

Best Practices for Working with Solar Company Clients



Communication, reporting, and contract strategies for building lasting partnerships with solar asset owners and operators.

Why It Matters

Building strong relationships with your solar industry clients is key to developing a multi-year partnership. Effective communication helps build this relationship by reducing friction, building trust, and positioning yourself as an indispensable service provider. Here is why focusing on communication is important to your solar grazing success:

- **Contract renewals depend on trust.**
Solar companies are more likely to renew agreements with graziers who reliably solve problems, communicate proactively, and achieve the management goals outlined in the contract terms.
- **Expect personnel turnover with your clients.**
Asset managers, O&M contacts, and site technicians change roles frequently; clear communication systems help new contacts get up to speed quickly.
- **Misunderstandings carry real costs.**
Poor communication can lead to delayed responses, scope disputes, or lost contracts when issues arise.



Best Practices for Communication

ESTABLISH A REPORTING CADENCE

Set expectations during contract negotiation for how often you will report and in what format. Here are ways to structure your reporting process:

- **Weekly updates** work well for most clients, even if they do not explicitly request them.
- **Biweekly meetings** may be appropriate for clients who prefer more structured check-ins.
- **Real-time reporting software** may be used by some larger clients; learn their systems and enter data consistently.

OVER-COMMUNICATE BY DEFAULT

Send updates even when clients do not ask for them. Proactive communication builds confidence and reduces the likelihood of surprises. Here are helpful tools for proactively communicating with your clients:

- **Before-and-after photos** are highly effective; label them clearly and include location details.
- **Progress maps** showing completed areas, current grazing zones, and upcoming sections help clients visualize your work.
- **Hazard reports** demonstrate value beyond vegetation management; photograph downed wires, fence gaps, or other issues and send them with GPS coordinates.



BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT ISSUES THAT ARISE

Transparency about setbacks builds trust more effectively than silence. Report damage, predator incidents, or operational issues as soon as they occur.

- **Document the incident** with photos and a brief written description.
- **Communicate directly** with both the asset manager and the site team.
- **Propose solutions** when presenting problems; clients appreciate contractors who bring answers, not just concerns.



Know Who You're Talking To

There are two layers of site management that graziers will interact with: Asset Managers and local Operations & Maintenance (O&M) teams. Asset Managers oversee the commercial operations of solar sites, including the project budget, day-to-day operations with the O&M team, energy sales to power consumers, and compliance with financing agreements and laws governing the electricity market. The O&M team is responsible for day-to-day operations and site maintenance, including ensuring that the asset owner's vegetation management requirements are met.

Asset owners may contract with third-party O&M companies or maintain their own in-house O&M teams. It is not uncommon for a third-party O&M provider to subcontract vegetation management to the solar grazier. In that scenario, the O&M provider manages your contract and invoices. In either case, questions around site access, hazards, and scheduling generally go to the local O&M team. Every client will be different; when signing a contract, it is important to understand what aspects of the agreement will be overseen by the asset manager and O&M team, respectively.

Handling Solar Company Staff Turnover

Personnel changes at solar companies are common. Prepare for new contacts by maintaining thorough records and being ready to re-educate.

- **Keep documentation organized.** Maintain copies of contracts, site maps, communication logs, and progress reports so you can bring new contacts up to speed quickly.
- **Treat turnover as an opportunity.** A new contact may be more receptive to your input than a predecessor who had established habits.
- **Rebuild rapport proactively.** Schedule an introductory call or site visit with new contacts to establish a working relationship early.



Negotiating and Maintaining Contracts

SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Under-promise and over-deliver. Avoid commitments you cannot reliably meet, and let your performance speak for itself.

- **Be honest about capabilities.** Clients appreciate candor about what is achievable more than inflated promises that fall short.
- **Clarify the scope in writing.** Ensure contracts specify vegetation height requirements, reporting expectations, water access responsibilities, and any supplemental services like mowing. ASGA's contract template is a helpful resource.

ADDRESS PRICING PROFESSIONALLY

Price increases become easier to negotiate after you have established a track record of reliable performance.

- **Build in modest annual increases.** Contracts of 3–5 years with 2–3% annual escalators help offset rising costs without requiring difficult renegotiations.
- **Justify requests with data.** When seeking price adjustments, provide clear explanations tied to labor costs, fuel, or regulatory changes.
- **Request infrastructure support when needed.** If a site lacks water access or requires fence repairs, present the cost and propose a shared investment or mobilization fee rather than absorbing the full expense.

KNOW WHEN TO DECLINE

Not every client or site is a good fit. Walking away from a problematic contract protects your business and reputation.

- **Evaluate site feasibility.** Some sites have structural problems—poor fencing, no water access, excessive hazards—that make grazing impractical at any price.
- **Assess client compatibility.** If a client's expectations are unreasonable or communication is consistently adversarial, declining or ending the relationship may be the right choice.

Benefits of Strong Client Relationships

- **Repeat contracts and referrals.** Satisfied clients renew agreements and recommend you to colleagues who move to other companies.
- **Reduced oversight burden.** Trusted graziers receive more autonomy and fewer interruptions from anxious asset managers.
- **Expanded scope of work.** Clients who trust your judgment are more likely to offer additional services such as mowing, fence repair, or site monitoring.

Key Takeaways

1. Adopt a service-provider mindset: you are hired to solve a problem, not simply to graze sheep.
2. Over-communicate with photos, maps, and regular updates, even when clients do not ask.
3. Self-report issues immediately and propose solutions alongside problems.
4. Prepare for staff turnover by maintaining organized records and building relationships with new contacts.
5. Under-promise and over-deliver.
6. Let your track record justify contract renewals and price increases.
7. Know when to say no to sites or clients that are not a good fit.



Resources

- ASGA Solar Grazing Master Service Agreement Template.
- ASGA Webinar Recording (Accessible to ASGA members): Best Practices for Managing Client Relationships.
- Become an ASGA member to access essential solar grazing resources and participate in weekly educational webinars.

This fact sheet is based on a 2026 ASGA member webinar featuring Ryan Indart (Indart Solar Grazing) and Eric Bronson (James River Grazing).

