



## Communicating With Your Farm Labor Resource

Jeffrey E. Tranel  
Ag & Business Management Economist

2009 Colorado Ag Big and Small Conference  
Greeley, CO  
2009 February 19

## Interpersonal Communications

“I just can’t seem to keep good help”  
Lament of many agricultural employers.

*Surprisingly often, workers leave  
because of how they are treated,  
especially how direct supervisors  
talk to them on an individual basis.*

## Ideas in Practice

---

- Lindermeier Family
  - Dad and Mother
  - Matt and young family
- Communications lacking
- Shared understanding

## Functions of Management

- Planning
  - developing the business purpose, philosophy, goals, and strategies.
- Organizing
  - Establishing a system of roles and responsibilities to achieve business goals.
- Staffing
  - Attracting, developing, and retaining people
- Leading
  - Directly influencing people and facilitating their work.
- Controlling
  - Assessing results against objectives.
  - Taking corrective action when necessary.

## Managers' Theories

- Theories are not described as such
- Practical axioms
  - The supervisor who respects his crew members will be respected by them.
  - If you don't measure results, don't expect they will be achieved.
  - A worker who has two bosses cannot effectively be supervised by either.
  - Promoting from within builds employee commitment.
  - Offering entry pay above the local average is necessary to attract the most capable applicants.

## Managers' Theories – Theory X by Douglas McGregor

- The average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if possible.
- Most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, and threatened.
- The average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition, and wants security above all.

## Managers' Theories – Theory Y by Douglas McGregor

- Physical and mental effort is as natural as play or rest.
- Self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which they are committed.
- Commitment is a function of rewards.
- Accept and seek responsibility.
- Imagination, ingenuity, and creativity is widely distributed.
- Intellectual potential is only partially utilized.

## Supervisory Decision-Making Styles

“I tell ‘em what to do, how to do it, and when. There’s not other way. Someone has to call the shots for this operation.”

“It is usually a mistake for me to finalize production commitments before checking with the crew. After all, they know what’s happening out their.”

“I put most problems into my foreman’s hands and let them take it from there. My role is to make sure they know what needs to be done, answer their questions, and get out of the way.”

## Leadership Styles

- **Telling**....*start baling the hay now.*
- **Selling**....*start baling now. It has dried enough to keep from molding, and we may lose too many leaves if it gets any drier.*
- **Checking**....*I am thinking about buying that new tractor. It has plenty of power for the money and reports show it to be reliable. What do you think given how we plan to use it?*
- **Consulting**...*our records show that we had twice as many injuries during this past harvest as in the last five. Why do you think that happened, and what can I do about it for next year?*
- **Swelling**... *we have to plant all twenty sections by Wednesday and only six of our rigs are working. Let me know if you can get it done, how, and what extra expenses we'll have to incur.*

## Goleman's Leadership Styles

Style	In a Phrase	When Best
Coercive		
Authoritative		
Affiliative		
Democratic		
Pacesetter		
Coaching		

## Goleman's Leadership Styles

Style	In a Phrase	When Best
Coercive	Do what I tell you.	Crisis, to kick-start a change, with problem employee
Authoritative		
Affiliative		
Democratic		
Pacesetting		
Coaching		

## Goleman's Leadership Styles

Style	In a Phrase	When Best
Coercive	Do what I tell you.	Crisis, to kick-start a change, with problem employee
Authoritative	Come with me.	Change requires a new vision or strong direction
Affiliative		
Democratic		
Pacesetting		
Coaching		

## Goleman's Leadership Styles

Style	In a Phrase	When Best
Coercive	Do what I tell you.	Crisis, to kick-start a change, with problem employee
Authoritative	Come with me.	Change requires a new vision or strong direction
Affiliative	People come first.	To heal rifts in a team or motivate people during stressful circumstances
Democratic		
Pacesetting		
Coaching		

## Goleman's Leadership Styles

Style	In a Phrase	When Best
Coercive	Do what I tell you.	Crisis, to kick-start a change, with problem employee
Authoritative	Come with me.	Change requires a new vision or strong direction
Affiliative	People come first.	To heal rifts in a team or motivate people during stressful circumstances
Democratic	What do you think?	To build buy-in or get input from valuable individuals
Pacesetting		
Coaching		

## Goleman's Leadership Styles

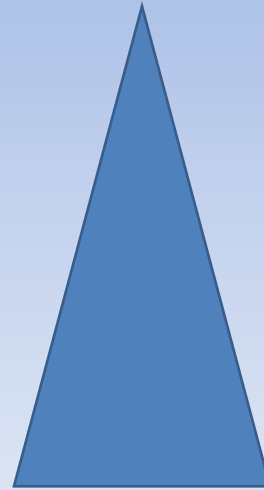
Style	In a Phrase	When Best
Coercive	Do what I tell you.	Crisis, to kick-start a change, with problem employee
Authoritative	Come with me.	Change requires a new vision or strong direction
Affiliative	People come first.	To heal rifts in a team or motivate people during stressful circumstances
Democratic	What do you think?	To build buy-in or get input from valuable individuals
Pacesetting	Do as I do, now.	To get a quick result from motivated, competent team
Coaching		

## Goleman's Leadership Styles

Style	In a Phrase	When Best
Coercive	Do what I tell you.	Crisis, to kick-start a change, with problem employee
Authoritative	Come with me.	Change requires a new vision or strong direction
Affiliative	People come first.	To heal rifts in a team or motivate people during stressful circumstances
Democratic	What do you think?	To build buy-in or get input from valuable individuals
Pacesetting	Do as I do, now.	To get a quick result from motivated, competent team
Coaching	Try this.	To help employees improve or develop strengths

## Motivating Employees - Maslow

- **Self-Actualization**
  - Need to fulfill personal potential, to use abilities to the fullest and most creative extent.
- **Esteem**
  - Need for respect, prestige, and recognition from others and for a sense of self-respect and competence
- **Social:**
  - Need for love, affection, and a sense of belonging
- **Safety:**
  - Need for security, stability, and protection now and in the future
- **Physiological:**
  - Need for basic personal maintenance – food, water, and shelter



## Motivating Employees - Maslow

- **Self-Actualization**
  - Creative/challenging work, learning and growth, participation in decision making, responsibility, autonomy, and discretion
- **Esteem**
  - Respect/recognition from managers and co-workers, favorable performance evaluation, merit pay increases and position advancement
- **Social:**
  - Friendly co-workers, social activities, compatible supervisor
- **Safety:**
  - Safe working conditions, job security, good wages and benefits
- **Physiological:**
  - Physically comfortable work area, livable wage.

## Interpersonal Communications - Active Listening -

- ❖ Committed to listening
- ❖ Staying focused
- ❖ Avoid distractions

## Interpersonal Communications - Suggestions for Better Listening -

- ❖ Eliminate distractions
- ❖ Listen with your eyes and ears
- ❖ Keep responses to a minimum
- ❖ Be patient
- ❖ Avoid jumping to conclusions

## Interpersonal Communications - Effective Speaking -

- Speak directly and concisely.
- Avoid insider jargon.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Avoid multiple messages that conflict.

## Interpersonal Communications - Common 'Red Flag' Phrases-

*Your are a loudmouth.*

*I noticed you talked loudly at our meeting.*

*You don't understand.*

*I don't think I explained it well.*

*You didn't do this right.*

*This was finished the way I had in mind.*

*You were supposed to buy feed today. What's wrong with you?*

*I'm disappointed you didn't buy feed today. Now I'll have to make a special trip for it.*

## Motivating Your Workers

(John Barbuto, UNL)

- Fun
- Rewards
- Reputation
- Challenge
- Purpose

## Motivating Your Workers

### - Fun -

- Enjoy work.
- Enjoy after work (social activities).
  
- Discover favorite tasks.
- Assign more favorites and fewer less-favorites.
- Have a sense of humor.
- Plan, sponsor, organize social events.
- Start meetings with social or fun.

## Motivating Your Workers - Rewards -

- Motivated by rewards.
- Not motivated by rewards.
- Incentive based pay.
- Contests.
- Clear work objectives/goals to earn salary increases.
- Avoid across-the-board raises.
- No perks if not earned.
- Remind workers of the tasks most important for performance evaluations.

## Motivating Your Workers - Reputation -

- Motivated by strong need to enhance their image or esteem with others.
- Give much feedback.
- Praise in front of others. Criticize privately.
- Appreciate.
- Get to know workers as individuals.
- Give out certificates/gifts of appreciation.

## Motivating Your Workers - Challenges -

- Leaders have extraordinary levels of self-concept.
- Motivated from within and like to challenge themselves.
- Stay out of the way.
- Assign tasks requiring their skills and talents.
- Find ways to help develop abilities.
- Avoid assigning mundane tasks.
- Challenge.
- Don't ask them to do something anyone/everyone can do.

## Motivating Your Workers - Purpose -

### Individuals

- look beyond themselves.
- must believe in what organization is doing.
- uninterested if not called by the vision.

People will be reserved for causes deserving of their heart and soul efforts.

- Communicate purpose of task
- Company must be pursuing vision and mission.
- Refer often to "why we exist".
- Remind workers how their efforts make a difference for the company.



- References

- AgHelpWanted.org
- NebGuide G1440 (77 Ways to Motivate Your Workers)

- Jeffrey E. Tranel

- [jtranel@colostate.edu](mailto:jtranel@colostate.edu)
- [coopext.colostate.edu/tranel/](http://coopext.colostate.edu/tranel/)

**Thank You!**