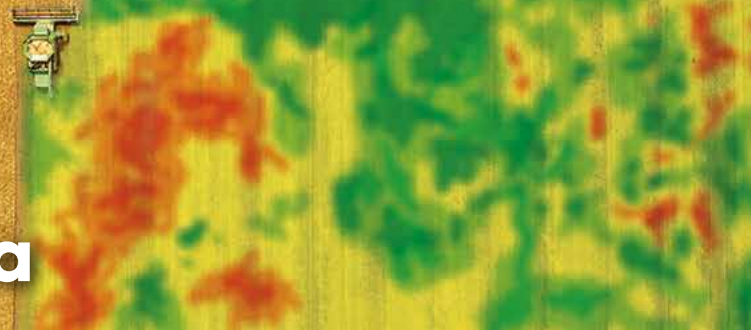# Three Ideas for Getting More Selling Value From Yield Data

Yield data: Is it a silver bullet or a colossal waste of time? Truth be told, it's neither. Rather, a more practical way to think about yield data is to consider it a tool — something to be used in specific situations for a specific purpose.

Here are three ways to use yield data that may just deliver great value to your customer and to you:

① Use it to start a dialogue: Show "what's new"

How many times, after a greeting and a handshake, has a customer or prospect asked you, "What's new?" Let's face it, people are naturally interested in hearing "news." And the news – interesting findings – from your yield data can be your answer. And while it may be tempting to spout off with examples of where you whipped the competition, there is a more strategic and potentially successful approach. Instead of boasting about wins, what if you answered with something like this:

> *"What's new? Well, I saw three new things that jumped out at me in this year's data. And they relate specifically to things you're trying to do in your operation. Want to take a look?"*

Those may not be the exact words, but you get the idea. What's important is to find something in the yield data that's news and relates specifically to what they care about. Ideally, you'd find three new things in the data, because research has shown people are persuaded by three support points — more breeds skepticism and fewer points aren't as convincing.[1] And make sure you get the customer talking. After a brief explanation of your interesting new finding, use questions to spark engagement and dialogue, like this:

> *"This is my take. How do you interpret this?"*
>
> *"Does this make sense for what you're trying to do? Or is this going down a rabbit hole?"*
>
> *"Which field, if any, might make sense for this approach (product, seeding rate, fertility program, etc.)?"*

These are just idea starters. Develop follow-up questions that fit you, the situation and your customer.

② Use it to build trust: Show where you lose

Some years ago, a successful independent seed company made a stir by running a contest highlighting plots in which they lost! It's true. The contest required customers to find examples from the company's yield book of where its hybrids and soybean varieties were outyielded by the "big boys." They even told them the specific page numbers in their book where people could find the surprising results. Had this seed company lost their mind? Hardly. They knew that a key to getting more value out of company run plots was to have customers and prospects believe the data was credible. And what better way to prove validity than by highlighting both the good and the bad. It's a well-known fact in marketing that a two-sided argument – one that includes pros and the cons — is more persuasive than a one-sided argument that only states what's good about the product.[2]

So, dig into your data. Find where you're strong and weak. And be ready to use the "losing" data to build believability for those times when you want to use "winning" data to make a sale. Top salespeople today go to work for their customers, even though they get a paycheck from their employer. Customers are smart. They know that no company or product is perfect and right for every situation. Use that fact to build trust. Show customers where your product may not be the perfect fit. You'll more than likely win in the end.

③ Use it to ignite curiosity: Surprise them!

This idea is a cousin of #1. And it might even be a way to have some fun with your customer or prospect. It works like this —

Go through your data and find three things that most surprised you. It could be a "good" surprise ("Wow!") or a "bad" surprise ("Ouch!"). And make it different from the news you used in idea #1. Have fun with this one. Find something that ticked you off, made you smile or scratch your head.

And then use those surprises to get or keep the conversation going. Invent your own ways to do that, but here are a few idea starters:

> *"Here's one thing I saw from this year's data that I have never seen before. What do you think of it? How the heck do you think this could have happened?"*
>
> *"This was one thing in the results that really had me confused. What's your take on it?"*
>
> *"This one had me grinning from ear to ear. Have you ever seen anything like this? Am I looking at this the right way?"*

[1] Shu, S. & Carlson, K., "When Three Charms but Four Alarms: Identifying the Optimal Number of Claims in Persuasion Settings," *Journal of Marketing.* 78(1), (2014): 127–139.

[2] Bohner, G., Einwiller, S., Erb, H., and Siebler, F., "When small means comfortable: relations between product attributes in two-sided advertising." *Journal of Consumer Psychology,* 13(4) (2023); 454–463.

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