

A photograph of a field of green plants, possibly a crop field, with a bright sunset or sunrise in the background. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The plants in the foreground are in focus, showing their leaves and stems. The text "Jay Chiat Awards" and "BASF 2017" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

Jay Chiat Awards

BASF 2017

When you bet the farm every year, you'd better be smart about it.

Agriculture is a big business that directly affects a lot of other, even bigger businesses. Not to mention a lot of family businesses. BASF is one of six global manufacturers of crop protection products that combat weed, insect and mold problems. Given the necessary scale of growing crops that provide food and raw materials for the world, these products are crucial to the success of a farmer's business.

Farmers are stoic, incredulous consumers. They're at the mercy of changing weather, markets and policies. They've heard every promise a crop protection company could ever make — all that matters is what they've seen.

BASF was being outspent and losing share. Farmers were dealing with tumbling commodity markets. We needed to find a better way forward, and it started with a radical reconsideration of the brand and the people it serves.

Grow Smart™ with BASF is all about demonstrating the impact of working hard, showing ingenuity, and delivering real results.

This is the story of how a new go-to-market strategy clearly links marketing efforts to sales growth that's outpacing the industry.

The Situation

Crop protection is a mature industry awash in functional product messaging and driven by conventions like sales incentives, promotional pricing and rebates. The result is a commoditized market flooded with product-first communications. While in a constant battle to gain market share, BASF was significantly outspent by huge global competitors like Bayer and Monsanto.

The sheer amount of chemistry available is overwhelming, with BASF alone producing more than 70+ product brands and growing. Many farmers spend upwards of \$150,000 on crop protection annually. While these inputs are critical to their success, some still struggle to see the value of such a hefty investment year upon year. This is especially true in recent years as crashing commodities markets continue to shrink farmers' margins and threaten their family legacy.



The Situation

Only 40 chances to build a legacy.

Though farming itself is a predictable annual cycle, farmers know they only get about 40 growing seasons in their lifetime to advance their family heritage. When commodity prices are high, many are flush with cash, potentially pulling in millions. When the markets are plummeting or multiple years of bad weather stack up, staying solvent is a significant achievement. 2016 marked the fourth year in a row of declining crop prices, leaving more farmers to face the prospect of parting with their family businesses to settle operating debts.



Our Driving Insight

The chemistry we create in the field with farmers matters even more than the chemistry that comes from the labs.

As agronomic practices modernize, farmers have to do much more than just grow crops. They've become mechanics, engineers, accountants, environmental stewards, chemists, marketers, meteorologists, risk management experts and HR directors. Mounting responsibilities leave many stuck in triage mode, unable to be proactive — all while the general public increases scrutiny on sustainable food production.



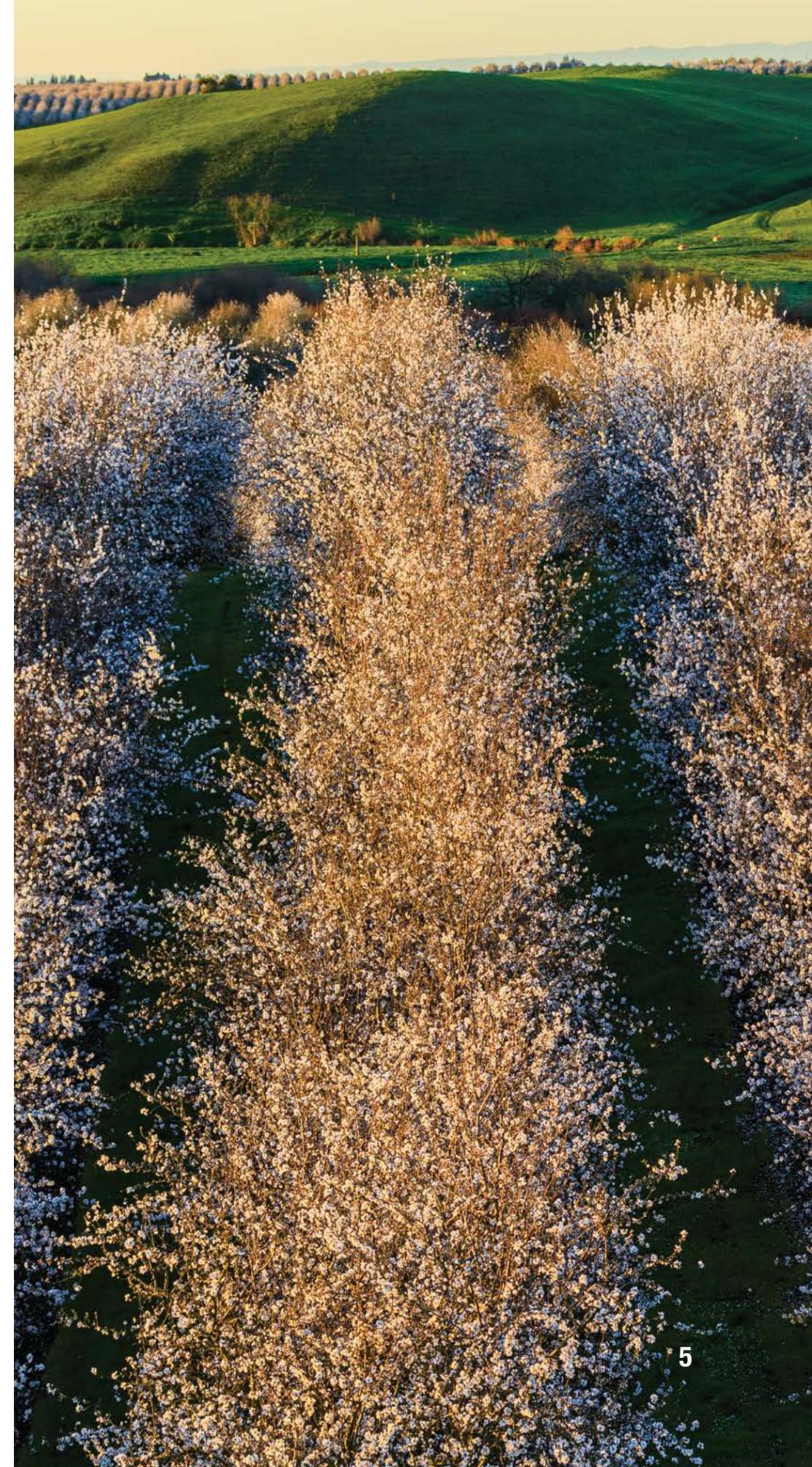
Our Driving Opportunity

Farmers need a partner who can see the whole forest for the trees, to challenge the potential of their entire operation.

Just as farmers need to find better ways to grow crops, we realized that, in order to succeed, we needed to find better ways to move beyond the products sold to the relationships we could grow with farmers.

Farmers today are bombarded with sales pitches. At the same time, they're spread too thin to think objectively about the whole of their businesses, and they need someone to turn to for unbiased advice. Most importantly, they need someone to help them make the most out of their 40 chances to grow their legacy; someone to help break through the barriers of their operation and challenge the status quo. To say the stakes are high for farmers is an understatement — they literally bet the farm every spring.

With farmers increasingly feeling the pressure from all sides, we saw a way to build impactful relationships with farmers; to take action as a partner that helps farmers weather the trials they face.



Our Strategy

Reinvent BASF, a giant German chemical company, as the American farmer's local "go-to guy" for innovative agronomic ideas that drive their success and ensure their legacy.

The new go-to-market strategy — Grow Smart™ with BASF — provides personalized solutions to farmers based on their individual needs through an approach that integrates sales, channel and marketing communications. And that means a Big Ag company can operate more like a local ag partner.

Grow Smart™ with BASF



Our Idea

People over transactions.

Grow Smart™ with BASF is all about demonstrating the impact of working hard, showing ingenuity and delivering real results. The new strategy clearly links marketing efforts to sales growth that's outpacing the industry. It's also generated significant impacts on specific, measurable objectives tied to perception and behavior.

Grow Smart with BASF is a solution-focused experience that relies on actions, not words. To deliver this to farmers, a whole new role in agriculture was created — the BASF Innovation Specialist. Not just another chemical sales representative, the Innovation Specialist's sole purpose is to build relationships with farmers and provide local, unbiased and truly sales-free agronomic expertise. In fact, they'll even recommend a competitor's product if they feel it would do the job better.

The Innovation Specialist is trained to provide a personalized approach and maximize farmers' business success by incorporating the best agronomic insights, practices and inputs into a complete acre plan. In this way, Grow Smart with BASF enables the sales force to interact differently with farmers in the field by demonstrating value beyond the products BASF offers.



BASF Innovation Specialist.
Straight talk, no manure.



With Innovation Specialists, our Twitter community has grown to almost 25,000 followers — up 131% YoY since January 2015.



The Grow Smart™ podcast showcases the smartest personalities in the category.

How It Works

*A simplified brand experience
for a complex landscape.*

The initiative was delivered through a compelling, cohesive omni-channel campaign that started with a single idea: a radical reconsideration of the brand and the people it serves.

Moving away from fragmented campaigns for 70+ products, the Grow Smart™ with BASF creative platform focuses on a portfolio of solutions for each crop type. We developed an agile design template with expressions across every channel and engagement. No other company in the category has a distinctive and cohesive palette of this kind.

For messaging, we decided to own the word GROW as the starting point for headlines. It's the single most important four-letter word in agriculture. This gave Grow Smart with BASF multiple dimensions of meaning, making our communications highly recognizable and memorable for the target audience.

Headline AMP[®]
Fungicide

GROW *corn that
pays you
back for
your smart
investment.*

BASF
We create chemistry

The pressure's on to get higher yields because of low commodity prices. And that makes Headline[®] AMP fungicide your best choice by delivering more yield from a tassel application than any other fungicide. It all starts by providing increased tolerance to stress, along with stronger stalks, which can reduce harvest time by nearly half. Plus, it provides best-in-class preventative and post-infection disease control. Talk with your BASF Authorized Retailer today. GrowSmartCorn.com

Grow Smart™ with BASF

Always read and follow label directions.
Headline is a registered trademark and Grow Smart is a trademark of BASF. © 2016 BASF Corporation. All rights reserved.
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Our Communication Strategy

Connecting in sync with farmers.

Supporting this farmer relationship is a carefully designed communications strategy — aligned with the annual growing cycle. The media strategy is a delicate balance of channels that increase awareness (print, radio, TV), drive consideration (website, digital, email) and build relationships (social media, events, direct mail). It shifts media spend from shrinking trade publications to newer, more geo-targeted channels that allow Innovation Specialists and their local farmers to connect one to one.

This full spectrum of expressions and experiences has contributed equally to Grow Smart™ with BASF success. We say and do the same thing on a farmer's doorstep as we do on a trade show floor, in a print ad, on a podcast or on the web. As a result, the impact Grow Smart with BASF has achieved is truly greater than the sum of its parts.



Social Engagement



TV Spot



Collateral



Trade Shows



New Product Launch



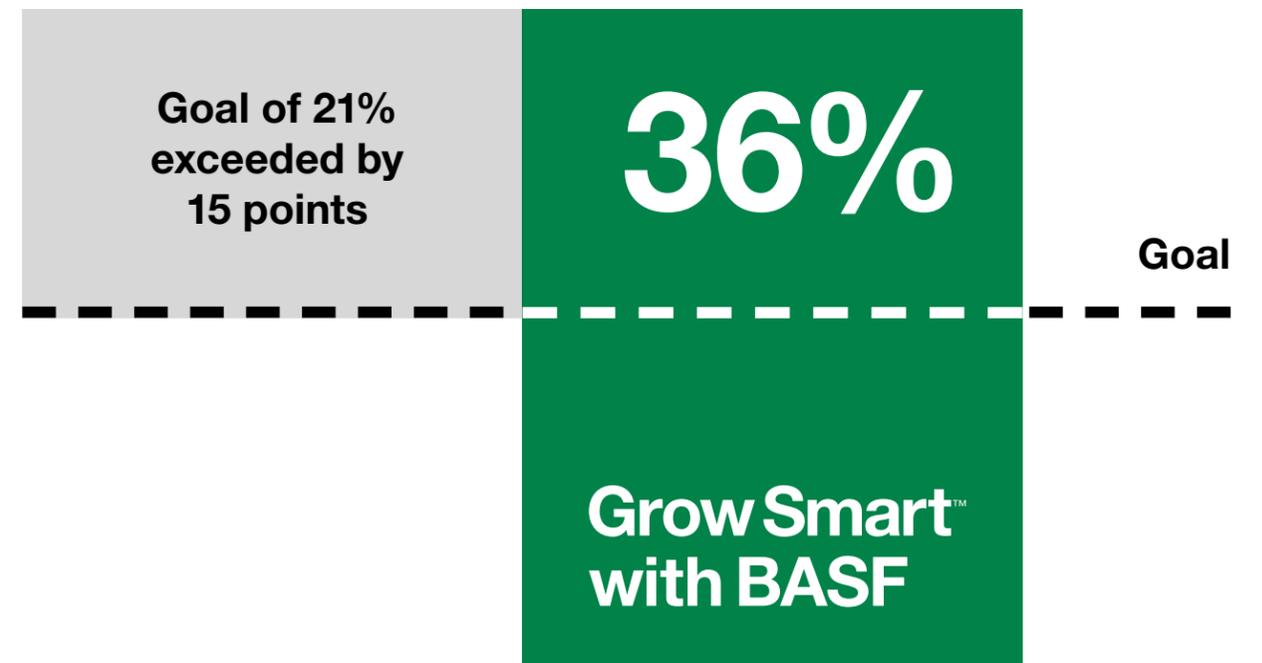
Direct Mail

Results

The results were felt immediately. The Grow Smart™ with BASF message broke through the clutter, resulting in favorable awareness levels, customer satisfaction, a shift in perceptions and, ultimately, sales growth.



Q2 2016 Aided Awareness

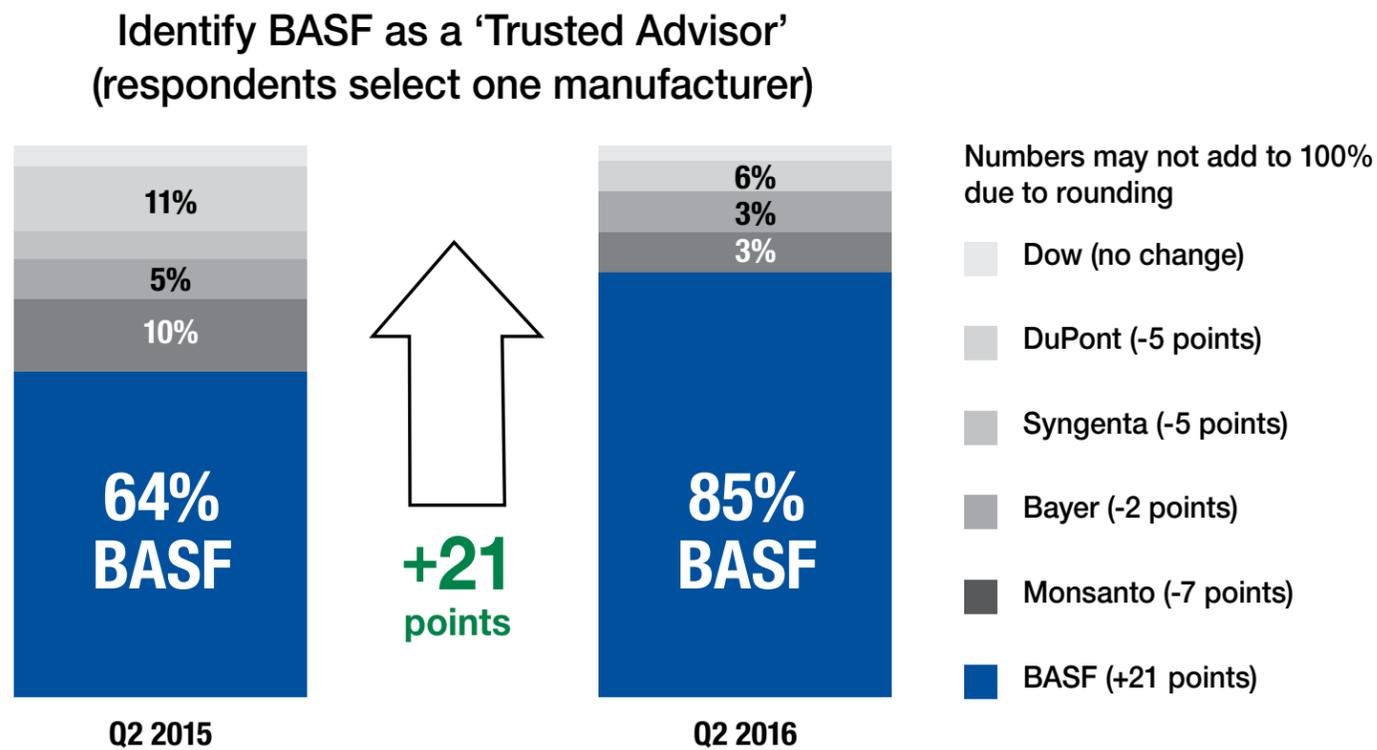


Source: Ipsos Quarterly Brand Tracker, Q2 2016

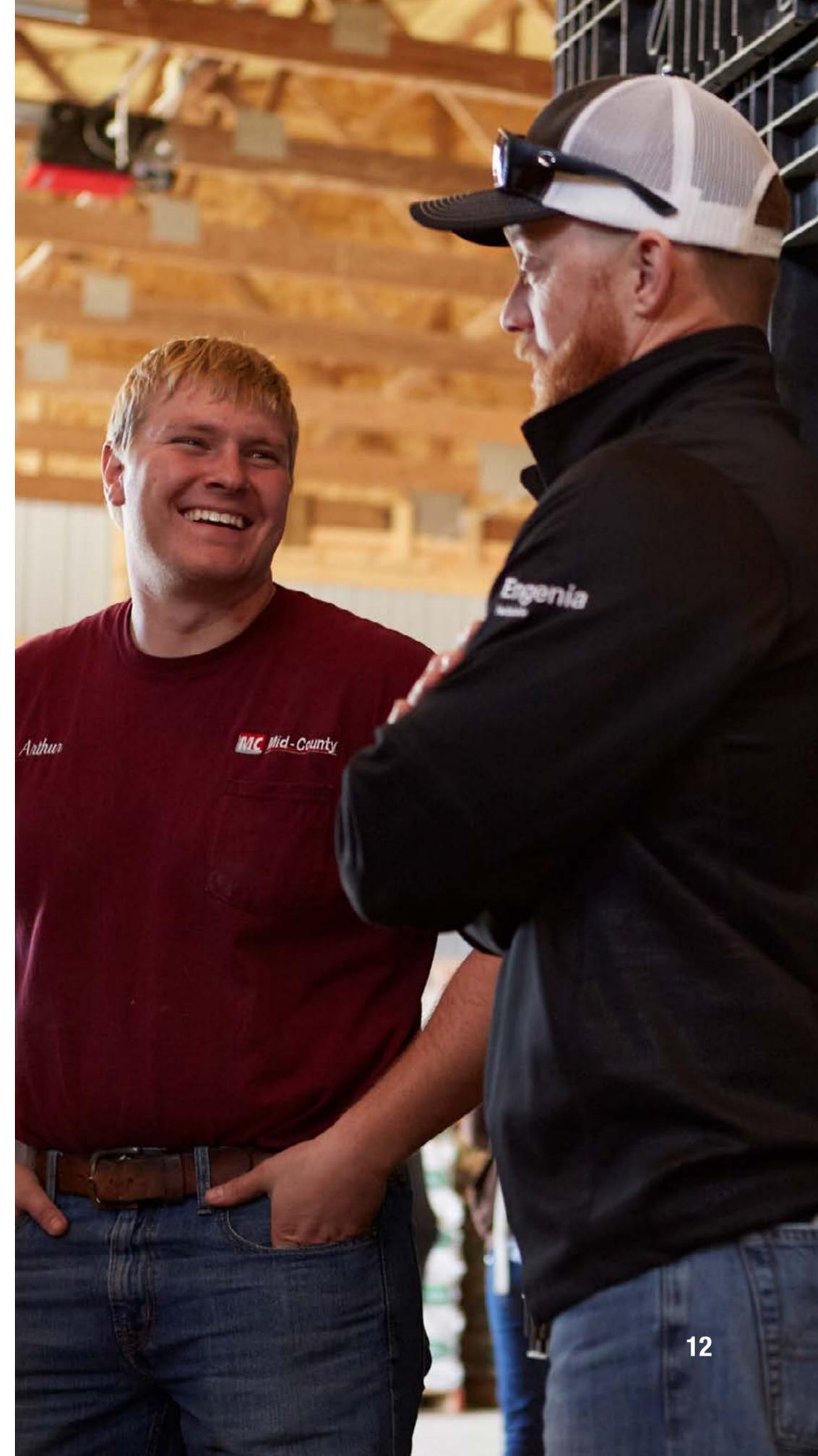
Results

Farmer Satisfaction with and Recognition of BASF as a Trusted Advisor

We maintained position as the number one trusted advisor in the minds of customers while growing recognition **above the target of 74%**. The year-over-year increase proved that BASF has deepened relationships with customers while competitor perceptions remained stagnant or decreased.



Source: Ipsos Farmer Satisfaction Study, 2015-16





Thank you.