

The Field Marketing Process



Professional Selling

Segment, Focus, Target Key Accounts...

Segmenting: Identify the different groups of customers within your territory who have similar situations.

As a result of increasing diversity within agriculture, market segmentation is becoming an important consideration as salespeople look for better ways to grow their business. Farms within the same market segment tend to have common wants, needs, problems, and issues.

Gary Heckman, Sales and Marketing VP, Mechanicsburg, PA., defines the market segmentation process as, "Taking a good hard look at what's out there within the territory you have."

"Market segmentation involves the grouping of clients and prospects which will allow you to fine tune your concentration. It's the 'buckshot' versus 'rifle' approach."

According to Ed Silba, a consultant from Asheville, N.C., "A market segment is a group of people who tend to think and buy very similarly. They have common needs, similar desires and goals."

"Different market segments tend to look for different things in an organization's product offering. Market segments are important to distinguish, describe, and separate into groups."

Bob Weller, Region Manager, Auburn, N.Y., adds, "If I, as a Field Marketer, make an effort to segment my customers, I will know how many I have with similar needs. If I want to put together a meeting

and really fine tune and target my message to that group, segmenting lets me know they are going to have interest. It's going to help me be more efficient."



For a market segment to be worthy of our attention, it must be measurable, accessible, and profitable.

Focusing: Develop product and service bundles that meet the unique needs of each market segment: Silba adds, "The next stage of

the Field Marketing process identifies the specific products, services, and programs we have available within our organization that we can bundle to create a 'just right' fit to each market segment's unique situation and needs. There will be some products we have available for a particular segment that may not be desirable or even wanted by another segment."

Targeting: Identify individual 'Key Accounts' for Market Development activity: According to Bob Diliberto, Area Sales Representative, Hilmar, Ca., "If your goal is nothing, you're going to get nothing. When you set specific goals for accounts you are going to acquire, it makes a tremendous difference in the results you get."

"By targeting a key account, you are saying, 'I'm going to get this guy and this is what I'm going to do to get him.' You are not always going to succeed, but you will succeed more than if you do not tar-

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get them; nothing ventured, nothing gained!”

Wout VanderGoot, Area Sales Representative, Visalia, Ca., comments, “It’s good to tell yourself you’re going to do business with certain accounts. However, you have to be realistic. Otherwise, you are going to be disappointed.

“Having said that, I always remind myself: things can change. A half year from now what you thought was unrealistic, might change. So, don’t give up on targeting key accounts.

“If you do a good solid targeting job and a particular account takes a little longer, I believe he will be a more faithful customer. The longer it takes to get a customer, the longer they will be a good customer for you.”

Put it all together: Segment, Focus, and Target!

Gary Heckman concludes by saying, “The one thing that

really supports the Field Marketing process is it provides the following supplementary benefit: managing your territory in this way allows you to be more efficient.

“I think it makes a lot of



Bob Weller
Auburn, New York

sense to periodically take a few hours and concentrate on 30 customers who fit into a market segment. This involves really focusing on their needs so you can determine what products, services, and programs

address their situation. Use this as your concentration with that market segment and you have a general plan for all 30 of those customers.”

Bob Weller adds, “As Field Marketers, we have precious too little time. Our time in front of, and face to face with the customer is far less than we actually believe it to be. So if we’re going to have influence, if we are going to be able to help customers make decisions, we need to be geared up and focused.

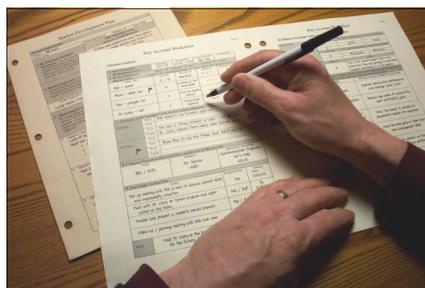
“Segmenting, focusing, and targeting helps us bring the right message to the farm which is tailored to the market segment. This approach forces us to ask, ‘Where can I make the best investment of my time with the greatest return for me and that customer?’ ”

The Field Marketer’s Planner / Organizer

Every successful person needs a plan. Builders use an architect’s plan. Pilots file a flight plan. And top coaches always have a game plan. Successful Field Marketers utilize two types of plans.

The first is called a **Market Development Plan**. This planning tool should be updated at least every six months. It includes the process of identifying the market segments in your territory, analyzes strengths and weaknesses rela-

tive to your competition, focuses on product and service bundles that fit each segment’s



situation, and prompts you to list individual Key Accounts you will target.

The second planning tool is the **Key Account Worksheet**. This tool enables you to track everything that is going on within individual key accounts so you will be able to monitor change and capitalize on opportunities.

It also helps you with the continuing challenge of evaluating where you stand with each buying influence within the account.