

Evaluating The Effectiveness of Experiential Learning for Motivating Value Chain Managers To Adopt New Ways of Capturing Value

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Overview

- Reason behind research (problem)
- Emergence of VCM as new business model
- Factors influence managers' adoption of VCM
- Why experiential workshops were chosen that reflected adult learning
- Research opportunity and methodology
- Insights into what works, and why?
- Evidence of change
- Conclusions

Mindsets Determine Individuals'...

Attitude towards others, and their surroundings



Ability to learn, and make appropriate decisions



Research Problem

- Agri-food industry being forced to adapt to risks spawned by changes that include:
 - » Deregulation
 - » Consolidation
 - » Accountability/due diligence
 - » Changing demands/expectations
- Agriculture does not appear to be adapting well to an industry whose structure is changing
- Looks to past for ways to solve future problems
 - » Resulted in perpetuation of business models that are increasingly unsuited to competing in a rapidly changing environment

Value Chain Management

- Proposed as a business model than can assist managers to adapt to changing environment
 - » Agri-food trails other industries in extent to which it has adopted VCM, and benefitted accordingly
- Adoption of VCM relies on approaching business relationships as strategic resource
 - » Challenge in historically adversarial industry
- Relies on value chain members possessing ability and motivation to communicate effectively
 - » Not occurred in agri-food, for various reasons
- Members need to possess the capabilities to develop and maintain effective partnerships
 - » Otherwise the required resources are too great

Motivating Learning and Application

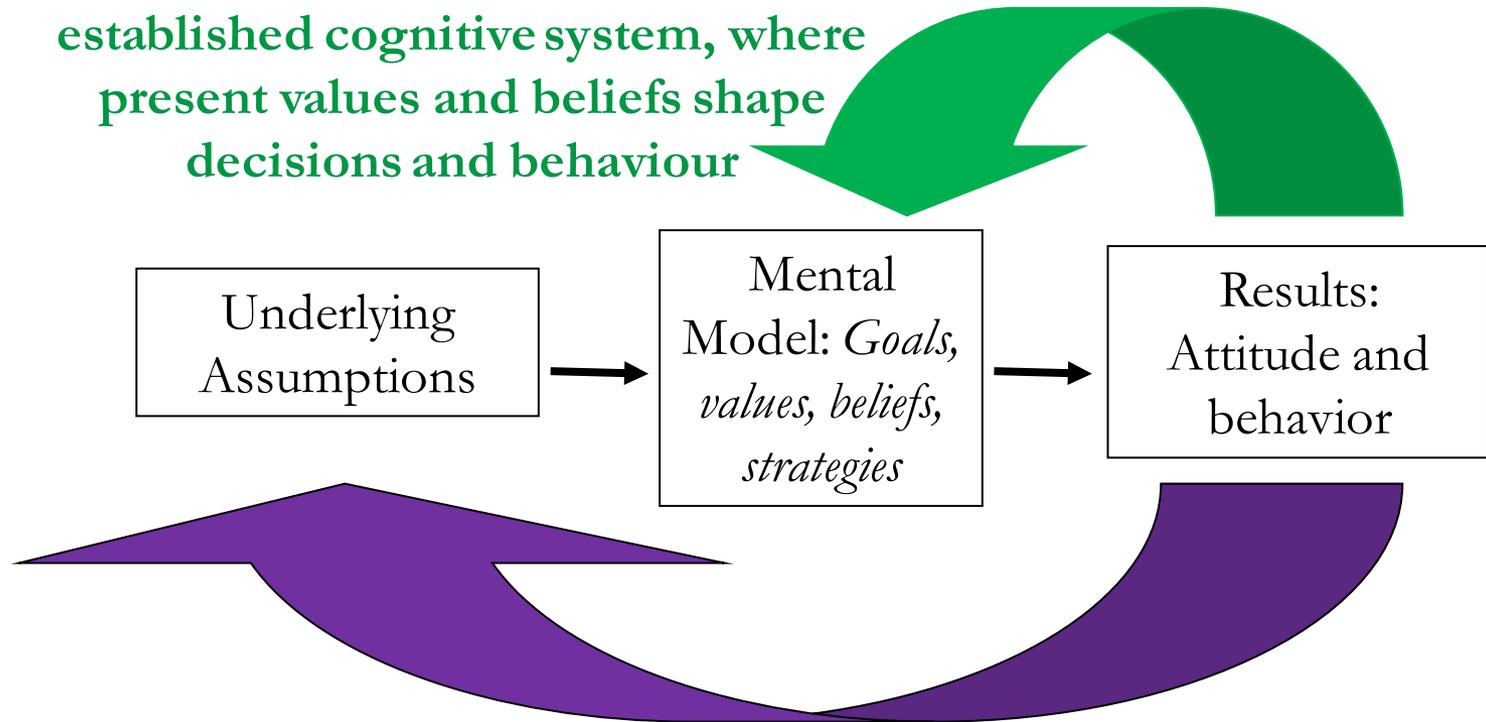
- Gaps in theory re effectiveness of methods that lead to adoption of non-traditional approaches
 - » Through first engendering changes in attitude
- Knowledge about benefit of change insufficient to change individuals' behaviour
 - » Unless first possess attitude supportive of change
- Need to present information in a form that appeals to individuals' learning style and senses
 - » Increase individuals' willingness to learn
- Begin with desired outcomes and how benefit, to help create sense of urgency to act
 - » Increase the value they attribute to the information

Knowledge Required to Adopt VCM

- Conceptual knowledge about why the closely-aligned chain(s) is being formed
 - » Batt, 2002; Duffy, 2005
- Operational knowledge about how to operate as a closely-aligned chain
 - » Hornibrook & Fearne, 2005; Whipple, 2007;
- Consciously recognise themselves as part of a larger system
 - » Boehlje, Hofing & Schroeder, 1999; Johnson, 2007;
- Tacit knowledge more important than explicit for enabling management of value chains
 - » Spekman, Spear, & Kamauff, 2002; Senge, Dow, & Neath, 2006;

Engendering Changes in Attitude and Behaviour

Single loop learning within an established cognitive system, where present values and beliefs shape decisions and behaviour



Double loop learning, where an individual critically assesses the assumptions which underpin the values and beliefs which shape their decision making processes and behaviour

Experiential Workshops

- Proposed as effective means for motivating and enabling managers to acquire tacit knowledge
 - » First-hand experience, leading to emotive connection between participants and material
- Facilitator is equal in status to the students
 - » There to assist learners to connect with material in method that creates emotional attachment
- Responsible for creating neutral environment
 - » Increases learners' willingness to experiment with new approaches to solve problems faced in real life
- Motivate learners to continue knowledge growth
 - » Leads to possession of increasingly sophisticated problem solving skills

Increasing Motivation to Act

(Change behaviour)



Causal (vs. defensive) reasoning

Enriched human experience

Increased opportunities

Enhanced confidence

Sense of empowerment

Enthusiasm for action

Genuine understanding

SUCCESS

Research Opportunity

**The strategic move
to profitability**

Value Chain Management Workshop



Canadian Farm Business Management Council
Conseil canadien de la gestion d'entreprise agricole



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire Canada



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Value Chain Management



Value Chain Management

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Adding value to agriculture



Value Chain Management

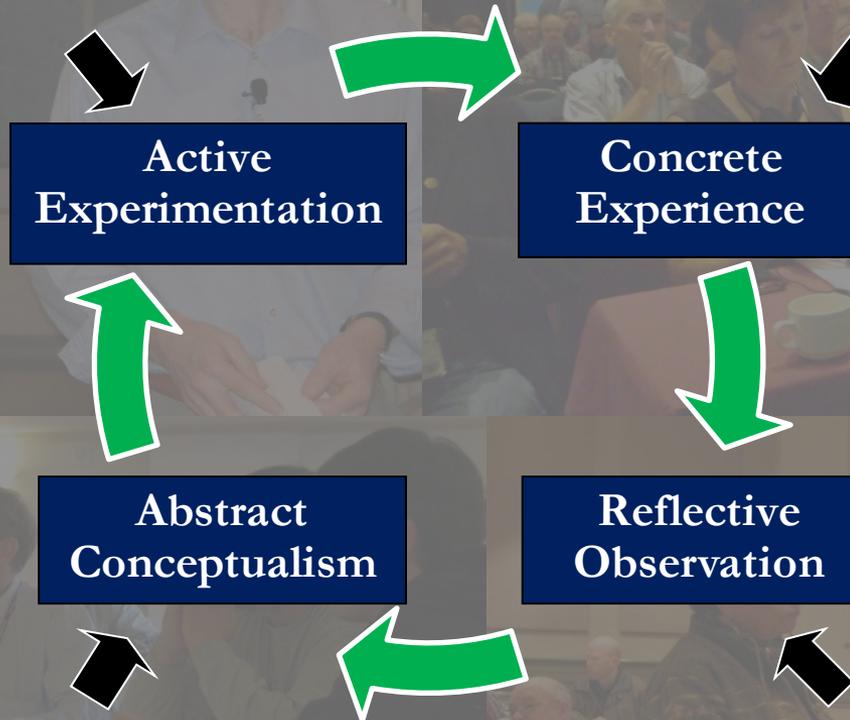


Value Chain Management

Structure Reflected Adult Learning Theory

Simulations on how a chosen chain's performance could be improved. Included value chain mapping and role playing.

Video cases of agri-food business managers describing how and why they work as a closely-aligned value chain.



Starting Point

Analogies developed between agri-food managers' past experiences, current situations and concepts shown in video.

Facilitated discussions about the case studies; encouraging learners to share differing perspectives; probing if, why, how questions.

Research Methodology

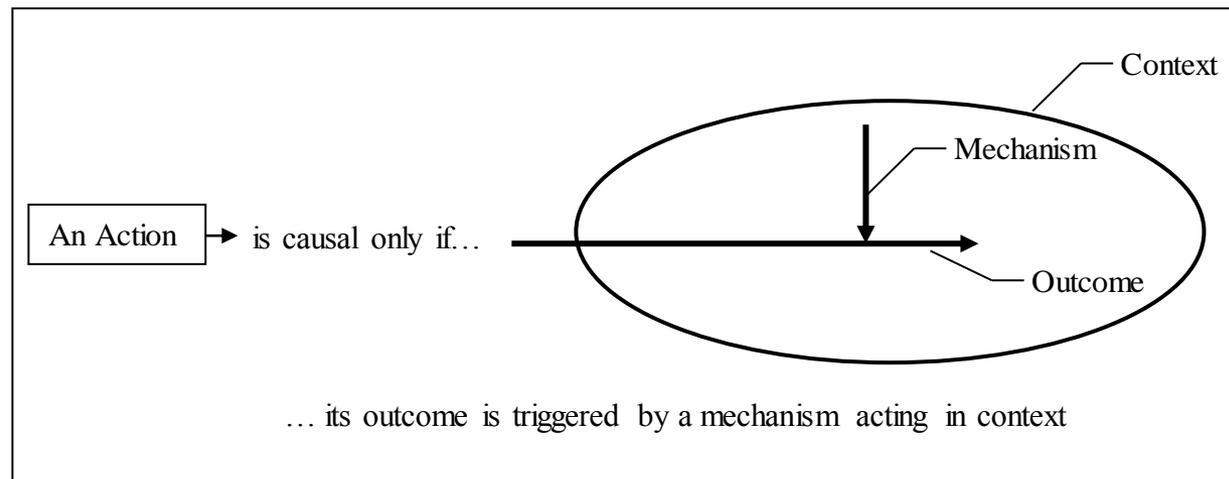
- 13 workshops nationally
 - » 3 focused on specific sectors, 10 general
- 334 attendees
 - » Farmers, processors, retailers, government, etc.
- 279 exit surveys
 - » Structure, materials, value, facilitator
- 95 follow up interviews (*~14 months after w'shop*)
 - » Resulting changes in attitude and behaviour
 - » Who changed vs. who didn't, why, outcomes
 - » 76 managers of commercial businesses (MCB)
- 14 workshop hosts and organizers
 - » Observations, attendees, pre/post interactions

Data Analysis: Objective

- Generate understanding of ‘if’ and ‘why’ the workshops led to changes in attitude
- Realistic explanation

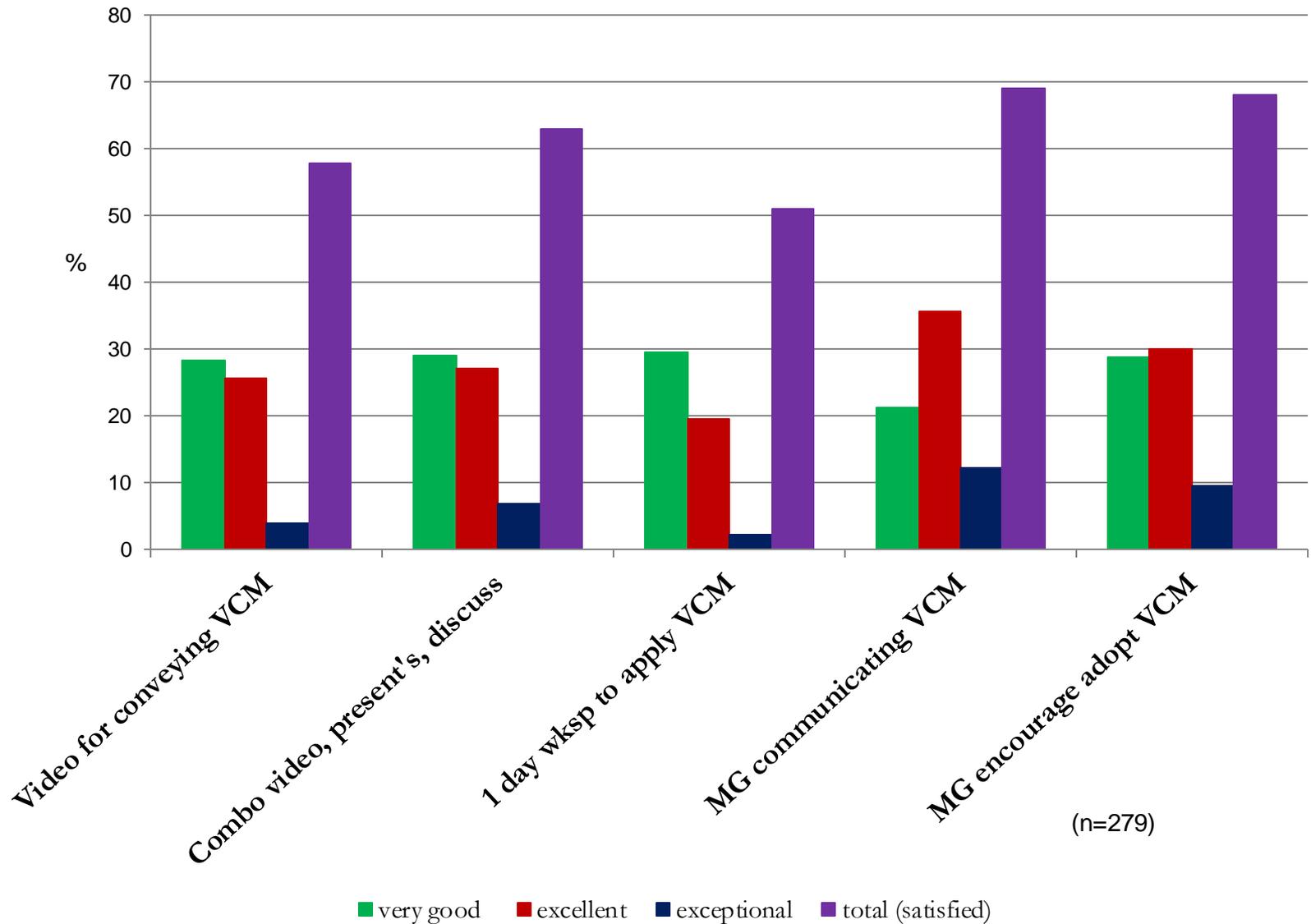
$$\textit{Regularity} = \textit{Mechanism} + \textit{Context}$$

- » Workshops: *Mechanism*
- » Cognitive environment: *Context*
- » Attitude/behaviour: *Outcome regularity*



Pawson &
Tilley, 2007

Exit Surveys*



(n=279)

very good excellent exceptional total (satisfied)

“Seeing and listening to Livestock Marketing was a great motivation to intently learn what and why they were doing, and how they were doing it.”

Livestock Marketing



**Randall
Parker
Foods**

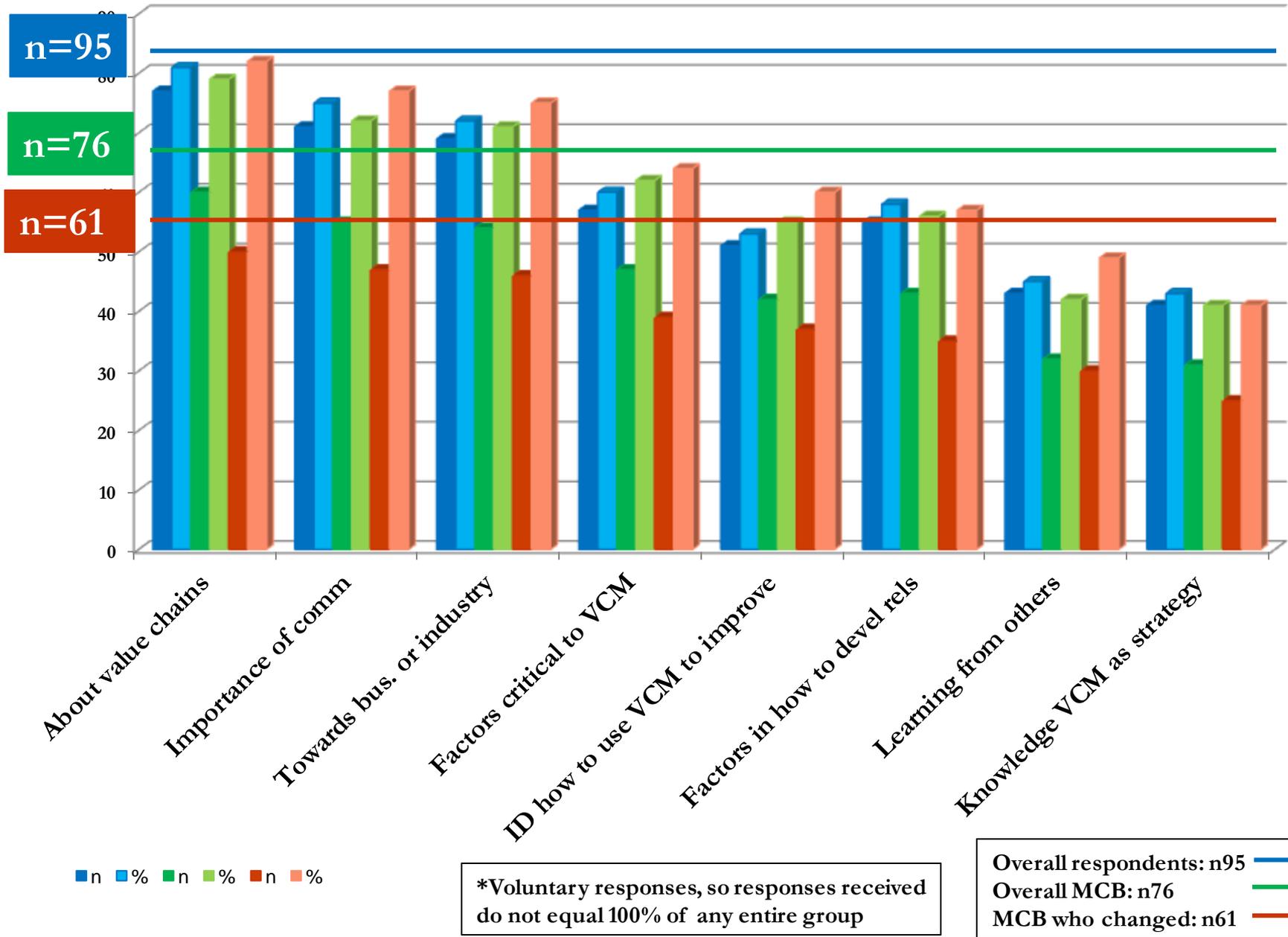


Observation and Abstraction

“When you give the PowerPoint to start with, it gives them the background and a better understanding before you go into things in more detail. When they are actively participating, there is no doubt that they are learning about ideas and concepts reflected in successful initiatives that they were able to observe through the case studies.”

Workshop host

Exit Surveys*

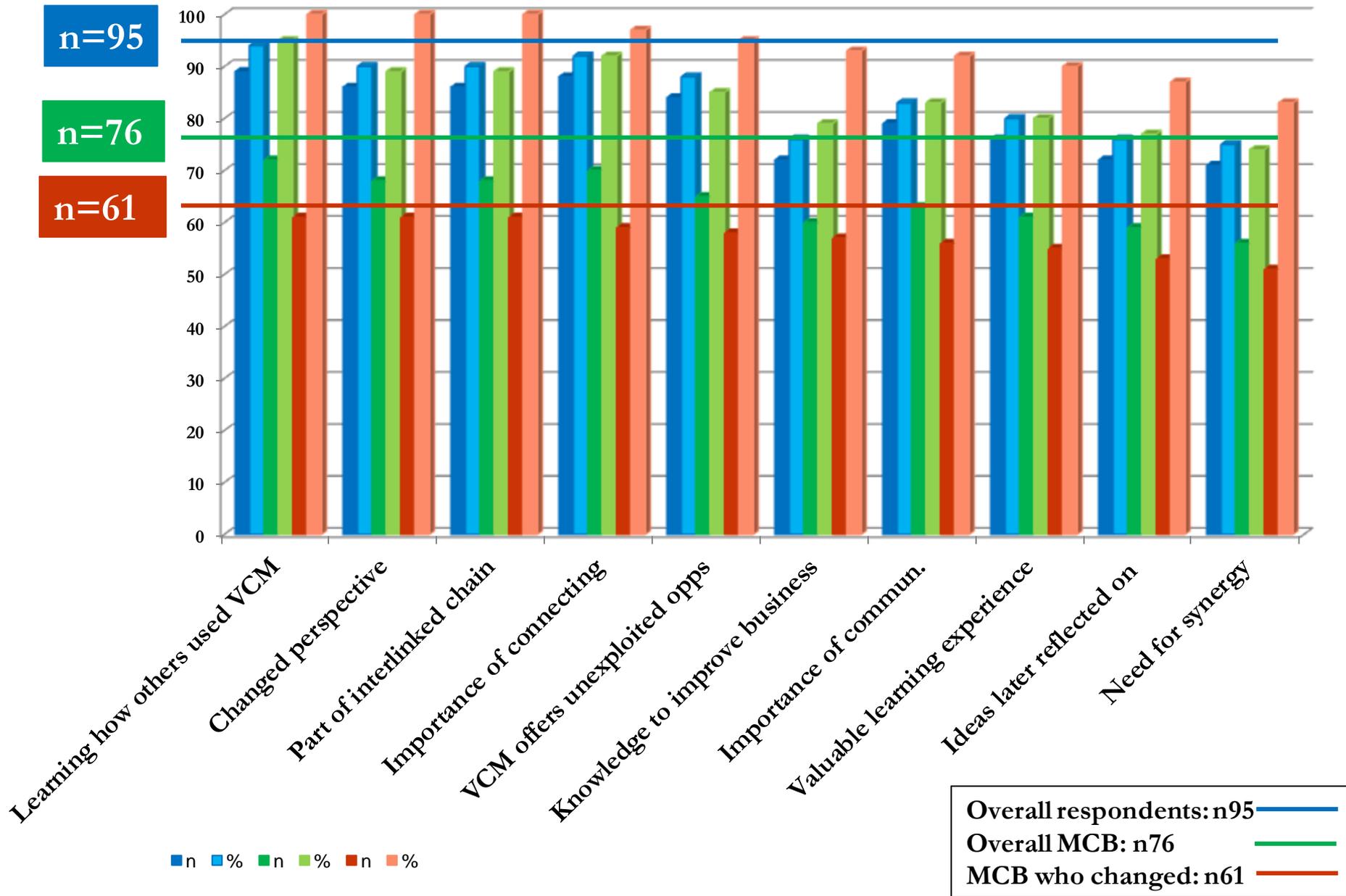


Combined Impact of Multiple Factors

“It distilled a number of things that I’d already been thinking down into a clearer vision of how we could get to where we want to be 5-10 years from now. Martin’s passion and background, combined with the tactile and visual element of the video, helped motivate discussions about the whys and not just the whats. That engaged other people to share their opinions and perspectives, which led to my connecting with the material.”

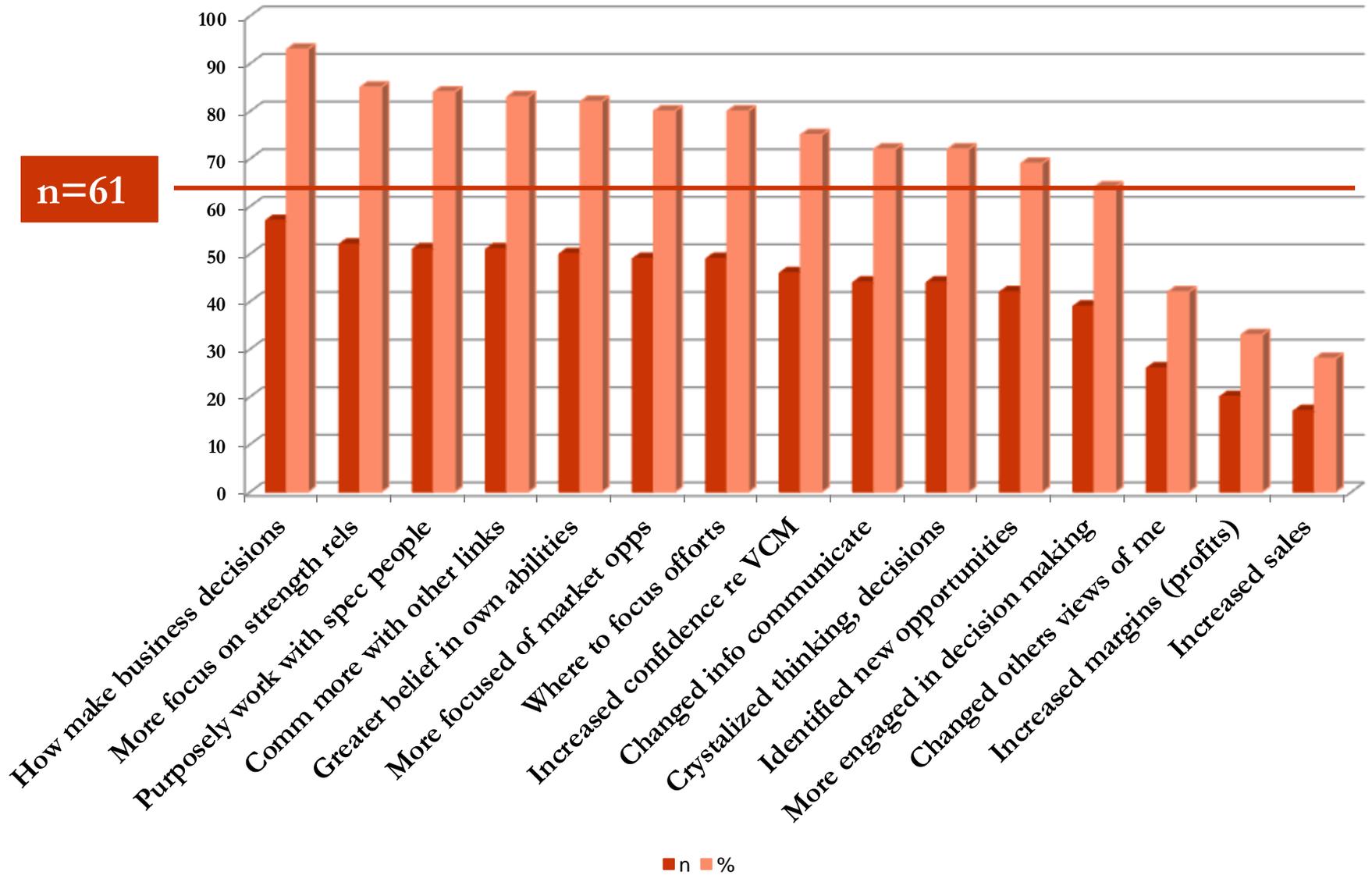
Farm manager

Impact of Workshop (follow-up)



Changes Achieved (n61)

n=61



Choosing Correct Partners

“Seeing how those guys were looking at the case study (allowed us) to identify people there who wanted to see if there are ways of working on a shared risk/reward basis.”

Processor

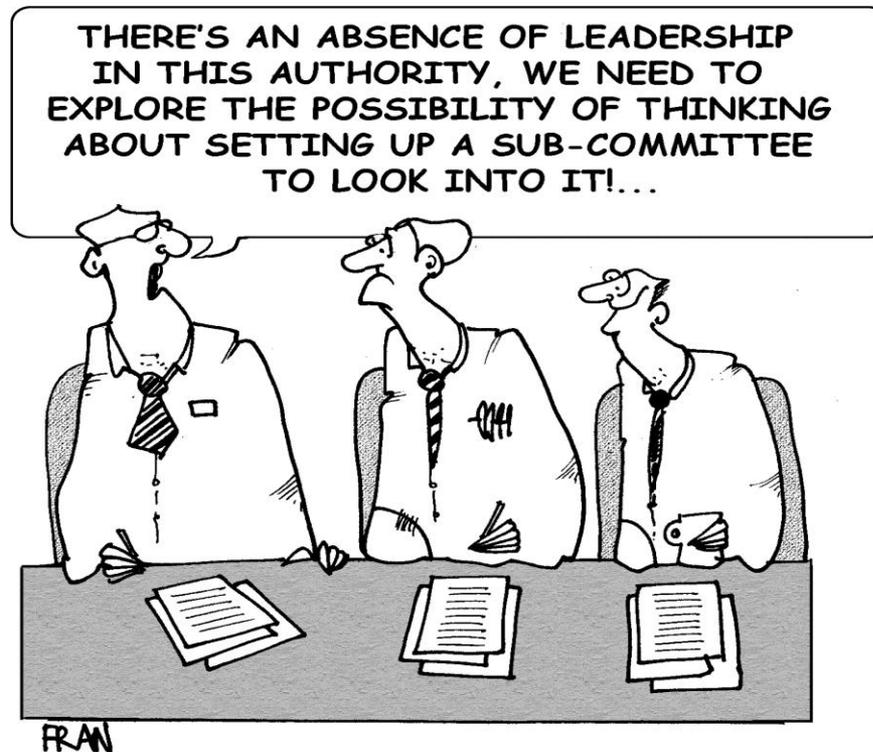


"Whatever happened to collective responsibility?"

Importance (and Role) of Leadership

“(Prior to the workshop) I had been investing energy in pushing people along. Now I look at who I need to push aside.”

Farm manager



Changed Paradigm

“When I see some of them now that they attended the workshop, they may not be in a value chain, though they are still more open minded and more engaging”

Workshop host



Reflection / Objective Reasoning

- Workshop created sense of aspiration
 - » Strengthened over time through reflection
 - » Video images and discussion, important elements
 - » Particularly among those who changed behaviour
- Aspiration (*why*) more important than skills (*how*)
 - » If don't have necessary skills, will seek those who do
 - » Objective reasoning is a crucial element in process
- Changes in perspective and aspirations led to changes in decision-making process
 - » What is possible
 - » Who to involve, why
 - » How to communicate objectively, influence others

Capturing Value In New Ways

- Retailer: *Chain coordination, consumer marketing*
 - » Changed metrics used to determine suppliers and track their performance; increased prices ~50%
 - » Turned unviable business into a profitable venture
- Meat Processor/Retailer: *Chain structure*
 - » Fewer links, strategically coordinates remaining links
 - » Increased value for entire chain, strong commitment
- Lamb Producers: *Strategic changes = >profitability*
 - » #1: New business plan, ceased accelerated lambing
 - » #2: Proactively embraced new market opportunities
- Home Construction: *Reduced costs, increased revenue*
 - » New processes for how coordinate and communicate with contractors; changed agent/buyer involvement

Conclusions

- Experiential workshops effective in encouraging managers to learn about non-traditional skills
 - » When structured to reflect adult learning theory
- Effective for encouraging managers of agri-food (and other) businesses to change behaviour
 - » Through stimulating changes in causal reasoning
- Video case studies combined with discussion are important elements of experiential workshop
 - » Convey tangible, contextual, concrete experience
- Emotional bond develops between participant and how they can benefit by applying material
 - » Become self-directed learners, problem solving skills
- Research to test if concept can be generalized
 - » Leading to strategic changes in individuals' behaviour



Vielen Dank!

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