365 days	2190	3 – Jeff (1 shift) Nancy (1 shift) Ken (2 days/wk)
Herd Care Daily	2 hrs./day x 365 days	730	1 - James
General : feeding, manure removal Daily	7 hrs./day x 365 days	2555	2 – James (3 hrs./day) Jeff (4 hrs./day)
Farm managements	4 hrs./day x 6 days/week	1248	1 - James

Total Farm or Business Requirements (Currently 200 acres, 90 cow herd)

Type of Work and When	**Total Hours per Year**	**Total Hours per Week**	**Who Does It**	**Hours per week per person**
Milking Daily	2190	42	Jeff Nancy Ken	15 15 12
Herd Care Daily	730	14	James	14
General Daily	2555	49	James Jeff	21 28
Management Daily	1248	24	James	24
Haylage June	160	140	James Jeff	70 70
Field Preparation End of April, early May	40	40	James	40
Crop Seeding May	40	40	James	40
Haying June, July, August	240	120	James 5 casuals	30 90
Silage July, August	160	140	James Jeff	70 70

Employee Schedule/Hourly Analysis (Currently)

Employee	**# of Normal Daily Hours**	**# of Normal Weekly Hours**	**# of Daily Hrs. Including Overtime**	**# of Weekly Hrs. Including Overtime**	**# of Possible Overtime Weeks**
James	8.5	59	18.5	129	5
Nancy	3	15	-	-	-
Jeff	8.5	43	16	113	2
Ken	6	12	-	-	-
5 Casuals	6	180	-	-	-

After analyzing and graphing his current situation, James was surprised to see how many hours per week and per day he actually spends working on his farm. It is very clear to James that should he expand his operation, he will need to make significant staff changes. Next, he takes a look at his working environment.

Working Environment

As James thought about the advantages he could offer employees, he came up with the following list:

- Good wages and benefits and possibly an incentive program (giving a calf to his employee),

- One day in seven and every second weekend off,
- Housing with the usual perks,
- Good work environment - his buildings and equipment are in good working condition,
- Willingness to listen and consult with his employee, and
- Opportunities to include a good employee in any future growth plans.

Step 2: Decide if your labour needs and workforce match

Having done a labour needs and workforce assessment, James sees that if he purchases the new place, he will need to make major staff changes. He discusses possible changes with his family and staff.

After considerable discussion, it was decided that James would expand his operation by purchasing the dairy farm down the road.

The staff changes would be as follows:

- James would continue to be the manager as well as do some of the general farm duties. He would continue to do the field preparation, crop seeding, haying, and silage work,
- Jeff agreed to take on the extra responsibility of herd care and most of the general farm duties. He would also help James to bring in the silage but would no longer milk the cows,
- A new full-time milker would be hired. That person would be responsible for milking both shifts 5 days per week. Nancy agreed to milk 2 shifts one day per week, and
- Robert, although he is still in school, agreed to take on the responsibility of milking 2 shifts one day per week, and take on some of the general farm duties during silage and haying.

Using the Labour Estimate Worksheet once again, James came up with the following figures as shown in Illustration 2.

Illustration 2

Task Analysis - Crops Expanded Operation 260 Acres Hay and Grain

* expanded operation with staff changes

Type of Work and When	Length of Time	Total Hours	People Required
Haylage June	12 days; 10 hrs./day	240	2 - James and Jeff
Hay 10,000 Bales June, July, August	4 days; 10 hrs./day 2 times per year	80	1 - James
Hay 10,000 Bales June, July, August	4 days; 6 hrs./day 2 times per year	240	5 – casual employees
Field Preparation April, early May	6 days; 10 hrs./day	60	1 - James
Seeding May	6 days; 10 hrs./day	60	1 - James
Silage	12 days; 10 hrs./day	240	2 – James and Jeff

Task Analysis – Animals (Expanded Operation - 120 Cow Herd)

Type of Work and When	Length of Time	Total Hours	People Required
Milking twice/day 3 hrs./shift	8 hrs./day x 365 days 2 shifts/day, 4 hrs./shift	2920	3 – Milker (5 days/wk.) Nancy (1 day/wk.) Robert (1 day/wk.)
Herd Care Daily	3 hrs./day x 365 days	1095	1 - James
General : feeding, manure removal Daily	7 hrs./day x 365 days	2555	3 – James Robert Jeff
Farm management Daily	4 hrs./day x 6 days/week	1248	1 - James

Total Farm or Business Requirements (Expanded Operations)

Type of Work and When	Total Hours per Year	Total Hours per Week	Who Does It	Hours per week per person
Milking Daily	2920	56	Milker Nancy Robert	40 8 8
Herd Care Daily	1095	21	Jeff	21
General Daily	2555	49	James Jeff (& Robert?)	21 28
Management Daily	1248	24	James	24
Haylage June	240	140	James Jeff	70 70
Field Preparation End of April, early May	60	60	James	60
Seeding May	60	60	James	60
Haying June, July, August	320	160	James 5 casuals	40 120
Silage July, August	240	140	James Jeff	70 70

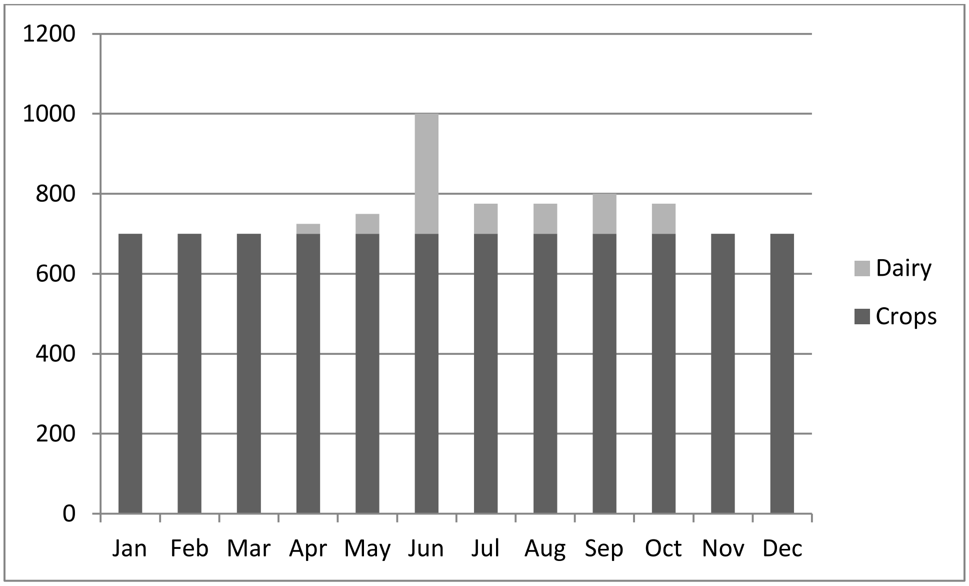
Employee Schedule/Hourly Analysis (Expanded Operation)

Employee	# of Normal Daily Hours	# of Normal Weekly Hours	# of Daily Hours Including Overtime	# of Weekly Hours Including Overtime	# of Possible Overtime Weeks
James	8.5	45	12	69	5
Nancy	8	8	-	-	-
Jeff	10	49	12	63	3
Milker	8	40	-	-	-
5 Casuals	6	240	-	-	-
Robert	8	Milking -8 Summer - 40			

Next, James uses a workload graph to help him see how he should plan his seasonal workloads.

James' Workload Graph

Labour Required in Hours per Month



Step 3: Decide if New Employees are needed and proceed with hiring

James decides that he needs one full-time employee to make expansion of his dairy herd feasible. He is confident he has, or can develop, the skills to be a good personnel manager. (The first ones he'll work on are assertiveness and delegation skills.) He feels that his labour environment is such that he should be able to attract a good employee. He proceeds with the hiring process.

HIRING

3

3.1 Hiring

The material in this section outlines the process to follow when hiring an employee. There are 10 steps in the hiring process.

Remember during the recruitment and hiring process you are trying to learn 2 things about a potential new employee:

1. Can they do the job? This is about having the right skills and knowledge to complete the job tasks.
2. Will they do the job? This is about the attitude and emotional well-being of the potential employee.

These two factors are assessed using differing methods:

- Can - from the resume and interview, and
- Will - from the reference check and interview.

10 steps in the Hiring Process:

1. Know Your Goals
2. Job Description
3. Recruitment
4. Interviewing
5. Testing
6. Checking References
7. Making the Selection
8. Offering the Job
9. Employment Understanding
10. Orientation

The first step in hiring a new employee is to have well-defined goals and objectives. Knowing your goals will help you decide how many and what kind of employees you need. By knowing your goals, you can share them with your employees so that you all work toward the same end.

3.2 Know your Goals

Farm Goals

Your business goals should reflect your own goals, values, attitudes, and personality. These four factors to a large extent define who you are.

Goals are objects or events in the future you will work to achieve. For example, goals could include a close family, financial security, a successful operation, respect in the community, etc.

Values are the foundation of your character. We develop a strong sense of what is right or wrong, good or bad, early in life and these basic ways of viewing the world stay with us throughout life. Examples of values include being honest, being decent to others, being active in the community, etc.

Attitudes are the feelings and beliefs we have toward specific people, objects or events. “I like the John Deere tractor because of its reliability”, “I like my work”, and “I enjoy Mexican food” are all examples of attitudes.

Personality describes your characteristic styles of thinking, feeling and acting in different situations. For example, one is shy or outgoing, open or closed-minded, a risk-taker or a risk-avoider.

It’s important that your business goals are in line with your other goals, values, and attitudes or you will become dissatisfied.

Goals are sometimes called visions or missions. The more specific your goals, the more likely you are to achieve them.

As you formulate a statement about your goals, think about the following questions:

- Who are we?
- What do we do?
- Whom do we serve?
- How do we serve?

A mission statement can often be developed from these goals. Here’s an example of a statement for Mason’s Berry Farm:

Mason’s Berry Farm grows strawberries, blueberries and raspberries for wholesale to supermarket chains. Careful cultivation of the newest and most succulent berry strains distinguishes Mason’s Berry Farm as one of the leading berry farms in the Edmonton area for berry quality and harvest quality. A streamlined organization and a comprehensive employee program for pickers ensure optimum freshness and rapid transportation to population centres.

Why Goals Are Important

- Goals help to motivate job performance. When goals are clear, specific and set within a time frame for completion, they are useful in directing your use of time, money, and energy.
- Goals challenge. Working toward a well-defined goal challenges people to use their skills and abilities. The goals must not be too simple or individuals won’t be challenged. Nor can they be too difficult or people will become discouraged.
- Goals can be communicated to others. By sharing the vision, managers allow their employees to share in the excitement of reaching their goals. A clear and mutually understood set of expectations will assist all to reach their goals.

- Goals allow small jobs to be seen in the context of the whole. Consider this old story: Two stonecutters were asked what they were doing. The first said, “I’m cutting this stone into blocks:’ the second replied, “I’m one of a team that’s building a cathedral.”

Setting Goals

- Once you’ve determined your goals, apply the following steps:
- Set a deadline to achieve the goal,
- Specify the tasks and duties involved,
- List obstacles to overcome,
- Identify the people, groups and organizations needed to accomplish the goal,
- Write down a list of benefits, and
- Decide how you’ll measure the results.

The following is an example of a goal setting worksheet:

Goal	**How to Measure**	**Time Frame**
Good sow productivity	18 pigs per sow	Will achieve this average over next calendar year
Spend more time with family	Have one family night per week	For next 6 months, starting immediately
To ensure farm safety, have well maintained equipment	Do a maintenance check every 3 months	Next 12 months

A Goal-Setting Checklist

Here’s a sample checklist that covers the key issues in goal setting that can assure that goals are attainable:

- Did everyone get a chance to speak about the goals?
- Has there been ample time to reflect on the goals?
- Are the goals realistic?
- Do the goals allow for future expansion?
- Are the goals consistent with your mission statement?
- Will everyone in your business commit to the goals?
- Is there a plan to monitor progress toward reaching the goals?
- Do the goals allow for emergencies and the unexpected?

The key to goal achievement lies in your willingness to constantly review and update your goals as circumstances change. Apply the SMAC test to each goal:

S Specific
M Measurable
A Achievable
C Consistent with your values

For example, a goal to remodel your dairy barn within the next five years does not pass the SMAC test because such a goal is too vague. Here's a revised version:

To add 10 cows to the dairy herd three years from now, we need to save $30,000 out of each of the next three years' profits.

While setting challenging goals is critical to performance, research shows that goal setting without review and feedback is ineffective.

Labour Goals

Written goals are the blueprint for successful labour relations. Once goals are written down, they can be translated into detailed day-to-day activities. This makes it easier to tell them to others and to get the job done. Goals will vary greatly from operation to operation and may be different for different workers. When setting labour goals, it is wise to think about how you will measure results and when you expect to see them.

Examples of labour goals:

- 10% decrease in staff turnover,
- 10% increase productivity,
- 8% decrease in machinery repairs,
- 10% decrease in veterinary bills, and
- 365 days accident free.

3.3 Job Descriptions

The next step is to develop job descriptions for the others working in the business. You may have to gather information about the tasks actually done or about the tasks that will be required in a new position.

Many employers do not use written job descriptions because the task of developing them looms too large or uncertain. References that lower this barrier, however, are readily available. Though not a substitute for descriptions specific to positions in a given organization, generic references that describe similar jobs can serve as models and help in launching local job analyses with which to modify them.

Examples of agricultural job descriptions are available at Ag Help Wanted: Guidelines for Managing Agricultural Labor chapter 3 page 82 found online at http://aghelpwanted.uwagec.org/FrameBookContents.htm . These can be expanded and tailored to individual company circumstances. They are presented as starting points, working drafts for you to further develop and refine to fit your operation.

Below are some tips on how to proceed:

- Interview an employee who already does the job,
- Prepare a questionnaire in which you ask the employee specific questions about his or her duties,
- Observe the employee on the job to determine the specific duties performed,
- Ask the employee to record every task performed in a typical day or week,
- Use your business organizational chart as the basis for writing the job description,
- Keep the job description simple, clean and factual,
- Make the job sound interesting. For example, “is responsible for livestock nutrition” sounds more interesting than, “feed livestock”,
- Make sure your job description correctly describes the job. Avoid overstating or exaggerating job importance and requirements,
- Make the description specific but avoid making it too restrictive. For example, “is responsible for the grain harvest” encompasses more than, “operate combine” and is also more appealing and motivating,
- Use active verbs in the job description,
- Make sure after writing your job description that there is a match between what you write and what your employee earns and actually ends up doing,
- Keep the duties/functions section separate from the qualifications,
- List functions in order of either significance or portion of work time spent – consider breaking down the percentage of time spent on each function, and
- Each time you revise the job description, review it with the employee(s).
    - Answer any questions about it and discuss the need for changes,
    - Ask the employee to sign it, to indicate their understanding,
    - Provide a copy to each employee, and
    - Check each year or two for continued accuracy.

Job descriptions take many forms and yours should be designed to reflect your business and your needs. An effective job description contains the following items:

- The job title,
- A job summary - a brief statement of the major responsibilities of the person with this job,
- Job qualifications - training and work experience necessary to do this job. Make sure that the requirements are essential to perform the tasks and comply with human rights,

- Scope of duties - a list of the major duties the person will perform and the approximate percentage of time spent on each duty,
- Relationships - to who is the employee responsible; who is responsible to the employee; and what authority does the employee have,
- Performance standards - performance standards may be put in a job description or kept as a separate document depending on the situation. If the job is technical and the performance standards can be easily measured, it may be best to include them. (Example: be able to pick a minimum of 10 pounds of berries an hour.),
- Wages and work hours, and
- Safety responsibilities (particularly if filling a supervisory role).

The following is a sample job description written for the position of herd manager on a dairy farm.

Job Title: Dairy Herd Manager

Summary: Responsible for overall daily, weekly, and seasonal management of the dairy herd, including milking, herd health, and breeding. Supervises employees and plans feeding program in cooperation with farm owner.

Duties and Responsibilities (essential): Oversee and participate in all aspects of herd management, including milking, monitoring health of cows, breeding, and raising replacements. Plan and implement feeding program in consultation with farm owner. Supervise three or four other dairy employees who milk feed and care for cattle.

Minor Functions: Assist with field work and/or machinery maintenance as time permits, especially during peak periods of planting and harvesting.

Direct Supervisor: Farm owner

Qualifications:

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- Knowledge of cow physiology, life cycle, and factors affecting health and milk production
- Understanding of and ability to work with modern milking equipment and automated feeding systems
- Ability to organize and maintain herd health and breeding records
- Ability to communicate well with and to train milking staff

Experience:

- At least 3 years of experience managing a dairy herd.

Education and Training:

- Associate's degree from an agricultural or technical school with a major in animal production or a closely related agricultural field
- Bachelor's degree preferred

Safety Qualification:

- First aid certificate and ambulance safety certification preferred

Conditions:

Salary Range: $1,110 to $1,300 per week (including value of house and utilities), depending on qualifications

Work Hours: 5:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., with two, one-hour breaks per full day

Days off per Week: 1.5

Other Benefits: Three bedroom house in very good condition plus paid utilities. Two weeks paid vacation after one year.

Work Environment: Modern 200-cow free-stall operation with 500 acres of field crops.

The following table is a sample breakdown of duties along with the amount of time to be spent on each duty.

Percent of Time	Major Duties
10	Overseeing herd health
10	Manage genetic program
5	Monitoring production levels
10	Identify heifers and cows to be culled
15	Oversee feed inputs
15	Scheduling and supervise herdsman and milkers
5	Assist with interviewing and hiring herdsman and milkers
30	Coordinate and provide training for herdsman and milkers

Blank Job Description

Job Title: ____

Summary: ____

Duties and Responsibilities (essential): ______________________________________

____

Minor Functions: ____

____

Direct Supervisor: ____

Qualifications

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- ____
- ____
- ____
- ____
- ____

Experience:

- ____

Education and Training:

- ____
- ____
- ____

Safety Qualification:

- ____

Conditions

Salary Range: ____

Work Hours: ____

Days off per Week: ____

Other Benefits: ____

____

Work Environment: ____

3.4 Recruitment

A good recruitment program starts on the belief that there are suitable people available. Employees are available to fill most employment situations; recruitment is the key to finding them. Good employer-employee relations are the key to keeping them.

Sources of Labour

The following is a list of possible sources of staff operations:

- Lists available from Canada Employment Centres and private firms,
- Women or men with related experience in non-farm jobs,
- High school graduates with a similar background in your business,
- Graduates from agricultural colleges or related programs,
- Graduates from a university in agriculture, commerce, business, or horticulture,
- Retired persons in good health,
- Disabled persons when the disability does not interfere with job performance, and
- Men or women from other farms or horticultural operations.

Determining the most appropriate recruitment sources depends upon the time and the type of position you need to fill.

Where and How to Recruit

SOURCE	ADVANTAGES	CONSIDERATIONS
Private Placement Agencies	Pay for performance or service of screening and locating.	Evaluate the cost benefit of a service vs. your time and expertise.
Recommendation from current employees	Current employees understand your needs and have a stake in whom you hire	Maintain a professional manner to avoid possible friction with the employee who made the recommendation
Advertisements in local newspapers	Spend relatively little money, reach a large audience and get results quickly	Write a specific ad to prevent too many unsuitable candidates from applying
College/university placements offices	Reach the type of employee you want for positions that require formal training	Coordinate your search with the college year to find students before they take other positions
Job announcements on bulletin boards	Target a specific area such as local schools to find seasonal help	Make your job announcement specific and easy to read
Neighbours	They know you. They may know of people who are	Be specific about the type of employee and qualifications

	looking for employment	you require
Personal contact with good employees in your area	See how they work before you hire them	Determine what advantages your business could offer them. Consider how this may affect your relationship with other neighbours and the situation in which you place the potential employee.
On Your Company Website	Applicants can learn about your farm before applying. There are no word limits so you can be as detailed as you like.	Write a specific ad to prevent too many unsuitable candidates from applying and make sure to remove the ad once filled.
Online Classifieds (Craigslist, Kijiji, etc.) and Job Boards (government, Monster.com, etc.)	Very low cost and reaches a large audience very quickly.	Write a specific ad to prevent too many unsuitable candidates from applying

3.4.1 Developing a Job Ad

Most the recruiting methods require you to write some kind of job ad. To write an ad, refer to the job description you have written for the position. If possible, start the advertising process long before you need your new employee.

It is important to place your ad in the right place. For example, if you are advertising a management position, use farm magazines, larger newspapers, or college placement offices. If you are advertising a less senior position, use local papers, and bulletin boards in high schools, community centres, agricultural businesses, and service centres.

An effective ad will inform, promote and screen.

- Inform: The ad should include a job title, brief description of the major responsibilities, wages, hours and how the applicant contacts you. Instead of asking for a resume, ask that anyone interested come to your site and complete an application,
- Promote: The ad should attract those who are qualified. Put something in the ad to spark the interest of qualified people. Include the benefits you offer. Possibilities include housing, bonus programs, company values, opportunities for advancement, etc. If you offer it and are proud of it, put it in the ad, and
- Screen: Include qualifications, experience, physical requirements, and specific job requirements. This information will screen out applicants who lack sufficient background for the position yet should not be so inflexible as to turn away candidates with good potential.

Look at the following three ads for the same job, and decide which one you would want to apply for.

1. Wanted: Hired worker. Phone 000-000-000
2. Wanted: Person for general farm work, full-time, on a beef and crop farm. Requires two years farm experience or equivalent and/or two years agricultural education beyond high school. Good wage and benefit package. Call 000-000-0000.
3. Good with plants and animals? Oak Bluff Farms has an opening for a person to assist the owner/operator in management and production of beef and crops. The position offers considerable variety and opportunity for growth. At least two years farm experience or equivalent and/or agricultural education beyond high school required. Pay and benefit package based on applicant's experience and training. Write for application to Oak Bluff Farms (address) or come to farm and request an application form. Please apply before March 31.

As you write the ad, concentrate on making the position sound as interesting as possible, but don't create expectations that can't be met. Use the list below as your checklist for information to include in your job ad. Use a natural, friendly style. Use large type and interesting graphics to highlight your job title. Use a catchy opening line or phrase to start off your advertisement text. Use simple clear language.

What to Include in a Job Ad

- Job Title,
- Major Responsibilities,
- Special Features,
- Hours,
- Wages,
- Benefits,
- Location,
- Qualifications & Experience,
- How to Apply, and
- Closing Date

The following are example of a job ads used by employers

Johnson Tree Care Inc. was started in 1976 by Mark Johnson, a nationally recognized consulting arboriculturist / educator, and has since specialized in offering full service urban tree care in the Edmonton area. Boasting high quality arboriculture and safety standards, and a commitment to life-long learning, current ownership continues to benefit from a close working relationship with Mark Johnson.

Arborist/Tree Worker

We require a climber with a practical understanding of

- *Current tree pruning methods,*
- *Tree removal,*

- *Cabling, bracing, fertilizing and other specialty tree care services, and*
- *Insect and disease identification and treatment.*

Qualifications: Related experience and preferably technical training or diploma from a recognized university or college specializing in arboriculture, horticulture, or forestry, or completion of a recognized trade apprenticeship; ISA Certification (or a willingness to obtain); valid driver's license. To qualify, you must also demonstrate good communication skills, a team-oriented approach, and the ability to supervise.

If you have the requisite skills and experience, please contact Denise Stewart in writing by January 8 at Johnson Tree Care (address).

We regret we will not be able to respond to all applicants. Only those individuals being considered for an interview will be contacted.

Below is another sample for a managerial position:

Wolf River Farms, the region's leading employer, has an immediate salaried opening in Human Resources for an Employment Supervisor supporting the Orchards Division. The position monitors the hiring of seasonal orchard employees, oversees the orchard recruitment process to ensure legal hiring practices, and travels to neighbouring areas on occasional recruiting trips. Requirements include a bachelor's degree in human resources or related field or at least five years of equivalent experience, bilingual ability in English and Spanish or Punjabi, and excellent interpersonal skills with cultural awareness. For more information, visit our website at www.wrf.not. Interested applicants may submit a resume by e-mail to jobs@wrf.not by (date).

The example below is for website postings of multiple positions:

Current Employment Opportunities at Murray Nursery

- *Production,*
- *Propagation,*
- *Landscape Services,*
- *Delivery Driver,*
- *Office Personnel, and*
- *Sales Representative.*

Production

> *Seeking individuals who are self-motivated, willing to work hard, and are anxious to grow with our company and fellow employee-owners in the general production area of our nursery.*
>
> *Desired Skills and Experience: Willingness to work hard, love of plants, and good communication skills.*

Propagation

> *Seeking individuals who are self-motivated, willing to work hard, and are anxious to grow with our company and fellow employee-owners in the propagation area of our nursery.*

Desired Skills and Experience: Love of plants, dedication, and willingness to work hard. Agricultural or horticultural background would be beneficial but not necessary.

Landscape Services

Landscape crew leaders and labourers needed for seasonal, as well as full-time, year-round positions.

Desired Skills and Experience: Must possess plant material knowledge, ability to operate equipment, and motivate work crew. For labourers, experience is beneficial, but not required.

Delivery Driver

Murray Nursery Company is looking for seasonal employees to work in a demanding job. Full-time employment may be available to the right individual.

Desired Skills and Experience: Must have a good driving record, ability to read maps and directions, and lift heavy plant material. Pre-employment drug screen and physical examination required.

Office Personnel

Seasonal data entry operators.

Desired Skills and Experience: Proficiency in all areas of data entry including ability to work independently, to troubleshoot problems, and to communicate effectively.

Sales Representative

A broad-based agri-related background is preferred. Ability to secure leads and interviews for residential and commercial landscape services in a designated Midwestern sales territory.

Desired Skills and Experience: Business courses, sales experience, horticulture, and landscape design course.

The employment interview is the most commonly used source of information in employee selection. It is one of the best ways for you to gather some of the information you will need to assess if a prospective employee would make a valuable contribution to your operation. Making such predications is difficult, but using a systematic approach to interviewing will help.

The most promising applicants, as you have determined by screening the application forms, should be invited to your farm for an interview. The interview serves two principle functions:

1. Allows the employer an opportunity to compare each applicant's qualifications and aptitudes with the job requirements, and
2. Provides the applicant with the opportunity to determine if he or she wishes to work for your business.

3.4.2 Screening

The first step is to screen the application forms and decide which applicants you wish to interview. Screening is often one of the hardest tasks in the hiring process. It is a test of your application design!

Read all your applications. Assess each one keeping in mind the list of desirable traits you are seeking for the position. Start by eliminating those candidates who don't meet the basic training or experience requirements.
Select no more than five or six candidates to interview. Interviewing more will probably lead to confusion when you go to make the decision. If, after the interviews, you have not found a qualified person, you can invite other applicants for an interview or re-advertise

3.4.3 Structuring Interviews

Practical and legal problems can be avoided by structuring interviews. The following suggestions for structuring selection interviews will help in planning and preparation:

- Make a list of the behaviours and knowledge you are looking for in a new employee. A middle management position, for example, would require the ability to work with people, make decisions, and take on responsibilities. The person would need technical and leadership skills.
- Develop a set of core questions in advance which will allow you to decide if the person has these abilities and characteristics. Have most of the questions relate directly to job duties and performance requirements. While completely scripting the interview would obviously reduce spontaneity and valuable individualized discussion, having some questions to ask of all applicants makes comparative evaluations easier and more meaningful, especially when more than one interviewer is involved.
- Make the questions open-ended to encourage detailed responses. Avoid questions which can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no". "Why did you quit your job at that time?" will get a more revealing response than, "Did you quit to make more money?"
- Use different types of questions to find out about the various qualifications you want in the new hire.
    - Situational questions usually begin, "What would you do if…," and continue with a description of some problem situation likely to occur on the job that the applicant is asked to respond to, as if holding the job.
    - Knowledge questions are direct requests for information that an applicant ought to already have if qualified for the job.
    - Worker requirement questions explore the applicant willingness to go along with such job demands as overtime work, travel, relocation and infrequent supervision.
    - Pre-test your interview questionnaire and your interviewing techniques on a trusted employee or family member, especially if this is your first interview.

- Use a consistent interview format and content (as well as core content) for all applicants. Unless each candidate gets about the same amount of time under the same conditions, interview responses are not likely to be comparable.
- Note important responses during the interview and document your impressions as soon as possible afterward. Documentation and comparison are easier when some classification or numerical scoring scheme is used to evaluate responses to key inquiries and to summarize ratings of each applicant. The scheme can be quite simple such as a 1=lowest to 5=highest scale. If candidates are rated according to certain attributes, those dimensions ought to correspond to qualifications specified on the job description.

- Make a list of the all the basic information the applicant would need to know and assess before deciding whether to take the job, such as work schedule and location, fringe benefits, responsibility for tools, etc.
- Understand the common rater biases and consciously fight them. Careful listening to what the applicant says goes hand in hand with waiting to make overall judgements until the interview is over. Having multiple interviewer/raters in a single or sequential set of interviews for each applicant is a good way of reducing the impact of any individual's bias.

Interview Questions

When drafting your questions, remember that it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of the following attributes:

- Race
- Ancestry
- Religion
- Age (19 or older)
- Physical or Mental Disability
- Colour
- Place of Origin
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Record of Offences Unrelated to Employment
- Citizenship
- Ethnic Origin
- Family Status
- Marital Status
- Retaliation for Human Rights Complaints

20 Questions That Could Add to Any Job Interview

Getting started

1. Your application (or résumé) looks interesting. Would you bring me up-to-date on your background relevant to possible employment here?

Applicant's view of how their fit with the job

2. What is your understanding about the nature of this job?
3. What abilities do you feel are most crucial for the success in this job?
4. What parts of this job do you think would be most enjoyable for you?
5. What parts of this job would be least enjoyable?

6. How well does your background prepare you for this job?
7. In what areas of this job would you need or appreciate additional supervision, training, or patience from us?

More about the applicant's situation and future, not specific to this job

8. What other kinds of jobs are you considering at this time?
9. What do you see as particular strong points in your character or personality?
10. What limitations or weak points may you need to overcome?
11. If someone who knew you very well wanted to describe you as accurately and completely as possible in one minute, what would he or she say?
12. At this point in your life (career), what goals are you aiming for?
13. If you could create your ideal job, what would it be? How would you spend your time?

Previous job experience

14. What have you been particularly praised for or recognized for on other jobs?
15. And what have you been criticized for?
16. In previous jobs, what suggestions have you made that improved the way things were done?
17. What would you say is your proudest accomplishment and your greatest disappointment in your work career so far?

In conclusion, the big picture

18. What other information that we have missed or didn't cover would you want us to know?
19. To sum up, why do you believe you should be hired for this job?
20. And why should you not be hired for this job?

The following chart contains an example of an interview checklist that could be used. You might alter the questions somewhat, depending on the position you are trying to fill.

Sample Interview Checklist

Foreman Position

Behaviours	**Questions Designed to Predict Behaviours**	**Answer Rating**
Job stability	How long were you at your last two jobs?	1 2 3 4 5
	What are your career goals?	1 2 3 4 5
Ability to Make Decisions	Describe a situation in a previous job where you had to make an important decision.	1 2 3 4 5
	What did you decide? How did you feel about the situation?	
	Assume your boss was not around and the following situation arose (describe a decision-making situation). What would you do, and why?	1 2 3 4 5
	How do you feel about making decisions that affect the success of the business you work for?	1 2 3 4 5
Ability to Work With People	Given a choice, do you prefer to work alone or in cooperation with others?	1 2 3 4 5
Technical Skills	Describe your experience with developing pesticide spray schedules.	1 2 3 4 5
	What equipment have you operated?	1 2 3 4 5
	Describe your knowledge of animal nutrition programs.	1 2 3 4 5
Ambition/ Industriousness	Describe a particularly productive day in a previous job.	1 2 3 4 5
	Describe a major job-related task you have performed that you are quite proud of.	1 2 3 4 5
Ability to be Trained	Describe your formal education background.	1 2 3 4 5
	Have you voluntarily taken any adult education courses?	1 2 3 4 5
	Describe an instance where you had to learn a new skill for a former job.	1 2 3 4 5
Leadership	Have you ever been an officer in a club or community organization? Describe.	1 2 3 4 5
	What supervisory roles have you had in previous jobs?	1 2 3 4 5
	How do you feel about supervising the work of others?	1 2 3 4 5
Good Attendance	In the past year, how many days off work have you taken for sickness or personal reasons?	1 2 3 4 5

Interview Techniques

You may feel like you're in unfamiliar territory when it comes time to conduct an interview. Remember a few things which may help:

- You are in control of the interview,
- You can make the interview a positive experience for both applicant and yourself, with proper preparation, and
- The applicant is also interviewing you, whether you realize it or not. Part of your task may be to sell the job so that your first choice applicant will want to work for you.

The following suggestions will help you conduct a successful interview.

1. Choose a quiet, comfortable place in which to conduct your interview.
2. Put the applicant at ease. The more you can do to reduce any tension, the more meaningful your communication will be. A handshake and friendly smile are a good start.
3. Stick to your plan. Follow your list of interview questions and have a time limit for your interview. Make sure you ask the same questions to each candidate. Your final decision will be easier to make if you get the same type of information from each person.
4. Listen. Encourage your applicant to do 80% of the talking. You must resist the temptation to discuss your point of view at length.
5. Provide your applicant with an opportunity to ask you questions about the position.
6. Be mindful of your own personal biases. Hire based on objective criteria instead of impressions. Do not overlook highly qualified applicants because of their religion, ethnic background, or some other trait different from what you had in mind.
7. Tell each applicant when you will be making your decision and that you will call them one way or the other.
8. Provide the applicant with all the basic information he/she would need to assess before deciding whether to take the job, such as work schedule and location, fringe benefits, responsibility for tools, etc.
9. Complete all the interviews before doing your evaluation. Do not indicate your feelings about any of the responses you get, or who you think may get the job before all the interviews are completed.
10. Be cautious about committing to a specific wage. You can mention the salary grid for the position but no specific amounts.

Interview Timetable

Prepare yourself for the interview by reviewing the candidate's application form and noting his or her qualifications.

Allow 35-50 minutes for each interview. If you plan to do testing, allow about one hour extra for that.

Remember that the candidate is also interviewing you, so project a positive image. If the candidate doesn't turn out to be the person you want, he or she may still speak well of you to someone who is perfect for the job.

Sample Timetable

Activity		**Time**
Greeting	Welcome the candidate in a positive and friendly manner.	1 minute
Small talk	Put the candidate at ease; show a personal interest; offer coffee.	2 minutes
Job description	Provide a full and clear explanation of the job and how it fits into your organization (beyond the job description)	5 minutes
Housekeeping details	Outline wages, hours, special conditions, housing, etc.	2 minutes
Answer questions	Focus on the candidate's questions: What does he/she want to know about your organization and the position? The candidate's questions will reveal a great deal about personal motivation, values, etc.	5-10 minutes
Asking questions	Stick to the plan: Use the interview checklist you've developed to ensure you ask the same questions and to simplify the selection process. Make specific notes during and immediately after the interview.	15-20 minutes
Continue selling or cut it off	If the applicant interests you, introduce him or her to other employees and give a short tour of the farm; if the applicant does not interest you, bring the interview to a dignified close. Always specify when you will inform the applicant of your decision or of any further steps such as a second round of interviews or testing.	5-10 minutes
	Total Interview Time:	**35-50 minutes**

Screening Seasonal Employees

You need to be as careful screening and selecting seasonal employees as you are screening and selecting full-time employees. Many employers find it convenient to do an interview at the time that an applicant comes in to fill in an application form. These same employers often ask seasonal employees to work for a trial period to determine if they are suitable for the job. The following form is an example of one employer's interview form.

Interview Form (for seasonal employees)

Name ____ Birthdate _____________________

Address ____ Phone ______________________

Name Job & Primary Duties ____

Have you done this work before? Yes ____ No ______

Start When? ________________________ Intend to leave job when? ___________________

For whom have you worked? ____

Have you operated the equipment we are using on this job? Yes ___ No ___
(list the machines used in the job)

Do you require housing? Yes ___ No ___ Transportation Yes ___ No ___

Board Yes ___ No ___

Are you legally entitled to work in Canada? Yes ___ No ___

Can you lift a __________ kg tote? (when required for the job) Yes ___ No ___

Realize that some of these questions are close ended but they quickly collect the most frequently desired information.

3.4.4 Testing

An applicant's qualifications may look very good, but how do you know how well the person can perform certain tasks. An interview does not demonstrate an applicant's ability to do the job. Testing skills can separate the person who interviews well from the person who can actually do the job.

Purpose of Testing

Nick and Marsha Adams selected four candidates for the position of tractor driver. The position required a candidate with several years of experience with farm work, the ability to train others, excellent driving skills, and knowledge of mechanics. Here's how they ranked the four candidates on the basis of their interviews.

Candidate	Qualifications/Assessment	Ranking
Mark	10 yrs. experience, college courses in mechanics, outgoing	1
Alice	2 yrs. experience, limited knowledge of farming, enthusiastic	4
Roy	3 years truck driving experience, 2 years of college, ambitious	3
Bert	20 years of experience, no formal training, friendly	2

Judging from the interview ranking, Mark would be the obvious choice for the position. However, Nick and Marsha chose to base their final decision on a half hour test that required candidates to change the oil in the tractor and manoeuvre it around the field. When actually required to demonstrate his skills, Mark rated third out of the four candidates while Alice showed excellent driving ability. Nick and Marsha decided that Alice's lack of experience was outweighed by her skills and willingness to learn.

If Nick and Marsha had not tested the four candidates, they would have hired Mark - who in fact was not the best candidate for a position that required excellent driving skills.

Testing Tips

- Determine acceptable standards for one or two specific skills,
- Develop an evaluation sheet for use during the test. This makes sure that each candidate is evaluated the same way,
- Make sure each candidate does the same functions in the same way, and
- Allow candidates plenty of lime. Avoid putting them under pressure.

3.4.5 Checking References

Once you've narrowed the field to two or three top candidates, you need to obtain the opinion of people who have actually worked with the candidates. Make sure each candidate lists several references, obtain their permission to contact them, and then contact them.

We've provided a sample Reference Checklist which could be used as a guide in doing reference checks.

When preparing your questions, remember that it is illegal to ask questions during reference checks that would discriminate on the basis of the following attributes:

- Race
- Ancestry
- Religion
- Age (19 or older)
- Physical or Mental Disability
- Colour
- Place of Origin
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Record of Offences Unrelated to Employment
- Citizenship
- Ethnic Origin
- Family Status
- Marital Status
- Retaliation for Human Rights Complaints

While reference checking is important, you should be aware that the reference provided may not always be entirely accurate. Unfortunately, some previous employers give inferior employees a good reference just to get him or her to leave.

As you do your reference check, listen for the tone. Is the person enthusiastic as he or she speaks of the employee, or is there guarded caution? Think about what wasn't said. "He gave me no problems," is very different from "He did his job well".

Start your telephone reference check by identifying yourself and your position. Then proceed along these lines:

____ (name of candidate) _______ has applied for a position as________________________

in my business. He/she has permitted me to contact you concerning his/her employment with you. Is this a convenient time for you to talk with me?

If the time is convenient, proceed with your questions.

If the time isn't convenient, set a time that is good for both of you.

REFERENCE CHECKLIST

General Questions

What were the employee’s duties and responsibilities? ______________________________

What type of work did the employee do best? ______________________________________

What type of work is the employee least suited for? _________________________________

What was the period of employment? ____

How much was the employee paid? ____

Why is the employee no longer employed by you? __________________________________

Did the employee take good care of his/her housing? ________________________________

Would you rehire this employee? Yes ___ No ___ If no, why not? ______________________

Personal Suitability Questions

Did the employee have any limitations which need to be considered? ____________________

How well did the employee get along with others? _________________________________

Personal Initiative Questions

What was the employee’s rate of absenteeism? ______________________________________

Was the employee punctual? ____

Was the employee a self-starter? ____

Was the employee innovative? ____

Did the employee supervise others? ____

Potential for Advancement Questions

Was the employee receptive to training? ____

Did the employee accept supervision? ____

Was the employee receptive to constructive criticism? ________________________________

3.4.6 Making the Selection

Now that you've screened, interviewed and tested the candidates, and checked their references, you have to decide which of them you want to hire. Ask yourself the following:

- How effectively will this person represent my business?
- How well will he or she harmonize with co-workers?
- How much energy and enthusiasm has this person shown in pursuing the application?
- Will the person have the necessary physical stamina for the position?

On occasion, you may find in the course of the recruiting and selecting process, that an applicant you particularly favour does not exactly meet the requirements of your position. Instead of hiring a person you favour less, consider changing the position to meet the skills and talents of the person you really want working for you.

3.4.7 Offering the Job/Advising Unsuccessful

Once you have narrowed the applicants to the top two or three, go after your #1 choice. You will want to do what you can to encourage the applicant to accept your offer.

How to Make the Offer

The offer should be made in person or by phone. Explain that you have reviewed the field of several qualified' candidates and would like to extend a job offer.

Now is the time to review the job description, your expectations and conditions of employment. The following checklist may be helpful as you prepare for the discussions.

What to Include in the Job Offer

- Review the quality and quantity of the work expected and the performance levels required. Include reporting relationships,
- Define the evaluation requirements: probationary period, performance appraisal times,
- Explain the work schedule: allow some flexibility if possible, and
- Provide a written list of the wages and benefits package you offer.

As you make your job offer, allow the person time to ask any questions. Now is the time to have a clear understanding of what is expected. Surprises later could sour the employer-employee relationship.

Keep your discussion upbeat. Communicate your expectation that the candidate will do a good job and enjoy working for you.

Notify Unsuccessful Candidates

Always notify unsuccessful candidates as quickly as possible once you've made your hiring decision. Keep their applications on file as part of your ongoing recruitment strategy.

Writing a "rejection" letter should not be a negative task. At all costs, you want to avoid the impersonal "I regret to inform you that your application for employment with Meadow Land Farm has been rejected".

Two sample letters follow. You could use these as a guideline but will want to write in the style that's comfortable for you.

Sample 1: Rejecting a Candidate Who HAS Been Seriously Considered.

Dear

Thank you for seeking employment with (your firm's name).

The position you applied for has been filled and I am no longer able to actively consider your application for employment. However, I will retain your application in our active files for six months. If another suitable opening occurs, I will consider you as a potential candidate for employment.

I enjoyed talking with you and appreciate the time you spent with us. Good luck with your job search and I hope you find a satisfying position in the near future.

Respectfully,

(your name)

Sample 2: Rejecting an applicant who is NOT a serious candidate.

Dear

Thank you for seeking employment with (your firm's name).

After reviewing the applications we received we have now selected a candidate for the Position. We are unable to make you an offer of employment at this time.

Again, thank you for your interest in our business. We hope you find a suitable position in the near future

Respectfully,

(your name)

3.5 Employment Contract

It is recommended that you prepare an employment contract and have it signed. A contract ensures the employee understands the terms and conditions of employment and understands and agrees to follow all of your business policies, rules, systems, and procedures. Careful attention to the details in these agreements helps both parties understand what is expected of them and it is important that you have your lawyer assist in developing the contract. The following can be used as a starting point to develop an employment contract. However, this checklist is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all potential legal requirements for employing workers. Check with your legal and financial advisors for complete requirements:

- Date,
- Job description,
- Salary and wages,
- Pay periods,
- Bonuses,
- Regular working days and hours,
- Overtime,
- Vacation,
- Sick leave,
- Housing (if applicable),
- Benefits (health insurance, retirement plan, accident insurance, life insurance, etc.),
- Transportation or car allowance,
- Statement of pay deductions,
- Leave policy on employee-requested training,
- Probationary period,
- Provision to update information in agreement,
- Termination statement, and
- Employer, employee, and witness signatures.

3.6 Orientation

Orientation sessions provide is a critical time to introduce a new employee to your operation, help them adapt to your operation and make them feel more prepared for their first day of work. A new job may appear complex to a new employee and you, as the manager, have many things to tell him or her. During the orientation, consider:

- Giving new employees your handbook to read,
- Leading them through a tour of your farm,
- Explaining their new job description to them, and
- Information on safe performance of their duties and their right to refuse unsafe work (Remember, BC Occupational Health and Safety Regulations stipulate that when (agriculture) workers, including seasonal and temporary workers, start employment, the employer and the employer's supervisor must ensure that they are instructed about the safe performance of their duties).

If you have additional training requirements (e.g. food safety or bio-security) this is an appropriate time to introduce these as well.

Try to think about the needs of your new employee when they arrive at your farm to begin work. He or she will probably have a strong desire to succeed and be anxious about working in a new environment. Your responsibility is to make them feel like they want to work for you; that they have made the right decision to accept a job at your farm.

By focusing on their needs,' you determine the four principal goals of an effective orientation:

1. Inspire
2. Encourage
3. Motivate
4. Activate

Use the following chart to accomplish these four goals, looking at them from Joe's point of view.

EMPLOYEE QUESTION	**EMPLOYER RESPONSE**	**ORIENTATION GOAL**
Will I like working here?	Set a warm, welcoming tone.	1. Inspire confidence and acceptance.
What exactly will I be doing?	Specify procedures for work, equipment, and safety.	2. Encourage expertise through knowledge.
Who else works here and how do I fit in?	Introduce other workers and the farm family.	3. Motivate by establishing a sense of community.
Who/where do I go for information?	Introduce the immediate supervisor and provide an orientation handout or handbook.	4. Activate the lines of authority.

How your new employee reacts during his first hours and days on the job will dramatically affect their long-term work performance and their attitude to your farm. You never get a second chance to make a first impression.

An effective orientation program sets a good tone for incoming employees, and can reduce staff turnover, absences, tardiness, injuries, and errors.

Often new employees are reluctant to ask too many questions for fear they'll "look stupid." By providing employees with an employee handbook that they can read, you give them control over their learning experience.

Introduction to the Workplace

Carefully plan how you will introduce your employee to the workplace. You need to make employees feel welcome while building their confidence in your organization. The employee needs to know specific information about the job to be performed.

Your principle goal is to ensure each employee can do his or her job at the earliest possible time.

As you sequence your orientation, use the following list as a guide.

TASK	EFFICIENCY TIPS
Tour the work area.	Organize the work area exactly as the employee is expected to keep it. Explain standards of cleanliness tidiness, and hygiene.
Show tools and equipment	Explain the function/purpose of equipment and demonstrate storage, care, and maintenance requirements.
Explain the job duties.	Encourage questions to determine the employee’s skill level. Emphasize why duties are important.
Present one task at a time.	Proceed step-by-step, pausing frequently to check for understanding. Don‘t rush!
Supervise first efforts.	Correct errors and reinforce success. Adopt a supportive attitude to reduce employee stress. Continue to supervise the employee until performance standards are met.
Let the employee fly solo.	If problems occur, work with the employee to find solutions. Continue to provide encouragement.
Maintain a progress record.	Tell the employee when competency has been attained and keep a progress record in the employee’s file.

Clearly define the information resources available to employees: for example, the supervisor, a handbook or handout, other workers, etc.

Seasonal and Temporary Employee Orientation

An orientation session is also recommended for seasonal employees. This can be provided in a small- group format providing information on.

- Wages,
- Hours of work,
- Rest periods,
- Tools,
- Special and protective clothing,
- Personal safety equipment,
- Their right to refuse unsafe work
- Availability and location of safe drinking water,
- Safety information including sun exposure, hydration,
- Availability and location of first aid supplies,
- Availability of portable toilets for employee comfort,
- Hand washing station and other food safety considerations.

BC *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* stipulate that for agriculture, when workers, including seasonal and temporary workers, start employment, the employer and the employer's supervisor must ensure that they are instructed about the safe performance of their duties. If you have additional training requirements (e.g. food safety or bio-security) this could be an appropriate time to introduce these. The BC *Employment Standards Act* specifies that potable water must be made available for all workers.

This is an opportunity to provide each worker with an information handout or an abbreviated handbook.

The following is an example of an orientation handout for seasonal workers

Welcome to Mason Farms

We hope that you enjoy your working experience at Mason Farms. To make the most of your time here, please observe the following guidelines:

A. *Job Requirements*

- You will be assigned to a row. Please do not move to another row until you have picked all the berries from the row you started at, or your supervisor asks you to move.
- Select solid, ripe fruit with short stems and hulls on; poor quality berries are not accepted or paid for.
- Pick and handle the fruit without squeezing. Place any mouldy, rotten, or damaged fruit in the aisle behind you.
- Carry your full boxes to the packing stand. Make sure the corners of your boxes are full.
- Remember the number you are assigned this number is used to tally your daily count.

B. *General Requirements*

- You must be at least 15 years old to work as a picker on this farm. Younger workers need parental consent.
- You will be picking 3-7 days a week, depending on market and berry conditions.
- You should bring a lunch, something to drink, appropriate clothing and sunscreen for all weather conditions, both hot and cold.
- Hours for picking are: 7:30 AM – 2:00 PM and 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM.
- You are asked to leave the field when you are finished picking for the day.
- Please arrive at the bus on time; it will not wait for late pickers.

C. Pay Guidelines

- You will be paid xx cents per quart, including vacation pay.
- You will receive your pay each Tuesday for all picking done in the previous calendar week.
- You must give one week notice to receive payment prior to pay day.
- You will be required to pay EI deductions if you earn over $XXX.00 in a week.

D. Health and Safety Guidelines

- Your safety is of primary concern. You will be provided with a safety briefing and overview by your supervisor, remember you have the right to refuse unsafe work. This will include information on:
    - *using pesticides,*
    - *safe equipment handling, and*
    - *preventing dehydration, sunburns and heat exhaustion.*
- The field supervisor is trained in first aid and first aid equipment is located by the Red Cross sign under the packing stand.
- Any accidents or injuries must be reported immediately to your supervisor.
- Following food safety practices is mandatory. You will be provided with an overview of our food safety practices by your supervisor.
- Drinking water is available at the packing stand; all other water is unsafe to drink.
- Portable toilets and washing stands are located near the packing stand.

E. In-Field Conduct

- The following behaviours will not be tolerated and after one warning you may be asked to leave:
    - *Fighting, throwing berries, disturbing other pickers or not complying with the supervisor.*
    - *Harassment and discrimination against others.*
    - *Not following safety guidelines.*
    - *Not following food safety guidelines.*

F. Employee Information

- Please complete the attached form and give it to your supervisor on the morning of your first picking day.

3.7 Employee Handbook

An employee handbook is a valuable tool for communicating with your employees and management. The basic purposes of the handbook are to help you communicate:

- How you run your operation,
- What you expect of your employees, and
- What staff can expect from you.

By helping you to effectively communicate the benefits and responsibilities of working at your farm, an employee handbook ensures that there is no ambiguity regarding your policies. This helps you to ensure that all employees are being treated fairly and consistently, which is an important foundation for employee satisfaction and for avoiding accusations of discrimination. As such it can be a valuable resource that increases employee satisfaction and reduces employee turnover.

An employee handbook is useful for helping your employees to understand your operation's culture, history, and values. It helps your employees to identify with your farm and its values, making them more likely to comply with policies and work more effectively for the good of the operation.

While an employee handbook is a useful tool for communicating with employees, it is not a substitute for good, clear management practices. It is important to think about your operation's ideals when crafting your handbook, but it is equally important to create realistic guidelines for everyone to follow. In an employee's eyes, it may be worse to have an employee handbook that is not being followed, than not having one at all. Beyond that, additional legal obligations may arise if you do not deliver on the promises that you have made in your handbook.

The publication, Guide to Developing a B.C. Agriculture Handbook was developed in 2012 through the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Business Development Unit. The guide is meant to assist employers in preparing a handbook that they can provide to their employees. The guide is available at: http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/busmgmt/labour_mgmt.htm

3.8 Personnel Files

Keep a personnel file for each of your employees and include the following:

- Job description,
- Application form,
- Interview report,
- Reference check results,
- Letter of offer with terms and conditions of employment,
- Salary: starting and increases,
- Tax exemptions and deductions,
- Performance evaluations,
- Grievances,
- Disciplinary actions,

- Dismissal notice,
- Letter of resignation,
- Exit interview report,
- Other confidential information,
- Record of employment (for unemployment insurance claims), and
- Record of education and training (certificates, independent study, etc.).

No information should be stored within this employee file that you are not comfortable sharing with your employee.

In addition to the above records, reserve a section of your filing system for the following general documents related to personnel management:

- Job descriptions,
- Orientation handout,
- Policies and Procedures - may be in manual or handbook form,
- Perspectives and values of the organization, and
- Copies of the handbook.

It is important to ensure that personal information collected about employees is kept confidential unless the employee consents to disclosure. In BC, the law that applies to private, provincially regulated employers in this regard is the *Personal Information Protection Act*. This law allows employers to collect, use, hold, and disclose employee's personal information in the course of operations for purposes that a reasonable person would consider appropriate in the circumstances. The *Personal Information Protection Act* also gives employees a right to request access to their personal information held by employers and to request that a correction be made if they feel the information is incorrect or incomplete.

It is important to note that the *Personal Information Protection Act* only applies to personal information. Personal information is information about a person who can be identified by the information itself or in combination with other information available in the circumstances. Personal information is not only information that you would expect might be private, like workplace reviews, health information or PIN's. It is any information that allows you to be identified (except business contact information, including an individual's name, position, business telephone numbers, business fax numbers, business mailing address and business email address).

Additional information can be found at the following websites:
http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_03063_01
http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/facshts/records.htm

SUPERVISING

4

Supervising is one of the key elements in a good employee-employer relationship. Employees are available to fill most employment situations; recruitment is the key to finding them, good employee-employer relations are the key to keeping them.

Consider the following example

John and Kelly Banner operate a successful nursery. They initially started in 1980 growing shrub liners and heathers, but shortly after they expanded into container perennials for which they are now known. With three locations across North America, they have become one of the largest wholesale producers of herbaceous perennials on the continent. John and Kelly built their business on the strength of their market leadership and innovation.

Promotion at the nursery was based on skill level, and often employees who were considered to be skilled horticulturists were promoted to supervisory positions. Without formal training, each supervisor had a different approach.

One newly appointed supervisor decided to try a more friendly and relaxed approach with the employees in her work group. Initially this style appeared to be working well; however, within a few months the group's productivity began to slow down. The supervisor turned to others for advice and was told to take a tougher approach and to get rid of any troublemakers. Reluctantly, she began to take a very forceful attitude towards her workers, which resulted in poor morale, low productivity and conflicts. After one heated dispute, an unhappy worker filed a formal harassment complaint.

The harassment complaint was the catalyst that brought the severity of the problem to John and Kelly's attention. Immediately, they began to review the way in which they appointed supervisors. They soon realized that production skill alone was not enough to qualify someone for a supervisory role. Supervisors needed training in communication, conflict resolution, and providing and accepting feedback.

With help from an outside consulting group, John and Kelly organized a series of workshops to address these issues. The supervisors who were quick to grasp the concepts and implement them noticed immediate results in both the attitude and productivity of their workers. When the workers felt they were being listened to, they had more of a sense of duty to the supervisor, and before long, production was higher than it had ever been.

While still appreciating the importance of technical production expertise, the Banners now always consider communication skills when choosing new supervisors, and they provide support for continuing development of these skills across all levels of management.

4.1 Leadership

What is leadership? What is management? What is supervision? Although these functions are interconnected, leadership is considered the foundation of good labour relations.

Although you may not think of yourself as a leader, as a manager you do have a leadership role. What makes a leader? Basically, the ability to develop and maintain a following is what makes a leader, and this is the result of many factors.

A study of successful business managers found that effective leadership is based on the following:

- Clearly defined goals - Good leaders have a clear vision of what they hope to achieve; where they want to go. They are able to pass this vision on to their employees so they, too, become excited about reaching the goals.
- Communicating and listening - In order to pass on the vision, leaders must be able to express themselves. Good leaders are also good listeners. They listen to what their employees want; take advantage of changes to incorporate good ideas and concerns raised by employees into the business plan,
- Credibility and experience - Good leaders know their business, know their people and are willing to seek challenges. They know from experience that progress is made only when risks are taken, and
- Trust developed from honesty and sincerity - Leaders must practise what they preach; leaders lead by example. Without trust, a leader will have no followers.

In their book entitled The Leadership Challenge, J.M. Kouzes and B.Z. Posner say that essential leadership activity includes:

- Challenging the process
  - *Search for opportunities*
  - *Experiment and take risks*
- Inspiring a shared vision
  - *Envision the future*
  - *Enlist others*
- Enabling others to act
  - *Foster collaboration*
  - *Strengthen others*
- Modelling the way
  - *Set the example*
  - *Plan small wins*
- Encouraging the heart
  - *Recognize individual contribution*
  - *Celebrate accomplishments*

A Self Quiz

Evaluate yourself on the following questions. Think about how your employees see you as well as how you see yourself.

Rank yourself from 1 to 5 with 1 being "I do very well in this area" and 5 being "I do poorly in this area".

Type	Description	Ranking
Goals	A leader has a vision; a set of clearly defined business operating goals. Have you a vision? Have you shared this vision with your employees?	1 2 3 4 5
Credibility and experience	A leader has experience and expertise. Do you know your business well? Do you know how to work with people? Are you willing to try new ideas and explore new territory so your business can grow?	1 2 3 4 5
Communicating and listening	A leader gives and shares information; listens to others for ideas and feedback. Are you a good listener? Do you express yourself well?	1 2 3 4 5
Trust	A leader develops trust through honesty and sincerity. Are you your own walking mission statement?	1 2 3 4 5

Interpreting the result; think about ways you could improve in those areas where you scored low. Refer to some of the excellent books that have been written about leadership.

Supervisors, who are liked, all other things being equal have greater influence than those who are not.

Leadership Power

Usually one person will follow the lead of another because the leader has some power or influence.

Management theory suggests that there are five different types of power.

- Referent,
- Expert,
- Legitimate,
- Reward, and/or
- Coercive.

A Self Quiz

Rank yourself from 1 to 5, with 1 being high ability and 5 being low ability, on your ability to use each of the power types.

Type	Description	Ranking
Referent	The leader evokes positive feelings from employees. How well are you liked?	1 2 3 4 5
Expert	The leader understands complex tasks. How familiar are you with technicalities?	1 2 3 4 5
Legitimate	The leader has a position title (supervisor). How much respect is given to your position?	1 2 3 4 5
Reward	The leader can provide pay raises, promotions, training, recognition, etc. How readily do you respond to good performances?	1 2 3 4 5
Coercive	The leader can enforce threats such as firing or demotion. How often do you resort to disciplinary action?	1 2 3 4 5

Interpreting the results; an effective leader makes some use of all five types of power, with special emphasis on referent and expert power.

4.2 Supervision

Managerial Functions

Supervision involves getting things done through others. To the person who has been traditionally involved in the operational end of the organization, adjusting to the role of supervisor can be difficult. Yet managers can do their business a great disservice by over-involving themselves in operational work.

Managers perform five major functions:

- Planning — Deciding on business philosophy, goals and strategies. Determining what to aim for and why,
- Organizing — Dividing work for assignment into structure units (e.g. ranches, departments, crews and jobs) and establishing means of co-ordination among them so that established goals are realized,
- Staffing — Hiring, developing, retaining people able and willing to perform the jobs as organized,

- Leading — Influencing and directing the behaviour of those people, usually through interpersonal communications, and
- Controlling — Assessing actual results against objectives, seeing what was done compared to what had been planned, and taking corrective action where required.

While the solution to the above process may seem to be to do the work yourself this is not the answer. The solution is to be an effective supervisor so that the job gets done as you would want.

Types of Activity in Managerial Roles

Interpersonal

- Figurehead – officially represents the business, greets visitors, and signs legal documents,
- Leader – sets a tone; directs, trains, equips, counsels. and evaluates employees, and/or
- Liaison – maintains information links both inside and outside the work unit or organization.

Informational

- Monitor – seeks and receives information, especially non-routine, from published, as well as personal, sources in other organizations,
- Disseminator – provides outside information to others in the department or business, and facilitates internal communication, and/or
- Spokesperson – tells outside stakeholders about business situations, plans, policies, achievements and problems.

Decisional

- Entrepreneur – identifies and introduces ideas for improvement, initiates planning for change, directs improvement projects,
- Disturbance Handler – deals with internal and external crises, disputes and other situations not resolved through routine procedures,
- Resource Allocator – decides how time, staff, equipment, funds and other allocable assets are distributed throughout the business, and/or
- Negotiator – confers to reach agreement on terms of transaction with suppliers, customers, creditors and service and labour organizations.

Supervisory Skills

Who makes a good supervisor? A good supervisor:

- Can lead - adapts to getting a job done with others,
- Can organize - keeps a daily schedule,
- Can motivate - a positive-type coach,
- Has initiative - makes own decisions, and
- Is assertive - gets started on own.

How do you think you rate as a supervisor? Rate yourself on each of the following points. These are qualities that employees list as being important in their supervisors.

How Do You Rate as a Supervisor?

Are you on top of your job? Do you command respect for your experience? Yes No

Do you have the ability to "put on your worker's, shoes" in discussing problems that come up? Yes No

Are you fair? Do you avoid playing favourites? Do you keep on an even keel? Yes No

Do you have great patience? Yes No

Do you have a sincere interest in learners? Yes No

Are you firm, but supportive? Yes No

Are you considerate, especially of the worker's job? Yes No

The more "yes" answers you could honestly give to the above questions the better the job of supervising you're likely to do.

Key Functions of a Supervisor

A supervisor gets results.

Function 1: Deputize: give the worker a job to do through people.

Function 2: Supervise: develop his or her ability to do the job.

Function 3: Energize: provide an environment in which the worker will want to do the job and do it well.

Function 4: Advise: provide counselling, corrective action, dismissal. If people do not feel satisfied with their work situation, they cannot perform effectively for you.

Foundations for Good Relations

- Let them know what you expect of them,
- Let workers know how they are doing,
- Point out ways to improve,
- Give credit when due,
- Look for extra or unusual performance,
- Give the credit right at the time,
- Tell people in advance about changes that will affect them,
- Tell them why if possible,
- Get them to accept the change,
- Make the best of each person's ability,
- Look for ability not now being used, and

- Never stand in a person’s way.

Good supervision is getting people to do what you want done, when it should be done and how you want it done because they want to do it. Remember that employees have to balance work, family, and other personal interests.

In summary, a good guiding principle is to follow the golden rule: treat employees as you would like to be treated.

While the solution to the above process may seem to be to do the work yourself, this is not the answer. The solution is to be an effective supervisor so that the job gets done as you would want.

Building and Supervising Teams

It’s a well recognized fact that often a group of people working together can accomplish more than the same people working by themselves.

The challenge to a supervisor is to get a team of people to work together smoothly and efficiently. First, the supervisor needs to know the characteristics of a well-functioning team.

Characteristics of a Well-Functioning Team

- Each individual ought to feel independent in that he or she is capable of doing the job assigned to them,
- Each individual must feel a responsibility to the whole group to look at overall goals and seek to help when needed, and
- Each individual needs to be “tuned-in” to others to know when an offer of help would be in order but must resist “rescuing” or “protecting” others from their own responsibilities.

The challenge for the team leader is to develop, among your team members, the skills and attitudes of behaving in an interdependent manner.

Tips for Team Building

1. Encourage all members to function interpedently so they:
   - Are aware when someone else needs help and offer assistance,

     Are responsible for finding out how their part fits into the whole process, and
   - Are reliable in meeting deadlines and schedules where others are counting on them.

   As a group leader you can assist in this process by doing the following:
   - Reward group efforts, not just individual successes,
   - Recognize individuals who could be “stars” but, in the team’s best interest, put aside their need to shine, and
   - Communicate you desire for the group to count on each other and you.

2. Keep communications open in the group.

As a group leader, there are two key communications skills you'll need to practise.

- Good questioning techniques. Concentrate on asking open questions - those questions which can't be answered with a simple "yes" or "no". Examples of open questions are, "What should we do?" and "What's your main concern right now?" Open questions encourage team members to think and invite them to talk.
- Good listening. Stop talking and listen; don't interrupt; concentrate and take notes; listen for ideas not words. To check that you've understood correctly, paraphrase what the person has said.

3. Structure work reviews and feedback to encourage cooperation and team building. Make sure wages, compensation, bonuses, and incentive programs also encourage cooperation, not competition.

4.3 Delegation

A key part of your role as a personnel manager is to delegate successfully. Delegating means to pass on responsibilities to others. Whether the person handles that responsibility well or not depends, in large measure, on how you delegate the job.

Most people respond positively to being given responsibility if they are confident they can handle the job. Most of us enjoy the feeling of power that comes from being in charge of some aspect of a job. When an employee enjoys the work and responds positively to responsibility, the quantity and quality of work are enhanced.

Leadership Styles

Which of the following quotes sounds most like you?

- "I tell 'em what to do, how to do it, and when. There's no other way. Someone has to call the shots for this operation",
- "It is usually a mistake for me to finalize production commitments before checking with the crew members. After all they know what's happening out there", or
- "I put most problems into my foremen's hands and let them take it from there. My role is to make sure they know what needs to be done and then get out of the way."

Each of these statements represents a different style of management.

There are many ways to label leadership styles. One's natural leadership style may be more or less effective depending on the people and the situation.

It is important to recognize that no one style is best, but rather a mix of styles determined by the people involved (both leader and followers) and by the situation.

Tips on Delegating

- Assign responsibility and authority,
- Give clear instructions and clearly define what success will look like,
- Invite questions and discussion, and

- Provide feedback and be available to receive employee feedback.

Four types of leadership styles are:

- Directive/Telling - “do it or else” - Managers with this style tend to expect immediate compliance with their directions and solicit very little or no input,
- Authoritative/Selling - “seeks input” - Managers who use this style tend to manage by providing clear instructions, solicit some input (without leaving any doubt as to who the boss is), monitor behaviour, motivate by both discipline and reward and see influence as a key part of the manager’s job,
- Democratic/Participating - “let’s all decide together” - Managers with this style are known for encouraging participation and human resource development. They tend to believe that individuals and groups function best when allowed to work together and therefore tend to feel close supervision or detailed instructions are not necessary, and/or
- Empowering/Delegating - “colleague, partner, delegator” - Managers with this as their preferred style see themselves as developing human resources and are concerned about high performance and standards. They allow people the flexibility to set goals and objectives consistent with their own business goals, and determine how to address their tasks and problems.

Making Style Fit the Situation

Depending on the people and situation, each of these styles is appropriate to use. Each has advantages and disadvantages.

No one leadership style is best. The most effective style depends on the people involved and the situation. Be flexible to change.

Knowing the advantages and disadvantages of each style will help you decide when it is most appropriate to use it. It may also be appropriate to use different styles with the same employee depending on the stage of development of the employee.

Paul Hershey and Kenneth Blanchard of the Center for Leadership Studies have developed a “Situational Leadership” model that illustrates how to effectively lead an employee or follower to a position of authority. The model is based on the four leadership styles. The following lists how to use these styles when delegating, the advantages and disadvantages of each, and when it is appropriate to use them.

Situational Leadership Model
by Paul Hershey and Kenneth Blanchard

Directive/Telling

Delegation Process - Step 1

When you first begin to work employees into a new area of responsibility, you must tell them what to do. You are very much involved in the job yourself and your relationship with the employee is one of primarily teacher-student and involves considerable one-way communication.

Advantages: • Short term efficiency - fast,

- Clear line of authority - people know who is in charge and what the desired action is, and
- Can be very productive, especially for the short term.

Disadvantages:
- People don't like it,
- Inhibits growth and development,
- May lead to high turnover, and
- Loss of potential good ideas.

Appropriate:
- When new tasks involved,
- With new or inexperienced employee,
- When goals are not being met,
- If urgency involved,
- If employee is reluctant to take on task, and/or
- If task is highly result-oriented.

Authoritative/Selling

Delegation Process - Step 2

As the employee advances in competence and confidence, you begin to involve him or her in decisions; to "buy into" the responsibility. Now your relationship with the employee is becoming one of sharing in decisions.

Advantages:
- Efficient and timely,
- Clear who is in charge,
- Way of exercising power without intimidation,
- Develops immature people, and
- Decisions are in the best interest of the organization.

Disadvantages:
- Not conducive to the growth of mature individuals,
- Some mature people may not like it or may resent it, and
- Could lead to turnover as people mature.

Appropriate:
- As employee gains experience and competence,
- When employee has some understanding of job, and/or
- When employee needs direction and encouragement.

Democratic/Participatory

Delegation Process - Step 3

As you progress through this stage, the employee shoulders the majority of the responsibility and you are shifting from selling the person on taking responsibility to participating as needed.

Advantages:
- Involves people,
- Opportunities for growth, and

- Keeps people happy (short run).

Disadvantages:
- Time consuming,
- Losers may disrupt organizational goals,
- Majority decisions aren't always in the best interests of the organization,
- Change becomes a source of conflict and may be avoided.

Appropriate:
- When employee is familiar with task, and/or
- When employee/employer share ideas and decisions.

Empowering/Delegating

Delegation Process - Step 4

The employee now has the knowledge and the confidence to take on the responsibility completely. You are there to give support when needed and to evaluate performance. You have turned over the authority to the follower and, therefore, are free to carry out other management tasks.

Advantages:
- Encourages growth and development in mature individuals,
- Long-term productivity,
- Mature people respond well,
- Works well if you have committed followers,
- Encourages maximum creative effort, and
- Frees management discretionary time,

Disadvantages:
- Doesn't work well with unwilling, unable followers,
- Followers may not follow, and
- Problems may arise with strong individuals abusing power.

Appropriate:
- When employee has ability to take responsibility for making and implementing decisions, and/or
- When employee has interest and desire to make and implement decisions

Adapting Your Leadership Style

No one leadership style is best. The most effective style depends on the people involved and the situation.

Consider the following examples about leadership styles.

Appropriate Styles of Managerial Leadership adapted from Paul Hershey and Kenneth Blanchard; "Lead" 1981*

Directions: Assume you are involved in each of the following situations. Read each item carefully and think about which alternative would most closely describe your behaviour in the situation presented. Circle only one choice.

1. You have formed a work group on your farm to improve productivity and quality. This group has not responded in making requested recommendations for change. Attendance at group sessions has been poor. Meetings have turned into social gatherings. Potentially group members have the talent necessary to help.
   A. Redefine goals and supervise carefully.
   B. Incorporate group recommendations, but see that the objectives are met.
   C. Allow group involvement in setting goals, but don't push.
   D. Let the group work out its own problems.

In this situation, you are dealing with people who are reluctant to take on tasks and who are not meeting their goals. A directive or telling approach would therefore be more effective. 'A' would be the best answer.

2. The observable performance of your group is improving. You have been making sure that all members are aware of their responsibilities and expected standards of performance.
   A. Emphasize the importance of deadlines and tasks.
   B. Engage in friendly interaction, but continue to make sure that all members are aware of their responsibilities and expected standards of performance.
   C. Do what you can to make the group feel important and involved.
   D. Take no definite action.

In this situation, your employees are gaining experience and competence. You have been giving them directions and feedback. In this instance, 'B' would be the best choice.

3. You are considering changing to a structure that will be new to your group. Members of the work team have made suggestions about needed change. The group has been productive and demonstrated flexibility in its operations.
   A. Define the change and supervise carefully.
   B. Be willing to make changes as recommended, but maintain control of implementation.
   C. Participate with the group in developing the change but allow members to organize the implementation.
   D. Avoid confrontation; leave things alone.

Here, you are dealing with employees who are productive and competent. They have communicated their ideas to you. Here, a democratic or participatory style is called for. ' C' is the best choice.

4. Recent information indicates some internal difficulties among the farm workers. The group has a remarkable record of accomplishment. Members have effectively maintained long-range goals. They have worked in harmony for the past year. All are qualified for the task.
   A. Act quickly and firmly to correct and redirect.
   B. Try out your solution with workers and examine the need for new practices.
   C. Participate in problem discussion while providing support for workers.

D. Allow group members to work it out themselves.

In this situation, a group of employees who have proved to be competent and able to meet agreed-upon objectives has encountered some difficulties. Because you know they are trusted employees, it would be best to use empowering or delegating style. Leave them to work it out themselves (answer ‘D’).

Discussion:

In each of these situations, the ‘A’ response describes a telling style of leadership; ‘ B’ describes a selling or authoritative style; ‘C’ describes democratic responses and ‘D’ an empowering or delegating response. Did you find you circled more of one letter than the others? If so, this may be your natural leadership style.

However, because the most effective style depends on the people involved and the particular situation, being able to adapt your style is important.

Being able to be flexible in your choice of leadership style is an important ability for a manager to have. Realize, however, that learning to adapt your style to the situation is a gradual process.

Examples of Delegating Authority

Example 1: From Greenhouse Worker to Greenhouse Supervisor

Marie has been part of the crew in your greenhouse for five years. She is a natural leader and it is obvious she has the respect of the other workers. You feel you must relieve yourself of supervising in the greenhouse if you are to effectively manage this farm.

Step 1: Telling

You inform Marie of your decision to promote her to greenhouse supervisor. She is pleased and scared at the same time. You tell her you will work with her until she feels comfortable in her new role. You then give her some tasks such as discussing with workers what could done to make their jobs easier, and you offer her some training tips in areas where they appear to be needed.

Step 2: Selling

You talk with Marie about decisions you are making, how and why you handled a particular problem in a particular way. Encourage her to make suggestions and ask questions.

Step 3: Participating

She supervises in the morning and you supervise in the afternoon or you in one greenhouse and she in another, then compare notes, including feedback from the workers.

Step 4: Delegating

You turn the job over to her, support her if she asks for it, and check with her regularly at coffee breaks or when an opportunity presents itself. At the end of the season, review her performance with her.

Example 2: From Milker to Herdsman

Your herdsman has just left to start farming on his own. You decide to promote Joe, one of the milkers who has been with you for some time, to herdsman.

Step 1: Telling

You inform Joe of your decision. He is pleased but worried that he may not be able to handle the job. You assure him and let him know you will help him as long as he needs you. You then train him to do one of the tasks (such as keeping the breeding records) and monitor his progress.

Step 2: Selling

You discuss with Joe how and why you make certain decisions. He may be concerned about supervising older milkers, but you assure him of your support and suggest how he might approach such a problem (he may see fewer problems when you point out how much of supervision is supporting and affirming those supervised).

Step 3: Participating

You and Joe share the various herdsman tasks and decisions with considerable two-way communication.

Step 4: Delegating

Joe takes full responsibility. You are available if and when he needs your support. You review his performance with him and discuss relevant issues at staff meetings. You are relieved of herdsman responsibilities.

4.4 Personal Style

Understanding personal styles is also an important management skill because personality directly influences working relationships.
Better results can be realized when both managers and employees are aware of how reactions of others may differ depending on their personal styles.

Here are some examples:

- A “bottom line” person often finds it frustrating to work with someone who spends a lot of time explaining details and alternatives before giving instructions. Conversely, someone who likes details can find it difficult to work with a person who sums up everything in a single sentence.
- Individuals who like to consider a number of alternatives before acting may find it annoying to work with people who must start a job as quickly as possible; and then figure out things as they go. On the other hand, an individual who likes to start right in on a job may find a lot of planning very trying.

Managers who can tune into these differences and modify their approach will get better results from their staff.

Adapting Your Communication Style

Always reacting in a way that is agreeable to your preferred approach to communicating with different individuals in different situations (I.e., your preferred approach to collecting, receiving, and providing information) will not always make you the most effective manager. To be truly effective, you need to determine what kind of style each of your employees reacts to best.

Remember, your communication style, as well as that of others is often a mix of the four types described below. Remember we all tend react in a different way in different situations. You should not try to pigeonhole people but rather use this as a general guide.

Think of the people you work with and think about the different communication styles that best describes them. Then think about what might be the most effective way to interact with them.

Realize that 75% of the people you relate to are very different from you. They use time differently, make decisions differently, prefer to relate in different ways, and have different styles of communicating.

Interacting with Different Communication Styles

Behavioural Style: Action

Want others to:

- Give them summarized facts,
- Respect their judgements,
- Support them to reach goals,
- Cope with unwanted details, and
- Cooperate with them.

Get most upset when others:

- Are too slow,
- Get in their way,
- Talk too much,
- Try to be in control, and
- Waste time.

Respond best to:

- Direct, honest confrontations,
- Logical, rational arguments,
- Fair, open competition,
- An impersonal approach, and
- Getting results quickly.

Cognitive Style: Analysis

Want others to:

- Give them detailed information,
- Ask for their opinions,
- Not interrupt their work,
- Treat them with respect, and
- Do quality work the first time.

Get most upset when others;

- Move ahead too quickly,
- Don't give them enough time,
- Are vague in their communications,
- Don't appreciate their efforts, and
- Are too personal or emotional.

Respond best to:

- Diplomatic, factual challenges,
- Arguments based on known facts,
- Freedom from competitive strain,
- Friendliness, not personal contact, and
- Doing tasks well and completely.

Affective Style: Expression

Want others to:

- Give them opportunity to speak,
- Admire their achievements,
- Be influenced in some ways,
- Take care of details for them, and
- Value their opinions.

Get most upset when others:

- Are too task oriented,
- Confine them to one place,
- Are not interested in them,
- Compete for and win attention, and
- Seem judgemental of them.

Respond best to:

- Being challenged in a kind way,
- An influencing, sales approach,
- Enjoyable competition,

- Affection and personal contact, and
- Having a good time.

Interpersonal Style: Harmony

Want others to:

- Make them feel they belong,
- Appreciate them for their efforts,
- Be kind, considerate, thoughtful,
- Trust them with important tasks, and
- Value them as persons.

Get most upset when others:

- Get angry, blow up, or are mean,
- Demand that they be too mobile,
- Take advantage of their goodness,
- Are manipulative or unfair, and
- Are judgemental of others.

Respond best to:

- A gradual approach to challenging,
- A factual, practical approach,
- Comfortable, friendly times,
- Respecting their boundaries, and
- Conventional, established ways.

Putting Theory into Action: An Example

Saying "Thank you"

Showing appreciation for what your employees do is an essential leadership task. Managers should take some time to consider what is important to each employee and think about how best to show appreciation. Raises, bonuses, time off, training, new activities and promotions are all concrete ways of backing up a "thank you".

How best to say "thank you" will depend on the individual involved and the situation.

Consider the case of the following four employees:

Mark is a steady, patient, reliable worker. He arrives, leaves, and gets things done on time. He does things "by the book" following routine and standard operating procedures. He values hard work, loyalty, belonging, tradition and thinks of long-term results. Recognition that Mark would find meaningful would include traditional activities such as summer picnics and family Christmas parties. As well, special efforts and accomplishments are important to him.

Susan thrives on change and excitement. She interacts well with colleagues and quickly get people to cooperate. She focuses on short-term results and easily solves problems of a practical nature. Routine can be difficult for her. As you think of ways to show Susan appreciation, remember that she enjoys celebrating in informal get-togethers with friends and co-workers and likes being noticed for getting results quickly and for taking some risks.

Steve is the analytical one of the group. He likes to take extra time to produce quality work the first time. He's innovative - turn him loose with your accounting system and he'll come up with a better way to handle it. To say "thank you" to Steve, realize that he appreciates recognition for his ideas and efforts. He likes new, challenging projects, detailed information and opportunities to offer his opinion on matters that affect him. He also values learning opportunities.

Miriam is a great people person. Just when things are getting a little tense, Miriam can step in and smooth things over. She is aware of the feelings of others and approaches issues with sensitivity. Despite her strong commitment to cooperative work relationships, she does not want to be seen as a cog in a wheel. The best way to compliment Miriam is to recognize her unique contributions to the group. She appreciates others being kind, considerate and valuing her as a person.

Managers can show their appreciation for their employees in concrete ways, such as a bonus or raise and by giving employees recognition that is important and meaningful to them.

Giving Feedback or Instructions

Be flexible. Some employees will respond well to a logical and impersonal approach. Others will find this threatening and will react better to a personal approach.

Remember that nobody is too sensitive. When we deal with people we need to respect how they feel. By being sensitive to individuals, employers can greatly enhance working relationships and productivity.

Courses on communication are available to employers through volunteer church groups, community colleges, universities, and private consultants.

4.5 Special Supervisory Situations

The management skills discussed so far in this book - leadership, supervision, delegation and adapting to personality style – apply to all personnel but you may need to give special consideration to different situations. We discuss some special, but quite common, agriculture and horticulture management situations.

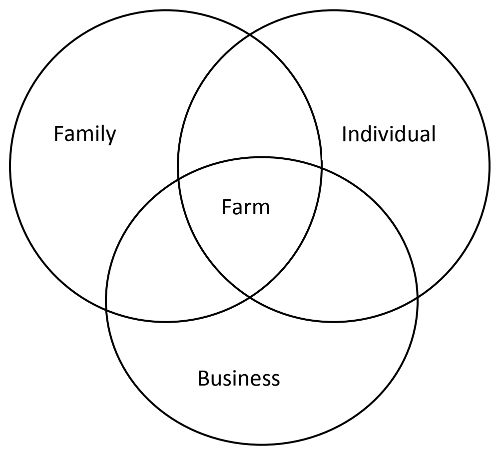
Family Members

Working together can bond families and gratify each member like few other experiences, but successfully mixing business and family dynamics is difficult. David Bork, of the Aspen Family Business Group in Colorado, has found and articulated the following common qualities of successful family businesses:

- Shared values around work, savings, charity, risk and family,
- Shared power between spouses, across generations, and among siblings,

- Traditions that promote healthy group identity,
- Willingness to learn and grow and to solve problems as a group,
- Joint recreational activities that maintain strong family and business relationships,
- Genuine caring for family business members,
- Mutual respect that as based on trust and love,
- Support and assistance for one another, especially in times of grief and loss,
- Privacy – respect for one another's individual space, and
- Well-defined interpersonal boundaries, direct communications, and distinction between roles in family and business.

Overlapping Boundaries of Family Businesses:



Structure and Policies

Structure and policies can effectively support managers who mix family and business. The following are some suggestions for the managing family members:

- Clarify what is expected from all concerned. Define hours to be worked, days off, allowable vacation and sick leave, and holidays. Write a description/profile for every job in the business, including bounds of decision making rights and responsibilities,
- Provide opportunity for family members to compete for any open job by presenting their interests and qualifications to the decision maker(s) in an interview. Use competency, training, and desire, rather than gender or birth order, as the primary criteria for hiring and promoting family members,
- With each family member, conduct formal planning and review sessions that start with identification of job duties, define "good" performance and results, and allow for frequent two-way communication,
- Develop an explicit, written understanding about compensation and benefits, specifying the income, perks, and benefits to which each family member may be entitled to, in their roles as co-owner, shareholder, manager, or employee. Often

useful as part of this agreement are expectations regarding rights of nonworking share owners, purchase and use of vehicles, computers, and other equipment, attendance at meetings and conferences, dedication of work time, and assorted other matters about which irritations can arrive and fester,

- Decide in advance on a policy about the hiring and supervision of family members who may want to join the business in the future. This document could set guidelines for conditions under which new family members will be welcome, how they will be held accountable, and how their pay will be determined,
- While relations are good, discuss with other family participants what to do if arrangements do not work out and not all family members can remain in the business, and
- Share information with all family members, and keep the lines of communication as open as possible. Problems that arise in the business or family, especially interpersonal frictions, are more likely to be resolved if discussed, not ignored with the hope that they'll go away by themselves.

Common Pitfalls

Family businesses with non-family employees need to pay close attention to some common pitfalls including:

Who is the employee's direct supervisor? On some family operations it seems that everyone assumes that they are in charge and employees find they are answering to several bosses. Often the results are disastrous: One person says to do one thing, a second family member comes along and gives contradictory orders, and then the first person returns and is angry that his or her original orders aren't being followed.

Things work best if there is one boss and everyone knows the chain of command. However, it is all right to divide up managerial responsibilities between family members. But make sure that the divisions are simple and clear so employees understand who they report to. That's not always easy. For example, one person may be in charge of marketing and their sibling in charge of production. But who is in charge of the employee delivering grain to an elevator or fetching some produce for the roadside stall—is that a production job or a marketing job? If two different "divisions" of the family enterprise are going to share an employee or group of employees, you need to schedule who works for whom and when.

Keep disputes family members behind the scenes. Professionally run organizations do not allow management to squabble in front of the employees. It destroys morale and lessens everyone's authority. This is an easy trap to fall into for family members because their disputes are often long-running affairs. And the participants may not even be aware of how they sound to others. Curb your anger and your tongue until you can go someplace private to hash things out.

Giving special status to family members. If a family member is working alongside hired employees, he or she should be treated exactly the same. That means no special favours—such as benefits others don't get, or exceptions from disagreeable jobs. When it comes to compensation, it is often better to pay a family member the same wage as other workers and use profit-sharing from the business to recognize their partnership in the family enterprise. But family members should get the same benefits as other workers—they should get the same coffee breaks and performance bonuses as any other employee and should not be the ones always asked to stay and work overtime.

Structure and Policies

Structure and policies can effectively support managers who mix family and business. Some suggestions for the managing family member follow:

- Clarify what is expected from all concerned. Define hours to be worked, days off, allowable vacation and sick leave, and holidays. Write a description/profile for every job in the business, including bounds of decision making rights and responsibilities. Having job descriptions with clearly defined roles and responsibilities can help prevent a common source of family conflict due to blurred lines of responsibilities.
- Provide opportunity for family members to compete for any open job by presenting their interests and qualifications to the decision maker(s) in an interview. Use competency, training, and desire, rather than gender or birth order, as the primary criteria for hiring and promoting family members.
- With each family member, conduct formal planning and review sessions that start with identification of job duties, define "good" performance and results, and allow for frequent two-way communication.
- Develop an explicit, written understanding about compensation and benefits, specifying the income, perks, and benefits to which each family member may be entitled to, in their roles as co-owner, shareholder, manager, or employee. Often useful as part of this agreement are expectations regarding rights of nonworking share owners, purchase and use of vehicles, computers, and other equipment, attendance at meetings and conferences, dedication of work time, and assorted other matters about which irritations can arrive and fester.
- Decide in advance on a policy about the hiring and supervision of family members who may want to join the business in the future. This document could set guidelines for conditions under which new family members will be welcome, how they will be held accountable, and how their pay will be determined.
- While relations are good, discuss with other family participants what to do if arrangements do not work out and not all family members can remain in the business.
- Share information with all family members, and keep the lines of communication as open as possible. Problems that arise in the business or family, especially interpersonal frictions, are more likely to be resolved if discussed, not ignored with the hope that they'll go away by themselves.

Family Business Charter

Creating a family business charter can be extremely helpful to minimize conflicts and misunderstanding. Some issues to be addressed in the family charter include:

- Who will be hired?
    - The charter needs to spell out whether all family members will be hired, including spouses, in-laws and cousins. In all cases, they should be hired because of their ability to contribute, not because of their family connection.

- What is the criteria for entry?
    - Guidelines should state age, education and experience required. For some families, on-farm training will be sufficient. Others see the advantage of having family members exposed to other experiences.

- Is there a job opening?
    - Family members should be brought in to do a job that clearly serves the purpose of the business. Creating a meaningless job just because a family member wants to work in the business can lead to resentment among other employees and to the erosion of the family member's self-esteem.

- Who will supervise?
    - Having one family member supervise another can be difficult. Family members often get very little critical, honest feedback about their performance. New family members should be supervised, if possible, by a non-family employee. This facilitates better training and more positive feedback.

- How will the family employee be held accountable?
    - Once in the business, is a family member assured of continued employment, no matter what? It is difficult for families to deal with a family member who isn't doing a good job. Having clearly defined roles and responsibilities with a performance appraisal system in place can greatly aid in handling this problem.

- How much will they be paid?
    - Compensation is often a source of conflict for a family business. Clearly defining a rational system of compensation for both farm and non-farm family members is a practical way to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts. A defined compensation system for a family farm may state that all family members are entitled to equal gifts and bequests. Family members who are employed by the business are entitled to salaries, wages and benefits. Both farming and non-farming family members who have an ownership interest may be entitled to dividends and equity appreciation.

- Salaries should be based on service to the business and be comparable to that of other employees doing similar work. Having a formal Pay Grid for both non-family and family employees that includes benefits such as housing, utilities, transportation, etc.. Can be very helpful. – See section 5.5 on compensation.

Treatment of non-family employees is an important question. Ask yourself the following questions about your non-family employees. After you've assessed it from your viewpoint, ask them to answer the same questions. Do they see the situation the same way you do?

- Do non-family employees have the same chance for advancement as family employees?
- Are family members treated the same as non-family employees?
- Are the senior managers willing to hear opinions and ideas even if they disagree with them?
- Are the opinions and viewpoints of all employees listened to and valued?
- Are salaries and rewards for both family and non-family members reasonable compared to what is expected of them?
- Are people promoted because of ability rather than family connections?
- Do non-family employees feel free to disagree with family employees?
- Does everyone in the business know how it is doing?
- Is information in the business shared freely?

Sample Family Hiring and Compensation Guidelines

Family Hiring and Compensation Guidelines for L J Greenhouses

It is our goal to provide meaningful career opportunities for family members in our greenhouse. Rather than live off the accomplishments of past generations, family employees will earn financial independence, while learning relevant business and leadership skills, contributing to the community, share in common family interests, and help expand and strengthen the business.

All children and grandchildren of those family members currently active in the family business are welcome to apply for position at our greenhouse operation.

Positions will be provided based on:

- The individual's skills and experience,
- The availability of a position, and
- Business circumstances.

We strongly encourage family members to gain 2 to 5 years of experience working for another business and / or the successful completion of a post-secondary college certificate or university degree.

We will work with family employees to assist them develop their technical, business and leadership skills with an:

- Annual performance and achievement review and a
- Training plan that will include the development of progressive responsibilities.

Family members may be asked to leave if their contributions and business circumstances do require.

For Owners

- After 5 years of tenure in the farm, family employees can take their share of bonuses, wage increases or stock growth as increases in partnership interest (or common stock). Family employees with less than 5 years can accumulate their bonuses and merit pay.
- All owners and their spouses will meet once or twice a year. All persons attending will be reimbursed for reasonable travel expenses and paid a per diem of $X.
- All owners will receive a minimum $X per year.
- Dividends will be paid.

For Family

- Tuition and student expenses will be paid.
- Family members will receive bequests and gifts of stock and assets.
- Loans for houses and vehicles will be available at attractive interest rates.
- Gifts will be given independent of the business.

For Family Employees

- Wages will be objectively determined.
- Wages will be somewhat conservative (75% of market value) given family ownership and uncertainty of the economy.
- Wages will be determined based on the size of the job, responsibility, relevant training and experience, and working conditions.
- Wage increases and vacations will be based on years of experience, seniority, and cost of living.
- Annual merit pay will be awarded. This will be based on jointly agreed-upon goals that will be determined at an annual performance planning meeting.
- Bonuses will be based on annual profits and distributed as partnership interest (common shares) or cash.

The Small Operation

The workforce on many small farms or horticultural businesses consists of the owner, some unpaid family members, and a regular hired employee. The resulting problem often is that the owner continues to work as hard as if there were no hired employee involved. He or she has had little experience in managing employees. The major objective is often to make sure that the employee works as hard as or harder than the owner.

To avoid these problems:

- Have a job description for the employee (Hiring materials).
- Have an agreement spelling out the hours of employment.
- Give responsibility to the employee for specific tasks (Make sure they are not all of the unpleasant ones).

Temporary or Seasonal Workers

Temporary employees often require close supervision. Worker productivity is directly related to the amount of personal contact and trust shown between the supervisor and worker. In training temporary employees, keep your approach fairly simple, though sufficient to do designated tasks efficiently and effectively. Over time, you may want to invest more training in those who show potential and interest in staying at this employment longer than originally planned.

These employees will tend to view this job as a means to an end: for example, to secure money to meet various personal needs or have some income until a permanent position can be found. Because of this, your pay structure is very important. Continually develop work plans and schedules and exercise close supervision.

Researchers in Ohio and California found that seasonal worker productivity is greatly enhanced by the following:

- Careful screening and selection of potential candidates with on-site testing including a pre-employment work test.
- Clearly communicated instructions and expectations.
- Close personal contact with supervisor. This includes visiting with workers both on and off the job. For example, one employer never missed a birthday party for any seasonal employees.
- Immediate feedback on worker productivity (e.g. $/day, kg/person).
- Clear expectations through orientation process and job descriptions.

It is important to provide an orientation for seasonal workers. During the orientation you may give new employees a handout. Try to include the following in your handout as needed:

- Job description
- Pay and benefits
- Work schedule
- Facilities available, including toilets, lunch area, water, transportation, etc.
- Tools and equipment as required
- Safety and first aid
- Employees' right to refuse unsafe work
- Grievances
- What to do if an employee cannot make it to work

You may need to translate this handout into other languages to ensure understanding.

BC *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* stipulate that for agriculture when workers, including seasonal and temporary workers, start employment, the employer and the employer's supervisor must ensure that they are instructed about the safe performance of their duties. If you have additional training requirements (e.g. food safety or bio-security) this could be an appropriate time to introduce these. The BC *Employment Standards Act* specifies that potable water must be made available for all workers.

Example:

Welcome to Mason Farms

We hope that you enjoy your working experience at Mason Farms. To make the most of your time here, please observe the following guidelines:

A. Job Requirements

- *You will be assigned to a row. Please do not move to another row until you have picked all the berries from the row you started at, or your supervisor asks you to move.*
- *Select solid, ripe fruit with short stems and hulls on; poor quality berries are not accepted or paid for.*
- *Pick and handle the fruit without squeezing. Place any mouldy, rotten or damaged fruit in the aisle behind you.*
- *Carry your full boxes to the packing stand. Make sure the corners of your boxes are full.*
- *Remember the number you are assigned this number is used to tally your daily count.*

B. General Requirements

- *You must be at least 18 years old to work as a picker on this farm. Younger workers need parental consent.*
- *You will be picking 3-7 days a week, depending on market and berry conditions.*
- *You should bring a lunch, something to drink, appropriate clothing and sunscreen for all weather conditions, both hot and cold.*
- *Hours for picking are: ____ AM – ___ PM and ___ PM – ___ PM.*
- *You are asked to leave the field when you are finished picking for the day.*
- *Please arrive at the bus on time; it will not wait for late pickers.*

C. Pay Guidelines

- *You will be paid ___ cents per quart, including vacation pay.*
- *You will receive your pay each Tuesday for all picking done in the previous calendar week.*

- *You must give one weeks' notice to receive payment prior to pay day.*
- *You will be required to pay EI deductions if you earn over $_____ in a week.*

D. Health and Safety Guidelines

- *Your safety is of primary concern. You will be provided with a safety briefing and overview by your supervisor, remember you have the right to refuse unsafe work. This will include information on:*
    - *Using pesticides,*
    - *Safe equipment handling, and*
    - *Preventing dehydration, sunburns and heat exhaustion.*
- *The field supervisor is trained in first aid and first aid equipment is located by the Red Cross sign under the packing stand,*
- *Any accidents or injuries must be reported immediately to your supervisor,*
- *Following food safety practices is mandatory. You will be provided with an overview of our food safety practices by your supervisor,*
- *Drinking water is available at the packing stand; all other water is unsafe to drink, and*
- *Portable toilets and washing stands are located near the packing stand.*

E. In-Field Conduct

- *The following behaviours will not be tolerated and after one warning you may be asked to leave:*
    - *Fighting, throwing berries, disturbing other pickers or not complying with the supervisor,*
    - *Harassment and discrimination against others,*
    - *Not following safety guidelines, and/or*
    - *Not following food safety guidelines.*

F. Employee Information

- *Please complete the attached form and give it to your supervisor on the morning of your first picking day.*

Practical Tips for Integrating Foreign Workers into the Workplace

Upon Hiring and Before Departure

- Provide as much information as possible in advance in the language(s) of the workers, including: contract, working conditions, salary, etc. You may want to hire a professional translation service.
- Provide some information on climate, culture, the community & region.

- Provide suggestions for what to bring (type of clothing for the climate, family photos, favourite music, camera, items to remind them of home).

Orientation and Training upon Arrival

Employers should provide thorough training/orientation to all aspects of the workplace, and not assume that the foreign workers will know it already. Specific systems and equipment may be entirely unfamiliar to them, so it is best not to take anything for granted, and to give concrete examples, as follows:

- Fully describe the worksite, location, & use of equipment, safety & emergency procedures (WHIMIS, 911, First Aid training if relevant), job description, specific tasks, etc.,
- Have all important documentation, signs, operating manuals, etc. translated into the language(s) of the workers,
- Label items in the workplace - as many as possible in both languages,
- Describe workplace culture - staff structure, interaction with other workers, gender roles/relations, places off limits, activities not allowed, lines of communication, dealing with conflict, use of computer/internet/email, etc.,
- Define working conditions - schedule, breaks, statutory holidays, probation, performance expectations/evaluation, punching time-clock, health/accident insurance, sick days (legitimate reasons for taking sick time),
- Details of remuneration - amount, how, when, vacation pay, deductions,
- Prepare local workers for arrival of foreign workers - cultural awareness, expectations of local workers (patience, cooperation, support, mutual learning),
- Implement a buddy/mentor system - match local workers with foreign workers to help them learn the job and the workplace culture,
- Host an informal social event – to welcome and "break the ice" between foreign and local workers, include food, drink, dance from both countries,
- Show interest in your new workers – get to know workers as people and learn how things are done in their country; this will go a long way with workers from "relational" cultures,
- Extend invitations – consider inviting newcomers to a family dinner or outing. Provide bilingual dictionaries in the workplace and encourage everyone to use them,
- Speak slowly, use simple language; speaking louder does not overcome language or cultural barriers, and
- Listen patiently and attentively – language learning takes time.

Practical Tips for Integration into Community

Geographic orientation:

- Provide maps & tourism information of town, the local region and province,
- Provide a familiarization tour of the region and town,

- Explain transportation and important city/town bylaws (smoking, jay-walking, seatbelts, etc.),
- Provide a driver education handbook to learn Canadian driving standards, and
- Provide a handbook of information about working in BC/Canada.

Amenities:

- Medical facilities (how to access, health insurance, what they pay for—prescriptions, dental),
- Explain appropriate use of emergency, hospital out-patient department, clinic (health system and costs may be very different from home),
- Bank (open account, get debit card & PIN, hours of operation),
- Police station (introduce to and have local police talk about key law enforcement and safety issues; in many countries police are feared and not trusted),
- Grocery store (where to get best prices, variety, familiar foods),
- Post office (hours of operation, price of postage),
- Barber shop (hours, prices),
- E-mail, internet access (internet café, library, at worksite), and
- Library, video store, pharmacy, etc.

Programs and Activities:

- ESL (English as a Second Language) courses – schedule and registration,
- Religious services (schedule and locations),
- Recreation centre (programs, facilities, schedules, fees),
- Community events (calendar or where to find out about them), and
- Social entertainment (restaurants, movie theatre, etc.).

(Integration of Immigrant Labour into Workplace and Communities, Silvia Begin[1] and Charlene Ball[2], 2008)

More information is available at: http://www.banffpork.ca/proc/2008pdf/129-Begin-Ball.pdf

Living and Working in the Same Yard

In many situations, hired employees are supplied housing as a part of their employment package and often the house is located in the same yard as the owner. This situation can give rise to several problems which need to be managed carefully.

A. *Privacy*

Hired employees and their families need and have a right to privacy. Lack of privacy can lead to tension and friction which otherwise may not occur. Consider some of the following methods to create some privacy for your employees.

- Place the house some distance from your own (this could be a solution if a mobile home were supplied),
- Plant hedges or build fences, and

- Respect your employee's privacy.

B. Infringing on time-off

Respect time-off. It can be very tempting to ask for assistance that "will only take a minute" when your employee is handy, even if he or she isn't on duty. Even though employees may be willing to help out, it's important not to take advantage of their good nature. Don't force your employee to leave the property in order to get any free time.

Acknowledge any extra emergency help in some tangible way (e.g. bonus, extra pay, time off, etc. - don't just say thanks).

C. Repairs and maintenance

Make it very clear who is responsible for repairs and maintenance required in the employee's house. If you are responsible for replacing worn-out appliances (for example), then do it promptly and willingly. Expecting your employee's family to live with non-functioning essentials such as a stove or hot water heater is bound to create resentment.

D. Kids and dogs

There are no easy solutions to offer if problems arise relating to pets or children. It may be your dog that howls all night and keeps your employees awake or it may be the other way around. It may be friction between your children and theirs could arise. These are difficult situations to handle. Being aware of them and discussing them in advance may help.

E. Family safety

The safety of children in a farm situation is a matter for the mutual discussion and input of all concerned. Everyone should be aware of a clear-cut policy relating to the safety of children on the farm and be equally responsible for maintaining the rules.

Dealing with Cultural Diversity

Working with people who look, believe or act differently from you may be difficult or uncomfortable. You may not know what to say or to expect. Certain people may not react when you speak to them or perform in the way you expect.

Understanding Other Cultures

Learning to understand and respect your employees of other cultures will go a long way toward making your association with them both comfortable and productive.

Many misunderstandings arise because people from different cultures interpret or react to certain situations very differently. Consider the following example:

Jack White managed a team of Asian employees who worked for his greenhouse operation. He had developed a plan to reduce the number of hours needed to do many of the greenhouse operations. He knew he needed the co-operation of the team members to make it work, so he called a meeting to discuss his idea. No one disagreed so the new plan was implemented.

Within the first few weeks, it was evident that the workers weren't doing what they had agreed to at the meeting. Jack felt angry that the team hadn't done what they agreed to do.

In many cultures, saying "no" to someone's request or offer, no matter how unreasonable, is taboo. In other cultures, "no" is never said to one in authority. Other signals of disagreement may be used. The untrained manager who misses these signals may feel that an agreement has taken place and be surprised when what "was promised" never happens. Silence doesn't always mean agreement.

Different cultures may have different ways of viewing time, of communicating and expressing emotion, or of handling conflicts. Try to learn as much as possible about the culture of your employees.

One approach you might use to deal with cultural diversity is to appoint an advisor from among your employees to share information with you on such things as religious holidays, communicating and working between genders, food and hygiene issues, considerations around respect and norms, and acceptable dress. One greenhouse operator found it was necessary to supply individual water bottles for workers to comply with their religious customs.

When people are speaking different languages (or using unfamiliar jargon), it can easily cause misunderstanding and hard feelings. Here are some ways to bridge the language barrier.

- Learn some of the language of a culture you deal with regularly. Knowing how to say "Hello:' "Goodbye;' "Please;' "Thank you;' etc. helps to create respect and goodwill,
- Use an interpreter,
- Be patient with people who speak your language less fluently than you. Also, speak more slowly, use simple words and avoid slang. Do not raise your voice and speak louder as if the other person were hard of hearing,
- Listen carefully and check back with each other from time to time to ensure you're each getting the message across, and
- Have employees translate important signs and information bulletins to enhance overall workplace safety and productivity. Examples might include orientation handouts, or signs relating to pesticide storage, first aid and equipment maintenance.

Substance Abuse in Employees

Alcohol (and/or drugs) and work constitute a dangerous mix. An employer who suspects an employee has a drinking or drug problem has a responsibility to deal with it to prevent injury to the employee or others at work.

What an Employer Should Do

1. Make sure that something else, such as sickness or stress, isn't the cause – Focus on the behaviour, e.g. inability to perform their job, disturbing others, or behaving in a manner that could be a danger to themselves or others.
2. Take steps to remove an employee who is unable to perform their duties, or are a potential safety risk to themselves or others.

3. Remove them from the workplace, ensuring that they do not cause harm to themselves or to others by operating equipment or vehicles. Make a record of the event and have a witness, if possible.
4. Use judgement and discretion. It is often best to have the employee take the day off without pay and take disciplinary or other appropriate action at a later time.

An employer is in a good position to help an individual with a drinking problem. By doing nothing, an employer becomes an “enabler”, a person who allows the problem to persist by covering up and allowing the employee not to face the issue.

Guidelines for Dealing with Substance Abuse

- Focus on the behaviour, erratic driving, poor performance or inability not on the individual,
- Don’t use violence, either physical or verbal, and avoid nagging or provoking,
- Outline what will happen if the behaviour continues. Discuss the problem with the employee in a private meeting; write down the circumstances and your expectations as an employer. Let the employee know you would like to see his or her problem resolved,
- Don’t threaten unless you are prepared to follow through. To threaten and not follow through only reinforces to the substance abuser that there will not be any consequences for his or her behaviour,
- Stick to the subject. One of the ways substance abusers avoid responsibility for their actions is to try to turn attention to other topics, and
- Know what professional help is available in your area and encourage your employee to seek it.

For information on disciplinary action, refer to progressive discipline.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

5

Training, Motivating and Evaluating

5.1 Policies and Practices for Retaining and Motivating Employees

This section discusses several ways in which managers can increase employee satisfaction and retention and how to enable improved performance from your employees.

Important strategies include:

- Creating a motivational climate in the workplace,
- Developing worker ability through training,
- Paying fair wages and offering valued benefits, and
- Implementing effective performance reviews.

A Tale of Two Firms

Consider the following observations of farmers and elected official on an agriculture farm tour.

As we went through the first farm, we saw that the employees were busy doing their jobs, but not with a lot of energy. The atmosphere felt cold. There was very little conversation between the managers conducting the tour and the employees, the relationship between the managers and the employees seemed very formal. The owners of the farm later talked about how tough it had become to make ends meet in their business. Labor costs were too high, productivity was down, rapid staff turnover was proving disruptive, and expensive in many ways, and good employees were always hard to find. They were thinking of relocating and rebuilding to another province that they believed would have a “friendlier” business environment.

The tour then continued down the road a few miles to another farm that produces a similar product for the same market. The difference was astonishing. Not only were production lines flowing smoothly, the employees had real energy and there was a hum about the place. It seemed the very building was alive. We heard some task-related conversations spiced with occasional laughs, and managers and employees were interacting comfortably. Owners later talked about their recent growth, steady increases of both sales and profits, and plans for further expansion. Naturally, we all wanted to know the secret of their success. They replied without hesitation, “Our employees.”

Unlike the first farm we visited, this one had no problem finding the employees it needed. In fact, well-qualified workers from other places often approached them looking for jobs, staff turnover was very low, and productivity was high. The owners’ main labour concern was that some employees were accumulating a great deal of their annual vacation leave, rather than taking it during the year.

Consider a second example that recounts a conversation between two friends regarding their experience with their respective employers.

N: A sign at the coffee shop said, 'Help wanted at 4 Bar Ranch' and I was out of work at the time. I went over there to check it out. The place seemed okay and the person in the office was nice, so I put in an application	J: I had just started looking for a full-time job on a dairy farm, and my brother showed me an ad in the paper recruiting for an assistant herdsman. The ad had a lot of details about what the job was responsible for and what they wanted in a new employee. The job looked like a good fit for me
When I had an interview, we talked a lot about what I liked to do, where I went to high school, my hobbies, and my previous jobs. They kept telling me that I was the right kind of guy for the place, and that I would get along well with the other people there.	During the interview they asked me several questions about herd health and nutrition and about my experience in relation to all the different tasks that were part of this job. Guess they wanted to be sure that I knew certain things and had the skills needed to do the work.
It was very confusing to me when I started to work there because I wasn't sure what I should be doing. I went to ask the lady in charge of the shop, but she didn't seem to have much of an idea either. So I spent some time floating to see where I could pitch in and help.	My first day, a supervisor showed me around, introduced me to other people on the shift, and set me up with a few tasks to start on. Later he came by with a list of things that I would be expected to take care of regularly. No real surprises, but it was nice to have it in that form. I knew who to go to with questions and how long it was supposed to take me to get the different things done. I was told that my starting salary was at the top of a herdsman 1 and this would be reviewed at the end of my 3 month probationary review. I also received a copy of the farm employee handbook that explained the companies, history, values and policies
When it came time for my review, my boss told me that my appearance was good, my attitude was okay, and that they had no problems with my work so far. She said that I was fitting in all right and would be getting a $.50 an hour raise	When it came time for my 3 month review, my supervisor gave me a copy of all my job tasks and objectives that I had initially been provided, and she asked me to think about how each of them was going, so that we could talk about it in a few days. At that meeting we discussed each area, a couple of things that I needed to do more carefully, a new way of reporting time spent on different tasks, and what I would have to learn to deal with some new equipment that was on order. At the end, she told me that with my performance rating, I would get a middle-range raise of $.50 an hour. She also told me what I would have to do to earn the maximum raise next time around.
I am making more money than I did in my old job, but only by a little, and I'm working a lot harder. I am pretty sure that other people here who do similar things as me make more, but I don't know how come. There's this other guy, Jack, who I'm often told to work with on short-term tasks, and he makes a lot more.	My current pay rate is at the entry level for a herdsman 2. I can expect my pay to increase in this level by as much as $5 per hour with experience and increased responsibility. At the third level, herdsmen are responsible for more complex procedures, but they make between $3 and $7 more than a herdsman 2, and a herdsman 4 can make as much as $7 to $11 more than me. I'll need other skills and more experience to get promoted to that level. I feel good about what I earn, because similar herdsman jobs that I see ads for don't seem to pay quite as much and I can see where I have a future here if I can increase my knowledge and experience.
I had an accident, dropped a chain saw on my foot. The doctor said I could work at different things as long as I didn't stand for too long until my foot got better. I asked my boss if I could come back to work and do something else for a while, but he said he couldn't be sure that I'd be able to stay off my feet. Said he didn't think it would work for me to come back until I was all healed.	After I had my foot injury, the doctor told me which of my normal tasks I could keep doing without danger and which I had to avoid for a few weeks. He spelled out some temporary restrictions and guidelines to follow. I talked to my boss about them, and he suggested altering my job temporarily. It was great that I could work while my foot was healing.

Sample Pay Grid for Herdsman

Department	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Herdsmen				
Pay Range	$11.00 – $13.00	$14.00 - $18.00	$19.00 - $21.00	$22.00 - $25.00
Title	Assistant Herdsman, Calf Feeder, Night Herdsman	Herdsman	Herdsman	Dairy Manager
Skills and attitudes Required for each level	1. Can follow caving protocol	1. All Level 1 Herdsman requirements	1. All Level 2 Herdsman requirements	All Level 3 Herdsman requirements
	2. Can follow hoof trimming protocol	2. Has an attitude that facilitates teamwork	2. Understands how breeding, feeding and treating and culling relates to the dairy system	2. Can prepare a budget for dairy/feedlot inputs and outputs
	3. Can diagnose common ailments (e.g. Mastitis, milk fever) and follow treatment protocol	3. Has a working knowledge of CPF treatment program	3. Understands the principles of raising livestock for dairy farming in regards to both feedlot and dairy systems	3. Can execute a budget
	4. Can administer intravenous treatment to cattle	4. Can sort and organize livestock in pens	4. Can actively develop systems and protocols for breeding, calving and treatment	4. Can train level 1 and 2 Herdsmen to move to the next level
	5. Excellent verbal communications skills with milkers and herdsmen	5. Can prepare daily feed charts	5. Reacts to abnormal situations and reports goals not being met to Operations Manager	5. Obtains sophisticated knowledge of raising heifers and milking cows
	6. Obtains A.I. Certification	6. Can maintain inventory levels of vet and breeding supplies	6. Extracts proper information from vet and feed professionals to develop systems and solve problems	6. Can schedule jobs for all herdsman
	7. Can work with a minimum level of supervision	7. Has a working knowledge of CPF breeding program	7. Obtains an attitude that strives for continuous improvement of systems and personal growth	
	8. Has achieved Dairy-level II status	8. Has a working knowledge of CPF hoof care program for cattle	8. Can identify heifers and cows to be culled	
	9. Can follow calf raising protocol	9. Can diagnose herd health problems and prescribe treatment	Demonstrates problem identification and solving abilities	

Which farm would you rather work for?

Which one do you think has job descriptions, a pay grid, written policies, and formal performance/achievement reviews?

5.2 Managing for High Performance

How well employees perform their jobs depends on both their ability and their motivation - what they can do as well as what they will do. Neither of the two is sufficient by itself to ensure good work. Despite being extremely dedicated, enthusiastic, and hard-working, a person with no mechanical skill will not be able to overhaul the tractor engine. And even a topnotch mechanic will not get the job done right if he/she does not want to.

So managers who want better worker performance may need to consider management practices that affect either ability, motivation, or both. Some workers can outperform others on any given task, and all workers have a range of performance levels that vary over time and by type of job. The central challenge of personnel management, simply put, is to employ the most capable people in the tasks and under the conditions that bring out their best work.

In this section we first describe the high performance cycle and then move on to discuss training and aspects of management tied to motivation.

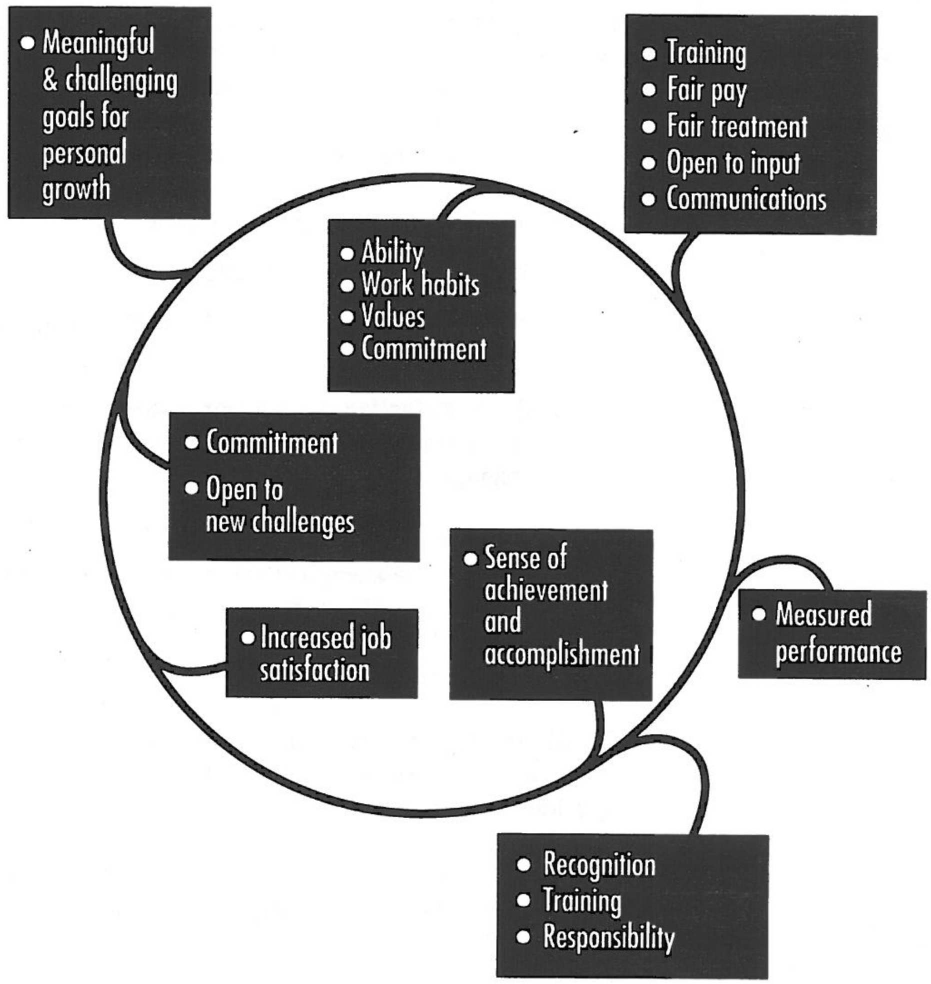
High Performance Cycle

Adapted from Lock and Latham

Productivity depends on many factors and there is a complex relationship between motivation to work and job satisfaction. A number of factors combine to create an atmosphere in which worker productivity can flourish. These factors are illustrated in the high performance cycle.

Factors influenced by the supervisor are outside the circle.

Factors influenced by the employee are inside the circle.



Supervisors have tremendous influence on employee productivity. These influences are noted on the outside portion of the circle. Changes in the employee are noted within the circle. The most effective tools an employer has are:

- Setting meaningful and challenging goals,
- Providing clear instructions that are well understood, and
- Recognizing personnel through thank you's and other meaningful rewards.

Successful managers have the ability to persuade workers (without using threats or coercion) to accept the manager's agenda, work hard at it and do a quality job.

5.3 Motivating

Why are some workers interested in their work and in the operation where they work? These workers take a special interest, notice things that need attention and are willing to give the job extra thought and care. Why are other workers turned off, showing no interest in doing anything beyond the bare minimum that is expected of them? These workers fail to notice the soft tire, the dry bearing, or the cow in heat.

The difference between these types of workers is often one of motivation. One group is motivated to do a good job; the other is not.

1. My employees do adequate work 0 1 2 3
2. My employees show up regularly 0 1 2 3
3. My employees meet basic job requirements 0 1 2 3
4. My employees do exceptional work 0 1 2 3
5. My employees are very satisfied with their jobs 0 1 2 3

	High	Moderate	Low
6. The rate of my staff turnover is	1	2	3
7. The level of my staff productivity is	3	2	1

Add up your score. The higher your score, the greater likelihood you are supplying a good motivational climate.

What is Motivation?

Motivation is something we feel within ourselves. It is an inner drive that is usually expressed in action.

We cannot truly motivate anyone else. Motivation must come from within. What we can do is create a climate where motivation is encouraged by good working conditions, incentives, positive feedback and other job-related factors. We can use the following tools for motivation.

"By employing only the hands of workers, and not their heads and hearts, organizations lose precious return on their investments in people." - Kouzes and Posner

Needs

Behavioural scientists say everything we do, we do in an attempt to fulfill needs. Several different theories have been formulated about human needs. One of the better known ones is Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. Maslow said we have five categories of needs. These needs are depicted as being a pyramid.

As individuals, whether managers or employees, we strive to fulfill our unmet needs

Employees are most satisfied and most productive when they are given an opportunity to meet some or all of their needs. The challenge then to you, the manager, is to understand what your employees' needs are and then supply a motivational climate in which they can meet their needs.

Things to remember about needs:

- The other needs do not act as strong motivators, until the physiological and safety needs are met,
- No two people are alike. Therefore, needs vary in type and intensity from individual to individual, and

- People's needs change as time progresses and circumstances change.

Providing a Motivational Climate

To provide a motivational climate for your employees, you need to understand what is important to employees.

Things People May Want From Work

Needs	What a Person Wants from a Job
Physiological	Physically comfortable working area. Minimum salary/wage
Safety	Safe working conditions. Job security
	Good base salary/wage and benefits
Social	Friendly co-workers Sponsored social activities on and off the job Compatible supervisor
Esteem	Promotion to higher-status job Praise and recognition from supervisor High-performance evaluation and merit-pay increase
Self-actualization	Creative and challenging work
Participation in decision making	Flexibility and autonomy

Charging Up - Draining Down

A simple way of looking at your motivational climate is to compare your workplace to a battery. There are conditions you can provide that will tend to charge up your employees and there are conditions which will tend to drain them down. Simply removing the drain-down factors won't necessarily result in charged up employees. Both sides of the "battery" must be considered.

Charges Up (+)	Drains Down (-)
+ recognition and praise for good work + variety of work that utilizes one's skills and abilities + independence and responsibility in work + participation in decision making about one's work + tasks or jobs that involve learning and growth + favourable working relationships + being trusted + seeing the result of one's work	- confusion - lack of trust - inadequate pay - poor or unsafe working conditions - poorly maintained or inadequate equipment - no opportunity to learn or grow - not being listened to - someone solving problems for you - not knowing whether you are succeeding - not getting along with co-workers or

+ high occupational status + being listened to and informed + good pay + interesting work + training	supervisor - boredom - perception of unfair treatment - poor instructions

Another method which can be used to assess motivational climate and what's important to employees is to look at a list of the 10 most common reasons for labour problems.

Might your employee be able to say any of the following?

Y = Yes

N = No

S = Sometimes

1. I can't communicate my concerns. Y N S
2. Too many bosses tell me what to do. Y N S
3. I don't know exactly what my responsibilities are. Y N S
4. I'm not growing and not learning new skills, Y N S
5. My time off is not specified. Y N S
6. I don't get paid enough for my skills. Y N S
7. The work environment is dangerous, unhealthy and equipment is inadequate. Y N S
8. I don't get any recognition when I perform well. Y N S
9. I have problems with my employer's spouse. Y N S
10. My employer breaks his promises. Y N S

Analyzing your answers may help you identify situations that need to be corrected.

Job Design

Good managers have a strong responsibility to design jobs that provide a high level of job satisfaction. A job can and should be more than a source of economic livelihood. Because work is such an important component of most people's lives, the quality of their work life affects their satisfaction with life.

Psychological incentives such as trust and usefulness far outweigh money as long as money is seen as adequate.

Well-designed jobs contribute significantly to a positive motivational climate.

Six Attributes of Jobs that Tap Motivation

Often jobs can be made more satisfying by structuring the work to allow employees greater scope, give them a sense of continuity and completeness, and encourage them to stretch their minds and sharpen their skills in accomplishing the tasks up to the expected standard. Attributes of such jobs usually include:

- Doing a whole job from beginning to end,
- Regular contact with other employees, suppliers and customers,
- Duties or tasks that use a variety of skills,
- Freedom to act independently. Let people make choices about how their work should be done,
- Feedback from results, with standards built in against which success can be measured soon, and
- Opportunity for growth.

Your business is as good as your employees; your employees are as good as your management.

The motivational climate you provide can determine whether or not you get high performance from your employees. The more thought and effort you put into the management process, the greater the performance, quality, and productivity you'll get in return. Not only will you be a satisfied manager but you'll have satisfied employees.

"Many jobs are too small for the human spirit. The boundaries of many jobs simply aren't elastic enough to make room for workers' vast hearts and spirits. As a result, the wasted energy and abandoned vision are resources lost to both the employer and the employee." John P. Schuster

Evaluate Your Success in Developing a Motivational Climate

The following checklist can help you judge your success in developing a motivational climate in your business. For each item, rate yourself (be very frank) on how often you use that skill. Give 3 – 4 employees copies and ask them to rate you on each of the items. Ask them to be frank. Compare your own personal rating with theirs and discuss it with them. How well do you stack up?

What changes would you like to make in your management style?

Rate yourself on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being Never and 4 being Always.

1. I give my people honest recognition on a regular basis. 1 2 3 4
2. I try to make each person's job as meaningful as possible. 1 2 3 4
3. I work at getting to know my people as individuals. 1 2 3 4
4. I provide clear requirements for every task. 1 2 3 4
5. I provide my people with feedback about performance on a regular basis. 1 2 3 4
6. I am available to my people. 1 2 3 4
7. If my people don't come to me with information, I go to them and ask. 1 2 3 4
8. I try to match business and employee needs. 1 2 3 4

People are capable of doing prodigious amounts of work if they believe their knowledge and skills are appreciated and they are involved in making decisions about their work. - William Glasser.

5.4 Training

Why Train?

New employees usually come to the job not fully equipped to do their new job. Training that they receive once on the job can make up the difference between the abilities they start with and those they need.

Your training program should meet your production needs as well as your employees' personal needs

Training your employees to know what they are supposed to do, how to do it, and why produces two kinds of benefit. Both eventually translate employer performance into improved profits for your business.

1. Productivity and quality improve, as workers:
    - Do the right thing the right way,
    - Waste less time and materials, and
    - Offer new and better methods of doing things.
2. Job satisfaction among employees improves, as workers successfully meet new challenges and feel your support as a manager.

If you give little attention to your employees, you risk getting little from them. The time, effort and cost of training are worth it.

In making a training commitment, plan to start with an understanding of what the job requires and some sensitivity for what your employee does and does not know.

Even workers who do what may seem to be the most basic and simple of tasks can be trained to do those jobs easier and faster.

For example:

A study was done in a greenhouse in Germany where workers were required to package potted plants for shipment. Simply by teaching workers different ways to do their job, the total number of pots prepared per hour per worker increased from 189 to 488, over double the output.

While all training may not result in such dramatic results, it can improve the productivity of your operation.

The Training Plan

As you think about training, keep in mind two key things we know about human behaviour:

1. We learn more quickly and retain it longer when we want to learn. The training must meet the learner's needs, not the trainer's needs.

2. We, as adults, are motivated to learn when we feel a need to grow, to achieve, to have power or any combination of these.

Training must be put to use soon after acquiring it or the effort is lost.

Overview of the Training Process

Develop training vision: Look at performance appraisals, productivity statistics, safety incidents, employee requests.

Set training objectives: What specific tasks should your worker be able to do after training? Change the oil in the tractor? Birth a calf?

Select training methods: Individual or group instruction? Course outline should progress from basic to complex in small, easy-to-master steps by matching training method to your employee technical skill level.

Use the four-step method: Prepare, Present, Try Out, Follow Up. Active involvement promotes learning: we learn by doing.

Evaluate the training: Have the objectives been met? How does the employee feel? What are the "bottom-line" results or benefits?

The key to successful training, then, is to involve the learner. Involve them in the training design and in doing the training.

Training is also critical for seasonal and part-time employees. One employer sums up his strategy for training seasonal workers by the simple phrase: Work well – Work fast - Work smart

The Four-Step Method of Training

Step 1 – Prepare

- Put the learner at ease,
- Find out what he or she already knows about the job,
- Get him or her interested in learning the job, and
- Place him or her in the correct position.

Step 2 – Present the Operation

- Tell, show, illustrate and question carefully and patiently,
- Stress key points, and
- Instruct clearly and completely: one point at a time – but no more than the learner can master.

Step 3 – Try-out Performance

- Test by having the learner perform the job. Have him of her tell and show you and explain key points,
- Ask questions and correct errors, and
- Continue until you know that he or she knows.

Step 4 – Follow Up

- Put the learner on his or her own,
- Check frequently. Designate someone who can help if needed. Encourage questions. Get the learner to look for key points as he or she progresses, and
- Taper off extra coaching and close follow up.

5.5 Compensation - Wages, Incentives and Benefits

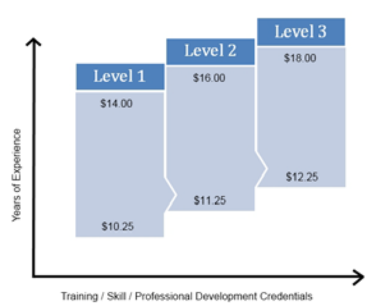
Employees who are dissatisfied because of wages will likely perform below their capabilities. When deciding on compensation for an employee, keep in mind what workers expect wages to be:

- Sufficient to guarantee an acceptable standard of living,
- Competitive with others in the community (including non-agricultural-horticultural operations) taking into account working conditions, bonuses, and fringe benefits (e.g. housing),
- Based on hours worked (regular and overtime),
- Based on the knowledge, experience, and skills the individual employer performance brings to the job,
- Based on skills and training required by the employee and the degree of responsibility given to an employee, and
- Not so fixed that they do not allow ‘for regular pay increases, cost of living adjustments and increased efficiency or increased work results.

Having a well-defined pay grid can avoid many personnel problems. The maximum and minimum pay amounts spell out what the market value of the position is worth to the business. There is no right number of pay grades, however, they should be

- Acceptable to the business,
- Fair to the employees,
- Administratively practical, and
- Recognize differences in job worth.

Sample Pay Grid



Methods of Payment

Hourly - An hourly rate has the advantage of making it easier to ask employees to work extra hours when needed.

Weekly or Monthly Wage - Under this method of payment, hours of work must be specified and adhered to, otherwise, employees will become resentful of working overtime. Weekly or monthly wages should be supplemented with adequate compensation for overtime, in the form of time-off-with-pay or overtime pay.

Wage Increases - Any changes in the wage you pay an employee should be consistent with his/her performance evaluation. Employees who need considerable improvement in their work should not be rewarded with a large merit raise. On the other hand, if an employee has been making good progress and is taking on more responsibility, you may decide a substantial merit increase is warranted. Seniority is also reason for a wage increase.

Incentives

The purpose of incentive plans is to motivate the employee to greater productivity.

When developing an incentive plan, involve the employee, otherwise the employee may distrust it. If not handled correctly, incentives can easily turn into disincentives.

For seasonal help, bonuses are often used as an incentive to encourage employees to stay for the whole work season. Casual rewards should be accompanied by a specific explanation, such as, “This is for reducing our harvest time breakdown costs:’ This kind of reward is more effective than a general thank you. Casual incentives communicate to employees that you have noticed their efforts, and people thrive on positive feedback. To be effective, casual incentives must be unexpected.

Incentive Plan - Do’s and Don’ts
(adapted from work done by Gregory Biflikopf)

Do:

- Analyze the purpose of the incentive (e.g., increase the number of berries picked),
- Specify the performance required to receive the reward (e.g. 10 cows culled); establish standards of “poor”, “good”, and “excellent”,
- Try a temporary program first. Then evaluate and fine-tune,
- Link the reward directly to the performance so the worker can see a direct correlation between the work and the bonus,
- Involve the workers in the program so they know what is expected and how performance translates into the bonus or reward,
- Formulate incentives that are easy to compute so that the employee readily understands how to qualify,
- Pay the bonus/reward as soon as possible after the worker meets the requirements,

- Design a range of incentives that appeal to the worker's need for responsibility and personal achievement,
- Follow-up on the program and make adjustments as necessary to ensure profitability, and
- Make sure the incentive is linked to results over which the worker has control.

Don't:

- Do not make incentives the standard by substituting bonus payments and benefits for wages,
- Do not reward "poor" workers for progressing to "good" rather than "excellent".
- Do not treat arbitrarily: one system for all,
- Do not add the bonus pay into the regular wages: include it as a separate cheque,
- Do not reduce wages if productivity increases: workers must feel the program is fair and will not result in negative consequences,
- Do not make the standards so high that an individual employee is unable to reach them,
- Do not give a bonus for only one task to avoid tempting workers to slight other tasks,
- Do not substitute cash bonuses for other forms of incentives such as training or promotion, and
- Do not lose quality control: anticipate loopholes, e.g. the fast picking crew who were paid by the container but picked bad quality fruit.

Benefits

A benefit is categorized as any compensation given to employees beyond the regular wages. Benefits can include food, housing, heat, insurance, pension plans, flexible work hours, sick leave, holidays, vacation time, and time off.

As an employer, do you know the cost of the benefits you offer? Do your employees know the value of the benefits they receive? The honest answer to these questions is often "no". Yet benefits, or the lack of them, can often be the issue that will cause an employee to take another job. In most jobs, the benefits package is valued at between 15 and 30 per cent of the amount of the wage or salary.

As you consider your benefits package, realize that your employees are people with individual needs.

- A single worker has different needs from a married worker with a family.
- A two-worker family may end up with duplicate benefits. There is no need for you to supply medical benefits if the spouse's employer does.
- Young workers may not feel the same need for insurance or pension plans as an older worker would.

Take a look at some typical benefits:

A. Housing- In times past, supplying farm employees with housing was considered the norm. This assumption is now changing. If you have good housing to offer, it can be an attractive benefit. If, on the other hand, the housing you offer your employees is the old farm house that you haven't been able to rent, then it's not a benefit.

   It may be that your employees would be happier renting or purchasing housing in the closest village or town. Offering housing as a benefit must be carefully considered. There are pros and cons.

B. Food and farm produce - estimating the value of these benefits is not simple. Do you price them at the farm gate value or at retail value? Whichever you decide, make sure your employee understands the value of what you are offering.

C. Fringe benefits - this category includes items such as group life insurance, pension plans, and sick leave benefits. It is often difficult for a single manager to offer these benefits. Group rates are often lower than a single operator would have to pay for dental, optical, and medical benefits. You should check to see if your marketing board or trade association can get group rates of these benefits. Increasingly, agricultural and horticultural operators are contributing to employee Registered Retirement Savings Plans.

D. Legislated benefits - Provincial and federal governments legislate certain benefits. These include Canada Pension Plan, Workers' Compensation, Employment Insurance and paid vacations.

Because these are legislated requirements, they are often not considered to be benefits, yet they are important to the employee's security and their value should be considered. .

A Benefits Checklist

- Have you analyzed your benefit package?
- What is the total value of benefits you provide?
- Do you discuss benefits offered with employees?
- Are employees given a wage statement showing the benefits provided?
- Have benefits been "tailor made" to meet employee needs?
- Are these benefits included as part of the employment understanding?
- Is the value of the compensation package reviewed as part of an annual performance evaluation? Have you tried any new kinds of benefits?

5.6 Performance Evaluation

Two questions every employee needs the answers to are, "What is my job?" and "How am I doing?" Regular feedback is one of the most effective tools an employer has to increase productivity. Studies show that 11% to 20% productivity gains are achievable by providing good feedback.

Monitoring of employee performance should be a primary and ongoing responsibility of all first-line supervisors. In addition, every manager should do at least an annual evaluation of each employee's overall performance. The successful manager will always be concerned about people's performance. There are various ways to monitor an employee, direct observation being one of them.

Purpose of Evaluation

From an employee's perspective, a performance evaluation provides the following:

- Allows me to compare how well I am doing my job with how well I need to do my job,
- Gives me clear guidelines for improvement,
- Makes me feel I can succeed in my weak areas if I adopt these guidelines, and
- Gives me opportunity to share my concerns about my job and career with my employer.

From the employer's perspective, a performance evaluation:

- Provides feedback from the employee,
- Determines how the employee's work contributes to my farm objectives,
- Builds teamwork in solving problems,
- Ensures the employee wants to improve and can improve, and
- Gives an opportunity to identify training needs.

Conducting performance appraisals should not be a dreaded task. Honest evaluations provide employees with a clear indication of their strengths and weaknesses and minimize legal proceedings when less than competent employees must be discharged. Do not use a performance review to discuss discipline. Discipline problems need to be dealt with independent of performance reviews.

Performance evaluations are best conducted with an open mind. One-sided employee evaluations can create more problems than they solve. Go into a performance evaluation with the goal of creating an atmosphere where an honest exchange of information between the employee and the employer can take place.

Developing Performance Appraisal Forms

There are many different types of appraisal forms in use today. Although it takes time to develop a form specific to your operation, the results are worth the effort.

As you develop your form, focus on two questions.

1. What do your employees actually do on their job? (Observable behaviours).
2. How can you measure their performance? For example, if one of their duties is to "maintain equipment", how can you measure how well the employee is doing this part of the job? One way is to make a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor performance and 5 being outstanding. Then write down what you mean as "poor" and "outstanding".

As a guide for you, we have provided two sample evaluation forms.

1. The Quarterly/Monthly Job Review Sheet. This short report is used to give specific feedback to your employee about tasks.
2. Worker Performance Appraisal. This form lists various duties to be done for each job and an objective way for you to measure the worker's performance.

This form is adapted from one designed by Howard Rosenberg

Sample Evaluation Forms

Quarterly/Monthly Job Review Sheet

Date:

Period under review:

Task	Planned Completion Date	Task Accomplished	Comments
1. Winterize power equipment, drain pumps and sprayers; add coolants to engines	October 1, 2012	Yes____ No ____	Completed on schedule; good attention to detail
2. Take soil samples and submit to lab for analysis	November 1, 2012	Yes____ No ____	(your comments)
3. Restock parts bin and clean up shop	December 15, 2012	Yes____ No ____	
4. Locate and spot-spray Canada thistle patches	October 15, 20__	Yes____ No ____	
5. Inspect combine, adjusting and replacing worn bearings, belts, bushings and chains. Advise on any major repairs required.		Yes____ No ____	
6. Attend two-day soil conservation workshop and be prepared to discuss recommendations with manager		Yes____ No ____	
7. Attend first-aid course		Yes____ No ____	

Worker Performance Appraisal

Example Using a Cow/Calf Worker

EMPLOYEE NAME:

DATE:______________________ PERIOD UNDER REVIEW _______________

On each line, place a mark which best describes worker's performance.

I. WORK PERFORMANCE

A. COW HERD

1. Quality of Work

improves cow herd	maintains the cow herd	harms the cow herd

2. Productivity

usually leads other workers	usually works with other workers	usually behind other workers

B. EQUIPMENT OPERATIONS

1. Field Work with Tractor

operates equipment with precision and with minimum damage	improve the efficiency of ground covered and equipment usage	often overlaps excessively or misses pieces

2. Spraying

always applies material to target area	sometimes does not check where material goes application	just drives tractor without checking

3. Misc., e.g. Hauling Equipment

uses correct gear speed	sometimes needs help finding proper gear and speed	often runs engine inand wrong gear or without enough on throttle

4. Safety

follows safety rules & guidelines	needs occasional reminder on safety rules	disregards rules on safety

C. EQUIPMENT CARE

1. Maintenance

anticipates breakdowns	reports repair needs	operates broken equipment

2. Servicing (Daily)

does daily servicing without supervision	does daily servicing with supervision	ignores daily servicing

3. Servicing (100 hr)

does 100 hr servicing without supervision	does 100 hr servicing with supervision	does not do 100 hr servicing

4. Mechanical Repairs

does a variety of minor repairs	makes an occasional repair	completely dependent for repairs

D. PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS

1. Measuring Chemicals

measures accurately	helps supervisor	does not measure accurately

2. Applying Chemicals

corrects improper applications	reports improper applications	neglects improper applications

3. Safety

always wears protective clothing	wears protective clothing if reminded	wears street clothes

II. WORK RELATIONSHIPS

A. CO-WORKERS

1. Teamwork

helps others	interested in own work	interferes with others

2. Leadership

teaches others and takes responsibility for group actions	leads by example, sometimes teaches others	does not take leadership position

B. SUPERVISORS

1. Acceptance of Supervision

needs few instructions, gives valuable feedback	accepts & carries out instructions	frequently argues about assignment

2. Directions

begins tasks after directions are fully understood	only follows instructions but sometimes they are misunderstood	often does wrong job or wrong way

3. Reliability

completes assignments on time and beyond expectations	completes assignments often with some supervision	often does not complete a task even with constant supervision

4. Ideas and Observations

offers useful information or suggestions	occasionally offers feedback	usually complains or offers useless information

III. GENERAL WORK HABITS AND SKILLS

A. ATTENDANCE

1. Absence without Notice

never	sometimes (<3/year)	often (>3/yr)

2. Tardy Without Notice

never	sometimes (<3/year)	often (>3/yr)

B. GROWTH

1. Interest in Personal Development

frequently volunteers for new jobs	takes new jobs with encouragement	difficult to “sell” new jobs

2. Learning

picks up new skills rapidly	learns new jobs with time	rarely gets past basics

3. Initiative

does not wait for authorization to solve a problem	looks for approval before trying something	never does a task without prior instructions

IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

outstanding	satisfactory	unsatisfactory

Tips on How to Do an Evaluation

You can divide the elements of an effective performance appraisal into five steps:

1. Establish work methods and productivity levels expected for each position. Use your job description as a blueprint for achievement and ask employees to define their goals.
2. Monitor employees at random to determine performance levels.
3. Regularly provide employees with both positive feedback and constructive criticism. There should be no surprises for the employee during the interview.
4. Plan the evaluation interviews. Analyze records and performance goals and ask employees to complete a pre-interview.
5. Conduct the evaluation interviews. Discuss the self-evaluations completed by employees and work together on ideas for improvement. Set new goals, if necessary.

Employee Involvement in the Process

Most of us would prefer to point out our own weaknesses before someone else does, just as most of us do not respond well to harsh criticism. Give your employees a chance to evaluate their own work.

Try the following technique:

- Ask the employee to bring to the evaluation interview a list of three things: a) tasks always performed well, b) areas of recent improvement, and c) areas needing improvement. Tell the employee that you will do the same,
- Refer to the records you made during regular monitoring and make your own list, using the same headings,
- During the interview, discuss the employee’s list and compare it with your own, and
- Respond as an active listener to employee’s discussion of his or her own weaknesses, concerns and goals. Offer support for improvement and help set new goals.

Evaluation Follow—up

The performance appraisal has to be acted upon. Its purpose is to generate and communicate information and unless you do this, the effort you've put into the appraisal process won't have been worth it.

Having completed the performance appraisal, what do you do? The following gives some suggestions, depending on how the employee is performing. Whatever you do, always discuss it with the employee first.

Is performance satisfactory or better?

If yes:

Show appreciation; provide a thank you

Consider:

- promotion, raise or bonus
- broadened assignment
- growth in present job

If no:

Ask - could performance be corrected?

If yes:

Consider

- training
- discipline
- redefined job

If no:

Consider

- different job

Best practices for formal performance/achievement planning and review meetings.

1. Always precede performance/ achievement reviews with performance planning and goal setting by 3 to 6 months. This clearly establishes goals and requirements.
2. Always involve the employees in setting performance goals and strategies for achieving the identified goals.
3. Never mix discipline with formal performance/ achievement reviews. If you have a situation where you are dealing with a performance issue, or other problem, do not wait until a scheduled review. You need to deal with the issue immediately. If a scheduled review should occur at the same time as you are dealing with a discipline issue, it is best to ask the employee if they would mind postponing the review until the issue has been resolved. This way, if the issue is resolved you can note the successful outcome on their review and how they improved. If the employee is dismissal as the outcome of the discipline process then there will be no need for a review.

COMMUNICATION

6

This section provides information on communication, problem solving, and discipline for farm employers and managers. Good communications can avoid many problems but when conflict or the need to discipline does arise, you must deal with it. Also discussed in this section is how to approach that dreaded task of dismissing an employee. Conflict and problems are a normal part of managing employees. You probably can't avoid problems, but you can manage them.

6.1 Communication Skills

Communication plays a major role in most aspects of the working relationship between you, the employer, and your employees. The manager's communication skill is critical to successful hiring and training processes, maintenance of employee motivation, and employee willingness to provide information. Most fundamentally, you must be able to send understandable messages to your employees if they are to be able to do what you want.

Communication between two people is effective when both understand a message the same way. In a situation of work being assigned, it is desirable for both parties involved to come away knowing clearly what needs to be done and feeling good about the process. It is said that 90% of conflicts at work arise because of miscommunication.

In one-to-one communication, three types of skills are required. These are listening skills, speaking skills and silent communication skills (often called body language).

6.2 Listening Skills

1. Stop talking. You cannot listen while talking.
    - Concentrate on what the other person is saying,
    - Look past the words to meaning,
    - Watch hands, facial expressions, eyes,
    - Control your emotions; they impede understanding,
    - React to ideas, not the person,
    - Make no value judgements, and
    - Allow employees time to think and respond.
2. Respond. If you understand, say so. If you don't, ask for clarification.
3. Listen for feelings as well as content.
4. Good listening is essential to communication — only part of the responsibility rests with the speaker. If you are a good listener, you will be a good supervisor.

Three Critical Communications Skills for Supervisors

1. Say only what you observe.
2. Ask open questions.
3. Listen actively.

"Listen to understand. Speak to be understood".- Steven Covey

6.3 Speaking Skills

1. Assigning tasks
   - Give clear, concise, positive directions as opposed to wishy-washy instructions,
   - Have confidence as opposed to cockiness,
   - Make instructions detailed enough to be understood,
   - Follow up,
   - Ask questions designed to make sure the listener understood, and
   - Invite participation and discussion.
2. Voicing complaints, objections, disapproval
   - Both employer and employee should have this right,
   - For both, there are proper times and places,
   - A constructive criticizer is an asset, and
   - A chronic complainer is a liability.
3. Communicating unfavourable news
   - Don't pass the buck,
   - Do it orally,
   - Do not delay or avoid the issue,
   - Start favourably,
   - Present possible benefits,
   - Justify unfavourable information,
   - Allow for freedom of discussion,
   - Pick the best time for the employee, and
   - Talk directly to the person involved.
4. Speaking jargon and common expressions can be confusing
   - For example, "Take the blue goose over to the Gerken place and pick up the green cattle". What the new employee may not know is that the Gerken place is where the Browns now live, the blue goose is the trailer that was painted red last year, and green cattle have nothing to do with colour.
5. Seeking information
   - Use open-ended questions which get you more than a "yes" or "no" answer. For example: "What parts would you like me to further explain?" is better than "Do you understand?". Or ask, "When do you think this job will be done?" instead of "Will you do that now?"
   - Allow for free information flow between you and your employee.

Remember the effectiveness of the 5 W's and H

- Who
- What

- Where
- When
- Why
- How

6.4 Silent Communication Skills

1. Body language. A smile, a frown or some other gesture may communicate more than the accompanying words. It is said that when speaking, only 7% of the message is in the words; 93% is in body language.
2. Actions speak louder than words.
3. Don't say one thing and do another. "Do as I say, not as I do" seldom works in business.

Tips on Effective communication starts with you having a positive attitude towards yourself and others.

Try following these tips.

- When expressing feelings, "I am upset about..:' is more effective than "You make me mad..."
- When asking for help, "Let's do..:' is more effective than "You help me do..:'
- When assigning work, request; don't order "Would you please...?' is more effective than "You go do..."
- Make sure your body and words give the same message. Body language gives strong messages. It can enrich and emphasize our words. However, if you do not mean what your words say, your body will give a conflicting message. If you say "I'm not angry" with your face flaming red and your teeth clenched, no one is likely to believe you.

6.5 How Well Do You Communicate With Your Employees?

Be honest as you rate yourself. Circle the best answer.

3 - Most of the time
2 - Sometimes
1 - Rarely or never

Listening

I listen to all members of my staff as one person who respects another.	3	2	1
I obtain necessary details from each conversation.	3	2	1
I refrain from making value judgements while listening.	3	2	1
I allow enough time to listen.	3	2	1
I reply as soon as possible when a reply is required	3	2	1

I provide follow-up.	3 2 1

Informing

I know the value of keeping employees informed.	3 2 1
I give equal information to everyone who needs to know.	3 2 1
I create time to inform.	3 2 1
I make a point of updating those who are absent.	3 2 1
I informally share information to help others on a regular basis.	3 2 1
I withhold no more information than is necessary.	3 2 1

Look back at your scoring. On items you scored 2 or less, consider if your communications could be more effective.

6.6 Giving Advice

Many managers feel uncomfortable about giving advice when an employee has come to them for help in solving a personal problem.

Find a quiet private setting where you can listen to your employee. Help them in coming up with a possible solution and getting the help they need. Do not tell them what to do.

Work together with your employee in coming up with a solution.

1. Ask the employee to write down a list of possible solutions to the problem.
2. While the employee writes, you also list what you think may be solutions.
3. The employee presents his or her solutions first.
4. You add only those solutions the employee did not mention.
5. The employee rates the various solutions good, bad or indifferent.
6. You than assist the employee to choose the best solution.

6.7 Making Criticism Positive

No one enjoys criticism. Most people don’t enjoy criticizing someone else either, so they often put it off. But criticism can be positive and productive. It all depends on how you do it.

- Think carefully before you say anything. Stop and ask yourself:
  - What do I want to change and why?
  - What is the best way and time for me to approach the other person?

Remember, be quick to praise but slow to criticize.

- Remember that the purpose of criticism should be to help the person improve performance. You should never criticize to hurt, embarrass, shame or insult. You should never criticize to make yourself feel superior or powerful.
- Show concern and desire to help. Make it clear that they will have a chance to improve. Offer specific solutions and directions. It does little good to tell people to do better if they don't know how.
- Try your best to affirm and strengthen the person's self-esteem. Don't say, "That was a stupid move:' Say instead, "I know you want to do your best. Have you considered doing it in other ways:' Go over the pros and cons of doing a job in different ways.
- Don't attack the person. You can't change a person's attitude no matter how much you might want to. Focus on performance. You might be able to change the person's behaviour.
- Always deliver criticism in private, in person. Never reprimand or criticize an employee in front of other workers. Never issue a written criticism as a first exchange.

If people feel criticized, angry or threatened, you will find it difficult to get to the bottom of a problem or get the employee to respond to your complaint. If you are having problems:

- Expressing your frustrations to employees,
- Stating limits with employees, or
- Criticizing without putting people down.

You may be using red flag or trigger words.

Look at the following list of red flag words. What happens inside of you when one of these words or phrases is said to you?

Red Flag Words

Check the words or phrases that are triggers for you. Add others that you have found that trigger emotions in you or others.

- ☐ You should
- ☐ Your weaknesses are
- ☐ You have to
- ☐ You never
- ☐ You must
- ☐ You always
- ☐ You are supposed to
- ☐ You don't understand

- You goofed
- You are confused
- Slow poke
- Wimpy
- Stupid, dumb
- Lazy
- I demand
- You have a bad attitude
- Every time you
- You do this all the time

The following is a list of typical statements that tend to trigger workers. You will get better results if you talk only about specific actions and use “I” statements.

Instead of saying: You are a loudmouth.
Try: I noticed you talked loudly at our meeting.

Instead of saying: You fail to see what I mean.
Try: I don’t think I explained it well.

Instead of saying: You misinterpreted me.
Try: I think you see it differently than I meant.

Instead of saying: You didn’t do this right.
Try: This wasn’t finished the way I asked.

Positive criticism is a useful tool, not a heartless heavy hand.

6.8 Staff Meetings

Staff meetings give opportunities for you and your staff to do three things:

- To report on the general status of the business,
- To discuss business goals and plans, and
- To try to solve problems.

When to Conduct a Staff Meeting

- A regular meeting time needs to be set and respected. The meeting should start and end on time - this shows respect for the participants’ time, or
- When a big change or crisis arises, it may be beneficial to hold meetings more often. During slow times when some staff members are on vacation, meetings can be cancelled.

How to Conduct a Staff Meeting

- Prepare an agenda and share it with the participants prior to the meeting. Participants presenting reports should be notified in advance. Try to eliminate surprises,
- Develop a feeling of respect for each participant in the staff meeting. Encourage their input. For a family business, all family members involved in the business should get together. Encourage their input and provide a comfortable setting for idea sharing,
- Encourage an open exchange of information and ideas but not an unproductive airing of beefs,
- Encourage teamwork,
- Use the staff meeting as an opportunity to establish a personal and earnest relationship with your employees. Promote caring, goodwill and trust, and
- Keep minutes of the decisions made, responsibilities delegated and time-frame established.

Where to Hold a Staff Meeting

- A meeting of the management team in an agricultural business could be over coffee in the staff room, kitchen or shop,
- A meeting of the production team might begin at the start of the day in the building or location where the work takes place or equipment is stored, and
- A meeting of the whole staff should be held in a location that makes everyone feel that “this is important business”.

6.9 Written Documents

When something is written down, it is more clearly understood by all parties. It is a record that can be referred back to and it can serve as a benchmark for making changes.

Businesses and employees use many types of written documents to communicate, from memo to union contracts.

Some common written documents that a farm employer might use are:

- Employment understanding/contract - An understanding between the employer and employee that covers wages, hours, vacation time, benefits, etc. See “Hiring” Section for more details on an employment understanding/contract,
- Housing contract - Very important when housing is provided. Such a contract should spell out, among other things, who is responsible for repairs and maintenance, and/or
- Employee handbook - A document that states the purpose and goals of the business and gives details about the rights and responsibilities of all parties concerned.

A word of caution:

While an employee handbook is a useful tool for communicating with employees, it is not a substitute for good, clear management practices. It is important to think about your operation's ideals when crafting your handbook, but it is equally important to create realistic guidelines for everyone to follow. In an employee's eyes, it may be worse to have an employee handbook that is not being followed, than not having one at all. Beyond that, additional legal obligations may arise if you do not deliver on the promises that you have made in your handbook.

CONFLICT

7

7.1 Dealing with Conflict

Everyone experiences conflict as a daily reality. Some of these conflicts cause only minor irritation while others provoke more serious consequences.

You need a strategy to resolve conflicts successfully in order to prevent tension or lasting resentment. Both negatively affect employee morale and productivity.

You will be required to deal with two types of conflicts:

- Conflict that may arise between or among your employees, and/or,
- Conflict between you and one of your employees.

Whatever the nature of conflict, certain characteristics about conflict seem to hold true.

7.2 Characteristics of Conflict

- When conflict arises, the “issue” is not always articulated or clearly understood,
- People in conflict don’t always take the time to understand one another’s positions,
- When people disagree, their discussions are frequently heated, tense and aggressive,
- Conflict situations are often avoided, not discussed and resolved,
- Conflicts are sometimes resolved by one person “giving in”, and
- The effect of conflict on a relationship is frequently negative.

If you are involved in a conflict, keep the following strategies in mind:

- Remain calm. Don’t argue or make accusations,
- Listen actively. Check your understanding of what is being said. Try to learn what is important to the other person,
- Use direct communication. State your feelings and what you mean honestly. Avoid manipulating or withdrawing. Deal with issues and behaviour, not personalities,
- Be persistent and consistent in your behaviour. This communicates that you mean what you say, and
- Be confident. In yourself and in your ability to deal with others. Remember your assertive rights.

The following steps will assist you to resolve conflicts as effectively as possible.

7.3 Steps for Resolving Conflict

Step I – Problem Identification

Identify each person's reasons or motives for the conflict.

Step 2 - Problem Diagnosis

Look at all the factors in the conflict. Look at personality styles of the people involved.

Step 3 – Generate Alternatives

Come up with different ideas to improve or change the behaviours that caused the conflict.

Step 4 - Decision Making

Compare the ideas and decide which style provides the best alternative.

Step 5 - Tactical Planning

Brainstorm and write a specific action plan to go with the decision made in Step 4.

Step 6 – Implementation

Carry out the plan and follow-up regularly.

While these steps should lead to a solution for most conflicts, there may be times when the conflict isn't resolved. If that occurs, here are your alternatives:

If conflict isn't resolved and you have authority:

- Acknowledge the person's right to differ and
- Explain your decision and outline what you expect to happen

If conflict isn't resolved and authority is equal or shared:

- Thank the person.
- Ask, "Who might help us?", and
- End the discussion

7.4 Conflict Management Styles

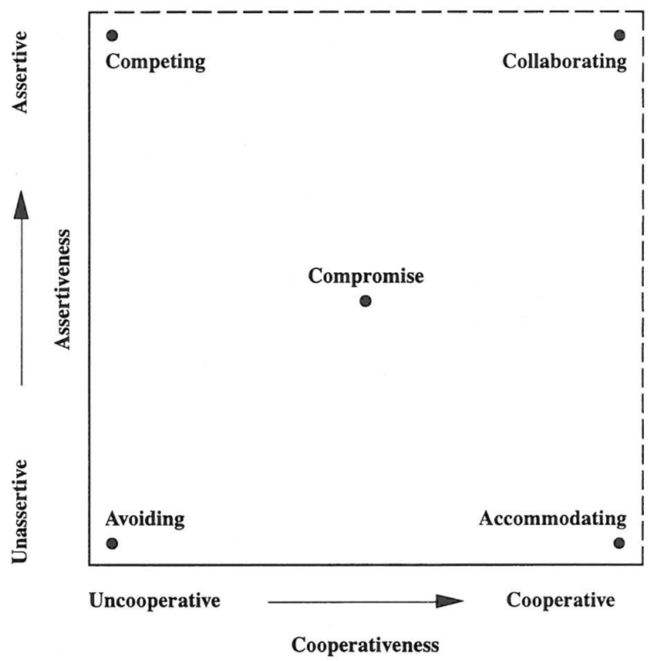
The ability to cope successfully with conflict is an important skill for a manager to have. Your success really depends on the people involved and the situation. Being aware of your preferred/ natural approach to conflict as well as other approaches to dealing with conflict can be a valuable asset to resolve conflicts in a more efficient and productive manner.

Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann have developed a conflict management framework. When the concerns of two people appear to be incompatible, Thomas and Kilmann say you can describe a person's behaviour along two basic dimensions:

I. Assertiveness - the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns

2. Cooperativeness - the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns

These two dimensions are illustrated in the following graph to point out the possible conflict-handling modes.



The five modes of handling conflict are described as follows:

- Avoidance: You do not pursue your own or the others' concerns,
- Accommodation: You have a high concern for others' needs and give in to them,
- Competition: You are concerned with your own satisfaction only and pursue your concerns at the expense of others. The mode is power-oriented,
- Compromise: This is in the centre of the graph and shows a mode in which you are equally concerned with your needs and the others' needs. Compromise never fully takes care of anyone's needs, and
- Collaboration: You have high concern for both your needs and the others' needs. Using this mode, you would work with the other person or people to find a solution which is acceptable to all.

No single mode is necessarily better than the others given particular circumstances, but collaboration and, to a lesser extent, compromise are considered to be the most constructive methods of conflict resolution.

Uses for the Conflict-Management Modes

Avoiding

- When an issue is trivial, of only passing importance or when other more important issues are pressing,

- When you perceive no chance of satisfying your concerns, e.g. when you have no power to change something (someone's personality, national politics),
- When the potential damage of confronting a conflict outweighs the benefits of its resolution,
- When time is needed to let people cool down,
- When you need more time to gather information, and
- When others can resolve the conflict more effectively.

Accommodating

- When you realize you are wrong - to allow a better position to be heard, to learn from others, and to show that you are reasonable,
- When the issue is much more important to the other person than to you - to satisfy the needs of others and as a goodwill gesture to help maintain a cooperative relationship,
- When preserving harmony and avoiding disruption are especially important, and
- When the issue could aid in the development of subordinates by allowing them to experiment and learn from their mistakes.

Competing

- When quick, decisive action is vital, e.g. emergencies,
- When unpopular courses of action are needed on important issues, e.g. cost cutting, enforcing unpopular rules, discipline, and
- When the issues are vital to your business' welfare and you know you're right.

Compromising

- When goals are moderately important, but not worth the effort or potential disruption of more assertive modes,
- When two opponents with equal power are strongly committed to mutually exclusive goals,
- When temporary settlements must be achieved for complex issues, and
- To arrive at expedient solutions under time pressure.

Collaborating

- To gain commitment by incorporating other's concerns into a consensual decision,
- To find a satisfactory solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised,
- To learn how to understand the views of others and test your own assumptions,
- To merge insights from people with different perspective on a problem, and
- To work through hard feelings which have been interfering with an interpersonal relationship.

Conflict Resolution Example

Betty has a problem with Bob, a field supervisor who constantly interrupts her work with chit-chat, personal problems, etc. when he comes to the main office to hand in daily time sheets and pick up customer orders. As a result, this past week she was two hours late getting out the weekly payroll. Betty has a track record of doing fast and accurate work but usually likes to work alone, while Bob enjoys leading his work crews and talking with fellow employees. You also note that Bob and Betty generally enjoy working together. When you call her in to discuss the problem, she becomes angry and accuses Bob of "making her" too slow.

Contact with Betty

1. Listen to Betty: acknowledge her anger without judging her. Don't rush her: she needs time to let off steam.
2. Stay calm and ask questions designed to collect the facts. Avoid using "why" questions which may elevate her defensiveness. Communicate that you are concerned. Summarize and repeat what she has said to make sure that you have understood her correctly and have been listening.
3. Let her know you have to be objective and that this problem needs to be solved.
4. Ask her if she would mind meeting with Bob to discuss and work out ways that they can help each other to ensure the payroll gets out on time. Also mention that you plan on meeting with Bob to discuss the issue and ask whether she wants you to speak to Bob about the two of them meeting.

Preparation for Contact

I. Review Bob's performance record.
2. Plan for meeting with Bob and try to anticipate his concerns.

Meeting with Bob

I. Start on a positive note: "Sure appreciate the long hours you are putting in during the harvest time."
2. Clearly explain the problem without judging. Nobody responds well to scolding.
3. Listen to Bob's assessment of the situation. You note that Bob is under a lot of stress at harvest time and feels he needs some time to get away from staff periodically throughout the day. Acknowledge his concerns.
4. Indicate that you would like Betty and him to get together to work this out. Let him know that Betty will be getting in touch with him to arrange a meeting and that you will be getting in touch with both of them to see how things worked out by the end of the week.

After Meeting with Bob

1. Confirm with Betty that Bob is expecting her to contact him and let her know that you will be checking with both of them after the meeting.

After Bob and Betty Have Met

I. Check to see how the problem has been resolved by speaking to both Betty and Bob.
2. If Bob and Betty have not been able to resolve this problem, you will have to arrange a joint meeting to help them develop a solution.

DISCIPLINE

8

8.1 Disciplining

Discipline is often one of the most difficult aspects of personnel management for many employers. Ideally, you want to strive for self-discipline among your employees. If there has been careful recruitment of employees followed by a sound training program, and proper attention to human needs, discipline problems should be minimal. Nevertheless, disciplining an employee is needed on occasion.

There are various types of problems you may encounter with an employee. Here are the most common ones grouped by type, not the severity of the problems:

- Productivity (slow or poor-quality work),
- Work habits (showing up late, sleeping on the job, carelessness with equipment or materials),
- Relations with others (fighting with or refusing to cooperate with co-workers, insubordination, verbal harassment, bullying),
- Ethical issues (lying, theft, spreading rumours about others), and
- Safety issues (ignoring safety rules and procedures, drug or alcohol abuse, reckless behaviour).

Before disciplining an employee, think about the nature of the problem. If the problem is productivity-related, consider if the employee has been given proper training and adequate supervision. Some people need several demonstrations before they can perform a task well or quickly, and require occasional reminders so they don't backslide. If you're unwilling or unable to provide that level of supervision, you may want to review your hiring procedures and use testing to weed out workers who won't function well at your workplace.

You should also review whether you have taken steps to minimize behaviour-related problems. Are consequences clearly spelled out to employees (for example, suspension after three late arrivals in a two-month period or suspension and probable dismissal for a serious breach of trust such as stealing, or fraud.)? Are lists of workplace rules posted or given to new employees? Even if the rules are obvious, such measures demonstrate that you are serious about enforcing them.

8.2 The Goal of Discipline

Effective discipline is designed to prevent problems and encourage productive performance and behaviour, not to punish employees for making mistakes. Stress the use of discipline to produce positive changes.

In a typical week, you may encounter several situations requiring some kind of discipline. Your actions will be more effective if you know why you are disciplining your employee.

Example:

Situation: A worker forgets to treat a sick cow; the cow dies.

Discipline: Verbal and written warning

Goal: To convey the importance of the need for intensive care of sick cows.

Situation: A young picker starts a fruit-throwing fight after already receiving one warning.

Discipline: Suspension/Dismissal

Goal: To encourage responsible behaviour by the pickers.

Situation: A bookkeeper releases confidential information to a competitor.

Discipline: Written warning

Goal: To stress the need for company loyalty.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

8.3 Progressive Discipline

The progressive discipline approach utilizes escalating interventions, depending on the number and severity of the offenses.

Progressive discipline for minor offenses begins with an informal verbal discussion and progresses to more formal disciplinary actions, should the problem persist. It is important that employees understand that if they are unwilling to change the behaviour, this may result in further disciplinary actions, such as suspension or dismissal. Also, initial violations of a more serious nature may result in a written warning or suspension and only the most serious violations may result in immediate dismissal. Progressive discipline is a necessary element in establishing 'just cause' for termination, to avoid wrongful dismissal actions. It is the responsibility of the employer to prove:

- The employer established reasonable rules and policies,
- These rules and policies were communicated to the employee,
- The employee was made aware that he/she was not following the required rules and policies,
- The initial and subsequent interventions were appropriate for the nature and circumstances of the violation (i.e. the punishment fit the crime),
- The employee was warned that failure to comply would result in dismissal, and
- The employee was unwilling to comply and subsequently dismissed.

Howard Rosenberg who is an extension specialist from the University of California discusses the following story.

Ben Chavez found one of his employee's, George Watson asleep in a back field where he was supposed to be welding a broken hitch.

Ben Chavez was enraged. Not since his recent promotion from mechanic to shop foreman had he faced a situation quite like this, and he was not about to let it endanger his hard-earned reputation.

“Alright Sleeping Beauty,” shouted Chavez at a startled George Walston, “get up and get out - for good. I should have figured you were grabbing a regular siesta back here just by looking at how little work you’ve been getting done out front. You’ll have plenty of time to sleep now.”

Ask:

- Was Ben’s reaction valid?
- Was it in the best interest of the business to fire Walston?
- What is Walston’s record with the company?
- Is this the first time that Walston has stepped out of line?
- Has anybody else in the business ever been caught napping, and what happened to him/her?
- Is there an explicit disciplinary policy that reflects rules and penalties for violations that happen?

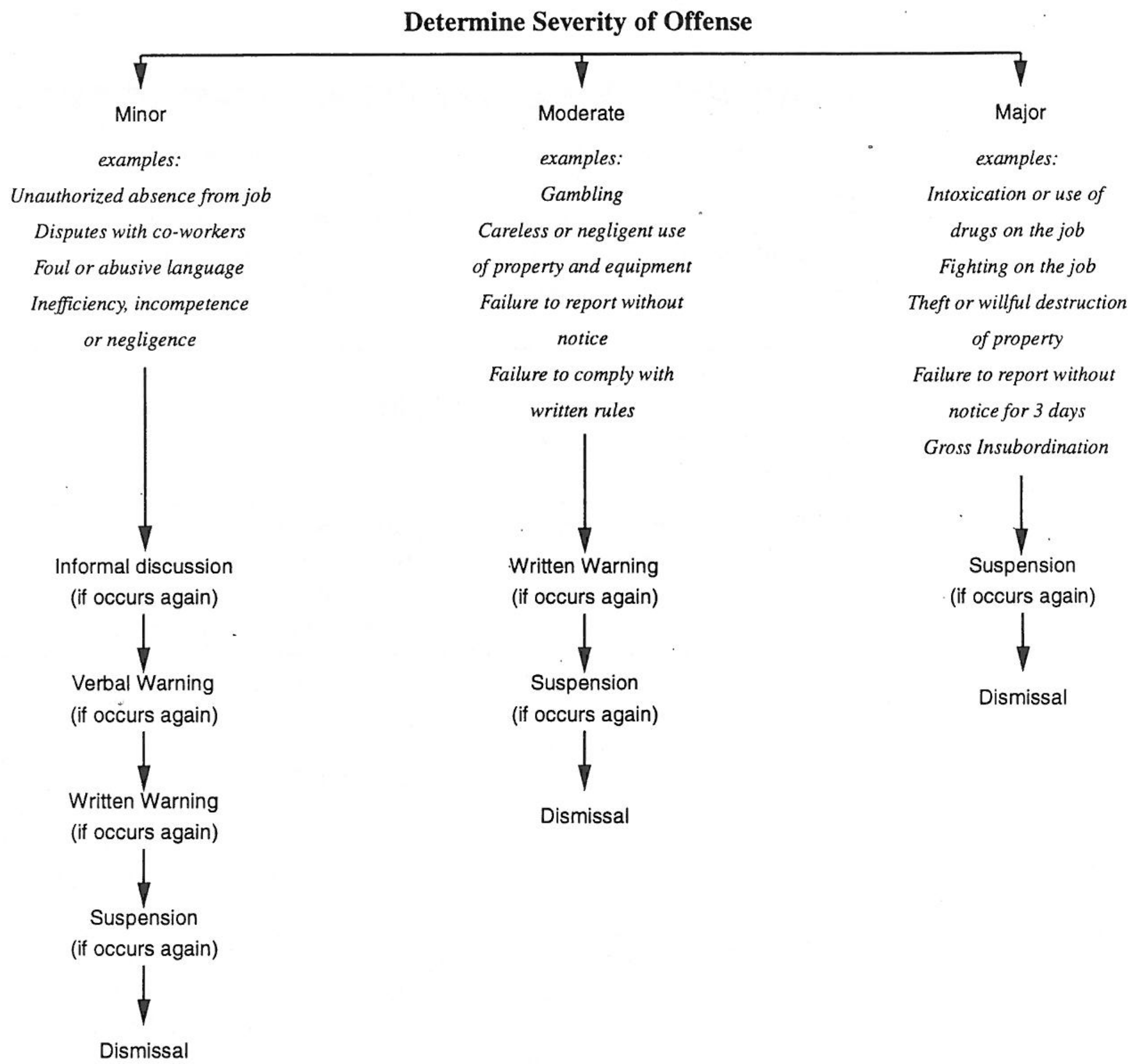
While Chavez intended to rid himself of a problem employee, his troubles may have been only beginning. This dismissal may prompt:

1. The general manager to doubt Chavez’s judgement,
2. Other shop employees to retaliate in subtle ways on Walston’s behalf,
3. Walston to file a legal complaint against the business.

Chavez’s position would be far less uncertain if his decision in this case were based on a written disciplinary procedure that had been clearly communicated to employees and consistently carried out in the past.

By imposing a systematic approach to discipline, you eliminate snap decisions made out of frustration. In this way, each employee receives fair treatment. For the progressive discipline approach to work smoothly, each employee should receive written notice of the discipline levels when he or she begins working for you.

8.4 Sample Procedure for Progressive Discipline



It is essential to document any disciplinary step taken for subsequent reference. Written records have better memories than people do, and they are invaluable when it comes to defending actions taken. In cases of supervisory counselling, a brief note of the date and the issue discussed is sufficient. A respectable record of more advanced disciplinary actions – warnings, suspensions, and dismissals – and the incidents that prompt them would contain the following items:

- Basic circumstances: Names, dates, times, places and people associated with incident,
- Violation: Specification of the offense or the rule broken,
- Expected improvement: Behaviour that the action is intended to elicit or extinguish,

- Review period: Time by which the employee will be reassessed to see if correction has been achieved, and
- Employee signature: Acknowledgement that the discipline has been administered with the employee's knowledge (not necessarily an agreement with the action, simply an awareness of it).

8.5 Communication with the Employee

When a discipline infraction occurs, action should be taken as quickly as possible. This should be done by the employee's immediate supervisor. Ensure that it is done in private, and in a reasonable and calm manner.

Let's suppose you've just found Joe Martin asleep on a bale of hay when he should have been grooming the horses. This is the second time you've caught him sleeping on the job. The last time it happened, he was informed that the next occurrence of this infraction would result in suspension.

Here's how you might handle it.

Supervisor's Role	Specific Action
1. Match the behaviour to the discipline required. Review Joe's record and determine what outcome you expect.	Decide that you will remind Joe of the written warning and that suspension for three days is imminent.
2. Ask Joe to meet with you privately. Adopt a non-judgmental attitude and begin with a question. Allow Joe to explain his position.	'I'm worried about your sleeping in the barn. Can you tell me more about it?"
3. Inform Joe of the corrective action required: suspension.	"Because you've already had one warning, I have to suspend you for three days. You know we just can't have the horses neglected."
4. As soon as possible, shift the discussion from the reprimand to positive suggestions for change.	"Can we think of a way of lightening your load? How about reducing your work hours and just have you do grooming? Sue could take over some of your other duties. Then you'll have more time for your show jumping. Of course with fewer hours, you'll receive less pay."
5. Provide Joe with a written record of the incident. Include a description of the behaviour change expected and the consequences of another violation.	Ask Joe to sign the record to acknowledge the discussion and his awareness of future consequences.

8.6 Response to Performance Problems

There a number of different approaches to disciplining, some of which are listed below. Remember that what works well in one situation may not work in another. As well, a combination of these approaches may work better than using only one.

Of the responses presented in the following chart, the first four (penalty, warning, threat, authority) are typically one-way communications. They don't encourage discussion or feedback. These responses tend to maintain or increase the distance felt between the supervisor and worker. They often provoke defensiveness, anger and alienation.

The last four types of responses, humour (if used when appropriate), explanation, appeal and problem solving, tend to invite two-way communication and constructive results. By using them, the supervisor is more likely to get the message across and to gain useful information back.

Different Ways to Respond to Performance Problems

Response	Example	Advantages	Disadvantages
Penalty Imposition	"You are suspended for 3 working days."	Makes clear to offender certain behaviour is unacceptable; sends strong message to other workers.	May alienate or terminate employees whose contributions to the operation outweigh the trouble they caused.
Specific Warning	"If you can't keep up with the other pruners, I'll put you back on the rock-moving crew."	Expresses strong concern about unacceptable behaviour while giving employee chance to improve. Supervisory follow-up is required if credibility is to be maintained.	Warnings may antagonize and the worker may try to "gain face" at the expense of the supervisor.
Vague Threat	"If you keep butchering these trees and leaving such a mess, I'll assume you don't want piece-rate."	Can inspire fear, a powerful motivator. The more vague the threat, the less follow-up needed.	Conveys no technical information so worker has no direct information about how to improve performance.
Emphasis on Authority	"I am supposed to suspend you for coming back to work in this condition. You know the rules."	Helpful reality therapy for some workers.	The "I'm the boss" attitude is a direct invitation to ego battles and subterfuge.

Avoidance	"Humpft"; "Gee what time is it anyway'?"	Easy to do and workers given a break may develop a loyalty to their supervisor.	Ignoring misconduct may send a message to the offender and other workers that such conduct is acceptable. Avoidance foregoes communication about problem behaviours and results.
Humouring	"Surely someone with your good looks and obvious genius can figure out how to get along with people."	Comes off as friendly and can diffuse tension. Can pave way for constructive discussion.	Can imply supervisory weakness or lack of seriousness. If used without sensitivity or finesse, humour can be destructive.
Explanation	"You have to leave the hulls on the strawberries. They don't keep as well if the hulls get pulled off."	Expresses respect and opens discussion. Can be a simple fix for problems which arise from lack of know-how.	Explanations that are not needed can be taken as condescending. If needed but are ineffective, can frustrate both worker and supervisor.
Appeal to Values	"The better quality job we do, the more demand there will be for our birds and the more hours of work you will have in the long run."	Is usually experienced by worker as being helpful and supportive. Can clarify for workers how to achieve important rewards.	Supervisors need to understand what employees really value, otherwise appeal will have no effect.
Problem Solving	"The spray rig has to be cleaned now or the work won't get started early enough tomorrow morning. Why won't you give me a hand?"	Shows respect and initiates conversation likely to produce ideas and commitment. Puts supervisors and worker on same side of things.	Can consume much time; Won't work if relationship is so deteriorated that constructive dialogue isn't possible.

Information in this chart was drawn from a paper by Howard Rosenberg, presented at the workshop, "Agricultural Personnel Management for Extension Educators," held in Napa, California.

DISMISSAL

9

9.1 Handling Dismissal in a Professional Way

Dismissal is the "capital punishment" of human relations. It is the highest level of corrective action or punishment a company can impose on an employee and it must be approached carefully.

Managers are faced with the possibility of legal action if they do not handle the dismissal in a professional and fair manner.

Clear, written records provide your first defence against legal action.

Document all the incidents leading to a dismissal and ensure they relate to your progressive discipline system.

Always give yourself time to assess the situation and your position by suspending an employee, who you are considering dismissing for at least 24 hours before dismissing.

This will allow you to review the situation and ideally contact your lawyer to discuss your legal position.

Before you dismiss an employee, evaluate the situation against the following checklist.

9.2 Dismissal Checklist

Is the reason for dismissal work related? Yes___ No___

Is there a rule or management policy which sets standards of performance and behaviour? Yes___ No___

Are the rules and policies reasonable and in compliance with existing Acts and Regulations? Yes___ No___

Did the employee have knowledge of the policy and consequences? Yes___ No___
(*The employer must be able to prove policies were communicated to employees, preferably in writing, and personally acknowledged by the employee.)*

Was the employee was made aware that he/she was not following the required rules and policies? Yes___ No___

Was the investigation of the infraction done fairly and impartially? Yes___ No___

Is there evidence or proof of the employee's wrong doing? Yes___ No___
(Performance appraisals, record of discipline, witnesses to wrong doing, etc. are important).

Has the business applied its policies uniformly to all employees? Yes___ No___

Did the employee have written notice that such an offense would result in dismissal? Yes___ No___

Was corrective action taken? Yes___ No___

Was the corrective action (and/or dismissal) related to the seriousness of the offense? Yes___ No___
(*The employee spinning tires in the driveway is not cause for dismissal).*

Has there been a balance between consistency and flexibility? Yes___ No___

A "no" answer to any of these questions may mean you have not followed proper personnel procedures. Remember, the burden of proof is on the employer.

To dismiss an employee without providing required written reasonable notice or termination pay, employers must show just cause. Grounds for termination occur when an employee is guilty of willful misconduct, disobedience, or willful neglect about which the employee has been warned.

It is imperative that, irrespective of the reason for dismissal that the employee is treated with professionalism and respect. It is also important to keep the reasons for dismissal confidential.

It is the responsibility of the employer to prove:

- The employer established reasonable rules and policies,
- These rules and policies were communicated to the employee,
- The employee was made aware that he/she was not following the required rules and policies,
- The initial and subsequent interventions were appropriate for nature and circumstances of the violation (e.g. the punishment fit the crime),
- The employee was warned that failure to comply would result in dismissal, and
- The employee was unwilling to comply and subsequently dismissed.

If dismissal is decided upon, it should always be handled in a fair and professional manner and with the benefit of legal advice. Clear, written records are your best defense against legal action, so be sure that you have followed your stated policies on discipline and that you have documented any previous warnings or disciplinary actions.

9.3 The Exit Interview

Sooner or later every employee will exit your operation. Types of exit are:

Type #1 - is when a long-time trusted employee retires. Such a termination is usually based on the mutual agreement between you and your employee.

Type #2 - is one that is employee initiated. When this is due to a better opportunity for the employee, it usually results in excitement for the employee and disappointment for you. On the other hand, if the employee is terminating because of dissatisfaction with the job, both the employee and you may feel angry.

Type #3 - is where you initiate dismissal. Usually when an employee is fired, both parties harbour strong feelings of anger.

An exit interview, properly conducted, can give you information about company morale and the attitude of employees toward their supervisors, management, and their fellow employees.

Exit interviews are recommended for both seasonal and full-time employees. One employer who has a large number of seasonal employees does the exit interview in a group setting.

A properly conducted exit interview accomplishes four things:

1. It provides information about how the job scan can be carried out more effectively. An employee usually has good ideas about how to improve things.
2. It provides suggestions for improved employee relations. An employee who is leaving is apt to be willing to talk about problems and concerns he or she saw in the workplace and may make suggestions for improvement.
3. It clears up misconceptions. Regardless of whether the termination is voluntary or forced, it is important that both parties clearly understand why the termination is taking place.
4. It reduces anger. An employee who is hostile toward a previous employer can be very costly to the business. First, there is the chance of the employee badmouthing the firm. Second, there is the chance of legal action based on wrongful dismissal or labour-law violation. Third, there is the chance of vandalism to your business. Try to learn why the employee is angry and reduce it if possible.

9.4 Exit Interview Guide

Ask non-threatening questions such as:

- Which responsibilities did you like most about the job? Which responsibilities did you like the least?
- What did you like most about the responsibilities you were assigned?
- What did you think about the way the manager handled complaints?
- What types of working conditions are most conducive to your best productivity?
- What do you see as the future of this operation?
- What impressed you about this operation when you first accepted your position? Has this impression changed? If so, how? Why?
- When you first joined the operation, was your training helpful for what you were actually doing six months later?
- What type of job are you going to? What are you looking for in that position that you feel is not present in this operation?
- What kind of work do you like to do best? Were you doing that kind of work in your job here?
- What points would you want to make if you could tell top management how you felt about this organization?
- How do you feel about the contribution you have made to this organization?
- Tell me what your feelings are about the benefit program offered by this organization.

Use these answers to help you to select a new employee and improve organizational and personnel areas in your operation.

WARNING: Don't be surprised if you get some very negative comments.

9.5 Exit Interview Questionnaire

Confidential - To be destroyed when summarized and analysed

Name: Job Title:

Department: Date of Hire:

Date of Termination:

1. Reason for termination? (check one)

(a) Leaving for another position ___

(b) Retirement ___

(c) Maternity Leave ___

Are you planning to return when your leave expires? Yes ___ No ___

(d) Return to school ___

(e) Other (briefly explain) ____

Circle best answer

2. In general, were working conditions satisfactory? Never 1 2 3 4 Always

Comments: ____

3. Did you find that your supervisor was fair in his/her requirements? Never 1 2 3 4 Always

Comments: ____

4. Did you find your overall by the ABC Company was fair? Never 1 2 3 4 Always

Comments: ____

5.Did you receive adequate instruction on how to perform your duties? Yes ___ No ___

If No, what improvements would you recommend? ________________________________

6.How would you rate your salary? Too high___ Fair ___Too low ___

Comments: ____

7. Would you consider seeking employment in the future with the ABC Company? Yes ___

No ___

If Yes, in what capacity? ____

If No, why not? ____

8. Do you feel that the ABC Company provides sufficient advancement and promotional opportunities for its employees? Yes ___ No ___

If No, do you have any thoughts on how this situation could be rectified?
____

9. Would you recommend the ABC Company as a possible source of employment? Yes ___ No ___

If No, explain briefly: ____

10. Please use this space for any additional comments you have: ________________________

____

Thank you for your assistance in completing this questionnaire.

APPENDICES 10

Sample Job Ads

The following are actual ads taken from a single edition of one publication. The contact information and locations have been taken out, but the ads are otherwise intact. After each ad are some points to consider:

MANAGER REQUIRED FOR large-scale commercial egg operation. Housing included. *(This is a very brief ad for what purports to be a senior position. It does not list key details such as salary or size of the staff to be managed and other operational details. This may turn off some qualified candidates.)*

MODERN 400 COW dairy requires 1 full-time employee, 1 part-time employee and 1 manager. *(At least the first ad had the eye-catching word 'manager' in capital letters at the start. Note that both of these ads make no attempt to pre-screen candidates by listing qualifications. The employers may have saved some money by running smaller ads, but have opened themselves up to spending a lot of time taking calls from unsuitable candidates.)*

WANTED: RELIABLE PERSON to work on large mixed farm. Must have some experience, driver's license and references. Accommodations available and good hourly wage. *(Another short ad that does little to pre-screen applicants or attract top-notch candidates.)*

MIXED GRAIN AND LIVESTOCK FARM requires energetic, dependable individual. Must have welding, mechanical, and cow/calf experience. Work well with others and take instructions. Drinkers need not apply. References required, good wages and bonus. *(Although short, this ad concisely lists the qualifications required and the mention of good wages and bonuses is enticing. The reference to 'drinkers' and 'take instruction' suggests this employer has had some unhappy experiences. That may deter some good candidates who will wonder if the troubled times are over.)*

OFFERING CAREER POSITION. Must be absolutely honest, dependable and knowledgeable. Large cow/calf operation requires person or couple w/ability to feed, calve, keep records, health check and treat. Salary and benefits up to $50,000. *(All of the previous ads listed a phone number. This one had only a box number, care of the publication where the ad ran. It's a good idea because this ad—which offers challenging career opportunity and a corresponding salary—seems destined to attract a lot of applicants.)*

FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT for reliable self-motivated person interested in large potato/grain operation. This individual would be a farm labourer who should have experience in mechanics, operating equipment, and who is willing to take on farm management responsibility. Living quarters may be available for family and relocation expenses for suitable applicant. *(This ad is also likely to generate a good response. It's only for a labourer, but the mention of taking on* *“farm management responsibility” suggests it offers the opportunity to upgrade one’s skills and experience—the same promise made in the ad described at the start of this chapter.)*

Orienting New Employees

The recruitment and selection processes are the beginnings of worker orientation. Through the procedural steps applicants undergo on the way to getting hired, they acquire information and form impressions that affect their decisions about how to perform on the job, beyond whether to accept an employment offer in the first place. Unfortunately, not many farm business managers take full advantage of either pre-hire or the less time-constrained post-hire opportunities to orient employees.

How does the new milker, picker, or mechanic feel when arriving to work the first day? He or she probably has a strong desire to succeed and is anxious about fitting into the new environment, as both a productive worker and part of a social group. If the employer provides for both, the new employee becomes more certain that it was the right decision to accept the job offer, and everybody wins. During the initial days on a job, employees are probably as receptive as they will ever be to signals about what is expected and offered in their new work environment. This period is a critical time that shapes new hires' impressions and understanding about how to get along.

The work environment experience and the performance pattern an employee establishes during the first few days will have a strong influence on that person's attitude, productivity, and team spirit for weeks, months, and even years to come. This holds true even for seasonal workers, as many return to the same employer year after year.

There is much for the employer to get across about administrative matters in addition to job tasks, tools, and functional relationships. A well-planned orientation accelerates the new hire's development and shortens the time to reach the productivity level desired. At best a weak one wastes opportunity and at worst, it figuratively throws cold water in the face of a worker who was excited to be starting a new job in a new place. At harvest time, when many agricultural managers are particularly busy and face a sudden influx of employees, a well-planned employee orientation can do much to help make transitions as painless as possible and get new employees off on the right foot.

Orientation to farm jobs traditionally has been handled in causal style, often by crew supervisors who merely introduce a new hire to crew members and the flow of work. Workers entering farm businesses through kinship and friendship networks arrive somewhat oriented to their jobs and working conditions. For these newcomers especially, continuing orientation and integration into the workforce tend to center on social and familial relationships.

New employees often are reluctant to ask many questions for fear they will appear ignorant. By anticipating what they will want to know and providing it through experiences and documents, growers can reduce more uncertainties than are expressed. An orientation handout (in the language workers use most) serves as a continuing reference that will help employees recall what they may not have been interested in or able to digest when initially told.

What does a complete orientation cover? The process involves the new hire in filling out personnel forms, learning about job duties from a supervisor and coworkers, reviewing the company handbook if there is one, taking a tour of the new surroundings, meeting co-workers, and starting work activity. In designing an orientation process that fits a given operation, it is wise to get opinions from those who have recently joined the firm.

Suggested elements of an orientation for new employees are listed below:

Initial Welcome

- Introduction to department manager,
- Clarification of the name the employee prefers to be known as,
- Brief history of the company, and
- Lunch with a co-worker the first few days (arranged in advance).

General information and procedures

- Reference document stating terms of employment, including the nature of the contract (such as a fixed-term or at-will) and other company information,
- Location of restrooms, personal storage areas, bulletin board, emergency supplies, and phones,
- Policy on personal use of telephones, company equipment, and facilities,
- Disciplinary, suggestion, and complaint procedures, and
- Special policies or procedures that are unique to working with a given unit or supervisor.

Work time and pay

- Work days and hours and variability of the schedule,
- Lunch and break periods,
- Overtime requirements or options,
- Means of notification in case of changes,
- Call-in procedure when unable to show up when expected,
- Tardiness and absenteeism policies,
- Time card and other time-keeping procedures,
- Pay cheque distribution—when, where, how,
- What to do and whom to ask about any pay discrepancies,
- Starting pay rate, including incentive wages or bonuses, and any normal progression,
- Relation of future pay increases to merit, longevity in job, or cost of living,
- Fringe benefits available,

- Procedures for use of vacation credit, sick/personal leave, and holidays, and
- Performance review and appraisal procedures.

The job

- Tour of the specific area(s) in which the employee will work,
- Introduction to the lead person and others in the work unit,
- Organizational structure and chain of command beyond the work unit,
- Systems, tools and procedures in the entire work unit,
- Job duties and scope,
- Relation of the employee's job to the end product and consumers,
- Specific performance expectations and work standards,
- Product quality requirements, and
- Any promotional opportunities and anticipated time to achieve them.

Safety

- All elements of the company injury and illness prevention program,
- Pesticide safety training as required under the Worker Protection Standard,
- Use and care of work equipment,
- Identification and location of workplace hazards,
- Use, storage, and disposal of solvents and hazardous chemical,s
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE), including clothes, footwear, respiratory, and eye protection,
- Symptoms of pesticide illness and heat stress,
- Lifting techniques and avoidance of ergonomic hazards,
- Use of fire extinguishers and emergency procedures in case of fire,
- Location of first-aid/medical care, and
- How to report and deal with accidents and illnesses.

An effective orientation pays off in employee performance, retention and workforce harmony. In this example, a manager recalled what a new orientation effort did for his firm:

"Years back we had a new employee orientation program we called Operation Indoctrination (OPDOC). We had OPDOC welcome letters for new employees, OPDOC welcome packages, OPDOC name tags for the new hires, and a buddy in their department that we called an OPDOCER. We also had top and mid-level managers stop by to introduce themselves to any new hires and to welcome them the first week. The program didn't just belong to the personnel guy. The whole company was part of it, and we all had a lot of fun with it….oh, and we reduced turnover by 64 percent."

Leadership Styles and Elements of Supervising

Theory into Action: An Example

Johan took over the greenhouse business from his father and has slowly modernized and expanded it. That's been more difficult to do in the past two years as production costs have risen while market prices have remained flat. Johan still views expansion as critical to his business—in fact, reduced margins increase the need to generate higher gross sales. But given his tight finances he's decided to retrofit two older structures which have sat idle since the last major expansion three years ago. The area needs to be cleaned out and a good part of the guttering systems as well as parts of the structure, ventilation system and piping will have to be replaced. Since keeping costs to a minimum is paramount, Johan wants to use recycled parts as much as possible.

Mark is the senior employee—a steady, patient, reliable worker. He does things "by the book" following routine and standard operating procedures. But he doesn't thrive in unfamiliar situations and Johan knows from experience that Mark will have trouble with this assignment. If he's told to economize, he'll waste days scavenging old parts or fixing things that aren't worth repairing. If he's told to get the job done quickly, he'll rip out equipment that could be salvaged.

Susan thrives on change and excitement. She interacts well with colleagues and quickly gets people to cooperate. She focuses on short-term results and easily solves problems of a practical nature. She assists Mark in overseeing the seasonal workers. Mark keeps everybody on task and on schedule but isn't very adept at training new workers or dealing with problem employees. Susan enjoys handling those situations and does it well. Her work flags when everything gets "too routine."

Steve is innovative and often comes up with better ways to handle a task or improve efficiency. After having to clean up the storage area where old parts and equipment are stored, he came up with the idea of retrofitting the old greenhouses. But Steve's productivity isn't always the best—he likes to take extra time to produce quality work the first time and that sometimes mean he's painfully slow at completing a task.

In Johan's view, Susan is the obvious choice to oversee the retrofitting job. But he knows that Mark will view that decision as an insult and a challenge to his status as the senior employee. Steve will feel cheated at not being able to implement the idea he came up with. Johan's instinct is to just give Susan the job and hope neither Mark nor Steve sulks for too long. But he doesn't want the situation to fester and has concluded it would be better to talk to both of them up front. He talks to Mark first, so he doesn't feel ambushed by the announcement that Susan is getting the assignment. He tells him matter-of-factly that he's picking Susan because he thinks this project plays to her talents. He also asks him if he would consider training Steve as assistant crew boss in Susan's absence. After giving the news to Susan, Johan talks to Steve and tells him that Mark will be training him as assistant crew boss. He thanks him for his idea and *suggests he may want to give thought to how they might improve other systems or procedures in the greenhouse.*

The scenario isn't meant to suggest that there was only one right way to go—you might have picked Mark or Steve for the job or you might have handled the situation differently. What's important is that Johan has factored in the personality traits of his employees (and himself) in arriving at his decision and implementing it.

Of course, none of the people in this scenario fit neatly into one box on the grid, but you can see strong leanings in each of them to one type. Johan has displayed effective leadership by forcing himself out of his corner of the grid. He likes harmony and hates confrontation, but has avoided the easy way out. He's recognized that Mark wants and expects respect and has given him a measure of that by talking to him first and giving him the assignment (framed as a request) to train Steve. But he hasn't concocted some story to placate him. Mark's a good employee but he has his limitations—if he wants more responsibility and authority, he's going to have to improve in those areas. Johan has obviously read Susan well and given her a chance to further develop her strengths. He has also given Steve a reward for his contribution by giving him recognition and encouragement, a new assignment, and the chance to learn supervisory skills.

Ideas in Practice: 100 Years of Experience – Priceless

Bell's Nurseries Ltd. first opened its doors in 1956. Founded by Dutch immigrant Adrian bell and his wife, Katie, Bell's has continued to grow in both size and market-share. Today, nearly 300 acres and up to 130 employees are involved in the production of woody ornamentals, fruit trees, perennials and other nursery plants. The vast majority of the sales are wholesale. The future didn't always look so bright for the Bell family, however. When Adrian died of cancer unexpectedly in 1982, his 24-year old son, John, was left to run the nursery.

John recognized his own inexperience and realized that in order to stay in business he would need advice and assistance from others. Prior to his father's death, John had attended a farm management seminar and had learned about advisory councils. He found out that an advisory council's main function is to act as a sounding board. In addition to this, he realized that members would provide support, advice, and even act as a devil's advocate. Advisors, who are often retired business executives, can propose new business opportunities or suggest ways to expand or diversify the existing business. They can offer invaluable instruction on everything from finance and personnel management to strategic planning and succession planning.

Wanting to continue the success of Bell's in producing the highest quality nursery stock possible, John brought in three retired, local business people to sit on Bell's Nurseries' advisory council. He chose people who, although not from his particular line of business, shared his values and who had been successful in their own right. Between them, they provided Bell with over 100 years' worth of business experience. They've advised him on land purchases, capital expenditures, and contract negotiations, as well as everything in between. They have held Bell accountable to his decisions, and have often required him to justify his plans to them. While the advisors hold no official power in the organization, for the most part John has taken the advice they have offered.

As Bell became more confident, the meetings shifted from being held every month to every quarter. Today, John has doubled the size of his father's business and has set trends in both innovative production and environmental issues, but he has no intention of dismantling the council. In his own words, the members offer a "depth of management expertise that's impossible for one individual to accumulate."

In fact, it is those 100 years of experience that have allowed this family enterprise to remain in the family.

Operating a family business is a goal for many. While this can be very rewarding, it can also result in a number of challenges for on-farm and off-farm family members. Many of these challenges can be addressed through clear communications. Creating a family business charter can be extremely helpful to minimize conflicts and misunderstanding. Some issues to be addressed in the family charter include:

- Who will be hired?
    - The charter needs to spell out whether all family members will be hired, including spouses, in-laws and cousins. In all cases, they should be hired because of their ability to contribute, not because of their family connection
- What is the criteria for entry?
    - Guidelines should state age, education and experience required. For some families, on-farm training will be sufficient. Others see the advantage of having family members exposed to other experiences.
- Is there a job opening?
    - Family members should be brought in to do a job that clearly serves the purpose of the business. Creating a meaningless job just because a family member wants to work in the business can lead to resentment among other employees and to the erosion of the family member's self-esteem.
- Who will supervise?
    - Having one family member supervise another can be difficult. Family members often get very little critical, honest feedback about their performance. New family members should be supervised, if possible, by a non-family employee. This facilitates better training and more positive feedback.
- How will the family employee be held accountable?
    - Once in the business, is a family member assured of continued employment, no matter what? It is difficult for families to deal with a family member who isn't doing a good job. Having clearly defined roles and responsibilities with a performance appraisal system in place can greatly aid in handling this problem.
- How much will they be paid?
    - Salary should be based on service to the business and be comparable to that of other employees doing similar work. Though a parent may want to give extra assistance to a child, this should not be done as part of a business compensation package. Rather, the parents should find a way of helping outside of the business context.

Treatment of non-family employees is another important question. Ask yourself the following questions about your non-family employees. After you've assessed it from your viewpoint, ask them to answer the same questions. Do they see the situation the same way you do?

- Do non-family employees have the same chance for advancement as family employees?
- Are family members treated the same as non-family employees?

- Are the senior managers willing to hear opinions and ideas even if they disagree with them?
- Are the opinions and viewpoints of all employees listened to and valued?
- Are salaries and rewards for both family and non-family members reasonable compared to what is expected of them?
- Are people promoted because of ability rather than family connections?
- Do non-family employees feel free to disagree with family employees?
- Does everyone in the business know how it is doing?
- Is information in the business shared freely?

Compensation is often a source of conflict for a family business. Clearly defining a rational system of compensation for both farm and non-farm family members is a practical way to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts. A defined compensation system for a family farm may state that all family members are entitled to equal gifts and bequests. Family members who are employed by the business are entitled to salaries, wages and benefits. Both farming and non-farming family members who have an ownership interest may be entitled to dividends and equity appreciation.

Each family will have a different approach to the above issues. It varies along a continuum of business first where family members receive no preferential treatment over non-family members with respect to hiring, compensation, to a family-first approach where family members do receive preferential treatment with respect to hiring, compensation, etc. The following example is a blended approach.

Rethinking Communication in Family Business

1. Receiving feedback: Recall and write a few things that family members have said that upset you. What would you have preferred they say instead?
2. Giving feedback: Recall something that you have said that upset someone else in the family. How could you have rephrased it to yield a more productive effect?
3. Family feedback: Ask all family members to record critical messages they hear from each other during a set time period. Discuss the results of these messages and how they could have been delivered to better effect.

In the following story, would a different approach by either antagonist have softened, if not prevented, the confrontation?

The Hermann family ran a large greenhouse operation with a direct marketing store attached to the workshop. Margaret and Roger had started the operation and now worked with their two adult children, Hugh and Sandra; Sandra managed the direct marketing store and frequently brought her two-year old son, Eric, to work with her.

One day as Sandra was busy talking to a customer, Eric wandered into the adjacent workshop and became curious what his Uncle Hugh was doing. Hugh was welding a piece of equipment and as soon as he saw Eric, stopped his work and took him promptly back to the store. He felt annoyed about the interruption in his work but seeing Sandra was with a customer, said nothing to her. It wasn't long before Eric again wandered into the workshop area. This time Hugh took him firmly by the hand and snapped at Sandra as he handed him back, "Take care of your kid, eh?" When Eric appeared in the workshop a third time, Hugh lost his temper. He marched into the store and began shouting at his sister. "What's wrong with you anyway? Don't you care that your kid might get hurt in the workshop? Not only are you making it hard for me to do my job, you're being a lousy mother. Maybe you should just stay home where you belong and take care of your kid." Sandra reacted in kind, with as much hostility as she felt from Hugh, "Don't shout at me, you bully! If you didn't always leave the door open, Eric wouldn't get in there. You're always complaining about Eric. If you were a decent uncle, you'd spend more time with him. And of course you'd like me to stay home. You never have liked the idea that I'm an equal partner in this business. Deal with it."

The way these two communicated clearly will take a toll on their work relationship and their ability to cooperate in this family business. Neither Hugh nor Sandra seemed to be building for a harmonious future in their exchange. Imagine how differently this scene might have played out if the first time Hugh had brought Eric back to the store, he had phrases his concerns as an "I" message:

"I was busy welding and Eric came into the shop. I'm afraid he'll get hurt. Plus I really need to get this job done and can't concentrate when he's around. How can we make sure that I get my job done and keep Eric safe?"

Even if he had delivered his angry message as described, Sandra might have defused the situation by paraphrasing and reframing. *“I understand that you’re concerned about Eric’s safety and want to get your work done. When I am busy and get interrupted, I get upset as well.”*

Sandra could have tried to enlist Hugh in figuring out how to prevent future occurrences.

“It’s tough for me when I am working with a customer. What do you think we should do to make sure Eric is safe, you are not disturbed, and I can take care of business out here?”

If you can, recall a family situation similar to the one with Sandra and Hugh. What “I” messages might have substituted for inflammatory statements? Would paraphrasing and reframing have helped? Would the people involved have reacted differently if these techniques had been used?

Taking Over the Family Farm: The Great Divide

Matt Lindermeier and his young family returned to the family farm when his father was within a few years of retiring. Noll and Lydia Lindermeier built a new house about two miles away, within view of their old house, where Matt lived with his family. Moll thought he was ready to do less work, and Lydia wanted to spend time with her grandchildren.

Noll was in the habit of waking each morning about 4:30 a.m. He would look toward Matt's house to see if he was starting his day. Noll expected his son to work just as hard and as many hours as he did while building the farming business.

Matt was willing to work hard at being a successful farmer, but he believed that sun-up was an acceptable time to start each day. He and his family liked to sleep in on Sunday mornings and they thought Sundays should be reserved for necessary chores, such as feeding cattle, and for family activities.

Noll was bothered by what he called Matt's "laziness." Rather than talk with Matt, Noll just went up to the farmstead and started working by 5:30 a.m. Matt was bothered when he would see his 70-year old father doing physical labour so early in the day. His festering feelings, in turn, caused problems within the rest of the family.

After about a year of such problems, the entire family participated in a program sponsored by their country Cooperative Extension office. The program consisted of goal setting, interpersonal skills for farm families, and financial management. In this setting, the Lindermeiers came to recognize that they never talked about goals for the business, their expectations of each other, or when and how Matt would actually take over the farm.

One of the instructors met with the two Lindermeier families to help them work through a goal-setting process as separate families and for the farm business. Through their conversations, Noll realized that Matt was not lazy. He came to understand that Matt needed one day a week to sleep in and have good family time. Furthermore, Noll and Matt both came to understand that Noll was struggling with the idea of relinquishing control of a business he had spent a lifetime building.

Through their goal setting and conversations, the Lindermeiers decided on the following ground rules:

- It was okay for Matt to sleep in on Sundays. Noll would not come to the main farmstead on those days.
- A plan would be developed within six months as to how Matt would take over management of the business. Another plan of transferring ownership would be developed within the year.
- A family meeting would be held once a month to discuss business issues. The meetings would be held at Noll and Lydia's house on the first Saturday of each month, beginning at 8 a.m.

After a year, the Lindermeier families seemed happy. Noll was enjoying his retirement, going to the coffee shop each morning, taking his grandchildren fishing, and traveling with his wife. Noll still helped with the farming and feeding whenever Matt needed him.

Matt was able to sleep in on Sundays. He was following the plans developed for taking over the farming business and had become more comfortable seeking his father's advice. The monthly business meetings were usually short, but everyone believed they were a good time to talk about specific, and sometimes sensitive issues.

Ten Common Causes of Family Business Pay Problems

- Role confusion: Confusing payouts to family members in their roles as owners or loved ones with compensation for performing a job in the business.
- Using pay to achieve tax savings: Using high salaries, perks or "phantom jobs" to transfer tax deductible wealth to family members and avoid heavy taxes imposed on dividends or gifts.
- Using pay to maintain parental control: Using paychecks to convey messages or accomplish goals that have nothings to do with the market value of the job performed, such as luring reluctant children to work in the business or pressuring offspring to learn the importance of frugality.
- Using pay to resolve emotional issues: Providing extra pay to ease uncomfortable feelings, such as parental guilt or resentment among offspring.
- Preserving secrecy at all costs: Assuming that it is always indiscreet, impolite, or just plain wrong to talk about how people working in the business are paid.
- Confusing business and personal funds: Assuming you can draw as much compensation from the business for as long as you need it to support the retirement lifestyle of your choice.
- Taking relationships for granted: Assuming family members will trust, respect and be satisfied with your pay decisions just because they are family members.
- Using salary substitutes: offering titles, perks or other "salary substitutes" to appease family members unhappy with their pay.
- Paying everyone too little – or too much: Holding down top-management pay as a way of suppressing compensation throughout the organization; or, conversely, raising pay too high to retain people and avoid having to tell long-time employees how they are doing.
- Using pay to smooth ups and downs: Altering pay to soften the impact on employees of ups and downs in the business paying more in lean times to prove that you are a great boss and paying less in good times because there is no need to prove anything then.

Culture Value Differences

Figure 1 identifies some key cultural value differences that employers are likely to encounter between Canadian and foreign workers. These are *broad cultural generalizations,* and represent the opposite ends of a continuum, with many variations in between. There is also variation found within every culture, so care must be taken to avoid cultural stereotyping.

Individualism/Collectivism is the core dimension present in most cultures, and tends to be closely tied to the corresponding value dimensions as show in Figure 1.

Individualism refers to the tendency to value individual identity, rights and needs, and "promotes self-efficiency, individual responsibilities, and personal autonomy" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p.67). The key values of individualism are "freedom, honesty, social recognition, comfort, pleasure-seeking and personal equity" (Ting-Toomey, p.68).

Collectivism refers to the tendency to value group identity, group rights, and "in-group-oriented needs over individual wants and desires. Collectivism promotes relational interdependence, in-group harmony, and in-group collaborative spirit" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p.67). The key values of collectivism are "harmony, face-saving, respect and conformity of parents' wishes, equality in the distribution of rewards among peers (for the sake of group harmony), and fulfillment of other's needs" (Ting-Toomey, p.68).

Figure 1. Key Cultural Value Differences

Individualism	Collectivism
Self-reliance, independence, individual goals, personal gain, functional, individual face-saving	Family and community interdependence, group goals, relational, collective face-saving
Egalitarianism (low power distance) Fairness, belief in equal opportunity, informality emphasized, subordinates expect consultation	**Hierarchy** (high power distance) Power distance (seniority, age, rank, title), and formality emphasized, subordinates expect directions
Competition Individual achievement	**Cooperation** Group achievement
Use of time Time is money, focus on punctuality, efficiency, productivity, "live to work"	**Passage of time** Time is for life, focus on spontaneous expression, "work to live"
Change/Future Adaptability ensures survival, focus on "progress", innovation	**Tradition/Past** Stability ensures survival, focus on time-honoured & proven traditions

(Adapted from Bennett & Bennett, 2007.; Stewart, et al., 1998; Ting-Toomey, 1999)

Some countries/cultures that *tend to be individualistic* are: Canada, United States, Australia, United Kingdom, Netherlands, New Zealand, and Germany; and some countries/cultures that *tend to be collectivistic* are: Mexico, The Philippines, Guatemala, Ecuador, Taiwan/China, and Japan.

Consider the following: The employer discovers that an expensive piece of equipment has been broken due to negligence and wants to find out who is responsible for the damage. In keeping with the collaborative spirit of collectivism, and the desire to maintain harmony and prevent a co-worker from losing face, no individual worker would be expected to admit fault in the incident, nor would it be appropriate for punitive measures to be taken. It might be most prudent in this situation for the employer to review proper operating procedures, including incident reporting, with all of the workers.

(Integration of Immigrant Labour into Workplace and Communities, Silvia Begin[1] and Charlene Ball[2], 2008)

More information is available at: http://www.banffpork.ca/proc/2008pdf/129-Begin-Ball.pdf

Cultural Adaptation & Culture Shock

Newcomers go through several stages of adaptation to a change in culture. Initially the newcomer experiences excitement over the novelty of new surroundings, this “honeymoon stage” wears out as he/she becomes burdened by cultural stress, leading to “Culture Shock,” a state of loss and disorientation precipitated by a change in environment that requires adjustment” (Barna, 1976). It occurs as a result of the loss of familiar cues, breakdown of interpersonal communication, and identity crisis (Weaver, 1993, p. 139). . .“when one enters another culture, it is like two icebergs colliding—the real clash occurs beneath the water where values and thought patterns conflict” (G. Weaver, p. 159). Culture shock is often followed by a period of partial adaptation/recovery, and additional culture shock incidents, before eventually achieving a level of sustainable cultural adaptation.

Recognizing Culture Shock

Symptoms of culture shock can include: headaches, dizziness, rashes, nausea, irritability, insomnia or excessive sleepiness, depression, withdrawal, paranoia, anger, aggression, hatred, fear, crying, and complaining. (L. Barna, 1976)

The single most important factor in easing the integration process for the foreign workers *will* be *their own awareness of the adaptation process* and of some effective coping strategies. Training and resources must be available to assist foreign workers with this process, as well as for their hosts to provide effective support. However, proactive measures taken by the employer, such as those mentioned below, will likely minimize the problems associated with the adaptation process.

Considering Cultural and Language Differences

Peruvian herders, Latino pickers, Asian fishermen, Anglo cowboys. The fundamental demographic shifts changing the face and fabric of Canada also have charted new courses for managers in western agriculture. The old techniques and languages do not seem to work as well with the more diverse workforce that agricultural employers have begun to know in recent years. Dealing with personnel issues and conflicts that are rooted in culture, values or language differences requires new knowledge. Skills and flexibility for many agricultural managers.

Cultural Interpretations

A grower's respect for employees of other cultures goes a long way toward making the association both productive and enjoyable. Many misunderstandings arise because people of different cultures interpret or react to certain situations very differently.

It is hard to know for sure how someone else will interpret a look in the eye, avoidance of eye contact, a handshake, hug, silence, or even a smile. These gestures are all open to interpretation. Looking some people in the eye may indicate listening; a pronounced facial expression may indicate understanding. To these people, averting eyes often suggests inattentiveness or insincerity. But to people from other traditions, direct eye contact and uncensored facial expressions may come off as distracting, aggressive, or even rude and disrespectful.

Silence generally means agreement in the dominant Canadian culture, but it can mean many things to other people – "no" or "I don't have anything to add," or "Don't pursue the subject," "I am thinking," or even "I disagree." Some people avoid saying no in order to maintain harmony.

For instance, Jack Green manages a crew of Asian-born workers in his greenhouse. Last year, he developed a plan to reduce the number of hours needed to perform two of their most time-consuming production tasks. He knew he heeded the cooperation of the crew members to make his idea work, so he called a meeting to explain the minor adjustments that they would have to make. Since no one expressed disagreement, the new plan was implemented. Or so Jack thought. Within two weeks, it became evident that the workers were still using the same procedures they had been suing and not doing what they had apparently agreed to at the meeting. Jack felt that the team had gone back on its commitment.

In many cultures, saying no to a request or offer, no matter how unreasonable is taboo. In others, "no" is never said to one in authority. Other expressions of disagreement may be used. The unaware manager who misses these signals, as Jack did, may feel that an agreement has taken place and is surprised when what "was promised" never happens. Silence may mean consent in some legal and social contexts but certainly not all.

Consider a supervisor who is angry because one of his Latino workers takes the day off each time his wife needs to go to a doctor's appointment. The boss cannot understand the need for the employee to do this because he knows the wife usually drives and takes care of shopping and other errands on her own.

How does each view the situation? The supervisor is irritated that the employee is not there when needed. In fact, the boss describes the employee as “irresponsible” for taking time off work. The employee feels that his boss is insensitive and punitive. Each, of course, sees the other through his own cultural lens.

What the supervisor does not realize is that in the employee’s culture, the role of head of the family requires him to take his wife to such important appointments and that he was being quite responsible within the context of these values. Family responsibility and loyalty to kin are prime values within many cultures. The employee, on the other hand, does not appear to realize that according to his boss’s cultural programming, work commitments take precedence over all non-emergency matters and that family members take care of such responsibilities on their own. The issue for the two of them is not who loves his family more, who is a better spouse, or who is a more committed worker, but how this can be worked out.

For another example, consider Susan, who is responsible for delivering supplies to five herders working for the family sheep operation. She sometimes finds herself gesturing a great deal in order to communicate. During on recent delivery, she indicated to a South American herder that he was doing well by giving him the “OK” gesture. The worker became visibly embarrassed and offended.

Body language, including gestures and physical distance, has important connotations in many cultures. Although body language is a natural and usually helpful adjunct to successful cross-cultural communication, some gestures may offend people from other cultures. As Susan later learned, the “OK” hand sign carries negative connotations in South America. Though most workers realize that managers probably do not mean to be offensive when using such loaded signals, some culturally rooted associations with gestures still make people uncomfortable. Managers can avoid difficulty by being aware of and eliminating culturally sensitive gestures from their vocabulary of body language.

An owner, manager, or foreman who understands farm workers’ cultural backgrounds is better able to understand why his or her employees act, think, and speak the way they do and is better able to work with them for greater productivity.

Bridging a Language Barrier

More and more supervisors are faced with the challenge of communicating with employees who do not speak English easily. Growers unable to speak with their employees usually communicate through bilingual foremen or crew leaders. Non-supervisory workers, their family members, friends and neighbours aid some growers.

A large and growing share of farm managers, however, have developed some ability to speak the language of their employees, and they often achieve operational and employee relations benefits by using it. Even if most communication is indirect, a primarily English speaker can convey respect, accessibility, and maybe some technical information by trying to speak in another's language. A manager's simple "Hello," "How are you?," "Goodbye," "Please," or "Thank you" in a worker's mother tongue sends the additional message that it is alright to try a different language and learn from mistakes. It also gives the worker a chance to teach something.

The overwhelming majorities of non-native and non-English speakers want to succeed, are intelligent and hardworking, try to express themselves clearly, and want to understand what they are told. But English is a complex language, and many workers who did not grow up with it are intimidated by the difficulty of using it. People who do not have their ability to communicate easily often develop feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness that carry over to their work performance and personal lives. When agricultural managers help employees to understand and be understood, they benefit more than their operations.

Simpler English

A most basic guideline in conversing with workers whose primary language is not English is to use simple vocabulary and sentence structure. Organizing thoughts before starting to speak and sticking to one subject at a time reduces cross-language difficulty. Concrete descriptions and straightforward, specific requests are more easily understood than abstractions and subtly manipulations. Instead of "I wanted to see if you could get here a little earlier tomorrow so we can get a good jump on things," try "Can you come in at seven tomorrow so that we can meet the deadline?" Because jargon and slang tend to confuse, they are best avoided. Phrasing statements positively and using active rather than passive verbs reduces room for misinterpretation. "Please return those tools to the shed," instead of "Those tools need to be put back."

- A calm and respectful tone is always welcome. Emphasize key words when communicating with a non-native speaker, but consistent use of oversimplified, grammatically-incorrect English may insult the listener's intelligence. Visual aids can give the worker more ways to understand. Pictures, charts, and diagrams are all good bridge-builders. So is the written word. Writing down instructions or key ideas from meetings and phone calls gives employees greater opportunity to fully grasp the information.

Assessing How Well You Are Understood

Supervisors are often frustrated when workers indicate they understand instructions, when in truth they do not. Why don't they just say so? Because they do not want to look foolish or insulting by implying that the instructions have not been explained well enough. They also may worry that, even if explained again, they will still not understand. If employees nod and smile at appropriate times and appear focussed, there is a good chance that they really understand. If they giggle at serious information and offer no interruptions or questions, it is safe to assume they do not. A few techniques can reduce the guesswork, with English and non-English speakers alike:

- Observe the employee's performance after the communication. If a procedure is done correctly the first time, the instructions were probably understood.
- Let employees ask questions individually and in private. Doing so can spare them loss of face from publicly admitting they do not understand.
- Allow enough time during and after the conversation for non-native speakers to formulate their questions. Come back to field questions after a day or so.
- Ask questions that would reveal comprehension, and phrase them positively (e.g. "What part of the job do you think will take longest?" "Do you understand?" rather than "You don't understand, do you?").

Helping Employees Get Their Points Across

Understanding what workers are trying to say is just as critical as helping them get a message from someone else. The following ideas may prove helpful:

- Share responsibility for a communication that does now work at first. Say something such as, "It sure is noisy here," or "I'm sorry it's taking me so long to understand," to take pressure off of the speaker.
- Invite the employee to slow down and collect his or her thoughts.
- Repeat what the speaker said in your own words and ask if you have heard correctly.
- If spoken communication is not working well, ask the employee to write part or all of the message.
- What the speaker's lips.
- Observe body language.

Supervising across language barriers is not easy, but no one has to accept it as insurmountable. Build bridges by using clear English, checking comprehension, working to understand all workers, and encouraging efforts to speak English. Doing these things builds essential communication skills that ultimately strengthen the operation.

Cultural differences are often subtle and loaded with nuances that are difficult to grasp. While most managers have to make some adjustments to deal well with people from other cultures, they need not and cannot change their essential personalities and own cultural values. Overriding rules-of-thumb for managers in today's diverse American landscape are:

- Try to remain aware of the natural tendency toward ethnocentrism – an orientation presuming that all people share one's own cultural values and perspectives.

- Don’t expect that workers from other backgrounds want to or can assimilate into the dominant culture.

Managing Employee Performance

Performance management is a broad concept that encompasses all communication between a manager and an employee intended to foster a high level of work performance. It must include exchanges about what to do, how to do it, how well it was done, and how to improve on the performance next time.

Most people want to do a good job. Poor performance usually can be traced to past experiences or current conditions fraught with inequity, fatigue, failure, or mixed messages. Growers, packinghouse managers, and other agricultural employers can see better employee performance through control of organizational structure, supervisory processes and other work conditions.

Effective adjustments in personnel management are aided by understanding how the job content, immediate job context, and overall work environment are affecting workers. When performance falls short, consider the following questions before concluding that a worker is unfit or lazy:

- Did anyone ever tell the employee what he is expected, or even allowed, to do?
- Does she understand enough of the big picture on a job to contribute as much as she can?
- Does he have the skill, physical energy, and time to handle his workload?
- In general, what difference does she think it will ultimately make to her if she does what is expected and refrains from what is prohibited?
- Do management's policies or past practices indicate that good work would improve job security? Current pay? Next year's pay? Future work assignments? Chances for layoff, rehire, or promotion?
- Does work performance affect whether immediate supervisors treat him with more or less respect?
- Do coworkers appreciate or resent her working well and according to management's standard?
- Will he be expected by either a supervisor or coworkers to compensate for others' inadequacies?

Enabling and Building High Performance

Performance that fails to meet expectations can be sorted into three classes of cause: (1) "I don't know" (2) "can't do" and (3) "won't do." The first is a matter of understanding. If workers are unsure about what is expected of them or do not know enough about the overall operation to do more than the minimum in their own jobs, the manager ought to find ways of delivering the missing information. Opportunities to inform can be found in employee orientation, job descriptions, an employee handbook or written notices, rotation of job assignments, crew or staff meetings, and ongoing, informal communications.

Workers often cite insufficient direction as a major impediment to their performance and insufficient feedback as a block to timely correction of problems. They want to know what is expected, how they are doing, how to monitor their own performance, and how others see them. An ongoing exchange of information, as well as periodic performance evaluations, can enhance both ability and motivation. The purpose of an evaluation is to clarify and agree upon expectations for the next performance period. However, performance evaluation alone is insufficient communication to ensure that an employee understands the job and its requirements.

Managers have to communicate their expectations before the work begins if they are to reasonably expect the results they desire. Ongoing communication between management and employees increases the likelihood of satisfactory performance. Where an organization appears to have problems with employees understanding job expectations, a review of communication methods and frequency is in order.

Once employees understand what is expected of them on the job, their performance depends on their ability and motivations – what they can do, as well as what they will do. Neither of the two is sufficient by itself to ensure good work. Despite being extremely dedicated, enthusiastic and hard-working, a person with no mechanical skills will not be able to overhaul the tractor engine. And even a top-notch mechanic will not get the job done right if he or she is not motivated to do so. Managers who want better worker performance may need to consider management practices that affect ability, motivation or both.

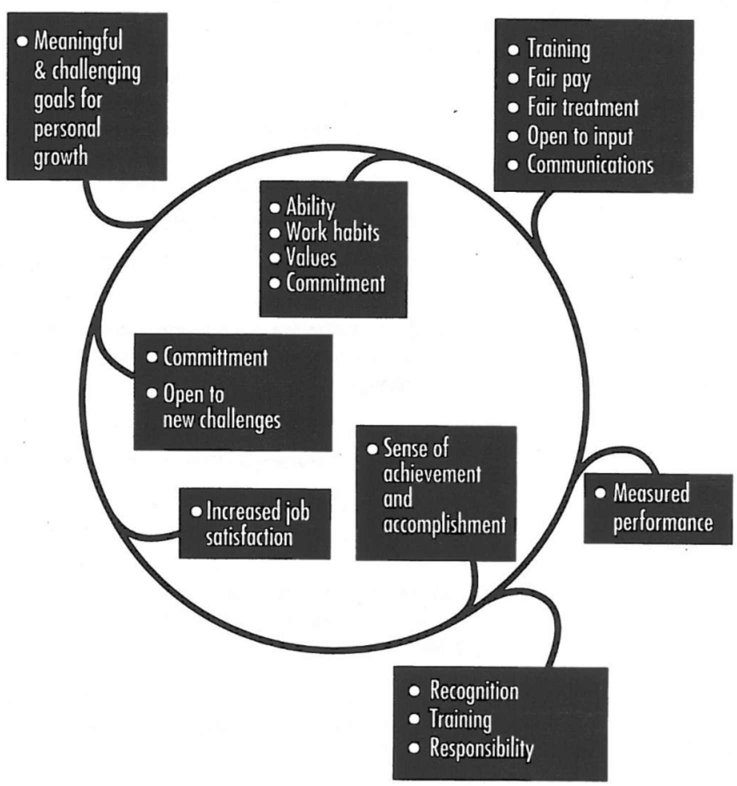
If employees do not have the ability to work effectively and reliably, the manager might consider restructuring recruitment and selection processes or providing better training (after hire) for the marginally qualified or for people whose jobs have changed. Different tools or equipment can help solve ability problems by reducing skill or stamina requirements, and they are sometimes the "reasonable accommodations" that workers with disabilities need.

When workers know what to do and are able to contribute up to par but do not, the issue is rightfully viewed as a lack of effort or motivation. Some folks call it an "attitude problem." The effort that people exert depends to a large extent on what they expect to receive in return. Most employees work harder to obtain higher pay, greater job security, coworkers esteem, appreciation, or a kind word. They seldom put out additional effort for a blank stare, disrespect from the foreman, resentment from coworkers, and more work without compensation.

Farmers can use pay systems, performance appraisals, job allocation policies, and related supervisory practices to persuade workers that it really matters if they perform up to or above expectations. Analyzing what the employee stands to gain from working hard is a step toward uncovering conditions that lead people to work below capacity.

Several factors can be combined to create an atmosphere in which worker productivity is more likely to flourish. These factors are noted in the High Performance Cycle diagram below. The influences under managers' and supervisors' control are noted on the outside portion of the circle (four groups). Factors internal to the employee are noted within the circle (four groups). This model highlights four powerful ways for managers to foster high performance:

- Set meaningful, challenging, achievable goals
- Provide clear instructions and check that they are well understood
- Provide structured, informative performance reviews
- Recognize personnel through verbal and other meaningful rewards



Motivation and Work

Motivation is, by definition, that which causes action or movement. What action or movement is evidence of motivation among agricultural employees? Employers associate motivated behaviour with those actions of workers that serve their business interests: accepting a job offer, staying in the job, producing high-quantity and high-quality results, coming to work reliably, working safely, cooperating with supervisors and coworkers, and offering useful ideas. If these behaviours are not in evidence, are workers unmotivated?

Some workers take an active interest in their work and the firms that employ them. They notice things that need attention and go out of their way to provide extra thought and care. Others are obviously turned off, showing no desire to perform beyond the bare minimum expected of them. They never notice the broken fence, the soft tire, the dry bearing, or the calf in distress. Differences in the quality and rates of performance of equally able workers are usually attributed to their motivation. Nearly everybody is motivated but not necessarily to do what us in the best interest of the farm. Mangers are challenged to tap their employees' motivation by arranging job content and context so that workers' pursuit of their own objectives naturally serves those of the business.

Needs-Based Views of Motivation

Many philosophers, behavioural scientists, and agricultural managers have offered theories on why people do what they do based on inherent drives to meet certain needs. One of the best known theories is Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow identified five categories of need and argued that humans are motivated to fill unmet needs in a predictable order. Once a need is pretty well met, it does not motivate, but the next need in the hierarchy does. The need categories are listed in order, highest level first:

Self-actualization: the need to fulfill personal potential, to use abilities to the fullest and most creative extent.

Esteem: the need for respect, prestige and recognition from others and for a sense of self-respect and competence.

Social: the need for love, affection, and a sense of belonging in relationships.

Safety: the need for security, stability and protection from harm in the present and future.

Physiological: the need for basic personal maintenance – food, water, air and shelter.

Until the lower-level needs (physiological and safety) are met, the higher-level needs do not motivate, according to Maslow. The manager who understands where employees currently are in the hierarchy can offer the most effective performance-contingent rewards to motivate their efforts (examples listed below). However, people's needs change over time.

Performance-Contingent Rewards

Physiological	- Physically comfortable work area - Livable salary/wage
Safety	- Safe working conditions - Job security - Good base salary/wage and benefits
Social	- Friendly coworkers - Social activities on and off the job - Compatible supervisor
Esteem	- Respect and recognition from managers and coworkers - Favourable performance evaluation - Merit pay increases and position advancement
Self-Actualization	- Creative and challenging work - Learning and growth - Participation in decision making - Responsibility, autonomy, and discretion

Another needs-oriented framework, Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, holds that not all types of needs motivate effort at work. Its central notion is that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are two different things, not opposing values of the same variable. If certain "hygiene factors" in the work context are not present, workers become dissatisfied and are likely to withhold effort or leave. If present, however, these factors do not tap motivations for high performance.

According to Herzberg, only "motivators," which are inherent in the job itself, can effectively stimulate performance in the long-run. Motivators can satisfy, and hygiene factors can dissatisfy. Good hygiene in the work context may hold down dissatisfaction and turnover in the short term, especially if employees have few options, but managers cannot count on them to motivate good work. This theory clearly has implications for the design of many different jobs. The motivators that Herzberg identified in his research with office workers were: achievement, recognition, growth and advancement, responsibility,and interest in the work itself. The hygiene factors (potential dissatisfiers) were supervision, the work environment, company policies, coworkers, and pay.

Later studies found that a couple of factors that were hygiene to Herzberg's office employees were motivators to industrial workers. Motivators to the latter were interesting work, full appreciation of the work done, a feeling of being in on things, good wages, and job security. Although the lists vary for people in different occupational circumstances, the basic point remains that hygiene factors and motivators relate to respectively different types of human needs and employee responses.

Clues that agricultural employees have offered about what defeats their enthusiasm for top performance include:

- I can’t communicate my concerns,
- Too many bosses tell me what to do,
- I don’t know exactly what my responsibilities are,
- I’m not growing and not learning new skills,
- My time off is not specified,
- I don’t get paid enough for my skills,
- The work environment is dangerous and unhealthy, and the equipment is inadequate,
- I don’t get any recognition when I perform well,
- I have problems with my employer’s spouse, and
- My employer breaks his promises.

Another way to visualize motivation-hygiene principles is to compare the motivators and hygiene factors to energy flows to and from a battery. There are conditions under management’s control that tend to charge up employees and conditions that tend to drain them down (examples listed below). Simply removing the drain-down factors does not provide a charge.

Charging Up, Draining Down

Charges Up (+)

+ Variety of work, drawing on skills and abilities
+ Independence and responsibilities
+ Being listened to and informed
+ Participation in decision making
+ Tasks that involve learning and growth
+ Training
+ Being trusted
+ Seeing the result of your work
+ Recognition and praise for good work
+ High occupational status
+ Good pay
+ Interesting work

Drains Down (-)

- Lack of trust
- Inadequate pay
- Confusion
- Unsafe working conditions
- Poorly maintained or inadequate equipment
- Vague instructions
- Not being listened to
- Someone solving problems for you
- Conflict with coworkers or supervisor
- Not knowing whether you are succeeding
- Boredom
- Perception of unfair treatment

An Expectancy Framework

"Process theories" make up another set of ways that psychologists look at motivation. They have in common a focus on mental processes that people go through in deciding on the level of effort to put forth. One of the most helpful theories is the Expectancy Theory, which simply suggests that people expend effort to obtain the rewards they value. They make choices, not always consciously, about how much effort to devote to what activity. These choices are based on expected payoffs associated with different behavioural alternatives. There are three parts to figuring these expected payoffs.

The first is the expectation that **effort produces performance**. This corresponds to the "can do" issue. At issue is whether the individual expects to have the ability, tools, supervision, and other support necessary to achieve desired performance. Even if a bonus is offered to truck drivers who complete their deliveries in half the allotted time, no additional effort will be put into improving performance if they view the target as unattainable.

The second part is the belief that improved **performance will be recognized** and rewarded. This is the "so what" issue, or the performance-reward link. The link is greater if differences in performance level are actually recognized and translate into different individual rewards. The belief that production quantity determines earnings is stronger under a piece rate system than under an hourly pay system. Failure of pay systems to motivate employee effort is most often attributable to this element in the expectancy chain.

The third aspect of expected payoff is the **value of the reward** given to the individual for improved performance. Even if a person can pick peppers, and the more peppers picked the more lira earned, effort to pick peppers will not be intense if lira are worthless to the worker. This theory has an intuitive appeal, as it basically says that people are motivated to work toward what will allow them to obtain the things they want and value.

Rewards from Work

Considering needs more generally, people work to obtain rewards, intrinsic and extrinsic. "Intrinsic rewards" are the intangible ones essentially given to one's self. Pride of workmanship, a sense of importance, satisfaction with a job well done, feelings of belonging, identification with a larger enterprise, and dignity are examples. "Extrinsic rewards" are mostly observable and given to the recipient by others: pay, health insurance, a new pickup truck, a large office, a company hat, a television set, control over certain resources, and the right to accept or to avoid overtime hours.

To most employees in agriculture, as well as in other industries, money is a special reward, the main one for working. It has value for both what it buys and what it represents as an index of worth. Employment income is a symbol and an instrument of status in society. Other rewards are important, but if other things are equal, people tend to do what will get them more money. In the words of a seasoned mechanic, "I have been up, down, and seen a lot. Been rich and miserable, and poor and miserable. Believe me, richer is better."

The comment below, posted on an Internet discussion group by a veteran ranch hand, reveals plenty about his motivation. What factors under management control would affect his desire to stay on the job and continue working to the best of his abilities?

"I have been a herd cowboy on a 20,000 head feed yard for over five years, and have seen a lot of people come and go. In the time I have been here, there have been two experienced cowboys hired, myself and one more. All the rest have been farm boys who fantasize over being a cowboy. I have taken the time to train these pups, just to see them quit after a year or so.

Our manager does the hiring, while I do the disciplining and firing. I really don't think it is fair to the true cowboys that have to carry these farm boys that are making basically the same wages.

Maybe someday management will wake up and see that good hands are hard to find and they (the management) should pay these hands accordingly. Working in a feed yard is a far cry from a glamorous job. It is wet, muddy and nasty. I don't think managers stop to think they are turning loose inexperienced farm boys on literally millions of dollars' worth of cattle every day. I wonder how many cattle have died because of these narrow-minded managers. The cost of two steers every month that a good hand would spot and pull would more than make up the difference. These managers are paying on the average $1,000 a month, and they are really paying a lot more in dead cattle. The true cowboy is a dying breed, because he has to feed his family and has to take jobs in other fields.

Doesn't it make good sense to pay good wages for a good hand? I myself have been thinking very much about changing occupations because I'm tired of eating beans while the managers I have worked for eat steak and drive new Cadillac's every year. It's grunts like me and thousands of others that make these managers look good. They line their pockets with big fat bonuses while we sweat long hours with low wages, little appreciation, and bad weather. I know nobody will probably read this letter that can do anything about the situation, but it makes me feel good to get my say.

These fat cat managers will learn the hard way, when they have a wreck and a bunch of cattle will die when they have no one with experience to ride and doctor sick cattle. I'm not going to sign my name because I work for one of these narrow-minded individuals. If he ever reads this letter he would cause me much grief, as I have a wife and four children. I can't risk being without a job.

Yours truly,

A Grunt with a Complaint

Enhancing Employee Ability

Matching employee ability with job requirements is a key part of personnel management. Knowing the requirements of an open position, developing an accurate job description, recruiting through the appropriate channels, and following a rational selection process all increase the chances of hiring employees with adequate ability.

Training Needs

No matter how thorough the recruitment and selection processes, new employees need some training when they come to the job. There is always more to get across about what to do, why, and how, as well as about the terms of employment under which the work is to be done. Some training, such as in injury and illness prevention, is required by law but most training is simply a matter of operational necessity. Introductory training is virtually essential, even for seasonal and part-time employees.

Even when workers are selected for their previously demonstrated competence in certain tasks, managers devote time into describing and urging adherence to favoured operational methods. Most growers and producers like to see jobs completed in a specific way. The more effectively managers explain their expectations, the more satisfied both they and their employees will be with initial on-the-job performance, provided all other things are equal.

When employee qualifications do not fully match the requirements of the job, training can remedy initial deficiencies. Potential employees sometimes interview for openings that require knowledge or abilities they do not possess. In such cases, managers must consider an applicant's ability to learn along with his or her current skills. They also have to carefully evaluate whether the costs of training an existing employee (or even a new hire) outweigh the benefits of finding and hiring someone who has the necessary qualifications. Where hiring is based more on such "character attributes" as honesty, loyalty, integrity, responsibility and learning potential, there is a greater need to help workers develop specific skills on the job. In addition, some managers find they want to ease workers out of certain techniques or work habits that were learned elsewhere.

Training employees to know what they are supposed to do, how to do it, and why, produces two types of benefits. Productivity and quality improve as workers do the right task the right way, waste less time and fewer materials, and offer new and better methods of completing their duties. Likewise, job satisfaction among employees improves as they successfully meet new challenges and feel the support of their manager. Both eventually translate into improved profits for the business.

When committing to an investment in training, the logical starting place is to understand what the job requires and what employees do and do not know. Training even helps workers who do the most basic and simple tasks, jobs of every type can be done easier, faster, or wrong.

For example, a crew of greenhouse workers packaged potted plants for shipment. After the crew was simply shown a different way to perform that task, the total number of pots prepared per worker per hour more than doubled, climbing from 189 to 488.

While all training may not result in such dramatic results, there is room to improve productivity in virtually all agricultural operations.

Training Methods

Once the level of employee knowledge and skills for a job has been assessed against the job requirements, training can be designed to address real needs. Training that combines explanatory instruction, practical demonstration, and hands-on experience is often best to ensure that employees will be able to actually apply new information to their jobs. There are many ways to involve learners in both planning and conducting the training.

Overview of Purposeful Workplace Training

- Review the symptoms of need for training such as productivity statistics, performance appraisals, turnover rates, accident experience, and employee requests.
- Set objectives and a timeframe in terms of tasks that workers would be able to do, things they would know, and standards to which they would perform after training.
- Plan the content, methods, setting, and schedule for training sessions.
- Deliver the training by informing, explaining, showing, advising, observing, asking, assessing, and refining.
- Evaluate the extent to which the objectives have been met; consider more than how the employees feel about the training in the short-term.

Choice of training techniques depends, in part, on time and resources available, but most of all, it depends on the training objectives – the type of skills or knowledge to be developed. Naturally, the best method for teaching how to use a computer, overhaul an engine, birth a calf, or identify voracious insects are not the same as to lift a computer, change the tractor oil, pitch hay at the calves, or pick berries. Skills to perform more complex jobs or those that have more cognitive content warrant more planning and time to help people learn.

Conceptually breaking complex tasks into smaller, easier-to-master components is necessary spade work for training in a series of steps. If material is spread over several sessions, it helps keep training time in reasonable proportion to the work week, gives employees the chance to incrementally build and confirm their competence, and allows for adjustments with experience. An extended training program like this typically includes some information delivery in a structured setting away from the worksite. Lectures, discussions, and demonstrations can be enhanced by slides, flip charts, videos and other visual aids.

Regardless of task or skill complexity, the use of multiple methods is a good strategy when trying to help many employees learn the same thing. While some people can pick up knowledge through explanation and discussion while seated in a quiet room, others may need to observe a demonstration or to personally perform the operation themselves. Even if methods cannot be tuned in to the personal characteristics of each learner, a few guiding principles are pertinent to the design of most employee training.

1. People learn and retain information better when they see it as meeting their own needs or interests.
2. While children often try to learn out of respect or fear of their elders, adults are more self-directed and relevancy oriented. They are more motivated by an intrinsic need to grow and the instrumental value of content – such as a skill or knowledge that is applicable to a problem they have experienced.
3. Learners lose much of their newly acquired information if they do not put it to use in some way.
4. People have different learning styles and tend to acquire skills in their own characteristic mix of ways.

Four Learning Styles

Auditory learners learn best by hearing. Information and directions for them are most effective if given orally and discussed. The more they hear the material, the better they recall and comprehend it. Audio tapes can be effective in delivering information to auditory learners.

Visual learners tend to learn by seeing. They pick up information most effectively from demonstrations, sheer observation, written words, diagrams, graphs, and charts. Oral instructions to them, if necessary, are best delivered in sentences as short and unambiguous as possible.

Tactual learners do best through hands-on activities. Practical exercises and simulations with manipulative or tools in the work environment are good methods to use with them.

Kinesthetic learners learn by experiencing concepts and finding the information themselves. Effective methods for these individuals include role-playing, observing, interviewing, and building.

Most agricultural training is provided informally, on the job by business operators and supervisors. A general sequence of steps for on-the-job skills training is as follows:

1. Introduction
    - Explain the purpose of the task,
    - Find out what the learner already knows and can do,
    - Identify inputs to the task and expected outputs from it, and
    - Relate personal experiences in learning and doing the job.

2. Presentation
    - Describe the procedure,
    - Demonstrate the correct performance,
    - Point out critical decisions, tricky maneuver, and foreseeable problems, and
    - Invite questions.
3. Trial performance
    - Ask the learner to describe and perform the task (or parts of it),
    - Invite self-assessment and questions,
    - Confirm what was done well and advise on what needs improvement, and
    - Ask for a repeat performance.
4. Let Fly
    - Ask the learner if he or she is ready to perform alone,
    - Put the learner in his or her own, with the option to get help if needed,
    - Check back frequently to assess progress, coach, ask and invite questions, and
    - Taper off coaching.

Employees who view their jobs as a temporary means to another end are less receptive to training specifically applicable to their current workplace. Most workers, however, enjoy learning and appreciate employer efforts to help them develop their skills. Opportunities to develop abilities beyond what the current job requires may inspire more thought and effort from them on the job.

Pay and Performance

Most people think of money and motivation as closely related in businesses. Employers pay dollars and expect employee motivation in return. But many employers feel they are not getting what they pay for, and many employees have problems with what they receive. Pay is not simply a cost; it is also a management tool for influencing the performance of employees on the job.

Just because money is a valued incentive to action for workers does not mean that it always stimulates the action that managers want. What a compensation system actually pays for is what rational people work toward. Pay systems are often inadvertently set up to reward one thing (e.g., time on the job), while managers are hoping for another (e.g., many trees pruned). For pay to motivate performance, the compensation system must be structured to provide more dollars for the desired performance.

A study by the Public Agenda Foundation several years ago found that only 22 percent of American workers saw a link between how hard they worked and how much they were paid. Nearly three-quarters said that they had actually decreased their level of effort because of seeing no consequence in terms of pay. Fully 61 percent said that they wanted to have their pay tied to performance.

- A boysenberry grower who hires up to 600 people for his three-week harvest was complaining that most of the pickers were unmotivated. To do what? “To fill up these cartons fast enough so that I can complete this harvest within budget.” What difference does it make to them? How are they paid? “They get a good wage for this area - $6.10 per hour.” Does that rate vary according to how fast they pick? “Well…no.”
- Lettuce harvest crews of 35 people were sharing in a crew piece rate. Every time a packed carton went up onto the truck for delivery to the cooler, the crew got $1.10. The harvest manager was not pleased. “There is something about cutters and packers that I simply can’t comprehend. These guys are just not motivated. Look at this: lettuce-leaves are hanging out, butts are facing in all directions, and some cartons even have rips. This is a lousy pack. If the crew put up better quality, we would be able to sell more cartons and probably also get a premium price. How are we going to market this stuff?” Do they know how to put up a good pack? “Sure they do. Every single one knows exactly how to select heads, cut, and pack them right.” Health problems? “I would like to have the same strength and stamina.” How’s the pay? “Probably the best in agriculture. They average $10 to $18 per hour.” Isn’t that a big range for an hourly rate? Oh, it is actually what they earn in an hour, based on a piece rate, not an hourly wage. Every one shares in the crew piece rate.” Now wait a minute. Suppose I laid dollar bills down in this row, as far as the eye could see. Then suppose that I gave you a bag and seven hours to spend in the field. What would you do? “I’d race my little fanny down the row as fast as I possibly could picking up those dollar bills and

stuffing them in the bag." Would you care whether George Washington's head was right side up or facing you? "I'd worry about that when I got home." So who is it that is not motivated?

- A nursery manager was positive that a particular planter was working much slower than she really could. "Why isn't she motivated? Can you help me? I don't really want to fire her. It is too complicated to fire people these days." Are you sure that the planter has the ability to be more productive? "Oh, yes. On occasion, when we need to get a big order out, I tell her that if she finishes up a stack of flats, she can go home and still get credit for the whole day. You have never seen anybody go so fast in your life. The thing is, she even knows that I know what she can do if she tries, but normally she just goes very, very slow." What about her pay? "She gets paid real well. We pay a cut above anybody else in this region. She makes about $8 per hour." That's pretty good. And does she make more when she works faster? "No, but her wages are good and secure. She can count on her pay every week. And she knows that she is getting paid well, so I just don't see why she is not motivated."

Does pay motivate agricultural workers? The picker, cutter, and planter certainly seem motivated, but not always to do what managers want. The planter on a good hourly rate was motivated to stay in her job and collect her good pay, neither of which seemed to depend on how fast she worked. The lettuce crew on a piece rate and coworkers depending on them to keep up the pace were motivated to produce rapidly. A forklift operator getting $6 per hour in the same company where all the others get $7 is motivated to complain. A mechanic making $8 hourly in a region where most companies pay $11 for similar work is motivated to look for another job. Regardless of their sheer amounts, wages are often not effectively spent. In pay administration, how much is important but so is what for and compared to whom.

The relationship between sheer amount of wages paid and operational results on a farm is not a given. It is strongly shaped by decisions that managers make in structuring and administering pay. Key choices involve:

1. ***External equity.*** What is the overall pay level in the organization, relative to others in same labour market? A policy of "keeping up with local norms" is common, but some employers like to stay a cut above or below.
2. ***Internal equity.*** What are the relationships between rates at which people in different jobs within the company are paid? Are mechanics, for example, paid the same as drivers or managers? If not, how much more or less?
3. ***Pay basis.*** From what is the periodic paycheck calculated? Is a rate applied to units of time (hours or weeks) or to output (trays, cartons, sales, or vines)?
4. ***Individual wage determination.*** Do all people in the same or similar jobs receive the exact same rate of pay, or do individual rates vary within a specified range? Can one service worker, for example, make more than another? If a range is used, what

determines where an individual's rate falls within it? Seniority and past performance can be systematically considered.

5. ***Indirect compensation.*** What deferred or non-dollar wages (e.g., pensions, health insurance, living quarters) supplement current pay, and who is eligible to receive them?
6. ***Communication.*** How much and by what means are employees told about the overall pay structure? In some businesses, employees understand quite well how their pay is computed and how they can earn more. In others, the pay system is a mystery, possibly because of poor communication, possibly because there is no consistent system, or possibly because management believes the employees will work harder if the reward system is kept a mystery.

Cases where employers pay for one thing but expect another are too common. Pay and benefit increases intended to stimulate better employee performance often only serve to motivate membership—joining or staying with the business. Employers who want to get more of what they are paying for need to think about whether they are paying for what they really want.

Time-Based Pay Structures

Agricultural employers can structure the time-based wages in their businesses to encourage good work. Better performance may be recognized and translated into higher future earnings through two types of movement within a wage structure: (1) advancement in a pay range for a given job (or family of jobs with the same range), and (2) promotion to a higher paying job. A structure that is carefully designed, maintained, and communicated to workers has strong motivating potential.

Wage differences across employees on a ranch—and changes for a given employee—may reflect both "job factors" (e.g., knowledge or license needed to do the job, degree of responsibility, difficulty or unpleasantness of tasks) and "individual factors" (e.g., quality of performance, length of service, age). The principle of paying more for work in jobs that involve more skill, responsibility, or unpleasantness and for better or longer service within jobs is well accepted. Problems in applying this concept often stem from the difficulty in measuring all these factors except age and length of service.

Ways in which wage structures can differ

- Number of classifications,
- Number of job titles per classification,
- Size ("height") of ranges for each classification,
- Amount of overlap between ranges of adjacent classes,
- Size of permissible increments within range,
- Basis for individual advancement within a range,
- Frequency of consideration for rate adjustments, and

- Overall level of pay and triggers for adjustment of the whole sale.

  (Each is subject to management choice.)

Job Factors and Comparisons for Internal and External Equity

A process of job “evaluation” can be used to rate jobs on the farm or ranch according to their relative importance. Jobs of similar importance may be grouped into a single classification within an associated pay rate or range, or every job might have its own wage range. Setting ranges is tricky business. The relationships between ranges for different jobs have symbolic and practical implications. A person at the top of one range may be earning more than a person at the bottom of the next higher range. Whether and how much range overlap to build into a pay structure is a basic pay policy choice.

If workers in the business see pay rates and commensurate with job importance or contribution, a sense of “internal equity” exists. While internal equity is important to establish, employee response to the pay structure also depends on its “external equity,” how it stacks up against those of other employers in the labour market. Even when jobs are priced fairly in relation to one another, they all might be too cheap or too expensive. If the overall wage level in the firm is too low, it encourages employees in all classifications to look elsewhere. Workers always have the option to move on to where their skills are more highly valued. If overall wages are much higher than the local norm, the business is probably foregoing some profit, though keeping its workforce happy. While employers may not want or be able to keep up with others, it is useful to be aware of what those others are paying.

Achieving external equity requires obtaining information about what others pay for comparable work in the same labour market. The information can be obtained through varied means such as a mailed survey, a round of phone calls, or a conversation in the coffee shop.

Individual Factors and Means for Advancement

For farmers and ranchers who do want to pay different wages for different jobs, the next question is whether to have a single rate or multiple rates for a particular job or pay classification. Even if tractor drivers are paid more than general labourers, should all workers in either respective category have identical wage rates? Differences in contribution or value to the farm business among individuals in the same type of position can be easily built into pay, if a range of rates is established for each job.

What factors should determine individual pay differences? Higher rates (or “upper steps”) within the range are typically associated with greater length of employment (seniority), better-evaluated performance, or a combination of the two. It is important to have clearly understood policies about how employees can move up in a range and when adjustments can be made. A yearly review of pay scales with consideration given to individual adjustments is most common. Many farmers and ranchers review all employees at the same time of the year, usually in a period of low activity; others consider each worker around the anniversary of initial employment; and others do it irregularly, adding to their employees’ sense of wonder.

So called “merit plans” provide for variable periodic increases in hourly or weekly wages, the size of an increase correlates to evaluated performance during a previous period. If the pay range for drivers is from $7 to $10 per hour, for example, new drivers might be brought in at the $7 level and advanced to higher rates after showing good work. This approach relies on input from performance appraisals that measure merit.

Unlike piece rate and most other incentive plans (discussed later in this chapter), merit systems do not tie current pay to current performance. Instead, they motivate by linking **future** pay and position to current performance. They have strong effects on employees when (1) the performance appraisals on which raises are based are accepted as objective and fair, (2) differences between raises given for different levels of performance are large enough to be worth working for, and (3) employment is stable enough that people can actually look forward to a future with the business.

Failing any of these conditions, a merit system contributes little if anything to employees’ motivation to perform. The temporal and psychological distance from effort exerted to a merit reward is much greater than that to an output-based paycheck. While some merit systems operate effectively, many become “demoralized” and resemble seniority plans, in which everybody in a job classification gets pretty much the same annual raise, regardless of performance. Where performance appraisals do not reliably distinguish better from worse performers, the range of possible pay increases is often set too small for the system to have a motivating effect.

Influences of Wage Structures

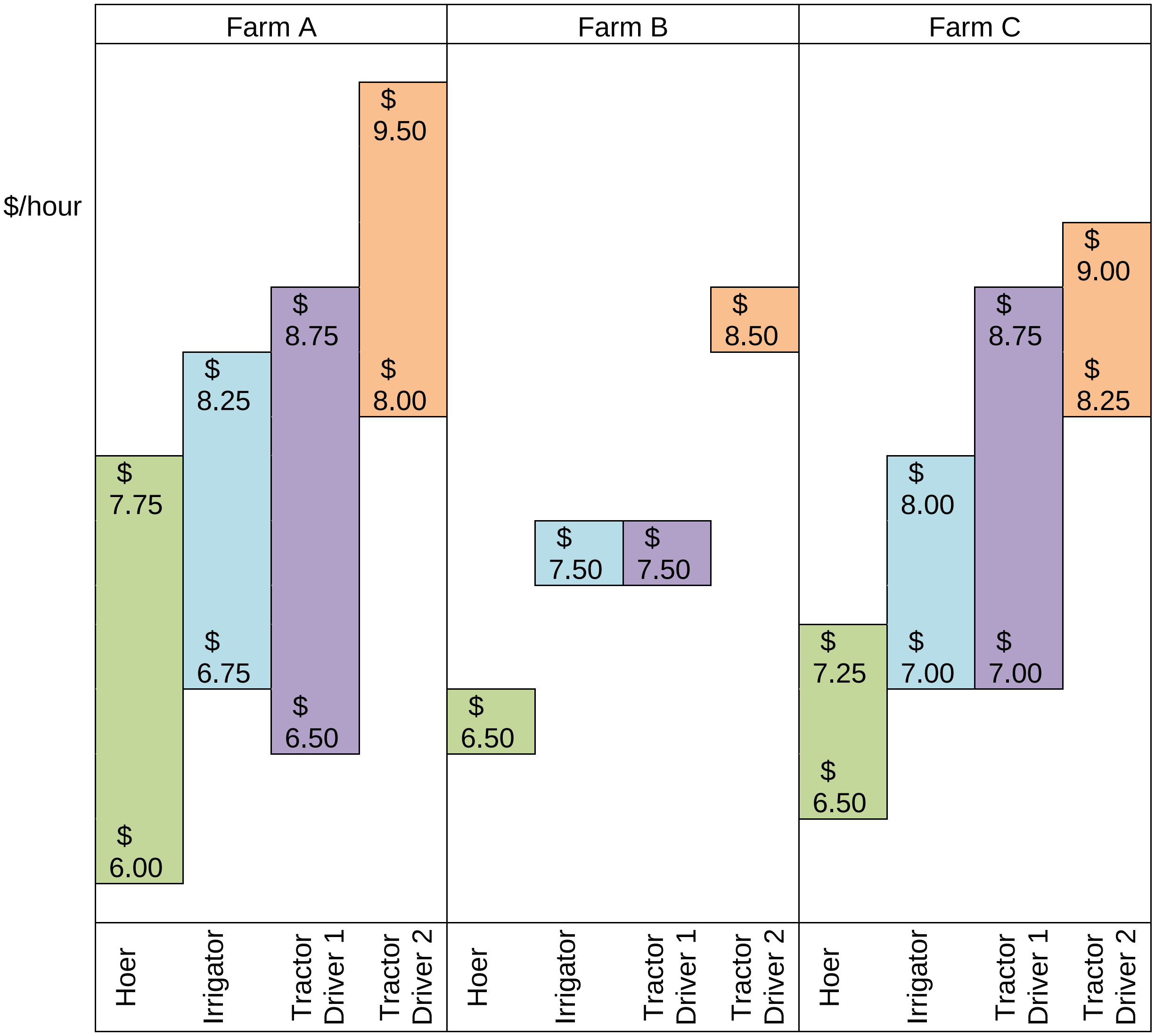
Pay structures affect both short- and long-term decisions by employees. In addition to revealing how jobs and individuals are currently valued, they inform employees, as well as applicants, about routes and limits of salary advancement. The example of Farms A, B, and C illustrate how three farms with the same total wage expense distribute it differently through their respective arrays of rates. Which farm would be more attractive to a prospective employee? Which structure would it be easier for a manager to administer?

Same cost, different pay rates at Farms A, B and C

Farms A, B, and C are independent operations producing a similar mix of vegetables, melons and grain on about the same total acreage. During the summer, all have the same field staffing pattern, which includes 10 general labourers, 3 irrigators, 4 tractor drivers I (basic), 2 tractor drivers II (advanced), 2 mechanics, and 3 supervisors. Total wages for the three were exactly the same last year. Pay rates for workers on all three farms are indicated below:

Employees	Farm A	Farm B	Farm C
Hoer, General Labourer			
1	$6.35	$6.70	$6.50
2	6.35	6.70	7.00
3	6.35	6.70	6.60
4	6.35	6.70	6.90
5	6.35	6.70	6.50
6	7.80	6.70	7.00
7	7.25	6.70	6.80
8	6.25	6.70	6.70
9	7.10	6.70	6.40
10	6.85	6.70	6.60
Irrigator			
1	7.00	7.55	7.60
2	7.00	7.55	7.00
3	8.10	7.55	7.25
Tractor Driver I			
1	6.85	7.55	8.00
2	8.25	7.55	8.50
3	8.25	7.55	7.50
4	6.85	7.55	7.00
Tractor Driver II			
1	8.00	8.50	8.25
2	9.00	8.50	8.75

Same Cost, Different Pay Rates at Farms A,B,C



Farm A pays various rates within each job category, and its rate ranges overlap quite a bit. Three of the general labourers are earning more than the lowest-paid irrigators and tractor drivers. In contrast, Farm B has a single rate for all employees in a job type, so that a pay raise can only be obtained with a move to another classification. Farm C also has a variety of pay rates for each category of employee but smaller, less overlapping, more logically related ranges than A.

A person interested in only short-term employment would probably favour the higher entry rate at Farm B over the growth opportunity within job type at Farms A and C. Factors not specified in this example that would affect how employees respond to the three structures include (1) criteria for moving up within a range in Farms A and C, (2) the type and amount of bonus opportunity and fringe benefits in each farm's compensation package, and (3) how much employees actually know about the structure of pay where they work, other than their own rate.

Incentive Plans to Strengthen the Pay-Performance Linkage

A device for directly tapping employee motivation and rewarding current performance is “incentive pay.” Incentive pay makes an employee’s current pay at least partly contingent on production results. Piecework is the most common but by no means the only form of incentive plan in agriculture.

Farmers have told of productivity gains in the range of 20 to 50 percent after moving field workers from time-based to output-based pay. Output-based pay is not compatible, however, with every job and production system. Even where feasible it can present difficulties. Fortunately, there are varieties of output-based plans that may fit different circumstances, and the broader family of incentive pay plans extends beyond those tied solely to output quantity.

Individual Piecework

Piecework is probably the oldest, most widely used incentive plan. Multiplying the piece rate by the number of units (cartons, bins, or tons) produced, yields a pay amount clearly related to the performance of each worker. Commission systems, under which most outside sales people work, are similar, except they relate pay to total dollar volume rather than numbers of units. The evident equity of piece rate systems is not obscured by complex computations and explanations. As long as employees perform at least well enough to earn the statutory minimum wage, employers paying piece rates have the advantage of reasonable certainty about their unit costs for direct labour. If piece rate earnings do not amount to at least the statutory minimum for hours worked, the employer must make up the difference.

There are disadvantages to piece rate pay, and the most common one is not limited to the lettuce crews that the previously mentioned harvest manager could not understand. The rush for quantity, which pays off to employees, can lead to neglect of quality. Additionally, before the work begins in earnest, rate-setting games may set farmer and workers against one another. Since conditions affecting production ease vary widely from field to field and time to time, farmers often wait to set piece rates until after an initial day or so of work. For their part, workers put on some remarkable huff-puff sweat-groan performances while producing well below their capacity.

Even after rates are set, workers’ fears of what might happen if they do perform to their best abilities can defeat the purpose of output incentive pay. Some workers have seen and others have imagined that employers would cut rates if earnings were consistently high or would fire the slower workers within a crew. Other objections to piecework are based on concerns that the system leads to overexertion and illness and that it only compresses the time in which a fixed amount of work is to be done, so total earnings are the same regardless of speed. And traditional pay differences between employees on piece rate (such as pickers and pruners) and more highly skilled hourly workers (such as mechanics, supervisors, and tractor drivers) can be upset when the former perform well and, consequently, are paid at higher levels than the hourly employees.

Piecework, in addition to other individual incentive plans, may threaten another status hierarchy within the worker group. Older, more senior-level workers may not be able to work as fast as the younger employees. In that case, there may be social pressure on the younger workers to produce below their capacity. Cohesive crews informally establish a level of individual output considered proper or safe. Employees who overproduce relative to that level are often ostracized as “rate busters.” Their quest for higher income can only be fulfilled at the cost of social acceptance.

The following Carlisle Nursery case illustrates a group dynamic that can easily thwart the power of piece rate pay to motivate a worker’s best effort. One worker wanted to earn as much as possible, but the others feared that her high performance was showing them up and, probably more important, would be used against them all by the management. They all might be expected to work to a faster standard and/or have their total earning opportunity reduced.

Carlisle Nursery’s motivated planters

Lee Perez

Carlisle Nursery produces a variety of bedding and potted plants in three locations. In the face of increasing competition three years ago, Carlisle management instituted a cost control program. A major part of the program was an incentive pay system for employees engaged in soil preparation, planting, fixing, assembling, and loading.

Lee Perez is one of six planters in the Ground Cover Branch. Most of the work involves transferring cuttings to 12-packs and labeling them. The company pays 26 cents per pack. The other five planters in the group fill an average of 21 packs per hour. Rarely does anyone produce less than 19 or more than 23 per hour during a day’s time. Lee, however, has consistently averaged about 24 packs per hour. She not only works hard but also seems to have a knack for inventing little short cuts to get more done in less time. The others have kidded her about going too fast, but she figured it was all in good fun.

Lee is 29 years old, married and has two children. Six months ago her mother-in-law moved in with the family. Lee has a strong family and is happy to do her part, but the extra financial burden has been difficult to bear. To meet added costs, she started working especially hard to turn out more 12-packs and earn more money. Now she is producing as many as 32 packs of ground cover in a good hour. She has to press a bit to get those last few completed each hour, but it is worth it to know that her family has a comfortable income.

Lately the other planters have not been quite as friendly as before. Lee has even noticed flashes of anger when one or two of them see how many full trays there are beside her. It is now to the point where the most senior of the planters has asked to have a word with her.

Anna Levos

As one of six planters in the Ground Cover Branch for many years, Anna Levos had always thought of Carlisle as a very good place to work, a place where the company tried to take care of its people. But about four years ago there was a big sales slump, and Anna was among four planters who were laid off. One of them was never called back. Anna and the other two who were recalled became determined not to go through another stretch of unemployment like that again. Fourteen months without a job did serious damage to their family lives. Now that things are back together again, nothing is going to mess them up.

Anna and four of the others are pretty up front with each other and have agreed to hold production to 21 packs per hour. Rarely do any of them produce less than 19 or more than 23 per hour during a day's time. Lee Perez, the sixth planter, has always been a bit of a maverick, routinely producing 24 packs or so per hour. Lately she began filling as many as 32 packs per hour. Anna tolerated her wild behaviour for a long time, but now that Lee is flaunting her big numbers, it is time to set her straight.

Sharing Plans

Also known as bonus plans, sharing plans pay guaranteed time-based rates for production up to a set standard. A partial piece rate (50 percent or so) applies as a bonus to units above the standard. In essence, employees and employer share in the value of production above normal. When employees produce at high levels, they realize rewards for their own efforts and the farmer gets more units for the labour dollar. The relationship between output and pay is looser under these plans than piecework. The other side of this coin, however, is that the smaller variance of pay among employees mutes the potential ill effects of competition among workers. These plans can provide a good transition for farms moving from time rates to pure piece rates. They are, however, somewhat more complex to explain than piecework plans. They are also less likely to motivate top individual performance.

Group Output Plans

Individual output incentives are impractical or risky in many situations. Where individual output is simply not identifiable (as in mechanized harvests), where total production depends on co-worker cooperation (as in pruning with pneumatic power), and where high crew cohesiveness or mistrust of management leads workers to produce at an informally agreed upon rate, group piecework or a group sharing plan may be the incentive system of choice. A piece rate is applied to the group's total output, and members share in the overall pay on an equal or other predetermined basis. Group output incentives encourage mutual helpfulness, cooperation, voluntary training of new co-workers, sharing knowledge about shortcuts, and development of better methods to perform the work. Group pressures for high performance can elicit work up to full potential even from employees who are unmoved by individual incentives.

On the other hand, group systems are less motivating to potential star performers and require somewhat more arithmetic to administer. While they do avoid the potential complications of workers pursuing only their individual interests, group systems still have problems associated with traditional output incentive plans. When pay is based strictly on output quantity, quality may be neglected, game playing and acrimony may dominate the rate setting process, and even minor technological changes introduce the need for rate adjustments. Workers may hold back their production for fear that rates would be cut if total earnings are high, that some people would be fired if the work progressed too fast, or that strain and illness would result from working all out. Equipment breakdown, supply shortages, and lack of training needed to perform at high levels can cause extreme conflict under output incentive plans. Finally, poor communication or understanding of the workings of any incentive plan renders it less effective than it could be otherwise.

Considering Change in the Pay System

Introduction or modification of an incentive pay system is least complicated before seasonal activity begins, but good reasons to consider it may arise any time. No matter when they are contemplated, incentive plans are more likely to fit under certain conditions. Piecework, output bonus, and sharing plans are better suited to work situations in which (1) output is easily measurable, (2) employees have a high degree of control over output quantity, (3) potential work process delays are largely due to human behaviours, (4) output quality is relatively unimportant, (5) the work group has not developed a consensus on what constitutes a “fair day’s work,” (6) inspiring supervision is unavailable, (7) the employer needs to tightly control unit labour costs, (8) the technology or process by which work is done is relatively stable, and (9) workers (on individual plans) or crews (on group plans) are relatively independent from others.

The vineyard manager in the following case was faced with a large majority of his workforce wanting to move to a pruning piece rate in hopes of bringing their hourly equivalent earnings up to the level of local unionized competitors:

Pruning pay for pieces or hours?

Multi Farms produces tree, vine, and field crops on 8,000 acres spread throughout six contiguous counties. Its holdings are physically and administratively split into eight major blocks, over which eight respective district managers have virtually autonomous control. Each manager must live within a yearly budget that specifies a total labour cost ceiling for his block. Within this limitation, however, he has a free hand in hiring, layoffs, pay determination, and pretty much all other personnel management matters.

Ray Thompson runs the 1,100-acre farm that accounts for all of Multi Farms’ wine grape production. He has a year-round staff of about 70, who have been joined in recent years by up to 20 seasonal employees during pruning and harvest times. Need for seasonal employees during harvest has declined in recent years with increased use of harvesting machines. In late fall, shortly before pruning was scheduled to get underway, Ray was approached by several of the regular employees who asked to be put on a piece rate system for the pruning season. They had learned that workers at two nearby vineyards, one of which operates under a union contract, had averaged more than $10 per hour on a piece rate system the previous year, and they wanted the opportunity to make as much.

While the employees who approached him were good workers and did not represent any fringe element of the work force, a few of the older employees had usually been the ones to bring *matters of general concern to him. Ray wanted to see how strong the sentiment for piece rate pruning really was. Over the next couple of days he spoke with a large majority of the employees in various parts of the vineyard. He learned that most (three-quarters or more) of the men indeed preferred a piece rate system to the straight $7.80 per hour (up from $7.50 the previous year) that they were scheduled to receive. The others, mostly older employees with many years of service on the farm, seemed to prefer an hourly rate but said that they would go along with what the majority wanted.*

Ray had long taken pride in the harmonious relations in his operation. His employees had never sought representation by a union, and he had no fundamental objection to piece rate pay. In fact, the vineyard normally put employees on a piece rate for hand harvesting some of the grape varieties. Ray wanted to be fair to all employees while not over-running his pruning budget or making any changes that he would regret later.

The manager had a lot to think about. What did he definitely do right? He had the good sense and respected his employees enough to check with many workers about their preferences. He found that a substantial minority, apparently including the more senior informal leadership, wanted to stay with the steady hourly pay. He also realized, however, that going to piece rate would satisfy the majority, keep costs in control (perhaps even reduce them), and keep his business in step with other firms in his area. Weighing against the change were the risks of dividing the workforce, creating downtime and necessitating layoffs for the workers after they finished pruning the fixed acreage at a faster rate, and putting more pressure on himself to supervise for quality.

A Closer Look at Benefits—One Employer's Example

Richard offers a number of benefits that aren't widely available in the agriculture sector. His philosophy is that "we don't want our workers to feel they're penalized just because they work in agriculture, instead of some other sector."

Most are tied to seniority. He balances the cost of those benefits versus the lost productivity when someone quits and the subsequent cost of training a replacement. There's also a management cost—he doesn't want "to lose sleep worrying about people leaving" or be distracted from his business in order to deal with staff problems caused by poor pay and benefits. A strong benefit package also sends a message to junior staff that the employer is a good person to work for.

Richard's benefit package was implemented slowly as profitability allowed. Holiday pay is the mandatory 4 percent (or two weeks annually for year-round employees) for the first five years with the company. For those with more than five years of service, that rises to 6 percent (or three weeks annually) and tops out at 8 percent for those with more than ten years of service.

Richard provides for "statutory" holidays even though farms in his province are excluded. The number of holidays varies by province. The core five are New Year's Day, Good Friday, Canada Day (Memorial Day in Newfoundland), Labour Day, and Christmas Day. Other common holidays include Victoria Day (Dollard Day in Quebec), the first Monday in August, Thanksgiving and Boxing Day. Other provinces have unique commemorative holidays.

Many employers do not formally offer paid sick leave, but end up doing so anyway. It might be because they just can't bring themselves to dock the pay of someone who has been felled by the flu or some other short-term ailment. Or they order employees who show up sick to go home and rest because they know they won't get much work done and run a higher risk of being injured on the job.

Richard opted to set up a formal system with separate sick-day accounts for each worker. Those with one year of service are credited with sick days equivalent to 2 percent of their pay. After two years, that rises to 4 percent. It's critical, in Richard's view, to let those accounts roll over from year to year.

"It's not a case of use it or lose it. What I've seen with use-or-lose-it is that people take the sick time whether they need it or not."

Workers are encouraged to carry one week's worth of sick time and if they have more than that, they can—at Richard's discretion—use it to top up vacation time. He also offers workers' compensation to his employees—even though, once again, it is not mandatory for farms in his province. He argues the program has made him and employees more safety-conscious and reduced accidents on his farm.

"Employees know they have the right to refuse unsafe work and they know they can point out safety deficiencies. And that's all helped—since we've been involved in the occupational health and safety process, it's brought down our compensation claims and that's brought down our premiums."

However, this has caused concerns when hiring new employees. There is a risk, he notes, that people may have an existing medical condition and it "suddenly flares up when they start working for you."

Richard also offers two other benefits. He pays an overtime premium of 25 percent (or time-and-a-quarter) based on the regular work week (which on his farm is 53 hours a week in the summer and 40 hours in winter). And he shares the cost of the health premium for senior employees. Altogether, the benefits add up to between $1.50 and $2.00 per hour. The benefits of having a stable and productive work force, he argues, more than cancel out the additional cost. He also maintains that agricultural businesses can't afford to ignore the reality that they are in competition with other sectors for workers.

"I talk to other farmers who are having a heck of a job keeping people around. I think part of it is that they aren't paying people enough—they start people at minimum wage and they'll never progress more than a couple of dollars beyond that. They expect them to work in all kinds of conditions and without any compensation for overtime or for holidays or that sort of thing. Personally, I don't think that's realistic in today's environment. If these people have any motivation at all, they can find an employer who will give them benefits. If we're not giving them benefits, then we're not competing. The days of someone working on a farm for minimum wage are gone."

Finally, Richards says he is not shy about talking to his workers about the benefit package he offers. There's a tendency to take benefits for granted, he says, and it's worthwhile to remind employees of what they have.

General Performance Appraisal Form

Identification of employee:

Date:________________________________

Name of employee:______________________

Title of employee:_______________________

Name of manager:_______________________

Legend (check off the appropriate column)

++ = Very satisfactory

+ = Satisfactory

+/- = Improvement needed

- = Unsatisfactory

N/A = Does not apply

Knowledge: The employee knows the principal characteristics of the business and possesses the qualifications required for his or her positions	**Rating Scale**					**Comments and Observations**
	++	+	+/-	-	N/A	
Comprehension Ability to learn and understand basic concepts						
Knowledge Possesses all the necessary knowledge						
Organization Is capable of						

prioritizing tasks so that work can be completed without delay						
<u>Versatility</u> Is interested in improving and broadening his or her scope of activity						

Personal Qualities: The employee demonstrates the ability and the behaviour that allows him or her to form relationships with others and do his or her work well.	**Rating Scale**					**Comments and Observations**
	++	+	+/-	-	N/A	
<u>Compatibility</u> The employee is compatible with the position and shows that he or she can take responsibility						
<u>Integration</u> Ability to get along well with co-workers and management						
<u>Relationship with customers</u> Demonstrates an understanding of the importance of customers by his or her positive behaviour						

Know-How: The employee possesses the technical competence and skills necessary to use the tools and methods for performing his or her work.	**Rating Scale**					**Comments and Observations**
	++	+	+/-	-	N/A	
Quality of work Accuracy, attention to detail, consistency and completion of assigned work						
Method Ability to follow instructions as provided						
Organization Able to prioritize tasks in a way that competes the work in the shortest period of time						

Employee Strengths	**Areas to Improve**
▪	▪
▪	▪
▪	▪
▪	▪

Achievement of objectives set during Previous Period

Additional support to provide:

Objectives for the next period (Repeat this section according to the number of objectives set)

SMART method:

Specific: Objective describes exactly the improvements to be made
Measurable: It should be possible to objectively measure achievement of the objective
Attainable: Achieving the objective implies making an effort
Realistic: Objective must be achievable with the means available
Time-based: Objective must be linked to an achievable time frame

Objective

S: Identified change?

M: How are we going to measure achievement of the objective?

A: In what way does the objective demand an effort from the employee? Ways proposed by the employee to achieve the objective

R: What kind of support will the business give to the employee?

T: What is the time frame for achieving the goal?

Additional Notes:

Signature of employee

supervisor

Signature of immediate

This form once completed and signed will be kept in the employee's file.

Assessing Employee Performance

Agricultural business operators cannot afford to be unconcerned with people's performance, and most people want to improve their own work and their lot. Accurate appraisals can help both employers and employees to pinpoint areas for extra effort and development. Without them, both managers and employees are at a disadvantage in planning for the future. Even on farms and ranches without a "performance appraisal system," managers pay attention to performance. The organization may not have a system, but it does have a performance appraisal.

In a broad sense, performance appraisal is a continuous informational process. Its essence is the observation and evaluation of behaviour. Although appraisals may not be conducted once per year by an immediate supervisor or recorded on forms, they may show in something as commonplace as a smile in the barn, the cheer of the crowd, and the half-joking "you blockhead." Informal performance appraisal takes place all the time. Comments from a boss, buddies, family, clients, and a voice inside provide the employee a sense of how he or she is seen.

Management's decision is not *whether* to have a performance appraisal, but rather *what form* the appraisal takes. Monitoring performance is an ongoing responsibility of all first-line supervisors. Many companies also provide for a regular periodic evaluation of each employee's work—a relatively formal process of evaluating performance, clarifying expectations for the future, and soliciting the employee's ideas for improving the business.

Ingredients of Performance Appraisal

Like pick-up trucks, formal performance appraisal systems come in different models. The stripped model, at rock bottom price, requires only two elements: an episode of work (performance) and an appraiser. A better model, with wheels, requires a recipient of the appraisal information (e.g., the employee, a personnel manager, etc.). An equipped model also would include a record of the appraisal and standards or expectations to guide the appraisal—some basis for turning raw observation into evaluation. To answer a question about how the cowboy, gardener, mechanic, or new supervisor is working out, you have to implicitly add, "Compared to what?"

In the deluxe model of performance appraisal, the dimensions of performance to be appraised and standards of different performance levels are clearly set forth ahead of time. These dimensions and standards help guide the appraised in their work, as well as appraisers in their observations, throughout a performance period. Ideally, they are codified on an "instrument," or appraisal form, on which the appraisal is eventually recorded. A final option on this deluxe model is training for appraisers.

The elements outlined above can be combined in different systems. An example flow of procedural steps is shown below:

Steps in sample performance appraisal process

ESTABLISH PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS
(Performance)
↓
MONITOR PERFORMANCE AND RECORD
↓
INFORMALLY SHARE OBSERVATIONS
↓
DISCUSS IN APPRAISAL INTERVIEW
Plan further development
Set new expectations
↓
ADD TO ORGANIZATIONAL RECORD
↙ ↘
Individual knowledge and decisions Management decisions

The process starts with the establishment of performance expectations, a touchstone of what the employee is supposed to do and how well. The list of duties on a job description makes the perfect aid for this step, and standards of different performance levels on each task can be agreed upon by supervisor and employee together. Observation of actual performance and results comes next. Maintaining communication about the observations both facilitates real-time adjustments and keeps the eventual appraisal interview from turning into a stressful revelation of horrors.

If employees are asked to prepare an assessment of their own performance ahead of time, the appraisal interview can be framed as a sharing of perceptions and planning for the next performance period. Desirable outcomes from this meeting are both new performance expectations and plans for employee development. The employee can use the information gained through the interview for individual decisions, and a record of the appraisal is normally sent to the company files for use in management decisions.

Utility of Performance Appraisal

Establishment of a structured appraisal program is an investment that can pay off for agricultural producers in better management decisions, as well as enhanced worker performance. To the individual, a performance appraisal represents feedback, if nothing else. People generally prefer to know where they stand and how they are perceived. Uncertainty produces stress, making people anxious, uncomfortable, forgetful, bitter, resentful, or otherwise unwell in ways that may haunt the employer. Performance appraisals also help people make sense of the world and understand why it treats them as it does. Appraisal information explains decisions that may otherwise appear arbitrary, such as the granting of a raise, the sponsorship of a training program, or the transfer to a distant ranch. Most important to the individual employee, performance appraisal provides *direction and guidance.*

These steps also benefit the employer. The farm where employees get informative feedback, understanding, and guidance reaps the benefits of a healthier, less distracted, more knowledgeable, and ultimately more skillful staff. Appraisal information helps organizations additionally in respect to communication, reward distribution, personnel planning, training needs assessment, and employee selection. The process provides a stimulus and structure for regrettably infrequent employee-supervisor dialogue.

Views of a good appraisal

Employee's perspective:

- "Enabled me to better compare my work to standards of the job."
- "Gave me clear guidelines for improvement and advancement."
- "Made me know that the grower sees my strengths and wants to use them more extensively."
- "Allowed me to voice concerns about my current job and career progress here."
- "Helped me understand a lot more about the whole business."

Employer's perspective:

- "Provided information about operations that I never realized."
- "Helped me see where the employee's personal goals and my farm objectives can mesh for a longer time."
- "Built a sense of teamwork to solve problems."
- "Gave me the chance to reinforce what I appreciate and want to see more of from this employee."
- "Clarified some needs for skill training."

At their best, evaluation discussions are constructive exchanges of information, providing employees with more insight into their strengths and weaknesses on the job and managers with indications of how they can support better operations. In addition, evaluations can substantiate the rationality of promotional, pay raise, and disciplinary actions and particularly reduce the risk of legal proceedings when employees are discharged for cause.

Informational tools used for selection, promotion, pay raise, demotion, training opportunity, and layoff determination are subject to challenge if they yield disproportionate outcomes for protected groups (compared to non-protected groups). A performance appraisal is under the same legal requirements as a selection test or interview. It must be a good measure of performance (i.e., valid and reliable) if it is to be useful in defense against discrimination charges. Of course, better performance appraisal measures are also more useful internally to an organization.

Despite its utility, performance appraisal is often uncomfortable to the appraiser and the appraised, a once a most important and avoided supervisory task. Surveys found that 75 percent of responding organizations had appraisal systems for operational personnel, 94 percent for clerical, and 93 percent for supervisory. More than one-half of the organizations had developed new systems in the previous three years. Still, respondents widely regarded appraisals as a waste of time or an abject nuisance.

A ranch foreman compared systematic appraisal to a seatbelt: it is good for him but does not feel good, so he is reluctant to use it. But appraising employee performance need not be a dreaded task. Appraisals can be structured and carried out in ways that make them more or less useful and enjoyable.

Structuring Appraisal Systems

There are three major decisions to make when structuring a performance appraisal system: (1) who appraises, (2) when to appraise, and (3) what and how to measure. Good answers to these three questions are not the same in every case. Choices on these three issues ought to relate back to what the performance appraisal is intended to achieve. An appraisal used predominantly to produce information for administrative decisions would focus on evaluation of past performance through rating and ranking procedures, with the appraiser acting as a judge and the appraised as a passive recipient. If designed primarily as an aid to development and improved performance, however, the appraisal would focus on the future and tend to be more ongoing or stepwise in nature; the appraiser would act more as a coach or guide and the appraised as an active learner and planner.

Although structured planning and review sessions with individual employees can lead to better performance, less turnover and greater satisfaction in the workplace, too often they do nothing of the sort, as workers and supervisors alike treat them as just a formality to endure. At the very worst, performance appraisals erode relationships, create hard feelings, and decrease morale. One tractor driver describes his review sessions as “the worst day of the year. My manager sits there and tells me ‘you didn’t do this,’ ‘you didn’t do that.’ I leave feeling completely demoralized.”

These techniques may help to get the most out of a planning and review session:

- Start off on the right foot—put emphasis on clarifying expectations and planning first and evaluate later.
- If you use a form, tailor it to the job—most stock forms are too general and trait-based.
- Ask employees to work with you in setting goals—supervisors need to do as much listening as talking.

- Approach the session more as a coach, counselor, and developer than as an evaluator.
- Separate planning and review from discipline. Address problem incidents when they occur, rather than putting of discipline to a planning and review session.

Who Appraises

Possible appraisers include the immediate supervisor, co-workers, self, subordinates, customers or clients, and outsiders. The immediate supervisor most commonly conducts formal performance appraisals. Although supervisors are thought to have the best vantage point from which to observe an employee's work, in some agricultural organizations, the official supervisor has broad geographic responsibility and may not even know what, no less how, his charges are doing.

Peer or co-worker appraisal is common in some professions and management ranks. Co-workers often have a view of an individual's performance through their daily interactions. Informal appraisal by peers is an extremely powerful dynamic in crews working on a group incentive pay basis. Co-workers are often understandably reluctant, however, to officially judge their peers for management's purposes. Job security and intra-organizational trust can help to overcome such reluctance.

Self-appraisal is still relatively uncommon in formal systems, though it offers several advantages. Obviously, the appraisee has good access to his own work performance. Knowing ahead of time that they will have to assess their own work helps employees to focus on (and seek clarification of) what is expected of them. People who have reviewed their own performance, whether or not with the aid of a structured form, are more prepared to participate actively in appraisal interviews. The anxiety and defensiveness that often plague these sessions can be replaced by a sense of information exchange and joint problem solving. Studies have demonstrated a relationship between the use of self-appraisal and actual performance improvements subsequent to appraisal interviews.

On the other hand, most people do want to have an external check on their own perceptions. Employees with a low need for independence and autonomy are more likely to prefer the traditional supervisory appraisal. Self appraisals and those performed by a supervisor can be effectively combined to obtain the advantages of both. Both the appraiser and the appraise can complete the same form one week before a scheduled appraisal interview, at which both meet to discuss their reviews, starting with the employee.

Performance appraisal by subordinates would clearly only apply to supervisory and management personnel. It has been noted as a stimulus to teamwork and a good reality check for the brave. Again, job security, trust, and/or anonymity are pre-requisites to the use of subordinate appraisal. If the appraisers fear reprisal for accurate but unflattering observations, there is little point in even attempting to pursue this approach.

The views of customers, clients, and other outsiders are sometimes pertinent to the appraisal of an individual employee's work, particularly if the customer relationship is of long duration or close involvement. These views are perhaps best incorporated into formal supervisory appraisals.

When to Appraise

Among the factors to consider when deciding on the timing of performance appraisal are the newness of the employee to the organization, the size of the organization, and the nature of the work performed. Official appraisals can be made at the end of a project, at some set frequency (once or twice per year seems most common), or at random. (For the record, random performance appraisals have given appraisals a bad name in many quarters.)

"Too many businesses and supervisors use official performance evaluations to avoid the responsibility of maintaining effective communication with their employees. This may sound old-fashioned, but part of being a good supervisor is maintaining a day-to-day relationship in which employees get information about their worth, successes, and shortcomings on an ongoing basis, and in which they receive encouragement, support, and challenges. A system of formal written evaluations often subverts this kind of communication. Good personal working relationships cannot be reduced to formulas and procedures."

Meaningful performance appraisals ought to occur very often, perhaps even daily or weekly. The once-per-year interview goes best when it is the ceremony at which the content of ongoing communication is reviewed. Ideally, there are no surprises in this session. A major problem in traditional appraisal processes is that many foremen and crew leaders figure that completing their periodic form and perfunctory delivery to employees absolves them from responsibility for good day-to-day communication.

What to Measure

There are three basic measurement options, and they are not equally useful: (1) traits—such as friendliness, strength, and mechanical skill, (2) results—such as new contracts written, calf mortality, acreage of trees pruned, and annual maintenance expense, and (3) observable behaviours—such as shears sheep, greets customers, learns content of related jobs, and fixes machines.

Although trait measures are often used in evaluation, they are seldom valid as measures of performance and do not serve performance appraisal purposes very well. The real question in evaluation is whether good performance occurred, regardless of ability.

Results are appealing as appraisal measure, because they appear to represent "the bottom line" of work performance. But for results to be good performance indicators, they need to be identifiable as a reflection of the appraised employee's work, and rarely are results not affected by external factors such as the market, general economic conditions, they quality of supplies, and the work of others in the organization.

Another drawback to using measures of work results in a performance appraisal is that they do not provide guidance for improvement and development. Simply being informed that mastitis is raging in the herd, you lost three contracts, you spent twice as much on maintenance, or you struck out in a ball game does you little good and usually presents little surprise. Most employees whose work is clearly reflected in results already know what those results are. What they really need is some information about why they achieved the results they did and what to do differently in the future in order to improve upon them.

Better Instruments for More Useful Appraisals

Perhaps the single most common defect in performance appraisal systems is weakness of the measuring instrument. All too often the instrument, or rating form, focuses on areas other than work performance and therefore increases the opportunities for rater biases to operate.

The appraisal instrument is a tool. Like any tool, a well-designed form is not everything but it certainly help. Its' very structure affects (1) the accuracy of performance measurement, (2) the perceived fairness and acceptability of the appraisal system to workers, (3) the usefulness of performance appraisal for both administration and development, and (4) the legal defensibility of decisions based on performance differences or "merit."

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are two fundamental criteria for measures of anything, including work performance. *Validity* is the extent to which something really reflects what it purports to be. In terms of work performance, a valid measure is one that assesses behaviour in terms of job duties or task requirements. A well-written job description, based upon careful job analysis, is the best foundation for a performance appraisal instrument. The description should clearly state major job duties in behavioural terms. For effectiveness of repair work, a valid measure might be whether the machine works as it should, not whether the mechanic has a vocational school credential or an M.S. in horticulture. Valid measures of typing skill would include the number of works typed per minute and the number of mistakes made in a finished product, not the pleasantness of personality or neatness of appearance.

Reliability is the consistency of a measure. If the same task is assigned the same value in repeated trials, the measurement is reliable. The bathroom scale with fatigued springs may be a valid but unreliable measure of weight. Even though it does measure pounds, it gives different readings on consecutive uses by the same person. Most unstructured interviews for employee selection are notoriously unreliable; ratings of the very same applicant have been shown to differ by rater, time of day, rater-applicant similarity, and other contextual circumstances.

Reliability problems in performance appraisals largely boil down to rater bias. Human judgement is at the heart of any system, and structuring that judgement is a major function of the appraisal instrument. Among the common rater biases are leniency, harshness, central tendency, halo, similarity, recently, and contrast errors. *Leniency* bias is the tendency of the appraiser to rate all appraises toward the upper end of the scale, somewhere between good and outstanding, for example. *Harshness* is the tendency to rate all people lower within a range. An appraiser with *central tendency*, not surprisingly, rates everybody near the middle. All of these three amount to the appraiser using a restricted range on the scale of possible performance levels. Since appraises can be differentiated even within a limited range, these biases pose little problem when the same rater evaluates everybody in an evaluating system; but such is seldom the case.

Problems arise from these biases when ratings from differently biased appraisers are compared. If crews A and B contain roughly similar performers, should the workers under a lenient Supervisor get larger appraisal-based raise (or more promotion opportunities) than those under central-tending Supervisor B? In any but a very small system, restriction of range tendencies, unless everybody has exactly the same one, destroys comparability across raters by allowing the same ratings or scores to take on multiple meanings. Raters do not have to be "biased" for these effects to occur. They simply might see different meanings in such commonly used evaluative words as "poor," "satisfactory," and "excellent," but the inter-rater complications are the same.

A *halo* effect is produced when an appraiser assigns the same score on each measured dimension of performance for a given employee. It often reflects an over-generalized view of the employee based on his or her true performance on a single important dimension. *Similarity* bias results in higher ratings for employees with certain attributes similar to those of the rater. This phenomenon is very close to the one well known by its esoterically technical name, "favouritism." Appraisals based largely on work done toward the end of a work period suffer from *recently* error. Many employees make it their business to be at their best during the month preceding an annual appraisal interview. Finally, *contrast* errors derive from the tendency to rate an employee in direct comparison with another, rather than against a set of objective standards.

The structure of the appraisal instrument affects the likelihood of biases operating. Clear definitions of not only the dimensions of performance but also different levels of performance help to minimize the occurrence of errors from appraiser bias. While appraiser training can constitute another foil to these errors, considerable relevance and objectivity can be built into performance appraisal through the instrument itself.

Types of Appraisal Instruments

Many types of appraisal forms are in use. The *graphic rating scale* is by far the most widely used type. These scales come in different formats. All require the appraiser to choose the most descriptive rating or evaluative adjective from a linear graph of possibilities ranging from worst to best or vice versa. Major distinctions between formats are how the performance criteria (dimensions) and performance levels (standards or degrees) are defined.

A second type of instrument approaches performance measurement through any one of what might be termed comparative techniques. All methods of this type put appraisees up against one another and require the appraiser to make distinctions among them. Specific types include the *ranking, paired comparison,* and *forced distribution* methods. They are not favoured in many quarters because they focus on and often exaggerate differences between employees rather than measuring each individual against a consistent standard.

In *checklist* methods, the appraiser checks or ranks items on a given list of adjectives or statements about employees. Sometimes a hidden scoring formula is used by personnel staff to translate the rater's choices into numerical indexes on one or more performance dimensions. Most appraisers dislike not knowing the meaning of their checks.

The *critical incident technique* enjoyed a period of fissionability years ago and still has its ardent proponents. A supervisor using it makes notes throughout a performance period about performance episodes that represent "critical" examples of performance on the job—good and bad. An instrument may contain categories to help sort such incidents as accumulated. A performance incident, for example, might be recorded on the form as an example of "better than average" on the job task "inspects equipment." This technique certainly focuses the appraiser on observable behaviour. It provides specifics for discussion in the eventual appraisal interview and reduces recently error by sampling performance from throughout the period. But it is somewhat tedious, has sinister little-black-book overtones, and may not produce information that can be well-used comparatively.

Another type of instrument is the *essay* appraisal form. It gives the appraisers freedom of expression, but it also tends to yield assessments that are uneven as a collection and are difficult to compare.

Performance appraisal instruments based on *behaviourally anchored rating scales* (BARS) have standards defined in behavioural terms by typical instances of behaviour corresponding to the different possible ratings (i.e., degrees of performance). A BARS form describes behaviours representing different levels of goodness or effectiveness for all major duties (or dimensions) of the job. Different raters are much more likely to give the same employee the same scores using this form than one in which performance levels are unanchored. It is especially valuable for jobs where there are a number of workers doing the same thing and there are specific expectations about what they should do. A well-constructed BARS form is also a handy supervisory and communications tool for development purposes. It describes in concrete terms how to perform various parts of the job well.

Developing a BARS rating form requires the answers to two questions:

1. What are the important duties that make up the job?
2. What does excellent, acceptable, and unacceptable performance in each of these duties look like?

Ideally, managers and job incumbents work together to answer these questions and, in so doing, come to a shared understanding of performance expectations. Many potential surprises are thus nipped in the bud.

Sample performance appraisal instruments, such as the following, are available at *AgHelpWanted.org.*

Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scale:

Job duty: Cleans and performs routine maintenance on milking machines

1	3	5
Operates broken equipment	Reports needs for repair	Anticipates breakdowns

Orienting New Employees

The recruitment and selection processes are the beginnings of worker orientation. Through the procedural steps applicants undergo on the way to getting hired, they acquire information and form impressions that affect their decisions about how to perform on the job, beyond whether to accept an employment offer in the first place. Unfortunately, not many farm business managers take full advantage of either pre-hire or the less time-constrained post-hire opportunities to orient employees.

How does the new milker, picker, or mechanic feel when arriving to work the first day? He or she probably has a strong desire to succeed and is anxious about fitting into the new environment, as both a productive worker and part of a social group. If the employer provides for both, the new employee becomes more certain that it was the right decision to accept the job offer, and everybody wins. During the initial days on a job, employees are probably as receptive as they will ever be to signals about what is expected and offered in their new work environment. This period is a critical time that shapes new hires' impressions and understanding about how to get along.

The work environment experience and the performance pattern an employee establishes during the first few days will have a strong influence on that person's attitude, productivity, and team spirit for weeks, months, and even years to come. This holds true even for seasonal workers, as many return to the same employer year after year.

There is much for the employer to get across about administrative matters in addition to job tasks, tools, and functional relationships. A well-planned orientation accelerates the new hire's development and shortens the time to reach the productivity level desired. At best a weak one wastes opportunity and at worst, it figuratively throws cold water in the face of a worker who was excited to be starting a new job in a new place. At harvest time, when many agricultural managers are particularly busy and face a sudden influx of employees, a well-planned employee orientation can do much to help make transitions as painless as possible and get new employees off on the right foot.

Orientation to farm jobs traditionally has been handled in causal style, often by crew supervisors who merely introduce a new hire to crew members and the flow of work. Workers entering farm businesses through kinship and friendship networks arrive somewhat oriented to their jobs and working conditions. For these newcomers especially, continuing orientation and integration into the workforce tend to center on social and familial relationships.

New employees often are reluctant to ask many questions for fear they will appear ignorant. By anticipating what they will want to know and providing it through experiences and documents, growers can reduce more uncertainties than are expressed. An orientation handout (in the language workers use most) serves as a continuing reference that will help employees recall what they may not have been interested in or able to digest when initially told.

What does a complete orientation cover? The process involves the new hire in filling out personnel forms, learning about job duties from a supervisor and coworkers, reviewing the company handbook if there is one, taking a tour of the new surroundings, meeting co-workers, and starting work activity. In designing an orientation process that fits a given operation, it is wise to get opinions from those who have recently joined the firm.

Suggested elements of an orientation for new employees are listed below:

Initial Welcome

- Introduction to department manager,
- Clarification of the name the employee prefers to be known as,
- Brief history of the company, and
- Lunch with a co-worker the first few days (arranged in advance).

General information and procedures

- Reference document stating terms of employment, including the nature of the contract (such as a fixed-term or at-will) and other company information,
- Location of restrooms, personal storage areas, bulletin board, emergency supplies, and phones,
- Policy on personal use of telephones, company equipment, and facilities,
- Disciplinary, suggestion, and complaint procedures, and
- Special policies or procedures that are unique to working with a given unit or supervisor.

Work time and pay

- Work days and hours and variability of the schedule,
- Lunch and break periods,
- Overtime requirements or options,
- Means of notification in case of changes,
- Call-in procedure when unable to show up when expected,
- Tardiness and absenteeism policies,
- Time card and other time-keeping procedures,
- Pay cheque distribution—when, where, how,
- What to do and whom to ask about any pay discrepancies,
- Starting pay rate, including incentive wages or bonuses, and any normal progression,
- Relation of future pay increases to merit, longevity in job, or cost of living,
- Fringe benefits available,
- Procedures for use of vacation credit, sick/personal leave, and holidays
- Performance review and appraisal procedures.

The job

- Tour of the specific area(s) in which the employee will work,
- Introduction to the lead person and others in the work unit,
- Organizational structure and chain of command beyond the work unit,
- Systems, tools and procedures in the entire work unit,
- Job duties and scope,
- Relation of the employee's job to the end product and consumers,
- Specific performance expectations and work standards,
- Product quality requirements, and
- Any promotional opportunities and anticipated time to achieve them.

Safety

- All elements of the company injury and illness prevention program,
- Pesticide safety training as required under the Worker Protection Standard,
- Use and care of work equipment,
- Identification and location of workplace hazards,
- Use, storage, and disposal of solvents and hazardous chemicals,

- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE), including clothes, footwear, respiratory, and eye protection,
- Symptoms of pesticide illness and heat stress,
- Lifting techniques and avoidance of ergonomic hazards,
- Use of fire extinguishers and emergency procedures in case of fire,
- Location of first-aid/medical care, and
- How to report and deal with accidents and illnesses.

An effective orientation pays off in employee performance, retention and workforce harmony. In this example, a manager recalled what a new orientation effort did for his firm:

"Years back we had a new employee orientation program we called Operation Indoctrination (OPDOC). We had OPDOC welcome letters for new employees, OPDOC welcome packages, OPDOC name tags for the new hires, and a buddy in their department that we called an OPDOCER. We also had top and mid-level managers stop by to introduce themselves to any new hires and to welcome them the first week. The program didn't just belong to the personnel guy. The whole company was part of it, and we all had a lot of fun with it….oh, and we reduced turnover by 64 percent."

Staff Meetings

Just about every introductory course on business communications has a section on how to properly conduct a staff meeting. And just about everyone who has to attend staff meetings has horror stories about how unproductive they are. There's no trick when it comes to the principles of running an effective staff meeting. The hard part is implementing those principles.

To begin with, always remember the twin purposes of staff meetings—to keep everyone informed about the general status of the business and to draw up plans to achieve the goals of the business. Many small business owners make the mistake of assuming that by making their meetings informal or "less corporate" they will be more productive. The opposite is usually true. Here are a few rules that should be followed whether you're at a corporate boardroom or sitting around the kitchen table.

Be a clock watcher: Start the meeting on time and always strive to avoid going overtime. If some people are late, there's no need to embarrass them—as long as you always start on time, they will quickly get the idea. If you hold regular meetings, don't be afraid to cancel them if there's nothing much to meet about.

Have an agenda. Most introductory business books lay out the rules for a basic agenda, but the key thing is to have one. Print up copies for everyone and hand them out in advance of the meeting. All you need is one page listing in point form the topics to be addressed and who will be making reports. You don't need to use formal or stuffy language on the agenda, you just want to give people a chance to prepare so you can use the time effectively. Below is a barebones sample agenda. Note that each topic has a time allotted to it. Andre, the farm manager, will do his part by rehearsing his presentations to make sure they don't go overtime. He's asked for the vacation requests before the meeting so he can see how many conflicts there are. If they can settle the schedule at the meeting, fine. But he's prepared to restrict any debate so the meeting keeps moving along.

Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, Feb. 9, 8a.m. to 8:50 a.m.

Lunchroom

1. Production stats from January_Andre (5 min)
2. Herd health update/concerns_Martin (10 min)
3. Vacation schedule_all (10 min)
4. New proposed regulations on manure spreading_Andre (15 min)
5. Cancellation of March meeting to attend MilkWorld conference (2 min)
6. New business (8 min)

Note 1: Please give Andre a list of your first and second choices for vacation times prior to the meeting. If time allows, we will begin work on a tentative schedule. Andre will make final decision prior to the April meeting.

Note 2: As always, notify Andre by Monday if you have new business.

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