Season 3, Episode 7: **Engaging Frontline Employees**

Kent Mogler, Mogler Family Farms, discusses how to engage the frontline workers on your farm and why it is so important.

Visual

Employees are one of the most valuable assets on any swine operation. It can be difficult to retain and keep all employees engaged. One critical piece of employee engagement to consider, do your employees know how the day is going? Is there a visual representation somewhere, on the farm, of how the day is going? For example, a television monitor in the break room or an app that can be easily referenced on a phone.

Avoid the whirlwind

Frontline workers, on any swine operation, are faced with a plethora of daily tasks. Providing meaningful feedback on how those tasks impact the operation, can help shape a positive work environment. The book, The 4 Disciplines of Execution, discusses four key principles for the success of any operation. Those four disciplines are focus on the wildly important, act on lead indicators, keep a compelling scoreboard and create a cadence of accountability. The first, is knowing your wildly important goal and measuring that goal to determine if everyone is on track. Next, focus on lead indicators for the frontline workers, rather than lag indicators. Focusing on lead indicators will help improve lag indicators more quickly. Thirdly, having a compelling scoreboard will ensure all employees see the why behind the job they are performing. Finally, a cadence of accountability is important, whether that be a daily or weekly meeting.

Scoreboard

Designing a compelling scoreboard involves a combination of data from multiple sources. Environmental, production related and financial information can all be brought together. Lead indicators such as feed and water consumption help shape a meaningful report. All of these systems can be combined together under an ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system. ERP systems help a company focus on forward thinking goals, rather than only reacting to outcomes. KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) should be based on lead indicators a frontline employee is able to influence through daily activities.

Environment

A positive work environment is one outcome of providing visual performance indicators. Instead of just telling employees how they are doing, they are able to see for themselves. Teams at different sites can keep up with each other's performance. Numbers do not lie. Visual performance indicators can help reduce conflict, hold teams accountable and positively change company culture. Employee turnover may also be reduced as a result. As an employer, it is critical to make frontline employees your passion. Leveraging data and technology, to create transparency with employees, will in turn benefit their work, the animals and your operation.

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