

Discipline: Agriculture	Sub-discipline: Agricultural Business
General Course Title: <b>Agricultural Sales and Communication</b>	Min. Units: <b>3 Semester</b>
Proposed Suffix: <b>L</b>	
<p>Course Description:</p> <p>The study of principles and practices of the selling process: selling strategies and approaches, why and how people buy, prospecting, territory management, and customer service. Self-management, communication, and interpersonal skills necessary in developing managerial abilities, leadership qualities, and facilitating teamwork within the agribusiness sector will be explored. Students will gain experience through role-play, formal sales presentations, and job shadowing. The course content is organized to give students an in-depth understanding of the factors and influences that affect the agribusiness industry on a day-to-day basis.</p>	
Required Prerequisites or Co-Requisites <sup>1</sup>	
Advisories/Recommended Preparation <sup>2</sup>	
<p>Course Objectives: <i>At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss history and development of the agribusiness sales industry, including scope, variety, historical perspective, relationship to other industries, and current and future role in the U.S. economy.</li> <li>• Recognize and understand the characteristics needed for successful agribusiness sales.</li> <li>• Analyze and apply the component parts and dynamics of the sales process.</li> <li>• Identify the major sources for agricultural sales prospects and the methods used to secure sales commitments from potential buyers.</li> <li>• Explain the benefits of providing post-sales customer service for agricultural customers.</li> <li>• Demonstrate characteristics of a good public speaker through role-play situations, using computer presentation software, and delivering formal sales presentations.</li> <li>• Define leadership and the characteristics of successful leadership. Explain current theories of leadership and influences on choice of leadership.</li> <li>• Demonstrate interpersonal and organizational communication skills, with emphasis on the uniqueness of the agribusiness sector. Become familiar with principles of good listening, overcoming communication barriers, and effective verbal and non-verbal communication.</li> <li>• Discuss the importance of teamwork in organizations.</li> <li>• Understand the nature of management. Managerial activities, skills, roles, and management as anticipation.</li> <li>• Become familiar with social responsibility and ethics. Factors affecting ethical choices, criteria for ethical decision making, managing company ethics.</li> </ul>	
<p>Course Content:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction to the Scope and Variety of the Sales Industry <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Agribusiness selling: Why is it different?</li> <li>B. A comparison of agribusiness selling and the total sales profession</li> <li>C. The knowledge base of agribusiness sales: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Agricultural background and experiences</li> <li>(2) Product and technical knowledge</li> <li>(3) Understanding selling</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><b>Agricultural Sales and Communication (Content Continued)</b></p> </li> <li>2. Agricultural Leadership</li> </ol>	

<sup>1</sup> Prerequisite or co-requisite course need to be validated at the CCC level in accordance with Title 5 regulations; co-requisites for CCCs are the linked courses that must be taken at the same time as the primary or target course.

<sup>2</sup> Advisories or recommended preparation will not require validation but are recommendations to be considered by the student prior to enrolling.

- A. Styles of leadership
  - B. Characteristics of successful leadership
    - (1) Teamwork in organizations
    - (2) Understanding teams
    - (3) Becoming a team
    - (4) Team leadership
    - (5) Team performance
  - C. Teamwork in organizations
    - (1) Understanding teams
    - (2) Becoming a team
    - (3) Team leadership
    - (4) Team performance
  - D. Development of a personal strategic plan:
    - (1) Self-analysis of traits
    - (2) Self-discipline and goals
    - (3) Vision and mission statements
    - (4) Time management analysis
3. Overview of Relationship Selling
- A. Why and how people buy
    - (1) Hierarchy of human needs
    - (2) The dominant buying urge
    - (3) Agriculture's decision model
  - B. Non-manipulative, consultative selling
  - C. Importance of long-term relationships with multiple sales
4. Communication Skills:
- A. Behavioral styles and communication techniques
  - B. Overcoming barriers in communication
  - C. Effective listening skills
  - D. Non-verbal communication (Image, body Language, Proxemics, Senses)
5. Prospecting
- A. Referrals
  - B. Other sources
6. The Sales Call
- A. Opening:
    - (1) Relaxing techniques
    - (2) The fine art of asking questions
    - (3) Listening skills
    - (4) Prospect needs analysis
  - B. Presentation:
    - (1) Product features and benefits
    - (2) Handling customer objections
  - C. Confirmation:
    - (1) Follow-up and service
    - (2) Value added techniques

**Agricultural Sales and Communication  
(Content Continued)**

- 7. The Nature of Management
  - A. Understanding the nature of management
    - (1) Managerial activities, skills, roles

- (2) Management as anticipation
- B. Sales Management
  - (1) Time management
  - (2) Territory Management
  - (3) Credit Management
  - (4) Financial Compensation Plans
- 8. Sales Ethics
  - A. Social responsibility and ethics
  - B. Factors affecting ethical choices
  - C. Criteria for ethical decision making
  - D. Managing company ethics
- 9. The Agribusiness Selling Experience
  - A. Planning and making sales presentations (To individuals and to groups)
  - B. Advertising and sales promotion
  - C. Multi-media selling
  - D. Use of computers and software in presentations
- 10. Careers in Agricultural Sales and Individual Career Planning
  - A. Exploration and understanding of careers in agricultural sales
    - (1) Job opportunities and demands
    - (2) Future trends in agribusiness sales
  - B. Job search strategies - an application of sales
    - (1) Resume
    - (2) Cover letter
    - (3) Job interview skills

Laboratory Activities: Individual Laboratory Activities are designed to support course objectives.

Teaching Methods:

- A. Methods used in achieving course objectives:
  - 1. Information and concepts will be presented through lecture and discussions with reinforcement achieved by text and selected outside readings.
  - 2. Guest speakers from and field trips to the agribusiness sales industry will provide additional learning opportunities.
  - 3. Video and audio-taping presentations will enable students to observe and evaluate their own performance.
  - 4. Movies, slide presentations, videocassettes, and audio cassettes will also be used to add variety and reinforcement to the lectures and discussions.
  - 5. Students will make sales presentations to groups and individuals.
  - 6. Role-play and a variety of sales situations.

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(Teaching Methods Continued)**

- B. Methods used in achieving learner independence and critical thinking:
  - 1. Analyze and evaluate different personality characteristics and how they relate to potential buyers and sales people. Students will perform a variety of self-analyses in order to better understand themselves, thus improving their selling skills.

2. Critically evaluate sales presentations using both written and oral techniques in order to hone evaluative skills and observe methods that are successful and/or problematical.
3. Using material presented in class and textbook information, students will prepare a written sales presentation, which will include the major aspects of selling agricultural products. This project will include a section, which deals with unpredictable customer objections and interests. Students will then deliver the presentation linking theory taught in class to the actual sales situation. They must demonstrate problem-solving techniques to overcome customer resistance. This project will be done independently and without instructor assistance.
4. Using computer presentation software, students will create a promotional presentation for an agricultural service or product. This presentation will utilize the interpersonal strategies and technical computer abilities learned in the class.
5. Engage in the planning, development, and presenting of various advertising and promotion applications. They will appraise these materials subjectively and with objective techniques, defending their appraisals.
6. Develop and organize a comprehensive course notebook of all information presented and submit said notebook monthly for evaluation and critique.
7. Student teams will develop and present a written and oral comprehensive sales plan for a particular agricultural product.
8. Students will locate a salesperson that fits in with their interests and accompany them making calls on their customers in the field. The interview will include questions related to personal skills needed, job benefits, job frustrations, time planning skills, how to service the customer, record keeping skills, dealing with dissatisfied customers, and prospecting for new customers. A term paper will be handed in on the details of their day.
9. Students will assess a major behavioral strength and the corresponding weakness that occurs when this strength is carried to excess. Each student will design and implement an action plan for modifying his/her management of this strength so as to reduce its negative impact on others.
10. Students will learn the techniques of time management, goal setting, and record keeping. They will be expected to recall how each of these is used by successful salespersons in the agriculture industry.

Typical Textbooks, Manuals, or Other Support Materials

Communicating at Work, Alessandra, A., Simon and Schuster  
Selling By Objectives, Alessandra, A., et al, Prentice Hall, 1988  
Relationship Selling, Cathcart, Jim, 1988  
The Soft Sell, Connor, Tim, TR Training Associates, 1984  
Agri-Selling – Successful Selling Strategies for the Agricultural Professional, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Downy, David, et al, Century Communications, Niles, Illinois, 1996  
Leadership Effectiveness Training, Gordon, T., Wyden Books, 1978  
The Art of Managing People, Hunsaker, P., Simon and Schuster.  
Developing Leadership and Personal Skills, Hunter, Sharon, Interstate Publishers, Inc., Danvill, Illinois, 1997  
The Wisdom of Teams, Katzenbach, J., Harvard Business School Press 1993  
Beyond the Bottom Line, Makower, J., Simon and Schuster.  
Consultative Selling, Manning and Reese  
Top Dog, A Different Kind of Book on Becoming a Leader,

Pincus, J., McGraw Hill, 1994.  
Leadership, Development and Career Success, Ricketts, Cliff,  
Delmar Publishers, 1997  
The Magic of Thinking Big, Schwartz, David  
Management, Stoner, J., Dryden Press, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition  
Leadership in Organizations, Yuhl, G., Prentice Hall, 1989.

**Statewide Articulation: CPSLO-AGB 202, CSUF-AGEC 64, other universities as lower division elective**

FDRG Lead Signature:

Date:

Mark E. Bender, PhD CSU Stanislaus

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**Internal Tracking Number**