



Improving Team Performance is Critical to Organizational Success

Susan N. Williams, Director Southeast Research and Extension District

Susan M. Fritz, Associate Vice Chancellor, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

University of Nebraska, USA

Organizational leaders today are striving to produce synergy in the workplace to increase outputs with existing inputs. The payoff may make the difference between organizational survival and organizational decline. The concept of work teams first began in manufacturing as a way to deliver a high quality product for minimal costs. Work teams are now gaining popularity in many professions such as education and medicine. Work groups frequently develop a synergy making them able to accomplish more than any one individual alone can accomplish (Buchholz, Roth and Hess, 1987).

Extension organizations in many states in the United States are forming teams to deliver programs in a discipline such as cropping systems or environmental sustainability. Extension is also seeking to be part of interdisciplinary teams with research and teaching to study complex issues at the system level. These teams bring individuals with different specialized areas of study together to create answers to a variety of emerging issues.

While many work teams are successful, others seem to struggle and some even fail. For the organization to be successful it is important to identify training and support for team members to increase success. A study of 356 members of 83 work groups in seven north central land grant universities examined the relationship between work group success and team member characteristics, team leadership and team process.

Team members' personality, in particular extraversion, was found to be significantly related to work groups' success. Extraverts share thoughts and ideas freely which is an important part of work group process. Team members who communicate progress toward goals also contribute to team success. The extension professional's studied exhibited a high mean for extraversion. Their job duties often require interaction with the public, initiating discussions in the community and facilitating groups. It is important to note that during the assessment of work group process, group success decreased as dominating increased in the group. If an individual or individuals in the group used influence, authority, power and expertise to get ideas accepted the group members identified themselves as less successful.

Effective team leadership was significantly related to work group success. All qualities of a transformational leader were significantly correlated to success. Team leaders helped team members feel valued and included. Leaders stimulated discussion, asked questions and kept communication a priority. Team leaders could articulate a team goal and inspire a sense of purpose.

During team process, work group cohesiveness was significantly related to work group success. Team cohesiveness was identified when team members felt accepted and part of the discussion and work process. They indicated group members listened to and used their ideas. Giving and receiving feedback was also an

IN THIS ISSUE

Improving Team Performance is Critical to Organizational Success	1
<i>Susan N. Williams, Susan M. Fritz</i>	
From the Editors	2
Consultation and collaboration to set resource condition targets	3
<i>Rebecca Heath</i>	
Collaboration at it's core is effective capacity building	4
<i>Bob Macadam</i>	
From the pieces to the whole: A case study of Extension team development	5
<i>Susan M. Fritz, Amy E. Boren</i>	
Australia Vs New Zealand Futures for Extension	6
<i>Roe Currie</i>	
APEN's Annual Report 2009-2010	6
APEN President's Report	7
<i>Tracey Gianatti</i>	
APEN Treasurer's Report	9
<i>Greg Mills</i>	
Technology Ideas	10
New APEN Members	12
Contact Details	12

Improving Team Performance (continued)

Work teams are complex systems with multiple variables that are highly interdependent.

important part of the cohesiveness measure.

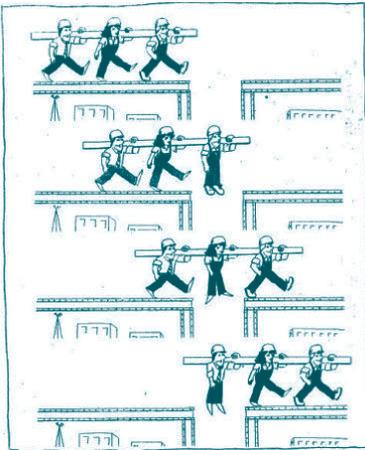
Work teams are complex systems with multiple variables that are highly interdependent. We can improve the likelihood of our work team success by providing training in interpersonal skills for team members and leadership skills for team leaders. Team members who make everyone feel a part of the discussion and process will increase chances for success. Team leaders who control the dominating individuals while helping inspire a sense of purpose for the entire team will also increase chances for success. Successful teams who

produce solutions to problems will equate to organizational success and perhaps organizational survival.

Buchholz, S., Roth, T. & Hess, K. (1987). *Creating the high-performance team*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc: New York.

Williams, S. (2005). *Testing the Relationships Between Personality, Motivation, Leadership and Process to Success of Self-Directed Work Teams*, Dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

ENET



“In the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed.”

Charles Darwin



FROM THE EDITORS



It's December again...this time the difference is it's 2010! So welcome to this last edition of ExtensionNet for the year.

There is more than just the year-change that's different! For one thing EN is up for change to become part of a member-driven, interactive APEN website. You can read more about that in the president's report. The APEN AGM report is where you can read about other changes. AGMs are important for members of APEN because it is through consultation and collaboration that an organisation such as APEN remains strong and current in order to deliver outcomes for its extension professionals.

We continue our themed editions this time with "collaboration". Once it was a difficult and painstaking process requiring you to get everyone into the same room, at the same time, for the same duration. Now eCommunication tools have swept away the logistic problems of interacting and the expectation is that people 'will' work together.

Two articles feature the collaboration fundamentals of team building. The authors are from the United States of America which adds an exciting international flavour to EN. The authors are recognised for their research into contemporary group functioning and each article is 'tip-laden' on how to have teams deliver outcomes.

As well, from our home turf there's an example of collaboration

and consultation in south west WA to generate salinity rehabilitation targets matched to landholder's aspirational and preferred management options. These three are added to when an APEN founder uses contemporary consultation events to highlight the role of collaboration for capacity building as a means of overcoming past failures.

As well there are three websites offering eCollaboration tools, quotes to make you think about collaboration and cartoons we hope give you another insight into it as well.

In 2010, we (Kate and Gerry = Editors) have collaborated for the first time to edit EN. It has been enjoyable work using only the collaboration tools of email, web-conferencing and telephones... we have never met face to face!

Our thanks to those who've written articles, on our request, around themes of current interest to APEN members. We also want to thank Roe Currie for her organisational and publishing skills and Tracey Gianatti and her committee for their strong support.

Our next newsletter will be web-based and we'll be keen to have you interacting with us particularly about the content of each issue, as well as ideas and subjects you would like to see featured in the newsletter.

We wish you a very merry and safe festive season.....



Consultation and collaboration to set resource condition targets

Rebecca Heath - Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia

In the south-west of Western Australia a consultative process was used to develop the necessary targets for managing salinity in the regions' drier agricultural areas.

Rather than set the targets themselves and then extend these to the landholders, the project team sought the advantages of ownership and commitment to achieve targets by having landholder participation. The project team thought it was the landholders' actions on the ground that are key in ensuring the targets are met.

The consultative process

Workshops were held in ten catchments, presenting landholder groups with the latest information on salinity risk. Landholders described their aspirations for their farms and catchment and discussed their preferred options for managing salinity. Simple models predicted the impact of these management options. Using this process, landholders were able to make what were considered informed decisions to set realistic targets for dryland salinity in their catchment.

"I didn't know what to do, apart from fence it off. And then do what? That was the question. So, if it wasn't for the workshop we wouldn't have put the w-drain in. We would have probably fenced it off, but we wouldn't have known what to do on it."

The project was evaluated to determine the impact of the workshops on the participants. This involved one-on-one interviews with 20 landholders, two from each catchment that attended the workshops.

Did the process work?

Two key reasons for involving the landholders in developing the targets were, 1) to ensure the targets were realistic and achievable; and 2) to encourage ownership and from this stimulate action.

Although intending to take action, some interviewees had neither the means nor the encouragement to persist with their preliminary plans from the workshops. This raised the question of whether their targets were indeed realistic and achievable.

In terms of ownership of the targets, over half the landholders interviewed were working toward the targets. This group saw

the targets as necessary *'because you've got to have something to aim for'*. They had either taken action to help reach their target or had plans in place.

The other landholders viewed the targets as arbitrary figures that did not have any impact on their management of salinity. In general, these landholders had their own targets for their own farms and were working towards these.

Impacts on capacity and management

Although the 'ultimate' purpose of the project was to set targets for dryland salinity – which the project achieved – the evaluation revealed a positive impact on landholder knowledge, understanding, attitudes and aspirations as well as on-ground salinity management.

The level of experience of landholders in salinity management, prior to the workshops, affected the impact. In general, the workshops did not affect the way the more experienced landholders did business – they knew the information being presented, they already had plans to manage salinity on their properties and they were putting these plans into place.

In contrast, the workshops were of great importance to participants with less salinity experience. This group were actively looking for ways to address salinity on their farms and the workshops provided an ideal venue to discuss these issues with other landholders and experts.

"Because we ran through it with different farmers, of what they would do or what their options are, it did widen my horizons to think 'Yes, I could do that as well.' Like I had never thought before to plant lucerne, for example ... And because others were doing it, I thought 'Oh yes, that's quite a good idea really.'"

Process was key

The workshops brought salinity and the management of it to the front of the landholder's minds. It made them think back on what they had done, and think forward on where they would like to be in the future. In general, it was recognised that *'we better continue our efforts, we can't just back off'* and, in some cases, it kick-

Rather than set the targets themselves and then extend these to the landholders, the project team sought the advantages of ownership and commitment to achieve targets by having landholder participation.

started them into action. The workshop process used, rather than the targets that were set, was the catalyst for action.

Important elements of the workshops included:

- 1) large catchment maps highlighting the areas at risk from salinity and
- 2) the interactions – one-to-one, group discussion/debate, access to expert input, sharing experiences with other landholders.

In particular, bringing together landholders with the common interest of the same catchment to discuss their aspirations for their catchment, built enthusiasm and motivation on a group-scale.

For the complete evaluation findings see:

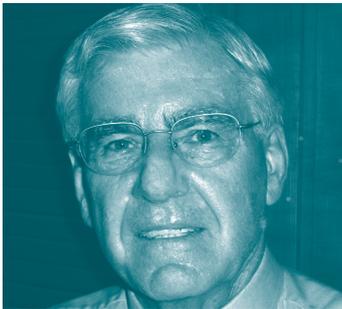
Heath, R, Murphy White, S and Bowyer J (2009) The impact of community consultation to set resource condition targets for dryland salinity. Resource Management Technical Report 359. Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia.

http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/objtwr/imported_assets/content/lwe/salin/sman/rmtr_target_setting_eval.pdf



Collaboration at its core is effective capacity building

Bob Macadam, Associate Professor



Had the Federal Government engaged with APEN before it announced its Mining Super Profits Tax I reckon the outcome would be different, and better. Likewise for the Murray Darling Basin Authority with the launch of its Draft Plan.

What makes me so confident? APEN is the repository of a lot of hard earned knowledge and wisdom about effective ways to collaborate to build capacity. Much of this is covered in the report on capacity building and institutional arrangements authored by John Drinan, Neil Inall, Bruce McKenzie and I in 2004.

The processes introducing the mining tax and MDBA Plan show the importance of (a) seeing the outcomes of a collaborative effort as potential improvements in all forms of capital – human, social, environmental, financial and physical; (b) engaging with the relevant ‘communities of practice’ (CoP - groups of individuals sharing knowledge about a common work practice even though not part of a formally work team. Communities of practice are about individuals acquiring new knowledge, faster.* Eds), and (c) providing leadership to these ends.

Our 2004 report raised a number of ethical issues relevant to leadership and which apply when collaboration is the aim. They arise for example when people are deliberately excluded because they might advocate positions different to those of the initiators or worse because people in positions of power wish them to be kept in a subordinate position. This then is not a collaboration that builds capacity.

There is of course a limit to how wide the net should be cast in seeking to harness relevant knowledge, expertise and support. At some point the gains in effectiveness of collaborating are balanced by the costs. Like any collaborative intervention its quality will be apparent in the outcomes, and can be modified in their light.

In the MDBA and mining tax examples there is much rhetoric about the importance of consultative collaboration. Is the consultation to date the same as the engagement we advocated in our 2004 report? Not so in my opinion. The recent MDBA ‘consultation meetings’ with stakeholders highlight the difference between debate and dialogue. The

difference is in designing the process so the engagement is collaborative.

To demonstrate the design impact, I recall a cotton industry project where we managed to throw the switch from debate between representatives of fixed positions, to dialogue. That switch gave rise to new insights when the process facilitated an increasingly respectful listening process as participants realized they were going to have the opportunity to be heard.

Listening is central to dialogue and meaningful collaboration and extension professionals are becoming increasingly skilled at facilitating it. This reflects a growing appreciation that it is not helpful to think of capacity building only as agents providing services to groups of users who benefit from them. Better instead to invite collaboration around desired outcomes for all. What would they be in the mining tax and MDBA Plan, and who decides?

The more I ponder these questions the more certain I am those extension professionals with a broad appreciation of capacity building and what it entails have a lot to offer collaborative efforts. The question then becomes how to get the movers and shakers to realize there is a better way than processes that result in the mining tax and MDBA Plan fiascos. These recent events suggest it is in their own interests to do so.

APEN might like to take the lead in communicating the benefits. Cross bench parliamentary representatives are well placed to play the role of brokers.

Macadam R, Drinan J, Inall N and McKenzie B. Growing the Capital of Rural Australia – the task of capacity building. RIRDC Publication 04/034. March 2004.

www.admin.state.nh.us/hr/documents/Workforce_Development/worforce_development_definitions.doc

There is of course a limit to how wide the net should be cast in seeking to harness relevant knowledge, expertise and support.

At some point the gains in effectiveness of collaborating are balanced by the costs.



From the pieces to the whole: A case study of Extension team development

Susan M. Fritz & Amy E. Boren, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA

Multi-disciplinary teams are becoming the norm in U. S. Extension. Competitive grant programs emphasize multi-disciplinary collaboration in Extension. However, few studies have explored the development of teams from different organizations and different disciplines. The purpose of this study was to explore team-building strategies of Extension faculty regarding their participation in a multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional team project developing web-based lessons in weed science.

Researchers identified 10 faculty members engaged in an Extension team project as sources of data. The team members were from five different universities and had Extension appointments in diverse agricultural disciplines. Data were collected from interviews over a 2-year period. Figure 1 depicts this team's development by integrating team events with Tuckman's (1965) team development model.

Motivation for Collaboration

Most team members were motivated to collaborate by a desire to further their knowledge of Web-based instruction. One participant commented:

"Do we really use the right tools or the right methods to teach these things on the Web? And these . . . non-traditional students, how well can they relate to these units? We are used to teaching in the classroom. We look at the students' eyes and can see whether they understand. When you put things on the Web . . . it really makes us think about whether we can modify it to make it better."

Timeline

The goal of all team members was to produce a superior instructional Web site. As the project progressed and deadlines were frequently unmet, team members went through a period of questioning team objectives. Some team members began lowering their expectations. One participant shared,

"Even if we only manage to do a good job completing 80% of our objectives, I think it will be a successful outcome."

Evaluation and Rewards

Most team members felt their administrators encouraged collaboration, but were unprepared to evaluate them. One participant noted:

"We are in a crunch for funding so people get together in order to get certain things done . . . I'm going to say that the administration likes to see us deliver certain results and if the multi-disciplinary approach is the way to deliver the right results then I'm sure they're going to be favorable to it."

Faculty did not feel their colleagues were unsupportive of their multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional collaborations, but they did feel that colleagues were generally unaware of those collaborations. One interviewee quipped, "I'm not sure that they know that I'm involved and I'm not sure that they would care." Team members felt little support for their collaboration from their colleagues and administrators.

Team Leader

Without the constant cajoling of the team

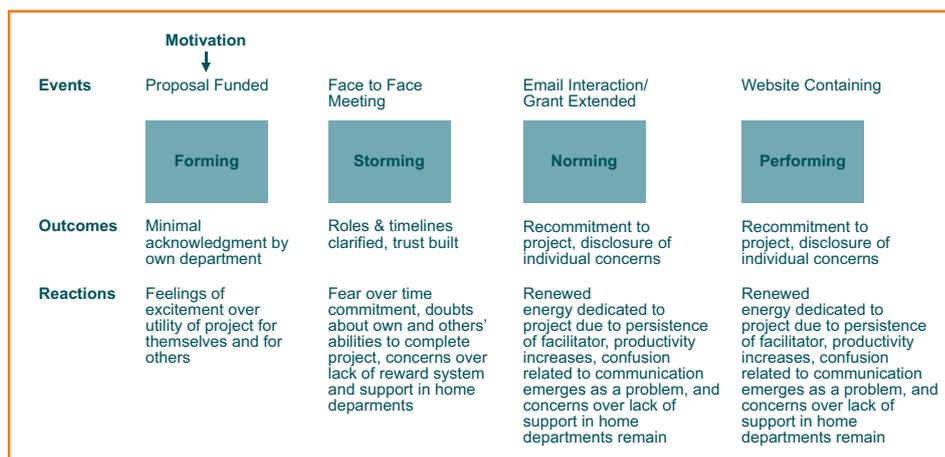
Continues on page 11

The distance separating team members added to difficulties in achieving successful collaboration.

"No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it."

H.E. Luccock

Figure 1 Integration of Tuckman's (1965) Small Group Development Model into One Team's Experience



Australia vs New Zealand Futures for Extension

Roe Currie

Our third and final webinar for 2010 was held on Thursday November 25 and was attended by 35 people viewing 19 different computers across APEN from Perth WA to Wellington NZ. The title was Australia vs New Zealand Futures for Extension.

Dr Bruce Kefford from DPI Victoria gave a presentation on "The future of extension in Australia under a national RD&E framework". Dr Terry Parminter, a private consultant (formerly with AgResearch NZ) gave a presentation on "Extension expectations of industry and government agencies in NZ and implications for future careers in extension".

Bruce Kefford described the trend in Australian agriculture and natural resource management for different State Departments and the CSIRO becoming "experts" in particular areas. For example, the Victorian Department of Primary Industry has gone out of sheep and wool research but is still heavily involved in dairy,

meat and natural resource management. Grower groups such as WestVic Dairy, the Birchip Cropping Group, and the Kondinin Group are becoming more and more involved in the determination of research projects and performing the extension role. Some commodities such as Cotton and Sugar already do most of the research and extension privately.

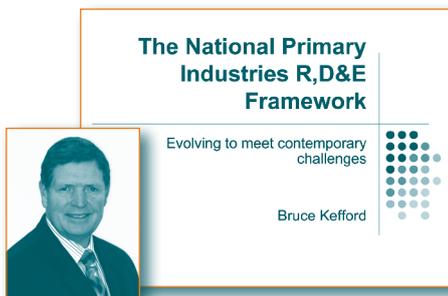
The National R, D & E framework will aim to: attempt to ensure that problems from regions are researched, improve dissemination of knowledge through providing people with the opportunity to develop their extension skills base, develop a common language or understanding of extension, involve the end users in project design, improve data collection and ensure cost effective evaluation of projects, amongst other things.

Terry Parminter described the system in New Zealand where the government got out of extension to the agricultural industries in

the early 1990's. Particular industries have taken on the R, D & E role using grower levies. DairyNZ for example has about 40 extension staff while Beef and Lamb NZ have 7 extension staff. The role of the extension staff is to improve production and productivity as well as working on industry good activities and natural resource management. Terry himself is now working in regional government where he is facilitating community groups to improve their environment. A former AgResearch colleague commented "you're not doing extension any more then?" We know it doesn't have to be about agriculture to be extension!

There was good discussion after each presentation. The webinar evaluation is being done by inviting participants to do a short on-line survey.

The powerpoint presentations are available on the website or through the APEN Secretariat.



APEN's Annual Report 2009 - 2010

The 16th APEN AGM was held via hybrid webinar and teleconference on Thursday November 25, 2010 at 3pm Daylight Eastern Standard Time. This was a first time experience using this technology and probably the quickest APEN AGM yet! Sixteen stayed on after the webinar and two members joined by teleconference. There were fourteen apologies. Tracey presented the President's report and Greg Mills presented the Treasurer's report using powerpoint presentations and webcams. The full reports are printed below.

Elections were required for four Regional Coordinator (RC) positions. Alison Medhurst (Vic) stood down due to pressure of work after a very active four years in that role and as Vice President for

2009/2010. Derek Foster (Qld) also left due to pressure of work and the Tasmanian and South Australian RC positions had both been carried out by seconded members, Sophie Folder and Lauren Thompson. Tracey thanked Alison and Derek for their participation and commitment to their roles on the APEN MC.

Newly elected Regional Coordinators are Sophie Folder, Tasmania and Greg Shannon, Queensland. Lauren Thompson agreed to remain in the seconded RC position for South Australia. The Victorian RC position is vacant.

Tracey was also pleased to announce that Ian Tarbotton, DairyNZ, has agreed to step in to the NZ/Overseas RC role while Denise Bewsell is on leave. Denise and

Mark recently welcomed their daughter Daisy Olive and we wish them well during this exciting time.

Bob Travers and Associates, Albury were appointed as auditor for 2010/2011 and Matt McCarthy as APEN Public Officer. Matt has taken over from Heather Shaw in this role.

In General Business, Jess Jennings reported on the exciting news about publishing the Australasian Extension Publication with Kondinin and the Gardiner Foundation. (More details are available in the President's report). Jess gave his brief report using his webcam as part of the webinar – a comment came from a member of the MC about how good it was to "meet" Jess for the first time.

APEN President's Report for 2009-2010

Tracey Gianatti, President

I am honoured to once again deliver the President's Report for APEN for 2009/10. It has been a year full of activity which I will outline below in more detail.

National Activities

APEN strives to organise a major event each year to fit a four year cycle. These are in addition to local events organised by cluster coordinators. The cycle of events is:

- 2009 International Conference, Busselton
- 2010 Webinar series (showcasing contemporary issues in extension)
- 2011 National Forum, NSW
- 2012 Roadshow/webinar series
- 2013 International Conference

2009 International Conference

In line with this timetable, our 5th International Conference was held at Busselton in November 2009. We were pleased to secure funding from DAFF to bring ten Next Gen scholars to the event. We also assisted some international visitors from Japan and Mali. Attendance from all states of Australia and New Zealand was very pleasing with 214 registrations. Thank you again to the organising committee who did a fantastic job.

2010 Webinar Series

In March this year we launched the 2010 APEN Webinar Series. Our aim was to provide professional development training and networking opportunities to all our members in the comfort of their own offices. The first webinar focused on delivering information from the conference to people who weren't able to attend. The presenters were Neil Guise, the winner of the 2009 APEN Award for Excellence in Extension by an Experienced Professional, and Nancye Gannaway who is part of Neil's team working on the Small Landholder Information Service project in WA. Kate Ambrose spoke about evaluation and Greg Mills, Industry & Investment, NSW hosted the webinar from central NSW. In conjunction with the webinar, many sites organised local presenters to hear stories from the coalface and maximise networking opportunities. The first webinar had 47

participants spread across 11 sites from Perth to Christchurch.

The second webinar in the series was held in early August and had presentations from Dr Lauren Rickards, the winner of the 2009 APEN Amabel Fulton Award for Excellence in Extension by a Young Professional, Mike Weise, WestVic Dairy and Greg Shannon from BSES Ltd. The theme was Successful techniques for working with groups: Experiences from the grain, dairy & sugar industries. We were very pleased with the attendance of 60 people spread across 18 sites, including presentations from Terang in western Victoria, Melbourne and Ingham, northern Queensland.

Today's webinar was the final in the series for 2010 and I thank Dr Bruce Kefford for his presentation on the future of extension in Australia under a National Extension Framework. Thank you also to Dr Terry Parminter for his insights into the New Zealand situation. This is the first time we have held a hybrid webinar/teleconference AGM and I look forward to some feedback from you on this format.

Linkages with Kondinin Group

In September, APEN joined with the Kondinin Group to host the inaugural national **Farming Ahead 2010 conference**. Held in Sydney, the conference was a two-day event for grower groups, research, development and extension organisations to come together to build effective knowledge networks for the future, and showcase best practice amongst grower groups. APEN supported the conference by providing program advice and promotion of the event and received a rebate on all APEN members who attended. We plan to reverse the roles with Kondinin supporting us with our 2011 National Forum being held at the University of New England, Armidale NSW next November. Greg Mills is convening the Forum with support from Industry & Investment, NSW.

Member's Survey

The APEN Management Committee continues to work with Warwick Waters on the development of a survey to find out your feelings and thoughts on APEN's services and what new things could be offered in



the future. This is being combined with an attitudinal survey to understand a bit more about us as extension professionals. The intention is that the survey will be conducted on-line through the APEN website using Survey Monkey.

Regional activities

In 2009/10 regional activities have occurred in conjunction with the webinars in Perth, Darwin, Adelaide, Hobart, Launceston, Toowoomba and Richmond. These events featured local presentations being run alongside the webinar which allowed contact across the whole network. Many thanks to the local coordinators who organised those events. As appears to be the trend, many of the attendees were not APEN members and we welcome those who have since joined.

Activities in the regions are a feature that attracts new members to APEN as they provide valuable networking and professional development opportunities. Our intention is that all members will have more opportunities to be involved in such activities, and where distances are too great to meet in person, clusters of interested people are encouraged to utilise APEN's email discussion groups.

Regional Coordinators (RC) on the Management Committee allow us to hear about things happening around the APEN Regions (the seven states of Australia and NZ/ Overseas) and take action to address any emerging issues affecting our members. The Regional Coordinator position SA is currently held by Lauren Thompson in a seconded position as no-one else from SA has offered to take on the role. The Victorian RC position is also vacant and I would love to hear from anyone who is interested in taking on these positions. The time commitment is not onerous – particularly with the support of our secretariat, Rosemary Currie.

Communication Activities

ExtensionNet had four bumper issues in the last financial year with the wonderful efforts of our editors, Dr Gerry Roberts from Longreach and Kate Charleston from Toowoomba. A survey of members held during the year indicated that 66% would prefer to receive ExtensionNet

electronically. Our efforts with the revamp of the APEN website will bring this about over the next twelve months.

The APEN website will have a new look and functionality with a plan to make it more user friendly and to allow more interaction and discussion between members. Thank you to Leigh Walters for all the work he has put in to it at this stage with advice from David Bicknell, Tom Croft, Roger Johnson and members of the MC. Thank you also to those of you who have sent in the fabulous photos of extensionists in action. We are still happy to receive more through Roe at the Secretariat.

APEN continues to work collaboratively with the Australian Farm Business Management Network to produce the Extension Farming Systems journal. I would especially like to thank Roy Murray-Prior and Neels Botha for their continuing efforts. Three special issues of the journal have been produced containing papers from the 2009 Conference and can be accessed from the publications page on our website.

Our electronic eBulletin has been sent to all of our members on a monthly basis keeping them up to date with extension activities and issues as well as training courses, conferences, and positions vacant.

Other activities

Australasia Extension Publication

As all authors and many APEN members already know, the manuscript from the original project "The Australasia Extension Publication" is now complete under the working title: ***Shaping Change: Natural Resource Management, Agriculture and the Role of Extension***. Since completion, APEN has been seeking commercial interest to have it published in hardcopy and electronic formats and to this end recently partnered with Kondinin Group to be the preferred publisher and joint distributor on an 'at cost' basis.

In addition, APEN is currently actively engaged with The Gardiner Foundation (a Victorian based dairy industry RD&E funding foundation) regarding the publication of the book and its potential to serve as a catalyst for change in the role of extension within both the dairy industry and agriculture generally. Although discussions are still in train, it is hoped that the publication will be available in hardcopy and electronically by the end of January 2011. If this timeframe is jointly approved between APEN, Gardiner

and Kondinin in the coming days after this AGM, then it should also be possible for pre-Christmas orders of the book to be placed with APEN (and possibly Kondinin) from mid-late Dec10. This will be a great publication for all types of professional extension practitioners and a must for any project work and reference libraries. The final hardcopy is hoped to be approximately \$20, \$30 and \$40 (ex GST) for student concession, APEN Member and full cost pricing, with sale proceeds returning to APEN. Thanks again for your patience, all good things take time!

The **Mentoring Scheme** has been operating again this year with some of the Next Gen Scholars taking up the opportunity as well as becoming members of APEN. Many thanks to Peter Hanrahan who is coordinating the scheme with Roe this year and to our mentors Jenny Crisp, Jane Weatherley, Annette McCaffery, Iva Quarisa and Doris Blaesing. This year's scheme is drawing to a close and registrations for next year's are now open. The scheme provides personal development to mentees and mentors alike and there is information about the scheme on our website.

The Management Committee met by teleconference every second month to discuss APEN issues and plan activities. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each of the members – Alison Medhurst (Vice-president, Vic RC) who is retiring at this AGM after four years of great participation, Greg Mills (Treasurer & NSW RC), Austin McLennan (Secretary, NT RC), Derek Foster (Qld RC) who is also retiring from the MC, Judy Bellati and then Lauren Thompson (SA RC), Kate Ambrose (WA RC), Sophie Folder (Tasmanian RC) and Denise Bewsell (NZ/Overseas RC) who is now on maternity leave - congratulations on the birth of your daughter. Ian Tarbotton has agreed to take over the role – thanks Ian. Thanks also to Neale Price (Past President), Kate Charleston and Gerry

Roberts (Editors) and finally to Roe, our Secretariat, for always being there to support the MC.

As a matter of accountability, the following meetings were held and the participants at each are listed. (See table below.)

APEN has continued to be represented at the State Extension Leaders Network meetings by myself and John James and other members who are also part of SELN.

Looking Ahead

In closing, I encourage members to get behind your Management Committee members, to interact at the local level as well as through the email system and to look out for the 2011 APEN Forum in November next year.

Finally, APEN exists to provide you, our members, with networking, professional development and representation opportunities – so let us know what you need! Your thoughts are welcome at any time by sending an email to me at president@apen.org.au or by calling Roe Currie on (02) 6024 5349. The member survey will be the perfect chance to have your say. Hopefully the results will allow APEN to deliver higher quality services to members making it the essential organisation for extension professionals.

Thank you for your continued support of APEN.

Tracey Gianatti

APEN President

25 November 2010



Quorum: 4 Members															
Meeting	Date	Tracey	Neale	Alison	Auslin	Greg	Kate A	Judy/ Lauren	Sophie	Denise	Derek	Kate C	Gerry	Roe	Members
#101	08/12/2009	Y			Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	7
#102	04/02/2010	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	9
#103	25/03/2010	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y				Y	7
#104	27/05/2010	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y		Y	8
#105	29/07/2010	Y		Y	Y	Y			Y				Y	Y	6
#106	1/10/2009	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y		Y	7
Total		6	0	4	6	5	4	3	5	5	0	4	2	6	

APEN Treasurer's Report for 2009 - 2010

Greg Mills, Treasurer

This report is based upon an audit of APEN's finances conducted by Bob Travers & Associates, Chartered Accountant, Albury, NSW.

The APEN financial position at June 30, 2010 is sound with total equity of \$76,141. This includes \$55,000 in a term deposit. Although we held an International Conference during this time, most of the sponsorship moneys were secured in the previous financial year and we had conference costs. These included the costs of the APEN Awards, having the Next Gen Scholars attend the conference and the assistance we gave to some international visitors to the conference (\$1,700) as well as secretariat costs. Membership income was down and some funding went towards finalising the Australasian Extension Publication from the 2007 Forum. ExtensionNet costs were also higher due to larger sized issues (16 pages rather than 12 pages) and having four issues rather than the three we have had over the previous few years. This all contributed to APEN's operating surplus for the 2009/2010 financial year being (\$24,499).

Tables 1 and 2 record the profit and loss situation and Table 3, the Assets and Liability situation.

APEN is dependent on conferences generating a surplus of around \$20,000 and forums \$10,000. The surplus is from sponsorship deals and registration income. This is shown in Table 2 where figures show that the larger surpluses indicate a year with an International conference, a smaller surplus the year with a National forum and years with losses indicate that no national event was held.

A healthy surplus allows APEN to underwrite future conferences and forums as well as cluster activities and work towards the renewal of the APEN website to a more valuable interactive resource for members.

As Treasurer I would like to thank Rosemary Currie for her management of the organisation's finances.

ENET

Table 1 Income and Expenses

	2007 - 08 Total \$	2008 - 09 Total \$	2009 - 10 Total \$
Income			
Advertising	700	700	210
APEN Conference	50 000	26 249	22 998
2007 APEN Forum	50 210	-	-
APEN Roadshow workshops	-	42 635	1390
Membership	26 452	24 487	15 877
Region Events (0708 Qld & WA workshops)	2 569	900	-
Sundry Receipts	38	-	1 097
Sponsorship (0708 GRDC for APEN Awards)	5 000	-	-
Interest Received	2 116	5 011	2 252
TOTAL	137 085	99 982	43 824
Expenditure			
Accountancy & Audit Fees	1 109	1 165	1 163
Administration	19 962	20 779	22 113
APEN Award	1 479	2 409	1 289
APEN Mentoring Scheme	237	-	343
APEN project AEP & Forum 07	11 000	-	4 470
APEN Roadshow workshop expenses	-	29 685	926
Bank & Government Charges	1 435	611	716
Cost of Meetings	1 420	1 031	1 121
Conference Costs APEN	-	26 297	17 828
2007 APEN Forum	19 194	-	-
ExtensionNet	12 070	11 643	14 771
Insurance	382	382	382
Printing, Stationery and Postage	44	513	227
Promotion (Members Directory & membership brochures)	899	1 463	900
Provision for impairment of receivables	(704)	-	-
Region Events Payments	2 399	715	-
Sundry Expenses	228	62	255
Website	1 885	1 860	1 819
TOTAL	73 039	98 606	68 323

Table 2 Profit and Accumulated funds

	2005 -2006 Total \$	2006 -2007 Total \$	2007-2008 Total \$	2008 -2009 Total \$	2009 -2010 Total \$
Net Surplus/Loss	11 798	-27 801	64 046	1 376	-24 499
Accumulated Funds	63 019	35 218	99 264	100 640	76 141

Table 3 Assets and Liabilities as at June 30

		2007-2008	2008 - 2009	2009 - 2010
Assets	Cheque Account	17 980	29 278	20 869
	Term Deposit	85 000	55 000	55 000
	Grant account (DAFF)	0	16 500	0
	Cash	0	0	0
	Accounts receivable	1045	1 001	2 503
	Provision for impairment of receivables	0	0	0
Total		104 025	101 779	78 372
Liabilities	Accounts owing	4 761	1 139	2 231
	GST owing	0	0	0
Total		4 761	1 139	2 231
Equity		99 264	100 640	76 141

“Strength is derived from unity. The range of our collective vision is far greater when individual insights become one.”

Andrew Carnegie

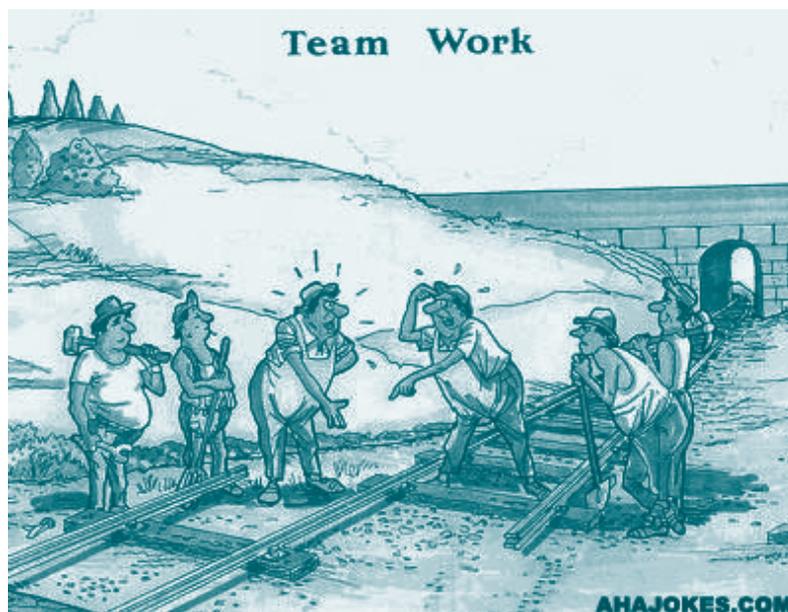
Technology ideas

Collaboration support tools are what we feature this edition with an emphasis on simplicity and no cost.

1st is a free whiteboard allowing you to share notes, docs, photos and lists is at <http://www.stixy.com/>. We tested it and it is easy to use with a limitation that docs can only be opened by one person at a time.

2nd is <http://www.google.com/google-d-s/documents/> which enables real-time, simultaneous collaboration to edit documents. It gives access from anywhere through the web...which makes it available across networks (read, 'across organisation IT platforms').

3rd is <http://www.mikogo.com/> is a collaboration step-up offering free screen sharing for businesses and individuals. Within organisations it may require permissions to pass through firewalls. It is ISO accredited.



“We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, while others are bright, some have weird names, but we have to learn to live in the same box.”

Anonymous

From the pieces to the whole (continued from page 5)

leader, team members agree the project would never have progressed. The team leader also maintained a positive relationship with them in spite of her persistence in keeping team members on task. One participant expressed:

“The leadership was awesome! Unfortunately, we’re not all good followers; so I don’t think we finished in a timely manner. [The team leader’s] patience and the way she encourages were very positive.”

By fostering open, trusting relationships with the team members, this team leader created a working environment conducive to collaboration.

Cohesion

Many team members missed the interaction of face-to-face meetings. The distance separating team members added to difficulties in achieving successful collaboration. One participant expressed,

“We want to make sure this set of modules doesn’t look like a six room house built by six different contractors! We need to have enough interaction so that we have a common view.”

The team did evolve from a mere work group into a synergistic entity. One interviewee noted, *“We talk as a group much more often now. Many of the modules reflect the thinking of the entire group . . . the lessons are better than they would have been if they were developed by an individual.”*

Interaction

Communication problems are widespread in teams collaborating via distance and can be harmful to productivity and cohesion. One interviewee observed, *“We’re all so far away, I think it made it harder for us to put this project on our platter as a real goal.”*

These feelings of isolation and stilted productivity were evident at every stage of the team’s development. However, at the end of the project the attitudes of the team members shifted from uncertainty to wistfulness about not spending more time together in person.

Trust

The team members felt comfortable enough with one another to be honest about their opinions and ideas. This dialogue was vital in bridging the space between team members. One interviewee expressed:

“I think that the travel money we put in to bring people [together] has been very critical. I like that kind of time because it feels more like a team; you’re not the lone rangers trying to conquer this project.”

Miscellaneous Findings

Another dynamic that emerged was the respect all team members held for the leader. According to one participant:

“She’s been doing a great job pulling us all together! You have to keep in mind that in order to pull 10 or 15 scientists together, you’re going to have to have a lot of nerve and a lot of patience.”

The team leader in this study had the least amount of status in the group, yet held the respect and admiration of the other team members. This could be due to the technical expertise in web-design the team leader possessed. The team leader encouraged team members to participate in the formation of project roles and deadlines. This inclusiveness endeared her to the team. One team member expressed:

I can’t thank [the team leader] enough for her leadership . . . I can call her at any time and she’ll help me through a glitch or any number of silly little things . . . she’s just always receptive to helping us improve our capabilities.

Implications

This study explored the team development in a multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional project. The team’s development followed the four stages described by Tuckman (1965) (Figure 1). Examining the characteristics of successful team leaders in Extension will be critical for future research. Profiling leadership skills in successful multi-disciplinary teams could encourage future collaborative successes for Extension faculty.

Recommended Reading

Armstrong, D., & Cole, P. (1995). Managing distance and differences in geographically distributed work groups. In S. E. Jackson & M. N. Ruderman (Eds.), *Diversity in work teams*. Washington, DC: APA.

Kiesler, S., & Cummings, J. N. (2002). What do we know about proximity and distance in work groups? A legacy of research. In P. Hinds & S. Kiesler (Eds.), *Distributed work*, 57-80. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Leholm, A., Hamm, L., Suvedi, M., Gray, I., & Poston, F. (1999). Area of Expertise teams: The Michigan approach to applied research and Extension. *Journal of Extension* [On-line], 37(3). Available at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/1999june/a3.html>

Leholm, A. & Vlasin, R. (2006). *Increasing the odds for high-performance teams: Lessons learned*. East Lansing, MI: MSU Press.

Schrage, M. (1995). *No more teams! Mastering the dynamics of creative collaboration*. New York: Currency Doubleday.

Tan, B. C. Y., Wei, K. K., Huang, W. W., & Ng, G. N. (2000). A dialogue technique to enhance electronic communication in virtual teams. *IEEE Transactions of Professional Communication*, 43(2), 153-165.

Tuckman, B. W. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63(6), 384-399.

Williams, S.N. (2005). Testing the relationships between personality, motivation, leadership and process to success in self-directed work teams. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2005). *ETD collection for University of Nebraska - Lincoln*. Paper AAI3186888.

Younglove-Webb, J., Gray, B., Abdalla, C. W., & Thurow, A. P. (1999). The dynamics of multidisciplinary research teams in academia. *The Review of Higher Education*, 22(4), 425- 440.

New APEN members

If you've recently joined APEN, welcome! You'll reap plenty of professional and personal rewards. If you've been in APEN for a few seasons now, be sure to say hello to the new members.

Rosie James



Rosie James is from the North West Coast of Tasmania and studied at the University of Tasmania in Hobart, graduating in 2006. Her key area of expertise is monitoring and improving soil productivity and sustainability through the integrated management of biological, chemical and physical aspects. Rosie also works with grower groups to assist them to understand and adapt to climate change. Rosie has a background in the potato and dairy industries and holds a Degree in Ag Science, and has a strong interest in helping young farmers develop their skills and knowledge.

Welcome to these new members who have joined since last edition. We're glad to have you all on board.

Jayne Morgan	NSW
Fraser Chapman	Qld
Frank Millar	Qld
Kimberley Mallon	Qld

WHERE TO CONTACT APEN:

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Tracey Gianatti (President)
Ph: 0427 344 722
president@apen.org.au

Austin McLennan
(Vice-President & NT RC)
Ph 08 8973 9762
austin.mclennan@nt.gov.au

Greg Mills (Treasurer & NSW RC)
Ph 02 6750 6312
greg.mills@industry.nsw.gov.au

Sophie Folder
(Secretary & Tas RC)
Ph: 0407 367 909
sfolder@serve-ag.com.au

Neale Price (Past President)
Ph 07 3893 3358
nealeprice@carbongrazing.com.au

Kate Charleston (Editor)
Ph 07 4688 1314
kate.charleston@deedi.qld.gov.au

Gerry Roberts (Editor)
Ph 07 4658 4410
gerry.roberts@deedi.qld.gov.au

Regional Coordinators

QUEENSLAND
Greg Shannon,
Ph: 07 4776 8200
gshannon@bses.com.au

SOUTH AUSTRALIA
Lauren Thompson
Ph 08 8373 2488
lauren@srhs.com.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Kate Ambrose
Ph: 08 9368 3650
kate.ambrose@agric.wa.gov.au

VICTORIA
Vacant

NEW ZEALAND/OVERSEAS
Ian Tarbotton,
Ph: 64 7 858 3750
ian.tarbotton@dairynz.co.nz

CLUSTER COORDINATORS

Far North Queensland
Rosalie Anderson
Ph 07 4064 1197
rosalie.anderson@deedi.qld.gov.au

SE Queensland & N NSW
Warwick Waters
Ph 07 4698 7839
watersw@internode.on.net

Western Queensland
Gerry Roberts Ph 07 4658 4410
gerry.roberts@deedi.qld.gov.au

NSW, ACT, NT, SA
Vacant

Tasmania
Sally Murfet
Ph 03 6257 5234
sally@ruralconnections.com.au

Melbourne
Vacant

Rutherglen (Victoria)
Carole Hollier Ph 02 6030 4500
carole.hollier@dpi.vic.gov.au

Western Australia (Agriculture)
Pamela l'Anson Ph 08 9690 2201
pamela.ianson@agric.wa.gov.au

Western Australia (NRM)
Amrit Kendrick Ph 08 9383 4438
amrit@westnet.com.au

Policy
Greg Leach (Qld)
Ph 07 3211 4404
gleach@seqcatchments.com.au

APEN SECRETARIAT

Rosemary Currie, PO Box 1239,
WODONGA VIC 3689, AUSTRALIA
Ph: 02 6024 5349, Fax: 02 6056 1967, info@apen.org.au
APEN Website www.apen.org.au

Guidelines and deadlines

Submissions should be made in MS Word 6.0 with minimal formatting. A portrait photograph of the author is required. All photographs, figures and/or tables ought to be provided as separate files (preferably TIF or JPEG; photos scanned at 300 dpi). Feature articles should be around 1000 words and minor articles 500 words. The editor reserves the right to edit submitted material to meet space restrictions. Letters to the editor or general items of news of interest to the network are welcome. Articles should be submitted at least four weeks prior to publication.

Preference is given to articles that are grounded in some form of project or event.

Editing: Kate Charleston and Gerry Roberts

Layout: Ross Tasker, Snap Printing Wodonga, Victoria.

Production management: Rosemary Currie, APEN Secretariat, Wodonga, Victoria.

Opinions expressed in ExtensionNet are not necessarily those of the Australasia-Pacific Extension Network (Inc.) unless otherwise stated.

Stories and photos (next edition) due to Editor 25 February 2011