

Final Report

PMA ANZ Produce Executive Program Scholarships

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Streamwise Learning Pty Ltd

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Project:

PMA ANZ Produce Executive Program Scholarships (VG16031)

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Summary

At the initial request of Horticulture Australia, “Executive Programs” a business owned by EMFOR Corporation P/L, conceived and developed a unique week long residential educational and training program for owners and senior and middle managers of companies and organisations involved in Australian horticulture. It was first held in September 2002 and embraces all horticulture products and all elements of the value chain, from input suppliers through growers, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, exporters and service suppliers to the industry. The business was bought by Streamwise Learning in 2008. The Program is now sponsored by PMA A-NZ and is called the Produce Executive Program.

Keywords

- Produce
- Horticulture
- Industry
- Executive Education
- Supply chain
- Streamwise Learning

Introduction

The Program was first held in May 2002 and embraces all horticulture products and all elements of the value chain, from input suppliers through growers, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, exporters and service suppliers to the industry.

The current contract of 3 scholarships for Australian levy paying vegetable growers to attend the PMA-A-NZ Produce Executive Program from 2017 to 2020 was adjusted to providing 4 scholarships for years 2018, 2019 and 2021.

The program has become extremely popular with all sectors of the Australian horticulture industry. It is equally relevant to all levels of the chain and participants have consistently given exceptionally high ratings for both relevance and satisfaction. Over the past three years the course as a whole has received an average rating of 4.6 for relevance and 4.6 for satisfaction (both on a five-point scale). To date, over 120 different companies have now sent delegates, many on an annual basis, and new contributing companies continue to be added to the list each year.

The program - which has no prescribed entry requirements - is aimed at imparting knowledge about worldwide developments and leading-edge trends, updating individual skills in leadership, strategy and working, “and expanding the network of like-minded people”. The diverse group of participants are carefully sorted into work groups (which change twice during the week) reflecting the different view points from the different levels of the supply chain and to ensure a thorough sharing of perspectives.

Methodology

In the 2018, 2019 and 2021 programs a total of another 97 owners and managers from all sectors of the industry have completed the program. This annual number of delegates (approx. 33) has allowed a quality program with a diversity of participants and supply chain sectors and a variety of types and sizes of enterprises. Such a breadth and depth of participation facilitates interactive discussion and provides synergy and a variety of perspectives for syndicate group exercises on current industry issues, management, marketing, meeting consumer needs, strategy, innovation, business relationships and communication and generally raises the quality of the learning outcomes.

The Program is currently being held at the Waurn Ponds Estate, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria. It is a five day fully residential Program. The Program fee includes instruction, accommodation, all meals, books and supplies.

Program Details

Mastering Market Realities	<i>Trends, Customers and Markets</i> A review of the key demographic, economic, lifestyle, shopping pattern and dietary factors which are driving the consumer market for produce, how these are changing and how produce retailers, foodservice operators, distributors, processors, suppliers and producers will need to respond if they are to succeed.
Succeeding at Innovation	<i>Problem Solving and Innovation</i> Practical tools to help solve day-to-day management problems and longer-term strategic issues. A framework for generating and evaluating innovation will be introduced and practised.
Leadership and Collaboration for Business Performance	<i>Leadership, Motivation and Decision Making</i> The key issues involved in motivating and retaining productive employees to grow the business will be examined. Participants will be provided with a framework to help interpret and understand their own management style and their primary motivating factors and how these can influence their decision-making as leaders. <i>Leading Effective Teams – Learning into Practice</i> A syndicate group exercise over the course of the week involving the use of collaboration and innovation on a real-life situation and requiring team building and team management, situation and opportunity analysis, application of course materials, group decision making and presentation of conclusions and recommendations. <i>Collaborative Advantage</i> A series of experiential activities aimed at understanding collaboration and its impact on teamwork, goal setting and business performance, identifying the barriers to collaboration and deciding when to collaborate versus compete in order to achieve business growth. <i>Personal Resilience</i> Experiential activities and discussion of the impact of personal health on emotional and mental well-being and the connection of well-being with individual and team-based decision making.

Industry Speakers 2021

Mr Michael Simonetta - Perfection Fresh
 Mr Sean Hallahan- Costa Group
 Mr Marie Gallagher - Woolworths Ltd
 Mr James Hutchinson - James Tyler
 Mr Michael Franks - Seeka Ltd
 Ms Katie de Villiers - OneHarvest

Timetable 2021



PMA A-NZ Produce Executive Program
23 – 28 May 2021

	SUNDAY 23 May	MONDAY 24 May	TUESDAY 25 May	WEDNESDAY 26 May	THURSDAY 27 May	FRIDAY 28 May
6.45am to 7.30am		Engiser with Lex	Engiser with Lex	Engiser with Lex	Engiser with Lex	Engiser with Lex
Breakfast 7.30am to 8.30am		Breakfast 7.30am to 8.30am	Breakfast 7.30am to 8.30am	Breakfast 7.30am to 8.30am	Breakfast 7.30am to 8.30am	Breakfast 7.30am to 8.30am
8.30 am to 9.45 am	<p>Chatham House Rule "When a meeting or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speakers, nor that of any other participant is to be revealed."</p>	Leadership and Culture <i>Dr Melinda Muth</i>	Problem Solving and Innovation <i>Ms Lisa Smith</i>	Trends, Customers and Markets - Global <i>Professor David Hughes (Zoom)</i>	Trends, Customers and Markets - Local <i>Mr Martin Kneebone</i>	Team Presentations <i>Dr Melinda Muth</i>
Break (morning tea) 9.45 am to 10.00am						
10.00 am to 11.15am		Leadership and Culture <i>Dr Melinda Muth</i>	Problem Solving and Innovation <i>Ms Lisa Smith</i>	Trends, Customers and Markets - Global <i>Professor David Hughes (Zoom)</i>	Australian Produce Value Chain <i>Mr Tristan Kitchener</i>	In Discussion <i>Mr Sean Hallahan</i>
Engiser/ Break 11.15am to 11.30am						
11.30am to 12.30pm		Leadership and Culture <i>Dr Melinda Muth</i>	Problem Solving and Innovation <i>Ms Lisa Smith</i>	In Discussion <i>Mr Darren Keating</i> <i>Ms Katie de Villiers</i>	Retail Supermarkets <i>Ms Marie Gallagher</i>	Feedforward / Course Review <i>Dr Melinda Muth</i>
Lunch 12.30pm to 1.30pm		Lunch 12.30pm to 1.30pm	Lunch 12.30pm to 1.30pm	Lunch 12.30pm to 1.30pm	Lunch 12.30pm to 1.30pm	Presentation of Certificates and Concluding Lunch
1.30pm to 2.30pm		3.00 pm Program Introduction <i>Dr Melinda Muth</i>	Collaborative Cup – Round 1 <i>Mr Lex Dwyer</i>	Collaborative Cup – Round 2 <i>Mr Lex Dwyer</i>	Collaborative Cup – Round 3 <i>Mr Lex Dwyer</i>	Export Markets <i>Mr James Hutchinson</i> <i>Mr Tristan Kitchener</i>
Break (afternoon tea) 2.30pm to 2.45pm						
2.45pm to 3.45pm		3.45pm – 5.30pm Leadership & Personal Resilience <i>Mr Lex Dwyer</i>	Leadership and Brand Innovation <i>Mr Michael Simonetta</i>	Success in Food Marketing in the 21 st Century – Mega Trends <i>Professor David Hughes (Zoom)</i>	In Discussion <i>Mr Michael Franks</i>	Goal Setting/Action Planning <i>Mr Lex Dwyer</i>
Reflection Activity 3.45pm to 4.15pm						
4.15pm to 5.00pm	5.30 pm Welcome Drinks	Team Effectiveness/Contracts <i>Dr Melinda Muth</i>	Team Meetings	Team Meetings	Team Meetings	
Dinner 6.30pm to 7.30pm	Dinner 6.30 to 8.30pm	Dinner 6.30pm to 7.30pm	Dinner 6.30pm to 7.30pm	Dinner 6.30pm to 7.30pm	Dinner 7.00 – 8.30 pm	
8.00pm	Individual Time	Individual Time	Team Meetings	Team Meetings		

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Outputs

All programs have clearly had the effect of raising management skill levels in the industry, particularly in the areas of managing people, leadership and teambuilding, understanding and responding to consumers and markets, business strategy, customer management, understanding and improving value chains, approaching business relationships more professionally, marketing, merchandising, brand development, growing the business, creating and using innovation and export marketing. In addition, participants' knowledge of leading-edge development in the produce industry from around the world has been upgraded and enhanced. Moreover, those attending leave with significant personal relationships with an expanded network of like-minded and progressive industry players from different part of the value chain.

New and ongoing business relationships, including collaborative alliances and cooperative approaches, often develop as a result of attending the course.

The 12 participants sponsored by HIA are below along with evaluation comments if supplied:

2018

Andreas Babiolakis – Sales Executive, Global Produce Solutions, Melbourne VIC

Overall this program was: *Great*.

Satish Chand – General Manager – Farms, Coolibah Herbs, Pearcedale VIC

Lauren East – Partner/Manager, Willarra Gold, Palgarrup WA

Overall this program was: *Excellent. Great networking opportunity and great strategy information to take back to business.*

Dumisani Mhlanga – Head Grower, Choice Seedlings, Werombi NSW

Overall this program was: *Excellent*.

2019

Wayne Adcock – Chief Operations Officer, Kalfresh, Kalbar QLD

Overall this program was: *Excellent and insightful*.

Anthony Chiera – Senior Business Manager, Fruitorama, Mt Barker SA

Overall this program was: *Excellent. The topics on global trends useful.*

Nicky Mann – WHS Manager, Family Fresh Farms, Peats Ridge NSW

Overall this program was: *Excellent, well structured and good, steady pace. The venue is outstanding! Food was awesome too. Content was good.*

Wade Mann – Senior Grower, Family Fresh Farms, Peats Ridge NSW

Overall this program was: *Comprehensive with good diversity, topics, speakers, program and participants.*

2021

Joshua Cranwell – Logistics and Operations Manager, AE Cranwell & Sons, Hay Valley SA

Overall this program was: *Pretty good being able to step away from life's business to focus on relevant information to better ourselves was great.*

Anthony De Ieso – Grower/Manager, Thorndon Park Produce, Waterloo Corner SA

Overall this program was: *Great content, however I do not feel I was at a good part of the industry to fully appreciate.*

Matthew Van Schaik – National Sales Manager – Retail, Hussey & Co, Pearcedale VIC

Overall this program was: *Fantastic, well organized, relevant and engaging. Loved it.*

Kees Versteeg – Sales and Business Development, Qualipac, Gatton QLD

Overall this program was: *very satisfied. Great experience, great accommodation and well organized.*

Outcomes

At the conclusion of each program every participant completes a comprehensive evaluation of the relevance to them and their satisfaction with each session, every presenter and speaker and the program as a whole. We are attaching below a piece on the evolution of the program in response to participant constructive suggestions.

In 2008, we were particularly pleased to have a slightly younger and very enthusiastic group including two who had participated previously in different roles. These two specifically commented on the improvement introduced by having several shorter case studies (rather than one which lasted throughout the course) enabling the work groups to be changed 3 times during the course thus facilitating the participants to work with as many other representatives from different sectors of the industry as possible in the time allocated.

The ratings for this program overall were 4.6 for relevance and 4.5 for satisfaction, which remains exceptionally high.

Clearly, the amount of responsive innovation in the program has quickened. At the same time the number of formal lectures has declined and the proportion of the course spent on the application of skills learned, group workshops, discussion of current challenges and local current situation case studies has increased, again at the recommendation of participants.

At the beginning of each program the Program Director holds an interactive session with the delegates where they are encouraged to articulate and discuss what they would like to get out of the course and what are the key (a) business and (b) personal issues they are currently facing. Responses to these points are woven into the course whenever possible. All the above factors contribute to making each program unique in itself. It is important to emphasize that while the format and concept remain the same, the actual content and the learning by each participant is individual to them, and to the course.

The current Produce Executive Program is clearly doing an excellent job in meeting the needs for a structured management development course suitable to all sectors of the Australian horticulture and produce industry.

Due to a lockdown in Victoria on Thursday 27 May 2021, this year's Program was cut short. The remaining day of sessions were presented the following week via zoom.

Monitoring and evaluation

Comments in the evaluations included: excellent, very informative and worthwhile, exceptionally relevant and thought provoking, beneficial and worthwhile, very satisfying and extremely informative, a great experience, interesting, stimulating and thought provoking, very relevant to the growth of my business, a good balance of learning and networking, very educational, a program of a very high standard and applicable to my role, provided clear models and examples of how to market and run a produce business, a great opportunity to network and discuss issues throughout the supply chain, provided a number of different perspectives on relevant issues, the interactive lectures and workshops were very effective, excellent, well run and very relevant, excellent content and very interactive and all participants were made to feel welcome.

Feedback from the HIA scholarships continues to strongly confirm the benefits of the course to individual participants, product groups, industry sectors and the horticulture and produce industry as a whole. Many key industry figures who have attended this annual course comment on the way in which potential barriers between participants are eliminated and how the participants start working together in the short space of a week.

Recommendations

The feedback from past participants strongly supports the continuation of the Produce Executive Program. Support from Horticulture Australia has been valuable and the Australian horticulture and produce industry would be benefiting from the increased skills and enhanced knowledge base of an estimated 691 owners and senior and middle managers who have completed the program. There are many owners and managers extant in our horticulture industry who could derive substantial benefits from the program for their business, for industry groups and for the industry as a whole. In short, there remains much upside potential in the industry learning curve which a continuation of the Produce Executive Program could help to meet.

Intellectual property, commercialisation and confidentiality

Each course incorporates significant intellectual property within a unique holistic pedagogical process owned by the “Institute of Food and Grocery Management” (under Streamwise Learning P/L). However, the resulting hard copy binder from each course contains all materials prepared in advance plus input annotated by the individual participant through interactive discussions during the program itself. The individual binder becomes the intellectual property of the individual participant.

Acknowledgements

Additionally, we acknowledge with gratitude the dedication to the programs and assistance in many forms but specifically by offering their time, experience and insight as Guest Speakers on the last three programs provided by the following:

Michael Simonetta, CEO, Perfection Fresh Australia

Tristan Harris, Co CEO, Harris Farm Markets

Sean Hallahan, CEO and Managing Director, Costa Group

Michael Franks, CEO, Seeka

Paul Turner, Head of Produce, Woolworths

George Haggard, CEO, Nutrano