



National FFA
2013 Nursery/Landscape CDE
VERBAL CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE
Judges Information Guide
Outdoor Power Equipment Dealership

The purpose of this practicum is to evaluate primarily the participants' communication skills. Part of the conversation (and scoring) will include the participants' knowledge of equipment characteristics and uses, but the main emphasis remains on communication in a sales environment.

The participant is a sales representative at an independent outdoor power equipment dealership. Your judging role-play is as a customer with little knowledge of power equipment (specifically trimmers). You have a specific need but do not know what information the sales clerk must learn to help you. It is the participant's task to determine and meet your need, providing additional supporting information as appropriate. Therefore, you should answer all questions in a normal manner while not volunteering details directly, but you may guide the conversation as needed to finish in the 6-minute limit.

Judging Uniformity

The practicum booths are located in a curtained room for sight/sound control, and a separate table area with chairs is provided for judges to complete their scoring before the next group arrives. All judges will meet with the head judge to review procedures while the participants are being organized. This review will include discussions of possible conversation flow and a consensus on the scoring guide. Please think through your own conversation approach and study the scoring guide beforehand. In addition, between each participant group the judges should confer on any unique situations or scoring problems that arise.

Each judge will have a folder for holding the scoring guide (attached) on one side and the participant's score sheet on the other. Some parts may be scored during the conversation (participants know they are being scored but cannot see what is marked), while the folder may be closed for handling any items offered. Scoring is then completed for the major areas from a recall over the whole conversation.

NOTE 1: For fairness (perceived and real), please avoid judging participants from your home state and score no more than two participants from the same state. Keep a record on the attached scoring guide.

Conversation Aid

On the following page are questions and information to help the conversation. It is on a single page so you may place it with the scoring guide on one side of the folder for quick reference until you are familiar with all the parts. Please allow for a variety of responses that may be "correct."



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Background Information - You recently purchased a home with a small sized lot and several flower beds and walkways. It is spring and the grass is growing. You have a party coming up and you want to give your yard a polished look for your guests. Your old string trimmer died and you are looking for a replacement. You live in a suburban area with neighbors on either side. The neighborhood is a quiet one and you want to be sure to get a trimmer that gets the job done but is also quiet and less impactful on the environment. You recently read an ad from one of the large home stores advertising a special deal on gas trimmers but had heard from a neighbor that you would be smart to go to a local dealership because they offer expert advice and service. You are looking for the best trimmer to purchase for the job.

The test display includes one sheet description of three different trimmers. The FS 40 C-E, a gas powered occasional-use string trimmer, an FSE 60 corded electric string trimmer for homeowner use, and an FSA 65 battery powered string trimmer. The goal is for the student to recommend the FSA 65 as it is the right sized trimmer for the job at hand, and provides low noise and zero emissions. Second choice would be the FSE 60, and the FSA 40 C-E last.

An important element of this sale is the inclusion of protective equipment (eye, ear), also on display in the test area, and a battery and charger. The student should also be making the point that as a servicing dealer, the string trimmer will be assembled for the customer and training provided before the customer leaves the store, an important sales differentiation from the mass merchant home store.

Conversation Guide - All components below to be included. Comments in parentheses and in bold are the main points the student should cover in responding to the question.

Opening Line: “I saw an ad from Mega Market for a gas powered string trimmer. I need a string trimmer but I don’t know what I should buy. What is the right string trimmer for me?”

- “How do you differentiate between string trimmers?” (**power, weight, noise, emissions, cutting head**)
- “Is there a difference in use?” (**string trimmers are designated for occasional/homeowner, and professional use**)
- “Is there a difference in features? (**Features are designated on product descriptions**)
- “What about price?” (**Prices are designated on product descriptions**)
- “I am not real confident that I know how to use this string trimmer?” (**Dealer representative will set up and demonstrate string trimmer before customer leaves**)
- “Which do you recommend as best for the job at hand?” (**FSA 65. Right power, low noise, no gas, no cord, easy to use, cheap to operate**)
- “Is there anything else I need?” (**Protective equipment, battery and charger**)
- Closing: “What do I do now?” (**We will take you to our service area where they will set up your string trimmer and demonstrate its use. You will have a chance to operate it until you feel comfortable with it.**)

Judges' Scoring Guide

VERBAL CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE

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String Trimmer Purchase

IMPORTANT: Verify participants number on scorecard matches name tag of your participant!

Record of participants judged (State)

1. _____	6. _____	11. _____	16. _____
2. _____	7. _____	12. _____	17. _____
3. _____	8. _____	13. _____	18. _____
4. _____	9. _____	14. _____	19. _____
5. _____	10. _____	15. _____	20. _____

Note: Points for suggested criteria or responses are given as specific values or with '+' as additive values up to the total points for that section. Judges have discretion in awarding lower values than shown, if done consistently by all, when response quality deserves less and to allow full value to outstanding participants.

CONVERSATION

EXPECTATION

Approach	(4)	Greeting made (+1) Offer to help made (+1) Positive, enthusiastic; not hesitant (+2)
Personality	(7)	Pleasant, friendly manner (+4) Not pushy in selling (+3)
Voice	(7)	Easy to hear and understand (+3) Proper grammar used (+2) Good speaking form (+2)
Information Requested	(7)	What does customer need (+3) Assesses customer knowledge level (+2) Assesses all customer questions (+2)
Salesmanship	(7)	Very effective in selling product/information (+3) Makes you confident in product/information (+2) Tries to expand sale (+1 or 2 for related items)
Closing	(3)	Verifies instructions are understood (+1) Directs to product(s) (+1) Thank you, come again (+1)

PRODUCT/PROCEDURE

Selection	(6)	Advises FSA 65 (+3), others (+1) Good argument for model advised (+3)
Information Provided	(6)	Product/procedure information accuracy (0-6)
Clarity of Information	(3)	Degree of information clarity (0-3)

JUDGING QUESTION GUIDE

“I saw an ad from Mega Market for a gas powered string trimmer. I need a string trimmer but I don’t know what I should buy. What is the right string trimmer for me?”

“How do you differentiate between string trimmers?”

“Is there a difference in use?”

“Is there a difference in features?”

“What about price?”

“I am not real confident that I know how to use this string trimmer.”

“Which do you recommend as best for the job at hand?”

“Is there anything else I need?”

Closing: “What do I do now?”



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Monitor's Instructions and Announcement to Participants
Outdoor Power Equipment Dealership

Organization - There will be 8 to 10 participants in each subgroup coming to this event (10 stations available for use), which has a total of 10 minutes allocated. Assemble the group and read the instructions below. Then move them to stations you assign, collecting their score sheets in order. Distribute the score sheets in order to the judges, asking them to verify and shift according to the home-state and multiple-teammate cautions in their procedures. Timing begins when judges move to the sales booths, and the conversation must be stopped after 6 minutes. Deliver the participants to the group leader for rotation to the next event. Judges complete scoring during this time in preparation for the next group arrival and instructions. (Total cycles = 3 main-groups x 5 contestant subgroups each = 15 contestants/judge max.)

Monitor - Distribute the score sheets to participants and read the following:

This activity evaluates your communication skill and power equipment knowledge. You are a sales representative for an independent outdoor power equipment dealership. A judge will be a customer seeking assistance. You will have 6 minutes to determine the customer's need and provide sales assistance. This may include advising on purchase and use of accessory products.

Sample product descriptions and related information will be at your station. I will assign you to a station and collect your score sheet. You may then study the materials and information at your station while I am organizing the judges. Timing for the event begins when the customer (your judge) approaches, and you will have 6 minutes to complete the conversation. If a sale at your station is appropriate, make it clear the customer will be picking the sold item(s) up at the service area of the store.

PLEASE NOTE: All the information that you require to make the sale is available in the test booth including a letter to you from the owner of the dealership. Review the available information and items and remember that you can refer back to them if necessary.

What questions are there?

Be sure your participant information is on your scorecard and then give it to me as I assign you to your station. You may review materials at your station until the customer approaches and I announce "begin."

Assign them to the stations, collecting their forms in order which are then passed to the corresponding judges. Remember to start timing as you announce **Begin**. (Judges arrive at the stations.)

Time for the 6 minutes allowed.

Stop. Leave your station now. Please collect any items you were carrying with you.

Move these completed contestants to their group leader.