

TRAIL (Training Rural Australians In Leadership) Leadership Course

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AUSTRALIAN
SEAFOOD
COOPERATIVE
RESEARCH CENTRE

**Project No.
2012/749**

***This project was conducted by Oyster Farmers P/L,
394 Arthur Highway Sorell TAS 7172.***

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

PROJECT NO: 2012/749

TRAIL (Training Rural Australians In Leadership) Leadership

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(PROJECT) OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH TRAVEL GRANT/ INDUSTRY BURSARY

To develop and learn leadership skills and strategies through participation of the Australians Rural Leadership Foundation's TRAIL Leadership Course.

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY:

The course began with most of the group being picked up and taken to Outward Bounds base camp in Tharwa, ACT. There we were met by the rest of the group. There were nine participants on the course. People were from all sectors, such as, cattle, fisheries, sugar cane and medicine. Straight away we began some deceptively simple challenges. These were designed to highlight the need for team work, leadership and an understanding of the different ways people work. These were skills that were essential throughout the rest of the course. The challenges varied from simple name games, to climbing a physically and mentally challenging rope course.

After these challenges were completed we moved inside and received our Disc profiles. Disc is designed to highlight your primary and secondary leadership styles. Different styles are dominance, conscientiousness, steadiness and influence. While every one is a blend of all four, most people tend more strongly towards one or two styles. By knowing where you sit on a Disc profile, it allows you to be more aware of your priorities, motivations, fears, and limitation. This knowledge allows you to better understand how others work under different styles, and therefore adjust your own preferences in order to more effectively lead and influence others. Disc helps you learn how to move between all four leadership styles, and which styles will assist you in approaching different situations. This knowledge was reflected throughout the rest of the course, and we were able to practice the different styles, styles that were not necessarily our preferred ones.

Once finishing our introduction to Disc, we move to our first campsite. This was where most people faced their first major challenge, sleeping outside, on the ground, at a temperature of -6°C. The following day we had another team building exercise before we faced our first major group challenge.

The first big challenge involved the group being split into two teams. Both teams had to navigate to an end point where our final challenge lay. Along the way both teams had smaller challenges, and had decisions to make. When successful in a challenge we received clues to aid us in the final challenge. Throughout the day we also had to change leaders, meaning we had to adjust as a team to everyone's different leadership styles. We successfully completed the final challenge, and gained useful information in to the following days challenge. Preparation started that night for what was the hardest challenge of the course. I was one of two volunteer leaders for the "Descent Challenge".

The descent challenge asked us to navigate to the top of a mountain, construct and abseil and pack lowering system and complete an 100m abseil. At the bottom we then had to construct a flying fox to get the packs down to the next stage of the challenge. The next stage involved a 1km descent down the mountain, through steep, uneven terrain that was all dense bush, no tracks. From there we had a 4-5km walk to the river crossing. We had until nightfall to reach the bridge. We then had a further 2km hike to our camp ground. It was the biggest group challenge of the course and we successfully completed it. Needless to say it was necessary to utilise all your leadership skills in order to complete such a major task.

The next day was focused on our personal values and beliefs, where we reflected and challenged our values. This was designed to demonstrate how people develop their own belief and value system and the things we need to consider as a leader when evaluating and understanding people and their behaviour.

This brought the experiential component to a close. From here we went back to the city and began the conference/class style component. This component still had daily tasks to complete, with a different leader assigned each day, but by having challenges in a different environment we were again challenged to adjust our leadership styles and strategies. The classes gave us some new skills and theories to consider and analysed some of the skills we had experienced practically during the experiential component. During this period we addressed a wide range of issues facing leaders, and strategies to deal with them effectively and efficiently.

- Some topics covered were:
- Leadership vs. management (the difference)
- Conflict management and crucial conversations
- Legacy and advocacy
- Giving persuasive and effective presentations
- Facilitating strategic conversations
- Networking
- Giving effective feedback
- Creating personal and professional development plans

Throughout the course some books were recommended for follow up reading, to help build on what we have learnt. I am currently continuing studies on Emotional Intelligence, and Strategic Thinking.

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED TO DATE

Successful completion of TRAIL course.

Admission to the LEAD (Leadership Engagement and Development Network).

Promotion of the next generation of leaders.

Promotion of the Australian Seafood CRC's willingness to invest in the industries future leaders.

Development of skills that directly benefit Oyster Farmers P/L through day to day operations and development of a practical succession plan, also allowing the business to make a better contribution to the industry.

Interview with ABC Country bringing attention to the industries lack of young leaders and the need to recruit and invest in the future generation.

(PROJECT) OUTPUTS DEVELOPED AS RESULT OF TRAVEL GRANT/ INDUSTRY BURSARY:

As a result of this bursary I am currently in the process of developing a project to assist the next generation of rural men and women in identifying and achieving their career goals within the industry, providing the industry with a generation of skilled leaders that are passionate about positively contributing to the industry. My goal is to develop a network of emerging young leaders who can work in conjunction with the currents owners, farmers and managers to secure a positive future for the industry.

ABOUT THE PROJECT/ACTIVITY

BACKGROUND AND NEED

TRAIL (Training Rural Australians in Leadership) is an 8 day residential program for emerging leaders. The program consists of two parts, an experiential learning component, and conference style sessions. Participants learn new techniques, strategies and processes and have the opportunity to use them in a variety of situations. This enables participants to experience the difference they can make to situations in their everyday lives.

Our industry has particular need for these skills, as emerging leaders of the next generation are in short supply and are the future of our industry. Without emerging skilled leaders the industry lack confidence and security in the next generation and will find succession planning becoming increasingly difficult to manage. Without people willing to learn these skills, and people willing to support them, a career pathway can be very difficult to identify. This provides the industry with another challenge regarding engaging, training and retaining the next generation of farmers in our industry,

RESULTS

By undertaking this course I am now confident in my skills as a leader and am highly motivated to promote the emergence of young people within the industry and while doing so promoting the skills required to really contribute to and positively influence our industry. I am determined to provide the younger generation a point of reference for career pathways within the industry, and to assist them in acquiring the skills they need to be valued industry leaders. In doing so the industry will gain confidence and security in the knowledge that there are skilled young leaders emerging who are eager to improve and influence the industry.

INDUSTRY IMPACT

PROJECT OUTCOMES (THAT INITIATED CHANGE IN INDUSTRY)

Since returning there has already been a great response to getting young leaders more actively involved in the industry. More people are seeing the value in sending young people to learn new skills and aid their personal and professional development. While there have always been people in the industry that recognise and push the need for change in relation to the next generation, by having young leaders out in the industry able to encourage and support others looking to step up in the industry, and give them direction, the industry will be able to develop a network that has a wider sphere of influence.

SUMMARY OF CHANGE IN INDUSTRY

The immediate change in the industry will be the attention brought to this issue. By bringing it to the forefront of peoples minds, industry will have more opportunity to implement change. The topic was discussed recently at the Shellfish Futures industry conference and the industry has already developed some school based programs, however having young people working in the industry, with a clear career path is essential if the industry is serious about developing young leaders. Businesses all through the industry will benefit from these young people as they bring their new ideas and approaches into their workplace. These leaders will allow the industry to remain innovative and relevant.

WHAT FUTURE AND ONGOING CHANGES ARE EXPECTED?

It is my intention to continue to encourage industry to support young leaders. I hope to do this by creating a network for young people that aids them in developing and implementing a career and training plan. Ideally it would be optimal to incorporate this into the schools programs already operating so that school age men and women have a clear path they can follow on with if aquaculture becomes their chosen career as a result of their participation in the school program. It will also be necessary to work with farm owners and operators who would be willing to assist in their development through employment based training, such as aquaculture traineeships.

WHAT BARRIERS ARE THERE FOR CHANGES TO OCCUR?

Immediate barriers would include finding farmers willing to put time and resources into supporting such a program. Funding for courses that young leaders would ideally attend may also present a barrier for themselves and their employer. Time out of the work place for training programs would be another impact employers would need to be willing to incorporate into their schedules. It would also be beneficial to have a number of young leaders who are currently working within involved with the program so that we are able to offer a variety of resources and experiences for the next generation to draw on, so recruiting such individuals may be challenging.

IF NOT ALREADY HAPPENING, WHEN WILL THE CHANGES OCCUR?

I already have one young potential leader, who is currently working within the industry that I am working with. Our aim is to have him undertake a leadership program within the next 12 months. Other changes should also take place over the next 12 months and into the future as the project develops.

WHAT IS THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THESE CHANGES WILL OCCUR?

I believe there is a 75% chance these changes can be implemented in the industry or at the very least in Tasmania. I have undertaken preliminary discussion with another young leader already associated with a program in another sector with similar goals, and believe it is something that can be applied to the industry with the right support from industry leaders. If successful in implementing such a scheme there is every reason for every farm in the industry to benefit.

WHAT BARRIERS ARE THERE TO DOPTION OF THESE CHANGES AND WHAT ACTION COULD BE TAKEN TO OVERCOME THESE?

Training, use of equipment, funding, volunteers. By creating a network that assists young people in finding job placement, and traineeships, most of these barriers will be negated. Training would be done on-the-job and through the traineeships, equipment would be used in day to day operations, employers fund the traineeship and in return get a dedicated team member. By having participants on worksites with program volunteers we would minimise any time commitments otherwise imposed on such volunteers as they can mentor and support the participant in the workplace. The remaining barrier is finding employers willing to offer positions, but due to the difficulties often experience when looking for reliable committed staff I believe there would be a number of farmers willing to participate.

COMMUNICATION OF PROJECT/EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

WHAT IS THE OUTPUT THAT NEEDS TO BE COMMUNICATED?

The industry needs to invest in the next generation of future leaders. These young men and women are the future of our industry and we need help provide them with all the tools necessary to have a positive influence. It is an essential move if we wish to have a successful and sustainable industry in the future.

WHO IS/ARE THE TARGET AUDIENCE/S?

Current farmers, owners, managers, future investors, future leaders, future employees. Everyone involved with or interested in the industry.

WHAT ARE THE KEY MESSAGES?

With out an action plan our industry will struggle with succession planning in the future, and skilled labor will become increasingly difficult to find. The industry needs to act now to ensure farms have a future beyond current owners and operators.

WHAT IS THE CALL TO ACTION?

Ideally I would like other people involved within the industry to be involved with any project related to recruiting and retaining young leaders. This could be done in a variety of ways including, communicating with me their own ideas on the subject, volunteering their time to assist in training and mentoring, committing to assisting in work placement for new recruits or even financial assistance if necessary. I would like the industry, as a whole, to support such a project in any way possible.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

(How can these messages be communicated and by who?):

<i>Channel</i>	<i>Who by</i>	<i>When</i>
<i>Industry Functions</i>	<i>Industry Leaders, TORC, TSEC, owners and managers, myself</i>	<i>Throughout the year, at any of our industry meetings and functions</i>
<i>ABC Radio</i>	<i>Myself</i>	<i>24/9/12</i>
<i>Face to Face</i>	<i>Farmers, myself</i>	<i>Any meetings or functions</i>
<i>Email</i>	<i>Myself, others involved</i>	<i>Weekly, monthly, as needed</i>

<i>Industry newsletters/websites</i>	<i>Industry leaders</i>	<i>Monthly, quarterly, as needed</i>
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LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

WHAT IS YOUR FEEDBACK?

Barriers to projects in this area are few. Essentially it comes down to support, funding and time constraints. Unfortunately for me these barriers made it difficult to be fully prepared so in the future I would recommend allowing more time for preparations, in order to gain as much as possible from the project. Funding barriers can be overcome by more research into available funding schemes or a more intensive internal training schedule and budget. These barriers had no great affect on the overall project, as I was able to overcome the funding barrier, time constraints were handled by Oyster Farmers PL and I had plenty of support from the company which certainly made overcoming such barriers possible.

FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED IN REGARDS TO COMMERCIALISATION?

None at this point.

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