

Northampton Monitor Farm

Meeting title: What can we learn from other industries?

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What do successful businesses do?

Personal development

- What do you say if people ask what you do? Do you say you are a farmer? Or do you say you are a business owner?
- With business **O**wnership comes **A**ccountability and **R**esponsibility (**OAR**)
- And you need to avoid **B**lame, **E**xcuse, **D**enial (**BED**)
- Business owners focus on the tasks that make money, i.e. the business areas rather than the £10/hr work which doesn't add value to the business
- The focus becomes how to attract good people to work in the business
- Advantage of looking at a business as a business owner rather than as a farmer:
 - Decisions tend to be based on logic rather than emotion

Setting goals

- What is the difference between setting big goals and setting small ones?
- If you set big goals you need to set milestones and celebrate each one – then your brain associates success with reward
- Non-agricultural businesses tend to set bigger goals so they tend to make bigger advances
- With bigger goals businesses tend to be more pro-active in finding out what they need to do to achieve them

Effective delegation

- What stops people from delegating?
- Factors such as businesses size, confidence, trust and time
- The biggest thing that stops businesses growing is the team
- Delegate or Abdicate
- If you are teaching someone how to do something ask him/her to repeat what you have said
- Don't accuse people of not listening
- Some people like detail, others don't

- You need to learn how to talk in their language – this is particularly important when it comes to selling
- You are learning how to communicate
- Farmers are good at producing products (**Delivery**)
- But the **Conversion** of these into **Leads** is where the money is - yet often the conversion bit is ignored
- When you are recruiting new team members look for **sponges**, not **rocks** – agriculture is a very technical industry and rapidly changing.

Learning and implementing important subjects

- Most farmers don't read books about business
- But you need to LEARN before you can EARN
- Clients who read a lot make the most money, especially the ones who implement things
- Read the right things, i.e. information that will make your business grow
- Like a tree, stronger roots give more stability

Testing and measuring progress

George Davies Turf Ltd. provides a great example of how testing and measuring has been used to grow a very successful business (see below)

Take-home messages

- Successful business owners focus on the tasks that make money
- Learn to delegate
- Focus on communication within the team
- Read books about business instead of just things about farming

Case study: George Davies Turf Ltd.

- The idea for the business came from wanting to see what else could be done with the farm
- Farm's best asset was its location, with a lot of towns nearby – what did they want? Turf.
- Turf business started as a sideline
- Moving from a one-man business to taking on staff provided challenges in dealing with unreliability, learning to trust people and handing over responsibility
- Cost control and watching margins is very important
- Figures are broken down frequently (weekly) and in detail (e.g. margin per km)
- Results are shown to team so that they can see the outcome, which encourages them to buy in to the numbers
- Small tweaks make big differences
- The detail coming out of the system shows there is still massive room for improvement

Take-home messages

- Learn to delegate - *delegation/abdication*
- Communication of the team is vitally important
- These ideas need to be instilled in farming – a change in culture is needed

AHDB resources

- Understand your business costs with AHDB's benchmarking tool Farmbench at ahdb.org.uk/farmbench
- Monitoring tools are available at ahdb.org.uk/tools
- Sign up to market information and research newsletters at ahdb.org.uk/keeping-in-touch
- Find out what's going on at other Monitor Farms and Strategic Farms at ahdb.org.uk/farm-excellence
- All AHDB events can be found at ahdb.org.uk/events
- For guidance on how Brexit will impact your business, see ahdb.org.uk/brexit

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