



Dear Fresh Produce Agent

Often the question is asked, “what makes a formula ‘won’ team”? Their ability to trust one another or their ability to stay focused on the vision of the business? High performance teams make higher quality decisions and achieve more in less time, with less commotion and frustration. They avoid wasting time talking about market gossip/the wrong issues and revisiting the same topics over and over again because of a lack of clear direction and buy in.



Much is written about the value of fully effective teams, yet so few perform anywhere close to their full potential. Knowing about the dysfunction within the team is critical as the agency's executives/owners set the tone for the entire business. If the dysfunctions are not identified and resolved, the people within the organisation will not believe in their owners/executives abilities to maintain and increase the efficiency of team efforts, resulting in a decline in effort, performance, trust and ultimately a decline in profits.

Establishing a formula ‘won’ team, requires courage and discipline which might not make one the most popular executive/owner, but it will instil trust and confidence. To begin improving the team and to better understand the level of dysfunction, these simple questions might assist:

- *Does the team have legitimacy in the eyes of others?* How do fellow agents view the conduct of your sales personnel? More importantly, do farmers, who entrust their most valuable asset to your agency, believe that the backbone of the agency is built on transparency and ethical values?
- *Do the team members feel mutually accountable for the results of the agency or is each sales person functioning as if they are a “franchise” on its own?*
- *Do team members sacrifice their own interests for the good of their client, the farmer?*
- *Is there an absence of trust, as sales personnel are reluctant to be vulnerable with one*



another and unwilling to admit to executives their mistakes, weaknesses or need for help? Teams with a low level of trust will never be able to apply their full focus onto what really matters – results.

- *Is the team clear about what it wants to achieve and how to win?* If the agency has no strategic plan, they are planning to fail.

Although no team is perfect, it is essential to address dysfunctions as soon as possible since they impact on the agency’s ability to ensure a formula ‘won’ team.

The key building-blocks for a formula ‘won’ team are for executives/owners to perform certain activities daily, weekly, monthly and annually. This will ensure that dysfunctions are identified and addressed in good time. The following will serve as a guideline:

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- Check if late sales are taking place and how these transactions are recorded.
 - Check if late sales are actually a mechanism used for irregular credit sales.
 - Check if discarded produce is ONLY discarded by a Health Inspector (no paying in at a low price).
 - Conduct random, surprised stock audits **yourself**.

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- Check if agents are reporting to Producers, within 3 days after receiving a consignment; on the quantity that is unsold, sold and discarded (check evidence in terms of Freshmark/Market IT reports that were either faxed or sent by email).
 - Check at least weekly that written reporting to producers is taking place.
 - Check if all producers are paid within 5 working days after the produce was sold.

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- Check agents’ buyer cards to review transactions.
 - Check volumes of cancelled transactions, the reasons for these, at what price and if they were booked for and to which buyer.
 - Review the transaction flow of produce that was reserved for buyers.
 - Thoroughly check the monthly trust reconciliation before submitting it to APAC.

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- Review with your team the agency’s performance for the past year as well as identify successes and failures in order to strategise for the year ahead.
 - Sign a Service Level Agreement with your producers.
 - Review with your auditors the audit report and submit it to APAC in good time.



Is not a % of your time...
It is 100 % of your behaviour

We also want to use this opportunity to wish you and your team a very Happy Holiday season and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

