



ROD OSTHUS TEACHES

5 Sales Skills You Must Have Before Planting

LIVE STREAM

**“The secret to getting ahead
is getting started.”**

-MARK TWAIN

How Prepared Are You for the 2022 Seed Selling Season?

If you can't do it in training, you can't do it in front of a prospect or customer.

PRIOR to the Live Stream session, check your level of preparedness by rating each of the following on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest. (can't use 7)

1. How prepared are you to visit with every customer during seed delivery to review their variety-by-field plan and show them what to expect from you for the rest of 2022? ____
2. How prepared are you to conduct a 10-minute planter visit with every customer to ensure 100% of the yield from your seed is protected during planting? ____
3. How well can you automatically get Outside the Circle when taken Inside, then take the conversation where you want it to go? ____
4. I plan to set bushel per 1000 plant goals, not yield goals, for each of my customers' fields. ____
5. How prepared are you to respond to a prospective customer and get back in control of the conversation when the prospect says, "It's too early to order"? ____
6. How prepared are you to get the sale when a current customer tells you he wants to delay ordering until after harvest so he can see how your varieties perform? ____
7. I know exactly what to say and how to immediately get Outside the Circle and back in control when a farmer says, "I suppose you guys raised your price since market prices are up. How much did you raise it?" ____
8. I know exactly what to say and how to immediately get Outside the Circle and back in control when a grower asks for plot data. ____
9. A farmer asks you what you think the markets are going to do. I know exactly how to respond and take back control of the conversation. ____
10. A farmer says your variety got beat by 10 bushels. I know exactly how to respond to keep the customer's business. ____

Handling an objection is not a conscious act. It must be an instinctive, automatic response.

11. I know exactly what to say and how to immediately get Outside the Circle and back in control when a farmer says, “Your price is too high. I can get the same thing from your competitor but cheaper.” _____
12. I know exactly what to say and how to immediately get Outside the Circle and back in control when a farmer says, “I can’t afford the high cost of nitrogen and need to cut back this year.” _____
13. I know exactly what to say and how to immediately get Outside the Circle and get the order size I want when a farmer says, “I will try a few units of your seed and, if it does well, I may buy more next year.” _____
14. I know exactly what to say and how to get back in control when a customer cancels an order he previously gave me, even though I beat the competition on his farm. _____
15. I know exactly what to say and how to immediately get back in control when a farmer tells me he puts in a plot every year and does side-by-sides before he buys from any company. _____
16. I know exactly what to say and how to immediately get back in control when a farmer says, “What are you selling.” _____
17. I know exactly what to say and how to immediately get back in control when a farmer tells me he planted my brand a few years ago, and it got beat on his farm. _____
18. I know exactly what to say when a farmer, unbeknownst to me, plants a test plot and includes several competitive varieties, then invites me to be there with my competitors when he harvests the plot. _____
19. I know exactly what to say when I visit a customer’s planter in the spring and find the customer driving too fast for the current conditions. _____
20. I know how to fully execute every step in the *SeedSeller* Blueprint. _____

5 Sales Skills You Must Have Before Planting Starts

What Do We Know About Selling Seed to Farmers?

The upcoming planting season is the continuation of a customer development process that never stops...EVER!

Seed is the most difficult input to sell to farmers because:

- It determines a _____
- _____ of the performance of every variety is out of your control
- Every variety planted is different and requires _____
- It's the most _____ a farmer will make all year
- Farmers put _____ for performance on the seed

You are the ONLY REAL value a farmer gets when he buys seed.

If farmers don't see YOUR value, they:

- Don't buy from you
- Will want to _____
- Will take you _____
- Will only try a small amount the first time
- Won't buy a second time
- Will never become a _____
- Won't help you build your business

Farmer/customers need your leadership to:

- Avoid the stunting effects of _____ over markets, costs, and weather
- Help them maintain a positive, healthy working environment
- Keep them _____, focused on making money, not saving money
- Have the _____ to their annual production test
- Avoid turning one year's experience into a _____
- Give them a greater feeling of control over their future

1. Understand Your Job Description

I need to fully understand my role as a seed seller and the skills I need to succeed.

A seed seller's job description may contain a lot of information, but all that information can be summarized into just two words – write orders. But to fill that job description, many other things must be in place. Look at the following list.

Too many people misjudge the skills needed to be a successful seed seller.

The Job Description of a Seed Seller:

- Allows you to determine whether the role you're asked to play _____
- Tells you what skills you will need to add to _____
- Serves as a point of reference to determine training needs
- Helps you decide if you're qualified for the position
- It automatically tells you about your position among the other team members
- Helps you create a _____ for your career
- Becomes a _____ of your performance
- Helps you formulate training and development plans
- Tells you about your company and what it represents
- Describes the job in detail
- Indicates where I am currently and where I need to be by the end of 2022?

Most Seed Seller Job Descriptions Are Incomplete. They Don't Tell You:

- Product knowledge is not that important, but _____ are essential
- Selling products is not important, but _____ is essential
- Price of your products is not important, but _____ is essential
- Beating competitors is not important, but _____ is essential
- Getting lots of buyers is not important, but getting _____ is essential
- Liking the job of selling is not important, but _____ is essential

2. Answer the Only Question on Your Customer's Production Test

How do I maximize yield to maximize profit?

Farmers take the same one-question test before every production year. When farmers ask most suppliers for help answering that one question, they get the wrong answers.

What are your answers to the test? What will you tell farmers they need to do to maximize yield and profit in 2022?

Steps to Maximizing Yield and Profit in 2022

1. _____ where he will be planting your seed
2. Determine average _____ for each field
3. Calculate past bushels per 1000 plants for each field
4. Set a _____ goal for each field based on an ultimate of 8
5. Teach the grower the Top 5 Factors – the key to maximizing bushels per 1000
6. Assign _____ to each field
7. _____ your guidance during planting when employing the Top 5 Factors to Produce a Top Crop
8. Follow every step in the _____ throughout the season
9. Ride the harvester in the fall to review the level of success _____
10. Finalize the plan for next season on the harvester

Application Scenario 1

A farmer says to you, “I can’t afford these high nitrogen prices. Things are just getting out of hand.”

What are you going to do about it?

Well, I will need to cut back on how much I apply to my corn this year. How much can I cut back without hurting yield?

Let me ask you a question. What has been your average yield the past 3-4 years, and how thick do you plant?

About 200 bushel and about 33,000.

Did you know that you are already only 75% efficient on your farm?

What do you mean?

You’re leaving over 60 bushels of corn in the field every year because your fields are 25% runt pigs. Let me explain. Every 1000 plants in your field is giving you 6 bushels of corn, and you need to be at 8. When you are at 8 bu/1000, 95% of your plants will be producing to their full potential. Right now, only 75% of your plants are producing to their full potential, 25% of the plants are producing $\frac{3}{4}$ ears, $\frac{1}{2}$ ears, and $\frac{1}{4}$ ears. What would an extra 60 bushels of corn mean to you at these market prices on your 1000 acres of corn?

It would mean a lot.

It would mean at least \$360,000 per year extra profit or a new tractor and planter every year or two. And you’re worried about spending another \$35 per acre on nitrogen? You are not cutting back. You’re going to change how you farm.

Ok, I agree.

Application Scenario 2

A farmer says to you, “What do you think of putting fungicide on corn?” I did it on a field a few years ago and didn’t see any difference.”

Did you cancel your life insurance last year because you weren’t killed? No. Fungicides are a life insurance policy on your crop, except you get to collect the benefit every year, even when you can’t see it. Fungicides ALWAYS work. They need to be part of your production system every year. In fact, all of the growers I work with tell me they have 2 fungicide applications budgeted into next year’s crop. You need to do the same. And

once you budget for it, follow through regardless of the weather or crop condition.

What does it cost today to apply fungicide?

On your corn, about 5 bushels per acre, but it will give you back 30 bushels per acre for every application.

Application Scenario 3

A farmer asks, “What are you recommending for population on your varieties nowadays?”

Let me ask you a question, and you may not have the answer. How many bushels per 1000 plants are you getting now?

You’re right. I don’t know.

We don’t use plant populations or row spacings as a way to increase yields anymore.

You don’t?

No, we use a concept called bushels per 1000 plants. That is, what percent of the plants in your field are giving you full production. That is, how many bushels of corn are you getting from every 1000 plants? You need to be at 8 bushels per 1000. How thick are you planting right now?

About 34,500.

So, you’re getting about 33,000 emerged.

Yeah, about that.

What are you averaging for yield?

Around 220.

You’re at about 6.6 bushels per 1000. You need to be at 8. Right now, you’re leaving about 44 bushels of corn in the field every year.

Wow, how do I fix it?

It’s not hard. We start by visiting each of your fields, setting a bushels per 1000 plant goal for each field, then putting together a plan for each field. But we would need to start right away.

Ok, let’s do it.

3. Stop Being Afraid of Losing

Fear is an enemy of every seed seller.

“My favorite failure is every time I ever ate it onstage as a comedian. Because I woke up the next day, and the world hadn’t ended.” —Patton Oswalt

Fear is an Enemy of Every Seed Seller Because It:

- Doesn’t motivate, but instead causes _____
- Takes away the feeling of confidence and the ability to _____
- Causes sellers to be _____, not _____
- Significantly increases stress and worry
- It silently transmits your unspoken true feelings to others through _____
- It loudly broadcasts your attitude to others through _____
- Demonstrates its presence via posture, body movements, sweating, and trembling
- Causes fear in those around you because they know you’re _____
- Can cause _____ of your surroundings
- It alienates those around you because they _____ in your leadership
- Sales leaders _____

Half of All Seed Sellers Checkout Before the New Seed Sales Season Begins Because They’re Afraid.

Fear is defined as False Evidence Appearing Real. Yet, fear is the number one factor controlling so many seed sellers. And the no.1 fear they have is _____ on a customer’s farm. However, that is NOT a fear that top seed sellers have.

That’s because top sellers know it’s _____ when they don’t perform to expectations. Any product performance issues are always due to the _____ —the combination of grower management and environment.

However, there are _____ during the selling season when fear does interfere with even the most successful seed seller's ability to function normally. Those 3 times are when they:

1. Get in front of prospective customers and realize they _____ because, instead of focusing on upgrading their abilities, they attempted to _____.
2. Allow themselves or their products to be _____. This creates doubt and fear.
3. Feel like they are _____ of their success.

Top seed sellers all have one thing in common. They never allow one of the biggest causes of fear to occur, and that is loss of _____.

That means: _____

Rules for Preventing Fear When Selling Seed

Always Being an 11+

- Believe you have _____ in the industry
- Teach customers to _____ at all costs
- Make sure every grower _____ how to protect variety performance
- _____ competitive plots, side-by-sides, and all contests you don't control
- Show customers how to _____ on-farm performance
- Make your _____ so strong that farmers and competitors can't overcome it

Increase Customer Confidence

- Don't focus on _____ – focus on helping them achieve their goals
- Give them a _____ designed to achieve the highest yields in every field

- Teach them _____ that will get results
- Meet with them _____ every month from planting to harvest
- Review _____ with them at every field meeting

Understand Winning is Simple

- Clearly define the problem. *“A problem well defined is half solved.”* —John Dewey
 - Don't say you can't get new customers. Define the problem by saying I don't have a prospecting strategy or a well-practiced prospecting story. I need to create both.
- The only competitor you have is the _____ you in the territory
 - Study harder, practice more, and execute better than your competition
- Farmers never buy your product, your price, or your programs
 - They only buy you
- Don't use the _____
 - The past will never be repeated
- Select _____ for each farm to increase winning
 - Plant one variety in each field
- Customers want you to win. Give each one a job that will help you grow
 - They like you, see your value and buy more than half their needs from you
- Set _____ goals with customers
 - Avoid cost-cutting talk
- Sell Outside the Circle
 - The only way to keep winning
- Suppress _____
 - Eliminate physical restrictions such as not doing a plan, not following a calendar to keep you on point, not preparing and practicing a story, not putting in the time

4. Compress the Selling Season

“Life is like a ten-speed bicycle. Most of us have gears we never use.” —Charles M. Schulz

“They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.”
—Andy Warhol

How much time do you have to achieve your annual sales goal? Most companies give their salespeople 9-12 months. Why does it take so long? The answer is so much time is wasted by not compressing the selling season. Time is money, and money is time. We need to stop wasting both.

Could you achieve your sales goal in 12 weeks instead of 12 months if your life depended on it?

Every salesperson I’ve asked that question said yes. Then why are so many sellers wasting 9 months of time and money not writing orders?

Being Busy is a Decision!

It’s Important to Compress the Selling Season and Get Customers to Order Earlier

1. No one in the company can do their job until orders are written
2. Expenses continue while income stops until orders are written
3. Delayed ordering leaves customers alone too long without focusing on their profit plans
4. Long selling seasons give competitors more time to call on your customers
5. Compressed selling time attaches varieties to fields quicker, securing customers from competitors faster
6. Eliminates distractions, providing greater focus on increasing sales
7. Gets customers to follow the same condensed schedule, making your job easier

5. Target Results Not Activities

Activities must lead directly to intended results.

Many sellers tell me they've heard me talk about a particular concept before. I simply ask them, "How is it working for you?" Their response is always the same, "Well, I haven't tried it."

1. Rate each of the following activities separately, 1-10, 10 being the most effective at getting sales, and 1, not at all effective. (can't use 7)
2. Place a checkmark next to the activities you currently do.
3. Place a checkmark next to the ones you're going to stop doing.

1-10	I DO	STOP DOING	
___	___	___	Putting up field signs
___	___	___	Entering competitive test plots
___	___	___	Going head-to-head with a competitor side-by-side
___	___	___	Prospecting for new customers
___	___	___	Riding the harvester when your varieties are being harvested
___	___	___	Being at the planter when your seed is being planted
___	___	___	Walking fields
___	___	___	Taking bu/1000 plant readings with customers after planting
___	___	___	Early order programs
___	___	___	Early pay programs
___	___	___	Gifts

- ___ ___ ___ Selling early
- ___ ___ ___ Cheap price
- ___ ___ ___ Well-practiced sales story
- ___ ___ ___ Ability to stay Outside the Circle
- ___ ___ ___ Converting buyers to customers
- ___ ___ ___ Writing cropping plans versus orders
- ___ ___ ___ Writing cropping plans before harvest
- ___ ___ ___ Following a selling calendar

How many ways do you know how to:

- Explain ideas
- Correct your mistakes
- Improve weaknesses

“All mankind is divided into three classes. Those that are immovable, those that are movable, and those that move.” –Ben Franklin

You can have a revolution in your territory, in your business, and in your life. You just need to be one of the movers.

LIVE STREAM

**“We don’t rise to the level of our expectations,
we fall to the level of our training.”**

-ARCHILOCHUS

