

CASE STUDY

WINFIELD SOLUTIONS – CROP PROTECTION PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE AND SALES TRAINING MODULES

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

Winfield Solutions is the newly formed seed and crop protection product limited liability company of Land O' Lakes, Inc. Winfield Solutions offers crop protection products in the form of AgriSolutions products (formerly Agrilience LLC) and seed and traits from CROPLAN Genetics to growers and retailers.

Winfield Solutions has over 600 sales people servicing Crop Protection Products with agronomy retailers across the United States. This group includes Account Managers, Agronomy Production Specialists, and technical agronomists.

CLIENT OBJECTIVE

In 2003, the crop protection product company (then Agrilience) began developing a web-accessible learning library called the Learning Network (tLN). Their vision was to use this learning management system to deliver product information and training to the sales staff in a consistent and timely manner.

"We had two challenges. Number one, when we introduce new products, how do we get a large and widespread sales staff up-to-speed on the features, benefits, and information on a new product so that it can be appropriately positioned in the market place? Our second challenge was that, as we bring on new staff people after the initial introduction, how do you get these people to competently represent our products?"

- Bob Schoper, Manager, Agronomy Services Group, Winfield Solutions

Russell Associates met with Winfield Solutions to develop the first module. The objectives were to:

- Develop sellers' critical technical skills and knowledge of AgriSolutions products.
- Develop product sales skills, including presentation of features and benefits and overcoming objections.
- Increase unit sales and margins for AgriSolutions products.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Winfield Solutions' 600 Account Managers and Agronomy Production Specialists and the 1500 independent agronomists with ag retailers.

RUSSELL ASSOCIATES' SOLUTION

Russell Associates created an effective module template that would be used for each of the individual integrated Product Knowledge/Sales Training modules.

This template allowed product knowledge to be presented consistently for each product:

- How to Position the Product in the Market
- What the Product Is
- What the Product Does
- How the Product Works
- Why Use the Product

The template also allows sales techniques to be presented consistently:

- High Impact Questions
- Benefits of the Product to the Potential Buyer
- Potential Objections

High Impact Questions were tailored for each product and presented in the modules. A list of potential objections for each product as well as good responses to use for each objection was gathered from experienced agronomy sales people.

Russell Associates has developed 7 product knowledge modules for AgriSolutions products, with several more scheduled to be completed in 2008. The training has also expanded to include crops-based retail programs. These modules introduce several AgriSolutions and CROPLAN Genetics products and present how they can be integrated into crop management systems, such as Intensive Corn Management and Intensive Soybean Management.

To test for understanding of the information presented in each of the product knowledge modules, a 10 question quiz must be completed by the learner.

TRAINING METHOD

Computer-Based Interactive Training (CBIT)

PROGRAM LENGTH

15-20 minutes per product knowledge module.

ADMINISTRATION

The modules and corresponding tests are hosted on the Learning Network (tLN).

"We found that when we had an incentive to complete the course or module, participation was very high. Alternatively when we just released the module and notified people that it's now on the tLN, we were only partially successful. Our next priority area is to continue to improve our implementation process." "I think this method has a great future."

- Bob Schoper

PROGRAM RESULTS

"Working with (Russell Associates) brought professionalism in developing modules and has enabled us to greatly accelerate our rate of development on these types of modules. "

"...I'm very proud of (the content and results of) our final modules..... They certainly met our needs in terms of functionality and information provided."

"The end results have been extremely good in terms of our growth in sales, especially of our new products.... I'm confident (these modules have) played a role in that success story."

- Bob Schoper