

Communication Matters in Farm Transition



Communication..

- Why
- What
- How



Why is Communication Important?

It is said that “85% of all conflict is due to Miscommunication”

If we want a successful transition, we cannot expect it to happen without good communication



But WHAT do we need to communicate?

- Why
- Vision and Goals
- Expectations
- Logistics
- Transition Plan



Starting with Why

- Why do you farm?
 - Drives how you look at things and your decisions
 - Do others on your farm know?
- Why does your farm exist?



Vision and Goals

- Both generations need to clearly articulate where they see the farm in the future.. And
- What goals they have
- It would common for some goals to not be consistent with the other generations goals



Expectations

- What do you see as your role(s) in this process?
- What do you see as others role(s) in this process?



Logistics

- How you operate as the leader of your farm operation
- Your successor should become your shadow



Transition Plan

- Are you clearly communicating how and when you see the transition plan being accomplished?
- Do both generations agree on the plan?
- When and how are you communicating the plan with non-farming heirs?



How do we communicate?

- Webster, *“The exchange of thoughts, messages or information.”*
- Issues
 - Lack listening skills
 - Lack ability or opportunity to express ideas

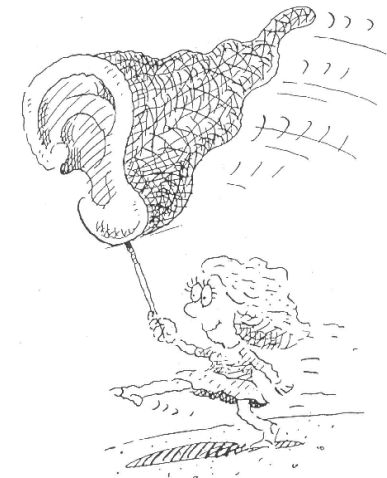
“Seek first to understand and then to be understood!”, Steven Covey



FACTS

FEELINGS

PRECEPTIONS



Nonverbal Communication

- **Body Language**
 - Posture
 - Facial Expressions
 - Gestures



- Listening Quiz



Improve Listening Skills

- Become People Conscious
 - Remember and call people by their **names**
 - Use **positive speech**
 - **Meanings are in people, not words**
 - Words may have more than one meaning
 - Word meanings change
 - Some words may not give enough information



Improve Listening Skills

- Limit **Listening Barriers**
 - Faking attention
 - Responding to the wrong thing
 - Using your filters



Improve Listening Skills

- Speak at a moderate rate
- Give Feedback
 - Clarify, paraphrase, respond



Verbal Communications

Improving verbal communications

- Think before you speak
- Know your audience
- Be specific and simplify
- Present thoughts logically
- Be patient
- Summarize
- Give and get feedback
- Practice effective listening



“You” Messages

You messages tend to blame, order or evaluate

“I noticed that some of “You” were late for the meeting tonight”

- ‘You’ messages label the receiver instead of describing your feelings
- ‘You’ messages put the receiver on the defensive against a negative message
- ‘You’ messages tend to create inhibitions and closed behavior because of distrust



Using “I” messages

Can be effective in dealing with problems with another person

- When I arrived for the meeting tonight...
“The event”
- And there were only a few people here...
”The effect”
- I felt disappointed...”The feeling”



Using “I” messages

Can be effective in dealing with problems with another person

- Places responsibility with the sender
- Reduces other person’s defensiveness
- Does not evaluate the other person
- Promotes communications
- Builds trust and creates empathy



Written Communication

Ways to improve Written Communications

- Write to read, you cannot be heard
- Keep it **short**
- Use **familiar words**, avoid jargon where possible
- Be **clear** and **definite**



Written Communication

Ways to improve Written Communications

- Use **graphics**
- **Edit** ruthlessly
- **Proof-read**, find the typos before someone else does
- Write so you cannot be misunderstood



Bizarro by Dan Piraro



Communication

Male and Female Differences

1. Problem Solving
2. Information
3. Conversation
4. Directions
5. Support



Generational Differences

- Often 3 different generations working on the farm
- Each generation grew up in a different era
- Each looks at things (job/work) differently
- Each needs to be part of the solution to communicate across these differences



Older Generation Vs. Younger Generation

- Older Generation perceived Satisfaction of communication higher, problems lower, and resources higher than the younger generation
- This is affected by
 - Stage of life related to the business
 - Generational differences in expectations
 - Life-stage events (marriage, newborns, retirement)
 - Each individuals contribution to communication



Communication Blockers

Directing/Ordering

“Stop complaining...” “Try harder...”

Threatening/Warning

“You had better...”
“If you don’t.....”

Moralizing/Preaching

“You ought to...”
“Nice girls don’t...”

Lecturing/Arguing

“The fact is...”
“Yes, but *this* is the way...”

Advice Giving

“Why don’t you ...”
“If you would do this...”

Criticizing/Blaming

“You’re not thinking straight..”
“You’re acting like an idiot...”
“You should have...”

Diagnosing/Counseling

“You don’t really mean that...”
“What you need is....”

Cross-examining, Prying

“When are you going to?”
“Why did you do that?”

Denying/reassuring/withdrawing

“Don’t worry about it...”
“It’s not that big of a deal...”
“Lets not talk about it now...”



Communication Openers

1. Be attentive. Look, listen, track
2. Invite responses.
3. Summarize.
4. Ask and Clarify.



Communication

- Hold business meeting for managers/owners
 - Set a regular schedule for updates
 - Set dates for quarterly meeting for financial and operations reviews.
 - Hold annual meeting with full financial review, business production/financial analysis and update short & long term goals



Any
Questions ?

