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DTN AGHOST® MOBILE

CASE STUDY

Freeland Bean and Grain

Freeland, Michigan

Northern Michigan growers produce a wide variety of crops, from corn, soybeans and wheat to edible beans, sugar beets and potatoes. As a result, these growers need an ag retailer that offers services and products as diverse as the crops grown in the region.

Freeland Bean and Grain identified this need nearly 30 years ago. Aside from providing crop inputs for growers, Freeland buys and sells these different commodities and offers customers crop consulting services.

In recent years, Freeland has grown steadily as their customers' operations have become more sophisticated. According to Freeland President and Marketing Manager Roger Hupfer, this has particularly been the case with customers using mobile technology. Hupfer realized Freeland needed to take advantage of this technology and engage customers on a new level.

The challenge

Freeland needed a tool that would allow it to reach out directly to customers. At First, Freeland started sending text messages to customers. While Freeland received positive customer feedback on the text messages, Hupfer felt there was more Freeland could offer.

He and his staff observed more customers were relying on tablets and smartphones to conduct day-to-day business. "Our customer base is evolving and getting younger," Hupfer said. "We wanted to adapt to changing grower demands."

But how could Freeland engage its customers even more without it impacting staff resources? Would it be efficient? What impact would it have on business? How would it benefit customers?

The solution

For nearly four years, Freeland has utilized DTN Portal technology to run its website. Customers have come to rely on the Freeland website for the latest on cash bids and other market information, services, inputs, and agronomic conditions and recommendations. Hupfer did not have to look far for a dependable mobile product capable of delivering the same user-friendly content to mobile customers and chose DTN AgHost Mobile.

With the new AgHost Mobile technology, Freeland's mobile site has the same functionality as its website, giving customers the 24/7 flexibility to do business with Freeland. This lets customers manage their cash bid offers, order supplies and complete transactions wherever and whenever they want, said Hupfer.



Plus, content on the Freeland mobile site is updated automatically when changes are made to their website. This helpful function gives Hupfer and his staff more time to interact with customers and do other projects.

The results

DTN AgHost Mobile had an immediate impact for Freeland. It allowed them to expand Freeland's business to customers further away.

"It is a great extension of our business and of our website," said Hupfer. "With [DTN AgHost Mobile], we are able to reach more customers. It has allowed us to expand our trade area and develop customer loyalty."

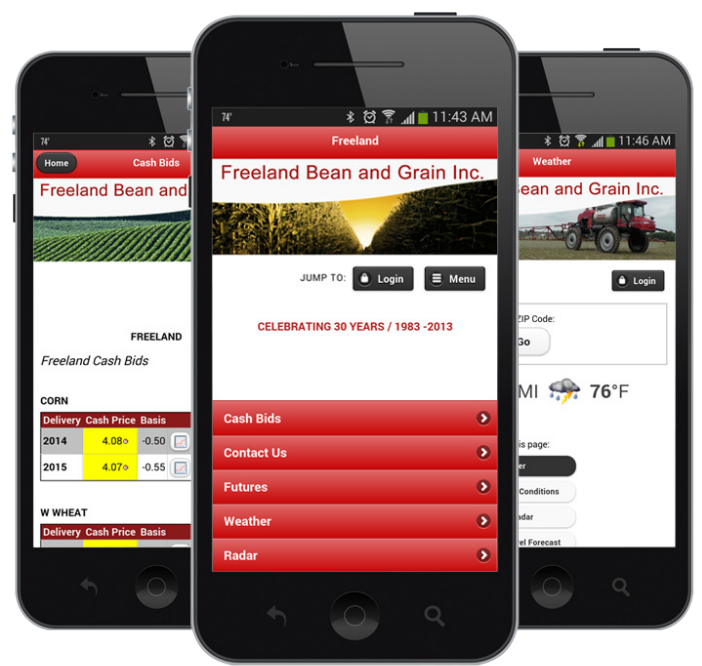
The simplicity of AgHost Mobile has also helped Hupfer and the Freeland staff become more efficient and interact with their customers more. "It has allowed us to increase productivity. I am able to do more marketing projects," said Hupfer. "And it enables us to provide another customer touch point."

The customers have also benefitted from DTN AgHost Mobile, according to Hupfer.

"The technology has made our customers more successful in their marketing. We sent customers text messages with cash bids twice a day. With the mobile version, customers now have that information available immediately. It has helped our customers be more productive," explained Hupfer.

With DTN AgHost Mobile, Freeland customers can remotely access cash bids, futures prices, weather, radar and their accounts at any time.

"Our customers engage when they want, where they want. They can easily access [the mobile site] while they are in the field working," Hupfer said. "Giving customers easier access to cash bids through their smartphone is one of the greatest services Freeland has been able to provide."



The client's view

"Freeland has been able to expand its grain business to customers further away since we began using DTN AgHost Mobile."

Roger Hupfer, president and marketing manager
 Freeland Bean and Grain