

What 18 Years Inside Dealer Networks *Taught Me*

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Three companies, eighteen years, one pattern that kept repeating: the businesses that grew weren't the ones with the best product. They were the ones that made it easiest for a dealer, a distributor, or a contractor to trust them. Seven things I learned building the systems that make that happen.

01 Your dealers don't need another brochure. They need a system they can run without you.

At Cemen Tech, standardizing a global dealer network wasn't a logo refresh. It was messaging, training, and content built so a distributor could sell correctly without calling first. Co-op dollars buy attention. Systems buy consistency.

02 The contractor isn't comparing your equipment to a competitor's

They're comparing it to the last time someone wasted their time. High-cost, high-stakes purchases run on trust before they run on specs. If the buying experience feels like a lot-dealer pitch, the equipment doesn't matter yet.

03 If the founder is the brand, the business hasn't been built yet

A company that depends on one person being in every room isn't a system. It's a bottleneck with good instincts. The real test: does it run, and sell, when that person is out sick?

04 A launch isn't finished until the field can run it without corporate on the phone

Launches at John Deere, including JD14, JD18, and the Kreisel battery integration, succeeded when dealers had what they needed to sell it themselves, day one. Not because of the announcement.

05 \$300K in savings didn't come from a new campaign

It came from replacing five disconnected systems with one. Power Connect was an infrastructure win, not a marketing win. The best ROI usually isn't a new tactic. It's removing friction underneath the old ones.

06 96% conference satisfaction was an operations metric wearing a marketing hat

The John Deere Intern Portal went from 75% to 96%, not because the messaging improved, but because five disconnected systems became one that worked. Fifteen years later, it's still running.

07 If you can't score how ready your customers are to trust you

You're guessing at growth. Most companies have never measured this. That's the first thing worth fixing, and what a Growth Snapshot is built to answer, before anyone spends a dollar on the fix.

THE PATTERN, IN ONE LINE

Growth didn't come from convincing more people to buy. It came from building the systems that made it easy for the people already choosing to buy, to actually follow through. John Deere, Cemen Tech, Diamond Vogel: same pattern, three different products.

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SYSTEMS THAT HOLD.