Customer Brief / October 2026

What keeps the project moving.

Why customers choose Alder & Coast Equipment Rental, and what would make the next booking easier.

Prepared for

Alder & Coast Equipment Rental

Prepared by

Clearly Qualified



The decision

Sell the certainty. Make the price clear.

In this fictional interview set, customers care about the rate. But they choose a supplier they believe will protect the working day.

Recommended direction

Lead the sales conversation with confirmed availability, a clear delivery window and a named support contact. Show the complete rental cost alongside that promise.

This is a proposition to test, not a proven market-wide positioning claim.

01 A lower day rate is only part of the comparison.

All five fictional customers discussed price. Delivery, extra charges and the cost of an idle crew changed how they evaluated it.

02 Confidence needs to be visible before booking.

Three customers raised support concerns. Two could not describe the escalation route before their first rental.

03 The quote is the best first place to improve.

A clear arrival window, total cost and contact person address practical hesitation without requiring a full website redesign.

Act now

Improve booking confirmations and quote clarity. Give the branch team one consistent explanation.

Investigate next

Interview lost prospects and occasional renters before expanding the positioning across every customer segment.

The people behind the decisions

Five customers. Five different pressures.

Alder & Coast is a fictional independent rental supplier serving small construction and property maintenance teams in Southern Ontario.

The business question

When another supplier advertises a lower rate, what makes customers choose Alder & Coast? Should the next sales message emphasise price, availability or support?

The illustrative scope

Five simulated 30–40 minute interviews about recent rentals. The brief models a project covering the buying decision, booking experience and expectations after delivery.

Fictional participant roster. IDs link observations throughout the brief.

Customer	Rental situation	Main pressure
P1 / Maya Chen Owner, Birchline Landscapes	Mini excavator First rental	Finish before the next crew arrives
P2 / Daniel Brooks Site supervisor, Slatebridge Build	Scissor lift Repeat rental	Equipment available on a fixed date
P3 / Priya Nair Owner, Fieldmark Property Care	Compact loader First rental	Help if unfamiliar equipment stops
P4 / Owen Mercer Site lead, Harbourstone Projects	Telehandler Repeat rental	Coordinate delivery with site access
P5 / Lucas Reid Owner-operator, Westmere Works	Plate compactor Repeat rental	Keep the total job cost predictable

> “The machine is one part. I’m really booking the day around it.”
>
> P4 / Owen Mercer • Fictional illustrative quote

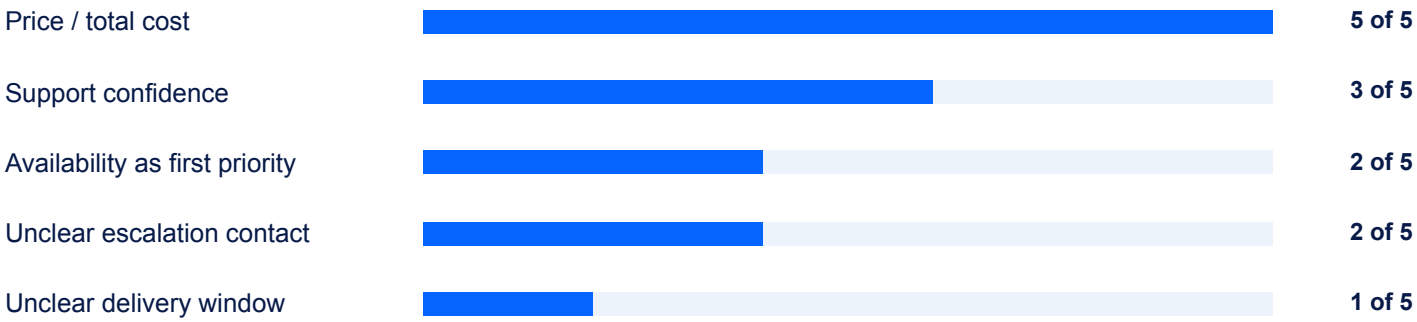
All names, companies, rental histories and quotations are invented. These are constructed customer accounts, not interviews that actually took place.

What appeared across the accounts

Price came up every time. Its meaning changed.

The useful distinction is between the advertised rate and the customer's confidence in the whole job.

Topics raised in the five simulated accounts. Topics overlap.



These counts describe an invented five-person sample. They are not survey estimates or evidence of market prevalence.

Observed in P1, P3, P5

Support reduces the perceived risk of booking.

P1 and P3 wanted to know who would answer if equipment stopped. P5 valued quick access to a familiar branch contact.

Our interpretation

Support is part of what customers buy, but the first-time customer needs a more explicit explanation than the repeat customer.

Observed in P2, P4

Availability means a workable schedule.

P2 needed a lift on a fixed date. P4 needed delivery to fit a narrow site-access window.

Our interpretation

"In stock" is incomplete reassurance. Customers also need to know when the equipment will reach the site.

The counterpoint worth keeping

P5 remained willing to change supplier when the complete cost difference was meaningful and support appeared comparable. Clear service promises should support transparent pricing, not excuse vague or higher charges.

Evidence strength: recurring within the simulated accounts. Commercial impact remains untested. The proposed messaging direction needs validation with real customers and lost prospects.

Where confidence is won or lost

The uncertainty sits between quote and arrival.



Illustrative imagery / The handoff is part of the product.

Compare

Check rates, stock and whether the machine fits the job.

Confirm

Clarify the full cost, date, access requirements and contact.

Receive

Coordinate arrival, understand controls and begin work.

Resolve

Get help quickly if the machine or schedule changes.

Three points of friction

Before booking P1, P3	The customers could not confidently explain whom they would call if equipment stopped. Put a named contact and an escalation route in the quote.
Before delivery P4	“Morning delivery” left too much room for interpretation. Agree a realistic window and communicate changes before the site has to chase.
When comparing P1–P5	The day rate did not answer the full cost question. Make delivery, pickup and applicable charges visible before the customer agrees.

Confirm existing branch capabilities before making a service promise. The brief recommends clearer communication, not an unverified response-time guarantee.

Turn the findings into choices

Three changes. In this order.

Start with the information customers need to book confidently. Then test how you describe the service.

1 Make the quote do more work.

Add a clear equipment confirmation, agreed delivery window, itemised rental total, pickup details and a named contact. Show exclusions or charges that depend on the rental outcome.

Evidence: P1–P5 cost discussion; P2/P4 schedule priority; P4 delivery ambiguity.

> **Example confirmation language**
> “Your scissor lift is confirmed for Tuesday. Delivery is agreed for 7:00–9:00 a.m. Your rental, delivery and pickup total is $[amount], plus applicable tax. Call [branch contact] if your site access changes.”

2 Explain the support handoff.

State the staffed contact hours, who handles equipment problems and what happens outside those hours. Repeat the information in the booking confirmation and at delivery.

Evidence: P1/P3 unclear escalation; P5 value of a familiar branch contact.

Verify what the team can consistently provide. Do not advertise 24/7 support unless it is actually available.

3 Test a message about a dependable working day.

Compare a service-led message against the existing price-led approach. Keep the rental price visible in both versions so the comparison remains useful.

> **Proposed message to test**
> “The right equipment. A clear arrival window. Someone to call when the job changes.”

Evidence: P1/P3/P5 support; P2/P4 scheduling. This copy is a hypothesis.

Ownership and follow-through

A practical first month.

Use a short pilot to improve clarity, learn what changes and decide whether to expand.

When	Action	Owner	Evidence of completion
Week 1 Clarify	**Audit five recent quotes.** List missing cost, arrival and support details. Confirm branch capabilities.	Branch manager	One agreed quote template and one verified support explanation.
Week 2 Pilot	**Use the template on the next ten eligible bookings.** Ask what is still unclear before confirmation.	Rental coordinator	Completed confirmations and a short log of customer questions.
Week 3 Learn	**Follow up after delivery.** Ask about arrival clarity and whether the customer knew whom to contact.	Customer service lead	Five follow-up conversations, including unresolved issues.
Week 4 Review	**Review the pilot and message options.** Keep, revise or stop each change based on actual feedback.	Owner + branch manager	A documented decision and the next learning question.

What to watch

Clarity before booking

Log questions about charges, delivery and support. Compare their type and frequency with the baseline quotes.

Confidence after delivery

Ask customers to explain the agreed arrival window and support route in their own words. Record gaps.

The review question

Did customers understand the booking more clearly, and can the branch sustain what it promised? Expand the pilot only when both answers are supported.

The suggested pilot sizes and timings are planning choices. They are not a statistical test. Any conversion change should be treated as directional until tested with adequate traffic and comparable conditions.

How to read this brief

Useful direction. Clear boundaries.

What this sample demonstrates

A focused business question, customer context, recurring themes, evidence references, alternative explanations, prioritised recommendations and an action plan. A real engagement would use actual interviews and the agreed research scope.

Illustrative interview framework

- Walk me through the last rental, from the first need to the equipment return.
- Which alternatives did you consider, and what changed your mind?
- What almost stopped you from booking?
- What did you expect to happen if something went wrong?
- What would make your next booking easier?

Evidence index

Cost: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5. **Support:** P1, P3, P5.
Availability first: P2, P4. **Escalation uncertainty:** P1, P3.
Delivery window uncertainty: P4.

Counts are based solely on the fictional accounts authored for this sample. All quotes are invented. Photos are AI-generated illustrations and do not depict interview participants.

What remains unanswered

The sample excludes customers who chose another supplier, larger contractors and occasional DIY renters. It cannot show how common a concern is across the market or whether a proposed change will increase sales.

The next learning agenda

Interview lost prospects to understand when price actually wins. Include occasional renters to check how much guidance they need. Observe the quote pilot before deciding on a broader positioning change.

Bring the team into the decision.

At the brief review, agree which changes to make, which assumptions to test, who owns the next step and when to revisit it.

Prepared by Clearly Qualified / clearlyqualified.ca
October 2026 / Illustrative sample, not a completed client project.