



Case Study:

Performance Inquiries

Situation:

Area marketing reps are a busy team that can always use some additional support. The balancing act of sales, grower requests and building relations via growers or retailers can strain hours of work in peak seasons, and/or can provide a varying result. The Performance Inquiry program was developed to allow client sales representatives to focus on sales, product and customer relations and support in the peak growing season, all the while a support network via AgCall is tending to the performance inquiries.

Issues the Work is Trying to Solve:

- Relieve the sales reps of duties that can be conducted by an independent, third-party support network.
- Maintain and strengthen the grower/sales rep relationship.
- Train retail agronomists on how to conduct a performance inquiry, if required.
- Provide a neutral environment in assessing and resolving performance inquiries.
- Use the Performance Inquiry as an opportunity to educate growers on best practices related to the product and the agronomics.
- Strengthen the brand in the eyes of the grower and the retailer, by negotiating and settling the claim on behalf of the client, 98% of the time in one visit.

Business Objectives:

The objective of this program was to differentiate branded products in the marketplace by providing a level of product inquiry service and maintain high product quality support for each branded product regardless of the retail supplier (some branded products received different levels of service).

Strategy & Action:

The strategic recommendation from AgCall was to:

- Provide a team of trained Associates with strong agronomic background, strategically located in target areas.
- Split regions into manageable distances, with eight associates located strategically across the Prairie Provinces.
- Contract Associates on a part-time basis with a 40-hour minimum guarantee.
- Select quality associates that have a strong agronomic background, negotiation skills and are detail oriented.
- Provide a dedicated project manager to coordinate activities and troubleshoot details that arise in the field.
- Develop a reporting platform which integrates directly with the client's CRM system and ensures that all Performance Inquiries are serviced, tracked and finalized so that there is no hold up in paperwork or payment.

Results:

AgCall has provided this service to our client for more than 10 years. We have had very low turnover of Associates, so growers and retailers know and trust them. Audits of growers determined a high level of satisfaction with the process and brand satisfaction was positive. Performance issues vary year to year, but providing a wide coverage area with many Associates, we have been able to deploy Associates into hotspots to handle issues quickly and professionally. In fact, in 100% of cases, the grower is contacted within 24 hours and 90% visit the field/grower and settle the claim within 3–4 days – a much shorter timeframe than when previously handled by client representatives.

Client management has noted that claims are handled with less product replacement, but higher grower satisfaction, due in part to the impartiality of the process, the fast response time, the educational component and the local knowledge the associate brings to the program. Less than 1% of claims ever require additional client involvement. Our client has done Net Promoter Score follow-up. After someone comes to settle an inquiry, the NPS score increases from 5–10, up to 30, with no difference between a company rep and an AgCall rep handling the PI.