Our Agenda:

1. Consulting in the North
2. Survey On Managing Employees
   - Help us “remember" things we already know....
   - Get a couple new ideas
3. Have fun!
My 29th year

- Startup company to a Startup again
- 3 vehicles to 60
- 3 employees to 39
- from 25,000 consulting acres to 1.5M acres
- 29 separate single-year experiences
CENTROf T w i n Val l ey
North Dakota and Minnesota

Dennis Berglund  January 23, 2010  NAICC Annual Meeting
CENTROL of Twin Valley

• Full Service
  – No ties to product sales
• Consult on 1.5 million acres
  – Whole farms
  – > 90% grower retention
• 37 agronomists
  – Average experience is > 15 years
  – College degree
  – Certified
  – Members of NAICCC and state Crop Consultant organizations
• Employee Owned (ESOP)
Biggest Problems

- Short growing season (lack of GDU)
- Need to plant early
- Excess water
Twin Valley Centrol Story (1)

- Cen-trol (Cenex and Control Data)
- TV Centrol started in 1981, by 10 local supply co-ops
- Each Centrol was an independent cooperative (there are now 4)
- “They” hired the best people around
- Hired technical people who didn’t know that much about consulting OR running a business
Twin Valley Control (2)

- It was “sink or swim” and most employees sank
- Good people got hurt
- My college and training did not prepare me to consult or manage
- I was amazed the first time that I saw a Balance Sheet
  - I thought our auditor invented it!
Twin Valley Control (3)

- We worked hard, had the right people join us at the right times and we became successful.
• At Twin Valley, the employees bought the company in 2002
  – **ESOP** has worked well
• Management needs have increased and it’s certainly more complicated to get everyone working together
My job is to get:

- 39
- Diverse
- Individual
- Fun
- Extremely talented
- Friends
- Pulling at the same end of the rope
- To help our growers
What makes success? (DRB)

• Take “roadblocks” out of their way
• We define the playing field together, and then let the consultants play the game.
  – Where are the goalposts?
  – Where are the boundaries?
  – What are the rules?
• Let them have fun!
Twin Valley Central Themes

- Each Consultant is a Manager in his own area
- We’re all volunteers!
- High standards
- All are Certified
- Everyone has input
- High ethics
- Loyal
- Have fun!
Open-Ended Survey

1) What did your BEST boss do?
2) What did your WORST boss do?
3) What do your employees expect of you?
4) Tips on managing employees or partnerships?
5) Any other comments?
“Survey Says....”

- Survey to over 100 consultants/researchers
- >50% response rate
- 68 single-spaced pages
- This is a “Virtual Panel” of 65 consultants
- 3 bullet points or less
We are so fortunate!

• God-given skills
• “Unique" thought process
• Make a living doing what we enjoy
• To know that it matters
• The BEST job in the world
Some of you said that you already got a lot out of this survey:

– “I learned some things about my management style that I had not considered before.”

– “The Best Boss-Worst Boss scenario was an eye opener.”

– “This survey truly made an impression on me and I want to do better.”
Helpful Survey Quotes:

• “I’ve never had a bad boss.”
  – I’ll bet he’s a great Employee!

• “I’ve always had the good fortune of having good employees.”
  – I’ll bet he’s a great Boss!

• You can tell a lot about a person by how often they say “We” vs. “I”.

Dennis Berglund  January 23, 2010  NAICC Annual Meeting
Survey says:

1) We have a lot of examples of BAD Bosses
2) Some of you DON’T want to manage employees
3) Good examples of what TO DO
Survey says:

1) We have a lot of examples of BAD Bosses
2) Some of you DON’T want to manage anyone
3) Good examples of what TO DO

Dennis Berglund  January 23, 2010  NAICC Annual Meeting
Survey Results

• Some Bosses are just plain BAD
• They will suck the energy right out of you
• They’re TOXIC!
The Toxic Boss:
(Don’t do these things!)

- Arrogant
- Close-minded
- Criticizes in public
- Dictator
- Hot-headed
- Incompetent
- Obnoxious
- Overbearing
- Rude
- Selfish
- Self-centered
- Two-faced
Toxic Bosses!

• Don’t work with them!
  – Find a way out!
• Toxic co-worker?
  – Find a way out!
• Toxic grower?
  – This is usually early in your career, but
  – Find a way out!
Survey says:

1) We have a lot of examples of Bad Bosses

2) Some of you DON’T want to manage anyone

3) Good examples of what TO DO
Some of you don’t hire employees

• “Employee management takes away from the FUN of consulting.”
• “The consulting is the most gratifying, but employee management is the most thankless.”
• You can still learn from this survey
It’s about more than being a BOSS

• It’s about SELF-Management
• We’re technical people who are trying to run a business
• Most of us have a LOT of time and $$ invested into our agronomic education (7 years, $100K+)
  – Invest a fraction of that in formal training
“Quick Guide” to Crop Consulting

• -If it’s green or it wiggles, it’s biology.
• -If it stinks, it’s chemistry.
• -If it doesn’t work, it’s physics.
• -If it’s incomprehensible, it’s mathematics.
• -If it doesn’t make sense, it’s either economics or psychology.
• -If it’s all of the above, it’s **Crop Consulting**!
Career track

• Start as a scout
• Gain experience
• Become a successful Professional
• Hire an employee or two
• Struggle all over again, due to lack of training in management
We forget things as we run our business

– “In our job, it is very easy for management to get out of touch.”

– When you’re up to your waist in alligators, it’s tough to remember that your objective was to drain the swamp!
What Makes Success?

• Colin Powell - The secret of success is to do the common day to day things uncommonly well.

• Muhammad Ali - The fight is won or lost far away from witnesses, in the gym and out there on the road, long before I dance under those lights.

• Yogi Berra - In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice…. But, in practice, there is…. 
Survey says:

1) We have a lot of examples of BAD Bosses
2) Some of you DON’T want to manage anyone
3) Good examples of what TO DO
Basic Themes From The Survey

• Follow The Golden Rule
• Don’t Micromanage
• Reward Your Best
• Lead By Example
• Enjoy The Work!
Follow The Golden Rule

• “Do unto others what you would have them do unto you.”

• Treat others with the same dignity and respect that you would like!
Be Empathetic

• Empathy is not Sympathy
  – Sympathy is feeling sorry for someone
  – Empathy is understanding what someone is going through

• Understanding, yet tough-minded

• Care about them as a person
Don’t Micromanage

• Hold them accountable, but let them be their own boss
• Check on their progress, but don’t meddle
• Ask what they need to be more successful and then try to provide it.
Reward Your People

• Money is not a big motivator
  – It can be a big demotivator, if you don’t have enough

• Pay people what they are worth
  – You won’t save money by underpaying

• Don’t forget to say thank-you
Compensation Does Not Equal Happiness

• A good example are Lawyers:
  – They are very highly paid and are one of the most unhappy professions, in spite of being highly paid
  – They concentrate on billable hours, rather than serving their clients
Lead By Example

• Be helpful, knowledgeable, available
• Get Certified
• Join NAICC and state groups
• Don’t ask employees to do anything you won’t do yourself
Rubik Cube Color
Be Ethical

1. Is it legal?
2. Is it balanced and fair?
3. How will it make me feel about myself?

At an NAICC Annual Meeting, we suggested adding another question….

4. How would I feel if I had to explain it to my family or client?
“Year End Review”
(Use With Growers Or Employees)

1. What went well?
2. What went poorly?
3. What did we learn?
4. What actions can we take to improve our working relationship?
5. Any other comments or concerns?
Open Book Management

• Share company Mission, Goals and Plans
• Run your business as transparently as possible
• Include them in the planning and decision-making
Build Trust...

• and never betray that trust!
• Always stand up for your people
• Provide them direction and support, and then get out of their way
Improve Your Time Management

• Getting Things Done – by David Allen
  – Context, time, energy, rather than A, B, C priority
  – Checklists, Projects, Life Goals
  – If you can handle something in 2 minutes, just do it
• Start every job on the early side
Retain Your People!
155 Years Of Experience!

Dennis Berglund                   January 23, 2010                   NAICC Annual Meeting
Find the right person

• Attitude is as important as expertise
  – Some things should be HIRED FOR but not TRAINED FOR

• There is a certain type of person that is a great match for consulting
  – If you find that great match, then they will prosper and have a great career

• No “magic formula”
Top 10 List

“Traits of Great Crop Consultants"

- 10. Hard working
- 9. Good technical knowledge
- 8. See the “big picture"
- 7. Good problem solvers
- 6. Implement technology
"Top 10 List" (Page 2)

- 5. Flexible
- 4. Empathetic
- 3. Have fun
- 2. Ethical
- 1. PASSION for what we do
Partnerships

• Put everything in writing so that there are no misunderstandings
  – Including Minutes from meetings
• Partnership agreement and business plan
  – Partner roles and compensation
• Have a written plan for dissolving the partnership
Survey Quote:

• “It might also be helpful to interview the employee’s spouse, to know what family pressures an employer must compete against.”

• “If the employee, employer and spouse are not “on the same page”, then something will give.”
The twenty-dollar-bill auction (1)

- I will donate the proceeds to FEAЕ
- Increasing bids in $1 increments
- Silent auction—raise your hand
- Whoever has the high bid will pay me what they bid and get the $20
- Whoever bid the 2nd highest amount will pay FEAЕ what they bid and get nothing
  - 1st place will give their bid to FEAЕ and will get the $20
  - 2nd place has to donate their bid to FEAЕ
The twenty-dollar-bill auction (2)

• If I would have told you 5 minutes ago that I would get someone to bid more than $20 for a $20 bill you would have said I was crazy
Lessons from the twenty-dollar_bill auction

• There are unforeseen consequences that can only be figured out looking backwards
• The game flipped from “how do I make money to how do I minimize my losses?”
• Never enter until you understand your exit strategy
• Ninety percent of organizational failures, result not from a major crisis, but from failing to halt small incremental steps that lead to failure.
• The tyranny of small steps
• Similar to war, bidding war
Life Skills

• Kindergarten Life Skills
• Elementary Life Skills
• Life Skills 101
• Advanced Life Skills
Kindergarten Life Skills

• Don’t blame
• Encourage others
• Be fair
• Control your temper
• Celebrate success

Dennis Berglund       January 23, 2010       NAICC Annual Meeting
## Elementary Life Skills:

1) Trustworthy
2) Loyal
3) Helpful
4) Friendly
5) Courteous
6) Kind
7) Obedient
8) Cheerful
9) Thrifty
10) Brave
11) Clean
12) Reverent

The Boy Scout Law
Life Skills 101

- Don't abuse your position, just because you have the title of BOSS
- Don't burn bridges
- Your attitude affects the person below you, to the side of you and above you
- “I looked forward to working with him.”
Life Skills 101
Phrases

1) Thank-you.
2) I love you.
3) How are You?
4) What do you need?
5) I’m sorry.
What Makes Success?

• Think of Success
  – What comes to mind?

• Think of a Successful LIFE
  – What comes to mind?
Advanced Life Skills

• You will reap what you sow… (Galatians 6:7-10)

• Survey Quote - “Someday soon, we will all die and what is important is what we did with our fellow human beings during our stay here on Earth.”
Renewal!

• Take time during the year to RENEW yourself!
  – Take care of yourself Mentally and Physically
Take a piece of paper and do the following:

1. List 10 things that you enjoy doing.
2. Write down the last time you did them.
3. Do something about it!
Any Questions?

Dennis Berglund
January 23, 2010
NAICC Annual Meeting