Building Successful Work Teams!

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Why Bother?

There’s a lot of money on the table

Reinventing the wheel every season wastes valuable resources

Your employees can make or break your business

You are a role model – how you behave reflects on what you value and how your business functions

Best management practices can be learned
Think about a past employment experience you’ve had

What worked?

What didn’t?
A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A MANAGER

- Planning
- Research
- Recruiting/Hiring
- Orientation/Training
- Recordkeeping
- Evaluation
- Ending Employment
Preparing to be a manager

- Self-assessment
- Systems in place vs “winging it”
- Safety procedures
- Can you make payroll?
- Are you aware of the legal and tax implications?
- Up-to-date job descriptions
Successful work teams

• Applications/Recruitment
• Interviews
• Training/Orientation (onboarding)
• Ongoing Communications
• Termination
Application/Recruiting

• Do your application/recruiting materials reflect the qualities you most want in employees?
• Curiosity, timeliness, reliability, honesty, attention to detail, creativity, fun, resiliency...
I like chocolate ice cream — but, when I go fishing, I use worms, ‘cause fish like worms.
**Interviews**

- Face-to-face is always best
- Ask open-ended questions but really hear the answers
- Probe for examples
- Provide time for applicants to ask questions – and look for the clues
Policies & Procedures

• If it’s not written down is it even real...?
  • Start/stop times
  • Tardiness/absence procedure
  • Expectations – quality/quantity of work
• Corrective discipline
• Appropriate dress
• Cell phones, breaks
• Benefits
Training/Orientation

• Incorporate different learning styles
• Mix hard/soft skills
• Put their jobs in the context of the whole farm
• Provide time for questions – and look for the clues
• Catch people doing things ‘right’
Adaptability

The willingness to modify my behavior for the benefit of the relationship
Ongoing workplace communication

• Incorporate different learning styles
• Praise in public/Criticize in private
• Share public communications with the team
• Provide time for questions – and look/listen for the clues
• Short and more frequent is better than longer and less frequent
Very willing
Low in ability

Very Willing
High in ability

Low in will and
Low in ability

Low in will and
High in ability
One thing you are doing well that you should keep doing

One thing you can do to be more effective

One thing I can do to support you

Fast Feedback Loop
Ending Employment

- Is there a clear papertrail documenting problems and efforts to resolve them?
- Do your policies and procedures clearly identify how problems will be addressed?
- Is notice of termination presented in writing?
- When an employee leaves is there an opportunity to meet for an exit interview?
- Do you have an end-of-season celebration for seasonal workers?
- Are any agreed on incentives/bonuses paid promptly?
- Do you collect contact information for any necessary follow-up?
How You See Yourself

Active
Fast-paced; Assertive; Dynamic; Bold

Questioning
Logic-focused; Objective; Skeptical; Challenging

Thoughtful
Moderate-paced; Calm; Methodical; Careful

Accepting
People-focused; empathizing; receptive; agreeable
Resources

Farm Commons - https://farmcommons.org/

Ag Labor Dashboard -
http://www.uvm.edu/aglabor/dashboard
Dashboard Tools

Interactive decision-making tools

Welcome to the Labor Dashboard

- **Labor Readiness Assessment**: Find out if there are areas where you need to prepare.
- **Job Description Generator**: Produce and download accurate, professional job descriptions.
- **Cost Calculator**: Determine the full cost of hiring an employee on your farm.
Questions?