

TEPAP 2010

Report for Nuffield Australia, Murray Scholz

Overview

Thanks to the generosity of the Kelly Family I was fortunate to attend The Executive Program for Agricultural Producers (TEPAP) held at Barton Creek Resort, Austin Texas USA.

The program ran over seven days from the 9th of January. It involved 33 hours of lectures and approximately 10 hours of open forum discussion between the lecturers and participants.

The topics covered were

- Family Business Management
- Financial Management
- Megatrends
- Personality Types
- Human Resource Management
- Problem Solving
- Leadership
- Process improvement
- Strategic Management
- Growth Strategies
- Public relations

Highlights

Megatrends by David Kohl

David gave us an overview of both the US & world economies. His view is that the US economy has improved but still has a long way to recover. He also showed us the five tools he uses to monitor the economy. He uses tools such as leading edge indicators, purchasing manager index, housing starts, factory utilisation and unemployment rates to give him a guide of where the economy is headed.

Problem Solving by Dr Bill Carden

Bill discussed the nature of decision making, the misconceptions and the common mistakes managers make when making decisions. We looked at strategies for making better decisions and how to implement them.

Leadership by Dr Jeff Magee

Jeff discussed his strategies on how to be a successful leader and manager. We looked at the mindset and skills needed as well as how to align human capital, improve communication and bring out the best in our employees.

Conclusions

I found the week very good with a lot of information to consider for my own business. I learnt something from every topic, but topics such as financial management and family business management were less relevant as they were aimed at a North American audience. This was due to factors like tax law and subsidies.

Participants ranged in age from 20 to 60 and business size ranged from an annual income of \$500,000 to \$26,000,000. Most participants were from the traditional industries of grain, beef & dairy. There was also many niche industries represented such as compost, turkeys and rice.

It was great to socialise and network with the participants but with such a busy schedule and a large number of participants (approximately 85 in Unit 1) it was hard to build strong relationships. I have made some good friends and if I complete Unit II next year those friendships will be strengthened.

I have never participated in a management course in Australia so for me it is hard to compare. It is a large investment by Nuffield Australia to send a scholar here. TEPAP does give the visiting scholar an insight into American management techniques and strategies that would be difficult to achieve in Australia. I will definitely be using what I have learnt in my own business.

I believe that Nuffield sending a scholar each year does have value in raising the profile of Nuffield. It also gives us many businesses as potential visit sites for future global focus trips.

I would like thank Nuffield Australia for giving me the opportunity to attend TEPAP and my understanding family for letting me abandon them yet again.

Murray Scholz, January 2010