

Our Passion, Your Future Leaders[©]

David Parlby
Greenhills Propagation, 20 Gillespie Road, Tynong, Vic 3813, Australia
Email: propagation@greenhills.com.au

Brooke Hallett
430 Tyabb Rd, Moorooduc VIC 3933, Australia
Email: info@tavistocknursery.com.au

BACKGROUND

Most nursery owners in today's tough times are concerned about the business today and not about the future. This is completely understandable, we all have bills we have to pay.

I don't know how many nursery owners consider the future, will you still want to be managing the business in 10 years, would you like to enjoy your days fishing or playing a round of golf? Without competent staff to run your business this might be difficult. Ideally you would love to hand down the business to one of your children, what happens if this isn't possible, where does this leave you?

This is where I would suggest looking towards the future of developing your staff to the best of their abilities. I'm sure you're thinking that I don't have staff that are that interested in doing anything else and that's a valid point, however have you actually asked them what they want out of their job.

So you might ask what I should do to...?

If you are looking at developing future leaders within your business, it can be tough and I'm not saying that it will work with everyone, however it can start by finding an area of interest and developing this. Let them see what else is in the industry. You can develop tunnel vision or create an island effect if you see the same thing every day.

Both NGIV and IPPS support youth development in their own way to give the Next Generation an opportunity to succeed.

MY EXPERIENCE

Taken from someone that didn't grow up in the industry.

When I started my career in horticulture, I didn't know where it would take me. I always think of myself being part of the Jamie Durie generation. I would watch Groundforce and BackyardBblitz and think that's something I would like to do. So that's what I did; however, I didn't enjoy landscaping, because I didn't get to work with plants enough. I was lucky enough to have a great start in the industry. David and Andrew Mathews gave me my start at proteaflora, I wasn't to know then how good that start would be. I enjoyed my time at proteaflora, however, that's all I knew. In 2006 I was lucky enough to be involved in the 6-pack at the IPPS Brisbane Conference.

This was one of the best introductions into the industry; it really took me out of my comfort zone. Back then I was quite a shy person and didn't know how to network with people in the industry, let alone striking up a conversation. I had a great opportunity to build confidence in myself and build on my knowledge on the industry. At this point I learnt there was more to the industry than proteas.

Not long after being involved with IPPS and the 6-Pack, NextGen Victoria began. This was a great idea, like minded, similar age group, great speakers. This motivated me to find out more about this industry. Each NextGen function inspired me in a different way and gives me more motivation.

When I won the NextGen award part of the award was to attend each of the Tree & Shrubbies for a 12 month period. During this time I was invited to join the NextGen committee, so it only seemed right to deliver the NextGen report. I remember Steve Day saying to me once that when I started to deliver the NextGen report it was hard to get a word out of me and it was noticeable that I was nervous. How things have changed, this opportunity gave me confidence in public speaking, which in turn gave me more

confidence to do my job.

The big turning point in my career was my trip to South Africa as part of the IPPS exchange program. This involved me traveling to South Africa for 3 weeks to work in nurseries and attend the regions IPPS conference. I have never been out of the country; however I saw this as a great opportunity to build on my career.

While in South Africa I was lucky enough to work at Arnelia nursery in Western Cape. This nursery has a partnership with Proteaflora, so I was very familiar with the running of the nursery.

The owner Hans Hettish asked me to observe what they were doing at the nursery and make some recommended changes on my last day. He wanted someone to look at the running of the nursery at the middle management level. I spent time talking with the team leaders and discussing issues and realise that it was something I was comfortable with. When I sat down and spoke with Hans I realise that this is something I wanted to invest more time in.

This is only a brief overview of what I have done in the industry, however I hope it gives you an idea of what the industry could do to motivate, develop, and your staff.