

**Increasing  
Productivity  
by  
Creating Champion  
Employees**

**Chris Rose**

# Labour Costs

- 🍓 Labour is the biggest production cost
- 🍓 The cost of labour increases every year
- 🍓 Returns are more often static
- 🍓 Without efficiency gains, how long will you stay in business?
- 🍓 How much variation is there between your best and your worst workers?



# Variation in Picking Speed

- 🍓 Fastest pickers are 2 x speed of average
- 🍓 2.7 x speed of bottom 25%
- 🍓 Top 75% improve over the season by 30%
- 🍓 Bottom 25% improve by 1%

If you always do what you've  
always done...



You'll always get what you've  
always got



# Sourcing the Right Labour

- 🍓 How carefully do you recruit labour?
- 🍓 Do all your workers want to be here?
- 🍓 Are they all genuinely hungry to earn?
- 🍓 Careful pre-selection filters out the non-motivated
- 🍓 CP 58 The Development of a Pre-selection System for Seasonal Horticultural Labour





**How much do you care?**

# Induction & Training

🍓 1<sup>st</sup> Impressions count

🍓 Be friendly & welcoming. Smile



🍓 They will be tired, stressed and unsure

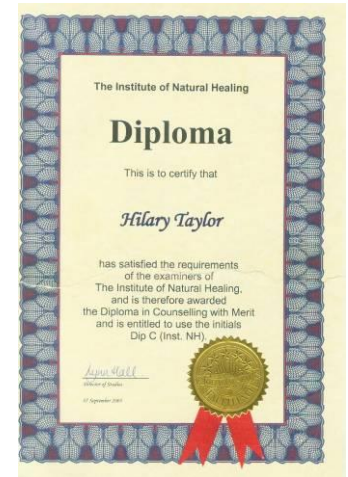
🍓 Explain what will happen – next steps

🍓 Use an interpreter if needed

# Induction & Training

## Trained labour outperforms keen beginners

- 🍓 Organise a training programme:
- 🍓 Define the tasks to be mastered
- 🍓 Set performance standards
- 🍓 Teach each task
- 🍓 Ensure later intakes get the same
- 🍓 Monitor performance daily
- 🍓 Recognise achievement





# Increasing Productivity

- 🍓 Teach to competence
- 🍓 Coach for productivity
- 🍓 Show trainees the top performers in action
- 🍓 Encourage all to set targets to improve
- 🍓 Recognise and praise every step forward
- 🍓 Believe in the potential of everyone



**Performance =  
Potential – Interference**



# What is a Champion Worker?

🍓 Does the job to the **required standard**

🍓 Does not need to be monitored






🍓 Does the job very **effectively**

🍓 Gets superb results **consistently**









# **The Champion Picker Model**

## ***Crop Specific (Strawberry) Traits***

-  Thorough consistent search pattern
-  Pick with both hands simultaneously
-  Read the plant and think ahead
-  Move the sledge accurately with the foot
-  Listen to their bodies

# The Champion Picker Model

## *Generic Traits*

-  Strongly goal-oriented
-  Physically fit and strong
-  They are good modellers
-  Consistent positive mindset
-  Set a sustainable pace and rhythm
-  Keep fully focussed

# Champion Supervisors

- 🍓 Select carefully
- 🍓 Train well
- 🍓 Teacher – (Policeman) – Speed Coach
- 🍓 Measure performance
- 🍓 Reward results
- 🍓 CP 59 The Development of a Champion Supervisor Model and Training Programme



# The Champion Supervisor

**Knowledge**

**Values**

**Skills**

**Behaviours**

**Attitudes**



# People Focused

- People first:
- Then task
- Their success = your success
- People matter



- Selfish
- Unhappy gang
- Only numbers





# Loyalty

- Work for the business
- Support people and boss
- Loyal to management
- Give & get loyalty



- Loyal to self
- Appear OK
- Tell tales to boss
- Tell tales about boss



# Know the Standards



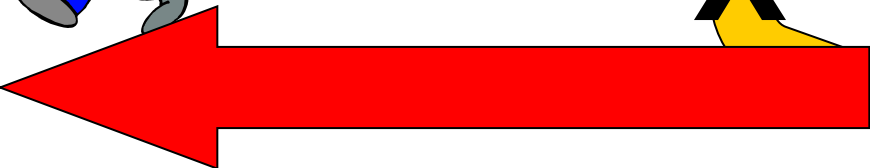
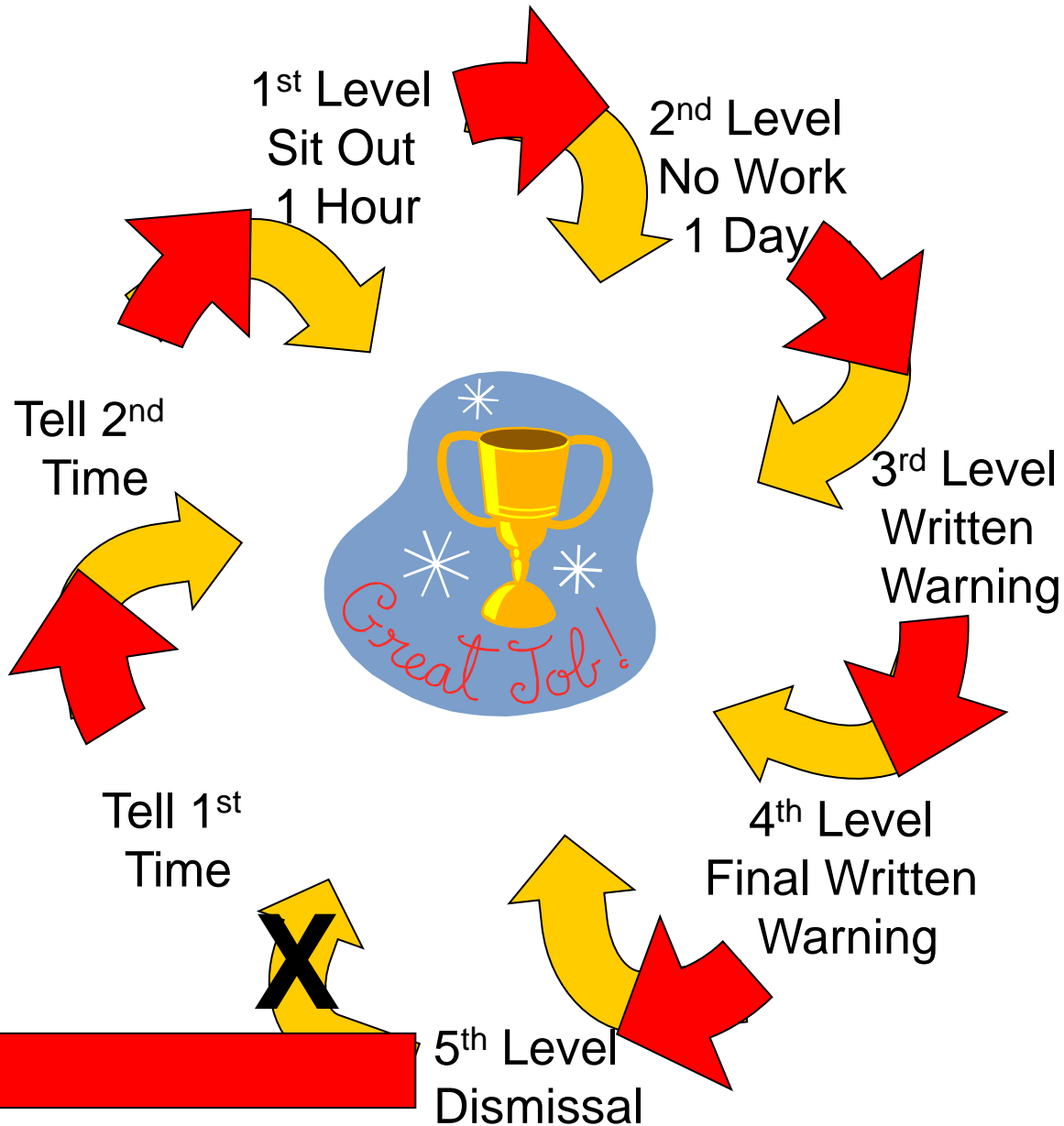
- Know all standards
- Any variations
- Change of spec
- Communicate change



- Confused
- Mixed messages
- Gets rejections!



# Constructive Correction



# Coaching



- Make connections
- Know their goals
- Help them get success
- Nurture → grow
- Job done right



- Uses stick only
- People don't matter
- Doesn't want confidence



# Flexibility

- Anticipate change
- Make changes early
- What's really happening
- Change methods quickly
- Fast actions: No problems

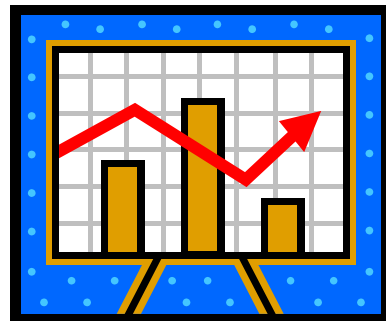


- Fights change
- Only rules count
- Crisis management



# What to do?

- 🍓 Wherever teams or individuals are performing the same task:
- 🍓 Measure variation in performance
- 🍓 Seek to understand reasons why
- 🍓 Plan to reduce it by x% - 20%? 40%?
- 🍓 Develop 'speed coaches'




# Best Practice in Harvest Organisation

 Observe

 Harvest is a busy time

 Do you know what should be happening...  
or what is really happening?

 Get a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to audit your harvest

# Strategic Planning & Field Design





# Strategic Planning & Field Design

Do your harvest staff have a say in:

- 🍓 Field size
- 🍓 Block size
- 🍓 Row length
- 🍓 Size of headland
- 🍓 Central roadway width
- 🍓 Grassing headlands



# Configuration

 2-Row bed?

 3-Row bed?

 Low or high bed?

 Soil or substrate?

 Ground level or table-top?

# Cropping Density







# Tunnels

 4 Bed?

 5 Bed?

 Wider leg rows?

 What alley width?

 Standardised system



# Picker Organisation

 Start of the day

 Keep the picker picking

 Runners

 Individual vs team payment

 Gang size



# A smooth start?



# Keep the Picker Picking



# Gang Size



# The Collection Point



# Collection Point Organisation

 Weigh or no way?

 Avoid queuing

 Q.C. or just book in?

 Book in on field or at farm?

 Data-logging systems

 Fruit carting

# Single handling



# Double handling



# New Mantra

“Right 1<sup>st</sup> time and on time every time”

We must add

**“in the most efficient, cost-effective  
manner possible”**





# Helping People Grow



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