

Key Things to Understand About Your Customers

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Can you be a successful company
without understanding your
customers?

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Can you be a successful company without understanding your customers?

Apple Computers

Cell phone companies in Africa

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Exactly WHO is the customer for
improved seed?

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Exactly WHO is the customer for improved seed?

Government?

Global Organizations, e.g. FAO?

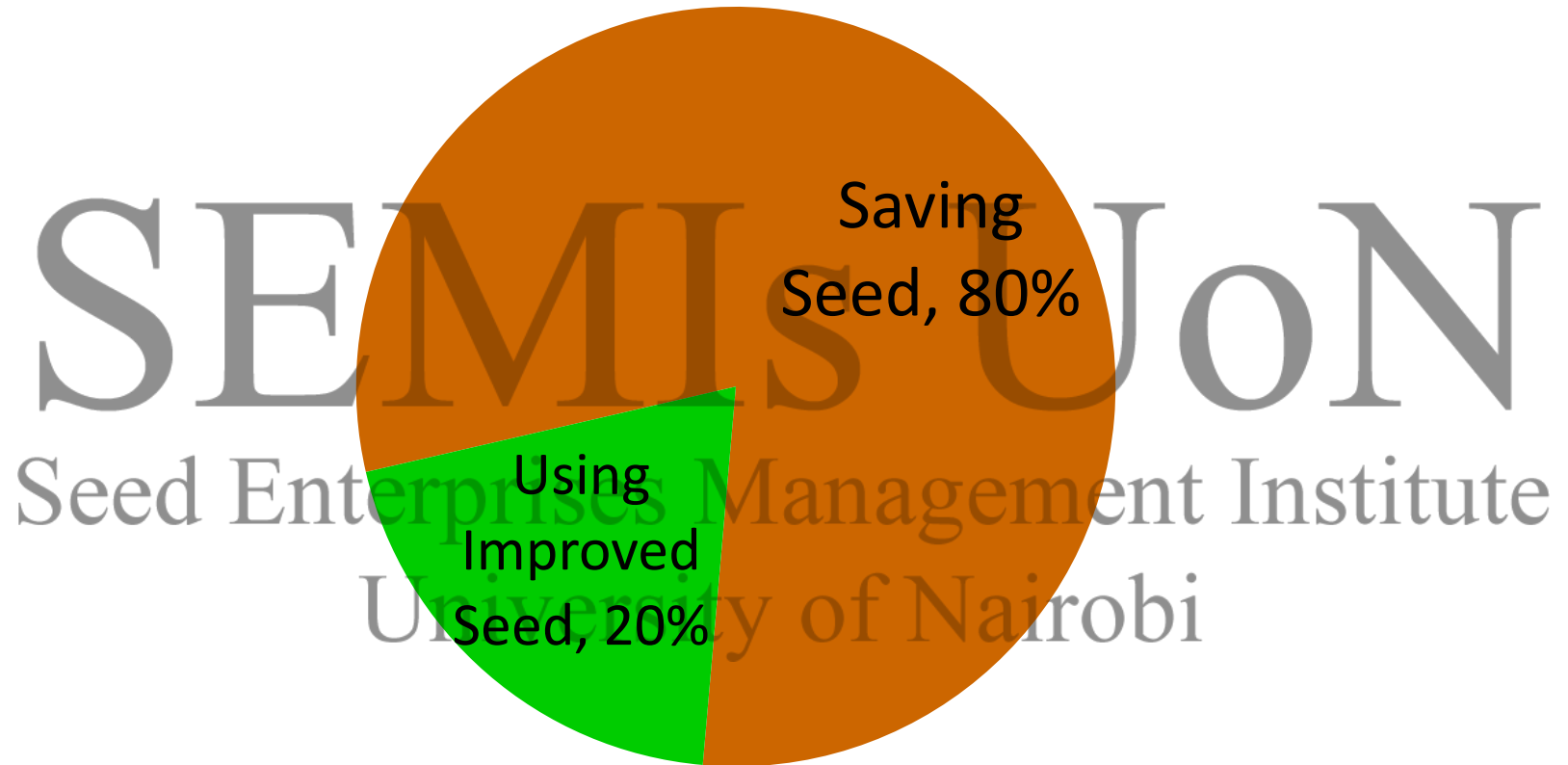
NGOs?

Agrodealers?

“Seed-Only” Dealers?

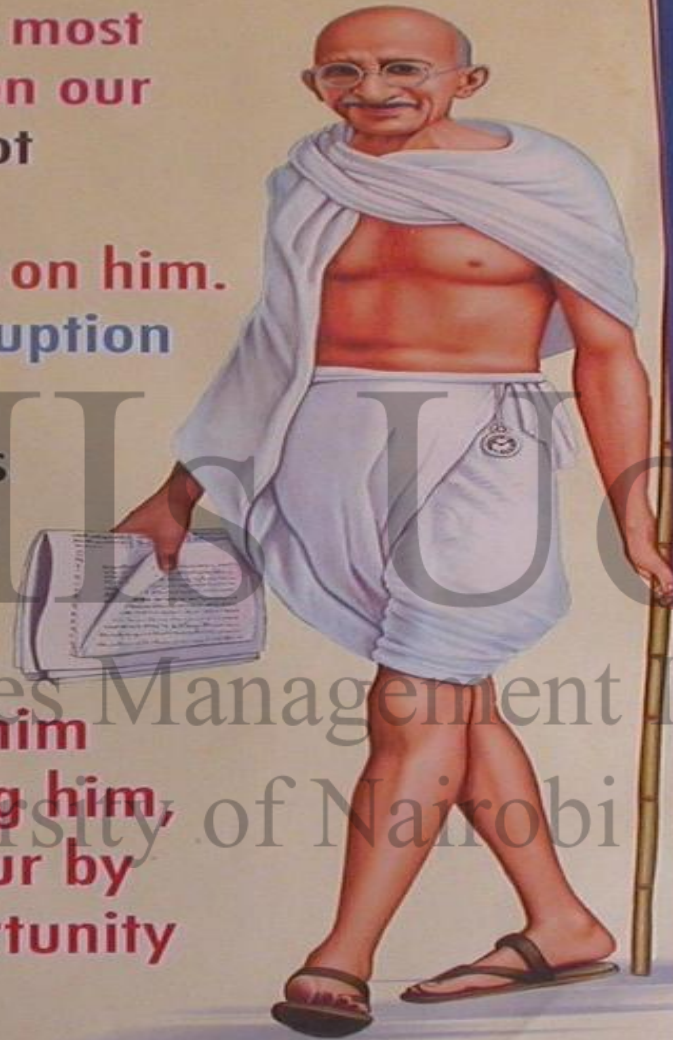
Farmers?

Estimated Usage of Improved Seed In SSA (excluding RSA)



CUSTOMER

"A customer is the most important visitor on our Premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption on work, he is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider on our business, but he is a part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him, he is doing a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so.



Mahatma Gandhi

PROJECTS & SERV



Design, Supply &



Greenhouse

Irrigation

1. TRUST

Trust is the most critical element of a farmer's relationship with a seed company.



2. CONVENIENCE

The convenience of making the purchase is a big factor for customers.

What determines convenience?

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3. RELIABILITY

From season to season, customers want their supplier to be reliable and consistent. They will be loyal to those brands that become reliable suppliers of high-quality seed.

What do farmers do if they do not have a reliable source of supply?

How do NGOs fit into this picture?

4. FAIR DEAL

Customers want a fair deal. They do not want to feel like they are being overcharged, nor do they want to hear that another farmer got a better deal than they did.

14-7-2008 FIPS AFRICA FOOD CROP PRODUCTION
 BASELINE SURVEY MEMBERS FROM EMATIRARA
 HOST FARMER WILLIAM O. WASHIPORE
 TEL 0724124888

	Region	CASSAVA	POTATOES	MAIZE	GROUND NUTS	CON PEAS	BEANS	Soyabean	PISTON PEAS	SOY AB
1. WILLIAM WASHIPORE	✓	50	100	9kg	4kg	1kg	4kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
2. ESAN OMUKUNDA	✓	50	100	20kg	1kg	1kg	6kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
3. FRANCIS A. AMBUKO	✓	100	50	2kg	1kg	1kg	6kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
4. WILCLIFE AMAKOBE	✓	400	200	20kg	6kg	2kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
5. JOSEPH LUMUMBA	✓	100	100	6kg	2kg	1kg	4kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
6. ELIZABETH AMATE	✓	50	50	5kg	4kg	2kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
7. MOSES OMUKUNDA	✓	20	20	2kg	1kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
8. ALFAMO WANZY	✓	20	10	6kg	2kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
9. PAUL NAMUKO	✓	20	40	2kg	2kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
10. PETER LUCHERA	✓	50	50	2kg	2kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
11. ROSEMARY NIVIS	✓	50	50	2kg	1kg	1kg	4kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
12. LORNA ONG'ENI	✓	50	50	2kg	1kg	1kg	4kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
13. EVELINE OMUKUNDA	✓	50	50	2kg	1kg	1kg	4kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
14. ALICE KIWANI	✓	50	50	2kg	4kg	1kg	8kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
15. MARY MAKOKHA	✓	50	50	2kg	4kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
16. MARGRET ATUMA	✓	20	20	2kg	1kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
17. HASIAN MULEWA	✓	20	20	5kg	2kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
18. NATHAN MUKASHA	✓	20	20	6kg	2kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
19. RUTH AMIETA	✓	10	10	6kg	1kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
20. LEONIDA OMUKHUYU	✓	50	50	8kg	1kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
21. EVELINE ONG'ENI	✓	50	50	2kg	2kg	1kg	10kg	2kg	1kg	1kg
22. GLANDI ASEKA	✓	50	50	2kg	8kg	1kg	6kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
23. RODA N'ABAMI	✓	50	50	2kg	4kg	1kg	4kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
24. RODA WANIKETA	✓	30	30	2kg	5kg	1kg	3kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
25. ROSE BATAWASA	✓	20	20	4kg	2kg	3kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
26. SELA WESA	✓	20	20	4kg	2kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
27. ALBERINA MWALO	✓	40	40	2kg	1kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
28. ISAAC SHISAMBA	✓	20	20	2kg	1kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
29. THOMAS OMUSILA	✓	50	50	2kg	2kg	2kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
30. SAMUEL ANDIKA	✓	20	20	8kg	4kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
31. JOICE ABION	✓	20	20	8kg	6kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg
32. SALOME MBATI	✓	20	20	8kg	8kg	1kg	2kg	1kg	1kg	1kg

5. PURCHASING PATTERN

Customers can be characterized by their purchasing patterns. For example:

- Do your customers want to buy all their seed at once, in one large package?
- Or do they prefer to make several smaller purchases?
- How will they transport the seed, and how does your packaging size relate to this?

6. FARMERS ARE VISUAL!

Farmers are extremely VISUAL! Your marketing efforts will improve significantly if you always add strong visual elements to any interaction you have with farmers. (See tool #20, the Value of Visual References.)



7. APPRECIATION

Appreciation is the forgotten element in most customer relationships. Customers have choices, so good companies demonstrate their appreciation to loyal customers, especially if they are satisfied and spread good news about your company. Don't take them for granted!

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8. EDUCATION

You are the seed expert. Your customers both need and expect good education from you. Whether it is a talk at a field day or thoughtful instructions on your bag, education is important to your customers.



9. CONSERVATIVE NATURE

Farmers are conservative risk managers. They will probably want to see your product perform for at least one season and possibly two before trying it for themselves. Keep this in mind in setting up both your demos and your expansion plans.



10. WORD OF MOUTH

If a farmer has a good experience with your seed, most likely he or she will tell approximately 10 people. But if that same farmer has a bad experience with your seed, he or she will likely tell 50 people! This is just human nature, but it is a great incentive to pay attention to quality.

11. SMART!

Farmers make
smart decisions!



The more successful you are at looking at the seed purchasing decision through their eyes, the more you will be able to understand how to educate them and market to them.

Let's Get Practical!

- How do you come to understand your customers?
 - Market Analysis?
 - Formal Data Surveys?
 - What Your Family Tells You?
 - Anecdotes?
 - Staying Close To Your Customer?

Let's Get Practical!

Given what you now understand about customers, what kind of company do you want to be? What actions must you take?

Trustworthy?

Reliable and consistent?

Understanding?

Visual?

“Opportunities are usually disguised as hard work, so most people don’t recognize them.”

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