

BECOMING AGILE TOGETHER

by Elizabeth Kuhn

Agility is what comes to mind when I consider what the agricultural industry has been through over the past year and a half. In 2020, unexpectedly, this sector was actually one of only a few that saw economic growth. While the fact that the industry was classified as an essential service (people need to eat) did contribute to this success, I believe it also had a lot to do with the people in our industry and the winning teams on-farm.

WHAT IS YOUR WHY?

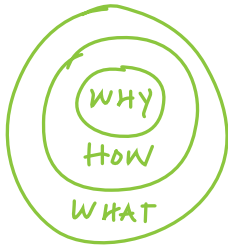
I have discussed the resiliency and work ethic of dairy farmers in previous articles; however, the overall success on-farm is not dependent on only one person. The term 'no man is an island' comes to mind and a smile creeps across my face when I picture the dedicated milkers in the milking parlour

and the managers allocating pasture on-farm. On each successful farm and dairy enterprise, there is a successful team working towards a greater cause or common goal. This cause is often referred to as your why. Why are you part of the dairy industry? Why do you ensure your cows are healthy and productive?



THE GOLDEN CIRCLE

by SIMON SINEK



Some farmers may have ended up here by accident and others by a conscious driven effort. What matters most is what is your team working towards on and off the farm? What drives them to do their best and make the best decision for the business, even when you are not looking? So many questions – and the answer to each will be personal. If you ensure your team, on and off the farm, knows what their greater cause is, you can create a collective positive push towards this common goal.

While we understand that the role of a single cog in a system may be less important than the whole, it is also true that the single cog is still necessary for the system to run. This is often neglected when trying to motivate the team that supports your business and drives your success. Starting with why should form the basis of any successful farming enterprise.



GO FURTHER TOGETHER

The next step in building a successful, resilient team is focusing on your people. Human capital, although often not the most expensive investment on-farm, if neglected, can result in well-planned systems failing miserably. The obvious solution, then, is to invest in your staff, invest in their education and training, and see them for the role they play in the bigger picture. It might be small, but it is still essential.

While a small voice at the back of your mind might be telling you that investing in your staff is an expensive exercise when there are plenty of people looking for jobs, pushing you to believe that people are replaceable, this is only partly true. A person that knows the system and how operations work on your farm is invaluable. Experience is something that cannot be taught, but this, coupled with an understanding of your business and a belief in the greater common goal, is a recipe for success. This will form the most solid foundation and backdrop to enable your business to not only be successful, but also be agile enough to adjust to and cope with changing environments and challenges within the industry.

Take the curve balls that life throws at you and your business in your stride by ensuring you have a strong and motivated team supporting you. Start with why and never lose sight of the role your people play in the bigger picture. Focus on the end goal and greater cause to help offset the stormy conditions that we may find ourselves in. There will always be a better day to come and, eventually, a rainbow at the end that is meant to be enjoyed together. [mpo](#)

