The Ag Help Wanted Saga

http://aghelpwanted.org

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Team AHW - Core

- Richard Carkner (WA)
- John Hewlett (WY)
- Lorne Owen (BC)
- Howard Rosenberg (CA)
- Trent Teegerstrom (AZ)
- Jeff Tranel (CO)
- Randy Weigel (WY)
Team AHW - More

- Kent Fleming (HI)
- Clark Seavert (OR)
- Bruce Godfrey (UT)
- Others, WFMEC
- Don West (USDA)
- External Reviewers
- Copy Editors and Artist
“Saga”

A Scandinavian legend, or heroic or mythic tradition, among the Norsemen and kindred people; a northern European popular historical or religious tale of olden time.

A narrative telling the adventures of a hero or a family.

A cuspy but bogus raving story about N random broken people.
Why Bother?
People Do the Work
Ag Business Results

- Products
- Earnings
- Worklife
- Well-being
- Community
Personnel outcomes

Capabilities
Motivation
Task performance
Attendance
Accidents/injuries
Ideas
Complaints
Satisfaction
Turnover

Results

Products
Earnings
Worklife
Well-being
Community
Human Resource Management Decision Areas

- Organizational Structure
- Job Design
- Recruitment
- Selection
- Training and Development

- Supervision
- Performance Appraisal
- Pay and Benefits
- Communications
- Problem Resolution
## HRM in Context

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Fuel for the Effort

- Clientele demand
- Personal interests within project team
- Diverse perspectives and clientele links
- Farm Foundation encouragement
- Need to pool expertise and strengths
- Applicable bodies of knowledge
- Previously published work
- Sabbatical opportunity
The Harvest
Ag Help Wanted Overview

A book presenting principles, practical examples, legal considerations, pictures, and leads to more references on management of human resources in agriculture.

- Roles and Responsibilities of an Agricultural Employer
- Organizational Planning
- Staffing the Farm Business
- Supervising Agricultural Work
- Managing Employee Performance
- Communication and Problem Solving
www.AgHelpWanted.org

- Companion website
- Referenced frequently in the book
- Direct links to supplementary material
  - Government agencies
  - Industry associations and service firms
  - Fact sheets
  - In-depth articles and reports
  - Video vignettes
Problem Work Situations: Working With Employees

- Nine sets of vignettes
- Four scenes each set
- Different approaches to one-on-one communication

Tardiness
  - Avoidance | Specific Warning | Explanation

Slow Work
  - Vague threat | Humoring | Problem solving

Inebriation
  - Imposition of Penalty | Appeal to Values | Emphasizing Authority

Poor Quality Work
  - Vague Threat | Emphasizing Authority | Explanation

Theft
  - Avoidance | Imposition of Penalty | Appeal to Values

Conflict Between Workers
  - Specific Warning | Humoring | Problem Solving

Insubordination
  - Emphasizing Authority | Imposition of Penalty | Problem Solving

Sleeping on the Job
  - Imposition of Penalty | Humoring | Explanation

Careless Work
  - Avoidance | Specific Warning | Explanation
AHW Conception to Consumption

- Gleam in eye: Fall 1999
- Team formation
- Review prior work & agree on design
- Product & process vision: Spring 2000
- Rough draft
- Video clip packaging
- Internal reviews: Fall 2001
- Advanced draft
- External reviews: Spring 2002
- Final Publication: Fall 2002
- Production & promotion
- Marketing & use: Today
- Spin-offs & bi-products
Issues Along the Way

- Target audience(s)
- Scope, depth, pedagogical voice
- Design principles
- Technical quality standard
- Division of labor
- Team communication: staying in touch
- Sustaining commitment
- Obtaining financial and organizational support
- Administering grant funds
- Web site development and maintenance
- Revenue disposition
Audience: Managers of Labor

- Property owner
- General manager
- Human res. manager
- Harvest manager
- Ranch supervisor
- Patrón
- Foreman
- Majordomo
- Vice president
- Chief mechanic
- Jefe
- Office administrator
- Deft spouse
- Production employees
- Lead man
- Crew boss
- Safety coordinator
- Herdsman
Content Drift

- Fewer “Ideas in Practice” cases
- More illustrations of concepts in main text
- More comprehensive scope
- More suitable for mid-managers and supervisors, educators, college students
Design Principles (partial)

- Reference for farm mgrs and extnsn educators
- Concepts and frameworks to fit reader experience
- Speak to broad audience
- Primarily inform, secondarily teach, never prescribe
- No musts, shoulds, commands, other talk-down
- Treat differences between small & large orgs
- Much attention to interpersonal communications
- Introduce techniques of rational approach to common decisions
DANGER

Complexity & Pitfalls
Emergent Roles

- Lead author
- Contributing writers
- Financial/grant coordinator
- Communication coordinator
- Mediator
- Media coordinator
- Website developers
- Inventory and orders fulfiller
- Income/expense manager
- Reader inquiry responder
- Publicity makers
There were a helluva lot of things they didn’t tell me when I hired on with this outfit.
Team Communication and Commitment

- Communication critical
- Numerous conference calls
- Use of “Blackboard”
- File circulation via email
- Two meetings/year
Grant Funding

- Timing can make or break
- Sponsors
  - Farm Foundation (1999 - 2001)
  - Regional RMA Office (2000-2001)
Paying to Save on Overhead

- From the initial Farm Foundation support to the final award from WCRME, only one institution controlled funds from each grant.
- No sub-contracts were used except between the WCRME and the institution with the lowest indirect charges.
- Operating under this structure allowed us to minimize “initial transaction costs” and overhead.
- Overseeing expenditures and making timely payments require much time interacting with the University Sponsored Projects or Grants and Contracts department.
Web Site Activity - Year 1

- 14,000+ user sessions
- 81,500+ hits
- Users worldwide - Asia, Europe, Australia, South America, Africa
- Users from avg 32 states per month
- Inquiry calls and emails from all over
Positive Points on Reflection

- Staying grounded in clientele need
- Building in broad relevance and accessibility
- Learning from each other, sharing thoughts and responsibilities
- Organic development from initial vision
- Supportive WFMEC and home university environments
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