

Employer of choice checklist and top tips

The benefits of becoming an employer of choice

- A positive business reputation
- Potential to attract, recruit and retain the best staff
- Attract new customers, suppliers and contractors
- Better motivated staff leading to increased productivity and reduced staff turnover
- Healthier workplace culture

Checklist	Top tips
Business vision and values	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a vision that describes where you are now and where you want to be as a business • Identify your values so that they explain what your business cares about the most 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Keep your vision simple and write it down so you can communicate the sort of business you are and why your farm is a great place to work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use your vision and values to provide a common purpose that all staff understand, work towards and live by • Use your vision and values to promote your business externally and raise your profile as an employer of choice when you recruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Remember, your vision and values should be what you, your business and your people live and breathe, day in and day out – not just a document in a drawer that's never used
Leadership	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the right tone in the way you talk to people and lead by example – your staff will look to you for examples of what to do or what not to do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Remember that leadership is a 'contact sport' – you cannot lead people if you never have any contact with them!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find time for your people, show genuine interest in them and listen to their feedback • Build trust by doing what you say you will do • Help people learn from their mistakes, rather than pointing the finger or blaming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make it easy for people to give you feedback on your leadership – the better you understand your strengths and weaknesses, the more effective you will be as a leader.
People	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help people see that they make a difference on your farm and why they are important within the team • Have clear roles and responsibilities so that people feel confident and empowered to do the right things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ When communicating jobs and what you expect from people, remember to explain the WHY (why the job is important), as well as the WHAT (what you want them to do). People are more motivated by the WHY.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate that you invest in people by identifying ongoing opportunities for training, coaching and mentoring • Make sure your HR policies are easy for staff to access and understand, provide support and keep them safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Remember that there are different ways of growing and developing people. Not all development needs to be focused on moving up the career ladder – adding skills such as coaching or mentoring can be just as rewarding.
Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find time for communication and show staff this is a valuable use of their time • Make sure any meetings are inclusive so that everyone feels able to contribute and comfortable doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Remember that poor communication costs you time and money, so check understanding by asking specific questions instead of 'do you understand'? (This tends to result in nodding heads, but might not mean people have actually understood.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff to ask questions for clarification rather than muddle through tasks making assumptions • Provide opportunities for people to meet, share ideas and solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Remember that people are different and learn in different ways. The more you take time to understand what makes people tick, the more you will get out of them.

Reward and recognition		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide fair pay, working hours and holidays • Recognise and reward people for their hard work – just finding the time to say thank you can make a difference! • Pay people on time and let them know when the money is coming, to help them budget and manage their finances • Ask staff for feedback on how they would prefer to be rewarded, don't just assume everyone is motivated by money 	✓	Be careful not to focus feedback purely on problems and mistakes. Consider how you take time to celebrate success and talk about what is going well on-farm
	✓	Be creative when you're looking at benefit packages. A gift voucher, lunch down the pub or an early finish can be really motivating to some people.
Ways of working		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide people with clear policies and ways of working so that they know what is expected of them and what to do if they have any problems • Develop Protocols and Standard Operating Procedures to help communicate what a 'good job' looks like on your farm • Describe desired behaviours; give people examples of what is acceptable and not acceptable on-farm, and help them see how together you can make the farm a more enjoyable place to work for everyone • Review and improve policies and protocols to make sure they are current, useful and add value to the business 	✓	Involve staff in developing Standard Operating Procedures and Protocols, giving them more ownership and helping them take more responsibility for following them.
	✓	Don't assume everyone understands how they should behave on-farm. Describe, for example, what 'great teamwork' or 'great communication' looks like and share real examples from your team.
Competitor awareness		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep an eye on your competition and be aware of what other farms are doing to promote themselves as an employer of choice • Find out how people view your business out in the marketplace and ask for feedback from the local community, customers, suppliers and contractors • Proactively promote your business to help people see why it's a great place to work – when you need to recruit, potential employees will already be aware of you and keen to apply! 	✓	If you have current staff who are happy working on your farm, think about how you can share their experiences when you are out at meetings, discussion groups, markets or shows.
	✓	Make sure the picture you paint of your business as an employer of choice matches up with the reality of working there.

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