

The Rural Conversation

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Welcome to our first newsletter under our new name Rural Coach

Formerly known as Coach Approach (for the past decade or more), we have this year changed our name to Rural Coach and we've been operating under this new name for the past six months.

As the name suggests, Rural Coach is all about helping Rural New Zealanders have the conversations that matter.

In this newsletter we have highlighted the key services that we offer, and given you the opportunity to hear from clients who have used our services.

As you will see, we work with individual farming and horticultural families, right through to large scale multi-site corporates. That's the beauty of the work that we do - it's scaleable and relevant, quite simply because good communications and solid strategic planning tools are useful in all walks of life.

As well as working directly with clients, we also work alongside other professionals like lawyers, accountants and on-farm advisors. Our skills and experience complement their skills, and we can often help unlock the strategic thinking or conversations that previously have been left unsaid.

As we move into the summer months, we hope that you will take the opportunity to take your thoughts and turn them into plans (and your plans into actions). We will be working throughout, so please don't hesitate to contact us if you need assistance from experienced and independent coaches, who are rural people by nature, just like you.

Our three core areas of activity are:

Succession Planning

Facilitating succession planning conversations for farming families and rural business owners. These can often be difficult or delicate conversations, but with our proven framework, we can help families get on the same track and walk confidently toward their future. To understand our value, see inside this newsletter for a case study featuring John Bourke. John tells how Rural Coach helped his family with completing their succession objectives and signing off on their family plan.

Business and Strategy

Reviewing and developing business and strategic plans to help farmers and rural business owners clarify purpose, vision, values and to align annual work plans.

On our website we've captured an interview we did with Grant Charteris. Grant outlines how Rural Coach has been there to help him and his wife Sally to understand their values, define their vision and create pathways to success. It's a great read and clearly highlights why having a plan is so valuable when assessing business and personal development opportunities.

People and Culture

Through our People360 Discovery and Development programme we help farmers and business owners understand and grow their people, improve their own performance and become employers of choice. We also provide a leadership programme called Ignite which brings together rural leaders or those about to step into leadership roles. Of course, we are available for one-on-one personal development coaching too.

We were fortunate to recently have the opportunity to interview Colin Glass, CEO of Dairy Holdings Limited. DHL have engaged Rural Coach for a number of years and are strong advocates for our People360 programme. We have published an excerpt from that interview on page 3 with the full interview available on our website.



Wishing you a happy festive season,

Happy Holidays

The team at Rural Coach

Succession Planning leads to Peace of Mind for Kiwifruit family

We had the pleasure of working alongside the Bourke family from Te Puke as they completed their family's succession plan. Read what John had to say about the process and the peace-of-mind it's given both him and wife Raewyn.

JOHN BOURKE

For me, the Succession Planning process with Rural Coach was really all about finishing off something that we had started as a family, but we didn't really now how to conclude it effectively.

In terms of what we wanted to get out of it when we started, it was about making sure there was no family animosity when we 'fell off the perch' so to speak. A lawyer once said to me that "you can't rule from the grave, but while you're still here, you can make sure that you've got things right". That really sparked a light for Raewyn and me, and it spurred us into action to make sure we got things done properly so that things were fair and equitable for both our children and their families, because they too had all made sacrifices to get the family business to where it is today.

The thing I liked most about the process with Rural Coach was that it was open, honest and transparent with no animosity along the way. They started by having each family member complete a survey which was done individually and in confidence. Then we all

came together to go over the answers and to quietly work our way through their guided process. Our Coach had a remarkable ability to draw things out of people without getting them upset or uncomfortable, and there was never any feeling that you were being rushed or pressured.

At the end of the process, the thing that I felt most of all was peace-of-mind. "It was like we all went into a safe bubble when we shared our answers and then from there, it was everyone in the bubble working together to develop up our eventual plan."

If friends ever ask me about Rural Coach, I tell them they were easy to talk to, and that it's a wonderful feeling to now have things sorted, before it's too late.

Our process took over a year and throughout that period, I always felt like we were working toward a solution to succession. Overall, it was a "pressureless process" and one I would highly recommend to others in the kiwifruit industry who want to get it right.



John's son Aidan also reflects on the value of the process undertaken with Rural Coach. You can read his story under the Case Studies tab on our website.

DID YOU KNOW

Rural Coach offers services that are registered with the Management Capability Development Fund?

Small businesses may qualify for vouchers to help pay for services such as training workshops, courses and coaching that build the management capabilities of their owners, operators and key managers. Management Capability Development Vouchers are only available through the Regional Business Partner Network (RBP) Growth Advisors.

Vouchers may be provided to a business where the Growth Advisors have identified a need for training as part of an action plan to support the business owner to grow and innovate their business. Find out more by visiting the regional business partners website www.regionalbusinesspartners.co.nz.

 **RuralCoach**

Ready when you are

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Colin Glass

CEO, Dairy Holdings Limited

Colin has long been a fan of Rural Coach, with the company using the People360 programme and Ignite Leadership course to support their People & Culture objectives.

In this abridged version of an interview with Colin, we highlight some of the key feedback he provided on the value of our People360 programme.

"We're in the midst of a war for talent right now meaning it's vital to invest in our people, and to keep investing so that they develop their careers alongside us.

Although this has always been important to us, we believe that you can always do better, and you can always do more," he said.

"Rather than simply roll out Performance Appraisals on an annual basis, we wanted an Employment Accreditation and full 360 programme for our people, similar in nature to the process that farmers and sharemilkers might go through for Business Awards or People Grow Awards."

Colin said that DHL wanted a trusted third party to lead the process.

"Our people won't talk to us as frankly as they will talk to someone else. For some reason, when strangers go onto your farms, your people will tell them everything," he said.

Why Rural Coach?

"What we liked about Rural Coach was that they have the right mix of corporate experience and rural backgrounds. Most of those we have on farm are in their thirties and forties, and technically very good as farmers, but they've often had no formal training on employment matters like how to recruit, and how to coach and give feedback effectively.

By comparison, Rural Coach know what good people development systems can look like and have strong rural connections and farming backgrounds. This gives them immediate street credibility when they step onto the farm," he said.

How does it work?

The People360 process starts with DHL's leadership team meeting with Rural Coach to discuss our objectives for the year ahead. Thereafter, onsite interviews are conducted by Rural Coach using their People360 framework, with information gathered and collated into a final report which is passed by each Farm Supervisor to check. From there, an Action List is created for Development and Improvement. This creates circularity that is aligned with strategy, with themes to respond to, and personal ownership for change allowed to cascade through the organisation.

Is it working?

On reflection, Colin said that Rural Coach has been hugely valuable in capturing information and providing feedback to everyone. "They have been our eyes and ears for many years. What they discover for us is the equivalent to gold."

Financially, the programme is paying big dividends too. A few years ago, no one would have thought that people management would be reflected in milk prices. But what we're finding today is that there's a direct correlation between what we earn and the focus we put on our people. Not only is there a war on to attract and retain good people, but international markets are changing with people willing to pay a premium to businesses who do the right thing.

Rural Coach and their listening culture have enabled us to be at the front of the curve. They listen carefully to what our people have to say, and because of that, we listen to them carefully too.



To read the full interview with Colin, please visit our website.

Hear from

Rural New Zealanders



A Family Affair

We had talked with our Bank Manager about involving our children in our farming business. They had both shown an interest. He talked about Rural Coach and we thought this could be helpful. We needed help to get everyone talking, involved and contributing.

Dairy Farmers / Canterbury



Moving Forward

Having external facilitation from the Rural Coach consultants was invaluable to enabling our business to move forward. They provided a clear pathway and processes with great experience and helped remove the negative emotion that is frequently involved.

Deer Farmers / Hawkes Bay



A Tight Knit Team

Our team are communicating better, striving for the same goals and are a tighter knit team. We are thrilled with the results and would encourage any farm team to invest in Rural Coach's People360 workshop to improve their team culture and communication.

Drystock Farmers / Mossburn



Meet the Rural Coach team helping New Zealand farmers have the conversations that matter.

For coaching for individual, family or business success, please talk to any of our team members.



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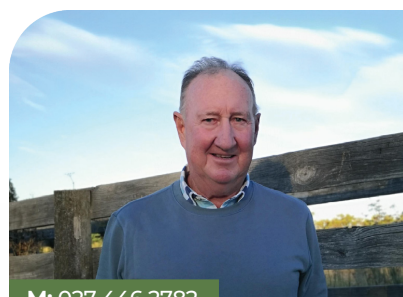
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Jodie Brenton-Rule
Finance / Admin Manager

The Christmas and New Year period often can be a time for reflection, with resolutions made to reduce stress, get affairs in order or to change up how you interact with others.

If you've got a plan for change, succession or growth in your head, and you want to sound it out with those around you, but you're not sure how to start, then we are here to assist. We help New Zealanders across the country to articulate their thoughts and to have the conversations that matter so that everyone can get on the same track. We'd be glad to help you too.