



August 2020 Enhance Webinar: Milk to the Basics: Training Your Technicians by Finding Their WHY Presented by Jorge Delgado, Alltech

In our August Enhance webinar, Alltech's Training, Talent Development and Retention (T2R) Program Lead, Jorge Delgado, used his 3 Pillars of Engagement and 4 Drivers of Motivation to understand each milking technician's "why" behind their job in order to create an effective training program.

To start, Jorge emphasized the importance in using the correct job title—they are milking technicians, not "milkers." It is important to distinguish this as people want and need to know they matter and that the work they do is seen as important. He also encouraged trainers to step into their employee's shoes. The milking technician role is often considered an entry-level position, so many employees may come to you with little to no prior experience in dairy, or agriculture. Jorge stressed using terms and examples that are easily understood by those outside of the farming realm—i.e. no farmer talk!

The ability to communicate so that both trainer and trainee are on the same level brought us to his next talking point: engagement. In order for a person to actively learn and understand something you are trying to teach them; you need to engage them. Jorge uses 3 "pillars" to achieve engagement: anonymity, measurement and irrelevance.

- *Anonymity*
 - Jorge explained that people need to know that they and their work are recognized and appreciated. Communication usually only happens when something bad happens, like when a herd's somatic cell count spikes. By opening communication through affirmations and other words of acknowledgment, you eliminate the feeling of anonymity among your workers.
- *Measurement*
 - In most cases, the employer usually measures the performance of their employees. However, Jorge suggested creating benchmarks for employees to reach so that employees can measure themselves and track their own progress. By doing this, they will see their own individual level of contribution and will be encouraged to work together to become better overall. Some means of measurement could be the number of cows milked per hour, cleanliness of the milking area or the cleanliness of

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teat ends.

- *Irrelevance*
 - Once again, Jorge emphasized a person's need to be recognized and needed. They need to be reminded on a regular basis that their work has a purpose and that they are helping somebody or something beyond themselves. It is our responsibility as an employer and trainer to help them identify that their work is relevant.

This point of relevancy is crucial in understanding Jorge's next concept, the 4 Drivers of Motivation. These drivers are the fundamental parts of a person's "why."

- *The Drive to Acquire*
 - Just about every person shares this drive; it is the drive to secure an income.
- *The Drive to Bond*
 - People want to form connections, whether it is with their coworkers or their boss.
- *The Drive to Comprehend*
 - People want to know why they are doing what they are doing. They possess a need to satisfy their curiosity.
- *The Drive to Defend*
 - For most, this will be their family or culture. However, once we begin to understand each other's "why," this could also be a drive to defend the industry in which they work, realizing their purpose and need within the industry.

When discovering a milking technician's "why," Jorge recommended starting off a training session by asking who they are and why they are there. You need to find a common ground and try to relate to one another. This common ground can be found in part of their "why"—family. You can use this as motivation for employees to do and be their best. Jorge said they should think of it like this: if they do a good job, they can provide for your family, and you can provide for theirs.

Apart from finding a person's "why," Jorge expressed the importance in having a designated area for training. It's important to create the right learning environment, which can be done by setting clear expectations and sending a clear message. Ask them to be respectful and pay attention and let them know that you are there to help. Because many technicians may not have prior dairy experience, visual and educational aids will come in handy. Using examples they can understand to explain terms and processes is key as well, like likening the stimulation

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of milk let-down through pre-stripping to a text message being sent to a cow's brain when you start stripping her teats. Jorge also noted that cheap prizes for answering questions correctly, such as hats or other novelties from dairy representatives, can go a long way in making them feel recognized.

In summary, by engaging your employees to understand their drivers and "why," Jorge explained in this webinar that you can effectively train milking technicians for their job and get them to gauge their own progress and come up with ways to achieve the goals you both set out for.

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