

## Season 1, Episode 7: The People Factor

Dr. Ken Stalder, Iowa State University, and Valerie Duttlinger, Summit SmartFarms, discuss how people can make or break a business.

### **Cultural fit**

Producers want to hire people with previous experience but that can no longer be a deciding factor as fewer people are growing up on farms. The hiring process has changed over the years where most employers now hire based off of a cultural fit. Humble, hungry, and smart are three key principles the hiring committee should think about. A humble worker puts the team before themselves, especially when it comes to giving credit. A hungry employee will be self-motivated and want to come to work every day. A smart employee sticks to their intuitions and knows the impact their words and actions can have on other employees and the operation. A cultural fit can outweigh previous knowledge when hiring someone to fit your operation.

### **Successful employee**

Employees who help grow the company are lifelong learners who want to grow their knowledge and impacts on the company. Colleges have changed their curriculum to adapt to students who have not had previous experience. This allows students to get experience in different industries before they enter the working field. Key observation skills are important to develop to become a successful caretaker. Following your observation skills, knowing what to do with the problem you have identified is another key aspect. An action attitude can make you a standout employee. Within the pork industry, there is a narrow window to act and successfully address a problem before it costs you money. Therefore, an action attitude employee can make or break your business financially.

### **Bridging opportunities**

Internships are a great opportunity for students to find what they do and do not like within the industry. Onboarding employees and students is an important step in training to make sure everyone is equipped with the information they need to be successful when starting a new job. Onboarding can be important for people who both do and do not have experience because the industry is always changing. There are materials on the internet that can benefit or hurt a company depending on what the company expects from their employees. Providing credible sources to employees is important in order to uphold your company's standards and expectations.

### **Employee turnover**

Employees may have experience or been employed for a while, but it is always important to continue to share information with them and grow their knowledge. A second set of eyes can provide insight on areas that employers may not see their employees lacking information. Employee turnover is important to keep at a minimum, so when having a great employer it is important to reward them to keep them hired on. Simple gestures such as offering a hand and complimenting employees work can help employees continue to enjoy their job. Employees want to work for a company who offers flexibility. Therefore, working with family schedules and appointments allows employees to see you care about them and their personal life. People are the most important part to an operation, so always keep their knowledge, willingness to learn, and determination in mind when going through the hiring process.

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