

Job Relations - Tatura Milk Industries

Building toward the "2015 Supervisor"



Equipping leaders to build leadership and respect. Oscar Roche

Brief

Executive management frequently and rightfully often impose change on a business, change is necessary to survive long term. Operationally, it is middle and lower management who need to drive the reality of the imposed change, changes in actions on the work floor.

Executive through to lower management, including HR personnel, will learn from this case study how:

- *TWI Job Relations was applied at Tatura Milk Industries in order to build leadership and respect - leadership and respect being a key ingredient in successful drive for change and improvement.*
- *Individual key achievements of a number of the operational leaders where specific focus on a single "JR line" lead to improved work performance.*
- *The application of JR has lead to far less "major people issues" reaching HR.*
- *The rate of "take up" by leaders is not the same and some find it quite confronting and in fact regress.*



*Information provided via presentation by Andrew Shaw
(TMI HR Advisor) at the 2014 TWI Summit in Nashville.*

INTRODUCTION

The Supervisor in 2012 at TMI was, generally speaking, identified as an overseer, one who was resistant to change, a firefighter. This was through no fault of their own, no more had ever been expected of them.

In 2013 TMI identified the desire for a “2015 Supervisor” - where they needed Supervision capability to be by 2015. They understood this change would be significant, would take time, and not all supervisors at the time would fit. Fundamentally they needed to transfer an understanding that the Supervisor is responsible for results through people. The current notion of “hand balling” upward or sideways needed to cease.

CONTENT

Starting mid-2013, and up till now (July 2014) 33 leaders undertook JRT (Job Relations Training) mostly in groups of 6-8. There is likelihood of 2 more groups, largely support function leaders, through 2014/15. 4 “JR mentors” were trained as well being Lainie Vaughan (HR), George Tepus and John Kremor (Manufacturing Managers), and Andrew Shaw. Andrew was the head of the mentor group and the key driver in the whole initiative.



To support and increase the strength of JR Step 2, Weigh and Decide a “positive discipline” procedure was developed. This procedure is, in some cases not all, a “possible action” of the Supervisor. If they take this action of applying “positive discipline” (in JR Step 3) how they do it is clearly prescribed.

The most significant “result” seen thus far is that Lainie was getting flooded with “people problems” from the factory, many cases going at once. At the time of Andrew’s presentation at the TWI Summit in May 2014, she had one. To use wording applied in JRT, “use a cup of water to put out a fire such that the fire department is not called in to tackle a blaze”.

Other crucial learnings and achievements include:

- “People issue” conversations are easier and better defined; consistency leads to confidence.
- Not everyone will make the grade. (See later in this case study.)
- Better decisions are being made in regard to people problems – the Supervisor and “person” makes the decision, the Supervisor takes responsibility for resolving the people problem.
- Quality mentoring is critical to progressing the 4 foundations for good relations. Mentors develop expertise – there’s no better learning than to have to develop others.
- Supervisors and Managers focusing on straightening their JR lines.
- Devolvement of people problems from HR to line management. The traditional role of HR as policeman, investigator, prosecutor, judge and jury is being eroded.



Daniel Miller (already a very good Supervisor before JR) embarked on “making Agro the best cheese maker he could be” (JR foundation – Make Best Use of Each Person’s Ability.) Daniel commented ...

“I have learnt to use people that are skilled to help me, and enhance their learning and work with me by engaging them and telling them what is going on. JR has made me look at the way I was leading and how every worker is different and you have to approach every situation differently. I have found that my working relationship has come a long way since starting the JR process.”

Along with the successes there have been struggles.

- Two supervisors have reverted to operator roles as “getting results through people”, with JR being a key factor in that, just wasn’t where they wanted to be. TMI have been very respectful of this and helped their move back to being operators go as smoothly as possible.
- Getting supervisors to buy into “soft skills” – again, they were used to getting their own results, now they have to get results through others.
- Getting focus onto the 4 foundations rather than the 4 step method.

PROGRESS (22/8/2014)

I (Oscar) was at TMI today and the Warehouse Manager told me the following during mentoring. He is focussing on “Make Best Use ...” with one of his Supervisors who was known to be “direct” in style. The Manager commented that he better understands his Supervisor now. (JR learning – “all people must be treated as individuals”). This has led to the Manager being a better leader of this Supervisor. The warehouse operators have themselves commented that “management have changed, this is a better place to work”. The Supervisor above has himself undertaken JR training and he too is focussing on “Make Best Use ...”. He is working closely with an operator who was varying his daily output (containers loaded per day). This operator has for the past month consistently loaded twice as many containers as he was doing.

CONCLUSION

Good Job Relations changes agendas. People’s engagement is directly linked to the type of leadership they experience, the standards set by the company, the way in which those standards are reinforced, and the consistency in doing so. JR is helping TMI move toward supervision that is respected and embodies leadership. TMI are now well placed to be able to engage their people in a change program. They are constantly reinforcing minimum standards, and every supervisor and manager is working to improve their JR line.