

5 Steps to a Winning Seed Dealership

— BY ROD OSTHUS —



Letter from Rod



Become a confident, effective sales rep

Have you dreamed of not only reaching, but blowing past, your sales goals?

Or wanted to gain that profound sense of peace that comes with knowing you're making a real impact with every farming operation?

Or have a life with more financial freedom and time with those you love?

It doesn't have to remain a dream.

You can transform yourself from an average sales rep with a big dream to a confident, effective leader who farmers rely on to help make important crop management decisions.

My name is Rod Osthus, and I'm here to help. I want to be your guide to a better way of selling.

I've had sales increases, not just in years when selling was easy, but in years of extreme drought, floods, seed shortages, and massive set-aside programs, such as Payment in Kind in 1983 when nearly one-half of all the acres were taken out of production.

I've dealt with product performance issues, been in price fights, got my butt kicked in test plots and side-by-sides, and faced rejection.

As I spent years pursuing sales to grow my own territory, I soon realized that spending more time behind a windshield and putting more miles on my truck was not the answer.

This guide is FREE to you and it's our most sincere hope it will help you grow your sales and help you succeed in selling the most difficult product in the world.

If you'd like to share this guide with team members, employees, or retail partners, simply send them to rcthomas.com/dealers where they can sign-up for free sales tips and receive this exclusive FREE guide.

Happy Selling,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rod Osthus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rod Osthus
President, RC Thomas Company

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Are you a seed dealer or a part-time seed seller?

Then you must change if you expect to compete in this changing marketplace.

I'm not talking about just being able to combat price deals and incentive programs that other companies use to steal your customers. I'm not talking about simply coping with farmers getting larger, fewer in number, and more controlling. And, I'm not talking about the challenge of keeping up with all of the new products and innovations coming to market each year and the information that comes with them.

I am talking about giving customers what they need most right now—your time.

The secret to success, as a seed seller, whether full-time or part-time, is to be there when customers need you most. However, the ability to do that is dependent on one thing that most part-time sellers are not good at—time management.

So how do you create a time management system that allows you to continue to be a part-time seller, while meeting the needs and wants of today's farmers?

The answer is you change how you view your business.

Following, are five steps to change how you view your seed dealership to help you generate the most sales possible.



Make a
Decision

1. Make a Decision

You have to decide whether or not you want to be in the seed business.

I know thousands of dealers, but I know hundreds of those dealers who haven't decided to get *into* the business.

They're just *in* the business.

They just want to take advantage of all the new technologies their company releases and get a better price on their seed. They just want to ride along with their company's growth, but they don't want to participate in that growth.



When you decide to get *into* the business, the first thing you'll do is start putting together a plan of how to succeed. Coupling a well-developed plan with the desire to make it work will start you on the path to success.

I find that most people who sell seed part-time consider themselves just that—part-time seed salespeople.

The customer of today no longer tolerates that attitude.

They know they need more than someone who just takes orders and delivers the seed. They know they shouldn't have to call every time they need something.

Why? Because top reps are ahead of their customers at every move and can anticipate their needs.

Customers don't seek out friends for advice when making important business decisions; they consult professionals.

Today's growers need serious help with serious challenges, so they need serious people to help them and that needs to be their seed dealer. The strongest farmer relationships are rooted in respect for the seed seller's ability to lead him where he doesn't know he needs to go.

The sophisticated growers of today question more and more whether they are getting *all* of their needs met when their seed supplier is just part-time and has a *part-time attitude* toward handling their most important crop input—seed.

In order to grow your dealership in today's atmosphere, you need to make a decision to get *into* the game and prepare to play the game.

2

Differentiate Yourself

2. Differentiate Yourself

I can stump 90 percent of sales reps I talk to. All I have to do is ask them one question:

“What makes you and your dealership different?”



You’re the third person to drive into your customer’s yard one typical morning to try to sell him seed. There are a lot of competitive dealers in his neighborhood and they’re all calling on your customers. And, there are fewer customers out there and they’re getting larger.

The first two reps said they have new products and they have top quality and great service.

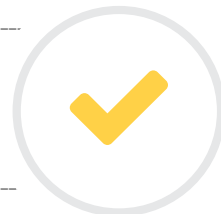
So, the farmer says to you, “Tell me why I should buy from you?”

Differentiate yourself.

What makes your dealership different than anyone else’s?

Write your answer on the card below:

Answer



Did your answer involve price, products, or programs? If it did, then you failed the test because the answer must include *you*!

Think about how you're viewed by farmers compared to how you're viewed by your competitors.

If you're not different than your competition, you're just a commodity.

That means you bring no real value outside of the products you sell and, most likely, they're really no better than anyone else's.

The key to being different is to employ a series of well-planned interactions, that others aren't doing, with customers throughout the entire growing season.



Let's Get Tactical

To start, begin your selling season when the seed is delivered—not after harvest.

It doesn't mean you write next year's order then, but prepare the customer for what is to come later in the year.

For example, when the customer's seed arrives, take him to his fields and finalize a variety-by-field plan to confirm where each variety will be planted.

No one else does that—but farmers love it.

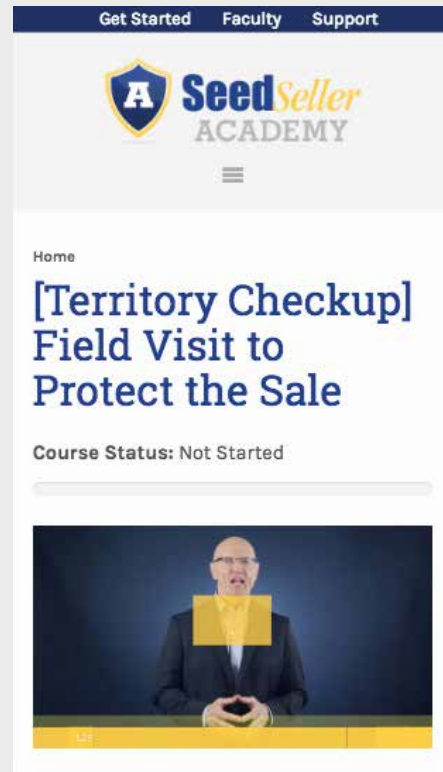
It's called the Winter Field Visit to Protect the Sale.

It gets them into the right frame of mind and excited about the upcoming spring.

Your competitors aren't doing any of those things. You will amaze your customers and it doesn't take that much time, and it's completely worth it.

Watch this Free Sample Class from the SeedSeller Academy

seedselleracademy.com/protect-the-sale



START CLASS

3

Know What Your
Time is Worth

3. Know What Your Time is Worth

How do you get all of the things mentioned in the previous step done when you sell part-time?

Well, that's easy. You plan for it.

That's right. Create a calendar and schedule all of those activities in advance.

Few seed sellers, full- or part-time, operate from a calendar because they don't know what their time is worth. If they did, it would be their first order of business every year. Most seed dealers have no idea what their time is worth on an hourly basis.

Let's figure yours right now.

Divide the gross dollars of total revenue you generate from your business (not just profit) by 1,000. The number 1,000 is only half of the total working hours available in a work year and I'm considering you spend half of your time running your seed business.

Most dealers spend less than one-fourth of their time operating their seed businesses, which means that 1,000 could be much higher.

As an example, if you sell \$250,000 worth of seed, your time is worth \$250 dollars per hour.

That is a real number.

The question is who gets your time? How will you use it to get the most out of every hour?

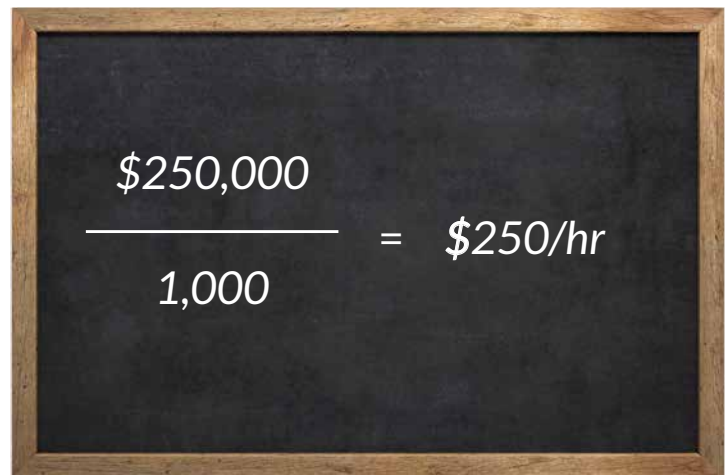
Most dealers don't know the true value of their time, so they don't follow a calendar or spend any time fine-tuning their schedules.

To them, part-time means randomly picking parts of their daily or weekly schedules to do what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, to operate the seed portion of their business.

Truth be told, most of their days center around executing unplanned activities.

But, smart dealers figure out how to use their time to create customer contacts that will generate the greatest return on the time they invest.

Whether you sell full-time or part-time, you must know what your time is truly worth!



$$\frac{\$250,000}{1,000} = \$250/\text{hr}$$



Let's Get Tactical

When planting season starts, make sure you're at your customers' planters when they're planting your seed to make sure it gets planted properly.

It's only a 10-minute stop.

It's the most important time of year in the lives of your customers. Seventy-five percent of final yield is determined when they put your seed in the ground and you have to be there to be sure it's done right.

But how do you find time to visit planters if you have your own crop to plant?

You make time.

A farmer dealer decides that his time is best spent visiting customers' planters in the spring. And, in order to do that while he's planting his own crop, he decides he has one of two options.

The first option is to stop planting over the noon hour and visit two planters. Each planter visit is only a 10-minute stop.

Or, he can get someone to operate his planter over the noon hour while he visits his customers' planters.

The key is that the dealer knows how valuable those strategic contacts are and, therefore, makes a plan to execute them. Customers are very impressed when dealers take the time to be with them during those busy times of year.

They also have lots of questions for their dealer on how planting is going in the spring or how their crop is yielding in the fall.

Those strategies are very effective.

Successfully growing a seed business when selling part-time is about efficiency and effectiveness.

That means **doing the right things, at the right time, and getting the right results.**

That takes planning.

Finally, remember step #2 where I talked about Differentiating Yourself?

Ask yourself how many of your competitors will make making customer contacts at the planter like I just described?

The answer is zero.

4

Avoid the
“Stupid Cycle”

4. Avoid the “Stupid Cycle”

How much time do you waste everyday thinking about the competition?

I know dealers who can tell me more about somebody else’s company and products than they can tell me about their own.

That’s a horrible time-management strategy because it distracts you and takes your eye off the prize.

Focus on yourself—on your company.

Let me repeat that—focus on yourself!

Ignore the competition.

It doesn’t matter what they sell, what their programs are, or where they are on price.

The only thing that matters is what you have to offer.

Just get really good at offering.

The Stupid Cycle is something that happens to many companies, especially as they grow.

How you get customer number one is exactly the same process as getting customer number 10,000.

But too many seed dealers forget that and start believing they need to give new prospects a special deal (to compete with competitor’s deals) to get them on board, while leaving their best customers to pay that bill.

Companies and dealers forget that they need to treat current loyal customers just like a new customer every year.

The business that is being lost and exchanged in the seed industry is not business lost because you can’t get enough new customers; it’s business lost because you can’t keep current customers.

That is the Stupid Cycle.

Focus on yourself **and** your best customers and how they helped you grow your business—it will keep you out of the Stupid Cycle.



5

Follow a
Blueprint

5. Follow a Blueprint

Nobody likes losing sales. But it's **NO BIG mystery** why so many dealers are struggling in this tough marketplace.

When you ask prospective farmers to buy, you're asking for more than a purchase. You're asking for a **big** commitment.

Selling crop inputs to a farmer is a very serious sale.

What he buys to raise a crop totally affects his very livelihood and, in many cases, can determine whether or not he will even be farming from one year to the next. Dealers need to stop peddling product and, instead, help today's sophisticated farmers produce more on every single acre.

So how do you stand out from the competition and not sound like every other Tom, Dick, and Harry who drives into his farm place?

Simple. You have a plan.

*You have a plan and purpose
for every customer contact
you make with a farmer.*



That's why I created the SeedSeller Blueprint.

You need to stop showing up without a reason for being there, just attempting to get the prospect to buy a few units of your seed.

When you think about motivating farmers to buy, here's what I want you to picture: Your prospective farmer is standing on the edge of a deep, rushing river. He knows he wants what's on the other side—higher yields and more revenue in his farming operation.

But to get it, he knows he has to cross the dangerous body of water.

He's aware of the risks in doing so because he's switched brands before—tried planting a few units of seed from someone else and got burned.

So, he starts asking himself...

Why should I cross this river again?

What happens if I fall in?

Is that a deadly waterfall downstream that I could go over?

Those are the kinds of questions farmers subconsciously ponder as they listen to sales reps discuss test plot data, free trips, and price discounts in hopes of convincing themselves why their varieties are better than the competitors’.

The problem is they’ve heard all that before.

In order to ease farmers’ concerns, you have to lay down stones in the river and show them the path across to the other side (working with you).

In other words, you need to have a plan.

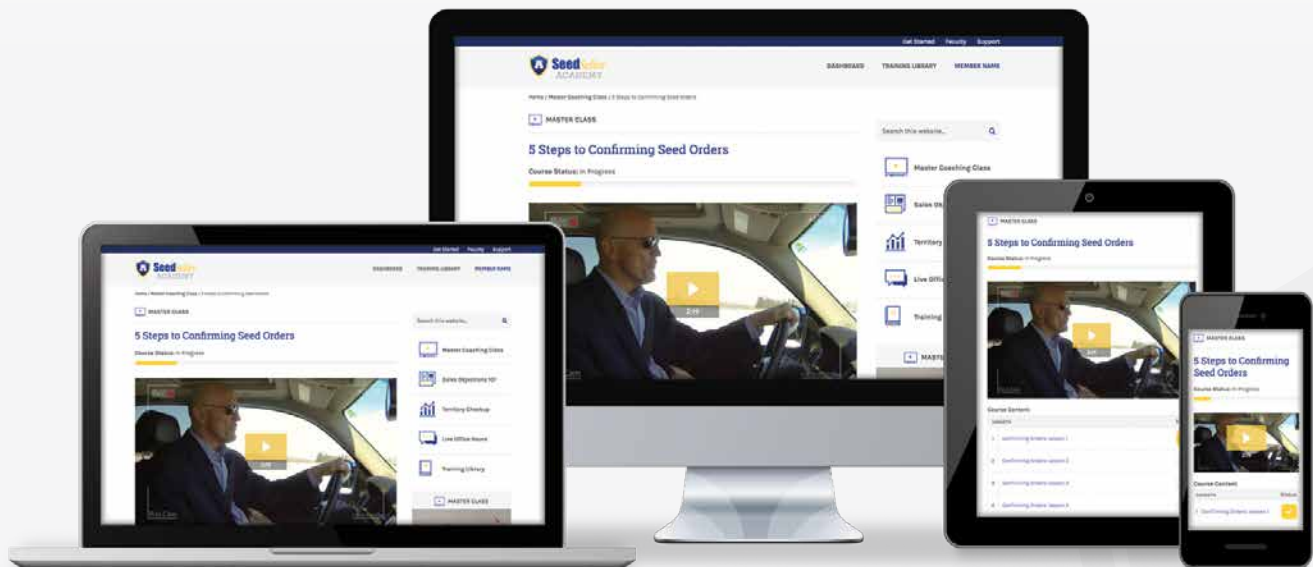
When you enroll in the SeedSeller Academy, you instantly set yourself apart from everyone else that is calling on the same prospects. They soon begin to feel much more comfortable getting across the “river” and doing business with ***you and your company.***

This isn’t about getting a guy to buy a few token units.

The SeedSeller Academy will help you turn every farmer you sell seed to into a long-term, loyal customer for life.

Take action right now and get enrolled.

If you’re sitting on the fence, trying to decide if you should register, let me remind you that selling seed doesn’t start with a product. It starts with you!



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