Channel and Dealer KPIs

Twenty-one metrics for revenue that runs through a dealer who has a portfolio, and why most of them have no public benchmark

By Andre Magrini, fractional Chief Revenue Officer, Chicago. Every benchmark in this document carries a named source. Where no credible public benchmark exists, it says so instead of inventing one.

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Why this guide exists

Almost everything written about revenue KPIs assumes you sell directly to the person who uses your product, or that you sell software on a subscription. Those systems break the moment your revenue passes through somebody else's balance sheet.

If you sell through dealers, distributors, integrators or OEM accounts, you do not control the last mile of your own revenue. You control a shipment. The gap between those two events is where channel businesses lose money quietly, for quarters at a time, while the dashboard stays green.

I have run both sides of that gap: the Brazil operation of Ag Growth International from roughly 35 million dollars in revenue to more than 150 million dollars in three years, then Director North America covering the United States and Canada, selling grain storage and feed processing equipment through dealers, distributors, OEM accounts and direct into feedlots.

The thesis: the dealer is your customer, not your salesperson

Here is the sentence that reorganizes everything else in this document. Your dealer is not your sales team. Your dealer is your customer, and your customer has a portfolio.

A dealer carrying eight lines has a finite number of selling hours, a finite service bay and a finite amount of credit. Every hour a salesperson spends quoting your product is an hour not spent quoting a competing line that may carry a better margin, a faster close or a lighter service burden. The dealer is running an allocation problem, and the allocation is made on return per hour of effort and return per dollar of capital tied up.

- Enthusiasm is not a metric. A dealer principal who loves your product and gives it two percent of the floor's selling hours is not selling your product. Measure allocation, not affection.
- Measure the dealer's economics, not yours. A scorecard containing only numbers that matter to your quota gets treated as paperwork. One that shows the dealer where their own money is gets read.
- Every channel KPI has a version that flatters you. Sell-in is the famous case, but coverage, participation, program adoption and pipeline all have a flattering reading and a true one.

One warning before the numbers. Public benchmarks for channel and dealer metrics are genuinely scarce, because dealer financials are competitively sensitive and mostly sit inside paid association studies. Where a credible, named, published benchmark exists, it is named here with the organization and the year. Where it does not exist, this guide says so rather than inventing a plausible number. In a field this thinly documented, an honest blank is worth more than a confident fiction.

The four numbers that decide whether the dealer sells your line

If you only ever compute four things about your channel, compute these, because these are the inputs to the dealer's allocation decision.

1. Gross margin dollars per unit, to the dealer. Not margin percent. Dollars. A dealer who nets 4,000 dollars on a competing unit and 2,600 on yours will sell the competing unit, and no amount of co-op marketing changes that arithmetic.

2. Selling and support hours per closed deal. A product needing three site visits, a layout drawing and an engineering call costs the dealer several times the labor of one that sells off a spec sheet. If you are the complicated line, either pay for the complexity or remove it.
3. Capital days per unit. How many days of the dealer's credit line does one unit consume, from the day it lands to the day it is invoiced to a farmer? Floor plan interest, curtailment and aging risk all live here.
4. Demand pull. The share of the dealer's opportunities where the customer asks for your brand by name. Pull multiplies the other three, because it collapses hours per deal and shortens capital days at once.

The dealer's real return on your line is roughly margin dollars, divided by the product of hours per deal and capital days per deal, multiplied by pull. That is not a formula for a board deck. It is the model that tells you which of the twenty-one KPIs below is the one actually hurting you.

Part one: demand truth

1. Sell-in

What it is. Sell-in is the volume or revenue a manufacturer ships and invoices to its channel partners in a period, regardless of whether those partners have sold anything to an end user.

Formula. Sell-in = total units or revenue invoiced to dealers and distributors in the period.

Benchmark. No ratio benchmark exists, because sell-in is an absolute. What is documented is the size of the correction when it runs ahead of demand: Manufacturing Dive reported through 2025 and into its 2026 outlook coverage that Deere, CNH and AGCO were all deliberately producing below retail demand, with CNH working off roughly a billion dollars of elevated dealer inventory.

How it lies to you. It is the easiest number in the revenue system to manufacture: three extra points before the thirtieth, longer floor plan terms, a program deadline, or simply asking. You hit the number by pushing stock onto the dealer, and two quarters later you find out that nothing left the lot for an end user, so the revenue you already booked has quietly eaten the next two quarters.

What to do with it. Never report sell-in without sell-through beside it, same table, same period. Flag any order in the last ten days of a period that exceeds the dealer's trailing retail run rate.

2. Sell-through (sell-out)

What it is. Sell-through is the volume or revenue the channel sells to actual end users in a period, and it is the only demand signal in the system that a real farmer, feedlot or processor generated.

Formula. Sell-through = opening channel inventory plus sell-in, minus closing channel inventory.

Benchmark. North American agricultural equipment has a usable public proxy: the Association of Equipment Manufacturers publishes a monthly Ag Tractor and Combine Report of retail unit sales compiled from member reporting. As summarized by farmdoc daily (University of Illinois, February 2026), that data shows United States tractor sales falling from 317,944 units in 2021 to 195,857 in 2025, and combines from 6,278 to 3,579.

How it lies to you. Sell-through lies through reporting quality, not arithmetic. A dealer who books a retail on the handshake and one who books it on installation produce curves six weeks apart, so ranking dealers can mean ranking accounting policies.

What to do with it. Define the trigger event in writing (invoice date to the end user, not order date, not delivery date) and pay for the data.

3. Sell-through ratio (channel absorption of shipments)

What it is. The sell-through ratio is the share of what you shipped into the channel that the channel actually sold out of it in the same period, which tells you whether you are supplying demand or building somebody else's inventory.

Formula. Sell-through ratio = sell-through units divided by sell-in units. Sustained above 100 percent means the channel is destocking; below means you are filling it.

Benchmark. No reliable public benchmark exists for a target ratio, because the right number depends entirely on where the category sits in its cycle.

How it lies to you. A network ratio near 100 percent looks like equilibrium and can be hiding two offsetting errors: heavy destocking at your strong dealers and heavy stuffing at your weak ones. The aggregate is calm and the network is not.

What to do with it. Compute it dealer by dealer before the network, on a twelve-month rolling basis, and treat any dealer below 80 percent for two consecutive quarters as a shipment freeze candidate.

Part two: the health of inventory you no longer own

4. Channel inventory turns

What it is. Channel inventory turns measure how many times a year a dealer sells and replaces the inventory of your line, which is the clearest indicator of whether your product is working capital or dead weight on their floor.

Formula. Inventory turns = annual cost of goods sold for the line, divided by average inventory value of the line held at the dealer.

Benchmark. The North American Equipment Dealers Association Cost of Doing Business Study, 2025 edition covering fiscal 2024 and analyzed by Curt Kleoppel of Equipment Dealer Consulting, reports total inventory turns of 2.52 times for dealers in the 200 to 600 million dollar band and 2.82 times above 600 million dollars. The 2024 edition (fiscal 2023) reported 2.82 and 3.16, with a stated target above three turns.

How it lies to you. Turns computed on average inventory hide the shape of the year: a dealer running 4.0 through harvest and 1.2 the rest of the time averages out respectably while carrying your product dead for eight months.

What to do with it. Compute turns on your line specifically, monthly, and compare them to the turns the same dealer gets on the competing line in the same category. That comparison, not the industry average, predicts whether you keep the floor space.

5. Months of supply in the channel

What it is. Months of supply is how long the inventory currently in the channel would last at the current retail rate of sale, converting an inventory balance into a length of time your future revenue is already spoken for.

Formula. Months of supply = current channel inventory units, divided by average retail sales per month.

Benchmark. No reliable public benchmark exists for a target months of supply in agricultural equipment, and anyone quoting one without naming a study is guessing. Directionally, the 2026 Dealer Business Outlook and Trends Report from Ag Equipment Intelligence found 27 percent of surveyed dealers considered used equipment inventory too high, and 67.5 percent reported new equipment sales down two percent or more in 2025.

How it lies to you. A trailing three-month denominator is violently distorted by seasonality. Computed in August, before harvest, months of supply looks catastrophic; computed in November it looks excellent, and nothing changed except the calendar.

What to do with it. Use a seasonally matched denominator, meaning the same three months of the prior year.

6. Aged inventory in the channel

What it is. Aged channel inventory is the share of your product sitting at dealers longer than a defined threshold, and it is the earliest reliable warning that a sell-in quarter was not a demand quarter.

Formula. Aged inventory percentage = value of units older than the threshold (commonly 180, 270 or 365 days from original shipment), divided by total channel inventory value.

Benchmark. No credible public benchmark exists for aged channel inventory in equipment distribution. The closest published evidence is pricing: Sandhills Global reported in December 2025 that used tractor asking prices were down 5.85 percent year over year while inventories had fallen for eight consecutive months.

How it lies to you. This is the metric most often laundered, because a unit transferred between two stores in the same dealer group can reset its age clock, and so can a unit re-invoiced under a new program.

What to do with it. Track age by serial number from original shipment date and make that the auditable field.

7. Floor plan exposure and dealer working capital tied up

What it is. Floor plan exposure is the amount of the dealer's borrowed working capital your line consumes at any moment, together with the interest and curtailment cost that consumption creates for them.

Formula. Capital cost = average inventory value of your line, multiplied by the floor plan rate, multiplied by average days held divided by 365, plus curtailment payments on unsold units.

Benchmark. No published benchmark exists for floor plan exposure by manufacturer line. The mechanics are documented in the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency's Comptroller's Handbook on Floor Plan Lending, and lender sources describe interest-free "free floor" periods commonly running 90 to 180 days, with curtailment requiring pay-down of 10 to 20 percent of the original advance. Treat those as market practice reported by lenders, not a surveyed benchmark.

How it lies to you. Extended free-floor terms make it painless for a dealer to accept a stocking order, so sell-in and dealer satisfaction improve together, and both improvements are financed.

What to do with it. Compute the dollar cost of carrying your line for each significant dealer and put it on the scorecard.

Part three: coverage, which is two different problems

8. Territory coverage

What it is. Territory coverage is the share of the addressable geography or customer base that has an appointed channel partner within a practical service distance, and it answers only whether you have a representative at all.

Formula. Coverage = counties, regions or named accounts with an appointed partner inside the service radius, divided by the total in the addressable market.

Benchmark. No public benchmark exists for target coverage, because it depends on product economics and service radius. What is published is how the footprint is consolidating: the 2025 Big Dealer Report from Ag Equipment Intelligence and the Machinery Advisors Consortium found the 100 largest North American dealers operate 2,012 ag stores, close to one third of all ag rooftops.

How it lies to you. A map with 94 percent of counties shaded says nothing about whether the partner in each one has a trained salesperson, a technician, floor space or any intention of quoting your product this year. Signed is not covered: coverage measures contracts, not capability.

What to do with it. Report coverage only when paired with the next metric, because alone it will be used to argue that the network is fine.

9. Territory capacity

What it is. Territory capacity is the volume the appointed partner can realistically sell, install and support in a year given their people, bays and capital, which is a different question from whether the territory has a partner.

Formula. Capacity = trained selling heads assigned to your category, multiplied by realistic deals per head per year, constrained by installation throughput. Capacity gap = territory potential minus capacity.

Benchmark. No public benchmark exists, and this is one of the clearest blanks in the field. Deals per head per year varies by product complexity by an order of magnitude and no association publishes it, so build it from your own network and use your own median.

How it lies to you. Capacity failures disguise themselves as demand failures. Frequently the truth is that one person at that dealer can quote your product and is at full utilization, so every additional lead you generate goes unanswered and reads as weak demand.

What to do with it. Separate the two diagnoses, because the remedies are opposite: a coverage gap is fixed by appointing a partner, a capacity gap by adding trained heads, service capability or capital at a partner you already have.

10. Active dealer rate

What it is. The active dealer rate is the share of appointed partners that actually transacted in the period, which separates the network you have from the network on your list.

Formula. Active dealer rate = partners with at least one qualifying retail sale of your line in the trailing twelve months, divided by total appointed partners.

Benchmark. No credible public benchmark exists for equipment distribution. Channel consulting sources covering technology partner programs report activation targets near 60 percent, but those come from vendor publications about software channels rather than surveyed equipment dealer data, and should not be transplanted.

How it lies to you. Any definition of active that counts a parts order, a warranty claim or one small transaction produces a rate near 100 percent while your line is dormant across half the network. The metric is only as honest as the threshold behind it.

What to do with it. Set the threshold in units or dollars representing real participation, publish it, and review dormant partners annually.

Part four: the dealer's economics, which is the whole game

11. Share of the dealer's revenue

What it is. Share of dealer revenue is what percentage of a partner's total annual sales your line represents, the most direct available proxy for how much of their attention you have earned.

Formula. Share of dealer revenue = your line's retail revenue at that dealer divided by their total annual revenue. Share of category is the same numerator divided by their revenue in your product category.

Benchmark. No public benchmark exists for a target share, and it would not be meaningful across categories. Relevant context: the NAEDA Cost of Doing Business Study, 2025 edition, shows dealer revenue concentrated in wholegoods while parts and service carry the margin, with NAEDA guidance targeting parts above 20 percent of store mix.

How it lies to you. This metric rewards you for being at a small dealer and punishes you for being at a large one. Ten percent of a 12 million dollar store is 1.2 million dollars; two percent of a 400 million dollar group is 8 million, and the one that looks indifferent is worth nearly seven times more.

What to do with it. Use share of category for attention diagnosis and absolute dollars for value ranking.

12. Dealer gross margin on your line

What it is. Dealer gross margin on your line is the margin the partner actually realizes after discounts, rebates, freight, pre-delivery work and trade allowances, which is almost never the margin printed on your price list.

Formula. Realized margin = (end user invoice price minus dealer net cost minus freight minus pre-delivery and installation cost minus trade loss) divided by end user invoice price. Realized margin dollars is the same expression without the final division.

Benchmark. The NAEDA Cost of Doing Business Study, 2025 edition covering fiscal 2024, reports service gross margin of 67.38 percent for dealers in the 200 to 600 million dollar band and 52.18 percent above 600 million, with parts and accessories margin of 30.06 and 26.98 percent. Wholegoods margins are structurally far lower than either.

How it lies to you. Your list margin is a fiction and the dealer knows it. If your program requires discounting to win, absorbs freight badly or forces a trade-in, realized margin can be half the published number, and a competitor with a lower list margin may be paying the dealer more per unit in practice.

What to do with it. Compute realized margin dollars per unit and audit it against actual dealer deal files rather than your own price file, at least annually.

13. Return per hour of dealer selling effort

What it is. Return per hour of dealer effort is the realized margin dollars a partner earns for each hour their people spend selling, quoting, configuring and supporting your line, and it is what actually governs where a dealer points their week.

Formula. Return per hour = realized margin dollars per closed deal, divided by total dealer hours per closed deal, including hours spent on lost bids allocated across the deals that closed.

Benchmark. No public benchmark exists, because no association publishes dealer selling hours by manufacturer line. Build it yourself by sitting with two or three trusted partners and reconstructing it from real deals.

How it lies to you. Most manufacturers never compute it and substitute margin percent, so a line at 22 percent margin and eight hours per deal loses every time to a line at 15 percent and two hours while its maker stays confused about the dealer's lack of engagement.

What to do with it. Attack the denominator before the numerator: configuration tools, pre-engineered packages and factory-supplied layouts raise the dealer's return per hour without costing you a point of margin.

14. Dealer reorder rate

What it is. The dealer reorder rate is the share of partners who place a further stocking order within a defined window after selling through the previous one, and it is the closest thing a channel business has to a retention metric.

Formula. Reorder rate = partners placing a qualifying stocking order within the window (commonly 90 or 180 days after sell-through of the prior order), divided by partners eligible to reorder.

Benchmark. No credible public benchmark exists for dealer reorder rate in equipment distribution. Baseline it against your own history across three years, so you can separate the cycle from the relationship.

How it lies to you. Reorder rate is corrupted by your own programs: an early order incentive or an end-of-quarter push produces a spike that reflects the terms, not the experience. Measured across a program deadline, it measures your discount.

What to do with it. Measure unincentivized reorders separately from program orders.

Part five: the aftermarket, where the dealer actually makes money

15. Parts and service attach rate

What it is. Attach rate is the share of equipment sales carrying an associated parts package, service agreement, extended warranty or commissioning contract, and it is the mechanism by which a low-margin machine sale becomes a profitable customer.

Formula. Attach rate = unit sales with an attached parts or service agreement, divided by total unit sales. The revenue version is attached aftermarket revenue divided by wholegoods revenue for the same units.

Benchmark. No public benchmark exists for attach rate in agricultural equipment. What is published is the economics that make it matter: NAEDA's 2025 study reports parts margins of 27 to 30 percent and service margins of 52 to 67 percent against far lower wholegoods margins, and the 2026 Dealer Business Outlook and Trends Report found 62.1 percent of dealers expecting service revenue up and 59.5 percent expecting parts revenue up.

How it lies to you. Attach rate at the point of sale ignores whether the attachment was ever used or renewed, so a service agreement sold and never serviced produces a healthy number and an unhealthy customer.

What to do with it. Measure by product family, and measure renewal at twelve and twenty-four months alongside it.

16. Dealer absorption rate

What it is. Absorption rate is the share of a dealership's total operating expense covered by the gross profit of its parts and service departments, and it is the standard measure of whether a dealer can survive a bad year for machine sales.

Formula. Absorption rate = (parts gross profit plus service gross profit) divided by total dealership operating expense.

Benchmark. Farm Equipment magazine, in a piece by Ron Birkey (retired President and CEO of Birkey's, first published 2004 and republished 2026), cites a North American average near 55 percent and sets 100 percent or higher as the goal. NAEDA's study reports a narrower measure it calls parts aftermarket absorption: 38.45 percent and 26.68 percent by size band in the 2025 edition. The two are not comparable, because one includes service gross profit and the other does not, and the Birkey figures are two decades old.

How it lies to you. Absorption rises when a dealer cuts costs and it rises when machine sales collapse, because a smaller expense base and a smaller wholegoods business both improve the ratio.

What to do with it. Track the trend at your key dealers rather than the level, and read it as a leverage indicator.

17. Training coverage of the dealer's team

What it is. Training coverage is the share of the partner's relevant selling and service headcount currently certified on your product, which determines how many people in that building can physically sell or support your line.

Formula. Training coverage = currently employed and currently certified people, divided by total relevant headcount at that partner, computed separately for sales and for service.

Benchmark. No public benchmark exists for dealer training coverage in equipment distribution. There is a structural reason to care anyway: with the largest 100 dealer groups operating roughly a third of North American ag rooftops (2025 Big Dealer Report, Ag Equipment Intelligence and the Machinery Advisors Consortium), training designed for single stores does not survive group-level staffing and turnover.

How it lies to you. Cumulative certification counts are close to pure vanity, because a partner with 40 people trained over six years may have nine still employed and five still current.

What to do with it. Refresh the count twice a year against the partner's real roster, not against your training records.

Part six: conflict, forecast and programs

18. Channel conflict rate

What it is. Channel conflict rate is how often your direct sales activity, your e-commerce, or a second appointed partner competes for the same end customer as an existing partner, and it measures a promise you made when you appointed them.

Formula. Conflict rate = opportunities with more than one selling entity from your side, divided by total opportunities. The financial version is revenue in disputed deals divided by total channel revenue.

Benchmark. No public benchmark exists and no organization publishes one, because manufacturers do not disclose conflict rates and dealers have no incentive to aggregate them.

How it lies to you. This metric lies by silence. A dealer who loses a deal to your direct team usually does not complain, they reallocate selling hours to a competing line, so the visible dispute is the tail end of a decision made quietly months earlier.

What to do with it. Publish rules of engagement before you need them: named house accounts, thresholds above which a deal goes direct, and a fixed compensation rule when a partner is bypassed.

19. Channel forecast versus CRM forecast variance

What it is. Channel forecast variance is the gap between what your partners say they will sell and what your own pipeline system says will close, and its size tells you how much of your forecast is actually visible to you.

Formula. Variance = (dealer submitted forecast minus CRM weighted forecast) divided by CRM weighted forecast, same period and territory, tracked alongside absolute error divided by actual for each source separately.

Benchmark. No reliable public benchmark exists for channel forecast accuracy specifically. Published benchmarks for direct B2B forecasting come mostly from vendor commentary rather than open surveyed data, and they assume the forecaster owns the customer relationship, which in a channel you do not.

How it lies to you. Both sides are biased in opposite directions: dealer forecasts run optimistic in good years because optimism protects allocation, and pessimistic before a program deadline because a low forecast makes the eventual order look like an achievement.

What to do with it. Measure each source's accuracy separately against actual retail, per partner, over at least four quarters.

20. Early order program participation

What it is. Early order participation is the share of eligible partners, and the share of expected annual volume, committed through your pre-season ordering program, which converts an unknown season into a known production plan.

Formula. Participation = partners placing a qualifying early order divided by eligible partners. Conversion quality = early order units that reached an end user within the season divided by early order units.

Benchmark. No public benchmark exists for early order participation in agricultural equipment. Early order and prepay structures are well documented in crop inputs (Bayer, BASF, Pioneer and cooperative programs publish terms, commonly zero percent interest from September through the following spring with prepay discounts in the low single digits), but those are grower-facing programs in a consumable category and do not transfer to capital equipment.

How it lies to you. Early order participation is a sell-in metric wearing a planning metric's clothing, because a good discount pulls forward orders that would have arrived anyway.

What to do with it. Always report participation with conversion quality beside it, and ask honestly how much of that volume would have arrived at full price later.

21. Rebate cost per incremental dollar

What it is. Rebate cost per incremental dollar is what you actually paid to generate the revenue your program genuinely added, measured against a defensible baseline of what would have happened without it.

Formula. Cost per incremental dollar = total rebate and program cost, divided by (actual revenue minus baseline revenue), where the baseline is the partner's trailing performance adjusted for market movement using an external index such as the AEM retail series.

Benchmark. No published benchmark exists for equipment distribution. The nearest analogue is consumer packaged goods, where trade promotion spend is commonly described as 15 to 25 percent of gross revenue and a McKinsey figure widely repeated in that literature holds that roughly 72 percent of United States trade promotions fail to generate a profit. That is a different industry, and I could not open the McKinsey source to verify the wording, so read it as a warning rather than a benchmark.

How it lies to you. This metric lies through its baseline, always: last year's actual lets the program take credit for the market recovering, and the partner's forecast lets it take credit for a number the partner controlled.

What to do with it. Insist on an externally anchored baseline, pilot against a matched holdout group of similar partners where the network is large enough, and pay on growth above a threshold rather than on total volume.

The dealer scorecard that the dealer accepts

A scorecard the channel rejects is a document, not a system. I have seen more channel measurement programs die from partner rejection than from bad math. Six rules separate the scorecards that get read from the ones that get filed.

- Every number must be auditable by the dealer. If a partner cannot reconstruct a figure from data they already hold, they will not trust it, and one disputed number invalidates the whole page in their mind.
- At least a third of the scorecard must be about you. Order-to-delivery time, line fill rate, quote turnaround, warranty settlement days, support response. A scorecard where the manufacturer grades the dealer and is graded by nobody is a performance review, and dealers respond accordingly.
- Never score what the dealer cannot control. If your factory lead time doubled, the resulting drop in their close rate is your number, not theirs. Scoring a partner on your own failure is the fastest way to lose the room.
- Report in the dealer's currency. Margin dollars per hour, dollars of capital tied up, days of aging, not index scores or weighted composites. The dealer runs a business in dollars and hours.

- Compare against anonymized peers in the same size band. Dealers argue with absolute targets and act on a quartile position among comparable peers. This single change most reliably turns a scorecard from a complaint into a conversation.
- State consequences in advance, and make them symmetric. What improves for a top-quartile partner, what changes for a bottom-quartile one, and what the partner gets from you when you land in your own bottom quartile. Symmetry makes it a contract instead of a threat.

Keep it to one page and no more than eight lines.

Seasonality: the twelve months that decide the year

Channel businesses in agriculture do not have four even quarters. They have a small number of narrow windows in which decisions are actually made. Measuring a channel on an even quarterly cadence guarantees you will read seasonal timing as performance. The calendar below reflects North American row crop and feed operations.

Window	What is happening on the farm	What the revenue system must be doing
January to February	Winter meetings, farm shows, capital plans set for the year	Peak quoting season. Dealer meetings, program launch, certification refresh, engineering capacity at maximum
March	Final pre-plant preparation, financing arranged, remaining capital decisions closed	Last window to convert winter quotes. Confirm early order conversion quality. Freeze shipments to dealers already carrying excess
April to May	Planting. The customer is unreachable and will stay that way	Do not launch programs, run campaigns or schedule dealer meetings. Install, commission and clear backlog. Measure, do not sell
June to July	Crop in the ground, field days, first realistic yield expectations forming	Field day presence, construction window for fixed equipment, mid-year forecast reset, capacity gap diagnosis while there is still time to fix it
August	Pre-harvest readiness, last-minute capacity fears, equipment checked and found wanting	Parts stocking and emergency response capability. This is where attach rate and fill rate earn or lose the next machine sale
September to November	Harvest. Cash arrives. Equipment fails in public. Storage and drying constraints become undeniable	Service execution above all else. Capture the failure list. The highest-intent selling window of the year, and it is won by technicians, not campaigns
December	Tax planning against the Section 179 deduction and bonus depreciation, year-end close, lender reviews	Close capital decisions, then audit them: December orders driven by tax rather than need are the ones that age. Set next year's dealer inventory plan and floor plan positions

Two operating rules follow. First, harvest is a service quarter that produces sales, not a sales quarter, and staffing it as a sales quarter is a recurring and expensive error. Second, any KPI in this business compared against the immediately preceding quarter is close to meaningless. Compare against the same window in the prior year, always.

Feed and livestock operations run on a different clock, driven by the cattle cycle and by permitting and construction seasons rather than planting and harvest, which is one reason a diversified channel portfolio smooths the year. If you serve both, build two calendars and do not average them.

Where to start

If your channel measurement today is sell-in plus a coverage map, the highest-value sequence is short.

1. Pair sell-in with sell-through in the same report, permanently. Nothing else changes until this changes.
2. Compute aged channel inventory by serial number for your ten largest partners.
3. Reconstruct realized dealer margin dollars per unit from actual deal files at three partners, and compare it to your price list.
4. Estimate dealer hours per closed deal for your line and for the competing line at those same partners.
5. Separate your coverage gaps from your capacity gaps before you appoint another partner.

Everything else here is refinement. Those five steps are the difference between measuring your shipments and measuring your business.

About the author

Andre Magrini is a fractional Chief Revenue Officer based in the Chicago area. He led the Brazil operation of Ag Growth International from roughly 35 million dollars in revenue to more than 150 million dollars in three years, then served as Director North America covering the United States and Canada, building and running revenue through dealers, distributors, OEM accounts and direct feedlot sales in grain storage and feed processing equipment. He serves as Vice Chairman of the Marketing and Communications Committee at the American Feed Industry Association.

Every benchmark in this guide is attributed to a named organization and year. Where no credible public benchmark exists, the guide says so rather than supplying a number.