

MASTER CLASS

# 3 Field Visits You Must Make With Growers

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# Introduction

Conducting three strategic field visits with customers throughout the selling season is something few, if any, sales reps have ever done. But once they witness the huge benefits of taking prospects and customers to their fields—one, after planting to ensure the crop was planted properly and is in good condition, two, during the summer to start developing next year's cropping plan, and three, in the winter to reaffirm the plans they made earlier are still intact—they will make sure they do those three visits every year, with every grower. The field visits we conduct are true leadership strategies. It's all about leading growers where they don't know they need to go, and doing things with them they have never done before.

## In this Master Coaching Class, you will learn:

1. The 3 types of field visits you must make with each of your growers and the benefits of each field visit for you and your customers.
2. The strategy behind each field visit and why it's not simply another version of field scouting.
3. How to introduce the idea of each field visit to prospects or current customers who have never experienced those visits.



# Lesson 1

**Sales reps need to be well-prepared to conduct every field visit with growers. They need to have a plan that covers all the details from what to say, to who's going to drive to the field, to what will be accomplished once they're there with the farmer.**

Field visits can be one of the most fun and rewarding times you spend with customers because there's so much to talk about. Everything you talk about with a prospect or customer during a field visit is of great interest to him because the entire conversation centers around the number one source for his on-farm income—the fields where he grows his crops. These fields aren't only the most important element in his production plan, apart from the seed, they're also the key to your product's success on his farm.

The field your seed is planted in is a huge factor in determining the success or failure of your varieties. It amazes me that more seed sellers don't visit fields prior to writing orders or developing cropping plans to make sure they know where their seed is going to be planted.

Seventy-five percent of all varieties never produce to their potential because they're planted in the wrong field. Therefore, properly conducting field visits—at least twice before your seed is planted and once afterward—is one of the most important factors that contributes to peak varietal performance. The goal is to match the right varieties with the right fields to ensure success for both you and the farmer at harvest time.



## Here are 5 things you need to do to prepare for every field visit.

- 1. Write out (in detail) and practice your field visit script.** Field visits will generate so many important benefits for you and your grower when done properly. When not done properly, they are a total waste of time for both you and the farmer. Don't *wing it*. Come prepared.
- 2. Review the plan with the grower before you go to visit his fields.** Tell your prospect or customer ahead of time what you plan to do and why you are planning to do it. This is not the time for surprises but, more importantly, a time for farmers to fully understand and have confidence in doing something they've never done before. You want and need their full cooperation and buy-in.
- 3. Be sure your vehicle is clean inside and out.** You will be taking the farmer to visit his fields in your vehicle. Your vehicle is your office, so use this as an opportunity to impress customers. I guarantee every farmer who gets into a vehicle that is sparkling clean inside and out will make a positive comment about it. That is exactly what you want—the farmer to be impressed or even a little intimidated.
- 4. On the way to the field, talk about the field you're about to see and review the goals he has for that field.** It will keep him focused on the future and how he plans to achieve his goals. He won't have the answer to most of your questions, but it will get him thinking that no other seed seller has ever taken this much time to sell him seed or asked so many important questions that he can't answer.
- 5. Take the lead.** Whether you're surveying his planted stand, creating a new cropping plan, or reviewing plans prior to planting, always lead the conversation. Always be in charge. Stay focused on his goals and he will follow your lead. Make sure he knows the plan and what you want him to do once you leave his farm.

# Lesson 2

## Field Visit No. 1: The Planting Report Card Visit

There are three types of field visits sales reps need to be prepared to conduct. In this lesson, we'll begin with the first one, which is done shortly after planting when the crop has fully emerged from the soil. I call it the Planting Report Card Visit.

It's the time when you take the customer with you to his fields to check the condition of the plant stands following planting to make sure the crop is off to the best start possible. If there are problems with the plants or the plant stand at this early stage that need to be solved, you can solve them.

It's also the time to record the first bushel per thousand plant readings for that field. Remember, 75% of the yield a farmer gets in the fall is determined at planting time. His bushels per thousand readings in the spring will greatly impact the yield he gets in the fall.

### **There are 4 primary benefits for the grower when conducting this first field visit.**

1. The grower will witness the sincere concern you have for him and the success of his crop.
2. The grower can witness the positive results of changes you made with him during planting.
3. It keeps the grower focused on his yield goals for those field shows and the importance of following the Top 5 Factors to achieve those goals.
4. It assures the grower his yield goals are intact and he is on pace for the highest yields possible.

### **There are 5 primary benefits for you when conducting this first field visit.**

1. The grower takes responsibility for his crop and controlling his yields—it's no longer you.
2. The relationship between you and the grower is greatly enhanced.
3. The customer sees how valuable you are to him in his operation compared to all other sales reps who call on him.
4. You will have virtually zero product complaints with customers whose fields you visit.
5. Customers whose fields you visit will almost always buy more seed from you the next year.

# Lesson 3

## Field Visit No. 2: Developing the Cropping Plan

You will remember from the previous lesson, there are three types of field visits sales reps need to be prepared to conduct. In lesson one, we talked about the first field visit, which is done shortly after planting—when the crop has fully emerged from the soil. That field visit gives us and the grower a Report Card on his crop to make sure it's on-track to producing the highest yields possible.

The second field visit, which we'll discuss in this lesson, is conducted during the growing season—a few months prior to harvest. That's the time when we begin developing the grower's cropping plan for the next growing season. We do this visit because early planning is the number one factor to raising top yields. We develop field-by-variety plans at that time, then finalize those plans on the harvester in the fall.

### **There are huge benefits to the grower when he does his cropping plan prior to harvest.**

1. He's excited and a little nervous about doing something he's never done before—develop his cropping plan before harvest.
2. His worry about input costs and market prices controlling his profit decreases dramatically.
3. His attitude becomes more positive toward his future—he begins to enjoy farming a lot more.

### **There are also three huge benefits YOU get from this particular field visit.**

1. He's out of the Ag Cycle—following your lead and putting you in control of your time, your inventory, and your profit.
2. Your sales will finally match forecasts because you decide what your customers will plant, instead of them choosing varieties at random.
3. You enjoy your job more because you have more free time. You're not spending all your time running around trying to get customers to order.

We'll talk more about the benefits of this specific type of field visit in an upcoming class about how to develop the cropping plan.

# Lesson 4

## Field Visit No. 3: Field Visit to Protect the Sale

The third, and most underused, field visit is the one that can have that greatest impact on your entire sales year, and it comes late in the season. This field visit takes place two to three months prior to planting in the winter during what I call the “hell time” of the sales season. It’s when your customers are being pursued by competitors offering them outlandish special deals, trying to get them to cancel orders that are already in place and take their deals. It’s also the time of year when the farmer has extra time on his hands—plenty of time to question the plans he already has in place.

Many farmers begin second-guessing decisions they made earlier in the season and start to think about changing plans or looking for ways to save money. It’s imperative that sales reps get to their customers during this time of year to refocus their minds on the goals they previously set. They need to get the grower thinking about doing everything he can to achieve his goals and not become distracted by deals.

Even though there isn’t a lot to see when visiting fields this time of year, what you’re really doing is taking control of the farmer’s thinking. The objective is to keep him focused on his goals and the cropping plan he already has in place—you get the grower to look forward to the upcoming spring. This field visit gets him talking about each of his fields and solidifying in his mind, the plans you already have in place with him for each of those fields. This is the time of year when you put every customer in your vehicle and haul his mind around. When you control what he’s thinking, you control what he does.



### **There are 3 primary benefits for the customer when visiting his fields in the wintertime.**

1. Once again, it is a totally new experience for him because no one else is doing it.
2. It gives the grower a reason to tell competitors NO when they stop to try to sell him.
3. It separates the grower from all his neighbors' negative thinking at that time of year, and keeps him focused on doing what is best for him.

### **There are 3 main benefits for you when visiting fields with customers prior to planting.**

1. The visit is a final confirmation strategy—you know the seed will be planted.
2. It exposes any unsold seed that can still be moved or sold and allows you to project returns and final sales earlier than ever.
3. You can use that information to ensure that next year's projections are more accurate.

Every one of those benefits determines how successful you will be the next year. Make each of those field visits as effective as possible by being well-prepared to conduct each and every one.



# Lesson 5

## Scripts for Preparing the Grower for the Field Visit

One of the key factors in making every one of the three field visits a success is preparing the prospect or current customer for each of the visits before they take place. The more growers know about the process prior to going to the field with you, the more successful every field visit will be.

Following are two short dialogues you can use to help prepare buyers for field visits. Let's start with a new prospect and assume you just finished giving this potential customer a sales presentation with your StoryBook. It's time to introduce him to the process of visiting fields.

### Script #1

John, I mentioned during our conversation—one of the things we do with customers is take them to visit their fields at three critical times of year in addition to our regular field scouting visits. The three-field visit strategy is unique and not something farmers are used to doing with their sales reps.

The first field visit takes place 2-3 weeks after planting when your crop has fully emerged. We call that the Planting Report Card Visit. It's the time when we assess the quality of your plant stand to see if there are any problems that need to be corrected. We also record your bushels per thousand plant readings at that time to be sure we're on-track to achieving the yield goals we set for each field.

The second field visit is done during the growing season—a few months prior to harvest. That's the time when we begin developing your cropping plan for next year. We do this visit because early planning is the number one factor to raising top yields. We develop field-by-variety plans at that time, then finalize those plans on the harvester in the fall.

The third field visit is done in the winter season—2-3 months prior to planting. The goal is to revisit each field in our crop plan and reaffirm those plans and the yield goals for each of those fields. It gets the farmer refocused on the upcoming spring and helps them solidify in their minds what they plan to do once spring planting arrives.

These three field visits are one of the things our customers really look forward to the most. They love the results that come from every field visit because it helps them feel more in control of their yields. We also tell them it's amazing no one else in the business has done anything like this for them.

So, if we decide we're a fit for your operation and start working together, we would do three primary field visits together during the year. You and I will get into my vehicle and drive to the fields that I'll be helping you manage the next season. That's a great program, isn't it.

*Now let's talk about how to introduce the field visit concept to a customer you've already been selling. In this case, I'm going to make a special point of meeting with this grower so I can tell him about our new and exciting strategy.*

## Script #2

Bill, thanks for taking time to see me. I have something new and exciting I want to tell you about that I think you're really going to like. We just finished fine-tuning this new strategy and I wanted you to be one of the first customers to hear about it.

One of the things we're going to be doing with customers from now on is taking them to visit their fields at three critical times of year in addition to the regular field scouting visits we already do for them. The three-field visit strategy is unique and not something farmers are used to doing.

I would do the first field visit with you 2-3 weeks after planting when your crop has fully emerged. This is the time when we'll assess the quality of your plant stand to see if there are any problems that need to be corrected. We call that the Planting Report Card Visit. We will also record your bushels per thousand plant readings at that time to be sure we're on-track to achieving the yield goals we set for each field. Sounds like a great benefit doesn't it, Bill.

The second field visit will be done during the growing season—a few months prior to harvest. Bill, in the past you've done next year's cropping plan after harvest, but this year I want to help you start planning next year's crop before harvest. Early planning is the number one factor to raising top yields. Virtually every farmer who does the cropping plan prior to harvest has the highest yields every year. We would start to develop your field-by-variety plans at that time, then finalize those plans on the harvester in the fall. Early planning almost always guarantees the highest yields possible.

I would do a third field visit with you during the winter—2-3 months prior to planting. The goal is to revisit each field in our crop plan and reaffirm those plans and the yield goals for those fields. It will keep you focused on your yield goals and looking forward to a successful new year.

These three field visits are one of the things I believe you will really look forward to. You will love the results that come from every field visit, because it gives you greater control over your yields. Isn't it amazing no one else in the business has done anything like this for you before?

My plan with you, Bill, is to do three primary field visits during the year. You and I will get into my vehicle and drive to the fields that I'll be helping you manage the next season.

Bill responds by saying, "That sounds great."

***Remember, field visits are one of the best ways to create emotion in growers. This process is not only strategic, but also very physical. It involves the physical act of putting farmers in your vehicle, taking them to their fields, and creating a dialogue on how to take their yields to totally new levels. Utilize the field visit strategy with every grower. You will see immediate changes in the way they think and their level of cooperation with you throughout the entire season.***

***In an upcoming Role-Play Class, I'll give you word-for-word scripts for what to say and how to say it when you're conducting the three different types of field visits with farmers.***

# Summary

One of the fastest and most effective ways to get farmers to follow your lead is to take them to their fields with a particular goal in mind. That goal always involves demonstrating value no one else offers. Whether it's a first-time buyer, or a long-term customer, field visits give farmers a look into the level of knowledge, expertise, and sincerity you have when it comes to helping them raise a better crop. When you bring new ideas and better ways to help them do what they're already doing, the relationship between you and the grower gets stronger. What better place to do that than in his fields?

One key point to remember when making a field visit is *come* prepared. Make sure you know why you're going to the field, what you plan to do—step-by-step—when you get there, how long you plan to stay, and how you will end the visit.

Finally, it's important to note that these three field visits are part of my *SeedSeller* Blueprint—the 9 customer contacts you must make with every grower, every year. Preplan, prepare, and practice, and these field visits will become a mainstay of your sales process and a major reason for your success.

Now that you've completed this Master Coaching Class, be sure to take the quiz about the importance of field visits.

Happy Selling,  
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