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

About a year ago...
- six months.

...we were on our way to L.A...
- San Francisco.

...when this teenager...
- old lady.

...in a sports car...
- panel van.

...pulled out...
- swerved.

...in front of...
- into.

...us...
- another car.

MARRIED STORY-TELLING
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 individual's 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…”
“Let’s 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?