



A Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust

Report

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The MacRobert Trust



**Influencing and motivating change:
have dairy discussion groups had their day?**

Heather Wildman

August 2013

NUFFIELD UK



A Nuffield (UK) Farming Scholarships Trust Report



July 2013

*"Leading positive change in agriculture.
Inspiring passion and potential in people".*

Title	Influencing and motivating change : have dairy discussion groups had their day?
Scholar	Heather Wildman
Sponsor	The MacRobert Trust
Objectives of Study Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To establish whether dairy discussion groups have had their day.• To establish whether there are more effective tools to enable effective knowledge transfer• To establish how the agricultural industry can be more effective in influencing and motivating change
Countries Visited	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canada, America, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand and Europe
Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dairy Discussion groups are alive and well and have great growth potential worldwide• To be effective in influencing and motivating change, industry needs to be driving forward with agreed goals, vision and targets• The dairy industry needs to identify, invest and then support the development of potential new leaders.• As an industry, to be more effective the dairy industry needs a cohesive network, that removes duplication, and makes accessing information and services easier

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DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this report are entirely my own and do not necessarily represent the views of the Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust, or any of my sponsors, or of my employers, or any other supporting bodies



1. Personal introduction and background

Personal

A Cumbrian girl born and bred, my life, work, rest and play have always centred around agriculture, from the early days on our family beef and sheep hill farm in the glorious Lorton Vale, to being an active member of the Young Farmers Club movement - both at local level (Greysouthern) then County level (Cumbria County Chairman). I have never been a great scholar, but I did seem to have an ability to talk which was coached and developed in my time serving the Young Farmers but - to the great dismay of my parents - this then seemed to lead into and build into an affinity for sales, where I then lost the plot and moved into the “dark side” of the commercial world...

It is through my time in “the dark” that my passion for learning and questioning flourished. It is through opportunities, push and support from my then employers (Alfa-Laval) and subsequently others that that I have been given great opportunities to grow and develop as a person. I have also hopefully built up knowledge and respect from within the industry.

I now work for DairyCo¹ as a facilitator for discussion groups.

Nuffield has only gone on to increase that need and desire to improve, and that want to make a difference. I just hope I have achieved this.

¹ **DairyCo** is a division of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and is a levy-funded, not-for-profit organisation working on behalf of Britain’s dairy farmers. DairyCo’s remit is to solve “market failure” in the dairy industry – to tackle issues not currently being dealt with sufficiently to meet the needs of the industry.



What is Facilitation?

Facilitation derives from the verb *facilitate*: to make easy or easier. The Latin *facilis* can be translated as *do-able*.

For me it's about making it easier for a conversation to bring about insight, consensus, decision and action. It's about making it easy to translate the aspirations of your team, group or organisation into ideas ... and those ideas into sustainable and effective action.

In my role as a facilitator for DairyCo I do recognise that discussion groups are an effective knowledge transfer tool, but are they the most effective way of influencing and motivating change? It is said they can achieve technology adoption faster than any other knowledge transfer method. However, the role of the facilitator is critical to the success of any discussion group.

Increasingly farmer participation in discussion groups is changing. For some the biggest



challenge is overcoming their resistance to change in decision making, due to social and cultural preconceptions. A discussion group's greatest asset is the ability of farmers to influence change with each other in order to challenge, learn and improve.

It is the facilitator's role to ensure that competitiveness is exploited as much as possible.

Objectives of my Nuffield Farming Scholarship

My Nuffield Farming Scholarship was a voyage of personal exploration and was centred around the following objectives:

- To find out what extension services are available in other countries, how they work and how effective they are
 - To discover ways of improving knowledge transfer services to the UK dairy industry
 - To disseminate findings and best practice to colleagues across the DairyCo. extension team
 - To build a virtual tool box of resources to enable others to be more effective in knowledge transfer
 - Through my findings to build a simple skills-progression platform to enable easy access to advice, further learning and information
 - To learn and grow my existing knowledge, confidence and experience
 - To expand and build new contacts and grow my networking reach
 - To build and grow my reputation and self-worth in industry as someone who can and does make a difference
 - To discover how I can be more effective in influencing and motivating positive change in people and industry
 - To be "The Saviour of The Scottish Dairy Industry"
- On my travels I came across the poster shown below. To me this encapsulates all I learnt.

The Ten Commandments

According to Hoard's Dairyman: (USA dairyman's magazine) these are:

- **Help each other to be right – not wrong**
- **Look for ways to make new ideas work – not for reasons they won't work**
- **If in doubt – check it out – don't make negative assumptions about it or others**
- **Help each other win and take pride in others victories**
- **Speak positively about each other and about your organisation**
- **Maintain positive mental attitude no matter what the circumstances**
- **Act with initiative and courage as if it all depends on you**
- **Do everything with enthusiasm – it's contagious**
- **Whatever you want power / respect / enthusiasm / compassion / recognition – give it away**
- **Don't lose faith – never give it away**
- **See and you shall be seen**



2. Discussion groups in the UK

Discussion groups have a broad range of potential purposes that are listed below. Depending on the specific need and the context a discussion group could serve many different purposes during its life - or be very limited in its focus.

What is a Discussion Group?

Here in the UK, Discussion groups can come in a variety of forms and have a variety of different expectations of delivery and achievements:

- **Social** - networking hubs
- **Crisis** - clear aim, objectives and end goals
- **Business** - profit or end target focused, building and sharing on common interests with a joint end goal/target
- **Internet-based** - an online forum for individuals to discuss various topics amongst each other. People add their comments by posting.
- Generally they consist of a group of people who all have **a common interest** and who want to achieve a common goal.
- Some groups have a short life expectancy; they see their common goal achieved and then disband, whilst others become a way of life with a social responsibility.

The purpose of discussion groups

- At times of crisis (e.g. 2001 Foot & Mouth) they are a tool to pull communities together, to help support, advise and guide people through difficult traumatic times.
- They are an opportunity to share information and advice, to bounce off ideas, discuss problems or issues with likeminded people or peers whom you respect and value.
- They are a tool to transfer new ways of working, and implement new ideas.
- When new legislation, health & welfare standards or environmental issues need to be implemented quickly.
- They are a way of communicating a message with a group of people rather than one to one, working on peer pressure, competitiveness and a desire to raise standards of individuals and groups.
- The best have a clear structure, agenda and programme with an independent facilitator and committee officers - such as chairperson, secretary, and treasurer - in place.
- Benchmarking and lifting both personal and industry standards and performance.
- They can work equally well and equally badly with a group of like-minded individuals, or a diverse group with little or no common interest. Each of these when working well can be amazing but, without structure and/or leadership, can be disastrous.

“A group without goals is a group that refuses to take responsibility for themselves: information itself does not make things happen- it is *people* who make things happen”

Michael Murphy – (2012)



3. Countries visited and why they were chosen

I visited the following countries:

Ireland	January 2012 and January 2013
United Kingdom	Ongoing
Canada	July 2012
USA	July 2012
Australia	March 2013
New Zealand	March 2013
Chile	February 2013
Peru	February 2013
Brazil	February 2013

The background to dairy discussion groups in each of these countries – and the reasons I chose to visit them - is as follows:

Ireland

I chose Ireland to visit as it is physically our nearest competitor in dairy and I had heard so much about their passion and respect for discussion groups, plus the longevity of those groups. The farming population in Ireland - and across the EU - consists largely of traditional family farming units. Although farmers are now better educated than ever, the continuous learning and development that is part of farmer progression must not be passive; it must be strategic and responsive at industry level while reflecting farmers' targets and ambitions.

With farm level change as a critical focus point throughout its advisory work, **Teagasc** -

the agriculture and food development authority in Ireland - is funded by State grant aid. Their mission is to support science-based innovation in the agri-food sector and the broader bio-economy that will underpin profitability, competitiveness and sustainability. As an agent of change Teagasc is active in the continuous evolution of advisory and education programmes; the development of new tools and methods of working; and policy-responsive programmes and initiatives. Teagasc focuses on bringing together international best practice in innovation support, and best practice in knowledge transfer.

United Kingdom

Agricultural discussion groups in the UK fall very largely under the umbrella of the



Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board.

The AHDB is a Non-Departmental public body that independently covers the UK. It is funded by a statutory levy from farmers and growers, and each sector has its own representation within this body. DairyCo is responsible for addressing the specific needs of the dairy sector, and levy payers benefit from sharing research and resources, where appropriate, with other AHDB divisions.

AHDB's purpose is to ensure our various agricultural industries are more competitive and sustainable.

AHDB's Corporate Objectives are to:

1. Deliver value for money for levy payers in everything it does
2. Improve efficiency and productivity in the industry to help levy payers have thriving businesses
3. Improve marketing in the industry to help profitability and customer awareness
4. Improve services that the industry provides to the community
5. Improve ways in which the industry contributes to sustainable development

DairyCo aims to provide independent, evidence-based information to British dairy farmers and British consumers. Its mission is to *'promote world class knowledge to British dairy farmers so they can profit from a sustainable future'*.

To achieve this DairyCo will provide the products, tools and services to improve the profitability of British dairy farmers through improved:

- Business management
- Environmental and economic sustainability

- Animal health and welfare
- Perception of dairy farming by the public
- DairyCo communication with levy payers

Canada

After attending the International Mastitis Conference in 2011 - which was held in Holland - I was keen to visit Canada. The focus at that Dutch Conference was on "Udder Health and Communication" and I was impressed by the quality of the Canadian speakers and their papers. Also, Canada used to have a funded independent extension service, but this is no longer. What has been the impact of this being withdrawn?

There is now no official independent extension service within Canada. The one milk buyer, 'Dairy Farmers of Canada', takes responsibility to manage milk price and quotas, while also representing farmers through lobbying to government; promoting dairy products to consumers; and co-ordinating national initiatives.

Quota and milk price is sub divided and based around the nation's dairy consumption to maintain stability; this is unique among the other countries I visited. There are no dairy imports or exports, with trends between milk/butter/yogurt/ice-cream monitored to track areas of growth and weakness. Quota has been stable now for a number of years; this is in the main attributed to improved genetics and farming practice with annual yield per cow increasing, resulting in a reduction in the total number of cows required.

There are very few independently run farmer meetings in Canada; most are led by commercial companies or vets. This can make farmers sceptical of the motives with most attending for the social and free lunch. Research is carried out at university level with



government, ministry and industry backing through funding and support depending on the project. Regular progress reports are written and publicised

Once a year, Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) runs technical information and exchange days for vets and industry. The events include a mixture of technical speakers, research findings and on farm discussions. They cater for an expected attendance of 100+; attendees are then split into smaller working groups and sent round a series of work stations which offer a range of information: for example bedding, feed rationing, mobility scoring, ventilation, and lighting.

USA

Why America? Because America has a strong respect and reputation for linking research and development, and leads in new technology and advancement.

But was America more efficient at actually transferring this information to their farmers and, if so, why?

Agriculture's importance to the US economy is recognised through clear mention of it in the nation's constitution: "Saving our farmers". This keeps extension service in the US alive in farmers' minds and, unlike the Canadian version, it is consistently developing and evolving.

Eric Coolidge – Tioga County Commissioner, said: *"It is the adoption of new technology that is going to change us and the implementation of new feeding alternatives. We have an obligation to support and grow our next generation. The population will always need to be fed. In this fast changing*

world, those not prepared to grow and improve will be left behind"

Extension in the USA is in 3 tiers – state, federal and county - and all are funded by land-grant universities².

Industry, research, government and farmers work closely together. They regularly meet up and run farmer briefing/information meetings. The value of a strong partnership is recognised and respected by all involved.

South America

I chose to visit this part of the world as I had never been before and to be honest did not know much about their farming systems or infrastructure. But I had heard that this was a region in fast development, which businesses in Ireland and New Zealand were looking to invest in and build partnerships with. Why was this and how was this working?

In my short time in Chile, Peru and Brazil I noted that there were a variety of government and industry bodies representing and working with dairy farmers. Discussion groups were in place in some areas but their effectiveness, support and variety was huge. In South America there is so much cultural history, tradition and bureaucracy. But, having said this, of all the many countries I have visited, in South America the difference between the attitude, motivation, ability and ambition of individuals was the greatest. We were only in South America a very short time but, in that short time, the opposite and extremes extremes in farming systems that we visited and observed were huge.

² Certain universities were, over a century ago, granted land by the Federal Government to fund agricultural education.



But there is a clear desire to learn from other countries and this is being driven from the top. South America as a producer and user of dairy is growing and developing quickly; they are ambitious and hungry for knowledge. But in this fast growth I see a huge gap between good, average and poor and, in the near future, this gap only widening. For many, especially in regard to milk quality and environmental issues, it will only be the implementation of law and subjected fines that will drive farmers to change.

Australia

Australia does not have one extension system, it has several. Australia is a federation of states and territories, with confusion of responsibilities between various governments, and extension providers for some - but not all –of the agricultural industries. A further problem is the separation by most agencies between production and natural resource management interests, leading to a disjointed approach in trying to influence farmers (*Vanclay 2004*). Changes in the national context in Australia over the last 20 years have led to a confused and underperforming extension system, which is affecting the production capacity of agriculture (*Hunt et al. 2012*). While there have been recent attempts at coordination (see *SELN 2006*), these have not yet been successful. Nevertheless, analysis of this system provides insights for extension around the world

Many factors are responsible for the situation in Australia. What is particularly evident is that the fragmentation of extension in Australia makes it vulnerable; conflict between state and federal governments, disconnection between extension, research and education, alongside the highly urbanised nature of Australian society, have meant that

extension struggled to be nationally relevant. A high turnover of government staff, especially at senior levels, as well as a rapid turnover of politicians, meant that the relevant departments had little understanding of extension.

Neoliberalism as a political ideology pervades Australian institutions, and neoliberalist rhetoric was used to justify cutbacks in funding for extension, especially as there were competing demands for the limited public purse. There had been a near decade of drought (2002 to 2010) that severely reduced production and, consequently, the funding to Research and Development. Finally the transition of rural and peri-urban areas away from agriculture to a multifunctional and diverse array of land uses, with a notable increase in amenity and lifestyle areas, known in Australia as the ‘seachange phenomenon’, weakened the claims of production agriculture.

New Zealand

The NZ dairy industry has a long history of co-operative structures and collective action among farmers. Dairy extension in NZ is led from the ‘industry-good organisation’ DairyNZ; it is owned by all farmers and funded by a farmer levy, similar to DairyCo here in the UK. Dairy NZ is based on a national network of consulting officers who primarily run discussion groups. Over the past ten years there has been increasing pressure for sustainable farming solutions that balance economic and profit imperatives with environmental outcomes.

There is also a question of balance: of when the urgent, proactive work gives way to reactive work when major issues arise (e.g. new farmer regulations or extreme weather events). Although NZ dairy farmers have a



high internet usage (over 90%), the quality of rural broadband technology in NZ limits the use of new learning technologies. Broadband in my experience in NZ was very, very poor!

Summary of visits

What was clearly evident in all the countries I visited was that each country had its own strengths and weaknesses; they each had economic, environmental and climatic challenges, and no one had it easy. Those countries with no formal independent body representing their dairy sector were jealous and envious of what we, in the UK, have with DairyCo.

New Zealand, Ireland and UK had the closest similarities in structure, support, co-relationships and services available.

South America surpassed all my expectations. Chile was beautiful, both the people and the countryside, and far more developed and with greater infrastructure than I had perceived. In Peru, Lima in particular was extraordinary - the speed at which the city and population were expanding, streets literally popping up each day, no town planning, little if any infrastructure - the city felt like a growing beast eating up rural areas in its thirst to grow. Brazil, again, had stunning scenery and

landscape. Agriculture was competing with other industries for land and employees.

In this report I have only touched on some of the amazing people, stories, innovation, ideas, and experiences that I was so fortunate to meet and experience on my travels. On this journey I fulfilled many of my life's dreams and ambitions; riding out and being a cowboy rounding up 3,300 head of Aberdeen Angus heifers in "Big Sky" country in Montana, conquering the one-way system in Santiago, sailing up the Amazon, wild camping in the bush, mustering sheep in the Canterbury Highlands, battling with the surf in Rio

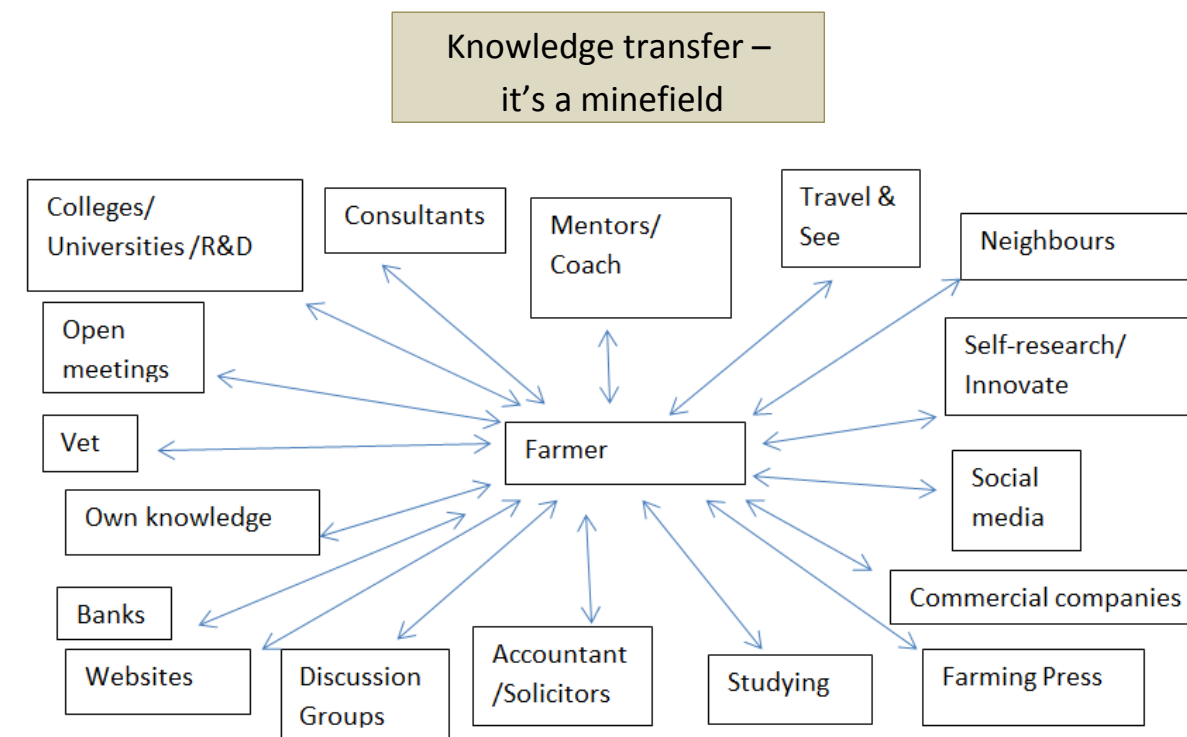
But what was clear and evident was the value, respect and importance of effective extension and knowledge transfer all over the world. Knowledge transfer is growing, and growing quickly.

This is an exciting business to be in, to be innovative, to be creative, to be persistent, and ask questions. The world may seem a big, scary place but it is becoming easier to access and share information: people **want** to help, people **want** to see others succeed, people **want** to share and celebrate in that success.

The only thing holding you back is you;
don't let you be your weakest link



4. The clear need for improved communication/knowledge transfer?



Is it any wonder that UK dairy farmers become confused, with so many knowledge transfer service providers available?

This is where discussion groups become an invaluable platform to discuss and debate different views, practices, advice and guidelines. What worked for you? What did you do when this happened? Who did you go to for advice? Who do you feel gave you the best advice? Cut through the myth, farmer to farmer, direct, hands-on and in the right portal - this is highly trusted and respected.

Quotes and examples from the countries visited:

Bill Mustoe, CEO First Milk,
quoted Winston Churchill when I asked him how do you get people on board? *"If you*

grab them by the balls, their hearts and minds soon follow"

Bill elaborated: *"You need to speak their language. There is so much spin in the world today but it all comes down to money and profit. Then back it with evidence, and then the tools, and know how to do it."*

Discussion groups are a critical component of Ireland's agricultural growth strategy with the benefits clearly identified (Hennessy & Heanue, 2012). Currently there are over 10,000 farmers involved in discussion groups and targets for increasing the membership are set out in Food Harvest 2020. Considering the pivotal role of discussion groups in agricultural policy, targeted and research-formed strategies are required to assist discussion groups to operate optimally.



4a. Discussion and implications for Extension

Discussion group members are more likely to adopt new technologies (see Table 1 below). The adoption differences between the two are clearly illustrated below: 87% of discussion group members using artificial insemination (AI) compared to 67% of non-members.

The research summarised in the related paper (by Hennessy & Heanue) has produced evidence that discussion group membership has been delivering tangible benefits to farmers in terms of both technology adoption and farm performance.

Dr John Walton, University of Guelph, Canada, says:

"Canadian dairy industry back in the 1970s was structured to manage supply and demand, with 100 cows on 100 acres.

"If you fly over Ontario you will still see a patch work of standardised 100 acre dairy units.

Many to this day have never grown or changed

"But then quota rules changed, there were no limits except your finances. You could expand but you bought the land and the cows as a whole plot.

"Immigrants took advantage of this. In its heyday you could see 3 dairies a week changing hands. People sold their quotas as

their pensions and left the industry. Dutch, Swiss and the Scots took advantage.

"Now we see a greater divide in dairy business. The younger farmers who speak English tend to be business focused. The Dutch in particular are extremely savvy business people, they are the people who are actively out there looking for new ideas, who want to meet with and learn from the best."

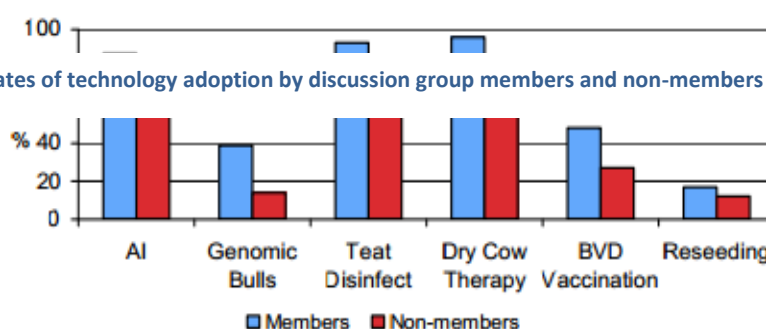
To quote Anne Gordon, Mennonite Economic Development Associates, Canada

"Here in Canada extension has not been innovative and quick enough to grow and develop so it has been dismantled. Farming here has less Government support; we have more market regulation management in Canada. The USA still has an extension service - however more than one funder contributes to the cost."

Dr David Kelton, Ontario Vet. College, Canada contributed:

Not having a formal knowledge transfer route can be frustrating; one example of this is work done on the research of the control and prevention of Johne's disease on your farm, but David was struggling to get industry's and farmers' attention and attendance at meetings. Overall uptake of information was poor, so he applied for funding and set up a

Table 1. Rates of technology adoption by discussion group members and non-members in Ireland





trial running “Focus farms” - working on “soft skills” - interacting and working more closely with farmers and research. This was a 3-year funded project which also tied in a PHD student Steve Roche. The findings of this work are still to be published, but to read a brief summary see (Appendix 1, page 42).

Tom Wright, Vivienne Bielman and Dr Ken Lesley highlighted that calf management in Canada is significantly undervalued, resulting in recorded calf mortality well into double digits. The view was that **any** mortalities - full stop – were unacceptable, but what steps were to be taken to get industry buy-in and implementation?

All three are researching the effectiveness of knowledge transfer. Once the results come back more money can be invested in further projects in this area. (Their project is called Calf-Eteria and the results can be seen in Appendix 2 page 43)

Like the Calf Eteria project in Canada, in **Tasmania, Janette Fisher**, creator and developer of www.heifermx.com.au also identified a need for greater importance and priority in calf rearing especially in the first 6 hours, and then to weaning. Jeanette had all the data, the facts, the noticeable key benefits in profit and cost control.

This key resource with potential to aid many people’s calf rearing problem is sitting there on a website and is effectively not being utilised. So this results in both farmers and industry losing money and resources plus a needless wastage of dairy heifers that could have been used to help expand herds.

Blair Murray Retired OMAFRA Extension Officer , Canada and Trevor DeVries, PhD Associate Professor, Department of Animal and Poultry Science, told me:

“Here in Ontario we are investing time and money into converting research work into farmer language and then putting it onto a website – but how many access this “tech transfer and lectures” online is hard to say. In my view the Agrisector is slower to catch on to this.

“Where I see the most effective uptake of information, advice and then implementation, is when we take farmers onto another farm and physically show them the science, then the steps that are required to be followed, and then the results; or if farmers talk to other farmers one to one. The best result to this is when a farmer really researches and asks key questions, and is not just looking and copying and then expecting to get the same results,” reports Blair.



5. Summary of global uses and differences

I wanted to look at different approaches to group meetings in the various countries I visited, and to see if these different formats produced different outcomes.

Are Discussion groups the only format of effective knowledge transfer and influencing change?

Ireland: John Donworth, Teagasc

Every dairy farmer who joins this initiative gets paid 1,000 Euro to attend these meetings. In return they must share costings, grass measurements, and meet up once a month.

Again John suggested trips were an excellent tool to build and form groups. John has also held competitions within the groups and *“do not be afraid of a large geographical spread – if keen and relevant they will keep coming and be keener to be open and to share, don’t be afraid to try something a little different,”* said John

New Zealand : Erica van Reenan. Beef & Lamb Extension Officer

“With our farmer demo farms each farmer needs to pay to be involved. How much depends on how many support that individual project. In my view, by paying to be a part of it they are more committed, they seem to gain more value.

“When we first introduced charging, attendances plummeted, there was uproar - ‘we have paid a levy we are entitled to this’ - and also they did not see a value in the facilitator. Now farmers take ownership and manage the membership levels so this keeps the fee stable and everyone participates. No floaters.”

New Zealand : Stu Neil – Manager, Mount Possession, South Island

“I personally get more out of monitor farm days than discussion groups. Some of the groups I had been in previously were either too loose and too social/beer focused, or they had got cliquey and stuffy and to be honest a bit repetitive. However, not so the monitor farm meetings run by beef and lamb NZ (4 days per year) which were always based at the same one farm. A committee ran the programme, with agreed relevant topics. It is open to everyone in the area and can get up to 100 people attending. What I really like is the access to top industry speakers.

“They give lots of value, discussion, also a managed format, so everyone felt comfortable speaking in public where they would not normally feel comfortable. It felt different, you saw best practice.

Past discussion group meetings wound me up, no challenge, no value, no feedback, no mark, no measure. No monitoring, so no overall value to host or participant.”



Ireland : Wealth Creation course: Michael Murphy and Con Hurley from Ireland plus two New Zealanders, Lynaire Ryan and Leonie Foster decided to take things a step further to really challenge farmers, to get farmers to work through their vision, aims, goals and objectives. This was a three month commitment and was not to be taken lightly; however this course has transformed many lives.

“At the end of the course you get a buzz of positive feedback. But this is not the measure. The measure is in 5 years’ time when you see that these people have turned into Industry leaders, shakers and movers” - Con Hurley.

New Zealand: Adrien van Bysterveldt – DairyNZ Development Project Manager Large Business Governance : 2-3 day Workshops

“In this current climate of fast growth and dairy business amalgamations, dairy businesses were becoming huge in NZ. This was great for the economy, but were the business skills and securities in place if and when the wheels come off? We were hearing of more instances being reported in the press of big business failing, family break ups, fall outs, huge legal costs.

“There was a clear need for governance. This was a completely new way of thinking for NZ dairy farmers. We set about trying to raise the awareness and the importance and the long term value of building governance structure into their business

“At first people did not understand, they had had either no experience or they linked it to the school board.

“We started with 1 day workshops, farmers enjoyed them and the feedback was hugely

positive. But when we later followed up with a phone call to see how they had progressed, the implementation was poor. To address this we needed to identify what were they key barriers to change. These were stated as:

- Once home I did not know where to start
- One day was not enough
- Wife and partners did not understand what I was trying to say/do
- Local consultants came in and pooh-poohed my suggestions, I lost confidence.

(To find out how these were developed and progressed see Appendix 3 page 45

My Take: This practice of cramming too much into a project, meeting or conference is something that I see happening often here in the UK too. No wonder implementation and full understanding of the key take home messages are often low, as it is often too hard to convert the theory and learning into practical measures that fit your home environment This is a lesson many of us need to learn

Ireland : Abigail Ryan – Independent consultant

She told me she manages 17 monitor farms who were paid 1,500 Euros apiece annually and a further 200 Euro per each on-farm meeting. Community group farmers were required to pay to attend these meetings.

Each host farmer ran 15 meetings per year; these were usually a farm walk every 3 weeks where they measured and recorded grass growth. At these meetings community group



could offer advice, suggestions, and comments. Due to the frequency of the visits host farmers really had to implement the changes otherwise the community group would give up supporting.

This was not just of benefit to the host; many of the community group saw big changes. In Abigail's view the fact that the community group had to pay to attend meant they were committed and really wanted to be there. In their evaluation they perceive that each farmer who attended a meeting would get back an approximate value of 200 Euros in advice from each meeting.

Canada: Dr John Walton, University of Guelph

John has taken a fresh approach to influencing and motivating change through his students, challenging them and preparing them for farming in the real world.

John came across the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge which allows dairy science students to apply theory and learning to a real world dairy farm while working as part of a team
<http://www.dairychallenge.org/>

John has re- adapted the principles of this event - admittedly on a smaller, less grand scale - for his students with fantastic results. This project is used as a carrot for the end of term.

Eight teams of 4 meet up in a hotel and are given a production summary briefing on a chosen dairy business; this helps them to formulate questions, ideas and structure. The next morning the teams all visit the same farm. They have 2 hours on farm to look, ask questions and then they go back to the hotel where they have 6 hours to come up with a

business plan that will make that farm the most money. Profit is king.

After 6 hours they must hand over their proposals and Powerpoint presentations.

The next day each group gets 20mins to make their case, propose their business plan and state their reasons and recommendations and what the ensuing results will return. How, when and why?

This is judged by a panel of well-respected industry experts, scoring them on the following criteria:

- Presentation
- Practicality
- Improvement to on-farm profit
- Innovation and grasp of the business
- Team work and leadership

This competition really helps to focus the students and brings together everything that they have learned through the year. It is stunning to see how different each group's presentations and business plans can be. Plus the work and results are now added to their end of year grades. This really helps to focus their hearts and minds and adds to the competitiveness of the challenge.

In John's view taking any group of people, students or otherwise, on to farm for a farm walk is pretty ineffective without including relevant farm data and figures to back up what you are seeing.

But stick to the fundamentals and relevance. You can get lost and swamped in too much data.



Canada : Blair Murray, Retired OMAFRA Extension Officer, and Trevor DeVries, PhD Associate Professor, Department of Animal and Poultry Science

We like to use “Mini management Clubs or specific study clubs, which means likeminded people who know each other and respect each other’s farming reputation.

Prime example of this again is the Calf Eteria project. People were only involved with this if they replied and responded so there was an immediate “buy-in” and “want” right from the beginning. There was a mixture of groups and on-farm learning, then after separating and returning home, everything was also available online.

Participation in the meetings was tremendous. These were held in 4 different locations and over 100 farmers regularly attended.

Results and detail (Appendix 1 pg. 42)



Chapter 6 : The Process of Facilitation

A facilitator can make or break a discussion group (See Appendix 6 page 50)

Facilitation is not the same thing as giving a presentation. As facilitators, our job is to guide the learning process for our learners - in other words, to make their learning easier. Doing this effectively is an acquired skill. This learner-centre focus is a new art, skill and challenge. Skilled facilitators reap their rewards via their learners: their success when they learn content, when they use and apply it, when they grow, and ultimately perform better back on farm.

“Facilitation” is a term that means different things to different people. Facilitation is generally considered to be a process in which a neutral person helps a group work together more effectively. The facilitator’s job is to lead the group process; by helping people improve the way they communicate, examine and solve problems, and make better decisions.

“Facilitation is a way of working with people. It enables and empowers people to carry out a task or perform an action. The facilitator does not perform the task, but uses certain skills in a process which allows the individuals/group to reach their decision/ set their goal/learn a skill. Facilitation is a developmental educational method which encourages people to share ideas, resources, and opinions and to think critically in order to identify needs and find effective ways of satisfying those needs.”
(Prendiville, 2004, p.8)

6a. What are the benefits of facilitation?

There are a number of common benefits from using facilitation skills in group settings:

- Because of their investment in the process, group members are often more motivated to support decisions made
- Group best efforts usually produce better results than individual best efforts
- Increased participation within the group increases productivity
- Everyone involved has a chance to contribute and feels they are an integral part of the team
- People realise that respect and responsibility for implementing decisions lies with everyone
- Innovation and problem-solving skills are built
- People are encouraged to think and act for the overall benefit of the group
- Higher quality decisions normally result
- A forum for constructively resolving issues and clarifying misunderstandings is created
- Negative attitudes, low morale, low involvement and withholding of information are less likely because everyone is involved in a joint process

On my travels I was fortunate enough to join in and observe a number of discussion groups, both on-farm and in more formal venues. The groups I observed were all focused around sharing costs of production, grass growth/measurement, fertility data,



then bench marking this information against each other, and finally working towards an agreed goal. Having said this, each group had a completely different feel.

This I put down to the preparation, control and partnership of the facilitator in charge. Fail to prepare; prepare to fail.

6b. Knowledge Transfer

Can collaboration aid effectiveness? What is the value and use of collaboration? How widely is it used? And are there cultural influences?

Ireland, Mary Kingston.

"Irish research institutes do work well and regularly interact with their farmers. But we are still missing the middle ground. Ireland needs to develop more tools and simple ideas that link in with the research finds, so that the recommendations can be easily picked up and implemented".

Canada, Anne Gordon, Mennonite Economic Development Associates .

"In Canada it is interesting, we do not have any independent body responsible for the delivery of knowledge transfer, but research work is still going on and the information is all there, but it is now up to the farmers themselves to go look for it. "No more spoon feeding", it is going to be survival of the fittest; we have stopped carrying the middle field."

New Zealand, Ron Pellow, Exec. Director, South Island Dairying development Centre, SIDDC

"SIDDC is a research partnership involving: The Lincoln University Dairy, Ravensdown, DairyNZ, LIC, Plant and Food, SIDE and AgResearch – with an agreed purpose to further dairying in the South Island. Lincoln University Dairy Farm is one of the top

performing farms in New Zealand, milking 656 cows, twice a day, on 159 hectares of fully irrigated land. It has to be commercially driven, while providing a base for science to develop world best practice and to pass on this information to farmers.

"The farm focus is on demonstrating best practice, while also hosting research projects, many of which relate to the effect of farming on water quality and the wider environment. This is a cracking idea, they have monthly grass measuring events which are open to everyone to attend, and there was even a group of Chilean students visiting the day that I was there. They bench mark with the best farmers in the area, to make sure that what they are doing is viable and comparable with profit and performance expectations. All this information is shared on line, they have public and farm open days."

Tasmania. Anne Taylor

PASS is a farm safety awareness campaign (www.Pass.org.au) that was set up in Tasmania after a number of local farm boys were electrocuted on separate occasions whilst moving field watering pivots that were close to electricity pylons.

As a lone voice and small community it was hard to make a great impact on industry, but it has since gained awareness once Anne partnered up with Dairy Australia and they managed to get sponsorship for one of the Dairy Farmer of the Year Awards: "Dairy safety."

"This has really helped to step up profile, buy in, adoption of best practice, adoption of safety and staff safety protocols.

"Farmers are risk takers by nature; you would not be in farming if you weren't. We are gamblers. Zero harm is not realistically



*achievable, it's an aim, but what **is** achievable is continual reductions of incidents and increased awareness and precaution."*

Anne Taylor

Working in partnerships where there are agreed, clear common goals, interest, aims and objectives produces great outcomes, helps to raise profile, and effectiveness of knowledge transfer, and generally achieved greater industry and farmer buy-in and overall effective positive change

6b. Is there a time when voluntary adoption is ineffective?

There are definitely times when, no matter how effective a message or knowledge transfer plan you have, you will need to step in with enforcement and legislation. This has been shown to be the quickest and most effective way to influence and motivate change, where time and mass implementation are key.

Example: Antibiotic use in Canada

It was claimed that some antibiotics were being "mis-used". Voluntary discussions were had with farmers on adoption of best practice; to get mass adoption and compliance it later became mandatory that farmers were trained in drug administration and had to receive a certificate to prove that they had completed the course. Farmers were not happy with this enforced compliance.

Outcomes

George MacNaughton, Director, Production Division Dairy Farmers of Ontario.

Dairy Farmers of Canada now have routine milk quality & hygiene inspections carried out by the local vets. Failure to comply results in

penalties and fines, leading to cancelled milk collection.

To get effective "behavioural change", adopt this approach: **DO NOW OR THERE WILL BE REPERCUSSIONS**. This simple yet harsh approach works when companies are under pressure either economically or physically or they need an immediate response.

Stuart Brown, Tatura Milk Industries Ltd, Victoria, Australia commented

"If we need to bring in new regulations we will start by sowing seeds, information dropped into newsletters, farmer meetings, possibly giving up to 2 years of notice. We can expect 10% will change right from the beginning once the seed has been sown and the message understood. But for many, possibly the majority, they will delay implementation until the penalties and legislation are in place."

This format would be similar to how I see many new regulations being introduced here in the UK, both with independent milk companies and with new government policies and regulations

6c. Identify key influencers to open minds to new ideas, new ways of thinking

This area is key, how do others engage and get "buy-in", is there a common approach?

Sam Leadley, Attica Vets, New York State

- *Segment the industry - invest your time and energy with early adopters, these are the guys that if you sow some seeds with will run with it, they will think it over and then be back on the phone, asking more questions and it is these people who then do the effective knowledge transfer as*



people watch, learn and then follow them. Early adopters rather than innovators are the ones that the farming communities look up to. Innovators seem to jump in and out of things, never seem to stick at one thing for very long.

- *Know the level of your audience. To do this you will need to ask questions, but if you have an open, keen audience they can take on more information – more information will also stick. They are looking to pick up tips, looking to be refreshed and looking for reassurance and confidence in what they are already doing. Here you can quickly “quantify/assess quality” and sum its “Detail/specifics/information”*

“There are 4 stages of information

Stage 1- Sowing an idea, raising awareness

Stage 2- Seeking information

Stage 3- Looking for specific information

Stage 4- Decision making

“Where farmers source this information will change depending on which stage they are at. The closer they are to stage 4 then the more credible and reliable information they require. Vets are often seen at this point.

*“As **agents of change and knowledge transfer** we need to think about the tools that we use to convey messages to farmer.*

How do we hit the right level all the time?”

Catalina Montalvo A Jefe Departamento de Extensión .

“In Chile 80% of milk produced now comes from 15% of the producers. This is the audience on whom we try to focus first”

Going Global with Social Cognitive Theory: from Prospect to pay dirt – by Albert Bandura, Stanford University

There is a fantastic report that looks into social cognitive behaviour, motivators and influencers of people’s behaviour: “Going Global with Social Cognitive Theory: From Prospect to Pay dirt” by Albert Bandura, Stanford University.

The report explains that there are two basic modes of learning. People learn through the direct experience of rewarding and punishing effects following actions, and through the power of social modelling.

People’s thinking is regulated through four major processes: cognitive, motivational, emotional and decisional. It is believed these influences, depending on whether people think pessimistically or optimistically, are self-enhancing or self-hindering.

The social cognitive theory is also complemented by Grahame Coleman, University of Melbourne, Co-developer of PROHand, alongside Jeremy Skuse, Animal Welfare Centre, Melbourne, Australia.

“Why do people behave in certain ways? Why do some people choose to adapt certain behavioural characteristics and others don’t?”

More information about PROhand can be found on the Dairy Australia Centre of Excellence website, under courses: <http://www.ncdea.edu.au>

JD, Pennsylvania State, USA , said:

“Any course or meeting needs to be transformative. There will be no learning if there is no trust”



- *It is always easier to elicit change if people are open to change*
- *If they are open to change they will embrace change*
- *Don't insist on change – ask people to be prepared to listen*

Innovative Dairy farmer Chris from Ontario commented: *“The reason for trying all these new advances in technology is: how do you pass on experience and knowledge to the next generation or staff? My dad could tell a cow was bulling or off colour just by the “glint” in her eye. I swear my dad could smell ‘em in heat! I don’t have that intuition, and I don’t have the time or patience to learn. I know my strengths; I will buy in help where I am weak”*

Gordon Cleary, Independent Consultant, Victoria, Australia.

Change-: *“It’s about blokes, sometimes you have to let ‘em crash and burn before they will listen and learn”*

Tom Philips, Massey University, NZ.

He has a theory on the “circle of change – how ideas are formed and then decisions made, the closer you are to the centre of the circle the closer you are to effect change.

“What people hear and what you have said can be completely different things – you need to test that people have heard and understood what you have wanted them to hear. You need to keep asking the same question but in different ways and then check that you are getting the same answer”.

Colin Glass, CEO Dairy Holdings, NZ echoed the same views as many:

“Keep your take home message simple, repeat it, and repeat three main key take home points. Then get clarification from the group that they have understood.

“I have been to some meetings with farmers and, talking to five of them later, you would think they had been to six different meetings!”

Simon Sankey, DairyNZ

“If you can get farmers leaving, knowing and repeating and having bought in to the three key points, then 90% of your work is done!”

Adrien van Bysterveldt, DairyNZ

“As a good communicator, a presenter or facilitator needs to make the complex simple, and make the simple compelling. How do I do this? I build up a story that is compelling, so compelling it grabs people in, it grabs their attention, they can relate... I also use a lot of fictitious farmers in my stories ... as in reality some of the real examples/mistakes/stories are far worse the longer you are in the job!

“I also believe in stating the problem and then my process of how I came to my end decision. Note down every alternative that I looked at and considered, note all the pros and cons to each option and then I wrote down why I chose that one over the others.”

6d. What questions should a facilitator ask?

Enabling is key, so questions, and how they are posed, are crucial.

To capture people, to make it relevant, whenever we are looking at addressing a group or putting out a new message, consider these questions:



- What specifically do YOU want?
- Where are you now in relation to the outcome: 10% , 50%, 80% there?
- What will you see/feel when you achieve this?
- How will you know if you have achieved this?
- Is this goal only for you?
- Where, when, how + with whom do you want to achieve this?
- What resources are needed?
- What have you now – what new is needed?
- Have you done this before?
- Do you know anyone who has?
- Can you act like you have achieved this?
- For what purpose do you want this goal?
- What will happen if you don't achieve it?
- What won't get done if it does not happen – what would be the overall impact / effect?

6e. What is needed in industry to facilitate this?

6e.i 'Clarity of Vision'

Nigel Evans, Wales was emphatic on this point; this was also clearly echoed by **Michael Murphy, Sian Bushell** and many others.

Nigel *"Taking the time to work out what we really want to achieve and why, has been a vital element in the process of personal and business growth. Developing clarity in this area was difficult and didn't happen overnight, and indeed the process continues. But a lot of thought eventually yielded a vision or picture of what we wished to accomplish with the rest of our lives and, from that, a strategy developed for bringing it about. Our vision and action plan act as our roadmap to the future helping to keep us motivated and on track."*

"We found that as we have progressed our view of "what" was possible has broadened and we have amended our strategy to take on bigger and different goals. As a result of this, the following stages are crucial to achieving those goals:

- Operate a rolling 5 year action plan which we revisit every six months or so, amending as necessary, as progress is made and capability increases
- Be very specific in designing your vision – if you are not absolutely clear, you will find it difficult to work out how to achieve it
- Your vision will not become reality unless you write it down in detail – until then it is just a dream
- Beware of outside influences on your thoughts as you develop your vision. You must have your own vision, it must not be someone else's
- Be clear about the **"why"** and the **"what"** in your goals – this is the framework on which everything else hangs."

6e.ii. Leadership

Nigel Evans, *"we must all identify our limiting factors."*

"What I am getting at is - you should think big i.e. the goals you set yourself in your vision should not only inspire you but also frighten you a little in terms of their scale indeed they should be BHAGs (Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals). You should also identify the potential limiting factors to their achievement and address them well in advance."

"The earlier in the process you can identify the likely limiting factors to progress the sooner you can start to overcome them, and the more options will be open to you. We have found



asking the following questions useful in this process:

- *If we were reviewing our progress 5 years from today, what would have happened for us to feel happy?*
- *What are the biggest issues we will have to face and overcome in order to achieve that progress?*
- *What are the biggest opportunities we have and can focus on to achieve our aims?*
- *What strengths do we need to improve on, what skills and resources do we need to develop, or bring in, in order to capture those opportunities?*

These are skills and attributes relevant to any business focusing on growth and improvement in any industry."

While I was visiting a high security prison, in **Canada, Sargent Billy Grant** reiterated the key skills and attributes for leadership. I chose to visit a prison as I was keen to look at how other organisations, in different industries, approached knowledge transfer to influence and motivate change. A high security correctional institution seemed a perfect place to visit. Thankfully they let me back out!

Billy's points were:

Traits of true leader:

- Intelligence
- Initiative
- Self-assurance
- Enthusiasm
- Sociability
- Integrity
- Courage
- Imagination

- Decisiveness
- Determination
- Energy
- Faith

You need just about everything listed here but how these named traits combine does seem to make a significant difference. Three examples of leadership models:

- Autocratic – leader decides what will be done, when and how
- Democratic – decisions are made after consultation and discussions
- Laissez- faire – where group members work on their own and the leader keeps his participation to a minimum.

The most effective can be viewed to be the autocratic – but the leader needs to be there all the time or work stops.

Democratic is the most popular and consistent in both overall quality and productivity.

Laissez- faire is generally rated poorly in all aspects.

A great leader should be like a helicopter – able to rise above a particular situation, see it from a broader perspective, then descend to attend to the detail.

But in practice the style that we adopt tends to reflect the following:

- Values and beliefs
- Confidence in colleagues / partners
- Tolerance of uncertainty
- Personal knowledge and level of contribution
- Stress



6f. How can we improve what we have in the UK? What is missing or where should more emphasis be placed?

Mary Kingston, Independent Consultant, Ireland

Mary learnt her trade and tools by having worked both with DairyNZ and then with Teagasc in Ireland. This gave her a good practical and technical foundation on which to grow and develop

“For successful change management every farmer needs:

- *Clear goals*
- *System to deliver those goals*
- *Relevant key performance indicator “*

Brian Van Doormaal – Canadian Dairy Network

“To help drive change and to take the dairy industry to the next level we need to grow a generation of young people who are keen, open minded, ready to roll up their sleeves and get involved in committees and organisations. Young people who understand governance, policy and strategic planning. These are not comfortable skills for the average dairy farmer!”

“Managers should never restrain talent for fear of being over shadowed – build talent around you”

Esther Leadley, Genesee County Legislator, USA

“Leaders are needed in a community, they do not have to be the richest, largest or the best educated. But for big changes you need to take time, you need to:

- Set goals
- Agree priorities
- Agree vision
- Agree time frames
- Review, monitor and measure

These characteristics have all been reiterated and highlighted in every country that I have visited. These are the areas I feel that, at home in the UK, we need to prioritise and focus on.

Dr Ken Lesley, University of Ontario & Alec Bach, Spain

Me: How do you deal with resistance to change?

“Keep searching for ‘teachable moments’ or nuggets of opportunity to demonstrate. You see many areas where people could improve, but you try to find small bite-sized easy wins that they can implement and then expand on this as time goes on. I am old enough to recognise signs of when people are not going to change. Don’t knock yourself out, some battles cannot be won”

Alex, what have been your greatest challenges implementing new ideas and practices to industry?

“Time spread - industry is looking for a faster answer than I can supply. True answers take time - from idea to project to results to analyses, and then implantation. We need facts not feelings. I ignore resistance or doubt. There will always be someone who sees what you see. Search them out and work with them – like a river, find a new port.”

- Identify bottle necks
- Get people on board
- Then act



- Pick things that are measurable
- This will encourage and maintain buy-in.

6g. How do you start up a new discussion group or improve an existing?

Me: How would you design and run effective Knowledge Transfer?

Ann Gordon, Mennonite Economic Development Associate, Canada

"Today's facilitators have huge variety of tools available to them.

- Internet
- Group discussion
- Show and see, touch, smell, taste
- Group participation
- Presentation
- Demonstration
- Trial
- Electronic groups
- Webinars
- On line forum
- Facebook
- Social media – Twitter

Think:

- Who is your audience?
 - What is it they're looking for?
 - What is already available to them, the individual, and the business?
 - Which is the best tool to meet their needs?
- Study tours
 - Trips
 - Workshops

- International speakers, experienced farmer speakers
- Mentors
- Young farmers groups, Herdsman groups, Movers & shaker groups
- Farm walks
- Books/literature/publications
- Conferences
- Field days, farmer forums, focus farms, monitor farms, trial farms
- Media, Social Media
- Joint working / partnerships

Show me, tell me, let me touch.

Chris Glass , DairyNZ

"Don't make the mistake of sticking to just one format or one type of event for everyone, everywhere. Be prepared to adapt, check your audience and what else is happening in that area. I once disregarded the importance to farmers of social integration and made meetings too long and too technical."

Colin Glass, CEO, Dairy Holdings, NZ

"Canterbury is now a different place to when you last visited. Dairy is huge down here now. The farmers here, they are motivated, smart, clever, aggressive. I once went to a paid discussion group (private membership), you could have scraped the testosterone off the walls in the room...."

A group without goals is a group that refuses to take responsibility for themselves

Billy Stewart – Penatangushine High security State prison

"An effective group is one that achieves its tasks. Its members derive satisfaction from attending and learning in the group."



For this to happen you first need to agree:

- Characteristics of the group – size, composition
- Tasks – what does it wish to cover, accomplish
- Style of leadership
- Group process & procedures – rules
- Motivation
- Group development

Members who share similar values and beliefs do not always achieve the highest creativity and innovation.

Groups who tackle problems in a considered systematic way are likely to be more effective than those that muddle through.”

Other tools available in the dairy sector are detailed below.

Round Robin

One member explains a problem that he/she experiencing on their farm; it could be anything.

Facilitator asks each member to spend a few minutes thinking about how they would go about solving said problem.

Then individually each member feeds back one point or recommendation – this is noted on a flip chart.

Each following person must come up with something new – no repeating

Role Playing

If a group are getting bogged down or you feel are getting tunnel vision. Split them into twos, one being the owner and one being the member of staff (for example.) They then discuss the same problem again but they have to answer the issue but only from the eyes of the person in whose shoes they are standing. This can be highly effective. Whether it is dealing with staff, angry customers, bank manager, wife, children...

Evaluation/ Consensus

When trying to get a group to agree on a definite outcome, but struggling to get full agreement:

Break it down into different angles:

- How practical is this
- How relevant is this
- How easy is this to implement
- Would this be short, medium or long term
- What would the return be on time or money invested

Buzz groups

This works really well when you have a large group and they are a mixture of shy, quiet people and loud dominant people.

- Split into groups of approx. 5 depending on numbers
- Ask them to discuss the issue/subject/problem/advice in their groups
- It can be the same topic or, if you have a lot to cover, give each group a separate topic.
- After an agreed amount of time everyone comes back together into one large group
- Each small group has an elected speaker who reports back their small group finding to the large group.

This option can work well as it involves everyone and makes new people feel involved, welcomed and able to participate but in a more comfortable platform.

Me: What would be your ideal discussion group format?



Stu Neil, Manager Mount possession, NZ –
“Steak and strippers” ...he says smiling,
“seriously though –

- Bi-monthly meetings
- High powered speakers who are thought provoking and challenging
- Nice venue does not always need to be on farm, unless farm visit has something to add
- Must have good facilitators, who can get discussion going and keep it sharp, snappy, focused, organised
- Timely, not dragging on
- Facilitator and speaker need to have done their homework, to make sure that it is local and relevant
- Also if attendees are late, you do not wait for them, crack on, they will learn not to be late the next time!”

Conclusion: To improve group outcomes or to be more effective in knowledge transfer you need common, agreed, measurable aims goals and objectives.

6h. Recommendations to improve existing discussion groups:

Michael Murphy referred to the chart shown below:

“Any successful dairy business model must encapsulate each of the blocks shown at the bottom of the chart. They must have each of these areas working well before any expansion can be considered. Scale is irrelevant if one of these core foundation blocks is not managed well. These foundation boxes are also key for every business - regardless of which industry - to be in peak condition to survive and ride in today’s market place and volatility.” Michael Murphy.

As I have previously mentioned, discussion groups are alive and well, but some are hanging on by a thread on a life support machine ... having now had this wonderful opportunity to visit, observe, question and partake in a number of discussion groups around the world it is evident to me that the

Building a platform for successful dairy business growth

Farm 5

Farms 3 & 4

Farm 2

Pasture and Feed Management	Herd Health Management	Honesty Integrity Attitude	Financial Budgeting and Management	Mentors Advisors Family	Business Planning KPIs	People Management Good staff	Solid Capital Base
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example above is even more key and relevant.

How many farmers, people, businesses, rush on in to expansion or development and overlook the key fundamentals to success?

These base foundation blocks detailed above are key regardless of the sector or industry that you are in, but how many people are taught and reminded of these?

In the most effective groups that I visited these core boxes were part of every meeting or, at least, strongly evident in a varied programme. Let any one of these boxes slip or miss it out altogether and then try and expand or grow your business and you will soon start to see cracks appear.

You just need to look around you and you will see this happen, where big has grown so quickly that it is no longer beautiful or profitable and suddenly becomes a headache.

But then there are those businesses that seem to grow effortlessly but, when you scrutinise them more closely, you will see that they all have core values , KPIs, mentors, advisers, attention to detail on all the basic pasture, feed, herd health, financial budgeting and management; people management and a solid capital base.

This I saw most recently with a UK discussion group “Turf Accounts”.

Here was a long established group who oozed the core and lived and breathed the value of the diagram on the previous page. Not just putting it in practice themselves but, as a group, nurturing, mentoring, supporting and guiding others through the ladder of growth and progress - allowing others to learn from

their mistakes and experiences. This is effective knowledge transfer, influencing and motivating change at its best.

As a seasoned and world respected leader and facilitator of discussion groups, and an activist in influencing and motivating change, I asked Mike Murphy what his advice would be. This is what he told me:

“Always start each meeting, asking for ideas and by laying out the motives and vision.

“Encourage consultative meetings – we want their contributions – what are they doing, how do they feel about this?

“Some farmers may need to bring in other individuals from their farms depending on whose role it is to do what. Make sure you are addressing the right person for the right message.

“Facilitators need to be well trained and respected; they can make or break projects

“Use focus groups to show a model of change that works. Educate attitudes and perceptions. Participatory participation, get them immediately engaged and driving ownership.

“There is always hierarchy in every group, break this down. Each wants to know, wants to be there; to come along and be part of the team.

- Talk about the real issues
- Check the understanding
- Look at all the variances
- Look at what may be the right answer



- Do we then need to bring in professional assistance?
- Visit farms who are embracing this and look at their data

"If you can pull this together, it may be slow and hard at the beginning but once it gets going the enthusiasm and energy builds. They become excited.

"Allow each topic to be fluent and moveable, they will progress at different rates at different times. Some topics may need a few meetings to crack; other can be covered in an hour. Just because you have been given 2 dates, does not mean you then stretch it out.

- Always ask group consensus
- Move away from being agenda focused to being group focused.
- I want to hear what is important to you?
- Have agreed ground rules and keep them visible – put them up on the meeting room wall
- Never assume

"Check out different regions' availability of information and meetings. It is shocking how many areas are "information gorged" overloaded with information, while others are "information starved". These latter ones tend to jump on board really quickly, take ownership, keen for trips.

"Alternatively you may have 'information gorged' areas. Ask them what it is that they are missing, what are they looking for, in what format? Is the internet an option, joint working?

"After every meeting encourage farmers to at least have a go at trying something new when they get home, and then feed back to the group at the next meeting how this worked."

"Apple knows what I want before I know what I want! They are switched on to market need," says Mike

Me: "I ask my farmers what they want and they say: "I don't know, you should tell me what I need to know!"

"Listen more

- Ask more questions, what do **the** farmers already know and what do they need?
- Then take action, be innovative
- Evaluate beginning, middle and end and use and feed back this information.
- Turn farmers' questions back on them
- Get farmers to ask more questions of each other
- They may say "Oh this won't work for us!" but then ask for more detail; other farmers will usually provide the solutions"

How do you make this industry sexy, sustainable and visionary?

"In the absence of measurement – bullshit flourishes!" M Murphy

If it does not get measured it does not get done

What gets measured gets managed



6h. Key differences in the countries visited

6h.i. New Zealand

Attitude, desire to be better, bigger, ambition.

"I am not competitive – I just don't like losing." **Colin Glass**

- **Craig McBeth, Regional Team Manager, DairyNZ.** *"DairyNZ have listened to their levy payers' demands, they have changed their focus, they have adapted, with their end audience in mind. We now see more of our top end, influential dairy farmers in the audience on our focus farm days; we are building our respect. It is good to be hitting more of the larger levy payers, the more we can interact and influence to change of this audience the more overall effect we have filtering down the line"*
- **AgFirst, consultants NZ.** *"Build a reputation for over delivering"*

6h.ii. South America

On the majority of larger dairy units that we visited, both owners and managers had separate qualifications and industry skills before coming into dairy, i.e. trained as vets, structural engineers, computer programming, owned their own independent enterprises. To be respected in this industry and in these countries you must have qualifications to back you up. This allowed people to view dairy without the "romance". They took key business decisions based on fact, business plan, efficiency and profit. Not tied to tradition.

Where can you train and become qualified in Extension and Knowledge Transfer?

Pride, and proud of their businesses.

Ambitious, and hungry for growth.

Massive growth and production opportunities both within and outside agriculture

6h.iii. Australia/Tasmania

Dairy as a whole in Australia appeared to be oversubscribed, saturated with resources and information.

- The value and respect of learning from farmer to farmer was very strong. They do not see their neighbour as competition. Sharing data, cost of production and key efficiencies are not seen as threatening or defamatory. *"Together we are stronger, we want to see a successful dairy field and industry."* **Paul Lambert**
- The dairy industry is talking a positive story, they are investing heavily in processing, actively looking to increase and grow their milk field by 30% in the next 5 years. But farmer confidence is low, returns said not to be high enough to justify level of investment, but yet I am also hearing of farmers considering conversions, having assessed the figures showing return on investment coming in between 10-12%, including re-valued land cost.

So what is the missing link in the communication between the two? Is it fear of volatility, not being confident in being able to weather the lows, or is it that the milk companies are not coming out loud and strong enough, agreeing and guaranteeing a base price in which new entrants or people looking to expand could guarantee budgets and costings?



There is a huge investment going into coaching and facilitation training to support growth opportunities: AUD1.3 million, 60% funded by state, 40% funded by industry, as identified by the 2020 project. It focuses on pushing whole farm reviews, preparing farmers for volatility, progressing innovative tools and resources. What new initiatives need to be launched to help prepare farmers and rebuild confidence to meet future milk growth and demands?

6h.iv. USA

Montana, Stovall ranch – where they live and deal with true hardship, battling with the extremes of nature and the environment. The importance of lean management and supply chain management of the Aberdeen Angus breed and reputation is demonstrated here. Succession: having strong relationships with staff and supply chain.

But the greatest difference or common theme that I felt really stood out on my travels was the pride, respect and love for the job, industry and country that oozed from everyone I met. I never heard people moaning, complaining, blaming.

It was all: OK, so this is where we are, how do we deal with it, how do we improve things, how do we take control?

This was so refreshing. Even when facing extreme drought or financial pressures this “can-do attitude”, “give me solutions not problems” was so very evident.

This is definitely something that I think we could work on improving in the UK.



7. In summary

Effective time management is a key skill to develop and it starts with learning to delegate. Any busy mother will tell you that if you already have your hands full you have to put something down in order to pick up something else. If you wish to take on new things in your life then you are going to have to learn to say “no” to some of the things you do now.

- Prioritise and delegate – learn to identify what does not need doing and focus on being effective rather than being busy.
- When delegating the task also delegate the responsibility
- Build a strong support group of positive people and mentors to discuss and bounce ideas off
- Remove “corrosive, negative” elements from your social circle, it only grinds you down
- Learn to ask for help when it is needed, sooner rather than later

- Always look to learn to improve, but also learn from the mistakes of others.
- Personal development and health are king
- Be realistic in your time plan and expectations you may need patience
- Believe in yourself and your confidence will grow
- Future is good

Recognise that change is the one constant in our lives, so don’t fear it or ignore it, but embrace it and direct it.

We know from experience that life can be unfair and difficult at times, but it is the challenges of life that inspire us to great things and there is an immense sense of satisfaction in overcoming life’s adversities and winning through.

If you learn to believe in yourself, to really believe in your capability to succeed, then you will. It’s a self-fulfilling prophecy.

“Life is change. Personal growth is optional. Choose wisely and do not be the limiting factor in your own success.”



8. Conclusions

1. The discussion group is the most effective knowledge transfer model available. It stimulates discussion, influences and encourages changing practice, challenges the norm, encourages and motivates. It provides easy access to technical information.
2. Effective knowledge transfer to influence and motivate change can be achieved in many ways, but it is key to ask questions – *and the right questions* – to enable minds to open, to engage, “buy in”, to identify the “want” and the “need”.
3. Effective time management is a key skill to develop and it starts with learning to delegate.
4. Recognise that change is the one constant in our lives. So don’t fear or ignore it, but embrace and direct it.
5. “Life is change. Personal growth is optional. Choose wisely and do not be the limiting factor in your own success”. If you learn to believe in yourself, to really believe in your capability to achieve success, then you will. It’s a self-fulfilling prophecy.
6. The role of the facilitator is critical to the success of the model.



9. Recommendations

1. To improve communication and to speed change we need a **dairy industry bureau**: a one stop shop that links government, service providers, industry and farmers. This would reduce duplication, reduce wasted resources and make accessing both information and support much easier. It would also highlight where there are skills and service deficits so industry funds can be more wisely spent and joint partnerships developed to pull together the information that our farmers need to be the best and most efficient dairy producers in the world.
2. DairyCo & the industry need to be looking further into the future. What will dairying look like 5, 10, 15, 20 years from now? Let's create that vision, educate and inform our farmers, get them on side and make it happen. Let's stop being reactionary, let's walk the walk and have goals, vision and dreams
3. We need to build confidence in our farmers to grow an ambitious industry, we need to agree and publicise dairy industry goals and targets and key performance indicators (KPIs)
4. We need to identify and nurture new leaders. We must encourage them to take time off farm, to travel to learn new ideas, and then help them to be effective, charismatic communicators.
5. Industry spokes-people and leaders need to be suitably reimbursed to allow time off farm without detrimental cost to their own businesses and personal life.
6. Introduce a UK version of <http://www.dairychallenge.org/> Get dairy universities competing against each other, to identify the dairy student of the year. Make our students into leaders from the minute they enter the industry
7. Farmers should find a mentor they trust, who will guide them, support them and encourage them to take steps that previously would have been thought impossible.



10. Next, after my study tour

10a. A one-stop Scottish dairy bureau.

In November 2012, Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Environment, commissioned the Scottish Dairy Review (full remit and background here:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2012/11/dairy21112012>).

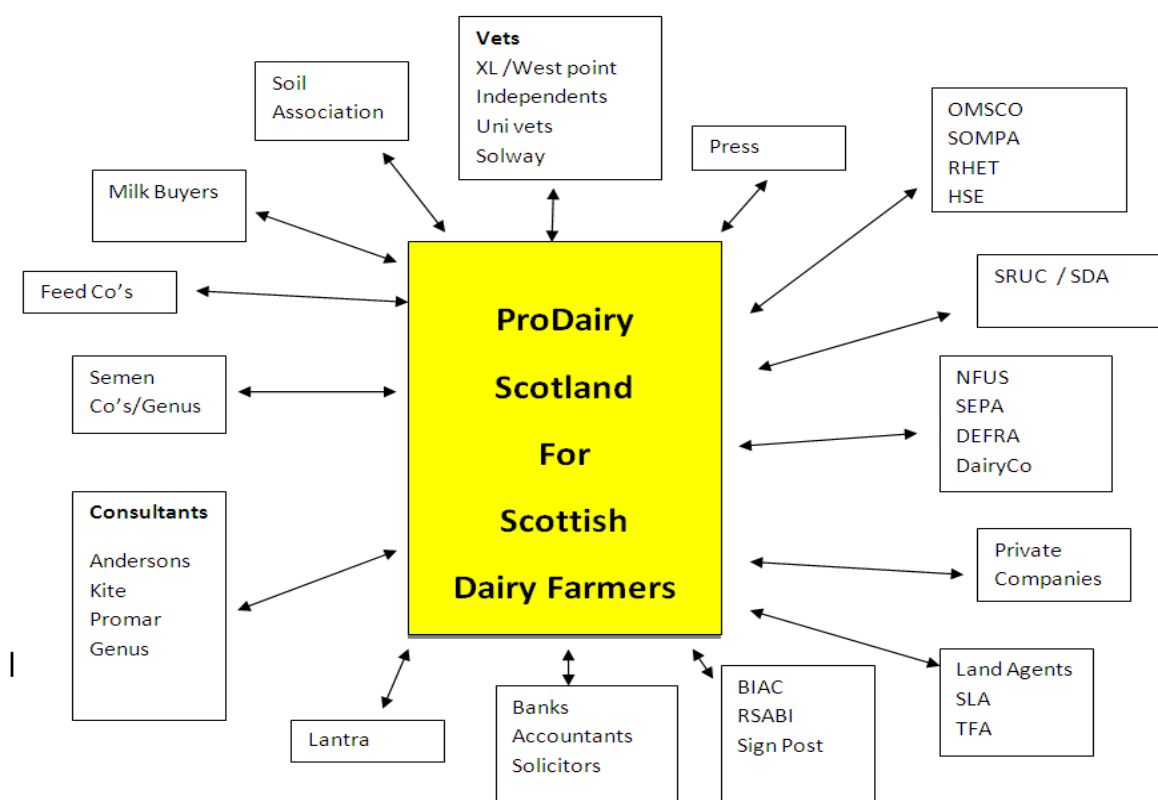
James Withers, Chief Executive of Scotland Food & Drink was appointed as Chairman.

Following my Nuffield Farming studies and findings I have drawn up a proposal

highlighting the need for an independent, one-stop Scottish dairy bureau, which James Withers has accepted and endorsed. This paper is due to be announced to industry and we are then waiting to hear which recommendation the minister is going to back, support and implement.

My proposal is as follows:

This diagram demonstrates the bewildering mass of information and knowledge transfer options and service providers available to dairy farmers in Scotland





The table below demonstrates the different levels of skill sets and what and who can provide training in these services. It also highlights how individuals/new entrants can develop and grow their career and skill sets.

Director CEO Governance Mentoring	Director CEO Governance Mentoring Advising on legislation/government policy	SAC Consultants/specialists Banks/solicitors/accountants Coaching/Nuffield/Worshipful Co.Farmers
Farm Manager Owner	HR/people management Financial management Statutory compliance Business support/understanding the market Personal development	LKL / DairyCo Promar Kite/Embryonics/Semex/SAC Andersons/Accountants/Consultants
Herdsman Staff	Advanced livestock technical skills Farm health Planning AI/Foot trimming Health & Safety Personal development	XL Vets/SEMEX/Lantra/ SDA/SRUC/DairyCo
New Entrant Apprentice School Leaver	Dairy Practical Introduction	DairyCo/Lantra RHET/SDA SRUC/School careers

Scotland's Dairy Bureau would act as a new signposting service facility, funded by the Scottish Government. It would create a hub around which Scottish training, information and knowledge for Scottish dairy farmers is collated and coordinated. It would offer a solution to the widely recognised problem of ensuring that in the future there is coherent joined-up thinking and coordination across the whole Scottish dairy industry.

At present all parties, quite understandably, present and champion their own views and material. Scotland's Dairy Bureau would be responsible for coordinating activities through a central hub, networking and building relationships across all the relevant sectors of the industry.

It would offer interested groups and individuals a conduit to supply reliable information and advice direct to Scottish Dairy farmers. The hub would provide dairy farmers with a simple and reliable single access point to discover what grants, services, training, and CPD is available from all of the service providers: vets, colleges, commercial organizations, milk buyers, Lantra, SRUC, and independent consultants. It would then keep a live database and website that was continually being updated.

Scotland's Dairy Bureau would be a professional service benefiting both the dairy farmers and the suppliers of services, and would remove one of the significant



barriers to expanding the Scottish Dairy industry.

This service would also help to identify training needs and gaps, feeding back to the policy makers, so funding is then targeted to meet market failure more precisely. The number of dairy farmers is reducing. The support sectors need to work more smartly and more cohesively, eradicating duplication and confusion. This would ensure that scarce and valuable government funding is directed at projects that would maximise the return and can leverage, in addition, third party funding. This would provide maximum opportunity for new entrants to join the Scottish dairy sector and for existing farmers to invest and expand with confidence.

A single industry portal providing all farmers with the information they need would also provide an opportunity to monitor and review trends, needs and demands. This information could be used by the support sectors to quickly recognise and meet high

demand areas ensuring skills gaps do not restrict the sector's development.

10b. Discussion Groups

I am also actively changing the way I work and interact with my dairy farmers. Since returning from my travels I have identified groups of farmers who are keen to be involved in new discussion groups. These groups are very much business-improvement and profit focused. They have agreed to benchmark and have set out their agreed aims, goals and vision for themselves personally and for the group as a whole.

I am also presenting and sharing my journey, experiences, outcomes and recommendations with my colleagues at DairyCo and further in the Dairy industry.

10c. Speaking events

I have been invited to speak and present to a number of discussion groups in and around my local area, and I am now also speaking and presenting at The National Soil Association Conference in Westminster in October

This has been an amazing year, an amazing opportunity. I will not let the fun, learning and adventure stop here.

Heather Wildman

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11. Final Words

The photos and words just tell one picture but it is the stories and people who have made the biggest impact on me. To be openly welcomed into strangers' homes and worlds; to have an insight and be able to walk in their shoes - this has been a great honour. There have been many deep, heartfelt conversations that have sometimes gone long into the night ... people who have great stories: of achievement, ambition, growth and success; also those of sadness, hardship, self-development, self-fulfilment and awareness.

What I have experienced on my travels is just how strong the need, pride, respect and values are of having a strong, loving family network. Together we are stronger. I have seen how this can empower, motivate, support and nurture. But sadly I have also seen how it can stifle, build bitterness, resentment and turn people who previously loved one another, against each other. Hearing the steps people have taken and their reasons for their direction has been humbling and also motivating. Sometimes hitting rock bottom - and hitting it hard - can be the best thing that ever happens to you. But it is then all down to how you choose to address each of these challenges as an opportunity. Which path you choose plays a massive part, as this can be the making and breaking of any great mind or person.

Right at the beginning of my Nuffield journey Mike Murphy and Con Hurley in Ireland encouraged me that, to be successful, I too needed to write down my own mission, vision and values statement; I too needed goals, but also needed to decide how I was going to get there. So I have made a start. Here are my attempts; I would be very keen to hear your thoughts.

My values prior to Nuffield would definitely have been fairly brief and simple:

- Work hard
- Party hard

Now my mission, vision and values following Nuffield are:

Mission: to be the saviour of the Scottish Dairy Industry.

Vision: to make a positive difference, empowering people to see opportunities, enabling a dairy industry with pride, innovation, a heads-up attitude, strong leadership, an industry working together, reducing duplication

Values: be the best that I can be, bringing out the best in myself and others, living every day to the full, but remembering to re-invest in the bank of family rewarded with happiness and security. Integrity, respect, fun, happiness, kick ass

But, what is life all about? Is it work, work, work, hitting those targets, getting the job done well, proving yourself to others, meeting deadlines, beating colleagues, being the best ... top dog ... is it being able to buy the best, the biggest ... is it about owning the most cows, land, or is it being better than the Joneses - let alone keeping up with the Joneses!

Jane Bennet, Nsch, Tasmania observed: *"one of my greatest mistakes was thinking and believing that the grass is greener on the other side. You can be so busy that you forget to live in the present, to see and appreciate what you have and what you have already achieved"*



12. Acknowledgements

I am incredibly proud and honoured to have been awarded a Nuffield Farming Scholarship. Sincere thanks to the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust and especially to my sponsor The MacRobert Trust, who saw potential in me during the early interviews. They believed in me and my potential to grow, develop and bring something good back to the industry.

I am indebted to my husband John, who has been patient and a great rock of support all the way through the Nuffield journey, and also for allowing me the time and freedom to complete my Nuffield Farming Scholarship. Our two gorgeous daughters, Charlotte and Nicola, have been understanding, patient and tolerant, but have each grown and developed with this experience.

My incredible family and friends who, alongside the support of John and the girls, I definitely could not have managed without. There are too many of you to thank individually and the risk of accidentally missing someone off is just too great, but thank you again each and every one.

The Team at DairyCo and especially my Scottish colleague Sophie Kinnear who will always be Robin to my Batman, you have all supported and assisted me in balancing the Nuffield and DairyCo work load. Applying and filling out the initial application form, building up and introducing me

to interview contacts home and abroad, and for just being there when I needed you.

I would like to thank all the wonderful businesses, friends and people whom I have been so fortunate to meet, visit, and spend time with on my travels, and also those whom I never met face to face but who were incremental in planning, opening doors and just helping to oil the whole process throughout Ireland, Canada, America, Chile, Peru, Brazil, West Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand and the UK.

To my wonderful Scottish dairy farmers who, to be honest, if it wasn't for you, I would never have had this amazing experience. The support and encouragement has been greatly appreciated especially on those wobbly days and for those of you who have unwittingly been my guineapigs, whilst I have been trying out new ways of working. I hope that you too will see a benefit from this experience.

And my final but by no means least thank you must go to Genus Plc, Hope's Auction at Wigton, NFUS Ayrshire region and The Westmorland Agricultural Society for very generously agreeing to give me additional sponsorship. This, and your support throughout, has been greatly appreciated.



12. Executive Summary

Have discussion groups had their day? Discussion groups in one form or another have been in existence for many years all over the world. Being involved in extension (transfer of knowledge) I often ask myself: how can I be more effective in getting messages across to my farmers? Are discussion groups the most effective route, how do they compare here in the UK to groups around the world? How can we be more effective in influencing and motivating change? Why do some people just get it, while others either cannot see it or choose to ignore it; are there smarter ways of working; is there a virtual tool kit out there that we can use in the UK? Is it down to how the information/message is being transferred, or is simply about the actual individual wanting to push and drive the change?

The skills to effectively communicate, influence and motivate are key across every industry and in each person's life; whether you are CEO of a global company, staff sergeant in army ranks, or a full time parent. The primary goal of my report is to determine the attributes of successful knowledge transfer and the effective routes to influence and motivate change.

A loss of key focus is a common issue with discussion groups across the UK. Many were set up in times of crisis, with a clear purpose, resulting in agreed objectives and direction. Once funding and formal facilitation inevitably withdraw, many have either ceased or

flounder with structure, leadership, agreed group purpose, vision, objectives and goals missing.

The countries I chose to visit were either already well recognised as having formal and established routes of knowledge transfer and discussion groups; had had them but no longer did; or were in the development stages of knowledge transfer.

My key findings were that NO, discussion groups have definitely not had their day; they are alive and well, if in some areas on life support. The recognition of effective knowledge transfer, as being truly important in influencing and motivating change, is growing worldwide.

As an industry and individuals we need to recognise and invest in leadership for the future.

We need to encourage cohesive working, reducing duplication and smarter pooling of resources, building a one-stop bureau to access, share and promote information, resources, advice and further education.

We need to build confidence in our farmers to grow an ambitious industry, we need to agree and publicise dairy industry goals and targets and key performance indicators (KPIs). What does good look like, and how do we meet and raise these targets, where are we and what do we need to do to get there?



14. One picture is worth a thousand words!!



Chile 1



New Zealand discussion group



Heather and Digger mustering sheep



Digger mustering sheep



Discussion group in Victoria, Australia



Janette Fisher, Philip Spratt, Ben Kearney and me. Tasmania



KIWI cross bred cattle



Me, mustering 1,000 heifers in Montana



Thinking out of the box! Lima, Peru



100 hectare, 100-cow units in Ontario



This says it all



And if you've taken a wrong turning,
go back to basics!



Self with Charlotte Glass, New Zealand



Calf Eteria + Johnes trials, Ontario

On the following pages are details of 12 practical examples of Discussion Groups and similar at work.

See Appendices 1-12



Appendix 1: Focus Farms, Ontario

Dr David Kelton, Ontario Vet. College

Not having a formal knowledge transfer route can be frustrating. One example of this is work done on the research of the prevention and control of Johne's disease in a herd.

David Kelton was struggling to get industry and farmers' attention and attendance at meetings, and overall uptake of information was poor. So he applied for funding and set up a trial running "Focus Farms" – working on "soft skills" – interacting and working closer with farmers and research. This was a 3 year funded project which also tied in a PhD student, Steve Roche. The findings of this work are still to be published, but here are some brief summary points, which have just been released:

- Overall, this project has shown that agricultural and rural education must move towards a producer-centred approach in order to become more effective at eliciting change. Through the development of Focus Farm groups and/or communities of practice, we may be able to help facilitate changes that are effective, based on good science, at the prevention and control of the myriad of diseases that impact the health of both animals and humans.
- Qualitatively, perceived barriers can be grouped into 3 major themes: (1) Tangible Resource barriers, such as time, money and infrastructure expectedly play a role in adoption, (2) Education/Awareness barriers, such as a lack of understanding/awareness, or misunderstanding/clarity of recommendations, also impact on adoption, and (3) Intrinsic/Perceived barriers, such as

priority, ignorance, motivation and controllability all seem to impact adoption (interestingly these aren't 'concrete').

- This is crucial! Moving forward we need to address some of the qualitative and/or social factors that contribute to behavioural change. If they understand the disease and how to treat it, but don't deem it as a priority, or are unmotivated to address it, then we are unlikely to see changes being made. We need to convey the importance of the disease, motivate, provide realistic/practical recommendations and engage with producers to better understand how to effect change.
- Focus Farms, a producer-centred KTT approach, has effectively increased knowledge, changed attitude/perspective, increased adoption and decreased on-farm JD risk
- Focus Farms has also impacted the way in which veterinarian-client relationships and education are perceived by the participating vets/facilitators in this project. Many vets acknowledged that the use of participatory, collective learning strategies for producer education were more engaging than previous one-way communication formats. In addition, several vets have reported that they are continuing to employ approaches learned through Focus Farms within their practices. This evidence provides a basis for expanding the process to realise these impacts on a larger, perhaps industry-wide, scale.



Appendix 2 : The Calf-ETERIA, Ontario, project

This had 3 major objectives:

1. To determine and quantify what calf and heifer management techniques are being implemented on Ontario dairy farms
2. To implement and assess different methods of transferring knowledge on best management practices for rearing calves and heifers to producers; and
3. Trying to determine the impact of these KTT methods and which methods should be used to improve the health and management of calves and heifers.

The first objective was achieved by sending a questionnaire to Ontario dairy producers to fill out and return.

To achieve the second objective, team members put together presentations on different aspects of calf and heifer management to be used in management clubs and online modules.

The last objective was achieved by conducting follow-up visits with producers that participated in the KTT activities.

Benchmarking current practices is important in order to be able to monitor change and to determine if new practices are being adopted. Evaluating different methods of exchanging and delivering information is important, not only in understanding how producers learn and accept new information, but also to determine what influences the adoption of new best management practices.

This project involved working with a team comprised of extension educators, researchers and industry professionals. It also

involved working with veterinarians and dairy producers in order to complete the major objectives.

The project was advertised in a number of ways (banner display at different meetings and producer events, articles in the Milk Producer and Ceptor publications, word of mouth through veterinarians and via the project website) in order to garner the attention of producers needed for participation. Producers were invited to participate by mail, email and by phone. The calf and heifer management clubs involved team members who gave presentations on specific topics (i.e. housing, health, economics etc.). The presentations were posted as online modules (hosted by My Brainshark) for producers to access.

Follow-up farm visits were conducted in the summer of 2012 with participating producers.

Furthermore, a final report will be made available to producers via the internet (or hardcopy if requested).

The presentations used for the KTT methods will be made available for use by veterinarians, industry professionals, producers and others.

Four locations (Elmira, Tavistock, Listowel and Kemptville) were chosen to host management clubs on calf and heifer management for dairy producers willing to participate. Locations were based on proximity to producers.

For each location, 4 meetings were held in February and March of 2012. In total, over 100 producers were contacted regarding participation in the meetings via phone, email or mail. Of those that responded to messages



or were spoken to directly, 44 agreed that yes, they were able to participate.

Attendance at the meetings varied widely meeting to meeting with as few as 2 and as many as 12 producers attending a meeting. Due to a warmer than expected March, attendance dropped markedly in this month. Over 100 different producers were contacted to participate in completing the online modules on calf and heifer management.

56 producers were enrolled to participate in viewing the different modules. The number of views varied between presentations (from 0-24 views).

62 farms (35 producers from the management club group, 14 producers from the internet group and 13 producers who were not involved in either group) were visited in the summer of 2012 for a follow-up visit.

Follow-up visits were conducted in the summer of 2012 with producers who participated in the management clubs, internet modules and also with a subset of producers not involved in either activity.

30 producers indicated that they were inspired to make changes on their farm. The types of changes ranged between :

- testing colostrum quality
- increasing the amount of milk fed to calves
- improving the dehorning process
- housing considerations such as ventilation, monitoring heifer growth and looking at their culling/selection criteria

This information suggests that the clubs and internet modules (as well as information gathered from other sources such as magazines) were successful in encouraging producers to make changes on-farm. The intended target audience was dairy producers and this audience was reached through the survey (30% response rate) and again in the KTT activities.

The modules that were prepared for the meetings and for the internet have been shared with veterinarians (for use at their own client meetings) and were accessed by veterinary students in P.E.I (for learning purposes), thus showing enhanced levels of collaboration between researchers and industry professionals. In addition, these modules will be made available online for any producers, veterinarians and industry professionals to use.



Appendix 3 : Governance – 2 - 3 day Workshops

Adrien van Bysterveldt – DairyNZ Development Project Manager – Large Business

Adrien talking : In this current climate of fast growth and dairy business amalgamations, dairy farm businesses were becoming huge in NZ. This was great for the economy, but were the business skills and securities in place if and when the wheels come off? We were hearing in the press of instances of big business failing, incurring family break ups, fall outs, and expensive legal costs.

There was a clear need for governance. This was a completely new way of thinking for dairy farmers. We set about trying to raise the awareness and the importance and the long term value of having governance structure in their business

At first people did not understand. They had had either no experience or they linked it to the school board.

We started with 1 day workshops; farmers enjoyed them and the feedback was hugely positive. But when we later followed up with a phone call to see how they had progressed, the implementation was poor.

To address this we needed to identify what were they key barriers to change? These were listed as:

1. Once home I did not know where to start
2. One day was not enough
3. Wife and partners did not understand what I was trying to say/do
4. Local consultants came in and pooh-poohed my suggestions, so I lost confidence

There was so much in that one day. It is such a massive topic, we just skimmed the surface...we still need to learn to translate ... we needed to cut the content. We needed to deliver experiences where they could role play ... draft up a good “personal” governance policy then we get them to work on at least one- if not two or three - policies for them to take home.

We invited the right people. The people who have the control and who would have the ability to implement the governance and change in the business

To measure the progress we arranged an assessor to visit each business prior to the work shop. The assessor can make sure each business focuses on the correct key areas for them, focusing on the immediate needs of their individual business.

Then we said: to be on it you must bring your key advisers...if they could not attend, then the dairy farmers were not allowed to attend either. This was what we covered:

- Our learning journey
- Discovery
- Understand the barriers
- Then address the barriers

Then only deal with just enough content so that they can build the content. There is only so much you can grasp and understand in a set time period ... previously we gave information overload.

It needs to be practical and implementable.

Because of the evaluation at the beginning, we then need to carry out an evaluation at



the end. This gives us massive leverage with industry and also with accessing outside funding.

We now market this course direct through accountants and advisers and we encourage them to invite 2/3/4 of their clients.

Part and parcel of governance of your business is development, which should then drive development.

To quote Adrien directly :

“Good management does not last long if there is poor governance. If they were poor in both areas they were screwed but if they have good governance and poor management they had the infrastructure to deal with this.”

“This is a long term commitment from Dairy NZ. The future of dairy is more large scale businesses. This and environmental issues are not going to go away.”

My Take:

This assumption of cramming too much into a project, meeting or conference is something that I see happening often here in the UK too. So no wonder implementation and full understanding of the key take home messages are low, for it is often too hard to convert the theory and learning into practice that fits your home environment. This is a lesson many of us need to learn.



Appendix 4: Blackwater Discussion Group

This group has just celebrated its 40th anniversary, testimony in itself to their success

How does it work, why does it work?

The Chairman of Blackwater told me this group had been initially set up by the late Paddy O’Keeffe. After meeting with me and talking to a number of New Zealanders whom we had invited over to Ireland, it was agreed that we had a lot more to learn from NZ, and the best way to do this was to take a study tour over there. Paddy was a visionary. We approached the top farmers in our area to see if they would be interested in such a study tour. The Irish Journal advertised it. We had 30 farmers apply, of which 25 were dairy farmers. This was the first trip of its kind. It pulled in “leaders” and “eagles”.

On return the group broke into two: (a) those who had enjoyed the trip but did not really make any significant changes once they got home, and (b) the others who embraced the principles and used them to drive on their businesses. At this time there was a culture of fear of expansion and milking 100+ dairy cows. Visiting NZ changed mind-sets - people could see the possibilities rather than the problems.

Blackwater Discussion Group grew from this trip. The members are:

- Not geographically close
- They have the same mind-set
- Meet religiously once a month (usually on farm)
- Always have at least one representative from Moorepark
- Share farm information, data and costings (physical & financial)

- Directly question aims, goals and targets and how these are managed

There is annual review and analysis of end of year accounts. Meeting the facilitator is key to dissect and challenge the group. This meeting is not held on farm.

Since starting, the group has now progressed to being a buying and trading group, a change which lost some members. The roles and responsibilities of the buying group are shared equally amongst the group. This does take up some time for the members, but you only focus on your specific area, knowing that someone else is reviewing and managing the others. We also negotiate superior bank interest charges and loans for the group.

The trust and rules of this buying group are hard and firm, but this is what gets them the greater discount. Bills must be paid within 2 days of the bill arriving. If late, fines are incurred. An administrator is employed by the group to oversee this

Total confidentiality is demanded – trust and group reputation are everything. There is no second chance for members: step out of line and you are out of the group. There are now 22 full members and a number of associates who have been life time members but who are now retired.

New members are vetted strictly. Full credit rating checks are carried out by their agreed accountant. He checks bank statements, credit rating, balance sheets, reputation. A new entrant needs to be proposed and backed. If they pass the financial audit they are then interviewed by 2 -3 members - do



they fit the requirement and image of the group?

Even sons of retiring fathers are checked and, if necessary, vetoed

A chair and secretary are in post, positions which rotate every 1-2 years. They also they have 5 directors of trading; these are in post 3-4 years. These positions take up more time.

The group sets and agrees business goals and aims; these are reviewed, monitored and adapted as required.

Every meeting has a clear purpose and the time is never wasted.

What bonds this group? Trips. It was a trip that made this group and they still hold firmly to the wisdom of getting away from the home turf. They always have an annual trip and every 3rd year they re-visit NZ.

Trips are not advertised any more. "We need people with the right mind frame. They are no holiday."

Sounds like undertaking a Nuffield Farming Scholarship!!



Appendix 5 : Running Independent groups:

Mary Kingston, Ireland

Mary told me: Financials are at the core of these meetings. There is an annual financial bench marking meeting. Mary also has a financial spread sheet tool that each individual must fill out monthly and send in to Mary, who then formulates. Costs and figures are quoted and used at every meeting.

Some of Mary's groups only require her to assist with the financial side, then they run independently; for others she runs the whole yearly programme.

The meeting planner's remit:

- Contact host farmer and arrange a pre- visit one week prior.
- Host fills out his financials with Mary there and then on-farm.
- Host writes down the aims and objectives that he wants to get out of the group visit.
- Together they do a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)
- Short and long terms goals.

This fact sheet is then circulated to the group attendees.

- Meetings start at 11am and finish either 2 or 4pm depending on the season
- All meetings are informal, relaxed and generally fun
- Everyone has to speak even if they are only tagging along.

- Dominant characters are “managed” and the shy ones encouraged.

Every member comes to meeting with their farm figures, grass growth, wedge, concentrates fed, cow body condition score, cost of feed etc. This is then benchmarked on a flip chart.

This is usually followed by a farm walk and talk around the farm.

After lunch they work through the farmer's aims and objectives, breaking into smaller working groups, each group debating the same issues and points.

Mary then summarises these points.

At close of meeting a round-up is taken, asking:

- What did you get out of it?
- What is your key learning?
- What are you going to do when you get home?

The following meeting the previous host must update the group on what he has done since the visit. Some activity and progress is expected. Knowing this review is looming is often the driver!

I asked Mary how she benchmarked and quantified the benefits of these meetings. She said: “It is often hard to get the credit for any on farm change and progress implemented after these meetings; you just have to accept this”



Appendix 6 : Abigail Ryan: Dairy Consultant for Greenfield, Ireland

Teagasc wanted to try and replicate how starting up a new large scale dairy unit would look - post quota. The purpose was to learn all the lessons, challenges and pit falls for the farmers prior to 2015. To find out more please follow link <http://www.greenfelddairy.ie>

Adrian Van Bysterveldt from DairyNZ, New Zealand, helped with the initial set up then Abigail took over.

They sourced cows from 5 different farms for the initial set up. This would be typical. They are now into their 3rd year and are currently milking 300 cows (July 2012). Grass and spring block calving system.

Abigail is the Project Co-ordinator and visits the farm twice weekly to:

- Measure and walk the grass
- Checking and record breeding
- Monitor and record the cash flow/ finances
- Monitor and record costs of production
- Land lease
- Loan repayment

“With any new project you need to be aware of the “pub talk” - this really is self-destructive ... farmers can really pull businesses to pieces”

“Knowledge transfer is done on-farm covering both herd health & welfare and financials. From July onwards we can get up to 5/6 discussion groups visiting each day We run one annual large open day where we can expect to get 1,600 farmers + through the gate”.

Ireland is taking the Food Harvest 20:20 report seriously and has a number of farmer focused initiatives running and funded to help get their industry into fighting form post 2015

Abigail's advice – Starting new groups

- Monitor finances. Monitor Profit
- Set goals and targets, discuss these openly in meetings, this creates competition
- If profit is not their sole focus then they are just a social group
- When starting a fresh group get costs in ASAP
- Consider specialised groups
- Meeting monthly is essential, keep it consistent
- 1:1 coaching is not sustainable – too expensive and not enough consultants or time

Endorsing Abigail's work at Greenmount, Merv Pangborn, Lincoln University, NZ

says – “having a college study farm that publishes and releases costs, growth and production on a regular basis is great, but when you benchmark this data with key leading industry farmers this is when we really have something special to share, use and learn from.”

Tom Wright – Knowledge Transfer Officer – Dairy Specialist Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Farming

Tom's background is nutrition but there are now only a handful of independent nutritionists available for the 4,000 dairy farms. He works with only one discussion group **“Progressive Dairy Operators” - PDO**



which meets up 10 times per year. This is no ordinary group as we would view it. They have an executive board of approximately 20 dairy farmers, representatives from the milk board, plus a few other independents and specialists - of which he is one.

This group have been on the go for over 25 years with a membership of approx. 500 dairy farmers, 100 mixed associates, vets, specialists etc. A one-page newsletter is sent out monthly, plus they get access to Dairy Herd Manager, which is an industry benchmarking service, all for a membership of \$100 per year.

The board is in charge of organising the group's educational programme.

Every 3 years they hold a 1.5 day seminar bringing in leading speakers from around the world.

Alternatively to this they will also run a world tour. The last trip was to Israel, but they have also recently visited Brazil and Argentina.

March 2013 will be the next one. These seminars focus on the future and leading their industry. They look for speculation and bold vision; they hope to have the norm challenged.

They look to be cutting edge, but relevant; look to motivate and enthuse, helping to keep their members ahead of the competition.

They feel that not running these events annually keeps them fresh.

The routine monthly meetings can effectively be anywhere in the world. 70 members in Aug 2012 visited Colombia to study robotic milking. They visited 15 farms in 3 days. This trip sold out as the members got to see and hear about things first hand.

Every September at Woodstock they hold a 3 day outside show comprising equipment, machinery and milking technology.

On the Thursday evening of this show there is a key, highly respected speaker which usually pulls in approximately 200 attendees. The Friday is usually a day of arranged farm visits. These farms are not chosen lightly and it is a great honour to be asked to be a host. These visits have such high respect and perceived value that farmers will travel well out of their area to attend. They have now grown to be so popular that the organisers are looking to invest in individual headsets so that everyone can clearly hear the speakers as they travel around.

This is a social mix of positive, go-getting farmers, who want to mix with likeminded people, not with feed reps or vets. The main focus is to have farmers interacting with farmers and sharing information.

Attendance and interactions is approx.:

Annual farm show	90%
3-yearly symposium	60-70%
Annual farm show	90%
Farm show dinner	20%
Farm show tour	40%
Yearly international tour	35-45% (first come first served)

Monthly newsletter
Emails as and when

Progressive Dairy Operators has just introduced a **"Young Manager Class"**:

- Aimed at 25–35 year olds
- 6 weeks (1 day per week) attendance - very strict on this
- Maximum 15 people
- 2/3 speakers per day
- Cost \$200 each



Topics covered:

- Dealing with banks
- Communication & time management
- Succession Planning
- Managing employees
- Business management
- Strategies , vision and goals

To date (July 12, 2013) these had been only marginally successful, people were slow to take advantage. But past attendees are raving about them, and say what a huge difference and benefit they have felt from having attended.

These courses are not for everyone, but for the right individual it can prove to be a pivotal turning point.



Appendix 7: the role of facilitation

Facilitation is not the same as making a presentation. The facilitator's job is to guide the learning process for our learners – in other words, to make their learning easier. Doing this effectively is an acquired skill. This learner- centred focus is a new art, skill and challenge. A skilled facilitator reaps the rewards from their learners: their success when they learn content, use and apply it, grow, and ultimately perform better back on farm.

“Facilitation” is a term that means different things to different people. Facilitation is generally considered to be a process in which **a neutral person helps a group work together more effectively**. The facilitator's job is to lead the group process: by helping people improve the way they communicate, examine and solve problems, and make better decisions.

“Facilitation is a way of working with people. Facilitation enables and empowers people to carry out a task or perform an action. The facilitator does not perform the task, but uses certain skills in a process which allows the individuals/group reach their decision/set their goal/learn a skill. Facilitation is a developmental educational method which encourages people to share ideas, resources, opinions, and to think critically in order to identify needs and find effective ways of satisfying those needs.” (Prendiville, 2004, p.8)

A good facilitator can help groups stay on task, and be more creative, efficient and productive than they would be without such help.

Core principles of facilitation

Three core values guide the practice of facilitation:

- Valid information
- Free and informed choices
- Internal commitment to those choices

Valid information means that everyone involved shares all information relevant to an issue. Free and informed choice means that participants have the ability to define their own goals and ways of achieving them.

Internal commitment to the choice means that people feel personally responsible for the choices they make. This type of commitment results because people are happy with the decision and their involvement in it.

Put together, these core values reinforce each other. To make an informed choice, people must have valid information. When people make free and informed decisions, they become internally committed to them. When people are committed to a decision, they are likely to make sure that the decision is implemented

KEY POINTS

- Agree joint aims & objectives
- Everyone participates and has ownership and accountability
- Ensure all valid information is available and in agreed formats
- Review and monitor agreed formats



Facilitation Skills

To be effective, facilitators must have a variety of skills and techniques. Strong verbal and analytical skills are essential. What questions to ask, when to ask them, and how questions should be structured to get good answers without defensiveness, are key. Facilitators must know how to probe for more information when the initial answers are not sufficient. They must also know how to rephrase or “reframe” statements to enhance understanding, and to highlight areas of agreement and disagreement as they develop.

Other skills include redirecting questions and comments, giving positive reinforcement, encouraging contrasting views, including quieter members of the group and dealing with domineering or hostile participants.

Non-verbal techniques include things such as eye contact, attentiveness, facial expression, body language, enthusiasm and maintaining a positive outlook. A facilitator must also develop the ability to read group dynamics on the spot in order to guide the group in a productive way. Facilitators use a variety of visual methods that help generate, organize and evaluate data and ideas.

What are the benefits of facilitation?

There are a number of common benefits to using facilitation skills in group settings:

- Group members are often more motivated to support decisions made because of their investment in the process.
- Group best efforts usually produce better results than individual best efforts.
- Increased participation within the group increases productivity.
- Everyone involved has a chance to contribute and feels they are an integral part of the team.
- People realise that respect and responsibility for implementing decisions lies with everyone.
- Innovation and problem-solving skills are built.
- People are encouraged to think and act for the overall benefit of the group.
- Higher quality decisions normally result.
- A forum for constructively resolving issues and clarifying misunderstandings is created.
- Negative attitudes, low morale, low involvement and withholding of information are less likely because everyone is involved in a joint process.



Appendix 8 : The group dynamics/roles

Stages of group development

Blind Date!

Initially a large number of people are thrown together on a geographical basis. During this time, the facilitator carries most of the responsibility of running the group.

Courtship!

After a settling down period, a core group of people attend regularly. These members become more comfortable with each other and trust is built up. During this phase group discussions tend to remain on general topics.

Engagement!

As the group develops members take on more responsibility. A group structure is formed. At this stage the group will decide on the areas it wishes to pursue.

Marriage!

Once the group is organised, the facilitator, the chairman and the group members run the group on a partnership basis ensuring that all the parties communicate clearly with each other and achieve the needs set out by the group.

Divorce!

Groups may survive at any stage of development as long as all the parties involved are happy with the arrangement. Otherwise the inevitable parting of ways will occur. This is the best course of action where all parties have tried their best but still feel they are not happy with their progress.

Group Process

Group Infrastructure

The importance of establishing a defined structure and a regular routine for discussion group activity cannot be over-emphasised. Successful discussion groups operate on the principle that consistent activity yield consistent progress. This next section describes some essential elements of group infrastructure

Facilitator

An effective facilitator is an important (but not indispensable) member of a successful discussion group. The primary roles of the facilitator in advance of the discussion group meetings are to:

- Collect data from host farm & establish his objectives
- Deal with any aspects of the meeting which may be worrying the host farmer
- Arrange a meeting focal point where people can sit comfortably (pref. in a semi-circle)

Primary roles during the meeting are to:

- Set out agenda for the day, start & finish times
- Ensure all group members report on their current position
- Maintain a clear thinking attitude
- Prompt quieter members to contribute, challenge member's views if they aren't challenged by other



members and prevent over-talkative members from dominating

- Asking open questions to generate discussion and gain further information / clarification
- Probe the group to gain further understanding / clarification
- Present research and other technical data as required
- Summarise and paraphrase the meeting
- Resist the temptation to provide immediate answers to questions raised.

Chairman

A discussion group chairman is required to co-ordinate activities throughout the year.

Appointment to the position may occur on a rotating annual basis. The primary roles of the chairman are to:

- Compile and circulate an annual meeting plan
- Inform group members of the details and requirements for upcoming meetings and events
- Liaise with host farm and group facilitator to organise and set the agenda for the next group meeting
- Encourage all members to fulfil their requirement for data recording, information sharing and participation in group activities
- Arrange assistance for those who have difficulty following the above
- Provide feedback to facilitator regarding members opinions on the progress of the group and conduct of meetings
- Organise guest speakers, field trips, and excursions
- Maintain group focus on the objectives set out in the group mission statement
- Function as a public spokesperson for the group. A secretary may be appointed to assist the chairman by taking responsibility for external

correspondence on behalf of the group

Key rules and objectives

- It is advisable that members draw up a mission statement at the outset of the group process. This concisely defines the principle objectives of the group which helps to maintain focus over time.
- A simple set of rules should be agreed and written up by the group members. These may specify criteria for data recording, information sharing, meeting schedules and participation in group activity. Any issues of confidentiality can also be addressed in this context.
- It is not the responsibility of the facilitator to draft the mission statement or to decide on the rules for the group. However, the facilitator must remain cognizant of the group's objectives and abide by its specified rules and conditions.

Group Plan

The following is a summary of the key features of the plans prepared for meetings of **successful groups**:

- A schedule of meetings and dates for the year is drawn up by the chairman and circulated to group members
- Meetings to be held on group members' farms are conducted on a rota basis. Ideally visiting at different times of the year to see how they manage in different weather conditions.
- Timing and location of scheduled indoor meetings i.e. annual financial review are also detailed in the plan
- Excursions and field trips are scheduled into the annual meetings plan

The conduct of the meetings should conform to a set format. This promotes adoption of



discussion group participation as habitual behaviour:

- Start and finish times consistent, e.g. second Tuesday of every other month
- All members submit monthly data and figures to chair and facilitator by agreed date before the meeting
- Facilitator visits host farm prior to meeting, gathers agreed data, answers host's questions/concerns, carries out risk assessment, works out meeting logistics, car parking, directions etc., and walks through the proposed farm walk. Provisions for inclement weather conditions are made.
- Agenda, programme and relevant information sent out to group 5 days in advance of meeting

Tips / tools/ techniques for successful working with groups

- To make members feel at ease, question them about how they deal with issues on their farm e.g. when do they currently turn cows out to grass? This is an easier way to familiarise new members into the way a discussion group functions than for example asking them to evaluate how the host farmer is grazing his cows.
- Divide up a group into small sub-groups for example to complete a worksheet. This will allow members to become more familiar with a

number of other members in the group.

- Ensure that group meetings are held in close succession to one another – no more than one month apart and preferably closer. This again will ensure that members become familiar with one another. The longer the interval between meetings, the more difficult it will be to start the cycle of meetings again.
- Give members more ownership/responsibility - delegate who organises each meeting/event, let them choose the topics/themes.
- At the beginning of every meeting go round the room and each member to give a short update on what has been happening on their farm since the last meeting.

Different style types of meetings are needed for different needs/requirements:

Discussion groups:

Social
Bench marking
Networking
Comfortable
Can be challenging / competitive

Planning for profit:

Wealth creation course
Worshipful company of farmers
Nuffield
Scholarships



Appendix 9 : Group size and participation

Studies show that as group size increases, participation by members tends to decline as outlined below. A few individuals will tend to dominate in large groups. The “ideal size” for groups in the 10 – 15 person range

The relationship between group size and participation by group members:

3–6 people	everyone speaks
7-10 people	Almost everyone speaks Quieter people say less One or two may not speak at all
11-18 people	5 or 6 people speak a lot 3 or 4 others join in occasionally
19-30 people	3 or 4 people dominate
30+ people	Little participation possible

Effective Communication Core Skills

For anyone to be effective in their job or role, communication is very important. Working with discussion groups is not any different. However, what people forget is that there are many forms of communication and many different ways of using each one and also how each one can be interpreted. Group communications can be broken down into verbal and non-verbal. These are:

Body Language

- Body language is an important form (if not the most important) of non-verbal communication. Every facilitator must learn to use it, but also how to see it and interpret it.
- Gestures
- Facial expression
- Physical position within the group
- Eye contact

Verbal and Tone of Voice

Listening

“We were given 2 ears but only one mouth.”

“This is because God knew that listening is twice as hard as talking”

Listening is one of the most important skills you can have and how well you listen has a major impact on one’s facilitation skills. It is easy to focus on speaking; we want to get our points out there. But, to be a good facilitator, you also need to step back, let the person talk and just listen.

One of the best practical measures of how effective the facilitation process is the amount of time the group is talking compared to the facilitator. When the group is contributing more to the decisions at the group meeting than the facilitator is, the greater the chance of changing the social and cultural capital decision making process.

Depending on which study you read, we only remember between 25% and 50% of what we hear. That means when we are talking people only pay attention to less than half of the conversation.

What type of listener are you?

- A “Passive” Listener
- A “Superficial” Listener
- An Active Listener

Becoming a good listener is more difficult than you think. In reality, we think we listen, in fact we actually hear only what we want to hear.

Hearing is passive. Listening is active; paying attention and searching for meaning. It is hard work.

Becoming an active listener

- To listen “actively” give your undivided attention to the speaker
- Look at the person



- Pay attention to his or her body language
 - Avoid distractions
 - Nod and smile to acknowledge points
 - Occasionally think back about what the person has said
 - Allow the person to speak without thinking what you'll say next
- Note your posture and make sure it is open and inviting
 - Don't interrupt
 - Provide feedback
 - Don't jump to conclusions

(Content courtesy of Teagasc Facilitation Training Course 21/22 March 2012)



Appendix 10 : Goals - Mike Murphy

People who don't achieve goals usually have not set them out correctly in the first place.

Goals should be:

S	Smart
M	Measureable
A	Achievable
R	Reviewed
T	Tested

Be specific when setting goals. Write down exactly what you want to achieve. Express them simply – so a 5 year old can understand. Measureable and achievable - so that it means something to you. How will you know when you have achieved this?

Express goals in the present tense. e.g.:

I am the best I can be)
I earn this amount)
I weigh this weight... .) Imagine you are there now.

We should have goals in every area of life

- Business /career
- Family
- Relationships
- Personal development / training / business skills development
- Spiritually
- Materialistically

Keep balance between the areas and also consider: would change in any one particular area have a negative impact on another area? If **not** balanced and positive you will **NOT** achieve, or you will lose support.

Are these goals achievable and realistic?

If so, what is limiting you?

Can you change this?

- What degree of certainty do you have that you can make this happen? - 100%?
- What degree of certainty do you have that this will happen? - 100%?

Questions to ask yourself:

- What specifically do YOU want?
- Where are you now in relation to the outcome 10%, 50%, 80% there?
- What will you see/feel when you achieve this?
- How will you know if you have achieved this?
- Is this goal only for you?
- Where, when, how + with who do you want to achieve this?
- What resources are needed?
- What have you now – what new is needed?
- Have you done this before?
- Do you know anyone who has?
- Can you act like you have achieved this?
- For what purpose do you want this goal?
- What will happen if you don't achieve it?
- What won't get done if it does not happen – what would be the overall impact/effect?

How different do you feel after answering all these questions?

Now take action

This is a clear achievable way to set goals that will allow you to act and to deliver. Always behave as if the goal is already achieved; this will SPUR on action.



Take 100% responsibility for the achievement.
Do NOT delegate – unless others are very well briefed and completely on board.

If you fail in achieving your goal – take 100% responsibility. Do not pass the blame or buck on.

By walking and talking positively and with your achieved goal in mind you will attract positive, relevant people and messages. This is like a “goal radar” – goals will be achieved as if by magic and with no planning

Now, go and make it happen

You will transform your life and the universe you live in

New Zealand farms will have goals now.
Australian farms would typically have goals now.

UK farms would rarely have goals.

Goals help to clarify in yourself and others what is important and to also help give direction



Appendix 11 : Discussion groups – Definitions and roles

Leadership is.....

- An ability and experience applied in a specific situation
- Accomplishment
- Communication
- Cooperation
- Decision making
- Dynamic – diffused and passed around
- Feedback – to/from the leader and to/from the members
- A process
- Unique in a group

From these definitions you can see that you are, have been, and will be a “leader”. Sometimes you have been effective – sometimes not so effective in your role(s) of leadership. I would like to help you have more of the former experiences and less of the latter in your present and future leadership roles.

The purpose of this paper is to help you, the reader, to develop an understanding of what “leadership is”. This paper considers:

- “What are the more common styles of leaders?”
- “What are the roles that individuals must play within group?”
- “What are the styles of group membership?”
- “What are the relationships among the styles of leadership – membership?” and
- “How does one apply these concepts to helping groups become more

effective for, and satisfying to, the membership?”

Styles of Leadership

The ability and experience of an individual as applied in a specific situation creates dynamic behaviour. It is this behaviour – this process of interpersonal relationships – upon which persons tend to hang the labels by which a leader subsequently tends to be labelled. In the literature this leadership behaviour has been commonly called: autocratic, democratic, or laissez faire. (For elaboration of these styles of leadership, see *Beal, et al., and Heasley*) These various labels suggest that there are differences in the behaviour patterns of individuals who display these styles of leadership.

Assumptions and selected behavioural characteristics

There is a vast difference in the nature of a person’s leadership behaviour based on assumptions the leader makes about others. Obviously, one behaves differently if others are viewed as dependent, hostile, unwilling to work, and in need of detailed plans (autocratic); or if they are viewed as independent, cooperative, willing to work if guided, and capable of creativity in carrying out tasks (democratic); or others are considered as wavering from one position to another and so the leader practises a hands off policy (laissez-faire). The consequences of these assumptions can be observed in a leader’s behaviour. One might examine an infinite number of behavioural characteristics of leaders, but for my purpose I will consider only the characteristics of communication,



feedback, location of decision making, and action.

The chart below shows that autocratic leadership behaviour is directive, as seen especially in the pattern of communication and in the location of decision making. Democratic leadership behaviour is participative, while the laissez-faire style of leadership is non-directive and non-participative as seen in a lack of focus, planning and the absence of a recognised or accepted leader. The most important point in Figure 1 is the location of decision making; autocratic – in one person; democratic - in the group; and laissez-faire – in no one. The importance of this factor will become increasingly evident.

considered up to this point; by leadership implies membership, so let me explain styles of membership at this time

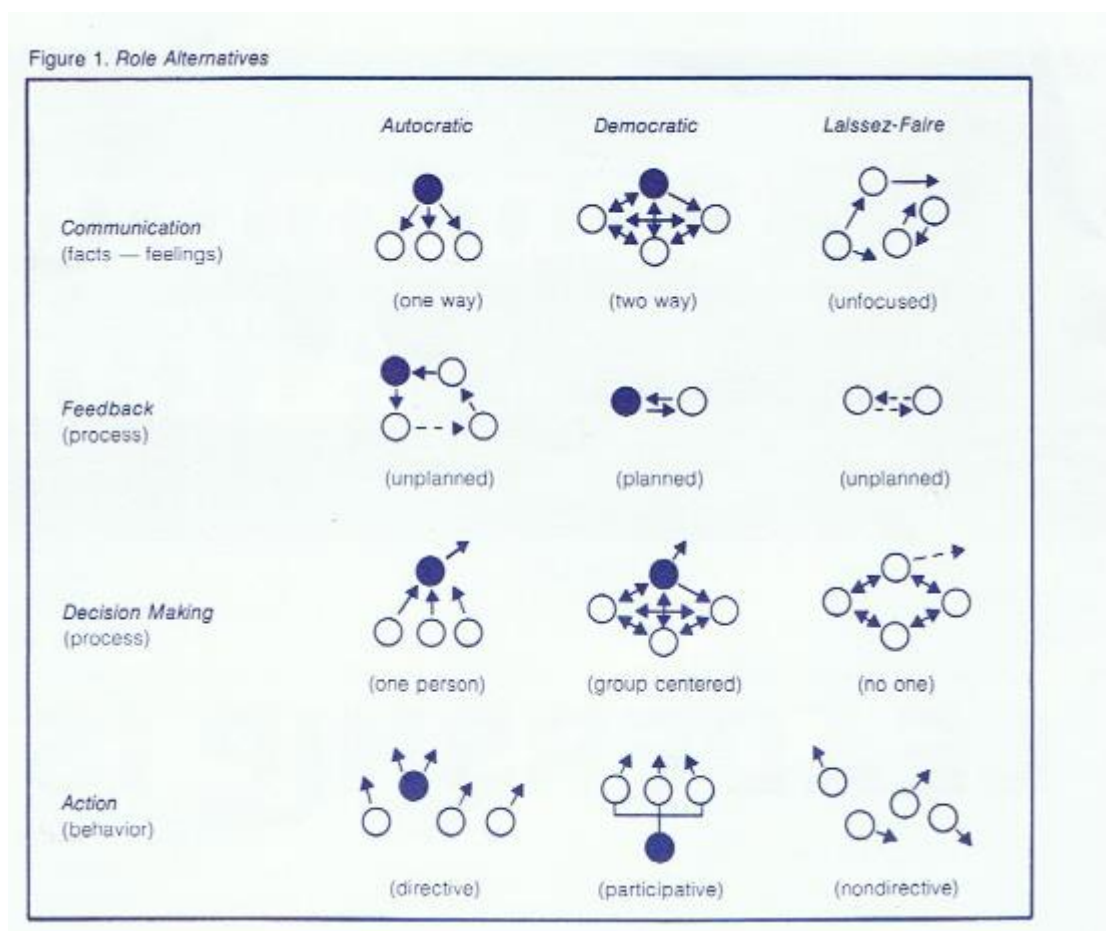
Styles of membership

Just as behaviour of leaders may be observed and labelled, so can the behaviours of group members. Membership is a preferred title, especially in considering democratic (participative) style of leadership. Bonser & Heasley (1968) have suggested four styles of membership: impulsive, routine, subversive, and constructive. Let us look at a brief description of each style.

See chart at top of next page.

Figure 1 : Role Alternatives

Only the styles of leadership have been





Impulsive:	The impulsive member is highly emotional and usually identifies more with the current leader than with the group.
Routine:	The routine member generally lacks initiative, but will carry out assigned tasks to the best of his/her ability and interest.
Subversive:	The subversive member is generally interested in promoting his or her interests and will go along with the group as the interests of the group and his/her own interests are in harmony. This style of membership represents a potential disruption of the group
Constructive:	The constructive member possesses definite leadership ability, shares in the group responsibilities, and accepts major group roles.

Most groups include all four styles of membership although these styles occur in differing proportions; for certain styles of leadership facilitate the development of certain style of membership, while inhibiting the development of others.

The literature (*Beal, et al., Leadership and dynamic group action: 1962 103-110*) refers to two types of group roles and one type of individual or self-interest role. The group roles are functional and necessary for group action and survival: task and maintenance. The self-interest role is non-functional for the group but may be functional for the individual in the short term.

Some persons in community groups will work on both tasks and maintenance roles, while others may work on only one or two sub-roles under either the main task or maintenance role. All contributions are important and leaders and members (constructive style) will

welcome everyone's contributions. Many times the types of contributions provide leads for placing persons on particular committees for maximum results. Let's look first at task roles.

Task Roles

The productivity of a group must be assured by seeing to it that action is implemented at the appropriate times. Some task roles are:

- Initiating ideas
- Giving information
- Expressing opinion
- Seeking information – asking questions or clarifying ideas
- Elaborative – helping to keep the group concentrating on the main item or concern
- Coordinating, testing, summarising

Maintenance Roles

A group to be productive must build and hold interest of group members. Here are some of the maintenance roles:

- Facilitating – enabling everyone to be heard
- Listening – understanding ideas of others
- Encouraging – being friendly, praising others, accepting the contributions of others
- Harmonising – finding common ground for agreement
- Relieving tension – reducing negative feelings or diverting attention from unpleasant to pleasant matters
- Setting standards – expressing standards of performance, or codes of conduct.

Self-interest Roles

In all groups there are times when some members respond from a standpoint of self-interest which may not be in harmony with



the group. Some of these non-functional group roles are:

- Blocking or delaying action
- Aggressively attacking others
- Seeking recognition by excessive talking
- Grabbing unwarranted authority
- Acting indifferent

Figure 2 shows the possible relationships that might logically be expected to occur in the short and long run in reference to group roles/leadership styles and membership styles.

Test these suggestions by observation in the groups to which you belong.

Problems common to many groups

Implicit throughout this paper is the notion that problems are associated with leadership regardless of style of behaviour. Moreover, these problems are resolvable.

have the abilities (knowledge, skills, and understanding) or interest to do an adequate job. Such mismatch frequently occurs when a person has demonstrated leadership ability in a previous but unrelated situation (a “good” refreshment chairman is appointed or elected as programme chairman) In such a case the leader takes the blame for failure when, in fact, the group is at fault for making a poor choice.

Possible Solution

A procedure that has worked for several groups is to review carefully the requirements of the job; then seek the most qualified person for the job. (Remember, job requirements change so this may become an annual task.) One group uses this procedure for each major position before nominating persons in the group as elected or appointed “leaders” for the coming year. Perhaps the process which follows may help your group:

Figure 2. Probable Group Role Emphases in Relationship to Leadership/Membership Styles in the Short and Long Run

	GROUP ROLES	
	SHORT-RUN	LONG-RUN
<i>Styles of:</i>		
<i>Leadership</i>		
Autocratic	task/self-interest	task/maintenance/self-interest
Democratic	task/maintenance	task/maintenance
Laissez-Faire	self-interest	self-interest/maintenance
<i>Membership</i>		
Impulsive	task/self-interest	self-interest
Routine	task/maintenance	task/maintenance/self-interest
Subversive	task (?)/self-interest	self-interest
Constructive	task/maintenance	task/maintenance

Problem 1

Very often, persons are elected or appointed to positions of leadership when they do not



Requirements for an acceptable performance
– search for person with those abilities –
election/appointment .

In other words: look at this year's group;
determine the mix of skills, knowledge,
attitudes and abilities required by each officer
and committee chairman; match these
“requirements” as closely as possible with
individual in your group; and chances for a
successful year should increase. Such an
approach helps to develop the constructive
style of membership. Think this “solution”
through in terms of the relationship we have
discussed thus far. Does it help to answer a
“So what?” question?

Problem 2

When the needs of individual members are
not met, groups often spend most of their
resources trying to resolve hidden agendas
(self-interest roles). In this circumstance
group productivity and member satisfaction
are considerably reduced. Hidden agendas
have been labelled: APATHY – INDECISION –
FIGHT. Let us look at some symptoms –
reasons for hidden agendas, together with
some suggestions for resolution. Symptoms
are like bananas or grapes – they are found in
bunches and they are easy to find whenever
they occur in community groups. As you read
these symptoms and reasons, think about
possible solutions to these hidden agendas
from our discussion thus far. What styles of
leadership and membership might you expect
to find in groups having these problems?

Apathy - symptoms expressed by leaders and members

- Low level of participation
- Members lose the point of discussion
- Member come late – absenteeism is great
- Slipshod decisions

- Reluctance to assume further responsibility

Reasons:

- The task/topic (agenda) is not considered important
- Members fear the consequences if the task is solved
- Leadership / members may have inadequate procedures
- Members doubt they have an influence on decisions made
- The group is dominated by a prolonged fight between a few influential members
- The group may have completed its original task / purpose and is now floundering because no central problem or purpose has emerged

Indecision - Symptoms expressed by leaders and members:

- Long arguments over unimportant points.
- Appoint needless committees
- Vote quickly on issues – then reverse themselves

Reasons:

Fear consequences of the decision:

- A. to the main group
- B. to individual members (s)
- C. do not understand consequences

Conflicting loyalties

- A. Members belong to groups with conflicting goals

Interpersonal conflicts

- A. Personalities become involved rather than issues

The methods or procedures are poor



- A. Rush to vote before majority consensus is reached
- B. Attempt premature decisions

Inadequate leadership

- A. Leader restricts member by forcing own ideas
- B. Leader does not understand how to channel the behaviour of others
- C. Leader does not provide adequate guidance

Fight symptoms expressed by leaders and members:

- Members are impatient with each other
- Ideas are attacked before being explored
- Comments and suggestions are made with vehemence
- Members accuse each other of not understanding the point
- Members insist the group has not got what it takes to get there

Reasons:

- Members are frustrated because task/topic is beyond their resources or abilities
- Members' main concern is to find status in the group
- Members are loyal to outside groups with conflicting interests
- Members are concerned; are working on the problem but are disappointed in the progress made
- Values or beliefs have been threatened by a situation, group action, or stance of the leader

Possible solution:

If the preceding symptoms and reasons give rise to hidden agendas, what can the leadership/membership of a group do to prevent them? What solutions have you considered? How do they compare to some suggestions that other groups have found helpful to minimise hidden agendas, regardless of the style of leadership? Some possible solutions are:

- Increase feedback. Make everyone feel his or her idea/ part is important (autocratic and laissez-faire leaders especially need to work on two-way communication which fosters meaningful feedback.)
- Perhaps the current leaders/members need additional education in leadership
- Provide status – giving opportunities for members. (This is more necessary under autocratic/laissez-faire leadership than under the democratic style. Such opportunities are inherent in the latter style.) Exhibit 1 offers one such approach.
- Use evaluation guides to ascertain members' interests, then "key" to these interests in selection of group tasks and maintenance roles. (This process comes more naturally with the democratic style leadership than with the others; however, it is relatively easy to structure this process even with the more unstructured feedback process. e.g. autocratic/laissez-faire styles.)
- Clarify the task/topic, its importance to the group, and suggest possible alternatives for the membership to consider (two-way communication



and planned feedback help in this case)

- If possible, recognise and resolve the conflict for the benefit of the majority. (Try to see that the decision- making process is group centred. Seldom does someone fight when he or she has helped determine the group's goals.)
- Employ meeting management techniques (the physical arrangements for the meeting are important if group productivity and members' satisfaction are to occur.)
- Last but not least, have an advance agenda. (A difficult task can be made easier if more time is spent in preparation of the details. Advance agendas also help to prevent surfacing of hidden agendas!)

These are certainly not all the problems (or all the solutions, even for those problems posed) that a group will encounter; however, they are problems common to many groups for which some alternative solutions have been suggested.

Were any "so what's?" answered?

It takes time and an understanding of the process of leadership to develop an effective and satisfying group. Understanding these ideas will help shorten the time necessary for such action. The topic was broad, the treatment was not in-depth, and thus, I hope you have been stimulated further to talk to others – observe groups in action – try to evaluate different approaches regarding leadership.

For the information in this chapter my thanks go to The Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture Extension Service



Appendix 12: Leadership – by Michael Murphy

“We all have dreams. We all want to believe that we can make a difference, that we can touch each other in a special way, and that we can make the world a better place. Yet for many of us these dreams have become so shrouded in the frustrations of everyday life that we no longer seek to fulfil our dreams.” *Anthony Robbins, personal development motivator.*

1. **Raise your standards.** *“The most important thing was changing what I demand of myself. I wrote down all the things in my life I would no longer accept or tolerate, and all the things I aspired to becoming. Changing an organisation, a company or a country begins with the simple step of changing yourself”.*

2. **Change your limiting beliefs.** *“If you raise your standards but don’t believe you can meet them, then you’ve already sabotaged yourself. Without believing in the certainty of success you will fail.”*

Three beliefs for lasting success

- I must change now
- I must change it now
- I can change it now

3. **Change your strategy.** *“In order to keep your commitment you need the best strategies for achieving results. One of my core beliefs is that if you set a higher standard and you can get yourself to believe, then you can certainly figure out the strategies. If you believe strongly enough you simply will find a way.”*

For many people this will be to find a role model, someone who is already getting the results you want, and then tap into their knowledge. Learn what things they’re doing, what their core beliefs are, and how they think. Not only will this make you more effective, it will also save you a huge amount of time because you won’t have to reinvent the wheel. You can fine tune it, or reshape it, and perhaps make it even better.

Brian Tracy, Personal Development Author

“A person becomes a leader when a leader is needed and the individual rises to the occasion. Many men and women have lived average lives for many years until a situation arises that requires that they step forward and accept the mantle of leadership.

“You become a leader in business and in the world around you by practising the qualities and behaviours of leaders who have gone before you. Like any set of skills, leadership is developed by practice and repetition until you master it.

“The rewards for becoming a leader are tremendous. As a leader you earn the respect, esteem and support of people around you. You enjoy a greater sense of control and personal power in every part of your life. You



become capable of achieving goals and objectives far beyond the ordinary.

“The more you behave like a leader, the more positive you feel about yourself. You enjoy higher levels of self-esteem and personal pride. You become more effective in bringing about positive change in your work and personal life.”

A leader is a role model and leads by example. Good leaders are completely reliable. People take them at their word and trust that they will do as they say. Promises aren't taken lightly – and are always kept. Don't over promise!

Emerson said *“Guard your integrity as a sacred thing”*.

Face the truth, however unpalatable or difficult it may be. Diagnosing exactly what is the problem is an essential first step in tackling the problem

Leaders have an intense desire to lead. They have a clear vision of a better future which they are determined to achieve. Vision is the one common quality that separates leaders from non-leaders. Leaders have a clear picture of the kind of future they want to create, and they have the ability to communicate to others in an inspiring way.

Leaders have the ability to visualise, to see the big picture and then to inspire others to work together to make it a reality. You become a leader when you know exactly where you want to go, why you want to get there, and what you have to do to achieve it.

The true leader radiates the confidence that all difficulties can be overcome and all goals can be obtained. Optimism in a leader inspires and empowers people to believe that they can do more and be better than they ever have before. It is one of the most

powerful qualities for leadership in personal and business life.

Optimists are “can do” people. They are in charge of their emotions, and are calm, positive and creative even under pressure. Above all optimists are solution orientated rather than problem orientated. They focus on the solution, on the next step, rather than what has already happened and who is to blame.

Leaders are good listeners. They are open to feedback, and open to changing decisions based on new information. Leaders vary their approach to different people, depending on what each person needs to perform at their best. Praise and appreciation are very important.

Leaders bounce back from the inevitable setbacks, disappointments and temporary failures experienced in the attainment of any worthwhile goal. The ability to respond effectively to a setback or crisis is the true test of leadership. The troops watch the leader in a crisis and observe carefully. The leader's behaviour, in difficult situation, set the tone for the organisation.

Adversity and setback is inevitable in life. Remind yourself, it's not how far you fall but how high you bounce, that counts.

The power of good example is never stronger than in a crisis. Lack of good leadership in a crisis leads to demoralisation. Good leadership calmly takes the best option open to it. And acts decisively to ensure that forward momentum is quickly regained.

Leaders are independent in their thinking. They are very clear about their values, their goals and their personal missions. They are clear about what they stand for and believe in. They don't deviate from their values for



any reason, especially the core values of integrity and responsibility.

Leaders invite input and ideas from others, but then they make their own decisions. Leaders tend to be non-defensive. They accept responsibility and refuse to make excuses. They don't rationalise, justify or blame others. Leaders accept the loneliness of making tough choices in difficult times. Above all, leaders set high standards for themselves and continually strive to live up to their own standards. They measure themselves against the very best that they can personally be.

Emotional maturity is one of the most important and respected qualities of leaders. It requires, first, that you are at peace with yourself, and second, that you remain calm in the face of adversity and difficulty.

Emotional maturity requires that you like and respect yourself. You have a positive self-image. You are able to endure the criticism and disapproval of other people without being bothered too much. You are able to do without either appreciation or rewards if they don't come immediately.

Emotionally mature people set their own standards and goals. They have an inner compass to judge and measure themselves against. Emotional maturity means that a person is better centred and balanced. This allows you to be calmer, more creative and more effective in everything that you do. This will ensure that as a leader you are more predictable and consistent over time. Followers will get very concerned if a leader isn't consistent. Consistency leads to clarity of thinking; inconsistency leads to confusion.

Be honest : *"It takes 20 years to build up a reputation and just 5 minutes to ruin it. If you always remember this you'll do things differently."*

Denis Brosnan's Definition of Leadership

- Leadership is seeing the obvious and coming up with a plan about how to achieve it
- Leaders are people who know and believe in their own ability
- A leader is a person who instils in others a belief and confidence that they can perform better than they ever thought possible.
- A leader gets people to believe it is possible
- Leaders are people who, regardless of level, still recognise that they have much to learn
- Leaders come in different styles - male, female, gentle, brash, dour and outgoing
- A leader has the ability to see undeveloped talent and get it to shine forth
- A leader sets high standards in work and outside
- A leader never criticises those around them when they make mistakes; instead they point out the mistake and get good people to learn from it
- A leader is honest with themselves and with those around them
- A business, short on capital, can borrow money. One with a poor location can move. But a business short on leadership has little chance of survival.
- Successful organisations have a leadership pyramid with many leaders, each having respect for the knowledge, integrity and leadership of the person above them.
- The leader is above all the captain of the ship. He/she must know the ship's capabilities and the capabilities of the crew.



- The pre-requisite to success in an organisation is to have leaders and managers who are training others to do the job better than they themselves can.
- Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what needs to be done and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.
- Never be a conformist
- Have the mentality of a winner
- Believe in what you do

"Have a positive attitude and spread it around, never let yourself be a victim; and for goodness sake have fun".

"Simple messages travel faster, simple designs market faster, and the elimination of clutter allows faster decision making." KISS: Keep it simple stupid.

"Effective leadership is having a lot of people working towards a common goal. When you have that with no one caring who gets the credit, you can accomplish a lot. If you have those just wanting the credit for themselves, you're not going to get as much accomplished." John Wooden, legendary UCLA coach.

"Live as though you'll die tomorrow. Learn as though you'll live forever. I believe the key to learning is listening with both eyes and your ears".

This contrasts sharply with Ben Franklin's description of a man who stopped learning early on: *"The man died at 25, but wasn't buried until 75!"*

Worrying about problems

"The next time you wake in the middle of the night, ask yourself: Am I fretting about the future. Or figuring out what to do? If it's the former, have a warm glass of milk and try to get back to sleep. If it's the latter, have a cup of coffee and make some notes.

"Concern" - i.e. figuring out future solutions – leads to results.

"Worrying" about problems and fretting about them results in losing a night's sleep, and making no progress."

The Three B's of leadership

- Be slow to criticise and be quick to command
- Be more concerned with what you can do for others, than what they can do for you
- Be more concerned with getting ahead, than with getting even

One of the greatest skills of leadership is the ability to handle change. *"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, it is the one most adaptable to change."* Charles Darwin.

*God,
Grant me the courage to change the things I can,
the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
and the wisdom to know the difference.*