

SALES:



Joe Bannon, Senior Vice President, Global Marketing and Brand Strategy at 5MetaCom, has over 40 years of experience in agricultural sales and marketing, and currently works with B2B companies on brand strategy, internal alignment and sales training.

Don't forget to actually close the sale!

In previous issues of *Groundwork*, we discussed sales prospecting, communicating value and handling customer objections. In this issue, we tackle the final step in the sales process – closing – in another conversation with Joe Bannon, Senior Vice President, Global Marketing and Brand Strategy at 5MetaCom.

Statistics show that close to half of sales reps don't even ask a potential customer for an order – they don't try to close the sale. "You're shooting yourself in the foot if you spend all that time building value, calling on the customer, following up...and then half the time don't even ask for the business," says Joe.

Joe has three key pieces of advice for sales reps. The first is to make sure – when the time is right – that you actually ask for the business. "Don't be afraid to do that. The one thing salespeople don't like is rejection," Joe says. "So it's tough for them to ask for the sale at the end." A sales rep might spend months calling on a potential customer and building a relationship so that they can be

ready to ask the "big question." "Just be sure you don't ask a closed-ended question that can be answered with a 'yes' or a 'no,'" Joe advises. "Instead of asking, 'Are you ready to place your order?' you should ask, 'What works better for you – three boxes or four?'"

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Joe's second piece of advice is to seek out the reps you know are skilled at closing a sale. "Look for colleagues who are really good at this step of getting the business," Joe advises. "Ask what words and techniques they use to close. They're the ones who know your business, your market, and you can learn from them. Especially if you're a newer rep, you can really learn from the more seasoned sales folks around you."

Joe's last piece of advice for closing the sale is to continuously remind the potential customer about the value of your product. Be specific about how it meets the needs or goals they shared with you during the prospecting phase. Joe's recommended approach for closing is to say something along the lines of: "Based on what you've told me about your goals, I think products X, Y and Z would be a good fit for your farm. Let's get these products locked in. Then I'll make sure we get them on the schedule for your preferred delivery dates."

Learn more about how to communicate about your products in the next issue of *Groundwork*.

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