

Case Study

Assuring Sustainable Growth: Creating the structure for a Commercial Farm



Business Context

Greenway Farms is a carrot farm, located in Tarlton, close to Krugersdorp in the Gauteng province. Greenway Farms is the result of a merger between the two farms of Mr. Vito Rugani and Mr. Vincent Sequeira in 1992. Both farms started small, but the two entrepreneurs managed to create a competitive edge in the industry that allowed them to obtain substantial market share. With an innovative technique that was adopted from Australia, the farm created a turnaround point for carrot production in South Africa: hydro-cooled carrots. The technique increased shelf life of these normally highly perishable goods, which boosted sales of "Africa's Favourite Carrot".

Increased demand required increased production, and over the past few years Greenway Farms developed into a farm with 150 staff members, growing 750 Ha of carrots per annum. The growth of the farm required a business approach: the right structures had to be put in place to support the growing organisation and to create space for the directors to focus on strategy instead of operations. Rugani: "A solid company needs a structure. A structure promotes discipline, which promotes trust. Structure, Discipline and Trust are the building blocks for a healthy organisation."

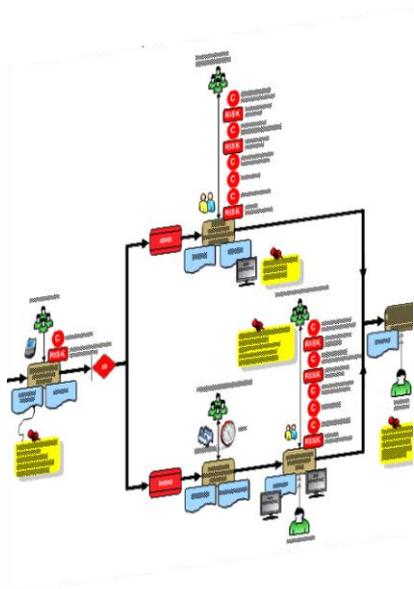
Greenway Farms contracted Pétanque to assist in developing the organizational structure that is informed by business processes, in other words, a structure which supports the "what needs to be done" of the farm. Using the visually rich, interactive approach of VizPro® process mapping to agree step by step on who does what when and how, business knowledge was captured, roles were clarified and current practices were improved on.

Point of Differentiation

Vito Rugani: "We started hitting the ceiling of growth, and we realised that we had to empower senior management to take over the daily responsibility of the operations. The exercise of mapping our processes created the perfect forum to communicate the detail of the processes and the risks involved. We now feel assured that our senior managers are equipped to fulfill their tasks and responsibilities."

Pétanque applies VizPro® to define processes in detail in order to achieve outcomes. Not only does VizPro® define who does what when, but it also identifies communication methods, document flow and management elements such as key performance indicators, risks, controls and compliance elements. VizPro® delivers results through interactive workshops where role players define, debate and agree on each step in a process. Once the steps have been defined, the roles are assigned in a collaborative fashion. Organisation structure therefore follows on process. Each process dictates what should be done and then roles are linked to activities.

Rugani: "The visualisation of the process and the people involved, and the use of keywords to describe the activity in each step had an additional unexpected benefit: we have empowered people who don't speak English as their first language to supervisor or management positions, which sometimes causes communication problems. The visualisation was so powerful that our people now understand exactly what is going on, and productivity actually improved instantly."



The key elements of VizPro® are:

- Participation, resulting in buy-in.
- Real time data capture: images and icons are used to build the process on screen, during discussion. Role players participate in the step by step build of the process, and at the end of the work session, leave with the logic, reasons and arguments for and against the process firmly embedded in personal knowledge banks. At the end of each session, the process map is visible evidence of the work that was done.
- Using easy to follow, colorful images.
- Ensuring business continuity due to knowledge being captured.

"Although the VizPro® methodology is tool independent, we use Microsoft® Visio®", says Dr Michelle Booyen, Managing Director of Pétanque. "It is easy to use, it allows our Process Architects to be creative as we capture data, participants understand what is happening at all times during the work session and the end result, as displayed in the process maps, is visually attractive and fun to work with. The real impact though is that Visio® has given us the means with which to unpack difficult, complex concepts, processes and business requirements in easy to understand, follow and come-back-to format."

Performance Management

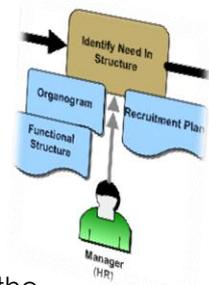
Once a process is defined in terms of "who does what when" other team members are invited to a second workshop to challenge the process. In this workshop the risks, controls and performance indicators of the process are added as well.

Rugani: "Each process needs to be measured by what we call KCV's: Known Critical Values. This means that it is measurable, it can be quantified, it is critical to the process and it's valuable to the company."

This theoretical process of identifying KCV's had an immediate impact: "In mapping the process for our packhouse we identified the KCV to measure the productivity per person per hour. This immediately resulted in an increase in productivity by 15%."

Role clarification

At the farm, staff was unclear about the respective roles of the two directors which lead to uncertainty on whom to speak to when problems arose and the fear that when speaking to one, they will offend the other. The impact of these communication problems were felt 6 months prior to the process mapping exercise when a bad crop was the result of problems that could have been prevented or mitigated if the risks were brought to the attention of the directors in time.



During the VizPro® workshops, role clarification was achieved through the participation of all impacted role players, thorough discussion and mutual agreement. These roles are captured on the maps and communicated to all staff. The process mapping exercise further identified inefficiencies which were corrected through improved practice steps being added to the processes.

The Outcome

The project involved two weeks of process mapping workshops. The deliverables were

- a positioning map in which the eight key processes to deliver the strategic goals of the business were identified,
- the detail mapping of these eight key processes, and
- an organogram of the new company structure which will be implemented to support the strategic direction of the business.

In summary, the achievement of strategic goals of the business is articulated in the processes and driven by an organogram that is based on what the processes require in terms of role players.

Pétanque sees business processes as the basis for organisational growth and development. Before an enterprise can decide on organisational structure, it first needs to decide on what must be done – and this can only be achieved by capturing knowledge of those who know what to do and where the business needs to head to.

At Greenway Farms one of the workshops also served as an induction. Rugani: "The workshop has been a great induction tool. A candidate sat in on one of the workshops, and before she even started the job, she knew exactly what was going on in that process. New employees can now just read the printed maps to see what the process looks like."

“This project was very important to us in that we worked with the business owners. We focused on delivering immediate value and continued benefit, and achieved these in a collaborative fashion: the business owners were the key drivers to ensure company-wide participation and to partake in delivering immediate returns. We are pleased to have achieved the benefits and look forward to a continued supportive relationship with Greenway Farms”, says Michéle Booyen.

Post Delivery Follow Up

Six months after concluding the project, we went back to the farm for a post-implementation evaluation. Rugani: “The process maps have a dedicated room on the farm, known as the Battle Room. There we strategise, action new plans and induct all new employees. We employed a new Production Manager, based on the new organogram, took him to the Battle Room, reviewed all the processes and he immediately understood what was required of him, and it gave him a clear picture of the farm's operations.” Communication on the farm has always been critical and previously, due to a lack thereof, resulted in large amounts of bad crop. Rugani: “Since the VizPro® work sessions and mapping the processes, internal communication has improved. Now my employees know when they immediately have to pick up the phone to talk to the relevant person, and also when they can just send an email.”

About Pétanque

Pétanque works with clients to improve business performance and bring about change through best-practice processes, business analysis and project implementation, linking into business vision and strategy. Pétanque specialises in:

- Process development, improvement and documentation
- Capturing business knowledge through processes
- Business analysis
- Project management
- Strategy development and business planning
- Storyboard development and presentation that assist in effective communication of complex messages
- Interactive, informative and fun training



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