SeedSeller Blueprint

PROSPECTING PLANNER

BY ROD OSTHUS

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Start Here

Prospecting Can Be Fun

The key to prospecting success is having a plan. And that plan includes changing prospecting from a dreaded task, to an activity that can be fun and motivating. All you have to do is understand how to prospect properly.

Prospecting is not selling—it's interviewing. When most sellers prospect or "cold call," they do it by trying to get a sale. But in today's marketplace, highly sophisticated farmers don't buy that quickly the first time, especially when it's seed they are buying. So prospecting in the 21st century ag business means understanding the need to raise the perceptions of yourself first, before ever asking for an order. That means following a prospecting plan that starts with you and continues through a series of contacts until the new prospect is trusting enough to give you a significant portion of his business.

In addition, because prospecting is interviewing and sorting, you need to search an entire group and then choose the ones you believe will help you reach your future goals. Too many field sellers are so hungry for sales, they have the mindset that they need to take anyone they can get and any size order they can get, regardless of how small it is. When you sell in a tough marketplace like this, that may be tempting, but that is totally the wrong strategy.

Prospecting is not selling...
you're not trying to write orders

Prospecting is INTERVIEWING...

_____ prospective buyers

Sorting _____

_____ the unqualified

_____ the qualified

_____ _____ around the qualified

Getting an _____ to come back

When calling on farmers you've never met, the key to successful prospecting is plenty of preparation so you know what to expect and how to handle the unexpected. If you're going to be successful at prospecting, you have to have a well thought-out, well practiced prospecting plan. Prospecting should not be a hated activity—it should be one of the most fun and profitable activities you do as a sales rep. That's because all you're doing is driving around visiting with farmers.

Set a Validated Sales Goal

Most sales goals are not achieved because they aren't validated. Validation ensures goal achievement.

How do you set valid sales goals when customers don't tell you how much they're going to buy?

In order to set a meaningful sales goal, you need to know three things. One, you need to know the total sales potential of your sales territory. Two, you need to know the average order size you're going to sell to each new customer. And three, you need to know how many new customers you need at that buying level to achieve your goals.

Unfortunately, most salespeople don't know any of those numbers, so they have no way of setting valid sales goals and achieving them.

Successful Prospecting is Knowing that...

- _____ of the business is FREE for the asking
- _____ of the available buyers will never buy from you
- _____ of the business is available, but you have to work to take it from someone else

The 30% Loss/Opportunity Principle

30% of the market is FREE! 30% of the business is free for prospecting. No one claims it! Use it to set your goals.

30% x _____ total units sold by all companies in your territory = _____ FREE units!

current average order size for new customers = _____

_____	−	_____	=	_____
new sales goal		last year's final net sales		**total increase units needed**
_____	÷	_____	=	_____
increase units needed		current average order size		**new customers needed**
_____	÷	_____	=	_____
# of new customers needed		closing percentage		**prospects needed**

I need to call on _____new prospects to get _____new buyers to purchase_____ new units each by_____(date).

My Current Sales Goal

I need to call on _____new prospects to get _____new buyers to purchase_____ new units each by_____(date).

Once the yield goal formula is completed, a statement of the entire goal is developed and used to explain the goal in it's most concise form possible.

True sales goals are not pulled out of the air, or based on last year's sales. They must be based on true market potentials. Unfortunately, too many field sellers have no idea what their market potential is or what part of that potential they currently have.

Your sales goal must not be just a number, but a statement. When you put your sales goal into statement form, it forces you to process the goal in your mind which helps you remember it. Most sales goals once set, are not remembered because it's just a number. And too often it's a number that wasn't even determined by the sales rep.

Follow a Prospecting Calendar

Sales reps who don't get the number of new customers they need or want each year don't follow a prospecting calendar.

The schedule for prospecting needs to be in place long before the selling season ever starts. Once the time is committed to days on the calendar, it just needs to be executed.

The first thing you do is select which days of the week you will commit to prospecting and how many weeks you will prospect. In the days that selected, simply write the number of prospects you want to call on each of those days.

When you execute this plan, you will not only achieve your sales goal but exceed it.

Your Secret to Having the Biggest Sales Year Ever:

Establishing a Prospecting Calendar and Sticking With It

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Totals
Prospecting 6	Prospecting 6	Sales Calls	Sales Calls	Planning Role-Play Fishing	OFF	
Prospecting 6	Prospecting 6	Sales Calls	Sales Calls	Planning Role-Play Fishing	OFF	
Prospecting 6	Prospecting 6	Sales Calls	Sales Calls	Planning Role-Play Fishing	OFF	
Prospecting 6	Prospecting 6	Sales Calls	Sales Calls	Planning Role-Play Fishing	OFF	72@ _____Units
24	24	48 Per Month	@3 Months	144 Prospects	50% = 72NC	_____ New Units

Progress Report Ratings & Checklist

This is simply a guide to help you remember what you've done for each customer when following the Blueprint.

The scale from 1-10 is used to monitor the customers thinking. The higher the number the more that customer is beginning to think like you want them to think.

The check marks help you keep track of when each Blueprint customer contact you have made with that customer. You will notice that John's customer progressed rapidly in how much he changed his thinking because he made every Blueprint contact. But Bob and Ken's customer did not make any real progress at all because they did not follow the Blueprint. In essence, both Bob and Ken wasted the year working with that grower.

The only way you can say you've made progress working with any customer is by seeing how much they change how they think to think like you want them to think.

Progress Report Ratings & Checklist

Rate 1-10 (1-lowest and 10-highest)

CUSTOMER	Follow the Planter		Planting Report Card		Prospecting		Sales Story		Develop Crop Plan		Harvester Ride		Confirming the Order		Field Visit to Protect Sale		Seed Delivery	
John Smith	1	✓	2	✓	2	✓	3	✓	3	✓	5	✓	6	✓	7	✓	7	✓
Bob Jackson	1	✓	4	✓	4	✓	5	✓	5	✓							2	✓
Ken Thomas	1		1		1		3	✓	2	✓	2	✓	0					

EXAMPLE

Progress Report Ratings & Checklist

Rate 1-10 (1-lowest and 10-highest)

CUSTOMER	Follow the Planter		Planting Report Card		Prospecting		Sales Story		Develop Crop Plan		Harvester Ride		Confirming the Order		Field Visit to Protect Sale		Seed Delivery	

Monthly Calendar

Month _____

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	NOTES

Month _____

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Month _____

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Your Ideal Week

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
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6:00-7:00							
7:00-8:00							
8:00-9:00							
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2:00-3:00							
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8:00-9:00							
9:00-10:00							

3 Sales Calls I Must Make Today

A reasonable daily prospecting goal is to call on three new prospects every day during your prospecting days.

That number does not take much time, so it's doable and keeps the momentum in your prospecting strategy.

Simply list the names of the prospects you want to contact each, if you have the names, then decide if they are going to be treated as a referral or will simply be a 5-minute drill. When each contact is complete, record notes of the contact immediately in the note portion, even if the call was unsuccessful. Just because he it didn't work out this time, doesn't mean it won't work out in the future.

You will also find those notes important once you make the rest of the contacts for that day.

3 Sales Calls

Date	/	/
✔		3 SALES CALLS I MUST MAKE TODAY
	1	☐ Referral ☐ 5-Minute Drill
	2	☐ Referral ☐ 5-Minute Drill
	3	☐ Referral ☐ 5-Minute Drill

✔	OTHER TASKS I MUST COMPLETE

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Summary

This guide can be a very important tool to your success when pursuing sales increases. If you follow the plan and execute it, it will give you the increases you want.

Prospecting doesn't need to be feared, hated or avoided. It can and should be a standard part of your sales plan every year. New customers are essential for growth and vitality in your sales territory because current customers change their buying for some reason almost every year. You need new customers to prevent any negative impact losing a customer may have on your success.

Happy Prospecting.

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