

Season 2, Episode 10: All About the People

Valerie Duttlinger, Summit Smart Farms, discusses the importance of matching employees with a job they are passionate about. **Dr. Sarah Probst-Miller**, Ag Create Solutions, Inc., a practicing veterinarian, emphasizes how company culture impacts operational success.

The right person for the right job

Valerie Duttlinger advises when evaluating how an employee fits in their role, it is important to find a balance between what an individual is good at and what they have a passion for. It is important to take time to listen to your personnel, getting to know their strengths, characteristics, and what they truly enjoy doing. Pay attention to what motivates members of your team, keeping in mind each individual may be motivated in a different way.

Tools available to you

Personality assessments are a tremendous tool for getting to know a prospect or new employee. DiSC assessment is one example of a commonly utilized personality evaluation tool. Although not a perfect science, these tools can help you understand your employees better as well as provide valuable insights they can apply into their daily lives. The Summit Smart Farms Cloverleaf is a personality assessment tool specific to agriculture employees, details can be found at <https://summitsmartfarms.com/cloverleaf/>.

People and pork

Dr. Probst-Miller puts it well, *“It really takes people to make pork.”* An introduction to company culture starts on day one for any new employee. It is critical your organization exudes a focus on caring for people. When employees feel they are valued and cared for they transfer that to pig care as well. In order to successfully onboard a new employee, you should put together an orientation course. Orientation should include gradual exposure to tasks they will be responsible for. *“When you care about your people, they will care about the pigs.”*

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One insightful exercise an organization leader can complete is to be a “new employee” in the system. Upper management interacting with barn level employees, taking the time to listen instead of talk, can go so far. Often times organizations are setting lofty companywide goals. It is important to transfer those goals to an employee’s daily responsibilities, explaining how their duties contribute to the overall success of those objectives.

Value focused vs. goal focused

Take time to examine what values are most important to your organization. Stop and look at the barn level, what is the first task your employees are focused on when they start their day? Are they focusing on collecting mortality or are they helping the harder to start piglets get the extra colostrum they need to thrive? Determine which tasks represent your values and make sure those things are being prioritized each day. Lastly, cultivate positivity within your operation. Positivity will have the most beneficial contribution to the success of your business and mission.

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