

Boating Industry

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INTELLIGENCE YOU CAN PROFIT FROM

46

PROFIT-BUILDING IDEAS — from —
THE DEALER ATTENDEES OF MDCE

Best IDEAS



EMPLOYEE TRAINING
FACILITY

NEW BUYER
PHOTOSHOOT

CHARITY CAR SHOW

REAL-TIME
TECHNICIAN NOTES

PIMP *my*
BOAT CONTEST

WINNER
DEMOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY

SALES TEAM
iPads



IN-HOUSE

TREAT SHOP

BOAT TOWN
BUCKS

LOTTERY
TICKET

GIVEAWAY



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Boating Industry

Enjoying your success



When is the last time you heard a new idea for growing your business that sincerely sounded like a good time – and not just for the extra bucks that could theoretically end up in your pocket?

Instead of illuminating things your dealership may be doing wrong, or not doing at all, it was refreshing to hear so many creative ideas at this year's Marine Dealer Conference & Expo that focused on bringing people together, generating excitement in the showroom and, above all else, sharing the fun of boating with more people than ever.

And the marine industry has a lot to feel good about. Now that positive indicators are signaling that the worst may be behind us, remember that you've come a long way. As your organization moves beyond survival mode with solid fundamentals in place, it's time to get creative finding new profit centers, looking for ways to improve the customer experience, growing the demographic pie and making your marina or dealership a place your customers look forward to visiting.

Throughout MDCE and the Top 100 Dealers program, we at *Boating Industry* were delighted by the positivity and truly original ideas shared for the benefit of all. An in-house coffee and ice cream shop, a posh employee training lounge, new buyer photo shoot, lottery ticket giveaway, charity car show, captain's club and a "pimp my boat" contest were a few of the engaging ideas. Even better, most of these ideas required minimal financial investment, and they all translated into increased profits and happier customers.

Some ideas are more serious than others. Out of necessity, Bob Pappajohn and Jaye-Lynn Gooch of M&P Mercury Sales undertook an in-depth study of their local emerging markets, which led to a sea change where they spoke to entirely new groups of customers that have proven to be very excited about the boating lifestyle, and a major driver of their spectacular sales growth. The full details of M&P's winning idea are in this e-white paper, which we can offer to the entire dealer community thanks to our sponsor, Boat Trader.

Innovative ideas don't fall from the sky, yet they are there for the taking in 20 Groups, everyday staff meetings, dealer education classes, industry analytics and the greater community around you. Take a cue from these industry leaders: great business ideas can come from unexpected places, and improving your business doesn't have to be expensive, time consuming or difficult. Now that the heavy lifting is hopefully behind us, let's get back to basics by remembering to enjoy the ride and have some fun.



Tom Kaiser
Boating Industry Senior Editor

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Dear Colleague,

The collaboration and networking among marine leaders throughout 2012 was exceptional, and Boat Trader is pleased to celebrate that camaraderie and idea sharing through this e-white paper.

There is energy already in the air that only the boating industry can create – wherever there is water, there is a buzz! Some say it's spring fever or the fact that the economy really is on the path to recovery, but I believe that dealers like you, who have developed creative methods of conducting new business, are responsible for keeping the spirit of the boating lifestyle alive. Your resilience and aptitude for success have flourished in a seemingly daunting market – and the results speak for themselves.

Boat Trader is pleased to partner with *Boating Industry* to bring you this white paper and offer helpful and creative ideas, as well as best practices from some of the recognized leaders in our industry. Boat Trader has been dedicated to the success of the marine industry for more than 30 years, and we remain committed to providing insight, guidance and statistics to help assist you in your business. Your growth is critical to the industry, and we are confident that the information provided in this white paper will help you capture the growth you need.

If you are interested in more information regarding these best practices or other information, please contact us at 877-354-4069.

Best wishes for a successful 2013,

Courtney Chalmers
Director of Marketing



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BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Clayton Raven **Boat Town** **Boat Town Bucks**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

Boat Town started a “Boat Town Bucks” program that rewards employees for productivity, time on the job, attendance and safety. The program builds in value and is based on the profitability of the dealership. For years, I would sit down and come up with a number to give to each employee. After working on this for a long time, I came up with a quantifiable, fair and generous bonus system that can be monitored throughout the year by all employees.

On a monthly basis, when the company meets various criteria, money is added to an account. For example, if the total company does better than the previous year, \$500 is added. If all four departments do better, another \$500 is added.

For every manufacturer that has CSI, we put in \$5,000 for meeting a minimum threshold. Employees get a buck for every year they’ve been employed; they also get rewarded for not using all their sick days and not getting hurt.

Results:

This has motivated employees to reach their department goals and come to work when they may otherwise not have. Personnel is advised monthly how much money is being added to the pot, which is paid out annually in December as a Christmas bonus.

It’s a pretty transparent system, and every department knows how well it’s doing in relation to budget in real time. It saves hard feelings and everyone gets a pretty good Christmas bonus.



Rob Brown **Clark Marine** **Welcome/Sales Desk**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We built and manned a welcome/sales desk close to the front door to more immediately greet and serve our customers. The owner mans it in-season and personally welcomes everyone who enters the store.

The station is equipped with a large-screen computer for surfing the Internet with our customers. Many times the conversation starts with, “I’ve seen a boat on your website ...” We have our website up and running at all times at the welcome desk so it can be quickly referenced. The station has become a launching pad straight to the item folks have been looking at on the web.

The computer is connected to the company server, password protected, so it doubles as a fully functional workstation. The owner is able to run the business from the front of the store.

Results:

In this day when more folks seem to want to get to the details first and then work their way back, we are able to use this welcome station to display specific criteria while simultaneously building a relationship.

With this welcome station and especially with where it is located, we are finding that it is much easier to position ourselves as the buyer’s assistant.

As a bonus, having a fully functional workstation allows for the owner to be both “the owner” and the “Walmart greeter,” which has created a certain wow factor.

Nicole French **Desmasdons Boatworks** **In-House Treat Shop**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We started talking about something to replace our gift shop in 2009 to spice up our marina store and provide our customers a service all while trying to increase profits and continue our relationships—first way of doing business.

In 2010 we did a survey asking customers what they wanted and gave them some ideas to choose from as well as welcomed any other ideas they may have had. Good coffee and gourmet ice cream was the resounding answer. We have a large customer work center area where we welcome our customers in to use comput-

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT



ers, Wi-Fi, desks, FAX machine, printer, scanner, telephone, etc. Many of these customers thought a nice warm beverage would be perfect. So, in 2011 we added our dockside café and aptly named it Beans & Scoops.

Here we serve everything from scoop ice cream in cups or waffle cones, milkshakes, espresso-based coffees such as lattes and cappuccinos, hot chocolate and gourmet herbal teas. We also brought in six tables (four indoor, two outdoor on our main dock), extended our Wi-Fi zone and added some children's play stations.

Results:

We never foresaw the great reaction our customers had. Beans & Scoops has far surpassed our goals for it. It now is a draw for people to stop in as they pass by from other marinas, come in with the grandkids and grab a quick cone for the car ride home and more. We started seeing people we had never seen before in the marina. This increased traffic, increased gas sales, increased boat sales and created a buzz among local cottagers about the new service. While Beans & Scoops itself was never designed to be a main profit center, it has impacted other areas of our business.

Being able to offer someone a nice hot latte on a cool day as we sit down to talk about boats and options is a great touch. Many family members will lose focus while one or two people get down to the finer details of a boat purchase, and Beans & Scoops gives the other family members something to do.

Our valet and concierge service means un-

loading and loading of cars and boats is taken care of by our customer service team, so often customers would choose to grab a cup of coffee or tea while their luggage was being loaded from their car into their boat.

What we never foresaw happening became more and more common as the season went on: people actually boated in from their island cottages just to get a coffee and sit and read the paper and socialize. We added two more docks to accommodate this business. All in all, Beans & Scoops totally fit into our way of doing business and really does cement our motto: "Demasdon's ... where relationships matter."

Andy Manke Don's Marine Employee Bonus Program

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

Our company developed a bonus program in 2011 based on our company's performance. We meet on a weekly basis to address opportunities and advise the staff on our performance benchmarks. This meeting is a companywide meeting, allowing a forum for ideas to be discussed to improve our processes and direction our company is headed. The idea was implemented in December 2011 and was created, implemented and managed by our operations manager.

Results:

We are seeing increased productivity and efficiency. Our employees are becoming more aware of our expenses and have cut down on the amount of waste. It has also made the employees more aware of profitability.

Sherry Jackson Glencove Marina New Tagline, New Mindset

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

Our company had grown to a point where our customers had become a number in the system, and we wanted to personalize our relationships again. We began building our company to include more services for our customers so that we

could take care of all of their needs. We added a personal watercraft service center in 2011, followed up by an upholstery department, a full time fiberglass and paint pro, and a prop repair business in 2012 to help us achieve our goals. We replaced a negative service manager with a positive one, giving our customers a level of comfort and actually resulting in customers returning to our company after leaving due to the negativity.

Our salesmen deliver their own boats after the sale, insisting on giving their customers the personal attention rather than working with a delivery captain. The idea came when we were brainstorming on a new design for a billboard in town. As a joint effort, we came up with "knot your average marina" and from there we have continued to make Glencove just that. Our personal inspiration came from one of our customers who purchased a boat and after closing, he told my sales manager that he wanted to belong to a marina where the employees knew who he was and would take care of his needs. We wanted to be his marina!

Results:

Our customers once again enjoy our holiday BBQs on the dock (something we use to do and got away from). They also enjoy our relaxed atmosphere all around the marina, and are more comfortable with Glencove knowing that the owner is actually a working part of the company rather than just the businessperson behind the scenes. My husband has been working around the marina as well, and the customers are getting to know him as well. We have both enjoyed getting to truly know our customers better over the past 18 months as we have consciously made a decision to be their "hometown" marina.



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT



Joseph Hoffmaster **Hoffmaster's Marina** **Electronic Customer Records**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We have been keeping records back seven years and will continue to do so; this idea streamlined our office efficiency. During one of our all-hands-on-deck meetings we came to realize that a lot of time was wasted manually going back through customer records and sales folders looking for little bits of information. Our solution was to buy a [Fujitsu] ScanSnap scanner and hire an intern to scan all of our old customer records and sales records and then we put them on our server inside a password-protected folder.

Results:

Instead of going through folders, which would take 10 minutes per office employee at least twice a week, we cut the time down to 30 seconds. Now the customer records are secure, and in one place. Documents are saved as editable PDFs so they are searchable.

Mark Helgen **Lake Union Sea Ray** **Sales Meeting Templates**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We have four sales locations with four sales managers required to have a formal weekly sales meeting each Saturday morning. We were see-

ing quite a variety of topics and subjects covered, and each store was very different in their approach – some better than others. We also saw that they were not covering important CSI, customer and product subjects.

While each store is unique with diverse personalities, we wanted to provide a better way to share timely information that applied to all stores, intermix ideas from each manager (to the other managers), and provide a format that directed topics that are common to the successful operation of our business. From there we designed and implemented the Sales Meeting Template that each manager was required to use weekly and share a copy to each manager and senior manager on each Friday (before their Saturday meeting).

Each manager can pick and choose various topics to add to their meetings and our corporate office knows that specific areas are covered more frequently and consistently.

Results:

This started in mid-2011 and has been in place since [then]. It is now a strong practice that is self-managed, as the other sales manager will remind any other manager of not providing/sharing their meeting agendas each Friday evening. We are finding that company policies and information are now moving through stores more quickly and efficiently, as well.

Kirk Benson **Lake Union Sea Ray** **Employee Training Facility**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

As part of our continued and improved at-



tention to training and development of our employees, we transformed a dusty, dark stockroom at our Redmond store into a bright, new training facility.

Until last April, our company did not have a dedicated place that could hold more than 10 people. With four locations and more than 80 employees, we were in need of a space that would allow sales and service training, conferences, seminars, manager's meetings, etc. However, we did not have the budget to afford new construction.

The Redmond store was the perfect location as it is centrally located to our other three stores and it offered a second-floor mezzanine that housed overstock parts and old company files. Many of our staff rolled up our sleeves and spent a few weekends cleaning out the stockroom. We disposed of old files and consolidated miscellaneous parts. The refurbished stockroom now has more than 1,500 square feet of dedicated training space that seats more than 50 people. The private room is isolated from the hustle of the showrooms and parts/service departments.

Our talented service crew put up some dry-wall, a door, installed carpet and painted the walls. We replaced a few light bulbs and wired in a large, flat-screen TV for presentations. We also purchased tables and chairs and hung a collection of plaques, awards and certifications on the wall.

Results:

The training room has provided a great venue for our company's continued training initiatives. With the new space, we are motivated to continue internal training and group meetings. We also have invited outside parties to conduct formal training seminars at our facility. For example, Sea Ray held its regional sales training session this spring that included local and international dealers. In addition, the Coast Guard has used the facility to teach boating safety classes.

For an investment of less than \$7,000, we feel our new training room has already become an asset. In the six months that we've had the training room it has nearly paid for itself with the savings we endured from renting outside facilities. We believe this will become one of our very best investments.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Larry Tague **Lake Viking** **The Kitchen Sink**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

There was not any one thing that we did better last year for best practices – it was everything from the fact that we concentrated on each customer one at a time, from the introduction to the call after the boat was delivered. Last year was a result of all the things we didn't do: we didn't cut staff, wages, store hours, advertising and we didn't drop or cut any boat shows.

We also added show space and manpower; actually hiring sales people from other dealers for show help. And lastly, we remodeled our website, added a landing site for our major sponsor, updated our computer system to ADP's latest system, sent our top people to Spader Business Management classes, updated our trucks and touched up our facility.

Results:

In 2013, we have added 25 percent more space to our major show to show all current model products – no non-currents. It doesn't sound sexy, but we didn't bury our heads in the sand, and kept on doing business. We were rewarded with the second best year we have had in 25 years.

Alexis Purnell **N3 Boatworks** **Showroom Expansion**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We remodeled our existing showroom to in-



clude two new sales offices, and the relocation and remodel of the parts and service departments were also completed. With the anticipation of a second salesperson, we felt it necessary to incorporate two sales offices in close proximity to the showroom. In addition, it was recommended by the Tow Boat 20 Group that we provide a more inviting closing area for our customers.

With that in mind, we have accomplished both tasks beautifully. Each office is equipped with comfortable chairs set around the beautifully designed round glass tables, a small file cabinet, phone and a large flat-screen television for showing product demonstration videos. The remodel also included new flooring in the front showroom and a sales counter for the pro shop.

Results:

This rich look has proved to be a big hit with our customers. Similarly, the showroom and service and detail bays were equipped with new, efficient bright lighting. This has also been helpful for customers to see the boat features more clearly, in addition to the fact that the boats look much more enticing and the service technicians and detailers can perform their tasks more efficiently.

Remodeling the parts and service area has also proved more efficient and inviting to our customers. The parts department is more organized than ever before. Access to parts is logical and handy. The parts and service departments are in close proximity now and allow the employees to communicate easier and control inventory more successfully.

The ultimate reward with the remodel is

that the customers are visibly aware of the entire major unit inventory and pro shop when they go to visit the service and parts counters. Indoor signage was added to facilitate the flow to these areas.

Jeff Strong **Strong's Marine** **Automatic Payment**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

The current economic environment has resulted in a tightening of our receivables. In years past, virtually all customers were granted a 30-day payment term; however, we can no longer take that risk. Our new Auto Pay form authorizes Strong's Marine to charge the credit card on file by the 20th of the month following the completed service.

Results:

The Auto Pay forms allow our clients ample time to submit payment if they don't want the service charged to their credit card. Once the form is returned, the controller determines a credit limit for the client based on boat size, location of the boat and payment history. If the client does not have a credit limit set to their account, it prompts the service department to collect payment at time of service. At no time may a boat leave our premise without payment or an Auto Pay form on file. All forms are kept in a secure locked area of the office and handled by the Controller.

FINALIST

Phil Miklo **Oak Hill Marina** **Custom Storage Racks**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

When storage time rolled around we struggled with space to store our units. We had storage racks made inside of our storage building to fit our pontoons so we could utilize the formerly wasted space above. We are now able to stack

pontoons, fitting twice the number of pontoons in the same floor space.

Results:

We are utilizing the storage space we have more efficiently by storing twice the number of pontoons without the expense of building a whole new storage shed. Building the racks was a small fraction of the expense of a new building – not to mention the additional insurance and taxes that a new building would require.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Nick Raguso Boaters Exchange Word of Mouth Rewards

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We have a standing policy that if a customer submits an online review anywhere that paints Boaters Exchange and/or one of our employees in a positive light, the employee gets a gift card for dinner somewhere. The employee and Boaters Exchange must be named in the review. The review can be anywhere online such as a boating forum, Google Reviews, The Hull Truth forum, Florida Sportsman Forums, etc.

Results:

Our word of mouth program has helped us encourage our employees to ask customers to give us a positive review. It helps us combat any negative online reviews proactively, and receive more online reviews than we would have without the program.

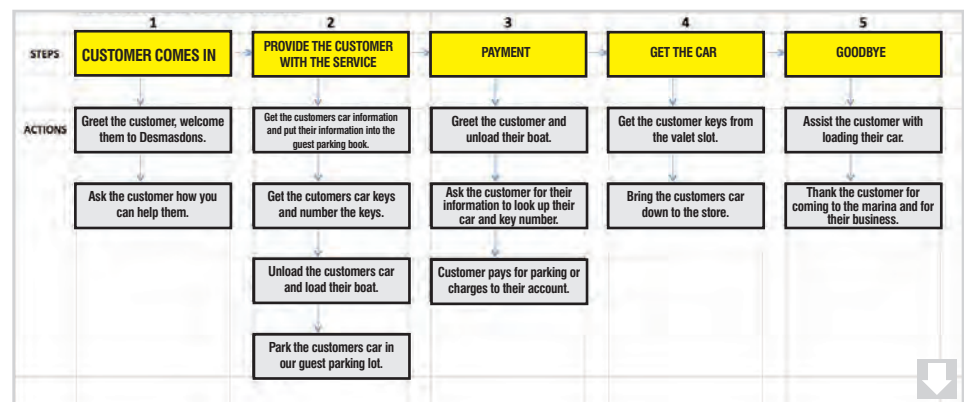
Nicole French Desmasdons Boatworks Valet and Concierge Service

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

This level of service is fairly unique. The word “no” no longer exists in the vocabulary of our staff. If you ask for it, it gets done.

A common scenario to exemplify our valet and concierge service would be on a Friday afternoon a customer would call from 30 minutes away and say they are almost at the marina, and to please bring their boat to the fuel dock, re-

VALET PARKING PROCESS MAPS



Upon arrival our team of customer service staff descend on the car, unload it, load the boat, get their car keys, register the car and get the customer on his or her way as quickly or slowly as they wish.

move the canvas, put in a propane tank for the cottage BBQ and a few big bottles of water, fuel the boat and leave it there for their arrival.

Upon arrival our team of customer service staff descend on the car, unload it, load the boat, get their car keys, register the car and get the customer on his or her way as quickly or slowly as they wish. If they want to be fast, they can have the boat loaded in minutes. If they would prefer to be slow and grab a cup of coffee and socialize, they accommodate that as well. We park the customer’s car and take all the worry out of the whole situation. Upon returning Sun-

day to head back home, we’ll get their car for them, unload the boat and load the car and get the customer on their way. At that point, we’ll take the boat to their slip and cover it or have it put in dry dock – whichever they prefer.

Results:

This level of service really sets us apart from our competition, and is why our customers all enjoy docking at Desmasdons. Our interaction levels with our customers are so much greater than most marinas. The amount of times per visit we see and spend time with our customers is so important to us and is why we pride ourselves on the relationships we create.

This has always been the backbone of Desmasdons Boatworks, but each year we try to make the marina experience easier for our customers. Additions such as golf carts, staff walkie-talkies, a proper valet car key depot, up to 15 customer service personnel, etc. ... are integral to our success. Each year we try to improve our service and do something to further impress our customers.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Nicole French Desmasdons Boatworks New Engine Break-In

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

When we started selling boats in 2005, our new engine break-in procedure started out of our constant drive for success and insatiable need to do things right the first time. We always wanted our technicians and sales manager to drive each boat and ensure that the PDI and rigging was done properly and that there were no flaws from the manufacturer.

Properly breaking in an engine is not a lot of fun – lots of low-RPM driving, constant manipulation of the throttle and paying attention to where your RPMs are. We made a decision that proper break-in not only was very boring, but also very important to the longevity of the engine. So, at that point in 2005, we made a decision that we were going to break in each engine, whether new on a boat or just a lose outboard.

Results:

Our customers enjoy worry-free boating from the point they pick up their new boat or engine, and can rest assured the break in has been done properly. We give them the printout showing the break in has been properly done and that the hours on the engine now allow them to use the engine as it was meant to be driven. This is just one example of how we strive to go above and beyond in keeping our customers happy.

Amanda Kanas Hampton Watercraft & Marine New Buyer Photo Shoot

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

When customers purchase a boat or WaveRunner from Hampton Watercraft they get their picture taken with their new purchase before their boat or WaveRunner orientation. It's an idea we implemented back in the 1990s when the company first started. As long as the customer gives us the OK we then upload the picture to our Facebook page for added promotion, along with mailing the customer the photo in their welcome aboard card.



Results:

Our customers enjoy getting their picture taken with their new boat or WaveRunner. With today's social media presence, our customers are starting to tag themselves in our photos that we upload and all their friends can see the photo and comment on it.

Rob Youker The Sportsman Relationship Selling

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

Our strategy has been to focus on building relationships. From the first greeting either by telephone, email or face-to-face, we communicate a genuine desire to determine the right boat to fit each unique customer's needs – even if it means recommending another boat line or dealership. Our entire staff is schooled on listening skills, probing questions to discover needs, and the importance of integrity in all dealings. We practice correct techniques through role playing. We work hard to always acknowledge our customers by their first name and we team up to help each other remember names.

Through our one-on-one delivery process, relationship building continues during this all-important time to impress upon each customer our attitude of professionalism and attention to detail. One week following delivery, a thank-you plant in a fishing creel, along with a handwritten thank-you note, is sent to the customer's home. We maintain these relationships by staying in contact. Sales and service customers are contacted by phone after deliveries to ensure satisfaction. In addition, our service customers are contacted every six months to schedule preventive maintenance service.

Relationship selling is another way we set ourselves apart from our competition. We don't sell our prospects a boat – we satisfy their needs. We stand beside our prospect, not across from them, and together we get the right boat for their needs. We're confident enough to suggest a competitor's boat if the result would better satisfy the need. By doing so, we add even non-buyers to our army of advocates.

Relationship selling turns into repeat business and referral business. Repeats and refer-

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

als are the most powerful form of marketing – and the least expensive. Recommendations from our advocates will always trump any marketing campaign.

Beyond that, all customers are emailed thank-you notes, with attached photos of them with their new boats on delivery day; referral spiffs are given to customers; follow-up calls are made one week after deliveries for feedback; and referral gifts such as a case of wine or box of premium steaks are given to select customers that have a direct impact on a sale. Customers are also contacted every six months to schedule preventative maintenance. We also have an annual owner's fishing tournament for all our buyers.

Results:

Year-end CSI results showed referral and repeat customers grew 16 points in 2008, representing 51 percent of sales – a tribute to our customer service. Our sales and service customer surveys keep us to task by asking the harder questions, stretching us to develop a loyal following of customers. Our reward is our growing list of referred and repeat customers.

Kim Woodard Woodard Marine Lottery Ticket Giveaway

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

With today's competition getting better, the gap of differences between dealerships is getting smaller. We were looking for something that would give our dealership a heads-up over the competition and a reason to do business with Woodard Marine. We implemented a lottery ticket giveaway. We started this concept at our boat shows and continued it at our retail counter and fuel dock during the summer season.

These lottery tickets are scratch-off tickets, just like the ones you would purchase at a convenience store. One side of the ticket has the prizes that are available to win. These prizes are all items that are from Woodard Marine, i.e. gift cards, sweatshirts, free detailing at our boat spa, tubes, water skis, a Kindle Fire – or you could lose. For 2012 we chose a pirate theme and for the tickets that are not winners, the scratch-off would say, "ye lose, walk the plank."



When we designed these tickets, we were able to choose the ratio of winners to losers in our packet. We chose to print 1,000 tickets for 2012, and out of those tickets there were 60 winning tickets.

We started this concept at our boat shows and continued it at our retail counter and fuel dock during the summer season. Every person who entered our booth at the boat shows got a free lottery ticket just for visiting. We continued this in our showroom with every prospect and purchase that occurred in our showroom.

The idea was also carried over to our retail counter, where every pro shop purchaser was given a free ticket, as well as at our fuel dock – one ticket per boat.

At each of our stations – boat show, retail store, showroom and fuel dock – we had a large promotional poster. This poster had each of the prizes that were available and under each prize there was a square for the quantity you could win for this prize. For example, under the Kindle Fire prize were two empty squares for the two Kindles that were available to win. When someone won that particular prize, we would take a picture of the customer with the prize and put his or her picture in the square for that particular prize. This was a great tool to show the public what prizes were still available to win and also showcase the winners.

Results:

This promotion was a huge success. At our boat shows and in-house boat sales, there was a buzz with the attendees asking each other what they won and what they purchased. If a win-

ning lottery ticket was won at a boat show, the winner was required to come to our dealership to redeem their prize. This put a customer in our dealership after a boat show with a great memory and one-on-one time with our team.

In our retail store and fuel dock, we found a 27-percent increase in our retail sales and a 15 percent increase in our fuel dock sales. This was a great promotion to utilize in these areas and it created a large buzz in our lake community.

This promotion cost us around \$1,500 for everything, including all of the prizes and lottery tickets. We consider this promotion a huge success both financially and in building stronger customer relationships.

Because this was such a huge success, we plan on continuing this promotion into 2013, and adding a second giveaway within the same lottery ticket. In 2013, we will also be adding a winning number sequence. There will only be one winner in this winning number combination. On the scratch-off ticket, there will be two areas to scratch off. The first will be the normal promotional giveaway that will simulate what we did in 2012. The second area of scratch-off will be the chance to reveal the one winning number. This winning number will only be posted in our main retail store. In order to compare the lottery scratch-off number to the one winning number, the customer will have to bring their lottery ticket into the store in person. This one grand prize most likely will be service and storage for a year.

MARKETING & EVENTS

FINALIST

Paula Fulton
BMC Boats
Google Adwords Co-op

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

I had quite a bit of money in my co-op account with Godfrey Pontoons, so I came up with a plan to get reimbursed through Google Adwords advertising, which has become a huge part of our advertising budget.

First, I bought a domain (hurricaneboatdealer.com) to use as an exclusive landing page. Next, I created a separate Google Adwords campaign with ads that only included information specific to Hurricane boats. Lastly, I set up the Google Hurricane campaign to go directly to hurricaneboatdealer.com then, from there, a link to my bmcboats.com website.

By doing this, and using the Google reports pages, I was able to isolate the exclusive Hurricane content, print it out, prove the advertising is exclusive to Hurricane and receive 80-percent reimbursement. I am currently working with Yamaha to do the same thing, and I will be hitting up the motor manufacturers next.

Results:

I have been getting 80 percent of my flex fund money reimbursed, which helps my advertising efforts and allows me more Google Adwords advertising dollars.

Nick Raguso
Boaters Exchange
Social Media Listening

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

The most important component of social media is listening. It is very important to hear your customers and respond to their needs. We search Facebook and Twitter daily for possible compatibilities and sales opportunities, which have yielded many new leads. Also, when you're speaking on social media it is very important to employ a good mix of content. If you blast your "friends" or "followers" with a constant stream of sales blasts, advertisements and promotions, they will just tune out of your channel. Therefore, it is important to use a 60/40 mix of social media content.

The best strategy is 60 percent good content, such as interesting fishing stories, funny photos, boater education, boat reviews, giveaways, etc. The remaining 40 percent is sales content such as boats for sale, coupons, in-store specials, promotions, etc.

Results:

This strategy keeps potential customers interested in what we have to say and keeps them tuned into our various social media channels because they are receiving fresh and interesting content. This makes it much easier to become part of their social media lives and convert them into lifelong customers.



Mitch O'Hara
Candlewood East Marina
Charity Car Show

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We wanted to expand our charity contributions to the community. We chose a car show, because it would appeal to a broad audience, give us exposure for the boating lifestyle and support a charity we were already involved with.

With many car enthusiasts working here, we went to the guys who go to the most car shows and took all the best ideas. Layout of cars, prizes for different categories, a live DJ, 50/50 raffles with prizes, and a food tent were all part of the planning. We had plenty of staffing, and with a couple of cars mixed in with the boats in our showroom ... the rest was history.

Results:

We had 116 cars that attended the car show, and we raised more than \$3,000 for our charity, "The Leaps of Faith Disabled Water-ski Foundation." This event gave us the most exposure in the community we have ever had. And, it was an awesome event with a community focus. It was a great way to showcase our dealership.

Don MacKenzie
Boats Incorporated
When to Endorse Political Candidates

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

Now that we have inventory under control, payroll in line, websites up and running, and events

MARKETING & EVENTS



planned for our customers to keep them in the industry, what is still probably the highest hurdle for our industry to clear? Legislation.

Endorsing a candidate can be a huge risk as you may be alienating half of your customer base or, should the candidates you endorse lose, you now have to deal with the candidate you did not endorse. At the same time, however, the fact that one should be involved at your state capital is an understatement.

You can endorse or suggest a candidate if he or she has done something specific to enhance the boating community. If your customer base was a benefactor of someone in public office stepping in on behalf of the industry that benefitted your customers, let them know.

Regardless of party or affiliation, if the boating community goes to the polls knowing that a certain politician did something that had an impact on an area that is important to your customers and you as a business have an avenue to convey what was done, do it. All you are doing is relaying factual information, not your personal preference.

Results:

In our last newsletter (circulation 4,000), we

took the opportunity to let our customers know how one local politician running for office worked with a major contractor and Amtrak to develop a construction schedule on a major bridge project that would not interfere with the boating community. It was not an endorsement, but a simple relaying of facts that if you were going to the polls and were undecided in this particular race, this is what one individual (regardless of party affiliation) did for you and your family this past year.

The results have been huge. First, the political arena finds out that you have a newsletter that is circulated to 4,000 voters. Secondly, you have let the world know that as a group, we are an industry and not just a select few people that are fortunate enough to own a boat. Unfortunately, the perception is still that boating is only for the rich and famous.

Lastly, when you ask for a meeting with a politician to discuss an issue, you will have an opportunity to discuss those issues, as you are no longer one voice, you are many.

Our best idea for others is to get involved.

Christine Ladner Breath's Boats & Motors Hiring a Marketer

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We added a part-time marketing position in January 2012, and the position became full-time five months later in June.



Results:

Although we are a relatively small dealership, adding this marketing position has enabled our dealership to be more consistent in updating our website, coordinating advertising, developing a Facebook page, creating a quarterly newsletter, and handling customer follow-up calls after a sale. Our owner/president/sales manager is now more free to follow up with leads, handle sales calls more effectively and spend more time cultivating relationships with customers, which leads to increased sales and successful customer service feedback.

Rob Brown Clark Marine Ad Tracking/ Individual Landing Pages

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We created individual landing pages on our website for each of the online venues we purchase advertising space from as a tool to help us qualify our expenditures. We also created pages for our regular print advertising as well.

No matter the size of a dealership, we each only have a certain amount of money to put into advertising. This information, used in combination with a few other factors, has helped us direct our advertising dollars to the proven venues.

This has been a good tool.

Results:

Prior to our advertisers knowing how we were tracking their products, their results did not quite match our returns very closely. Once we let on what we were doing and I shared my own results, the reports became more alike.

We experienced costs anywhere from 80 to 90 cents per click-through and up to \$8 per click. What we found was that the lower click-through costs tended to help nurture the most new business. This is not a sole indicator, although it is a very helpful tool when it comes to delegating advertising dollars.

MARKETING & EVENTS

Ashley Smith Colorado Boat Center Traveling Photo Booth

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We had two goals with our project. One, to generate more energy and excitement within our show booth this year, we added a "Traveling Photo Booth." Then, to draw more attention to our Facebook site, we incorporated a contest for all attendees who visited the Traveling Photo Booth. Attendees were able to get free pictures (color and black and white). Our logo and contest promotion were also printed on the pics to drive them to our Facebook site. The pictures



were also uploaded to our Facebook page so that attendees could like, comment and share the photos within their social network.

Results:

In total, 237 photo sets were taken, which generated 141 new "likes" on our Facebook site, including three contest winners who had not been previous CBC customers. This promotion gave us the fastest 141 new "likes" in the shortest amount of time. It meant more of our customers were able to see things going on at our dealership in real time. This has also led to new buyers for us this year.

Kay Woltman Lake Union Sea Ray Seattle Yacht Expo

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

Every year in early December, we have traveled to Merritt Island, Fla., to the Sea Ray Yacht Expo with a group of qualified yacht prospects and customers to sometimes disappointing results. The trip to Florida from Seattle is a very expensive undertaking for our company. This year, we decided to spend a fraction of the cost and have our own "Seattle Yacht Expo" with Sea Ray's blessing and support. We were able to utilize much of the same Yacht Expo promotional POP and incentives provided by Sea Ray.

Our event was held the same weekend in December as the actual Yacht Expo event in Florida. The salespeople hand-selected their best cruiser, sport yacht and yacht prospects to receive an invitation. The invitation was a formal letter from Kevin Roggenbuck, owner of Lake Union Sea Ray, which described the purpose of the event and that only a select group of customers would be invited to attend.

Our Seattle showroom was decorated with holiday décor, which provided a special, festive atmosphere. We rolled out our red carpet and made sure the inventory of cruisers, sport yachts and yachts were boat show-ready with professionally printed Yacht Expo price signs. Inside our showroom we offered appetizers and hosted a bar with beer, wine and other holiday refreshments. We offered special Yacht Expo discounts on parts and accessories and exclusive gifts with purchase. Our team went above and beyond to create a special environment for an elite group of potential buyers.

Results:

With a budget of \$1,000, we had more than 50 people attend our one-day event in December – not the best time of year for boat shopping. As a result of our Seattle Yacht Expo, our Q4 sales were astronomically high year over year, with Sea Ray Q4 sales up over 800 percent, and



all new segments combined were up 433 percent against the prior year. Also, we doubled our pre-owned by selling some of the hot trades from the event. Virtually all segments of our business were up for this quarter, year over year.

Bradley Wallace North Texas Marine Captain's Club

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We have always taken great care of our customers. As a dealership, we do a lot of things to engage our customers and keep them coming back. However, it was difficult to quantify and explain to a customer during the sales process how we intended to take care of them during and after the sale. To quantify these things and give our staff another tool to build customer confidence, we developed our Captain's Club ownership group.

If a customer purchases a boat from North Texas Marine, they are automatically granted membership into this club. Membership includes boating school upon delivery, priority service at our two service centers, a new boat owner's kit, logo apparel and members-only discounts. Captain's Club members were also given access to boating safety seminars,



We are better connected to our customers and able to interact with them year round. This has led to more sales due to word of mouth and referral business. It has also helped us build a reputation as one of the premier boating resources in north Texas. Our customers now feel more connected to us and like they are a part of the North Texas Marine family.

Debbie Cuzzo
Strong's Marine
Accounts Receivable Flyers

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

Our monthly Accounts Receivable statements are sent out with a flyer promoting boat sales, service, rentals, dockage or events. The flyer is one page long and does not increase any postage needed. The department promoting the service designs the flyer and our office executes the rest.

Results:

This is just one additional way of marketing our company without adding any further cost other than the paper the flyer is printed on. Every month, we send out approximately, 175 to 200 statements. The flyer goes in every envelope and gives our customers a monthly look at what is new at Strong's Marine. This includes upcoming boat shows, service information, dockage specials, etc. Email is a great tool; however, everyone always opens their regular mail but not always their emails.

boat care and maintenance tips, women-on-the-water clinics, lake tie-ups, and customer appreciation events.

Keep in mind; we were doing most of these things already. We just weren't telling anybody about it, nor were we laying it out for our customers in black and white.

Results:

As a result of implementing the Captain's

Club ownership group, we have been able to do a better job of making our customers feel confident in their purchase, and we differentiated ourselves from our competitors. Our customers have found that it is just as important whom you are buying from as what you are buying. We have had excellent involvement and feedback on our women-on-the-water and boating classes as well as our customer appreciation events.



FOR EVEN MORE BEST IDEAS, CHECK OUT LAST YEAR'S BEST IDEA'S WHITE PAPER

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SALES AND F&I

Martin Boyer **Austin Boats & Motors** **Pimp My Boat Contest**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

The “Pimp-my-Boat” contest was a highlight to our boat show again this year. To better display and advertise our booth and brands at the annual Austin Boat Show, all employees were called to action.

Each employee was placed on a team with a captain. The captains drew an envelope containing a specific brand and model. Each team staged a particular boat for the showroom. The teams were given a \$25 budget, and we suggested shopping at discount retailers to maximize their impact. Teams were asked to be resourceful and creative, and were allowed to utilize items available from the dealership.

Judges selected the top three winning teams of employees, who received prizes like gift cards, cash, iPods, etc. Our judges included brand reps, sublet vendors, community members we’ve invited, Austin Boat Show staff and staff-nominated customers.

Results:

This contest has encouraged our staff to take ownership and greater pride in the setup, display and overall look of our boat show booth.

Paul Berube **Boaters Exchange** **In-House Brand Stewards**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We assign one salesperson to each product line. Not to take all of the sales for that line, but instead

to be the custodian of that particular product line – making sure the boats are ready to show, being the subject matter expert, and also being responsible for all aspects of check-in when the boats arrive (such as placing the loose gear into storage with tags, stowing the owner bags, etc.).

Results:

This helps spread the load among the sales team, and it also fosters a sense of ownership and pride in the product line.

Chris Stevens **Grand Pointe Marina** **Bi-Annual Sale Partnership**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We used to do the identical bi-annual, off-site boat sale by ourselves since 1996. We then had

the idea of teaming up with an RV dealer to attract even more attendees and split the expenses of the sale. We have implemented this idea twice per year since 2003.

Results:

Our expenses from the show were cut in half, and we get extra sales every time. I think it is the perfect match. RV customers do not steal sales away from boat dealers. We have the same type of clientele, but generally the consumer is purchasing one or the other. We have teamed up twice per year. Once in early spring, we rent out a massive two-field indoor soccer building and hold a spring open house event. In the late summer we hold an end-of-the-year blowout sale and rent a large parking lot or field. Our dealership is now able to spend double the amount in advertising due to splitting the expenses.



FINALIST

Douglyss Giuliana **Advantage Yacht Sales** **Membership Club Partnership**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We have had a relationship with SailTime Boston, a fractional membership club, for a number of years. SailTime uses Hunter sailboats in their fleet, so as the area Hunter dealer, we worked with SailTime Boston to sell boats into the fleet. We would also occasionally send them prospects for the club that we had met, typically people that were still a number of years away from buying a boat or were new to sailing. SailTime also used us for service and winter storage.

In 2011, we significantly deepened our relationship with SailTime Boston and also with Black Rock Sailing School. Black Rock is an ASA sailing school and also offers charters in Boston and the Caribbean. This deeper relationship included four focus areas: joint marketing of boats, memberships, and classes across all three organizations; shared, combined boat show presence; use of fleet boats for showings and test sails, and integrated selling of boats into club and charter fleets.

The first and easiest step was a joint effort to cross-market all three business offerings. By working closely together, we are able to provide a full suite of services and products to both new and experienced sailors. In total, we have something for almost everyone. When Advantage sends email campaigns, they include mention of the SailTime membership program as an alternative for those not quite ready to buy a boat. We offer value to our potential future customers, and also get them on the brand of boats that we sell so they can start to develop an affinity. At the end of the sailing season, SailTime Boston directs its members to Advantage for both new and used boat purchases. For events like open houses or demo sails, the companies combine email lists to spread the word to a larger audience. There are also a number of smaller things we do from trade brochures to display, list all companies in

our email signature, list each other on websites and Facebook pages, etc.

It is easy to seamlessly refer prospects to each other, but we can also bundle packages together. If Advantage has a prospect that feels they need some additional instruction before buying a boat, we can build that into the sale of the boat and send them to Black Rock. The customer is more likely to buy from us when we can not only provide a recommendation but also one-stop-shopping and a consistent, high-quality experience.

As we further realized the power of this combination, we decided to join forces at our largest boat show to offer a complete line of sailing products and services in one booth. All three companies joined in one large booth. This made us the largest sailing booth at the show, and gave us the ability to select a great location. By having lessons, clubs, trailer-able and cruising boat sales, and new and used boat sales all in one location, we could have meaningful conversations with just about every sailor at the show. The tone of the booth actually changed from trying to sell a boat to everyone (which is obviously futile) to trying to get each visitor to the information they needed, thereby getting them more involved in sailing.

The third area of cooperation was of particular benefit to Advantage. With the need to decrease inventory levels, it has been more difficult to be able to show specific models to prospects, and very difficult to be able to get them on a test sail. With our Hunter inventory dropping from six to three boats, there are always a number of models that we don't have in stock. At times we have relied on nearby customer boats for showings, but they are not always close or in good condition. However, SailTime Boston's boats are professionally maintained, clean and easy to show. And since they are already available for club or charter use, it is easy for us to schedule time for test sails. This has allowed us to double our effective available inventory for marketing at no additional cost.

Finally, we saw a real opportunity to help both SailTime and Black Rock expand their fleets, which they were trying to do, by sell-

ing a boat along with an income stream. We had many prospects that either couldn't quite afford a new boat or justify owning given the amount of time they expected to spend on the water. By showing them how their boat could generate income to offset a portion of their operating costs, it both allowed them to afford the boat and justify ownership.

While SailTime and Black Rock wanted to sell new boats into their fleets, they didn't have the staff, sales expertise, or the buyer prospects. Advantage had all of those. So we jointly developed materials to show the combined boat purchase, operating costs and income stream. This provided us with a big advantage over our local competition.

Results:

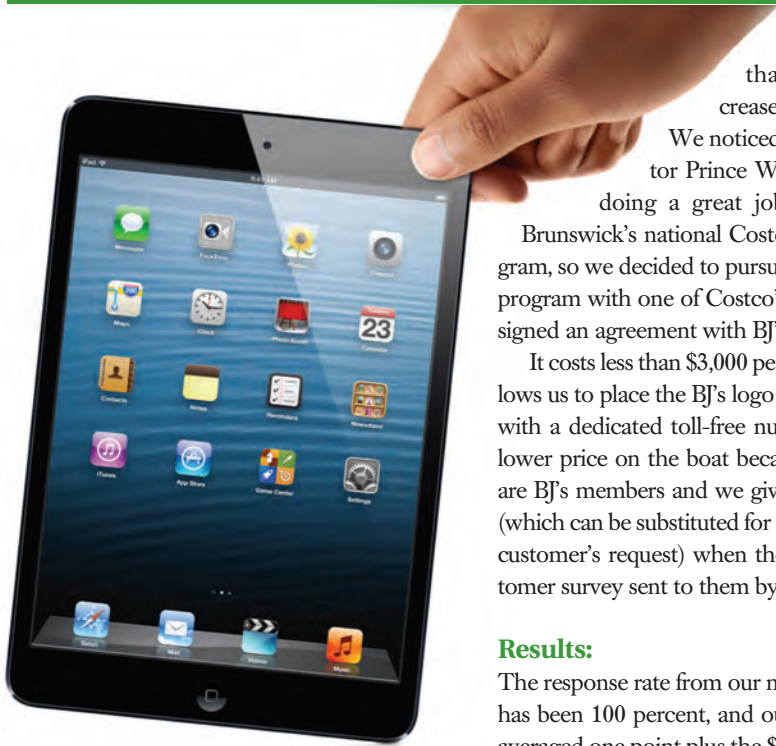
Cross-marketing has provided a quick benefit to the sailing school, with a couple dozen new students registered during 2011 from this. SailTime also signed three new members during 2011 from referrals. Advantage benefited greatly as well with two boats sold to former SailTime members – a \$225,000 brokerage boat and a \$317,000 new sailboat.

The shared boat show space did not provide any real cost savings, but seemed more effective. Even when Advantage handed a prospect off to SailTime or Black Rock, we were able to get contact information from the prospect, demonstrate our knowledge and care, and keep them "in the family" so we had a better chance of future business with them.

Regarding the use of the fleet boats for showings, we saved some good money over having similar boats in inventory. Estimated annual savings are at least \$45,000 in inventory, storage, and other carrying costs.

The integrated selling of boats into the fleets obviously offered the greatest results for Advantage. In 2011 and early 2012, we sold three new boats into the fleets totaling \$789,000. These were all deals we were very unlikely to get without the income programs these fleets offered.

In total, the five boats sold through this effort resulted in about \$200,000 gross profit.



Amanda Kanas
Hampton Watercraft & Marine
Sales Team iPads

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

Our idea is simple: we have provided Apple iPads for our entire sales team – and have reaped many rewards from doing so.

Results:

Hampton Watercraft & Marine bought iPads for its sales team. By having the iPads, the sales team can now pull up images, listings, and videos for the customers while they are sitting on a boat discussing it with the customer. They do not need to be in their office sitting in front of a computer. The iPads also allow the customer to access their website and server while at boat shows.

Joseph Hoffmaster
Hoffmaster's Marina
Warehouse Club Partnership

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We started carrying more entry-level product (Bennington's small S Series and Chaparral H20s) and wanted a way to market them so

that we could increase our market share. We noticed that our competitor Prince William Marina was doing a great job participating in Brunswick's national Costco Wholesale program, so we decided to pursue participating in a program with one of Costco's competitors. We signed an agreement with BJ's Wholesale Club.

It costs less than \$3,000 per year to do, and allows us to place the BJ's logo on our home page with a dedicated toll-free number. We place a lower price on the boat because the customers are BJ's members and we give them a BJ's card (which can be substituted for a store credit at the customer's request) when they submit the customer survey sent to them by the manufacturer.

Results:

The response rate from our new BJ's purchasers has been 100 percent, and our margin cost has averaged one point plus the \$250 card. Thus far, we have sold six boats through the partnership, totaling \$25,000 gross margin with expenses in fees and cards/credits at just \$2,800.

Joseph Hoffmaster
Hoffmaster's Marina
Valet Fuel Service

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

At the end of fiscal 2011 we discovered that our gas sales had decreased. One reason was the obvious increase in fuel prices, the other was that our fuel area is at the shore rather than at the end of the pier and so its harder to get to.

HOFFMASTER'S MARINA

HOURS OF OPERATION
Sunday: Noon-4 p.m.
Monday-Friday: 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

FUELING + PUMP OUT RESERVATIONS

Dear Customers,
Thank you so much for participating in our popular program!
We are taking reservations for fueling plus pump out this weekend until the end of the day **Wednesday!** Please call 703/494-7151 or email [email] for your reservations.
Thank you for your cooperation,
Hoffmaster's Marina

HOFFMASTER'S MARINA INC.
1214 Swan Point Road
Hockessin, VA 22162

Visit our Website
follow us on twitter
like us on facebook

We instituted a Valet Service for fueling boats. For \$19.99 we would fill up your boat and, for \$29.99, pump it out as well.

Results:

As a result, our gas profit through September was up \$10,000. The trick is to use help that is not engaged in collectable labor (sales, management, etc.) so the yard can keep going. Also when we find things wrong with the boats, we can point them out for the yard, and we can quote on other services.

Ed Brailsford
Lincolnton Marine
Trade-Up Sales Program

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We have compiled our loan files for the past five years, analyzed the opportunity, developed sales

Opportunity:

- Increase customer interaction;
- Educate customer of Lincolnton Marine products, services, and events;
- Generate sales, inventory turns, and operating income.

Example:

Customer A purchased a Tournament 2008 Centurion at 8% interest rate. We can lower his interest rate for 200 days points, saving him \$2,000 a month or \$24,000 over the life of the loan!

Lincolnton Marine will have to price the new boat, expected trade-in or consignment value, and have a firm offer to the customer before contacting.

If we have a prospect willing to purchase the customer's existing boat, the customer purchases a new boat and both parties receive the opportunity to generate potential increase of \$15,000.

If only 8 applicable, there we are getting closer to \$30,000!

Category	Item	Value	Notes
Trade-In	Trade-In Value	\$15,000	Trade-In Value
Consignment	Consignment Value	\$15,000	Consignment Value
Trade-In	Trade-In Value	\$15,000	Trade-In Value
Consignment	Consignment Value	\$15,000	Consignment Value
Trade-In	Trade-In Value	\$15,000	Trade-In Value
Consignment	Consignment Value	\$15,000	Consignment Value

Economic Benefits:

To make the efforts worthwhile we need to address how we can compensate for the efforts.

- I suggest that we continue with our current financing arrangement of a 10% SFC;
- Pay a 3% commission on the sale of a new boat, and 2% on the sale of the consigned boat;
- And have a 2% override bonus if 5 or more boats are sold; 2% on the next 10 boats sold; and 1% if or more;
- The commissions and bonuses will be divided by between the sales team.

Minimum Projections:

- If we sell 5 new units at an average price of \$60,000 each and 2 consignments at an average of \$40,000, the Gross Profit would be approximately \$18,000.
- We have the opportunity of \$1,033 in commission and \$766 in bonus, and the dealer's bonus \$12,000.
- Additionally, I request some form of compensation for the development of this plan, set up & training, and for the implementation of project, management of project, and execution of the project.

processes, and are contacting customers to see if they would be interested in trading in their existing boat, which gives us the opportunity to engage them on many different fronts. We are currently in the beginning (contacted 10 customers) of the program and are completing one refinance, working on two new upgrades and a brokerage deal.

In reviewing our files, we have closed 46 loans from 2006 to 2010, generating \$69,448 in reserve income. During that time, we reviewed another 35 loans, of which 20 were approved,

but none closed.

Before contacting the customers, we review the contract status with management, sales and finance, determine their approximate trade-in value, scour prospect lists of potential buyers for the customer's boat, determine the price of the 2013 model of their boat and contact the customer. When in contact, we verify that the customer still owns the boat, ask if they have seen the 2013 models, and ask if they are interested in trading up to a 2013 model or customizing a 2013 model. We also provide a cost analysis approach of purchasing a new boat from Lincoln Marine.

If they are not interested, we offer several other services: refinance their current loan; offer an extended warranty before theirs expires; see if they need their boat serviced or winterized; invite them to any customer appreciation or demo days (if applicable); invite them to join Lincoln Marine's Facebook page; email them a survey to see their opinion of us; ask for referrals; and invite them to our website.

Results:

Our multi-effort plan has increased customer interaction, educated customers of our products, services and events, and has generated sales and increased our operating income.

Matt Lodder Lodder's Marine Hometown Nametags

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We first used this idea at the 2012 Cincinnati Boat Show – hiring about 15 additional sales people to work our boat show. We've always been big on nametags because they help establish a first-name basis with customers. This year we took it a step further. Instead of just having



the salesperson's name on it, we put what part of town they live in just underneath their name.

We got this idea from a casino where they do the same thing. The goal is to open up more communication with the customer and find common ground. For example, when the customer sees "Hamilton, OH" on the name badge, it might start up a conversation about the customer's brother who lives in Hamilton. Anything to have a conversation about that helps break down the normal customer-salesperson barrier and puts both parties at ease helps promote our goal of the salesperson becoming more of an adviser than a person who just wants to sell something.

Results:

The feedback received from the salespeople working the show was good. I can't say it definitively lead us to "X" amount of additional sales, but I can tell you it sparked more conversations with customers that led to better rapport with our salespeople.

James Baker Seattle Boat Company iPad Integration

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

In the fall of 2011 we decided to get each salesperson an iPad for a sales tool. Everybody can get iPads for their team and just hand them out and say "go use it". The implementation and execution of actually using the tool is what we felt was going to be most critical.

The first step was taking something we were doing and replace with the iPad – and enhance the experience by doing that. We picked what we called our "sales book" and created it on the iPad (but it became a more interactive and valuable tool for sales presentations). The second step was to make sure that each iPad was set up exactly the same (content, folders, layout, etc.). The third step was role playing and practicing so that everyone could navigate fluidly thru the iPad keeping the presentations focused on the product and not the iPad.

Results:

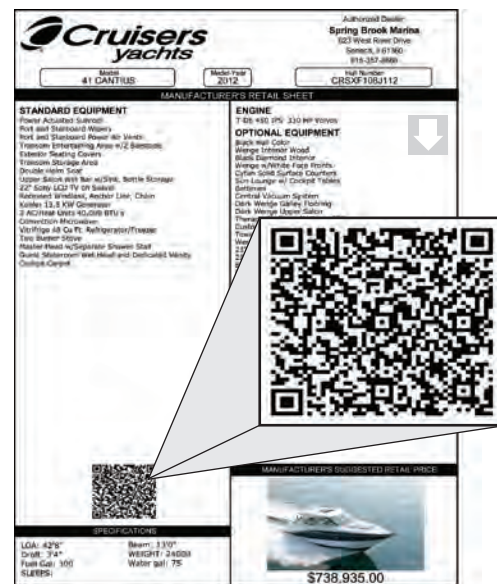
We have increased sales and can now offer better, more efficient product presentations.

Explaining how options and features worked without having to actually set them up was one the biggest advantages, especially at boat shows. For example, if someone wanted to see how a canvas enclosure package worked we produced a quick 12-second video/slideshow from pictures showing the option. We have found that 12 to 15 seconds is about the limit for videos you will be sharing in your presentations.

Jim Thorpe Spring Brook Marina QR Code Adoption

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

This year we began putting QR codes on everything from business cards to used boat price lists to new and used boat equipment spec sheets.



We even put them on our For Sale signs. This way if a customer walks on our lot after hours, they can snap the QR code, which takes them to our YachtWorld listing. I have seen customers at boat shows walk up and snap the code while I was busy with other customers.

Results:

It may be coincidence, but our YachtWorld website hits have increased greatly since implementing this practice.



**Bob Pappajohn/
Jaye-Lynn Gooch**
M&P Mercury Sales
Demographic Diversity

**When and How the
Idea Was Implemented:**

M&P recognized the need to break out and sell to new emerging ethnic markets. It is evident that the Caucasian population in North America is seeing a reduction resulting in a decrease in our standard white American boat buyer. It is obvious that, if we want to increase our boating population and boat sales, we need to introduce new ethnic groups to the boating lifestyle through different ways.

When planning our strategy for growth, one of the most important things in an economically challenged environment was for us to determine who has the resources and means to purchase our products. In other words, find out who has the money.

In 2010, we began to formalize and expand our strategy to significantly increase our sales to the new affluent ethnic consumer.

M&P has conducted business with a number of ethnic groups over the years including Persians, Iranians, Chinese, Koreans, Taiwanese and Indo-Canadians. The financial wealth of these groups is astounding. In particular, the mainland Chinese who have established a presence in Vancouver are exceedingly wealthy and have an insatiable desire for ultra-luxury products and the associated lifestyle.

Our marketing and growth strategy focused more heavily on the Asian community. Components of this strategy include obtaining interpreters for our English-speaking sales and service staff, hiring multi-lingual staff members,

recruiting a full-time member for our Yacht Centre division, building micro websites in our target markets' respective languages, translating signage, manuals, safety information, educational materials, boating seminars in their native tongue and forming ethnic boat clubs, networking with influential leaders in each of the ethnic communities to understand their specific needs and wants, and embrace their culture. We networked extensively with the local Asian business community. We established relations with Asian realtors who in turn brought new clients to our stores. Also, we advertise in Chinese newspapers and radio stations.

Understanding the various cultures is key to selling and marketing to these various groups. Understanding how each of these groups like to conduct business and what will attract them to the lifestyle was a learning curve that took time, effort, training and re-programming from

our traditional marketing, selling and interacting with our Caucasian buyers. Our sales people were required to conduct the sales process differently and adapt to its respective buyers.

Our full-time, Chinese-speaking staff member attends all Getaways and our annual Rendezvous; as a result we have had an increase in Chinese attendance at these events.

Results:

Boat sales resulted in 40 percent of our Sea Ray sport yacht and yacht sales to non-native Canadians and 25 percent of our Meridian sport yacht sales were sold to clients from this market segment.

M&P will continue to embrace this new affluent ethnic consumer and develop new ways to maximize this growth potential and increase sales.



SERVICE

Jerry Brouwer **Action Water Sports** **Affordable Digital Signage**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

It has always been easy to display products in a store, but hard showing our customers the additional services our dealership can provide like detailing, fiberglass repair, stor-



age, tire changing, LED kit installs, etc. This idea came to mind last fall and was implemented in January just before our boat show season. It is an affordable way to display rotating ads on almost any TV screen. We use it for service, but it could also be used to show summer events, boat specials, or anything else you would like to show your customers on a TV. We also use it for digital signage at boat shows.

You can also store photos for dock and lift installs or tower installations on different boats and access them via the remote control if a customer would like to see finished examples of what the product or service would look like completed. You can also control the TV with an iPad or iPhone by sharing videos or pictures wirelessly off your mobile device allowing your TV to become

more functional.

We mounted an LCD TV on the wall behind our service counter. The Apple TV (\$99) device uses a power cord, a HDMI cord, and can use an Ethernet line or Wi-Fi to connect to your store's network. The total cost is \$120, plus a new or existing TV.

Results:

We receive five to 10 questions a week about the services we advertise on the new screens. This has resulted in sales increasing \$10,000 to \$15,000 in the services advertised.

Catherine de Silva **Atlantic Boats** **Fuel Line Parts Kit**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We've created a bundled parts kit from OEMs for fuel line service, as it is such an issue from ethanol on older motors. These bundled kits contain all parts needed for a complete change-out (and kits for low- and high-pressure side only).



We've only recently implemented the idea, and it is still a work in progress. Techs, sales reps and regional sales managers have actually responded, "Why didn't I think of that?"

Results:

This idea saves our customers from lost boating time, the costly expense of a fuel system cleaning, is a win on generating sales of parts for everyone (OEM, distributors and service), and our customers feel safe that we have their best interest in mind. It is an easy sell.

I feel my idea is fantastic when you consider the trickle-down effect it has on sales, from the OEM to the distributor and the ease of sales with one part number. Now we have a bundled kit that saves the parts department or the technician much wasted time looking at a schematic trying to figure out which line it is, length, etc.

For example, if you pull up a Suzuki 300 you would have a field day trying to go through page-by-page and if you have a 300A you could easily mistake a part number. The kit as a bundle would solve time and money and seeing it as part of the maintenance schedule on every motor – a no-brainer.

Rosanna Aiello **Davey Marine** **VIP Service Discount**

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

In January of 2011, we kicked off an E-Blast campaign featuring a VIP discount that included \$50 off the labor charge for a variety of engine services. Our service/parts administrator tracked the results for the first quarter of 2011

SERVICE

and saw a substantial increase in work orders and tech billable hours. At that point, management made the decision to include a VIP discount to our daily billing, making all of our clients eligible to receive the VIP discount.

Results:

The results of our VIP discount program were higher profits and higher customer satisfaction. Our service department had an increase of 18-percent net profit and our parts and accessories department had an increase of 24-percent net profit in 2011.

FINALIST

Rob Brown Clark Marine End-of-Day Briefing

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We started lining out our next day's service schedule by 3 p.m. and then making sure each technician is fully briefed prior to leaving for the day. This idea was first implemented in fall of 2011, and we began tracking the results in January 2012.

Results:

In the first nine months of 2012, in comparison to the same period in 2011, this adjustment has been the largest contributing factor for consummating an additional 1,600 customer billed hours with the same amount of technicians. We calculated, at an average of \$70 per hour, our end-of-day briefings have resulted in an additional \$112,000 in service department labor sales.

We have the same size service staff as 2011, and one additional front-end person and one additional person on our cleaning staff. Our companywide cost of payroll has increased in the same term by just \$37,000.

This adjustment has been the lead factor in netting our business an additional \$75,000 during 2012 in relation to 2011 results of the same timeframe. To me, this is a great deal of money.

Jim Canepa Marine Specialties Service Order Organization

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

We needed an effective way to organize all of our service repair orders, so we dreamed up this wall-mounted divider for all of our orders



that separates the service repair orders (ROs) into several different categories depending on their status. This lets everyone involved in the service process know where that boat is in the process without having to talk with someone else. Anyone from the service writer, technician or phone personnel can easily tell the status of a boat in for service.

Our divider has separate spots for: "Pending ROs," for each technician so they know there next job; "Need Estimate" of a pending RO that needs a detailed estimate put together by the service manager; "Hold for Authoriza-

tion," waiting for customer approval; "Parts on Order," if we need special-order parts; "Needs Parts," if a job needs additional parts pulled to complete the job; "Ready to Bill," when the technician has completed all the items on the RO; "Billed and Called," when the customer has been notified that his/her boat is done and the exact amount of repair; "Need To File," after the customer has picked up the boat the paper portion is filed away to future reference.

Results:

Our improved service repair order organization has helped us keep the repair orders flowing through the service department. This has also been very helpful in getting bills out faster and expedited pick-ups of serviced boats.

Greer Ingersoll Seattle Boat Company Real-Time Technician Notes

When and How the Idea Was Implemented:

Our DockMaster computer software has the function to leave notes in the job line on the electronic work orders. This has been implemented for the previous four seasons. Each employee uses the DockMaster system daily and has been cross-trained to be able to pull up the service invoices.

Results:

The result is that, at any time during the repair process, any employee can pull up a customer's work order on the DockMaster computer system and look at the technician notes and inform customers about the progress on their boat. This is especially helpful when a customer calls in for updates when the service department is closed. This also allows the customer to get real-time updates regarding their boat repairs even if the repairs are being performed off site, for example at the customer dock.

This procedure has streamlined the communication process and allows for customer to get an update with the first contacted person instead of waiting on hold or being transferred multiple times.

1^{IN} 7 LEADS

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