



Claire Laughlin  
Consulting

# A Positive Culture Shift —Built on Shared Trust— Supports Exciting Growth at COKE FARM

## CASE STUDY

Coke Farm has grown and evolved from an organic farming operation into a thriving organic produce aggregation company. Due to changes in leadership, increased volume, and the fast pace of work on the farm, existing systems and processes were being challenged and stress in the workplace was on the rise.

As a company that takes great pride in offering consistently high quality organic and specialty produce, Coke Farm's management knew it was imperative to be a high-functioning team with efficient systems and processes.

Under the stress of all these changes, some latent conflict was resurfacing. Management team members felt that things needed to be (and could be) improved – but didn't know how to initiate change. They requested assistance in resolving growing tensions—they wanted to regain trust and good communication among themselves as a team, so as to better face all the changes underway.



“We all felt stress levels rising and knew that things could be better. So, we decided to try.”

## THE SOLUTION

**Regain and cultivate a positive workplace culture through trust-building and better communication skills.** Coke Farm chose communication and trust-focused training because it was the root of rising tensions and system failures. A live training program was developed, and personal interviews were held to explore team dynamics. Then, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and group gatherings were prohibited. The team agreed to move ahead with **Building a High-Trust Workplace**, Claire Laughlin's online communication and trust-building course, supported by live, virtual, facilitated meetings.

## THE IMPLEMENTATION

The Coke Farm team worked with Claire Laughlin Consulting to develop **working agreements** and practice proven **communication techniques** that enabled them to solve problems and meet the challenges ahead. After enrolling in the **Building a High-Trust Workplace** course, team members **watched course videos** and deepened their understanding of key concepts through **related assignments**. Six **virtual meetings** were held to **review and apply the concepts** to real issues they faced in their workplace.

The skills and practices developed through **Building a High-Trust Workplace** gave the team:

- Permission to slow down, recognize, and address conflict head on
- Tools to reduce stress
- An understanding of personal “triggers” and how inaccurate perceptions can create problems
- A robust emotional vocabulary to help navigate hard conversations
- Key listening skills and application techniques
- The 5-Step Problem Solving Method



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## THE OUTCOME

Coke Farm team members who completed Claire Laughlin's **Building a High-Trust Workplace** course reported these outcomes:

- People have learned to put assumptions aside; they now pause to listen to each other more attentively.
- Connection and understanding between team members has improved.
- Conversations are more pleasant.
- There's an increased awareness of the team dynamic, and reduced stress.
- We've been able to come up with solutions to manage the increased workload (due to Coke Farm's exponential growth).
- The team felt excited to confidently welcome new leadership.
- The positive shift in workplace culture resulted in many benefits; one being that strong, cohesive teamwork is necessary to successfully achieve the company expansion being planned by a new partner.
- Out of these changes came newly created opportunities for responsibility, additional staff, and personal growth.

"We wanted to ensure team members felt valued and could get the job done amidst ongoing changes."

*"Our company was growing exponentially and had ever-changing needs. The fast paced environment impacted our approach; our team ran into communication roadblocks. **Building a High-Trust Workplace** taught us that in order to build and maintain trust, we needed to slow down, listen, refrain from making assumptions, and be present (not distracted). I learned that perceptions are not necessarily accurate. Perceptions without facts can lead to misguided conclusions—which erodes trust and is unhealthy for the team.*



*This course helped our team slow down; it taught us to stay "low on the ladder" of assumption; we became better listeners; we now use "I statements" to help with challenging discussions. We are now more comfortable with each other and have better focus on achieving our goals. I highly recommend this course for any workplace. "*

- Adele Gemignani, Sales & Business Development, Coke Farm

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- Claire Laughlin Consulting: <https://www.clairelaughlinonline.com/>
- Coke Farm: <https://cokefarm.com/>
- Building a High-Trust Workplace: <https://www.clairelaughlinonline.com/high-trust-workplace>
- Coaching for Excellence: <https://www.clairelaughlinonline.com/coaching-for-excellence>