

AGEC 3313
Agribusiness Sales
Spring 2007

Salesperson Assigned: Feb. 2, 2007
Interview Completed by: March 7, 2007
SAS Checklist Due: March 7, 2007
FINAL PAPER DUE: March 26, 2007

Project will not be accepted after March 26, 2007 – 9:30 a.m.

STUDY A SALESPERSON PROJECT

The Opportunity

One of the most effective learning experiences for a student is to observe business in action and see what agribusiness professionals do on a day to day basis. It is imperative for students considering a sales career in business-to-business selling to spend time observing a successful professional salesperson. This project requires you to set up an opportunity to travel with a salesperson on a sales call. Ask the salesperson to accompany them on at least one and preferably two sales presentations. You will learn the most if the salesperson will schedule you to go along on a call with an ongoing customer and with at least one prospect who is not a regular customer. You will also need to plan 20 minutes with the salesperson before the sales presentation to get some information about themselves and their pre-call preparation. **Many students find internships and even full-time employment with the firms they visit.** At the very least, you will make contacts in the industry in which you plan to work to add to your professional network.

You will probably want to write out a number of questions or an outline on 3x5 cards before your visit to be sure you get all the information you need from the sales call. In addition to observing the salesperson, you will also evaluate the presentation and provide suggestions on how to make the presentation even better. ***Be sure to get some technical sales information from your salesperson about the product being sold.***

Your Report

The report you will write is detailed in the following sections. It is anticipated that the report itself will be approximately **six to eight pages** in length (not counting the attached technical data), 12 pt. Times New Roman, double-spaced with one inch margins. The process of observing the sales call is most important, but the report will help you "pull it together" and be sure you've noted important things about the visit.

Your report for this project will have a **predefined title page** (see attached or web page example) that reports on the sales call you observed. This title page will list contact data about your salesperson and the customers visited as well as a signed verification that you actually did go on the sales call. [***Random verification of the sales call visits may be made. Students who falsify the authenticity of their sales call visit will be in violation of the academic dishonesty policy and will receive an F grade for the course.***] The report consists of five parts:

- 1) **Information about the salesperson**, including a business card from your salesperson stapled to the front of your report.
- 2) **Description of the customer(s)** on whom you and your salesperson call.
- 3) **Description and evaluation of the sales presentation.**
- 4) **A professionally written Thank-You letter** to your salesperson. This letter must be a professional business letter and include an inside address of the sender (you) and the

salesperson to whom you are sending it.

- 5) **An example of technical information** about the product sold by your salesperson (bulletins, pamphlets, graphs, etc...). ***Be sure to plan ahead!*** Ask your salesperson in advance if they have printed technical information about their product that they can give you. If your salesperson does not have or cannot give you supporting information, you will have to develop it. Take photographs, create graphs, whatever you can think of to show the technical aspects of the product or service used by the salesperson. **Remember, your final report must have information attached that shows the technical aspects of the product** your salesperson sells.

Follow Up

Be sure to send the Thank-You letter to the salesperson as well as **including** a copy in your report! See the grading form, it is worth 10 points.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SALESPERSON

(This part of the report should be 1.5 to 2 pages long). The first part of the report will show information about the salesperson. Required information includes the following information: name, address, phone, company, products sold. You should include their business card stapled to the front of your report. Describe the general education and any specialized sales education of the salesperson. Also describe the career of the salesperson; include the years of experience with this company and previous companies and products. Also include a short description of their career path to this point and their plans and goals for the future. Ask them why they particularly like the sales profession. Please include any other information you feel is important.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

(This part of the report should be 1-2 pages long). **Be sure to get contact information for the customer(s) to include on the title page of your report.** Develop a description of the customer or customers visited. Be sure to note whether the customer is a new customer (prospect) or a continuing customer (modified rebuy or straight rebuy). Describe the education and experience of this customer. What kind of a buyer are they (buyer type?). How do they adopt technology? You might get this information from the salesperson or the customer. What is their business like? How long have they been in business?

THE SALES PRESENTATION

You are to write a description of the sales presentation. This discussion should reflect the fact that you have had a professional sales course, use the language of a professional salesperson to describe what you see. Ask the salesperson to discuss their **pre-call preparation** activities (before the sales call) in general and specifically for this product. Ask the salesperson to describe the **objective for the sales call**. Be sure to note the type of **opening** used. Discuss the sales presentation itself. Could you see the **feature/benefit** approach being used? How did the salesperson handle **objections or customer responses**? Did the salesperson **close** the sale? How (what type of close was used, and when?). What approach did the salesperson use for the close? Note any **trial close** statements used by the salesperson. Was any **follow-up** promised?

If your salesperson does not (or at least did not for this situation) use the above approach or if the salesperson simply makes a check-up call or performs as an order taker on the call and does not do a sales presentation, write about how the salesperson *could* have used professional selling skills. For example, if the salesperson did not use Feature/Benefit/Evidence/Agreement model, *how could* they have used this approach? Describe in detail how they could and should have used a suggested type of **close** or how they should have handled questions from the customer. In other words, just because the salesperson you chose did not use any of these methods, this does not excuse you from developing a report that characterizes how they could have used the methods taught in class. You are trying to learn from a professional. If they don't use these methods, you must write about how they could have used them. This is worth 50 points of the assignment, so be sure to cover it clearly and completely.

ORGANIZATION/ATTRACTIVENESS OF REPORT

Your report is expected to look professional. Misspellings and poor grammar are unacceptable, and points will be deducted. The paper will be graded on the overall attractiveness and professionalism of the paper. Take a few moments and reread your paper. Be sure it "makes sense" and strive to work out awkward or unusually long sentences. Include paragraphs where appropriate. In short, make sure your paper is professional.

SALESPERSON THANK-YOU LETTER

The final part of the report is to include a copy of a thank you note that you have sent to the salesperson no later than one week after your interview. Be professional!!! Remember to include a short paragraph that thanks them for something SPECIFIC that you talked about. CHECK YOUR SPELLING!!! This must be a Business letter; it must include an inside address for the salesperson and for you. Your instructor will also be contacting the salespeople to Thank them for participating.

TECHNICAL SALES INFORMATION

Ask your salesperson to give you some technical information about their product or service. Most companies have a lot of this material available (You might consider out of date pamphlets). **If this material is not available or is competitively sensitive you can create your own information by developing graphs, handouts, or diagrams (but it must show the technical aspects of the product or service sold).** You may want to take a few photographs of your salesperson and the customer. (Ask if it is O.K.)

But above all be sure the information shows the technical aspects of this product or service

Examples of material used include any of the following:

- ** Example of demonstrations, testimonial or selling aids that emphasizes the technical features of the products.
- ** Technical information (product tags, brochures etc)
- ** Customer profile worksheet.

IF YOU PLAN TO USE ANY OF THIS MATERIAL IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL SALES PRESENTATION, MAKE A COPY OF IT PRIOR TO TURNING IN YOUR STUDY OF A SALESPERSON REPORT!!!! It may or may not be returned before you need it in class.

AGRIBUSINESS SALES

STUDY A SALESPERSON PROJECT - TITLE PAGE Grading Form for _____
(student name)

Section Number /Time _____

Salesperson Name _____ Current Customer Name _____
Company Name _____ Company Name _____
Product Sold (name) _____ Contact phone number _____
(product description) _____ Contact e-mail _____
Contact phone number _____ [attach customer business card here]
Contact e-mail _____

[attach salesperson business card here]

New Customer Name _____
Company Name _____
Contact Phone Number _____
Contact e-mail _____
[attach customer business card here]

Verification.....

This is to certify that upon my honor I actually did go on this study-a-salesperson sales call. Further, I realize that my instructor may verify this. Falsification of participation in this project may result in my receiving a F grade for the course.

Your signature _____

Grading of the Report.....

	Points Possible	Your Score
1. Salesperson Information	10	_____
2. Customer Information	10	_____
3. Sales Presentation		
a. Preparation	10	_____
b. Presentation	20	_____
c. Handling Objections	10	_____
d. Close	10	_____
4. Thank-You Note	10	_____
5. Organization/Attractiveness of Report	10	_____
6. Supporting Technical Materials used by the Salesperson	10	_____
TOTAL	100	_____

Instructor OK _____

STUDY A SALESPERSON PROJECT

Student's Name: _____

Salesperson's Name: _____

Company: _____

Product(s) Sold: _____

Date and time of SAS "shadowing": _____

Is this salesperson a close relative (eg. cousin, uncle/aunt) to you? Yes No

NOTE that close relatives will not be approved.

Are you sure this salesperson sells a product business to business? Yes No

You must turn this sheet in to the instructor not later than one week prior to your SAS shadowing.

AGEC 3313 STUDY A SALESPERSON PROJECT CHECKLIST
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THE SALESPERSON

Name:
 Company:
 Position:
 Product:
 Experience:
 Date of Visit:

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

	Low				High
Positive attitude	1	2	3	4	5
Enthusiasm	1	2	3	4	5
Appearance/Personal grooming	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking skills	1	2	3	4	5
Listening ability	1	2	3	4	5
Professionalism	1	2	3	4	5
Product knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Customer focus/ Needs based	1	2	3	4	5
Clear objectives for the call	1	2	3	4	5
Preparation	1	2	3	4	5

THE CUSTOMERS

Customer:
 Name:
 Business:
 Type: (circle one)
 new modified re-buy straight re-buy
 Focus: (circle one)
 economic business relationship

THE SALES PROCESS

OPENING

		Low			High
Impression made	1	2	3	4	5
Opener (Type _____)	1	2	3	4	5
Rapport built	1	2	3	4	5

NEEDS/FEATURES/BENEFITS

Situation exploration	1	2	3	4	5
Needs determination	1	2	3	4	5
Matched needs with features/ benefits of alternatives	1	2	3	4	5
Asked the appropriate Question(s) at the appropriate time	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to handle objections	1	2	3	4	5
Use of appropriate sales aids for evidence	1	2	3	4	5
Secured agreement of benefits	1	2	3	4	5

CLOSE

Effectiveness of close	1	2	3	4	5
Was a trial close attempted?			Y	N	
What triggered the close?					

What type of close was used?

Was the call a success?				Y	N
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FOLLOW-UP

Were details of the call recorded?				Y	N
Was the interaction reviewed?				Y	N
Was action initiated?				Y	N
What follow-up was promised?					