



*Making More From Sheep*

**MODULE 4**

Capable and Confident Producers



A joint initiative of Australian Wool Innovation and Meat & Livestock Australia



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## 4

## Capable and Confident Producers

### What does this module do for you?

More than 90% of farms are family owned and people have multiple roles. Tension between these roles, particularly those related to work and family, can lead to stress, poor decisions and lost potential in the people and business

This module focuses on the people who are important to your business, whether they are family members, owners or employees, advisers or contractors. It offers practical ways to boost capacity, capability and confidence (in oneself and in others) through more effective communication, long-term planning and, ultimately, business performance.

'Best practice' can be hard to define where people issues are concerned, but this module can assist farm families and farm businesses who want to:

- Be clearer about 'who is responsible for what';
- Build more effective communication in the workplace;
- Increase knowledge and skills within the business; and
- Strike a better balance between work and leisure.

This module repeatedly emphasises the need for scheduled 'business meetings'. These are times set aside as part of the working day to deal with issues and assist the smooth operation of the business. This important discipline is called 'working on the business' and is often as important as the day-to-day activities known as 'working in the business'.

## Procedure 4.1

Know who does what in the business



### Background information



This procedure clarifies the expectations, roles and responsibilities of people in the business. The procedure can be used with both family and others who work for the business.

We can choose to either work on the business or in the business. If you prefer to be out in the paddock then you may have a strong 'working-in-the-business' orientation. If you prefer to be in the office looking at the business and preparing options for the future then you are more orientated to working on the business. In a successful business, both approaches are important.

Sorting out 'who does what' is important so that people can work effectively together.

### Key decisions, critical actions and benchmarks

#### Put things in writing

It is important to clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations in any business and, in family-run farming businesses, completing a written agreement is a useful way to clarify both work and family roles.

Use the processes in tool 4.1 to assist in preparing a written agreement for the business. Creating this agreement or statement should be the focus of a work related meeting as it will clarify responsibilities and provide the basis for monitoring progress and accountability for results.

Procedure 1.1 in *Plan for Success* will help you develop and document your business plan.

The process of developing a written agreement and the business plan itself will help you:

- Ensure each member of the business knows his or her role and job responsibilities
- Develop a set of clear ground rules to reduce the risk of personal conflicts when under pressure
- Discuss and agree on expectations about key areas of the business
- Set dates in advance for regular progress reviews

#### AT A GLANCE



- Develop a written agreement to include everyone involved in the business
- Ensure a balance between working on and working in the business

→ Let everyone in the business divide their time and energy to work on the business, as well as in the business.

The aim is to reduce the potential for misunderstanding or tension and create a happier, team-oriented and more productive workplace.

## Procedure 4.2

Develop more effective communication



### Background information



The key to every successful business is effective communication. It underpins efficient transfer of information and knowledge, the development of positive relationships and the creation of a productive work and family environment. Improving communication pathways can have positive and lasting benefits for work, family relationships and business performance.

Creating effective communication delivers benefits through the '3 Rs':

- **Relationship:** good communication (both talking and listening) is the basis of all high-quality relationships, whether personal or business.
- **Relevance:** the message sent needs to be the message received. There are barriers if the receiver feels the information is not relevant, or not 'packaged' in a relevant way.
- **Respect:** although you may not always agree with what is being said, respect for what a person is saying is important to developing dialogue. Respect is created by focusing on the issue, not the person.

### Key decisions, critical actions and benchmarks

#### Dialogue versus debate

Dialogue is an effective communication tool to deal with controversial issues, whereas debate can quickly descend into disagreement. Tool 4.2 provides a comparison of dialogue and debate in communication. Always strive for dialogue in a best-practice approach.

#### Communication styles

People have different styles of communicating. Effective communicators recognise this. Get to know and understand the strengths and limitations of your communication style, and those of others within your business. Tool 4.3 will help you to do this – and it's a good fun exercise.

Once barriers or blockages are identified, take action to improve communication. Often new approaches can solve old problems. Discuss the results as a family or a business group, focusing on the positives but also identifying any limitations or challenges. Use tool 1.5 in *Plan for Success* to identify and build on the positives in your business.

Use your next business meeting (see tool 4.1) to discuss and agree on some actions you think will make communication more effective. Plan a follow-up meeting to allow the impacts of any changes to be evaluated. When ongoing tensions or conflicts exist within the business seek help from an external facilitator or trusted "outsider".

#### AT A GLANCE



- Determine the different communication styles of people involved with the business
- Find new ways to improve the quality of business relationships

#### Important principles to improve communication

- Be aware of the range in communication styles as it is often the way in which a message is delivered that creates a blockage or barrier.
- Analyse yourself before trying to analyse others. Understand why difficulties arise. Be honest, logical, clear in dialogue, and if something is not working, try something new or different to reach a consensus.
- Plan and monitor your strategies to improve communication and relationships. Be positive and proactive. When faced with a difficult situation don't follow a path of evasion, avoidance, frustration and anger.
- Always work towards creating a win-win situation where there are gains or benefits for both sides.
- Remember we are all 'difficult people' to someone so monitor your own behaviour and make changes where necessary.

## Procedure 4.3

Develop a sound business purpose



### Background information



The focus of this procedure is on personal and business values and goals. It links to better business planning and benchmarking procedures (see tools 1.3 and 1.9 in *Plan for Success*). Values describe the things that are important to you personally, whilst goals give you direction by naming the destination. Both have a big role in business and personal decisions, so developing them is important for both business and family.

Values are those things you deem important to you personally, and are the guidelines for how you behave; they underpin the choices and decisions you make. Goals are much less complicated and describe what an individual or business wants to achieve. A goal may be to reach a certain level of income, while your values will determine how you go about reaching that goal.

### Key decisions, critical actions and benchmarks

Tool 4.4 provides you with the opportunity to shape a common sense of purpose, based on the values and goals that are important to each individual in the business.

Determining what values you have in common and what is really important to the people in the business is not something to be rushed – thought and reflection are needed to gain agreement. Allow whatever time is needed to develop a sense of trust, ownership, commitment and unity. You can then discover what people really want. To help develop a common sense of purpose:

- Work out who needs to be involved. It is recommended that all family members have a chance to contribute to the discussion. Many businesses also involve employees in this step.
- Start with each person working individually on their values and goals. Then share and discuss these to develop a combined 'values and goals statement' for the business.

### AT A GLANCE



- Use agreed values and goals to develop a common sense of purpose within your business
- Record and display a statement of business intent

- Write down the agreed-upon values and goals as a statement of business intent. Display this in a prominent location.
- Review the statement regularly. Allow values and goals to evolve over time. You will gain ownership, commitment and unity.
- Use values and goals to shape decisions. In this way the business will remain focused on what people really want.

Using this process with family and business members will assist greatly with finding and maintaining a balance between work and family time (for more on this issue, see procedure 4.5).



Shape a common sense of purpose, based on the values and goals that are important to the individuals in the business

## Procedure 4.4

Build knowledge and skills in the business



### Background information



The ability to quickly adapt to changing situations (seasons, markets and input costs) is a key factor in business success. Applying new knowledge and skills enables a business to seize opportunities and provides a buffer against influences beyond the farm gate.

It is important to commit to identifying and implementing new ideas for your business. This involves a commitment to developing the knowledge and skills of each individual and, through them, the capability of the business to be productive and profitable.

### Key decisions, critical actions and benchmarks

Developing knowledge, skills and confidence within a business requires a commitment to:

#### Seeking new ideas and information

People with a commitment to learning, growth and improvement are those who are most likely to be able to adapt to the changing realities of business and family life. Learning creates opportunity and this can lead to new production and business options. In general, better trained people are more confident in their decision-making and are more likely to make timely decisions that can benefit the business.

There are many ways to learn, discover new ideas and identify opportunities. Some people prefer reading articles and books, while others prefer to attend workshops and field days or to participate in discussion groups and use the internet. Identify the methods that best suit your personal learning style and situation.

#### Learn by doing and trying new ideas

Applying new knowledge or skills to benefit your business is not always a straightforward process. Use the stages in the 'Action Learning Cycle' (over page) to help minimise some of the risks associated with trying new ideas, and to help build confidence to successfully implement changes in your farming practices or operations.

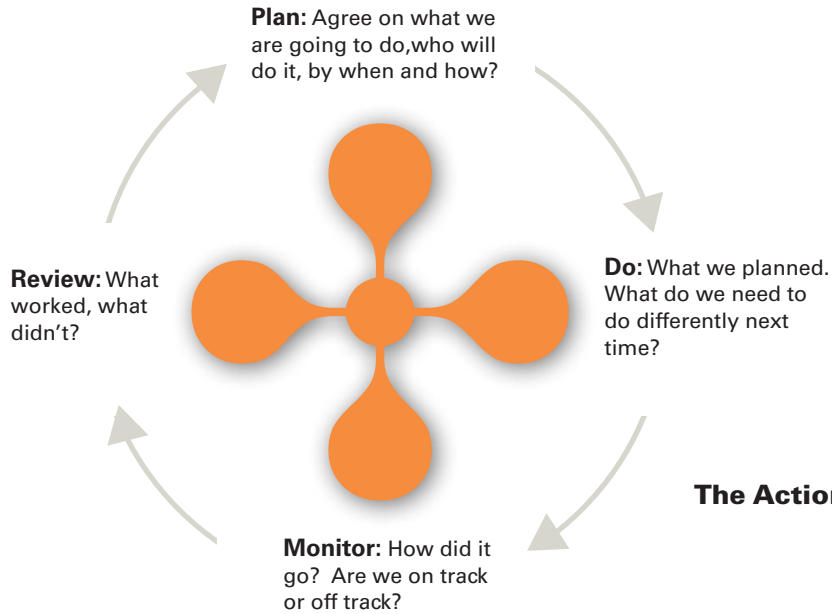
### AT A GLANCE



- Commit to identifying and successfully applying new ideas for the business
- Develop knowledge, skills and confidence within the business
- Foster positive attitudes and support for change



Join a group or use trusted external advisers to develop the capability and confidence of your business members



**The Action Learning Cycle**

**Develop personal learning styles**

Learning is a skill that develops over time and it is useful to know the strengths and challenges of each person's approach to learning. Use tool 4.5 to better understand learning preferences and to select appropriate learning experiences.

**Encourage positive attitudes and support for change**

There are many reasons why people are reluctant to adopt new ideas and implement change. But generally, these barriers to adoption can be attributed to either a lack of knowledge, skills and confidence or a lack of perceived benefits from the change.

When planning or implementing new ideas, use production or discussion groups to share experiences (both good and bad) in a positive environment. This support significantly contributes to successful practice change, by sharing information and reinforcing positive outcomes and attitudes.

Good ways to develop the capability and confidence of business members include:

- Have family and employees complete the learning styles exercise (tool 4.5) to better understand everyone's learning strengths and challenges.
- At your business meetings, plan ways to improve the capacity to learn and implement change within the business.
- Use external information sources to assist with business decisions. This may be through a group or trusted external advisers.

→ Develop and maintain a positive attitude at all times. Build a commitment to whole-of-life learning, training and skills development.

→ Work equally hard on yourself and your business. Remember, your business can only grow as fast as you do!

## Procedure 4.5

Maintain a happy balance between work and family time



### Background information



Farm families who live and work on the farm, face a particular challenge when it comes to finding and maintaining a comfortable balance between work, family and leisure time.

The different roles in life, and the feeling of being pulled in multiple directions at once, can build tension and create stress. This stress can harm your health, your relationships and impair your ability to make decisions. It makes sense to examine these roles and the causes of any stress and to plan to do something about it.

Achieving a satisfactory work–life balance is quite a challenge, but an achievable goal. This procedure is about helping the people in your business and finding a satisfactory work–life balance to reduce stress and combat the depression that potentially results from long-term and continuous hard work.

### Key decisions, critical actions and benchmarks

#### Guidelines for a more balanced lifestyle

Most of us have five key areas in our lives that need balancing:

- **Work:** meaningful work (paid or unpaid) is fundamental to our quality of life. It is how we sustain ourselves and our families and how many of us express ourselves.
- **Family:** family is fundamental to our personal happiness and to a regenerating, healthy community. The most important ‘success’ is accomplishment in our personal lives. Making things better for current and future generations is the way we contribute to society as a whole.
- **Self:** your physical, emotional, spiritual and mental wellbeing are key factors in maintaining a healthy work–life balance. Farming men, in particular, often neglect this part of the balance.
- **Time:** when stretched for time, it is our priorities and what we do (or don’t do) each day that determine our quality of life.
- **Money:** money is integral to almost every issue involving the relationship between work, family, self and time. Does your business have the capacity to create the income you need to live a more balanced lifestyle?

**Source:** Adapted from *Life Matters* by Roger and Rebecca Merril, 2003

#### AT A GLANCE ←

- Work towards a work–life balance that suits your business and family interests and minimises tensions between the two
- Make your farm a safe place to live and work

Complete the exercise on work–life balance in tool 4.6 to identify what is ‘going well’ and to identify areas for improvement and action. Record some notes for future reference, either on your own or in conjunction with other members of your business team. The steps are:

- Identify the areas in your work and family life that are going well, and the ones to which you would like to devote more time.
- Determine whether the business is capable of producing the financial returns you need.
- Identify the stresses in your life (that are under your control), and what can be done to relieve them.

Meet the challenge of finding and maintaining a comfortable balance between work, family and leisure time



### A safer farm environment

Sheep and wool enterprises are largely farm family businesses. While larger farms employ full time workers, many are run with family labour, most employing shearing contractors for wool harvesting.

An important part of managing your farm is to ensure the health and safety of your employees and other people, such as customers, visitors or tradespeople who visit your workplace. In fact, the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 requires you to ensure your workplace is safe. To ensure you fulfil your obligation for a safe workplace, you need to become aware of what can cause harm and then take action to ensure no one is at risk while they are in your workplace.

The “15-minute farm safety check” (see signposts) will help you evaluate how well you are currently managing safety on your farm. Other key information sources are listed in the signposts section of this module.

The key responsibility for farm safety rests primarily with individual sheep producers, their families and workers.

## Signposts



### Read

**Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.** Stephen Covey (Simon and Schuster: UK).

**Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families.** Stephen Covey (Simon and Schuster: UK).

**Managing as a Performing Art.** Peter Vaill (Jossey-Bass: San Francisco).

**Who Moved My Cheese?** Spencer Johnson (Putnam and Sons: USA).

**The Cashflow Quadrant** Robert Kiyosaki (Techpress Inc: USA).

**Life Matters** Roger and Rebecca Merrill (McGraw Hill: New York).

**A Guide to Succession – sustaining families and farms:** includes case studies and covers ‘front-end’ options when people are entering a business, either through invitation or marriage, and ‘back-end’ options when they are leaving. Order your copy by calling:

→ AWI on 1800 070 099

→ GRDC on 1800 11 00 44

### View

**ABC men’s health library:** good health underpins many of our personal and business aspirations. This library contains articles and links to more specific websites - there is even an article titled ‘How To Outlive The Missus’. Visit: <http://www.abc.net.au/health/library/menshealth.htm>

**E-myth:** a web site for people interested in learning more about working on the business (WOTB) and working in the business (WITB). Visit: [www.e-myth.com](http://www.e-myth.com)

**Rich Dad:** this site has some valuable information on the ‘cashflow quadrant’. It is recommended for people interested in improving the financial performance of their business. Visit: [www.richdad.com](http://www.richdad.com)

AWI publications and information on **Shearing and OH&S Costs:** [www.wool.com.au/Publications/Shearing/page\\_\\_2208.aspx](http://www.wool.com.au/Publications/Shearing/page__2208.aspx)

You can find a variety of **OH&S information** by running a search on the MLA On-line Publications database: [www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/InformationCentre/PublicationsDatabase/Search+publications.htm](http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/InformationCentre/PublicationsDatabase/Search+publications.htm)

**Australian Farm and Rural OHS Resources:** a large selection of farming safety resources from around Australia. Visit: [www.ascc.gov.au/ascc/healthSafety/DiseaseInjuryIssues/infectiousDiseases/DiseaseAcquired/AustralianFarmandRuralOHSResources.htm](http://www.ascc.gov.au/ascc/healthSafety/DiseaseInjuryIssues/infectiousDiseases/DiseaseAcquired/AustralianFarmandRuralOHSResources.htm)

**15 minute farm safety check:** help to quickly check your farm for hazards and risks. It is not designed to cover all of the hazards and risks on the farm but to help you identify and control those hazards and risks that may cause an injury or death to yourself, your family, friends or employees. Visit: <http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/Publications/Industry/Rural/15minutefarmsafetycheck.htm>

**Farmsafe** on-farm resources available to download from <http://www.farmsafe.org.au/> include:

- Hazard checklists and action plans
- Induction forms
- Injury register
- Training register
- Guidelines
- Practical videos

**AWI Shearing Shed Guidelines** provides information about shed design so sheep producers and shed builders can make informed decisions about building or renovating a shed. The guidelines include information about design elements, dimensions, technology and key issues such as productivity and occupational health and safety: [www.wool.com.au/Harvesting/Shearing\\_shed\\_guidelines/page\\_\\_2296.aspx](http://www.wool.com.au/Harvesting/Shearing_shed_guidelines/page__2296.aspx)

Local **Rural Financial Counsellors** can help you:

- Identify financial and business options for your enterprise
- Find private training and agricultural service providers across Australia who deliver training courses and offer advice on the incorporation of new technologies or new enterprises into farming businesses.

Find your local Rural Financial Counsellor by calling 1800 686 175 or visiting the website: [www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/aaa/rfcs/counsellors](http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/aaa/rfcs/counsellors)

## An important part of managing your farm is to ensure the health and safety of your employees and other people, such as customers, visitors or tradespeople

**Australian Association of Agricultural Consultants (AAAC)** – search this website to find accredited consultants and advisers in agri-industry and allied natural resource areas that meet the Specialist Consultant Standards for entry into the AAAC Register: <http://www.aiaast.com.au/consultant.php>

**FarmBis**: gives primary producers and rural land managers access to business and natural resource management, training and education at a reduced cost. Visit the Farmbis website at: <http://www.farmbis.gov.au/> or call 1800 195 543 (free call within Australia).

### Attend

The MLA **EDGEnetwork**® program is nationally coordinated and has a range of courses for sheep producers. Contact can be made via:

- Phone: 1800 993 343
- Email: [edgenetwork@mla.com.au](mailto:edgenetwork@mla.com.au)
- Website: [www.mla.com.au/edgenetwork](http://www.mla.com.au/edgenetwork)

#### Website link not working?

Go to the Making More From Sheep website:

[www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au](http://www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au)

and follow the links to updated signposts





## Tool 4.1

### Steps for establishing your business agreement

The process below focuses on a business setting. You can apply it to a family setting by modifying it as required. Consider the following questions and use them for establishing your business agreement.

#### Important principles to apply when calling a business meeting

- Appoint a leader/chair for the meeting. If you believe that the issues are difficult and the relationships already strained, you might benefit from engaging an external facilitator who can be impartial in giving everyone a say.
- Decide who needs to be involved, and consult with others on the value of having a written agreement.
- Choose a convenient time, place and date for a meeting. Sometimes this may be away from the home environment.
- Send out an agenda so that people can prepare beforehand. Don't take on too much for the time you have allocated.
- Set a start and finish time, and appoint someone to keep notes.
- Each person's views are important, so let everyone have a say.
- Work on the areas of agreement first, before focusing on any differences.
- Summarise agreements and actions and close the meeting on time.
- After the meeting, ask for feedback and how you can do things better next time.
- Make sure notes are distributed. Set at least two future dates to review what has been agreed on and to get into a regular pattern of business meetings.
- Discussion will be required to reach consensus. Write down your agreed group position.

Often farming businesses find that a series of meetings over a short period of time is the best way to complete their agreement. In some of the steps below, it will be necessary to refer to, or perhaps develop, some clear objectives for the business – refer to tool 1.2 in *Plan for Success*.

#### Step 1. Roles and responsibilities: who is doing what?

- Describe an ideal week
- What will each person be doing?
- Is this the best use of people's skills, or is modification needed?
- How will they make decisions? Who is responsible for what?
- Agree on specific ways of handling common situations that arise (eg, heavy work periods such as shearing). Write these down.
- Who has overall responsibility for business performance?

#### Step 2. List the situations where conflict could occur

- What must you do to reduce the risk?
- What recovery actions can you take after conflict?

### Step 3. What do people expect?

Each person can make a list of what they expect while they are working in the business.

Below are some common sources of tension in sheep businesses. You may like to discuss these (adapting as required) and agree on:

- Work hours (and flexibility)
- Work days/week
- Amount/timing of holidays through the year
- Remuneration levels<sup>1</sup>
- Vehicles (type and amount of personal use)
- Housing (including power and phone usage)
- Education for children
- Recognition/feedback
- Input into decision making

**Source:** Adapted from Working in Groups Manual, MLA, 1995

<sup>1</sup> Visit [www.workchoices.gov.au](http://www.workchoices.gov.au) or call the Workplace Infoline 1300 363 264 to review pay and conditions for your enterprise.



## Tool 4.2

### The difference between dialogue and debate

Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding. Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.

**In dialogue**, finding common ground is the goal.

**In debate**, winning is the goal.

**In dialogue**, one listens to the other side(s) to understand, find meaning, and seek agreement.

**In debate**, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter their arguments.

**Dialogue** enlarges, and possibly changes, a participant's point of view.

**Debate** affirms a participant's own point of view.

**Dialogue** reveals assumptions for re-evaluation.

**Debate** defends assumptions as truth.

**Dialogue** causes questioning of one's own position.

**Debate** causes critique of the other position.

**Dialogue** opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.

**Debate** defends one's own position as the best solution and excludes other solutions.

**Dialogue** creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness for change.

**Debate** creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right, and to win.

**In dialogue**, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other people's reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.

**In debate**, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.

**Dialogue** calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.

**Debate** calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.

**In dialogue**, one searches for basic agreements.

**In debate**, one searches for glaring differences.

**In dialogue**, one searches for strengths in the other position.

**In debate**, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.

**Dialogue** involves a real concern for the other person and tries to avoid alienating or offending him or her.

**Debate** involves countering the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles the other person.

**Dialogue** assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.

**Debate** assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.

**Dialogue** remains open-ended.

**Debate** implies a conclusion.

(Source: Anon)



## Tool 4.3

### Understanding different communication styles

People have a number of different ways of behaving and responding, depending on the situation. When communication is difficult, it can be helpful to take an approach that suits other people's styles and habits.

Whatever their behavioural style, people can be skilled at getting a job done and getting along with others. Once people are aware of the areas needing improvement, they can develop new skills to increase the flexibility of their behavioural range and enhance the quality of their relationships.

#### The process

Have all members of the business (or family) complete the exercise. Often, using an external consultant or other trusted person as a discussion leader or facilitator can help ensure the experience is a positive one for everyone.

- 1 Complete the behavioural questionnaire by ticking those statements that apply to you. There are no right or wrong responses — this exercise simply provides insights into your preferred communication style.
- 2 Add up the number of ticks in each of the four boxes, taking note of the positions of your highest and lowest results.
- 3 Go to the interpretation table.

**Step 1:** Look for the box which corresponds with your highest score, eg, if your highest score from the questionnaire was in the top right, then go to the top right box, which is called "Direct".

Read the statements. The higher your total score, the more you may find the statements describe you.

**Step 2:** Repeat the process for your next highest score, and so on. Your lowest scoring box will provide you with a profile of your least preferred style.

**Step 3:** If you are completing this exercise in a business, you may like to discuss people's individual results, and what they have learned about themselves – when are they at their best and what are their needs and stress points (fears)?

- 4 You can repeat the process by looking at the list below 'Hints on Communicating'. This will give you a good insight to your own preferred communication approach. Importantly, if you are completing the process with other business (or family) members, this step is a great way to understand each other's preferred style. It will also help explain situations where communication blockages can occur and perhaps provide some ideas for change.
- 5 Be aware of your own strengths and any areas where development may be required. Understanding your own preferences, and then those around you, can provide the opportunity to improve communication within the business or family.

### Behavioural Style Questionnaire

Tick each statement that you believe is a fair representation of yourself in your role in the family OR business.

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gives priority to detail and organisation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sets exacting standards</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Approaches tasks and people with steadiness</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys research and analysis</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prefers operating within guidelines</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Completes tasks thoroughly</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Focuses attention on immediate task</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Likes accuracy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Makes decisions on thorough basis</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Values standard procedures highly</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Approaches work systematically</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Likes to plan for change</p> <p><b>Total :</b> _____</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gives priority to achieving results</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Seeks challenges</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Approaches tasks and people with clear goals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is willing to confront</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Makes decisions easily</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is keen to progress</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Feels a sense of urgency</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Acts with authority</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Likes to take the lead</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys solving problems</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Questions the status quo</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Takes action to bring about change</p> <p><b>Total :</b> _____</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gives priority to supporting others</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys assisting others</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Approaches people and tasks with quiet and caution</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Has difficulty saying no</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Values co-operation over competition</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Eager to get on with others</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Willing to show loyalty</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Calms excited people</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Listens well/attentively</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prefers others to take the lead</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gives priority to secure relationships and arrangements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prefers steady not sudden change</p> <p><b>Total :</b> _____</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gives priority to creating a friendly environment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Likes an informal style</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Approaches people and tasks with energy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Emphasises enjoying oneself</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Rates creativity highly</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prefers broad approach to details</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Likes participating in groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Creates a motivational environment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Acts on impulse</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Willing to express feelings</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys discussing possibilities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Keen to promote change</p> <p><b>Total :</b> _____</p>

**Interpretation Table:**

		Introverted	Extroverted		
Task oriented	Conscientious	<p><b>Behaviours</b> Reserved Approaches work systematically Pays attention to details Focuses attention on immediate task Prefers to stick to established guidelines and practices Likes to plan for change</p> <p><b>Needs</b> High standards Appreciation Quality work</p> <p><b>Fears</b> Criticism of work Imperfection Not having things adequately explained</p>	<p><b>Direct</b></p> <p><b>Behaviours</b> Outgoing Challenges status quo Keen to get things done Resists authority Likes to take the lead Takes action to bring about change</p> <p><b>Needs</b> Results Recognition Challenges</p> <p><b>Fears</b> Challenges to their authority Lack of results from others</p>	Task oriented	
	Stabilising	<p><b>Behaviours</b> Reserved Works well in a team Accommodates others Maintains status quo Recovers slowly from hurt Prefers steady rather than sudden change</p> <p><b>Needs</b> Security Acceptance Teamwork</p> <p><b>Fears</b> Isolation Standing out as better or worse Unplanned challenges</p>	<p><b>Influencing</b></p> <p><b>Behaviours</b> Outgoing Leads by enthusing others Prefers a global approach Steers away from details Acts on impulse Keen to promote change</p> <p><b>Needs</b> Change acknowledgement New trends and ideas</p> <p><b>Fears</b> Disapproval Stagnation Detailed work</p>	People oriented	
		Introverted	Extroverted		

## Hints on communicating with different styles

Conscientious	Direct
<p>They speak thoughtfully, precisely with pauses for thinking.</p> <p>Don't interrupt.</p> <p><b>Use :</b> It's logical, reasonable, clear, precise, balanced... guarantee...specifically... judgement...critical...exactly... factual...qualified...professional... just...well thought out... planned detailed... quality...discerning</p> <p><b>Don't use :</b> creative...risky...daring...generally... colourful...make it up ...chaotic ...experimental... fun...innovative...popular</p>	<p>They come to the point, in short, sharp sentences.</p> <p>They think and respond fast and have an impatient style.</p> <p>Don't bother with niceties, or tell them long stories.</p> <p><b>Use :</b> Yes...OK...now...I'll do this, will that be OK? true... solid...effective...bottom line... ball park figure...asap...we'll get right onto it...deadline...be first...leading ...initiate...get cracking...I'll handle it...can do!</p> <p><b>Don't use :</b> I'll look into it...we'll have to discuss it...you must understand ...I'll let you know...this needs a consensus decision... you'll have to be patient</p>
Stabilising	Influencing
<p>Generally quietly spoken, a little shy but friendly, approachable.</p> <p>Give them space, don't interrupt.</p> <p><b>Use :</b> How do you feel about it?...it would be helpful...I need...I'd be grateful if...would you mind assisting us...it's fair to all...safe...gentle... quiet...modest... faithful...considerate...most people</p> <p><b>Don't use :</b> Do this...Next!... Now!...that's emotional rubbish...you could be the first person to...</p>	<p>Bubbly speakers, friendly, informal, they use creative language.</p> <p>You can talk over them and they'll join in. Don't be critical. They're optimists.</p> <p><b>Use :</b> positive...bright idea ...innovative... fresh...easy...</p> <p>how do you see it? here are your choices... that's easy...big picture...the latest...it'll be fun ...enjoy it!</p> <p><b>Don't use :</b> No way! show me your figures ...tried and true...traditional...it's always been like that...I'm only doing my job</p>

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## Tool 4.4

### Developing shared values, personal and business goals

This tool provides each business with the opportunity to develop a list of shared values and a common sense of purpose. Wherever possible, all members of the business (or family) should complete the exercise. Consider asking an external facilitator or trusted adviser to facilitate this exercise to ensure it is a positive and rewarding experience for those involved.

#### Process

- 1 Initially working alone, ask each member of the business to tick the values which are of utmost importance to them about the business (exercise 1 - next page). You may like to repeat this step for a family setting.
- 2 After everyone has completed the exercise alone, share the list of values selected by each individual. Do this by allowing each person the chance to name one value, and to discuss why they chose it, before moving to the next person, who names and discusses one value. Complete this step until all people have named and discussed their values list.
- 3 Once this is complete, decide on 5–6 values in common from the discussions and write them down, with a short sentence that provides some detail.
- 4 The process can be repeated to develop personal (exercise 2) and business visions (exercise 3). It is important that each person completes the exercise individually and then has an opportunity for input into the group discussion.

### Exercise 1. Values list

Mark 12 values on this list that you believe are of most importance to you:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Affection (love & caring)      | <input type="radio"/> Achievement                                  | <input type="radio"/> Democracy  |
| <input type="radio"/> Community                      | <input type="radio"/> Adventure                                    | <input type="radio"/> Effectiveness  |
| <input type="radio"/> Close relationships            | <input type="radio"/> Change and variety                           | <input type="radio"/> Honesty  |
| <input type="radio"/> Creativity                     | <input type="radio"/> Challenging problems                         | <input type="radio"/> Influencing others   |
| <input type="radio"/> Friendship                     | <input type="radio"/> Cooperation                                  | <input type="radio"/> Inner harmony  |
| <input type="radio"/> Growth                         | <input type="radio"/> Competence                                   | <input type="radio"/> Integrity  |
| <input type="radio"/> Having a family                | <input type="radio"/> Decisiveness                                 | <input type="radio"/> Ethical practice   |
| <input type="radio"/> Helping other people           | <input type="radio"/> Efficiency                                   | <input type="radio"/> Leadership   |
| <input type="radio"/> Involvement                    | <input type="radio"/> Competition                                  | <input type="radio"/> Personal development (living to the fullest of my potential) |
| <input type="radio"/> Meaningful work                | <input type="radio"/> Excellence                                   | <input type="radio"/> Being around people who are open & honest                    |
| <input type="radio"/> Quality relationships          | <input type="radio"/> Expertise                                    | <input type="radio"/> Physical change  |
| <input type="radio"/> Self respect                   | <input type="radio"/> Fast-paced work                              | <input type="radio"/> Reputation   |
| <input type="radio"/> Stability                      | <input type="radio"/> Independence                                 | <input type="radio"/> Supervising others   |
| <input type="radio"/> Intellectual status            | <input type="radio"/> Loyalty                                      | <input type="radio"/> Arts   |
| <input type="radio"/> Quality of what I take part in | <input type="radio"/> Recognition (respect from others, status)    | <input type="radio"/> Country  |
| <input type="radio"/> Work with others               | <input type="radio"/> Truth  | <input type="radio"/> Fast living  |
| <input type="radio"/> Status                         | <input type="radio"/> Job tranquillity                             | <input type="radio"/> Location   |
| <input type="radio"/> Ecological awareness           | <input type="radio"/> Freedom                                      | <input type="radio"/> Nature   |
| <input type="radio"/> Excitement                     | <input type="radio"/> Economic security                            | <input type="radio"/> Pleasure   |
| <input type="radio"/> Financial gain                 | <input type="radio"/> Fame   | <input type="radio"/> Responsibility and accountability                            |
| <input type="radio"/> Market position                | <input type="radio"/> Knowledge                                    | <input type="radio"/> Public service   |
| <input type="radio"/> Money                          | <input type="radio"/> Advancement & promotion                      | <input type="radio"/> Serenity   |
| <input type="radio"/> Power and authority            | <input type="radio"/> Order (tranquillity, stability & conformity) | <input type="radio"/> Financial gain   |
| <input type="radio"/> Merit                          | <input type="radio"/> Religion                                     | <input type="radio"/> Work under pressure  |
| <input type="radio"/> Purity                         | <input type="radio"/> Privacy                                      |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Sophistication                 | <input type="radio"/> Security                                     |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Wealth                         | <input type="radio"/> Time   |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Working alone                  | <input type="radio"/> Wisdom                                       |  |

(Source: The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organisation. Senge, P. et.al 1994. Nicholas Brealey Publishing)

After sharing your list of 12 values with others from your farm business team, write the six values you have agreed on as shared values for the business.

- A \_\_\_\_\_
- B \_\_\_\_\_
- C \_\_\_\_\_
- D \_\_\_\_\_
- E \_\_\_\_\_
- F \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 2. Your vision**

Your vision describes what you ultimately want to achieve. It should be closely aligned with your core values and will reflect what you ultimately want to achieve in life. It describes the future state that you would like your business and life to look like.

A vision should contain more about the environment you wish to work in and the manner in which you would choose to live. A vision describes why you are ‘playing the game’.

Take a moment to consider your personal vision. You can write it in words or draw what it means to you. Once you have done this, work with others from your farm business to discuss what is important to each of you and determine a shared vision for the business.

**Your personal vision:**

**Your shared vision for the business:**

**Exercise 3. Your core business**

Describe what you are in the business of producing – your core business. Have a look at your current core business and ask yourself the following question:

*If we continue doing what we are doing, will this help us achieve our vision?*

What business do you need to be in to achieve your shared vision for the business?

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(Source: MLA EDGENetwork® course Developing the Strategy)



## Tool 4.5

### Your preferred learning style

This questionnaire may help you pinpoint your learning preferences so that you are in a better position to select learning experiences that suit your personal style.

- There are no right or wrong answers
- Read each box and if you agree with the statement more than you disagree, put a tick in that box
- At the end of each page, add up the number of ticks in each column

I often act without considering the possible consequences	I like the sort of work where I have time for proper preparation	I have strong beliefs about what is right and wrong and good and bad	I have a reputation for saying what I think, simply and directly
I often find that actions based on feelings are as sound as those based on careful thought and analysis	I take care over the interpretation of research available to me and avoid jumping to conclusions	I am keen on self-discipline like sticking to a fixed routine, watching what I eat, being planned and systematic	When I hear about a new idea or approach, I immediately start working out how to apply it in practice
I prefer to respond to events on a spontaneous, flexible basis rather than plan things out in advance	I prefer to have as many sources of information as possible; the more information to think over the better	I get on best with logical, analytical people and less well with spontaneous "irrational" people	What matters most is that something works in practice
I'm attracted more to new, unusual ideas rather than practical ones	I think that decisions based on thorough study of all the information are sounder than those based on intuition	I don't like disorganised things and prefer to fit things into a coherent pattern	I accept and stick to laid down procedures and plans so long as I regard them as an efficient way of getting the job done
I thrive on the challenge of tackling something new and different	I like to reach a decision carefully after weighing up many alternatives	I like to relate what I do to a general principle in use	In discussions, I like to get straight to the point
I enjoy the drama and excitement of a crisis situation	I listen to other people's points of view before putting my own forward	I tend to have distant, formal relations with people in my area	I tend to judge people's ideas on their practical merits
I tend to be open about how I am feeling	In discussions, I enjoy watching the manoeuvrings of the other participants	Flippant people who don't take things seriously enough usually irritate me	In groups, I tend to put forward practical, realistic ideas
I actively seek out new experiences	It worries me if I have to rush something to meet a deadline	I find it difficult to produce ideas on impulse	I can often see better, more practical ways to get things done
<b>A =</b>	<b>R =</b>	<b>T =</b>	<b>P =</b>

Quiet, thoughtful people tend to make me feel uneasy	I pay meticulous attention to detail before coming to conclusions	I tend to be tough on people who find it difficult to adopt a logical approach	I like people who approach things realistically rather than theoretically
It is more important to enjoy the present moment than to think about the past or the future	I prefer to stand back from a situation and consider all the perspectives	I can often see inconsistencies and weaknesses in other people's arguments	In discussions, I get impatient with irrelevancies and digressions
In discussions, I tend to produce lots of ideas, spontaneously	I tend to discuss specific things with people rather than engaging in social discussion	I believe that rational, logical thinking should win the day	In discussions, I often find that I am the realist, keeping people on track and avoiding wild speculation
More often than not, rules are there to be broken	I like to ponder many alternatives before making up my mind	I am keen to reach answers via a logical approach	I am keen to try things out to see if they work in practice
On balance, I talk more than I listen	In discussions, I am more likely to adopt a low profile than to take the lead	In discussions with people, I often find I am the most dispassionate and objective	Most times, I believe the end justifies the means
When things go wrong, I am happy to shrug it off and "put it down to experience"	It's best to think carefully before taking action	I like to be able to relate current actions to a longer-term, bigger picture	I don't mind hurting people's feelings so long as the job gets done
I'm usually one of the people who puts life into the party	On balance, I do the listening rather than the talking	I tend to be a perfectionist	I do whatever is the quickest and most effective to get things done
I quickly get bored with methodical, detailed work	I'm always interested to find out what people think	I steer clear of subjective or ambiguous topics	People often find me insensitive to their feelings
<b>A =</b>	<b>R =</b>	<b>T =</b>	<b>P =</b>

To pinpoint your preferred learning style, add the number of 'ticks' in each column and place the number at the bottom of the column in each of the two previous tables. Add the respective column scores together and record your scores in the following table.

<b>A</b> <b>(Activist) Do</b>	<b>R</b> <b>(Reflector) Review</b>	<b>T</b> <b>(Theorist) Generalise</b>	<b>P</b> <b>(Pragmatist) Plan</b>

This table profiles your own individual learning approach, the higher the score for each of the four styles the more you prefer to learn this way, and vice versa.

## Learning styles – general descriptions

Each learning style adds to the ability to solve problems in a different way as described below.

### Activists – act

Activists involve themselves fully and without bias in new experiences. They enjoy the here and now and are happy to be dominated by immediate experiences. They are open-minded, not sceptical, and this tends to make them enthusiastic about anything new. Their philosophy is “I’ll try anything once”. They dash in where angels fear to tread. They tend to throw caution to the wind. Their days are filled with activity. They revel in short-term crisis firefighting. They tackle problems by brainstorming. As soon as the excitement from one activity has died down they are busy looking for the next. They tend to thrive on the challenge of new experiences but are bored with implementation and longer-term consolidation. They are gregarious people, constantly involving themselves with others, but in doing so, they hog the limelight. They are the life and soul of the party, and seek to centre all activities around themselves.

### Reflectors – reflect

Reflectors like to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect data, both first-hand and from others, and prefer to chew it over thoroughly before coming to any conclusion. The thorough collection and analysis of data about experiences and events is what counts so they tend to postpone reaching definitive conclusions for as long as possible. Their philosophy is to be cautious; to leave no stone unturned. “Look before you leap”, “sleep on it”. They are thoughtful people, who like to consider all possible angles and implications before making a move. They prefer to take a back seat in meetings and discussions. They enjoy observing other people in action. They tend to adopt a low profile and have a slightly distant, tolerant unruffled air about them. When they act it is part of a big picture which includes the past as well as the present and others’ observations as well as their own.

### Theorists – generalise

Theorists adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. They think problems through in a vertical, step-by-step, logical way. They assimilate disparate factors into coherent theories. They tend to be perfectionists and won’t rest easy until things are tidy and fit into their rational scheme. They like to analyse and synthesise. Their philosophy prizes rationality and logic. “If it’s logical it’s good”. Questions they frequently ask are: “Does it make sense?”; “How does this fit with that?”; and “What are the basic assumptions?” They tend to be detached, analytical and dedicated to rational objectivity rather than anything subjective or ambiguous. Their approach to problems is consistently logical. This is their “mental set” and they rigidly reject anything that doesn’t fit with it. They prefer to maximise certainty and feel uncomfortable with subjective judgements, lateral thinking and anything flippant.

### Pragmatists – plan

Pragmatists are keen on trying out ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice. They positively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications. They are the sort of people who return from management courses brimming with new ideas that they want to try out in practice. They like to get on with things and act quickly and confidently on ideas that attract them. They don’t like beating around the bush and tend to be impatient with ruminating and open-ended discussions. They are essentially practical, down-to-earth people who like making practical decisions and solving problems. They respond to problems and opportunities “as a challenge”. Their philosophies are “There is always a better way”, and “If it works, it’s good”.

**Key questions to improve your business**

**What different learning styles do you have in your business?**

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**How can you best use people's learning styles?**

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Adapted from: On Track Coaching Manual for Farm Families Working with People (2005)



## Tool 4.6

### Work-life balance exercise

This tool is simply a framework for recording how you think you are going in relation to the five things (work, family, you, time and money) that most people find important.

At its simplest, you can place a tick in the boxes 'going well' or 'not going well', and comment on your decision. However, you will get more insight and gain more value if you can list some things that are going well and others that are not going quite so well for each of the five areas.

For example, in the 'work' row, it might be that contracting out the hay-making, working one day a week off the farm, and employing a casual gardener are going well, but weed control has become a bit out of hand and you can't find anyone to lease you some additional land so you can expand your lamb finishing enterprise.

The things that matter	What's going well	What's not going quite so well	Comments
Work	• • •	• • •	
Family	• • •	• • •	
You	• • •	• • •	
Time	• • •	• • •	
Money	• • •	• • •	

**Step 1: Individual response**

As an individual, fill out the table (with either ticks in the boxes or with more specific items listed) for the things that are going well and for the things that are not going quite so well.

For the things that are going well, how can they be protected or further enhanced, while for the things that are not going so well, what are the causes of your dissatisfaction, and what actions can you take to get a better overall balance in your life?

**Step 2: Write a statement that describes your idea of your work–life balance situation.**

On the basis of your individual response at Step 1, write a statement that describes what an ideal work/life balance would look like. How close to that ideal are you, and therefore how significant are the changes you might contemplate?

**Step 3: Business**

Share and discuss the individual responses to Steps 1 and 2 with those who matter in your business and family. This is not as easy as the individual analysis, for it is almost certain that changes one person wants to make will affect the others in the business or family. The challenge is to work collectively to ensure that everyone understands the needs and aspirations of the others in the family/business so you can all work to achieve a better work/life balance in both the short and longer terms.



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