Understanding people

Why it helps to understand people:

Everyone is different and has different strengths and weaknesses. The more you understand about what makes people tick, the more motivated and effective your team will be.

Motivation:

People are motivated by very different needs at different times of their life. It is not the responsibility of an employer to meet all of an employee’s needs but it is useful to understand some of the different motivators. Good managers are good motivators – they create an environment where employees have a sense of achievement, pride and pleasure in their jobs.

If you have staff that are unmotivated, work through this list of motivators and ask yourself if their needs are being met in each area, and if not, how you could change this:

- **Money**: While money is not necessarily the primary driver for most employees, people do need fair remuneration.
- **To belong to the in-crowd**: This means people want to have a sense of “belonging” in the work place. It can help people to feel like they belong if they are kept up to date with what management is up to and why decisions on farm management are being made.
- **The opportunity for growth and development**: This includes education and training, a career path and stimulation from outside sources.
- **Leadership**: This includes clear expectations and directions from their manager.
- **Control of their work**: This includes things like the ability to have an influence on farm decisions, clear responsibilities and the opportunity to meet those responsibilities through planning their own work load, and recognition of achievement.
- **A balance between work and life**: Many people work their hardest when they know that there is plenty of opportunity for recreation when the work is finished.
Human development and work-life stages:

Often all you need is to get work done and get it done properly. However the ability of a person to perform at work may be affected by their life stage. Use the following information when planning who will do which jobs:

**Adolescence**
Work is important to adolescents, but so is a strong sense of wanting to experience different jobs, so structure their jobs in a way that ensures the job gets done properly even when the employee’s mind may be elsewhere. Adolescents have a lot to offer an employer, but don’t expect high commitment.

**Early adulthood**
Early adulthood is about career establishment and commitment. For positions where strong commitment to the job is required, best results are achieved by selecting people who have clearly entered their adult time of life, usually people who are aged 25 – 30 and older.

**Middle adulthood**
During middle adulthood, career development generally peaks – mature employees can offer an employer a wealth of experience and life skills. There is often a tendency to shift energy from career concerns to family concerns at this time of life and this is often reflected in better time management and work/life balance choices. This period usually lasts until a person reaches retirement age.

**Generation Y**
This section examines the most effective strategies for managing “Generation Y” (people born between 1978 and 2002). They come into the workforce with quite different attitudes and expectations from previous generations. They are techno-savy and look for roles that offer them opportunities to acquire skills and build networks that will make them more marketable in the future. Many don’t expect to stay with their first employer for more than two years. Generation Y are idealistic, with a strong focus on family and religious values and jobs that “matter” are important.

**Recruiting Generation Y**
- Be candid - they don’t respond well to a hard sell or “BS”.
- Ensure there is a cultural fit by matching individual values to those of the business.
- Use the internet as an advertising means.
- Respond promptly, make each candidate feel unique and keep them informed.

**Managing Generation Y**
- Build effective relationships that acknowledge people professionally and as individuals (people are reluctant to leave if they have friends).
- Provide frequent feedback.
- Instantly recognise and reward outstanding efforts.
- Adopt a collaborative management style.
- Work-life balance is essential (younger employees want control of their time).
- Encourage and support personal growth and development plans.
- Let people know how their work contributes to organisational goals so that work feels meaningful.
- Train well at the beginning so that you get an early return on your investments – you may not have them long-term.

Salary and benefits are important to employees of any generation, but finding challenging work in a nurturing environment is more important to Generation Y.
Understanding personality:

There are many different tools available for understanding personality. This factsheet provides some tips for working better with the four main types of personalities based on the DISC model. The most important thing to remember is that no person fits completely into one personality type, but making the effort to understand your team members and to communicate with them in the way they are most receptive to is a very useful staff management tool.

**Direct personalities**
Direct personalities speak in shorter sentences and come straight to the point. They think and respond quickly and have an impatient style. Don’t bother with niceties or tell them long stories, but keep communication direct and to the point.

**Influencing personalities**
Influencing personalities are bubbly, friendly, informal and use creative language. To communicate effectively with influencers be positive and enthusiastic as well as emphasising the value of the person.

**Stabilising personalities**
Stabilising personalities are generally quietly spoken but are friendly and approachable. They need space to speak and should not be interrupted. Use phrases such as “How do you feel about it?”, “I’d be grateful if…” and avoid harsh orders with these people.

**Conscientious personalities**
Conscientious personalities speak thoughtfully and precisely with pauses for thinking. Do not interrupt conscientious personalities. Use words like “It’s logical, reasonable, clear….” and avoid creative and colourful talk.