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Jerry Keown

Presto-X Co., Omaha, Nebraska

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SELLING BIRD CONTROL

Jerry Keown
Presto-X Co.
Omaha, Nebraska

The remarks that I have prepared deal with direct contacts selling pest and bird control programs. I am going to limit my remarks to what I feel are the more important aspects of selling Bird Control.

I think it is safe to say that one of the most difficult aspects of selling for most sales personnel is prospecting, that is, finding accounts to call on. Our sales personnel have to more or less come up with their own leads. They have to find out who to contact once they get there.

I have found that the best prospect most of us have for selling Bird Control accounts are our present pest control accounts. Generally speaking, we try to maintain contact with our applicators in the field, who are in these accounts every day, asking them if there are any of their accounts that are having bird control problems.

Another method of finding potential accounts, is driving around looking. It is more difficult to drive around and look for rat and/or roach problems, but generally speaking if a building or some type of business has a bird problem, it is fairly easy to locate.

Another thing we can do is call on specific accounts. There are generally certain accounts that just by the manufacturing process do attract birds, for example: food plants, mills, beet plants, grain elevators, food processors, and so on. Other type operations which lend themselves to bird problems are industrial plants because of the super-structure (physical plant) that they have. Sub-stations and power plants are very attractive to birds. Some other situations that should be checked for bird problems are lumber yards and contractors' storage buildings.

After deciding on a contact we get into what I call my basic four. There are four basic things that I try to impress upon our personnel to keep in mind when they go in to make a contact. The first one is the interview or actually making the contact so that you get an opportunity to have the interview, either calling for an appointment or making a "cold" call. The second one is closing for the survey. The third one is making the survey and preparing a proposal. The fourth and last one is the proposal presentation and closing of the sale. An additional item which would make a basic five is after you make the sale don't forget to follow up on the sale.

I am going to emphasize the two specific areas I think are the most important aspects of selling. The first one is making the survey, which I think is the most important factor in Bird Control. The second area is the preparation of the proposal.

Why follow these rules? How many times have any of you fellows gone in to call on an account and find them over receptive. In other words, you walk in and you say, "Well, I notice you have a bird problem on the building," and the guy

says, "Yes, and I really want something done about it, and how much do you charge to take care of that." Rather than go ahead and look at the situation and maybe get some background on it, you throw him a price and he says, "Well, that's way too much." You are lost before you've started because you really don't have an opportunity to go anywhere from there. This is why I feel it is important to sit down with the individual, review his problems, his current programs, and determine whether it is a full pest control program or just bird control. Ask for an opportunity to make a complete survey of the operation.

There are two main factors to be considered during the survey. The first one is that you are looking, naturally, for selling points. The second is while you are making an analysis of the present bird problem try to get some idea of what kind of control procedure you are going to use in your program. In bird control, more so than in any other type of control program, you are going to be concerned with this analysis. Generally, there isn't too much concern with most of these individual as to what type of control you are going to use in a rat control program, for example. I think that we are finding in our bird control programs it is just the opposite. The individual wants to know all the details of what you are going to do. Therefore, it is extremely important, while you are making this survey, to get some ideas as to what you are going to do, the procedures you are going to use, and to be able to present them to him.

Another thing that I like to keep in mind with bird control is the safety aspects as far as our personnel are concerned. For example, we were working on some livestock holding pens with slanted roofs and we had an individual fall through the roof. From just looking at it, the roof looked perfectly sturdy, but on closer observation there were two different types of materials in the roof. The one type of material wasn't safe to be out on. In bird work you might be opening your people up to a little different hazard than they are normally exposed to. (Editor's note: The remaining portion of the presentation was illustrated with slides.)

At this time I would like to show you some specific situations and point out what I feel are the major selling points of each of them. The first situation is a large building with the white streaks of starlings droppings over the top part of the ginger bread. I think the first and most obvious selling point here is defacement of the building as well as the cost to clean it. Some other things that we want to keep in mind in an operation like this is the additional maintenance required for cleaning the sidewalks or possible sweeping out the lobby from the droppings that are accumulating on the sidewalk below.

Some situations are very obvious as far as pigeon problems go. Here we have pigeons on top of the building. Some problems here were pigeons roosting down on the second level ledges with the employees trying to work right inside. Ectoparasites and associated diseases are problems here. These birds were nesting in the rain gutters creating problems with the drainage off the building. They would have to get up on the roof and their employees would be exposed to some danger having to get out on this building to clean these gutters.

Here is a school building defacement problem. The thing that comes to my mind in this particular situation as a selling point is the process that you are going to use has to be something that is acceptable for use with children around.

The operations such as department stores and some of our new shopping centers. The canopies that are erected over a garden center, for example, can lead to

sparrow problems. The sparrows are roosting in the overhead in this area. Droppings are landing on the merchandise below.

This particular building brings another selling point idea to my mind relative to public buildings. The State Capitol building in Lincoln, Nebraska is a good example. They were concerned with the public's attitude toward what they were doing. A sales point might be that you can accomplish the operation without bringing any attention to them or to you as to what is being done. Sometimes a lot of us may be afraid to approach it in that particular manner, but I think sometimes this is the difference between actually selling the program and not selling the program.

Naturally, the first thing that comes to most of our minds around hospitals is the fact that there the sanitation standards have to be above those of most other buildings. Right away they have a health problem with birds on a particular building.

Sometimes when you get into a residential area with churches, you have the same problems that I have already mentioned, especially with the guttering. Another factor that I think helps occasionally is the good neighbor policy-especially in a very nice neighborhood. They had a continuous pigeon problem and I think the thing that possibly helped in this situation was the fact that these birds were spreading to some of the other homes in the vicinity.

Signs can be an especially difficult problem. This particular one had just been repainted and cleaned up. Before they cleaned it up, where it says "Visit our coffee shop" it was a mess of bird dropping smears. The selling point here was the fact that here you are inviting people to come in and eat in your coffee shop, and you have a mess there on the sign which really wasn't very attractive.

Another thing I did want to mention on the signs is that the bird droppings deteriorate paint on the sign. The problem here was a continuous bird problem. They were painting this sign about once a year. This particular sign has Nixalite on it, and you can see it hasn't done the job as far as getting rid of the birds.

The situation of contamination around food plants is another obvious situation for selling bird control. I have found situations where the plant itself didn't have a direct contamination problem, but a canopy entrance or trees along the entry way to the plant had birds in them with droppings on the sidewalk. These droppings were being walked into the plant. This is a point that I think most of your food plants are being more and more concerned with all the time.

Feed mills and elevators are another problem area. I think most of us have a pretty good idea of some of the problems that occur in the loading areas, the truck dumps, car dumps, and in the overhead areas.

Stock yards and feed lots can have several different problems. Naturally, a large bird population will eat a goodly amount of the feed. Also large flocks of birds around these feed lots and holding pens make cattle nervous. In this situation all the feed ingested could be offset by this continual movement of the livestock.

Around airports, pigeons, starlings, and sparrows living in hangers will create a little different problem. It is my understanding that the surface of these airplanes has to be such that the wind will flow over it without any resistance. Bird droppings landing on these planes will corrode the finish and create problems in this particular respect.

This is another area which may be a little unusual to some of us, but in most of our cities we have football and baseball stadiums which attract birds. This is a

concrete affair with the birds roosting over the seating area. Naturally, the stadium had to be cleaned regularly. Another problem was created here by the birds going through the expansion joints into the interior of the building; employees were having to climb up on to the top on six or eight foot extension ladders and clean bird droppings and nests out of these areas so that they could seal the openings against water. They had quite a safety problem with their employees working off these high ladders. The birds would come right back in and pull that insulation out again and make their nests. In this situation we used an Avitrol program to get rid of the birds.

Another area that may not be obvious is that a lot of our new highway bridges are attracting pigeons. A large amount of the structure of these new bridges is metal, and once again you have the same problems that you have on signs with the deterioration of the metal parts. Another factor that you have to consider on interstate highways is a safety factor. If one of these birds drop down out of here and catch a windshield you can have a major accident.

This is a power plant with the boilers on the outside. You have two particular problems here. One is that the birds were coming in by the thousands and roosting over-night on these boilers. The droppings were creating a safety hazard for employees walking along the metal staircases! Droppings accumulated on the boilers as well. The birds here were mainly sparrows and a few starlings. We initiated an Avitrol program here. It was quite unusual. I didn't think we were going to get acceptance at the overnight roost, but we were able to. I might mention that we also had some pigeons in this situation. We used a four to six week pre-baiting program, and we got the birds to eat at the site.

This is a transformer in a power substation. These pieces of machinery, it is my understanding, have to be shut down so that the nests and so on can be removed. Also, birds bring metal objects in there that can create a short in equipment and burn one of these transformers out that are worth twenty to thirty thousand dollars. Sometimes we have had a situation where one or two birds have caused a short on the upper structure and blown out insulators. Naturally, this creates another problem. This is another good opportunity to sell pest control because it is costly to replace this equipment. Replacement costs for equipment like this could pay for pest control service for their entire line of substations for most of these power districts for several years.

Now we come to the point where we have diagnosed the problem, we know what species of birds are in the area, and we know what type of a control program we are going to use. The next thing that I do is sit down and put together my proposal. As I pointed out earlier, I think one of the most important aspects in selling bird control is the proposal.

The first thing I do is outline the problem, stressing the major problem, whether it be a safety factor, or building maintenance, or what have you. Second of all, I list what I call the secondary factors, and I don't think that you can overdo this particular aspect. The more information you get into your proposal the more likely you are going to have it accepted, because there are going to be some people in the organization that aren't going to be in on your presentation.

The second thing I do is describe in some detail what type of control procedures are going to be used. If we are going to pre-bait, I tell them how long we are

going to pre-bait. I tell them that we are going to notify them when we are ready to go ahead with the actual control procedures. Also, cover such things as what mortality, if any, to be expected. These people had better be aware of it, because about the time an employee or neighbor comes carrying a bird in, and you didn't tell him anything about mortality, you might find yourself out on your ear. I can relate an experience that we had in Omaha with a particular bid for several schools there, for bird control. A few birds were killed, and the news media picked it up; the schools weren't aware that there were going to be birds killed, so the program came to an abrupt halt. I think a lot of this should have been taken care of in your proposal.

Other things that should be covered are the safety factors that your personnel as well as their employees to be aware of. A very important aspect is the clean-up, in other words, the droppings and the ectoparasite situation. Something should be said as to who is responsible for clean-up. The same thing is true with the pick-up of dead birds. Last, but not least, don't forget to tell them how long it is going to be until they can expect some control.

Some of you use forms. You just fill in the blanks and so on. Well, I would say in this particular respect that you should use some type of letter of transmittal if you are going to do that. In this letter of transmittal you might relate some of these facts and figures that should accompany the proposal. Generally speaking, we sell them on the maintenance service, in other words, not only selling them on getting rid of the birds initially but explaining why it is important to continue a control program. Generally, this isn't a great problem.

Pamphlets especially are helpful. The Avitrol pamphlet has been especially helpful to me. Include this in your proposal. The more information that you can get to them and the more that you relate to them that you are competent, the better your chances of selling the program.

DISCUSSION:

J. STECKEL: Does your sales representative ask them to sign?

J. KEOWN: Very definitely.

DELEGATE: What is the biggest problem of doing more bird control work, of selling more people?

J. KEOWN: Probably the fact that you have to prove to them that you are competent, that you won't create any bad public relations problems for them. You have to convince them that you are going to do the job in a professional manner and there are not going to be any repercussions from what you did as far as the public and their employees are concerned. I think this is the main thing. This is almost as important as getting across the point to the man that you can control the birds