Ryan Skamp - GRDC in conversation

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GRDC investment, ag tech company, farming journey, tradie lifestyle, efficiency program, harvest optimization, software engineer, market strategy, customer acquisition, farm efficiency, operational savings, business development, industry connections, future plans, social media

**SPEAKERS**

Oli Le Lievre, Ryan Skamp

**Oli Le Lievre** 00:10

This series is a GRDC investment that takes you behind the scenes as we sit down with some of the people shaping our grain industry, uncovering their journeys, learning more about their passions and the projects that are part of their everyday. We are over in Western Australia. This is now the third part of what has been the GRDC In Conversation Podcast. We’ve covered Southern Australia, we’ve covered the north across NSW and Qld, and now we’ve headed west to meet with all sorts of growers, advisers, researchers and people involved in the Aussie grains industry. Welcome to the next series.

**Oli Le Lievre** 02:21

Is your last name, Skamp?

**Ryan Skamp** 02:22

Yup, Skamp.

**Oli Le Lievre** 02:23

So how do we come up with Skan?

**Ryan Skamp** 02:24

I just…my wife Talia, reckons, like every time I come with a business idea…I gotta figure out how to get Skamp or Skan into…Skamp into it. And then so it was…oh, there was some weird variations of Skan, but I just want it to be s, k, a, something. So Skan was the closest thing we came up with that was near Skamp. I think I tried to call it Skamp at the start, and everyone was just like…terrible, but yeah, I just wanted to weasel that into there somewhere.

**Oli Le Lievre** 02:53

There you go. Mate, you've nailed it.

**Ryan Skamp** 02:54

Yeah. So, yeah, Skan.

**Oli Le Lievre** 02:55

So, yeah…well…I guess how I came across you…well, it's funny, like, it's…how these things work, is someone will, like, say something. So I think it was Melissa…or Melanie.

**Ryan Skamp** 03:07

Yeah, from the GRDC…from their marketing network. Yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 03:11

And so she was like, here's a great story. And then you popped up somewhere else, and then you popped up somewhere else. So, and then I was like, Okay, I need to actually reply to this email.

**Ryan Skamp** 03:20

Yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 03:21

And then, sure enough, you're literally in the in the town where I'm coming to. So it's worked out perfectly.

**Ryan Skamp** 03:25

Timing’s everything, Hey?

**Oli Le Lievre** 03:27

It is, hey. But I think the things that really stuck out to me in your story was similar to my background. Grew up in the city, had friends in agriculture, fell in love with it. You then go on farming, and now you've founded an ag. tech company. Which is bloody cool. So, like, I guess, yeah, starting off…what do I need to know about you, Ryan, to understand…like, how did this love of Ag. and farming come about?

**Ryan Skamp** 03:50

Yeah, I think, I think you spoke about it really well there. It was…I don't know, I think as a young kid, like…always just a bit of a sense of adventure. I was pretty, you know, up and about sort of kid. And yeah, went to high school, and, like you say, just started…like the country kids kind of stood out from the crowd. They're always a bit, you know, larrikin. And yeah, they were just fun to be around. And I started hanging out with them more and more. And yeah, started going back to their farms on school holidays. And I just went, This is awesome, like how have I not known about farming. My mom, like her family, kind of grew up all around regional WA so I travelled a fair bit as young kids, but I spent my entire life in the city, apart from holidays and whatnot. And yeah, just fell in love with it. And yeah, as soon as I kind of got exposure to it through going back to my mates farms, I knew right this is where I'm going to end up some way or another. And yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 04:43

And so the options for you out of high school, you ended up becoming a chippy.

**Ryan Skamp** 04:45

Yeah, I was a chippy. And it's funny, I kind of look back on it now…I love now I love problem solving, maths, probably a lot of kind of intellectual problems that at school, I thought were worst thing ever. Like at school, you know, I was, yeah, I wanted to be a tradie. I thought, you know, kind of, that was not a route for me at all. I've since found out I really enjoy solving those problems, but I was probably just an, you know, an agitator than an upbeat 16 year old. So, yeah, that was, I kind of forgot your question.

**Oli Le Lievre** 05:19

No, no. Well…And I think it's such an interesting point, like, where the like, with the benefit of time, you actually can kind of grow into these things. Because I would say at school, I was the exact same…

**Ryan Skamp** 05:27

Big time. Yeah, it gave me…yeah, I never thought I'd pursue this kind of route. And now I can't see myself doing anything else but being intellectually stimulated, like we were saying, this is the most fun I've ever had. Is getting up in the morning and using your brain to solve real world problems. Like, you know, I mean, that makes it sound pretty grandiose and big, but yeah, at the core principle of what it is that's kind of what we're doing. And yeah, definitely grown into that role, and love it.

**Oli Le Lievre** 05:51

And so the chippy side of life…

**Ryan Skamp** 05:54

Yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 05:55

Talk to me. What are some of the perks of being a tradie?

**Ryan Skamp** 05:57

Tradie..which you don't get in farming…which was a rude culture shock for me, and something I still probably struggle with is…when it should be pretty good, you get to work at 7:30 you leave at 3:30 or whatever it is, and you don't work weekends, typically. Farming, as I'm sure anyone in farming understands, that is not the case at all. Yeah, farming is weekends, big nights, which I don't mind. I like working hard, but yeah, that's probably…the lifestyle is kind of the the, well, yeah, what could appeal to a tradie?

**Oli Le Lievre** 06:26

Are there elements of that, like life that you wish Agriculture had, where you could literally walk out at the end…

**Ryan Skamp** 06:32

Big time. It’s probably a limiting factor for me. I…I mean, I'm married, I've got a wife. We want to have a family. To me, being a dad is probably the biggest thing in my life, and I struggle to see, in a farming role, how I can actually do both of those things well. In terms…I'm speaking from a perspective where I don't own a farm I am subject to if I was working on someone's farm, their hours and their program and, yeah, 100%. I I would almost be an advocate of that, of having some more structure around these things, because I think it would invite a few more people in. We're kind of in a world now where I think young people want a bit more flexibility in terms of their work life. A lot of people work from home these days. You're never going to get that nag, but what you might be able to get is a bit more structure. It might appeal to some people, maybe, maybe I'm just thinking about it wrong. But yeah, to me, it is…It was a big limiting factor for me, big time. Yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 07:26

It’s something I think about a lot, actually, and, and I think, as we'll start to get to…for you, but…in running my own business…what I'm trying to do is create the life that I want to have. And so as you say, it's like…I'm a long way off having kids and things like that. But actually, going well, I want to be the dad that can do the canteen duty at lunch, who actually is present and knows.

**Ryan Skamp** 07:48

100% that is…that was massive for me. And yeah, like that was, yeah, it's always been a big priority. If my job can't provide that, to be doing the small little life and Dad stuff, then I didn't really want it. And yeah, like I say, if it's not your farm, you're kind of at the mercy of someone else. So I always wanted to be involved in ag. but this is me deciding my future. How that looks in ag..

**Oli Le Lievre** 08:12

And so being able to look at the options was life as a tradie, able to give you that or not really?

**Ryan Skamp** 08:17

Yeah. I think so. Yeah. I think so. Probably just lack of interest in the work, to be fair. I mean, houses have been built for ages, and they're pretty cool. One of my best mates is a chippy, and I know he loves his job and he loves what he does, but yeah, I just didn't find much engagement. I didn't see too many big problems to solve, like building houses has been done to death. There's, I mean, there's literally instructions written out about how to do it, you know, I'm sure you can do it in a new way. But yeah, to me, there wasn't a big problem or just interest. Yeah, it's cool industry, but not for me.

**Oli Le Lievre** 08:45

So how did you go from living in Perth to then ending up in Moora? Moora. Moora.

**Ryan Skamp** 08:51

Yeah, Moora.

**Oli Le Lievre** 08:52

I keep saying it wrong.

**Ryan Skamp** 08:53

Nah. Moora, yeah. Yeah, so I moved to…the first town I lived in was Badgingarra, which is 45 minutes from here. And so that was where I was living and doing my trade at the time. And yeah, living on a mate's farm that I knew from high school and yeah doing my trade. And yeah, then my chippy boss at the time, who's now my father in law, he…yeah, he went farming. He’s managed a farm. My brother in law kind of went back to a family farm. And yeah, I thought, well, why not? Yeah, so Moora seemed like the place to be at the time. So yeah, kind of transferred my way over here. I had a few different farming jobs after my…after I left my trade around Badgingarra, but yeah, I've been here for the longest, in Moora.

**Oli Le Lievre** 09:41

The centre of the universe.

**Ryan Skamp** 09:42

Yeah, mate. Big time.

**Oli Le Lievre** 09:45

And for you, so the last three years you've been farming?

**Ryan Skamp** 09:46

Yup. Well, last…I think we're at almost five now. This would be my fifth, but three years here at Dave's…well, maybe four then. Four or five.

**Oli Le Lievre** 09:54

And so has it been everything you kind of dreamed of when you first got those exposures as a teenager.

**Ryan Skamp** 09:59

Yeah, that's...I I actually reflect on this stuff. I don't know, I’m a pretty nostalgic person, and I tend to reflect a fair bit on…oh, Ryan in 2017, would he like…this is almost exactly where I thought I wanted to be and then I get here and I'm like, Oh, this isn't everything I thought it was. But yeah, I do…this is kind of…this was the plan. So, yeah, I'd like to think that I somewhat executed those goals pretty well and continue to work on them. But, yeah, I think this is, I mean, this is farming really. This is the reality of it. Yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 10:27

Talk to me. So, so from 2017 to now, what were those goals? What did you…

**Ryan Skamp** 10:31

It was…Yeah, definitely I was, yeah, just working on a kind of large scale farm is really what I wanted to do. You know…you know, saw photos and videos of the farms. I was like, Oh, this is wicked. I've got to get a part of that. And yeah, now being a part of it, it is awesome. So, yeah, that was something I was interested in. And yeah, kind of…yeah, got into.

**Oli Le Lievre** 10:51

And as you stare down the barrel of this kind of next chapter, which I think we'll start to touch on, like, what are you…like, what has it that's instigated the change?

**Ryan Skamp** 11:01

Probably my willingness and passion to solve problems. Like, in the job I am in now, a lot of it is operating machinery, operating tractors, it's a broad oak farm. That's kind of what happens day to day, and not to…not to knock it, but going up and back in a paddock is probably not what I'm built for. And it's probably…I don't feel like it's kind of my destiny, if you will. You know, a bit of a buzzword, but, you know…yeah, I think I was, yeah, I wanted to be doing something a bit more mentally stimulating than just driving tractors. And, yeah, this next thing is a big problem solving challenge for me, which gets me out of bed in the morning. You find yourself,

**Oli Le Lievre** 11:39

Do you find yourself over the last five years, and I don't know if this is an assumption, but you can…we can test it, you were looking…like, do you find yourself, over the last five years, just constantly looking for something that you could be like, Where can I…

**Ryan Skamp** 11:49

All the time, and I've done that my entire life, always looking, probably to my detriment at times, but always looking. As soon as I get somewhere…I wouldn't say…I don't know, I don’t think it's bad thing maybe, but…kind of struggle to just enjoy the moment and just chill out and think, Oh, this is pretty cool. As soon as I'm somewhere, I'm not thinking about an exit strategy, but I'm thinking, right, what's next? How do we build on this? Yeah. And hopefully maybe one day that'll slow down. But for now, in my 20s, that's kind of what I'm doing, is every time I get somewhere, I seem to think, right, what's next? How do we get there?

**Oli Le Lievre** 12:21

So what have been some of those ideas? What are some of those hair brain ideas that you have? Let's talk about solving the world's problems.

**Ryan Skamp** 12:30

Yeah, well, actually, I did want to be chippy again for a bit. I was like, right I could be a builder that would be sick. Lots of work around, that was a good idea. What are some other whiz-bang ideas…like, all types of, Ag. contracting…like, I started doing sheep work when I started farming, and I thought sheep work was the absolute bees knees..you’ve got your sheep dog. And I'm like, right, here we go. We're on here. Let's…like, I'm gonna be a sheep contractor. I was like, right? You know, I could do all the, you know sheep contracting work. Pretty good that I didn't do that, to be fair, especially with the kind of state of the WA sheep industry. That was the next big idea. Then I started drawing machines more. And then next, you know…starry, bright and all that, so I was like, right, here we go, I'll be an Australian contractor or a….contractor. So pretty much everything I've thought of, I thought it was a genius idea. And, yeah, haven't done all of them. Probably a good thing that I ended up here. This scene…this was the final one where I could convince my wife that this was a good idea, because it didn't require me to outlay half a million dollars to buy a tractor to start…

**Oli Le Lievre** 13:34

Yeah fair.

**Ryan Skamp** 13:34

So, like I was saying before, I literally started this whole thing on an iPad and a bit of spare time. So yeah, it's, um…it was probably one I could do. That was a safe gamble.

**Oli Le Lievre** 13:44

Talk to me about the…what the idea is, and when it, when it came about, and tell me, like, I know nothing, because I know nothing.

**Ryan Skamp** 13:52

It was started last harvest and driving up and back in the paddock and I mean…people that have been in a paddock know that, you know, if there's funny shapes or angles, sometimes it's not so clear as to which way you should turn at the end of a run to run most efficiently. We had two headers and a chase bin at the time, and I've just kind of been sitting on this thing for weeks, thinking, Far out, is there not a way? Like, is there not a…yeah, I was like, Surely someone's made a program that can tell me how to do this paddock most efficiently. I feared this had been done before, so I start Googling, kind of struggling to find something, and I was like, Oh, there might be an opportunity here. And so we had this young girl, Lucy who was driving our Chase bin, and we were sharing a ute to drive home every night, like to the home farm. And so kind of throughout this week…like, I think it was about Monday or Tuesday or whatever, I jumped in the ute, and I was…start kind of floating this idea a little bit. I was like, Oh, you know, imagine if there was a little efficiency optimizer or a little program. And I was like, Nah, it’s a stupid idea. And kind of put it to bed. Jumped in the ute the next day. And I was like, Oh, I've been doing some research. And yeah…and every day I was just building on this thing. By the end of the week, I was chewing her absolute ear off. I was like, Nah, I've got an idea, this is going to work, this is the best thing ever. And so the idea was to build a program that could tell a tractor or header…whatever paddock operation, the most efficient way to traverse a paddock. And yeah, either with multiple machines or a single machine, just to gain efficiency, to, you know, negate having all those small, incorrect turns. And, yeah, that's where the idea was born.

**Oli Le Lievre** 15:28

And so incredibly simple, but literally, if we look out the window here and we go, all right, there's an area of the paddock which goes to a teardrop, and so at the top of it, it's 10 metres at the bottom, it's 70 metres wide. You're going to have to turn quite a lot.

**Ryan Skamp** 15:42

Exactly.

**Oli Le Lievre** 15:43

How do you save 15-20 minutes in how you turn?

**Ryan Skamp** 15:45

Exactly. And, I mean, anyone that's done the teardrop turns know if you take…if you turn right instead of left, whatever the outside factors are…yeah, it really can take a lot of time. If you're in a header, I mean, you're turning it, like eight, nine Ks an hour, you make a wrong turn, you're travelling a fair way to get back. I timed it one…I mean, this was mid harvest last…and I was sitting there with my phone, and every time we turned, I was timing how long we were spending out of the ground not harvesting, depending on the pattern we were doing. Same thing with seeding. I just became obsessed with these, like, little efficiency timers. And, I mean, there's the fucking note in my phone is, yeah, it was just me going, Far out, like, there's so much time we could save here. I think…during seeding, just the pattern we chose saved, like, over a paddock an hour and 15 minutes or something, by doing a different turning pattern. And yeah, my head was just kind of exploding with the idea that, far out, there's so much time to be saved here, and if a mathematical program could tell you exactly how to do it. So, yeah, I'll spin it out.

**Oli Le Lievre** 16:43

And for you, like, it's simple maths in the sense of, it's not, yeah, some big, far fetched whiteboard that you need to write different formulas on. It’s literally…

**Ryan Skamp** 16:53

Yeah, it's pretty…it's pretty simple, really. It's…the machine width, how far to the next run line, what is the most efficient run line, what's the least amount of metres…And, yeah, it's pretty simple maths, really. And the way I've come to look at…kind of modern day ag., is just one big mathematical equation. Like, that's how me and Lachie look at it. I've…and probably it helps I'm a little bit removed, as as we've said, I didn't grow up here, so I don't have kind of these preconceived ideas about farming from my dad or anything. I'm coming into this with a fresh set of eyes, and all I can see is just heaps of maths problems, and I'm just thinking, Right, how do we solve them?

**Oli Le Lievre** 17:31

And so was maths…going back to school, was maths a subject you liked?

**Ryan Skamp** 17:35

To be fair, I actually wasn't bad at maths and didn't mind doing it. My year 10 teacher was Mr. Hussain and I mean, we probably talked a bit too much in class, but he was a good dude. And I've always like, I've…and probably was, didn't like, didn't mind being a chippy…it's all pretty practical maths. Like, yeah. And I think, I think the thing I like about maths is there's always a good answer at the end of it. It's not, it's not very black and white. There's usually a right or wrong answer, yeah. And as my wife might tell you, I'm a little bit particular in terms of answers, like, it's got to be…so, yeah. I think, yeah, maths does that for me.

**Oli Le Lievre** 18:08

Not cryptic.

**Ryan Skamp** 18:09

Nah. yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 18:10

What's the difference between ideas that you've had in the past and actually this becoming a business, like, why is this thing different?

**Ryan Skamp** 18:18

I think probably, barrier to entry, really. This…all of the other ideas I've had were either going to be things that had to be done right away. Like, I mean, if we talk about the contract thing that required me to leave my job and start that job. Black and white. Out of one job into the next. Financial security is out the window.

**Oli Le Lievre** 18:39

Bad season.

**Ryan Skamp** 18:40

Exactly. This I've been doing, I mean, probably detriment to my social life…but, this, I can do it on the weekends. I do it at night, when I get home. And Lachie, obviously my co-founder is working while I'm at work still. So it was probably the ability to, you know, please, my own life…that it's not going to, you know, turn into a fireball, and I can do it without having to sacrifice everything at the start to actually give it some feeling, see if it's going to go anywhere.

**Oli Le Lievre** 19:09

Which I think so important for a side hustle, to be able to, like, yeah, have that teething time…

**Ryan Skamp** 19:14

Yeah, exactly.

**Oli Le Lievre** 19:15

To work out if this is actually just an idea? Yeah, talk to me about Locky. Who is he? Locky is

**Ryan Skamp** 19:16

Yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 19:17

Talk to me about Lachie. Who is he?

**Ryan Skamp** 19:19

Lachie is the man, the myth, the legend. Yeah, he is my co-founder. He's a software engineer. We, yeah, we grew up together. Like, we, we've got this, like, family thing, like, called the play group crew. Well, all of us kids that went to play group, we are all still…like all the mums, are still mates, and we still catch up with each other. So this is, you know, 20 odd years ago, but yeah, Lachie, and I went to play group together. We all used to go on family holidays, and kind of lost touch with them a bit, as you do throughout your teen years. But yeah, I knew…I bumped into his mom, and she said, like he was doing this software engineering thing…I came with…came up with this idea during harvest, and I thought, well, you know, I'll just get Lachie’s advice. Really, I was just calling him to see if this thing was doable. And Lachie was in between…he was working at a medical tech startup. And yeah, I think they…that startup folded. Lachie was…he was just working there. Anyway, he was kind of looking for a project or looking for a job. And yeah, it was perfect timing. I called him up, and he was like, Oh, that's pretty cool. I can probably give you a hand if you want. And I was like, Yeah, wicked, why not? And, you know, we just, yeah, got on with it. And he's, yeah, been now my co-founder, we've got a 50-50 share in the company. And yeah, he does all our computing.

**Oli Le Lievre** 20:35

If you go back to those early conversations, what do you reckon? What were they like? And how did you convince someone who had…assumption again, never stepped into a paddock, that this was going to be a good idea, that there was a real market opportunity?

**Ryan Skamp** 20:48

Yeah, well, it was…it what it looked like, was to where we are standing, well, sitting now, I had this whiteboard, and I drawn all the run lines…as I'm a pretty passionate person, very passionately going, Look, if you jump over here and jump this front line, you save 26 seconds, and if we do this throughout the paddock…and he was just like, Whoa, what's going on here? But it was me very passionately saying, this is a massive opportunity. The operational costs of what I'm talking about are big and Lachie’s a pretty analytical guy, so he could see opportunity was big, the savings were going to be big, and was it very doable? Yes. So he looked at it with a very analytical approach and thought, yeah, this could be something cool. Um, so yeah, but it was me looking like a mad man trying to convince him this was a good idea.

**Oli Le Lievre** 21:28

And as simple as…now you've got me thinking, and I think we're just gonna…this podcast just becomes an ideas one. But like, as you said before, in that paddock, you could save an hour of time. Do you when you market this, like, do you take the lens of where you see yourself in 10 years? And so actually, that hour, instead of an hour to do another job on the farm, is an hour with your kids.

**Ryan Skamp** 21:48

Well, that's, that's how I think about it. And I've said in a previous podcast, I was playing cricket at the time during harvest, and I wanted Sundays off to go and play cricket. And I was thinking from the approach that, right, if we get this done quicker, we…It doesn't mean we can harvest on Sunday. It means I can go and play cricket. So yeah, that is yeah, that is, you know, that's the thing if, and I think that's just what, whatever people prefer, like, I understand some people just love farming and love working, and that's wicked. But if you want more time to go and spend with your family, then, yeah, that's, um, yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 22:14

And so from here, like, you, you and Lachie, have been working on it for eight odd months, yeah.

**Ryan Skamp** 22:19

Yeah. Or what are we September now? So, yeah, nine months…we started in January, really. Full time,

**Oli Le Lievre** 22:24

And you've got the eyes and ears of GRDC.

**Ryan Skamp** 22:27

Yes, no, we…Yeah. We got a…I said, I'd say, shout out Helen on the podcast. So, shout out Helen. Ahaha. Yeah, we…we got onto their accelerator program, yeah. And I remember the day we were doing…we'd applied for it. We got it sent by…oh…name blank…Oh Mick Fells from Esperance. He's yeah, Ag-tech guy, and…no idea how I got his number, but anyway, he knew what we were doing, and he flicked us through his application for this GRDC ground up program, and it closed in 24 hours time. And I was like, How have I not heard about this, yeah but I'll do it. And so I jumped home that night, did the application, didn't think a heap of it. I was…and that was back when, I mean, I've got a bit more belief in what we're doing now, but back then, I'm thinking, Oh, some like, little gimmick, two guys trying to muck around. I didn't really have a lot of confidence in what we were doing. But then we got accepted into the program. Helen called us up and said, We're in. And yeah, then we started this…yeah, the program. But that was…yeah, it's been wicked, such good industry connections, yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 23:30

And so what does the accelerator program look like? Who's in it?

**Ryan Skamp** 23:33

Yeah, so we…it's run by the Ag-technologistics hub, who are very closely associated with the GRDC. And it was, I believe, 12 mentoring sessions. So we were doing…and it was during seating. It was perfect. I was starting my seating shift at midday, and they were in the morning, so I had…get up in the mornings, and they were, I think, a two hour mentoring session on a Wednesday, and then an hour on the Friday, just have a chat. But they were…kind of, yeah, giving us modules and units and procedures about how to run a small business, how to scale a business, yeah, literally, the nuts and bolts of what we're trying to do. And it was vital information we did it with…I don't know how exactly, but I think 10 or 11 other companies. And it was awesome. We're all good mates now, and we all met over in Queensland a few weeks ago. So yeah, it's wicked to have a little cohort to do it with.

**Oli Le Lievre** 24:21

And what would you say? What have you learned about going…taking it from an idea into being a business? What did you pick up along the way?

**Ryan Skamp** 24:28

I think the nuts and bolts of a business is a…what kind of got drilled into us is a past market strategy. If you don't actually have an idea about how you get from point A to point B with all the small steps, you don't really have a business, you've got an idea. So a past market strategy…throw everything else out, what is your strategy…and how do you actually have a product to sell? in terms of development and all those kind of nitty gritty things. I didn't know that I knew it, but once being told it, I was like, right…that’s pretty logical, that's kind of what we were thinking anyway. Not to say that we knew what we were doing, but it was good to just have our own thoughts kind of reinforced back to us. But yeah, past market, how do you actually get there?

**Oli Le Lievre** 25:09

And so on that, how do you go from, like, chatting to mates about the idea, to saying, and I don't know, picking numbers, it's $1,000 a year subscription. How do you go from, yeah, having a beer with your mates talking about it, and they go, Oh, that sounds pretty good to them…actually paying for it?

**Ryan Skamp** 25:24

Well. Interesting you say your mates, because I've read this somewhere, and I've not…I've found it to be so true is that you find more customers that turn into your mates than mates that turn into customers. And I think that kind of thing...like, all my mates are pretty keen to talk about it, but it's kind of hard…you don't really want to sales pitch your mates and be like, you know, this thing's wicked, can I have your money? But yeah, to get back to what you're saying, in terms of actually getting there, is heaps of hard work really. Small kind of micro steps about development, finding this guy's phone number, having a chat to him, what does he think about it? He recommends you to someone else. The next phone call is just…there's little micro steps, I'm sure you know all about it. When it just takes the next phone call and the next email and you just have, like, It honestly feels like you're staring at a brick wall, and you're just chipping away this thing, you don't know what's on the other side, but just little steps, little forward steps…Get, actually gets you there.

**Oli Le Lievre** 26:23

I've gone off on a tangent here because I'm thinking like, I've never, never heard of that before, where you're more likely to have customers that become mates. Because I'd say, if I think about this podcast, the people I talk to, um, haven't had many mates on it. Probably from like, the point of view of, I don't know if we'd have, like, if we'd have the type of chat that I want to…

**Ryan Skamp** 26:44

Yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 26:45

As opposed to people who've come on who’ve then stayed in touch with…

**Ryan Skamp** 26:47

Exactly yeah, and yeah, we've, like…I can like…Gary, Lingy, he's a good one. Like, they're guys that just liked what we were doing, and we've spent so much time communicating with them these days that I would call them my mates, and they were some of our first customers. And you know, they've given our business more than, and this is not to knock my mates, but more than my mates have given us. And I'd really like that to think, yeah, like these customers, some of them do turn into your mates, because you spend so much time dealing with them. And yeah, we've…I’ve found that first hand.

**Oli Le Lievre** 27:19

Nah that’s really, really true. So for you, if you fast forward 10 years, you're obviously so passionate about it now, How do you…how do you look at the future and know that those passions will probably change, and like, do you put a time horizon on something like this?

**Ryan Skamp** 27:35

Big question, hey? And I ask myself all the time. I have been…yeah, I mean, it's hard to say my passion is going to die, because, you know, inevitably things do change. But yeah, I think I enjoyed being with people, so the bigger we build something, and the more people you have, and the more people that are accountable to what you're doing, probably the more interested I'm becoming. Having employees and stuff makes me accountable to them, and that's what I think will drive my interest past the…I mean, I'm still in the love of the product phase, where I just love what we're doing and love what we're building. If that dies, I think I will…I hope I will fall in love with the management of people and giving people a career in what we're doing. I think that's what'll ignite my spark again. I hope. But I think…I think so. I like dealing with people.

**Oli Le Lievre** 28:24

Now, I reckon…well, and I think it seems like the natural evolution, hey? Where you come over that hill and then it's like, rather than either drop off if you keep doing the same thing, or you find that next chance for your own growth.

**Ryan Skamp** 28:34

Yeah, big time. And I think, yeah, kind of products are products. They're cool. But yeah, building a company is what I'm interested in. Building people that want to work here. And I want to invite, and, you know, people with big ideas to come work for us. I don't just want it to be me and Lachie with all the big ideas. I think there's a lot of people out there that have a way better ideas than me, and if we can get them to work for us, that'll be sick.

**Oli Le Lievre** 28:57

And so for you, like, what does the future look like if money is no barrier and anything's possible for you guys, what does the future look like?

**Ryan Skamp** 29:06

Money no barrier? House in the Maldives. Hahah. Nah, I don't think of anything worth it. Actually, I don't like the beach. No, the beach is all right. No, we would, honestly, if we had all the money in the world for development, it would kind of get to our big grandiose plan, which is where scan started with this big harvest plan, and it got tailed back to something we could actually develop, but kind of a big harvest efficiency program where we're looking at…well actually, I'll go bigger than that, a farm efficiency program that looks at every single detail on a farm in terms of movements and operational efficiencies and how can they be improved? That's what we would endeavour to build, which we're trying to do. But yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 29:50

And there's nothing else out there like it?

**Ryan Skamp** 29:51

There’s some similar things. So Verge is the other…they're a Canadian company. They basically generate the most efficient run line in a paddock. But outside of that, they don't give you the kind of live operational…yeah, in the paddock, where do I turn? Where are my gateways? Where's my exit points? Which is…yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 30:11

Yeah right.

**Ryan Skamp** 30:12

Not to say they won't, but yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 30:13

So I've got two questions to finish on. One being obviously the kid from Perth that has then fallen into agriculture. What would you say to another 16 year old today who's got no exposure to agriculture?

**Ryan Skamp** 30:26

Yeah, and it's such a weird…like, you know…it's such a big industry to take that first step into because it's so far away from the city, like, but it's such…there's so many opportunities like, that's what I've loved about it, is almost every industry comes back to agriculture in some way, so it touches on everything in the world. So if you're someone that's interested in getting out and about and being exposed to different things, then ag. is the best place for it. Like, there's so many avenues you will not get bored in ag. and, yeah.

**Oli Le Lievre** 30:57

And so for you, why is Western Australia the place to be. I don't know. I think it's because I grew up here. I actually went to Queensland the other day. It's not bad over there. It's a bit humid. I don't think I'd go to Queensland. I don't know. I'm, yeah…WA’s just where I’ve been. Not to say I wouldn't move, ever.

**Oli Le Lievre** 31:10

There you go. Well mate, is there anything else that you want to talk about?

**Ryan Skamp** 31:14

No, I think, yeah, it's pretty good, I think, yeah. Tells the story I think.

**Oli Le Lievre** 31:17

Easy. Well, I can't wait to follow this journey, and you better give yourself a plug. Where can people find you to follow this as well?

**Ryan Skamp** 31:22

Instagram or Skan farming. That's probably our best one. And Facebook, yeah, Skan farming logistics. So yeah. Instagram's a good one. You’ll be able to keep up…all of our stuff. Watch few funny reels. figure out where we go next. But yeah, that's really the place.

**Oli Le Lievre** 31:37

Beautiful mate. Well, all the best.

**Ryan Skamp** 3

All right.

**Oli Le Lievre** 3

Thanks for the chat.

**Ryan Skamp** 3

Cheers, mate. Appreciate it.

**Oli Le Lievre** 31:42

Thanks for joining us for the GRDC in conversation podcast. This series is a GRDC investment that's sharing the stories of the people who are living and breathing the Aussie grains industry. Make sure you check out some of our other conversations and hit follow on your favourite podcast app to never miss an episode.