

meatup FORUM

For the latest in red meat R&D

Proactive business and people management in mixed farming

Paul O'Meehan
A O'Meehan and Co

Introduction

- Family operation.
- Farm 11,300 ha of which 8,000 is owned by an overseas super fund.
- Operate a 5,000 head Feedlot, markets include Stirling Ranges Beef, Woolworths and custom feeding.
- Employ between 8 and 14 people.





Business Growth

- Took over the management and operation of the family farm in 1990 from my father. Farm established in 1906.
- Initially it was a 1,500 ha crop, 3,000 sheep and 400 head cow herd.
- Growth was organically, which is pretty slow when you're in a hurry.
- 2008 I completed an Advanced Diploma in Business Management through Ballarat University.
- My Uni project was Outside Investment in Agriculture.
- The physical model was to have a farming unit of 10 to 15,000 acres, with one airseeder, boomspray, header, labour unit and be within 70 kms.
- Mental model was people, planning, processes, production and profit.

Exponential growth in 2013

- Went from 8,500 acres to 28,300 in one year.
- Doubled our plant, but more than trebled our farming size.
- Achieved scale that fitted into our model.



CEO Institute

- 2009 became a member of the CEO Institute.
- Took on Steve Stanley to help with our HR on Farm.
- Developed a set of Vision and Values for our business.
- Staff had 100% ownership of the procedure and outcome.



Vision

- Undertook a process driven by Steve to create a vision for our business.
- Given 50 questions and asked to pick a dozen that were appropriate for our business.
- This became the template for our vision.
- This task was done almost entirely by our staff, with my input minimal.

Vision: A O'Meehan and Co

At A. O'Meehan and Co, we are proud of the farm, our team and our product. Our farm is organised, neat and appealing. It demonstrates care and commitment by our team. It allows us to be more efficient and effective with all operations. We welcome visitors to the property and value their comments and reactions.

We operate as one team working together to achieve outstanding results. We earn respect from our workmates by always acting with trust and care. We support each other through our versatility and help wherever it is needed. We value, respect and welcome all skill sets and listen to new ideas no matter the age or experience of any of our team.

As a team we are reliable, get the job done on time and to the best of our ability. We take no shortcuts and ask for help when needed. We try different methods and suggestions to continually innovate and improve every aspect of farming. We know that we can progress and work towards achieving the perfect operation.

Together we work as a team. Together we improve and innovate. Together we achieve results to ensure our farm is the best.

Values

“Values are an internal reference for what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable in ourselves and others”.

“Values are moral principles, based on beliefs, so significant to us as individuals that they drive our behaviour, our interactions with others and the world”

Eric Lynn; cultureQs

excellence
work life balance
honesty trust
rules integrity quality service
ethical teamwork innovation quality
conduct collaborate
personal growth
success faith openness achievement
growth
accountability consistency
organisation participation commitment correctness

Values

Values: A O'Meehan and Co

- **Communication** – We talk openly, honestly and we listen with respect. We don't hold ideas and issues back, but share them with the team. We seek feedback and accept it is given to assist us to get better than we've ever been.
- **Work Ethic / Effort** – We make the effort to improve everything we do. We can always do better and we strive to make this happen. We do what it takes to reach our goals.
- **Teamwork** – We work together and support each other at all times. We have each other's backs and will be there whenever we are needed. If someone achieves success, we celebrate together. If someone needs help, we give that help without hesitation. If one of us is down, we lift them.
- **Openness** – In order to give each other the support that great teams do, and to improve constantly, we are open about issues with work, or in our lives that impact on work. We are not afraid to bring issues into the open, as we know we will be respected and supported.

Human Resources

- We see HR as part of our business, like any other maintenance.
- 4 to 5 meetings a year with Steve as our facilitator. We think his independence is critical.
- Pre and post harvest and pre and post seeding is the driver of meeting times.
- Pre meetings we use the SMEAC principal:
 - Situation
 - Mission
 - Execution
 - Administration
 - Communication

Key Stakeholders

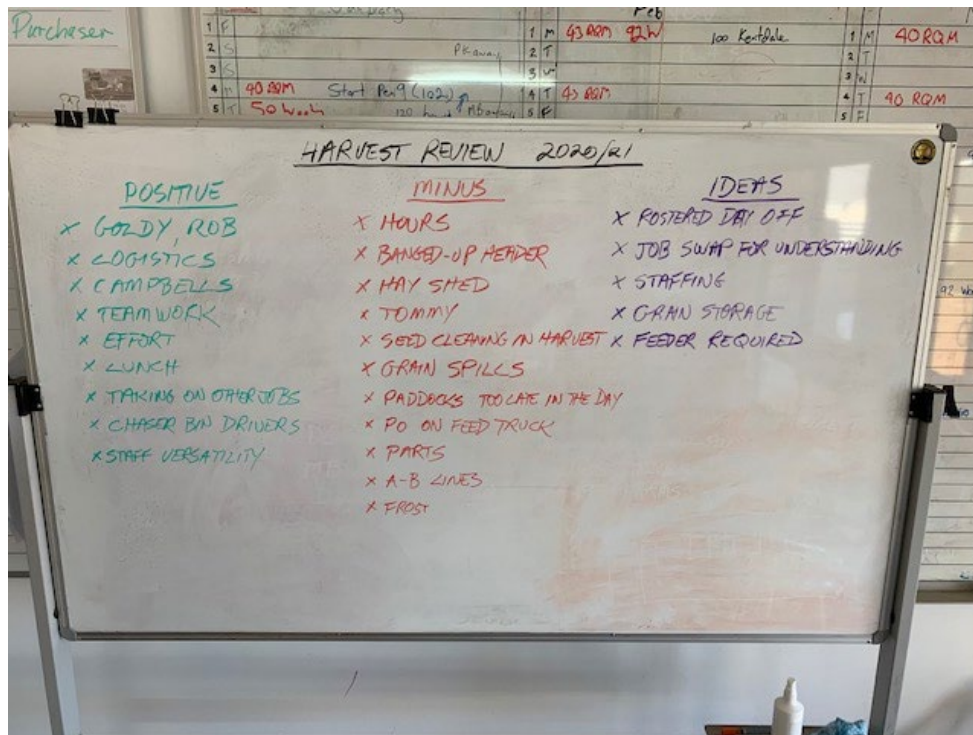
- About 5 years ago we started to include our key stakeholders.
- At the end of our pre and post meetings we invite the businesses that have the most influence on our business.
- Includes: our machinery dealer, chemical supplier, fert supplier, contractors (freight and farm), CBH, Westchester.



PMI: Positive, Minus, Ideas

- At our Post meetings we will do a PMI on how seeding or harvest went.
- Initially it will be just with ourselves, and then later our Stakeholders.
- List all the positives, then minus's and ideas on how to improve.

PMI Harvest 2021



Personal Development: Stop, Start, Continue

- An opportunity to evaluate and be evaluated by your peers.
- Feedback from your work mates, not the Boss.
- Feedback that can be used to identify change.
- Evaluation that that can be used to improve and understand yourself.
- Information that improves and keeps good guys, and uncovers fakes and dishonesty.

Paul's Stop, Start, Continue: 2019

Stop:

- Leaving coffee cups everywhere
- Answering the phone during conversations
- Pretending to go on business trips when you're bike riding
- Leaving things until the last minute
- Taking things on when you don't have the time
- Avoiding the pile of paper Beth brings in

Start:

- Addressing issues early
- Listening and trusting the judgment of other people
- Delegating
- Putting paper in the bin
- Sorting paperwork at the end of the day
- Learning how to use a printer

Continue:

- Always has time for people
- Teaching – you're a great teacher
- Good boss and a good guy
- Making decisions and sticking by them
- Understands the situation
- Sense of humour
- Calming influence
- No mistakes, only lessons
- Gives everyone a chance
- Interested in people – not just as employees.

Summary

- Cannot imagine doing business without human resource management. It's part of our DNA and culture.
- As important as our pre harvest maintenance, or our financial budget.
- Staff look forward to the process.
- Businesses want to be a part of our business.
- People want to come and work here.



Take home messages

- There are three key aspects to managing people, and managing your business as it grows:
 - Vision
 - Values
 - HR

Tools and resources

- **The Toolbox** – MLA's new e learning platform has a collection of resources, including People and Business (among others)
 - <https://elearning.mla.com.au>
- **People in Agriculture** – an easy to use website with information on employment law, news, career management and professional practice, and the broader industry.
- **Lead with Certainty (PGS)** – Develop an understanding of yourself and your team. Learn to create a positive team culture through planning, goal setting and communication