



Case Study:

Contract Sales Teams

Situation:

The crop protection landscape is becoming increasingly crowded, while the acres in production agriculture remain relatively flat. This combination has made identifying and creating needs, and responding to marketplace opportunities, more critical than ever. Our client's portfolio had expanded rapidly over the prior few years, creating more opportunities (and work) for the sales force. This contract sales program was developed to expand the customer reach and maintain more consistent contact with key retailers.

Issues the Work is Trying to Solve:

- Ease the burden on the client's sales force by centralizing administration of a temporary, contract sales force who will support overall company sales and marketing goals.
- Extend the reach and frequency of the client's sales force.
- Strengthen the relationship between the client, the client sales representatives, and retail customers utilizing a virtual sales support team.

Business Objectives:

The objective of this program was to assist the client's sales force by providing additional "boots on the ground." Our duty (role) was to conduct customer calls to help build awareness of and demonstrate the need for the client's products.

Strategy & Action:

The strategic recommendation from AgCall was to:

- Recruit, hire and train six contract sales Associates to support territories that have been identified by the client as having high opportunity, but low market penetration.
- Centralize the administration of temporary contract sales employees who supported the overall sales and marketing goals of the company by creating awareness and demand for their products.
- Contract AgCall Associates on a part-time (400-800 hrs/yr) basis.
- Select AgCall Associates based on their crop protection sales experience, agronomic background and understanding of agriculture and cropping systems within the targeted sales regions.
- Assign a dedicated AgCall project manager to lead and coordinate the efforts of this team, to ensure that all project needs are being met and that the workload is well-distributed throughout the year.

The Associates involved in this program had an average of 35 years of crop protection sales experience at the distributor, retailer, and/or manufacturer level. The team was tasked with a variety of activities, including educating customers, managing customer/grower events, monitoring test plots, setting up trials, gathering market intelligence and managing product performance inquiries.

Results:

Client sales reps were able to track and attribute increases in sales directly to the team. Notable accomplishments:

- Product sales among four large retailer groups increased by more than \$500,000.
- Associate influenced approx. 17,000 acres in sales of a new herbicide product.
- Associate conducted a product mixing demonstration with several growers and secured orders for 2,600 acres of product.
- Based on its success, the engagement became a multi-year effort.