

Recruitment

INFORMATION SHEET

Introducing a new staff member is intended to achieve a positive outcome. Before you advertise a position however, there are important factors to consider that will help achieve this goal. Not only must you determine what you want the employee to do and what skills and experience you require them to have, you should also investigate:

- the employment conditions and entitlements they can expect
- the level of pay they are legally entitled to receive
- other employment costs that may be associated with hiring an additional staff member including training, equipment and facilities
- what can you do to differentiate your employment offer to make the position attractive, for example offering flexible work arrangements

You will also need to prepare a position or job description for the role that defines responsibilities, reporting relationships, experience and qualifications necessary to undertake the position.

Recruiting staff

As populations in the bush decline and other industries compete for labour in rural areas some businesses struggle to find and keep staff. Also, many younger people want a job that gives them more than just a paycheque. This 'what's in it for me' mentality means you need to let potential employees know not only what you are looking for but also what you can offer them.


Many job seekers search online websites for positions. Being able to sell your brand with a clear USP (see Business Overview worksheet) and farm profile is essential. The rise of social media has changed the way many companies recruit. Learning how to use social media platforms will help you promote job vacancies.

Recruiting family members

Recruiting family members is a far simpler process than filling a vacancy externally. You already know their personality, work ethic and have shared values. It is most likely the family member has grown up working in the business and the transition to being permanent team member is just a formality.

Other situations arise when a grownup sibling returns to join the business after working away or when a daughter or son's partner joins the team.

For many families the situation simply evolves and no documentation, policy or formal discussion takes place to assist the process. There is no guarantee that the new team members have the skills required or that their personality will fit the farm's culture. This is why it is important to be prepared and set expectations early. All new team members should complete a skills audit and be given a copy of the vision and values in which the business operates. Most importantly however, any new addition to your team should be viewed as a positive opportunity.



Most jobs can be learnt if the person has the right attitude and support provided to them. There is still a challenge for some family members to embrace the opportunity as they focus instead on asset control and management of perceived threats. This is all the more reason to invest the time to create policies, have formal meetings and open the communication channels to foster harmonious relationships.

The importance of job descriptions

The purpose of a job description is to ensure you, your family and your management team agree on what the job requirements, experience needed, skills and expectations of a position are before you start the hiring process.

By referring to the position description in the interview process it is easier to stay focused and ask the right questions to ensure you hire on skills, traits and experience needed to do the job. Position descriptions also offer better legal protection.

Interview Questions

Once you have reviewed and short-listed candidates for a job vacancy it is worthwhile preparing for the interview process. Remember the 80/20 rule. The candidate should be speaking 80% of the time.

If you want to have an initial phone chat to get a feeling for the candidate you could ask simple questions like –

- Why are you interested in the job?
- What do you know about our business/farm?
- Why are you no longer with your last employer?
- What type of manager do you like to work for?

In person interviews should go no longer than an hour. Be prepared and have questions written down. When writing interview questions think about the core tasks, skills and behaviour the position requires. What would a successful candidate need to demonstrate? Ask questions that will get the candidate talking about their behaviour.

Questions might start out with “Tell me about a time...” or “Describe a situation...”

This will encourage the candidate to reflect on real-life examples to demonstrate a core competency you are looking for.

Take notes or have a simple scoring system for responses. Example include:

- 1. Not specific, did not address question, vague
- 2. Solid response, provided examples, demonstrated competency
- 3. Outstanding, engaging, enthusiastic, experienced

Try to avoid offering a job at the interview, especially if you have not checked references. Both you and the candidate need time to reflect on the interview and consider if the role is the right fit.

Reference Checks

Decide if you wish to call or email a referee. It is always best to ask specific questions of the referee. Think about the key things you want to know and ask appropriate questions such as –

- Why do they no longer work for you?
- Describe their time management? Are they punctual?
- Do they meet deadlines? Are they reliable?
- What were their major areas of job responsibility?
- What are the applicants main strengths?
- What level of supervision did they require?
- How they get along with team members?
- Would you rehire them?