

final report

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Sheep Genetics Communications Review and Development of a 12-month Tactical Communications Plan

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Executive summary

Sheep Genetics currently communicates to a large number of direct subscribers (~900) and indirect users of Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs). These subscribers consist of commercial growers, data managers, farm consultants and educators.

Sheep Genetics' objective and vision are:

- **Objective:** Producer engagement with Sheep Genetics information and tools.
- **Vision:** Sheep producers use ASBVs to improve their flock and increase their profitability.

Increased resource requirements from collaborative research projects have reduced the level of direct communication by Sheep Genetics to its core stakeholders. As a result, Sheep Genetics required a review to be undertaken to investigate whether it currently has the right resources and communications material to provide accurate and timely information to its stakeholders and, if not, what is required to address any deficiencies.

Schuster Consulting Group Pty Limited approached this task through three distinct stages, each stage being a prerequisite for the next:

- 1) Analysis of the communication needs of the target audience/s.
- 2) Review of existing communications materials and assessment of "fit for purpose".
- 3) Development of a 12-month tactical communications plan.

In considering the communication needs of Sheep Genetics target audience, it was found that:

- Sheep Genetics has a broader target audience than what they have traditionally been focusing on.
- A focus on one target audience and push strategies has been to the detriment of the other target audiences ability to pull demand for ASBVs.
- Communication channels and methods have been utilised as broad "one-size-fits all" channels rather than through a strategic audience-based focus.
- Value propositions that can guide the development of key messages and communication materials are absent.

In overcoming many of the challenges SCG identified with Sheep Genetics existing communication approaches, the use of a Buyer's Journey concept was recommended.

The Buyer's Journey is a cognitive decision making journey individuals follow when considering buying, adopting or consuming products, services or offerings. Within the Buyer's Journey, each individual (a "buyer") must personally traverse a pathway leading from apathy (Do I have a need?) to commitment (How can I get this?).

SCG mapped the Buyer's Journey for each of the identified target audience and identified appropriate channels, communication materials and elements as well as value propositions depending on the stage in the audiences Buyer's Journey.

An implementation plan was also developed for each of the target audience that included budget options for in-house management compared with outsourcing the communications program. A further implementation plan was provided that outlines an option that reduces the budget by 25%.