
Welcome to [ASK] - Always Seeking Knowledge!
#5 - Sunday, June 30, 2002
Written and Published by Bruce Ward, Holistic Results Pty. Limited

Table of Contents

- 1 Quick [ASK]
- 2 Welcome
- 3 Around the Traps
- 4 More on change and direction
- 5 Update your diary
- 6 Books and materials you can use
- 7 Joke
- 8 Quotes that mean something

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1. Quick [ASK]

Last week the Australian Bureau of Agricultural Resource Economics (ABARE) announced that Australian farmers will experience a 40% downturn in farm receipts during 2002/03. They expect almost every major commodity to be effected. My question is, what is this 'cheese move' going to do to you in the next 12 months?

I have some good news. Everyone who has attended a 'Wealth Generation' module already knows they have the tools required to handle this situation.

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2. Welcome

This month I am starting by passing on a request for help I received last week. Many of you have either met - or have heard of - *Phillip Panizza*. Phillip was one of those hardy pioneers who was in the very first WA group. It seems a long time ago, now.

He is also one of a small group who is actively involved in bringing the wool harvesting business into the 21st century. He is a founding director of a company named "ShearExpress". These people have developed a portable shearing machine based on a production line concept. It is said this invention may well make conventional shearing sheds redundant. A few months ago ShearExpress gained a multi-million dollar grant from Wool Innovations Limited to bring the prototype to full commercial production.

The machine has a range of amazing new concepts built into it, including new comb and cutter advancements - and much more. One of the underlying concepts - right from inception - was that this machine must not only cause a sheep to be shorn, but collect and utilise a range of data about the flock, at the individual sheep level and then by age, sex, mob etc etc.

Phil is now getting the last bits of the puzzle together and has written to me, asking:

Could you help please. ShearExpress needs to find out what "farm production recording" software programs farmers are using. The ShearExpress mobile wool harvesting systems does not only remove the sheep from its wool, it also collect a range of production data on the sheep. This data will need to be fed back automatically into the farmer's "paddock / flock recording program", so the farmer can extract useful \$ and production related information.

ShearExpress needs to know what programs farmers are using, and the contact for the program developer, so we can make sure the data we produce can seamlessly feed into the farm production recording system.

Let's ASK!

Regards

Phillip Panizza
ShearExpress
CEO / Operations p 08 9209 3630 f 08 9209 3631 e
info@shearexpress.com.au

If you are using an agricultural software program, please let Phil know what it is. Click on his email address on the line above. Do your bit to get this incredibly innovative machine into the paddock, so it is the best it can be for as many people as possible. Making sure all bases are covered now beats having to do patches later.

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3. Around the Traps

WA

The early break has turned out as a mixed deal. For some, it kept on raining. For others it is the fourth consecutive lousy start. Large areas of crop remain unplanted at this stage, so I am told.

There is some good news. *Pam McGregor* is home, and doing well. It seems that nobody consulted her about not walking again, so she just got on with it!!

Era Farming's *Ken Bailey* is working with us, so that many of their cropping clients attend the next program, which starts in a month (July 31st) in Perth. There will be a great mix of stock and cropping people present.

Vic

Pretty ordinary in much of Victoria. Already the smart operators are consulting their rainfall records and doing a Richardson Analysis. Some have already made livestock marketing decisions based on this analysis. Doing nothing doesn't seem like the best plan, they feel.

By the way, did you read the wonderful article by *Hazel Wann* in the last Newsletter? If not, I urge you to read it.

NSW

So much for the good rain. Almost all of inland northern NSW is dreadful. In all, well over 60% of the state is drought declared. In the south I hear that an area roughly 30 kms in radius, centered on Wagga, is ok. The rest is generally reported as crook.

A great group now under way at Wingham. Diversity would be a word that springs to mind about this lot. Diverse backgrounds - one was once a designer of breweries and wineries -

before he fell in love with Berkshire pigs, cattle, sheep, ducks and geese, and more - at Booral. We have the whole famdamily in the group - but the animals have stayed at home!

Excitingly we have a group at Cooma. Over 20 people completed the Wealth Generation module this week. A few repeats in this group as well, including *Peter and Narelle Davis* (Cooma) and *Grant Molloy* (Manduramah).

NZ

Lots of snow down south. Alexandra had a metre the other day. That then iced up and was followed by another fall. A lot of sheep were in trouble for a while. *Ben Turner* tells me he was feeding almost every animal for a while, because of the snow. *Bob and Sue Simpson* have returned from an extended holiday in Europe, excited about his future in New Zealand.

There has been a population increase in the South Island recently. *Ben and Caroline Innes* have produced twin daughters, *Alex and Suzie*. *Murray and Kate Ross* then produced a daughter, *Zoe*. Shortly after, *Ben and Anna Turner* produced their daughter, *Sky*. Congratulations.

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4. More on Change and Direction

1 *There is more change coming*

Last time I wrote, it was about Dr Spencer Johnson's great little book, "Who Moved My Cheese?". In part I wrote, "*Who Moved My Cheese* is about how we react when somebody changes the rules on us."

In Australia, we should get ready for an imminent cheese move, and it will effect NZ as well. Last week the Australian Bureau of Agricultural Resource Economics (ABARE) announced that Australian farmers will experience a 40% downturn in farm receipts during 2002/03. They expect almost every major commodity to be effected. My question is, what is this 'cheese move' going to do to you in the next 12 months?

I have some good news. Everyone who has attended a 'Wealth Generation' module already knows they have the tools required to handle this situation. You have already encountered this problem and found a solution. You will recall that everyone who participated in your group was thrown in the deep end, just like you were. You will remember they all mentally 'kicked and squealed' for a while at the difficulty of the problem, but then collectively came up with a way forward. Almost invariably (admittedly with a deep breath and a strong dose of courage) the options people come up with are 'do-able'.

That word, '**courage**', is really important. Many will recall me once before recounting the late American commentator, Earle Nightingale, in a marvellous broadcast he made, saying that 'the opposite of courage is not cowardice, but CONFORMITY'. People tend to conform to current practices and beliefs, often until they are forced to change. Think about that for a while. Change is under way again, after the brief respite provided to us by a period of generally higher prices than we have experienced in perhaps the previous 10 or more years.

If you are doing your wealth generation planning, make sure that it incorporates all of the ingredients of Holistic Financial Planning. These are:

- Have a goal for your whole
- Look for log jams that are stopping you making change (probably people related)
- Check the Gross Profit (GP) of current enterprises
- Brainstorm potential new enterprises (Good, Average and Poor)
- Select new and existing enterprises that have a high GP

- Pass all selected enterprises through the remaining testing questions
- After doing this, decide your enterprises for the next year
- Allocate your WIM expenses, and brainstorm ways to cut them (Remember that your Wealth Generation ('W') Expenses will probably include some Quality of Life items as well - you should test this for yourself)
- Create the plan, setting a profit that is difficult but achievable

Make sure all of the decision makers in your whole are involved. This is critical. Do what is necessary to make this happen.

Use the green Holistic Financial Planning Aide (ring or fax Irené Dasey on 02 6721 0255, if you don't have a current version). Follow it through, step by step.

If you need help in creating a Wealth Generation Plan, call someone. My number is +61 2 9929 5568. Others can help you as well - and we are happy to give you their numbers. A few dollars of time will look pretty cheap compared to a 40% drop in your turnover. Remember this, the 40% drop is OPTIONAL. You get to choose. You can either be reactive after the event, or pro-active and committed to your goal. Either way, the cheese will move this year in some way or another, so expect and plan for that!

I am really excited by the new and different things people are doing. I am impressed by the way people are addressing their Weak Link. Some really good marketing ideas are showing up. In addition, more and more people are recognising that, "Profit is a function of Cost of Production, not Sale Price", still has a basic truth attached to it. It is a pretty good starting point, I have observed.

2 A tap on the shoulder for me

As you know, I am the chairman of the new Holistic Decision Making Association (HDMA). I have considered the need for this organisation as critical for about seven years. Now it exists, and it is starting to work.

The board is developing a strategic plan as I write this Newsletter. That plan will be the result of a large amount of work, especially by the the non-educator directors. We have initiated consultations with a wide range of practitioners and with the Educators, seeking to find exactly what practitioners (or as *George Gundry* like to call us all - Learners) really need from the Association. The answer is clear, and succinct. Better support structures.

What is emerging is that some people are angry that they have not had sufficient support up to date. If you are one of those people, I am writing to apologise to you, and to advise you I believe your needs will soon be met.

Philosophically, I have seen myself as a messenger, if you like, that there is an alternate way of making decisions - one that allows better and better outcomes for individuals, families, and businesses. I have always believed that how people use this knowledge is an entirely individual thing. At first, I also thought that self directed support groups would provide the level of support needed. I expected that peers would assist peers to move forward using the new process. Gradually it became clear that some people could not organise themselves to do this, and more was needed.

I have not wanted to create a large consulting businesses, offering a wide range of support services, employing many people. My core business is the basic story. I can only speak for myself here, but the actions of other Educators suggests that we all share a broadly similar view. Nevertheless for our own part, Suzie and I have chosen to risk our business several times in the last 8 years, through our involvement in every conference held to date in either Australia or New Zealand, because we believed they were the most cost effective medium for support available at the time they were each held.

The idea of an Association (whose membership spans the work of hopefully hundreds of Educators in the future) as the basic support structure appeals to me enormously. I just didn't think it would take so long to be put in place. Now we have it.

We do have an Association, and it is working on some practical, innovative and affordable ways to provide you needed support. I ask you to give us a few more weeks. We have a board meeting in Sydney on July 19 and 20. Some big decisions will be made then that I expect will address the concerns you have raised with the non-educator directors in both Australia and New Zealand. I simply cannot tell you how much unpaid work these people have put into making progress on your behalf. It is work that no individual can do on their own, and they are doing it because they believe that things can be better than they presently are.

Holistic Management is new. It is a 'work in progress'. With the best will in the world, mistakes are likely to be made by us all. I have made more than one. But that doesn't mean I have stopped trying to be better. I ask you to take a broad view, and support the Association as it moves forward in its vitally important work of developing better support mechanisms for you.

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5. Update your Diary

Events we have planned include:

Monday, July 15,	Wingham, NSW	Grazing and Land Planning
Wednesday, July 24	Bega, NSW	Overview of Holistic Management
Wednesday, July 24	Cooma, NSW	Grazing and Land Planning
Tuesday, July 30	Three Springs, WA,	Overview of Holistic Management
Wednesday, July 31	Perth, WA	Introduction to Holistic Management
Wednesday, August 7	Quirindi, NSW	Introduction to Holistic Management
Monday, September 2	Perth, WA	Financial Planning/Wealth Generation
Friday, September 6	Quirindi, NSW	Financial Planning/Wealth Generation
Wednesday, Sept 11	Wanaka, NZ	Introduction to Holistic Management
Tuesday, September 24	Perth, WA	Grazing and Land Planning

Call us and talk about coaching in holistic goal formation, wealth generation planning or biological planning. Coaching can be conducted by regular phone schedule, or at your location.

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6. Books and Materials you can use

"Who Moved My Cheese?"

I am reprinting the review of this book, because I believe its concepts will be important for us all in the next year or so. Dr. Spencer Johnson's excellent book is, he says, a parable about modern life. Like most of the books I recommend, it is small, easily read and full of meaning. *Who Moved My Cheese* is about how we react when somebody changes the rules on us. In this case the mice suddenly had their cheese removed. How did they react? It is an intriguing story. Should they move on and find new cheese? Should they hang around expecting the cheese would return again? How would their various

temperaments respond - would some be resigned to the new conditions, would some become angry, or would they be challenged to find 'new cheese'?

What is your 'cheese'? Is it the market - or market prices for your product? Are you stuck in the enterprises and activities you are in now, even when they are no longer working as well as they once did? Is it relationships that are changing around you? You can be sure that people are always moving our cheese. It is our response that matters, not the fact that the cheese has moved.

A must read for everyone, at around \$A17.95

By the way:

You can get this book from The Book Connection in Dubbo, NSW

Ph: 02 6882 3311 Fax: 02 6882 3311 or email orders@bookconnection.com.au

(Also ask them about their Mail Order Catalogue - it is terrific)

or

Scorpio Books in Christchurch, NZ

Ph: 03 379 2882 Fax: 03 379 2886 or email scorpbk@ihug.co.nz

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7. Joke.

I am indebted to Gail Guthrie of WA, for her seemingly inexhaustible supply of jokes. Thanks, Gail!

The old Cherokee chief sat in his reservation hut, smoking the ceremonial pipe, eyeing the two US government officials sent to interview him.

"Chief Two Eagles," one official began, "you have observed the white man for many generations, you have seen his wars and his products, you have seen all his progress, and all his problems."

The chief nodded. The official continued, "Considering recent events, in your opinion, where has the white man gone wrong?"

The chief stared at the government officials for over a minute, and then calmly replied. "When white man found the land, Indians were running it. We had: No taxes. No debt. Plenty buffalo. Plenty beaver. Women did the work. Medicine man free. Indian men hunted and fished all the time..."

The chief smiled, and added quietly, "White man dumb enough to think he could improve system like that."

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8. Quotes that mean something

"You will do foolish things, but do them with enthusiasm."

-- Colette

"And the trouble is, if you don't risk anything, you risk even more."

-- Erica Jong

"We would worry less about what others think of us if we realized how seldom they do."

-- Ethel Barrett

If you have a great ambition, take as big a step as possible in the direction of fulfilling it. The step may only be a tiny one, but trust that it may be the largest one possible for now.

-- Mildred McAfee

"Fear of the unknown is the worst of all the fears; it kills the creative powers that come from Curiosity."

-- Dr. Nirvikar Dahiya

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Regards

Bruce Ward