

OBJECTIONS & ROLE-PLAY

Confirming Orders

SCRIPT



Face-to-Face Confirmation

The most effective confirmation strategy is based on a trusting relationship between you and the buyer. And the best way to enhance that trusting relationship is through face-to-face contact. That means that face-to-face contact is also the best way to confirm orders.

Going face-to-face with a buyer during order confirmation is really the only option available, if you want to be sure all the seed you sell gets planted. Some of the most grandiose haulback surprises in seed selling have come from customers whose orders were confirmed by the sales rep over the telephone. How many times have you heard a sales rep say, "I called him on the phone and he said he was going to take the seed"? True confirmation with growers is a result of face-to-face contact.



Before you make that face-to-face contact to confirm an order, ask yourself a few key questions and spend time preparing for the contact.

- How do I look? Do I look professional—like someone who is an effective leader?
- How does my vehicle look? Does it represent my company well and does it create the personal perception I want to portray?
- Do I have my individualized confirmation package organized?
- Do I have a checklist of everything I want to talk about?
 - The cropping plan
 - A copy of the order
 - A copy of the receipt of payment or an invoice so he can pay
 - A verbal agreement on when he can take delivery of his seed
 - A proposed calendar of events for the upcoming season and when I plan to see him or look at his fields
 - A small postcard to give him as a reminder that I will be coming to visit his planter when he starts planting my seed

When you're well prepared for the confirmation contact with a customer, you will take the lead, enhance that trusting relationship, and get what you want—a firm sale.



What to Say on a Face-to-Face Confirmation Visit Without a Field Visit

Here's what to say word-for-word on your confirmation visit:

(I'm going to start with a sincere compliment)

Sales Rep: Good morning, Bill. It's great to see you. Boy you sure have your place looking nice. I admire it every time I come by. This used to be the home farm, didn't it?

Grower: Yes, it was. My grandpa had it, then my dad and mom lived here. I grew up here.

Sales Rep: Wow, it sure is nice. It takes a lot of work, doesn't it?

Grower: Yes, it does, but it isn't so bad if you stay at it.

(I'm going to continue with a gift for his family)

Sales Rep: Oh, before I forget, Bill, I brought you a clipping from last week's paper about your daughter. I see she's having a great basketball season in her last year of high school. You must be very proud of her.

Grower: Oh, thank you very much. Yes, we are pretty proud of her.

Sales Rep: Has she chosen a college yet?

Grower: She's going to State.

Sales Rep: Will she be playing ball there?

Grower: Well, she's going to try out, but we'll have to see.

Sales Rep: Be sure to wish her good luck for me.

Grower: I sure will and thanks again for the clipping.

Sales Rep: Oh, you're welcome. Bill, the reason I stopped by is that I'd like to review your cropping plan for this spring. Your seed will be shipped soon and I want to review the plan with you to make sure everything is on target. Could we take a few minutes to look it over?



Grower: Sure.

Sales Rep: Could we step into your shop where I could place my materials on the bench?

Grower: No, let's go into the house and sit in my office. It's warmer there and we can have a cup of coffee.

(I'm going to continue with a "Doggy Treat" for Bill. Remember, a Doggy Treat is an article from a publication Bill doesn't read and has not heard about. A Doggy Treat raises perceptions of me, the seller, in the customer's mind about how smart and innovative I am. We'll be talking more about Doggy Treats in upcoming segments.)

Sales Rep: That would be nice, thank you. By the way, Bill, I also brought an article for you that I thought you would be interested in as a top corn and hog producer. It talks about a new vaccine that's being tested to combat transmissible gastroenteritis in swine. Are you familiar with that disease?

Grower: Oh yes, we vaccinate for it all the time.

Sales Rep: What makes this vaccine unique is that it's expressed in corn kernels, allowing the vaccine to be given when this corn is fed. It has a lot of potential for both corn AND hog growers and it's only one of many vaccines predicted to be expressed in corn in the future.

Grower: Wow, that IS interesting. Thanks, I'll definitely look that over. That's what I like about working with you, Rod, you're always teaching me new things.

Sales Rep: I'm glad you find that worthwhile, Bill. I know that, as a leader and innovator, you like to keep ahead of the game.

Grower: This is great, thanks.

Sales Rep: You're very welcome, Bill. Before we get into your specific order, are there any changes in your cropping plan since we last met during harvest? Did you rent more land or change your farming practices in any way?

Grower: No, everything is as we discussed on the combine.

Sales Rep: Great. Let's go over it by field, take a look at your warehouse to make sure it's ready for delivery, and I will be on my way.



What to Say During Face-To-Face Confirmation Without a Field Visit When the Grower Doesn't Want to Plan

Sales Rep: Good morning, Bill. It's great to see you. Boy you sure have your place looking nice. I admire it every time I come by. This used to be the home farm, didn't it?

Grower: Yes, it was. My grandpa had it, then my dad and mom lived here, and I grew up here.

Sales Rep: Wow, it sure is nice. Takes a lot of work, doesn't it?

Grower: Yes, it does, but it isn't so bad if you stay at it.

Sales Rep: Oh, before I forget, Bill, I brought you a clipping from last week's paper about your daughter. I see she is having a great basketball season this year. You must be very proud of her.

Grower: Oh, thank you very much. Yes, we're pretty proud of her.

Sales Rep: She's a senior, isn't she? Has she chosen a college yet?

Grower: She's going to State.

Sales Rep: Will she be playing ball there?

Grower: Well, she is going to try out, but we'll have to see.

Sales Rep: Be sure to wish her good luck for me.

Grower: I sure will and thanks again for the clipping.

Sales Rep: Oh, you're welcome. Bill, the reason I stopped by is that I'd like to review your cropping plan for this spring. Your seed will be shipped soon and I want to review the plan with you to make sure everything is on target. Could we take a few minutes to look it over?

Grower: I really don't know what I'm going to do yet. I'm going to wait and see what input costs do before I make any decisions.

Sales Rep: How long have you been farming, Bill?



Grower: 15 years now.

Sales Rep: Why do you farm?

Grower: Well, I like the life and I really want to make money.

Sales Rep: Since you love farming so much, you want to do everything you can to succeed, don't you!

Grower: Yes, I do, but it's not easy when prices and markets keep jumping around like they are.

Sales Rep: What's your APH for corn?

Grower: About 210.

Sales Rep: Where do you want to take your yields the next 3 years?

Grower: I don't really know—maybe 225.

Sales Rep: Ok, what's your plan to get to 225?

Grower: Well, I really don't have one.

Sales Rep: First of all, what do you think about shooting for 270 bu/a in 2 years instead of just 225? We need to plan to raise yields that high, don't we!

Grower: Wow. I don't know about that.

Sales Rep: We have a plan to do that—it's called a high yield cropping plan. Have you ever done a high yield cropping plan before, Bill?

Grower: No, I haven't.

Sales Rep: We need a plan to get yields high enough so input costs and market prices really don't matter that much anymore. It's more important than ever before to have a plan, isn't it!

Grower: Yeah, it probably is.



Sales Rep: Let's start the process right now and I'll take it home with me and finish it for you. Then, next week I'll come by and we can look it over together. The most important thing is to get started raising your yields. Don't you agree?

Grower: Yes, I agree.

There are a number of ways to test the strength of your business relationship with a grower. But one of the best ways to test it is to ask specific questions during the confirmation process! Here are a few sample questions.

1. Are you enjoying your crop production program more now than you were before our relationship began?
2. What things do you like best about our business relationship?
3. What things could I do better to strengthen our business relationship?
4. Are you feeling more confident about your ability to control yields than before?
5. What difference would it make in your life if we didn't have this business relationship?
6. Would you like me to take a stronger leadership role in our business relationship?
7. On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest, how well do you understand the direction we're going in with your operation?
8. On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest, how much do you recognize the need to continue to challenge yourself to change?

One of the questions I often get from sales reps is, "Why can't I just call the customer on the phone to confirm the order?" Well, I used to do that. But I got burned way too often using that kind of strategy. There was no real commitment. Sometimes the farmer would say, "Yes, you can confirm my order" just to be nice. In addition, in the years when seed is in short supply, many growers over book seed and buy from several different companies. They confirm everyone's order and allow the seed to be delivered just to make sure they have all the seed they need come planting. After planting, they will send the unused seed back to the respective company.

The telephone is also the easiest way for a farmer to put you off. He can either refuse to start his cropping plan, if he hasn't yet done so, or he can just cancel his order. It is much easier for a farmer to cancel an order over the phone than it is for him to cancel it when you are face-to-face.

Once again, the only real way to confirm orders is through face-to-face contact with the customer. Not only will it enhance your business relationship, it will make sure the seed you sold that customer gets planted.



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