



CHAPTER 6

It is important to create a workforce plan and recruiting process that ensures sufficiently trained and motivated employees are available when needed.

Maintaining a Productive and Motivated Workforce

The effective management of human resources can reduce risks and cut costs. It benefits vineyard and winery operations through improved employee morale, attitudes, and productivity. This not only helps with retention and recruiting, but can positively impact the economic bottom line and overall sustainability of your business.

This chapter summarizes recommended practices for the optimal management of human resources for vineyard operations. Practices are categorized by: A) Workforce Planning & Recruiting, B) Employee Safety & Training, C) Communication & Employee Relations, and D) Employee Reward Systems.

A. Workforce Planning & Recruiting

Most vineyard and winery operations in California have a combination of full-time, part-time, and seasonal workers. It is important to create a workforce plan and recruiting process that ensures sufficiently trained and motivated employees are available when needed.

Workforce Planning

- After each harvest, develop a workforce plan for the next 12 months that documents:
 - Estimated number of acres to be managed
 - Types of work to be performed, and the percentage of each that will be mechanized
 - Number of full-time, part-time and seasonal workers needed
 - Employees who may be retiring, leaving, or promoted
- Identify discrepancies between the number of workers needed and the number available. Use this information as the basis for preparing an Annual Recruitment Plan (see below); moreover, consider developing a 5-year Workforce Recruiting Strategic Plan.

Key Safety Issues to Address During Employee Training

- Safe use and handling of pesticides (and other chemicals) and pesticide notification procedures
- Availability and interpretation of Materials Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs)
- Prevention of heat stress
- Importance of personal hygiene and daily changes into clean clothing
- Hazardous materials handling
- Equipment operational and confined space safety
- First aid
- Solid waste handling
- Avoiding dangerous snakes, spiders, and related hazards in the vineyard

Note: Providers of worker's compensation insurance generally offer free or low-cost safety training and audits.

Cost of Creating Workforce Plan	Management time
Benefits of Creating Workforce Plan	Early identification of potential gaps in employment and time to resolve
Resources	http://www.hhs.gov/ohr/workforce/wfpguide.html

Recruiting Plan & Process

- Create a recruitment plan, as part of a broader workforce plan, that includes the following:
 - Identify your preferred recruitment method(s)
 - Create an associated recruiting budget
 - Develop provisions for emergency recruitment, e.g., unexpected employee turnover
 - Identify individual(s) responsible for recruiting and ensure they are trained on legally mandated hiring practices
 - Ensure that your recruiting process complies with state and federal requirements

Cost of Creating Recruitment Process	Management time plus recruitment costs (actual costs are dependent upon recruiting process used, e.g., word of mouth is less expensive than advertising)
Benefit of Creating Recruitment Process	The development and implementation of a standardized recruiting process results in saved time and avoids potential legal problems
Resources	http://www.calbizcentral.com/HRC/News/Articles/Hiring/Recruiting/Pages/Default.aspx

B. Employee Safety & Training

Developing and applying effective safety and training programs can increase employees' morale, performance, and job satisfaction. Training can be done in various formats and should include safety, orientation, professional, and supervisory/management training. Certain safety policies and training are legally mandated, and all businesses should be aware of and implement those requirements.

Safety Planning

- Develop an Illness and Injury Prevention Plan (IIPP) that documents steps to prevent workforce injury and illness. (The IIPP must be in writing for businesses with over 10 employees). For details, see http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/IIPP.html
- Identify and plan measures to prevent heat stress, explained in **Box 6.1**
- Develop a plan for emergencies, including fire, which should be documented in an Emergency Action Plan (EAP). For details, see <http://www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/3220.html>
- Create a Hazard Communication (HAZCOM) program which identifies workplace hazards, including hazardous substances employees may handle or be exposed to during work. Determine which substances require employees to wear protective gear when handling; and specify postings, training, and other methods to effectively communicate hazards

- Ensure that Materials Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) are readily available for hazardous chemicals or materials
- Conduct an ergonomics assessment for repetitive tasks and identify and communicate safety standards for doing work without injury

Safety and Health Training and Monitoring

- Develop a safety training program that addresses IIPP, EAP, HAZCOM, ergonomics, and heat stress prevention. Employees who handle dangerous substances, such as pesticides, or operate hazardous equipment should receive additional training and be provided with necessary protective gear (See Boxes 6.1 and 6.2)
- Develop methods for ongoing safety communication and document all safety training; documentation should include employee signatures
- Implement a regular safety inspection process
- Consider adopting a safety bonus system to reward positive behavior
- Comply with Cal/OSHA reporting and documentation requirements, including recording and reporting workplace injuries
- If there are Spanish speaking employees in your operation, translate safety communications, documents, and training for Spanish-speaking employees
- Ensure all employees have access to worker's compensation insurance

Orientation Training

- Schedule at least one hour with new employees during their first day of work to review company history, policies and procedures, the employee handbook, employee benefits, safety elements, employment forms, etc.
- Consider providing new employees with an orientation tour of company facilities and operations

Training for Professional Skills and Management

- Complete a needs assessment to determine if employees require training for professional skills, such as specific technical capacities, office/computer or management skills
- Identify and develop methods for delivering necessary training, e.g., training manuals, self-study, CD-Rom, videotape, or hiring a consultant
- Document all training in employee records
- Evaluate how well the training was received
- Provide non-harassment training for employees in supervisory positions.
- Ensure that employees newly promoted to supervisory or management positions undergo appropriate training in workforce management
- Consider establishing a mentoring or coaching system



Box 6.2

Protection from Heat Stress

Symptoms of heat stress are loss of coordination; increased heart rate, body temperature and irritability; fatigue; headache; little desire to drink; fainting, and possible death if not removed from the situation causing heat stress. Ways to reduce the risk of heat stress are:

- Provide cool water in close proximity of the workplace and encourage workers to drink often (1-2 quarts per hour)
- Provide rest breaks and access to shade when temperatures are above 100 degrees F, humidity is unusually high, or environmental conditions warrant concern
- Stay alert to early symptoms of heat stress
- Train supervisors and first aid workers to recognize heat stress disorders
- Ensure proper provisions and communication systems are in place to contact medical assistance to avoid unnecessary delay of treatment
- Encourage workers to wear appropriate clothing (eg, cotton garments) and to use sun-screen, hats, and sunglasses.

Source: Adapted from the Agricultural Safety and Health Inspection Project, CA Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational Safety and Health, Sacramento.

Clear communication reduces risks and costs by ensuring that employees understand the policies and procedures associated with operations.

Cost of Creating Safety & Training Process	Consultant/trainer costs and costs associated with materials, facilities, and employee salary/benefits while away from the job. (Standard trainer/consulting costs range from \$125 to \$350 per hour; safety brochures, postings, and material costs vary)
Benefit of Creating Safety & Training Process	Employees gain skills to safely and efficiently manage vineyard operations and personnel, and the business is in compliance with federal and state laws
Resources	http://www.calbizcentral.com/HRC/News/Articles/HealthandSafety/Pages/Healthand-Safety.aspx http://www.fehc.ca.gov/act/harass.asp

C. Communication & Employee Relations

Clear communication reduces risks and costs by ensuring that employees understand the policies and procedures associated with operations. Furthermore, clarity of communication improves employee relations by creating collective understanding about company goals and work rules. Motivational activities such as teambuilding, special events, and harvest or holiday parties also can significantly enhance employee relations.

Effective Employee Communication & Positive Relations

- Document and communicate workplace policies and procedures in a handout or Employee Manual and post the key policies, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Statement (EEO), Unlawful Harassment Policy, and the Workplace Conduct Statement
- Review company policies and procedures with employees during orientation or whenever a change in policy/procedure occurs
- Hold meetings to update employees on progress and issues within the company and industry
- Consider developing an Open Door Policy so employees are encouraged to talk to supervisors or managers about their concerns



- Consider installing a mechanism for employees to anonymously make suggestions
- Encourage teamwork and respect among all individuals
- Consider developing a Performance Management system so that each employee meets with his or her supervisor at the beginning of the year to set goals and evaluate performance
- Consider holding teambuilding and other events where employees are recognized for their efforts and for being a valued member of the company

Costs of Implementing Effective Employee Communication & Positive Relations Processes	Costs associated with management time to meet with employees, developing and updating the Employee Handbook and performance management system, and teambuilding motivational events
Benefits of Positive Communication & Employee Relations	More motivated and efficient workforce because they understand company policies and procedures and feel valued by management, i.e., less risk of employee dissatisfaction
Resources	http://www.keepem.com/doc_files/clc_article_on_productivity.pdf http://www.calbizcentral.com/HRC/News/Articles/PerformanceandDiscipline/Pages/Performance.aspx

Recent research in the US and Australia indicates that vineyard and winery businesses with established reward systems have higher profitability than those that do not.

D. Employee Reward Systems

Employee reward systems include both financial and non-financial rewards. Financial rewards include salary increases, bonuses, and benefits. Non-financial rewards include positive feedback, a pleasant work environment, motivational supervisors, supportive co-workers, and the satisfaction of being valued. Recent research in the US and Australia indicates that vineyard and winery businesses with established reward systems have higher profitability than those that do not (Thach and Kidwell, 2008).

Establishing Reward Systems

- Identify clear performance standards within the vineyard business for average, above average, and below average work
- Link financial rewards to average and above average performance
- Create a reward system for all jobs, although the specific percentages of bonus and/or salary increase may vary by job type
 - Make sure the reward system is fair, does not discriminate, and complies with laws
 - Analyze salary surveys to ensure employees are paid at market levels
 - When establishing bonuses, consider what types are being offered by similar companies, e.g., bonuses for harvest, holidays, safety, or general performance
- Foster a work environment where positive feedback is encouraged for outstanding work-related behavior or performance and which is conducive to other non-financial rewards

References and Resources

Thach, L. & Kidwell, R. (2008) Impact of HR Practices on Winery Performance: Comparison of US and Australian Small Family Wineries. In Press.

For details on developing an Illness and Injury Prevention Plan (IIPP) see http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/IIPP.html

For details on developing an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) see <http://www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/3220.html>

Costs of Implementing a Reward System	Costs include those for bonus or salary increases and for management time and possibly for consulting to setup reward system
Benefits of Reward System	More motivated and efficient workforce because employees better understand performance goals and targets. Research shows positive impact on company profitability
Resources	<p>http://www.amazon.ca/1001-Ways-Reward-Employees-Revised/dp/0761136819</p> <p>http://www.winebusiness.com/ReferenceLibrary/webarticle.cfm?dataId=17442</p> <p>Impact of HR Practices on Winery Performance: Comparison of US and Australian Small Family Wineries. Thach, L. & Kidwell, R. 2008. In Press.</p>

