Increasing Productivity by Creating Champion Employees

Chris Rose
Labour Costs

- Labour is the biggest production cost
- The cost of labour increases every year
- Returns are more often static
- Without efficiency gains, how long will you stay in business?
- How much variation is there between your best and your worst workers?
Variation in Picking Speed

- Fastest pickers are 2 x speed of average
- 2.7 x speed of bottom 25%
- Top 75% improve over the season by 30%
- Bottom 25% improve by 1%
If you always do what you’ve always done…

You’ll always get what you’ve always got
Sourcing the Right Labour

How carefully do you recruit labour?

Do all your workers want to be here?

Are they all genuinely hungry to earn?

Careful pre-selection filters out the non-motivated

CP 58 The Development of a Pre-selection System for Seasonal Horticultural Labour
How much do you care?
Induction & Training

1\textsuperscript{st} Impressions count

Be friendly & welcoming. Smile

They will be tired, stressed and unsure

Explain what will happen – next steps

Use an interpreter if needed
Trained labour outperforms keen beginners

Organise a training programme:
- Define the tasks to be mastered
- Set performance standards
- Teach each task
- Ensure later intakes get the same
- Monitor performance daily
- Recognise achievement
Increasing Productivity

- Teach to competence
- Coach for productivity
- Show trainees the top performers in action
- Encourage all to set targets to improve
- Recognise and praise every step forward
- Believe in the potential of everyone
Performance = Potential – Interference
What is a Champion Worker?

- Does the job to the **required standard**
- Does not need to be monitored
- Does the job very **effectively**
- Gets superb results **consistently**
The Champion Picker Model

Crop Specific (Strawberry) Traits

- Thorough consistent search pattern
- Pick with both hands simultaneously
- Read the plant and think ahead
- Move the sledge accurately with the foot
- Listen to their bodies
The Champion Picker Model

Generic Traits

- Strongly goal-oriented
- Physically fit and strong
- They are good modellers
- Consistent positive mindset
- Set a sustainable pace and rhythm
- Keep fully focussed
Champion Supervisors

- Select carefully
- Train well
- Teacher – (Policeman) – Speed Coach
- Measure performance
- Reward results
- CP 59 The Development of a Champion Supervisor Model and Training Programme
The Champion Supervisor

Knowledge

Values

Skills

Behaviours

Attitudes
People Focused

- People first:
- Then task
- Their success = your success
- People matter

- Selfish
- Unhappy gang
- Only numbers
Loyalty

- Work for the business
- Support people and boss
- Loyal to management
- Give & get loyalty

- Loyal to self
- Appear OK
- Tell tales to boss
- Tell tales about boss
Know the Standards

- Know all standards
- Any variations
- Change of spec
- Communicate change

- Confused
- Mixed messages
- Gets rejections!
Constructive Correction

1st Level
Sit Out
1 Hour

2nd Level
No Work
1 Day

3rd Level
Written Warning

4th Level
Final Written Warning

5th Level
Dismissal

Tell 1st Time

Tell 2nd Time

Great Job!
Coaching

- Make connections
- Know their goals
- Help them get success
- Nurture → grow
- Job done right

• Uses stick only
• People don’t matter
• Doesn’t want confidence
Flexibility

- Anticipate change
- Make changes early
- What’s really happening
- Change methods quickly
- Fast actions: No problems

• Fights change
• Only rules count
• Crisis management
What to do?

Wherever teams or individuals are performing the same task:
- Measure variation in performance
- Seek to understand reasons why
- Plan to reduce it by x% - 20%? 40%?
- Develop ‘speed coaches’
Best Practice in Harvest Organisation

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Harvest is a busy time

Do you know what should be happening… or what is really happening?

Get a 3rd party to audit your harvest
Strategic Planning & Field Design
Strategic Planning & Field Design

Do your harvest staff have a say in:

- Field size
- Block size
- Row length
- Size of headland
- Central roadway width
- Grassing headlands
Configuration

- 2-Row bed?
- 3-Row bed?
- Low or high bed?
- Soil or substrate?
- Ground level or table-top?
Cropping Density
Tunnels

- 4 Bed?
- 5 Bed?
- Wider leg rows?
- What alley width?
- Standardised system
Picker Organisation

- Start of the day
- Keep the picker picking
- Runners
- Individual vs team payment
- Gang size
A smooth start?
Keep the Picker Picking
Gang Size
The Collection Point
Collection Point Organisation

Weigh or no way?

Avoid queuing

Q.C. or just book in?

Book in on field or at farm?

Data-logging systems

Fruit carting
Single handling
Double handling
New Mantra

“Right 1st time and on time every time”

We must add

“in the most efficient, cost-effective manner possible”
Helping People Grow

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