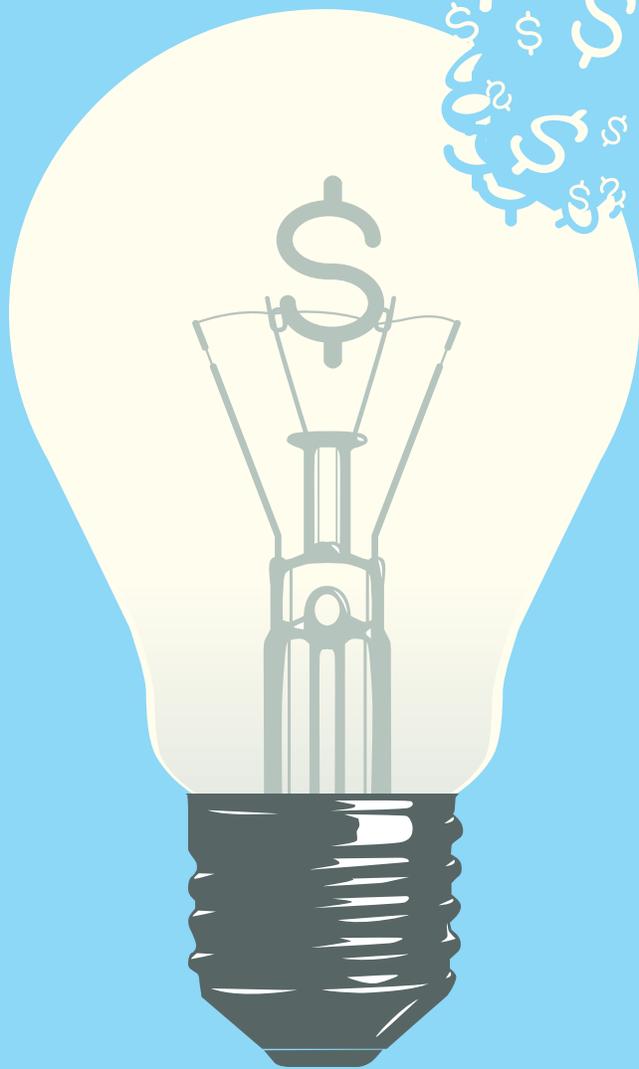


Boating Industry

2014 WHITE PAPER | www.BoatingIndustry.com

INTELLIGENCE YOU CAN PROFIT FROM



BEST IDEAS

52 profit building ideas from
the dealer attendees of MDCE

Sponsored by **DOMINION**
MARINE MEDIA



INSPIRATION FOR THE FUTURE

In 2014, I began my tenure as managing editor at *Boating Industry*. Throughout my first year, I was encouraged to see how dedicated boat dealers were to continuously making their businesses better than they'd ever been. Not one dealer I've spoken with has expressed complacency as they plan for the future.

But even the most energetic dealers can feel tapped out from time to time. There is only so much brainpower one person or team of people can exert before the light bulb in your brain starts to flicker.

That's why we are excited to once again bring you our Best Ideas white paper, a collection of the industry's most creative and successful service processes, marketing strategies, sales tactics, customer-focused initiatives, business practices and more.

These 52 ideas have provided tangible results throughout the year for dealers like you. Many of these dealers attend the Marine Dealer Conference and Expo each November, where they seize the opportunity to learn new ways to improve their businesses. Several of the ideas in this white paper represent the *Boating Industry* Top 100, who continue to lead the industry with their best practices.

If you're craving inspiration for how to make your business even more successful in 2015, start with this white paper. Afterward, consider signing up for the MDCE and networking with other dealers to share even more ideas with one another. Together, we can continue to grow this life-changing recreation we all love.

I wish you the best of luck with your business in 2015 and look forward to seeing the ideas you implement in the coming year.



Brianna Liestman
Boating Industry Managing Editor

BoatingIndustry



DEAR COLLEAGUE,

Dominion Marine Media has proudly sponsored the Best Ideas eWhitepaper for five years, and over the years many of you have shared great ideas ranging from appointment apps to owners' events that promote the boating lifestyle. These great ideas have one common thread – to make your customers happy and to create the best experience for them.

Today, we have an opportunity to improve the boat buying experience in the way that Uber has changed the transportation industry and in the way that Amazon has changed the online shopping experience. We don't have to be Uber, but we can't afford to be the taxi companies.

Dominion Marine Media is doing its part by making consumer-driven changes to the Boat Trader, YachtWorld and boats.com websites. We spent much of 2014 learning about boat buyers' preferences and expectations throughout the search and buying process – and you'll see that feedback come to life on our websites throughout 2015.

Boating Industry and the leaders published here are doing their part by sharing their best ideas and insights with the industry. I encourage you to make 2015 the year that your business makes one change to influence your customers' experience.

DMM has been dedicated to the success of the boating industry for over 30 years and we remain committed to providing insight, guidance and statistics to help you deliver a great experience.

Best wishes for a successful 2015,



Courtney R. Chalmers

Courtney Chalmers
VP of Marketing, Dominion Marine Media

DOMINION
MARINE MEDIA
Boat Trader | **boats**.com | **YACHTWORLD**.COM



CONTENTS

pg. 5

WINNER

Using Google Reviews to build a dealer's brand

pg. 7

► BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

- Long Distance Hauling
 - Licensed Insurance Agency
 - Boat Show Mobile Office
 - Corporate IT Improvements
 - Departmental Roadmaps
 - Internet-Based Security Cameras
 - Recruitment Process – Health & Safety
 - Sponsor an Ethics Initiative
 - Invest in Training and Education
 - News From the Bridge
 - Winter Work
 - Team-Based Budgeting
-

pg. 11

► CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

- Spiff Program
- Unhappy Camper Program
- Gold Membership with Sea Tow

- Warranty Administrator
 - High-Class VIP Waiting Room
 - Promoting Social Media Reviews
 - Do-it-Yourself Seminars
-

pg. 14

► MARKETING

- Boatpooling with Uber – **FINALIST**
 - Increased Presence in Non-Traditional Settings
 - Ride & Drive Show
 - Lease Boats to Youth Program
 - Branding through Instagram
 - Showcasing the Lake Lifestyle
 - Riverfront WakeBattle
 - WWS Shredfest
 - Spin the Wheel Promotion
 - Relationship Management Centre
 - YouTube Inventory
 - Touch Screen TV for Used Boats
-

pg. 18

► SALES

- Delivery Folder – **FINALIST**
- In-House Boat Show
- Friday Night 'Under the Lights'
- Wanted: Your Used Boat

- AIR MILES Partnership
 - Boat Displays at the Airport
 - Mobile Sales Bus
 - Boat Show Quote Form
 - Boat Show Display of Lifestyle Packages
 - 20th Anniversary Small Boat Program
 - Shopping Mall Display
-

pg. 23

► SERVICE DEPARTMENT

- Dig Deeper for Service Revenue – **FINALIST**
 - Two-Year Prepaid Maintenance and Storage Program
 - Boat Identification Plate Numbers
 - Spring Check Out Maintenance Package
 - Before-and-After Shots
 - In-Ground Service Bay Pits
 - Gel Coat and Fiberglass Repair Booth
 - Digital Customer Scheduling System
-

Go to
[BoatingIndustry.com/
e-white-papers](http://BoatingIndustry.com/e-white-papers)
to see all the previously
published Best Ideas
White Papers.



WINNER

BUILDING TRUST IN THE DEALERSHIP

Matt Sellhorst utilizes Google Reviews to build his brand

The most defining trait of any good salesman is the ability to provide great service and build long-lasting relationships. How else do you ensure customers repeat their business?

For Matt Sellhorst, whose idea was selected by MDCE attendees as the Best Idea of 2014, this is an integral – if not the most important – piece to the system he created for his boat business.

However, being likable can only get you so far: What other says about you is 100 times more persuasive than what you say about you. If customers A, B and C didn't like you and tell customer D all about it, will customer D take the risk to meet you in person? Probably not.

"Fact: No one trusts a salesperson," said Sellhorst.

This was key for Sellhorst when planning his business goals. Another contributing factor was the knowledge that most consumers conduct online research before ever stepping foot into a dealership.

"Almost all of our prospects go online at one point or another to research boats and boat dealers. Almost everyone uses or knows Google," said Sellhorst. "Plus, they research to confirm what they were told by the salesperson at the dealership. Things like 'We provide the best products and best service in the area,' which every salesperson in the world says."

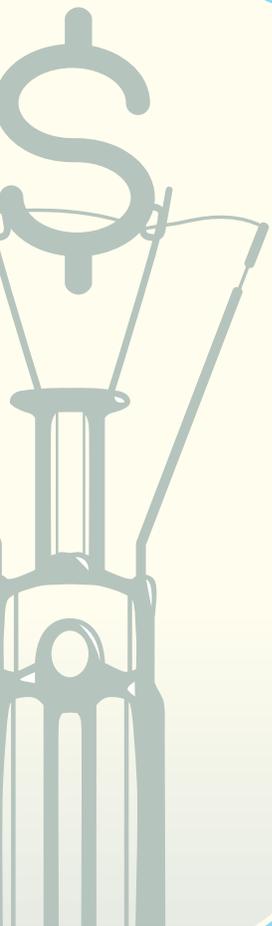
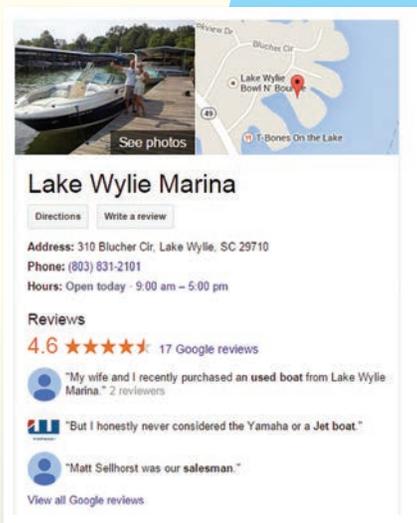
Sellhorst wanted to take advantage of the new digital space and sought to improve his ratings on Google Reviews, specifically through detailed, persuasive reviews. After all, "he was great" can only be so convincing.

"Google Reviews is the closest you can get [personal recommendations] out to the mass media," said Sellhorst. "I can get that same effect ... when you get [customers] to write the same stuff down on Google Reviews, anybody that searches your dealership is going to see that, and it has a similar impact on [their] opinion of your dealership."

The challenge, of course, was to persuade customers to leave positive, persuasive reviews. Most customers don't feel inspired to leave a review unless they have a uniquely bad experience.

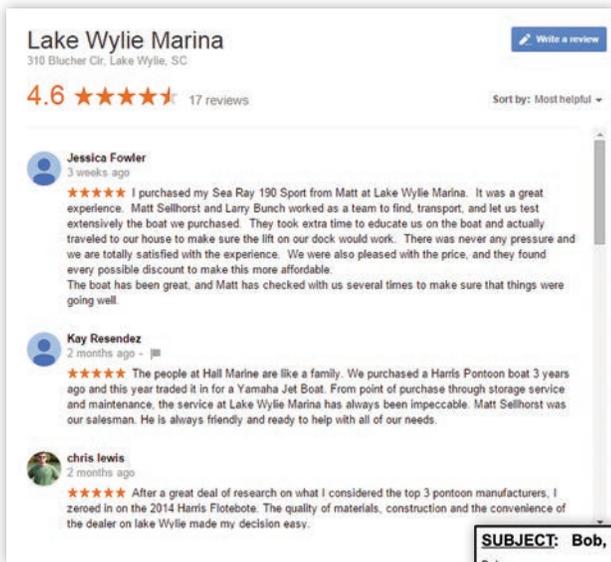
"It's the people that have the worst experience that are going to scream the loudest from the mountaintop," said Sellhorst. "It is easy [to get positive reviews] if you truly do provide great products and service, but they won't just do it on their own. You have to ask in the right way."

So, starting with the foundation of strong customer service, Sellhorst developed a simple





▶ **WINNER** continued from page 5



“It’s your happy clients who are saying it on your behalf, and what they say is much more believable than what any salesperson can say and has a dramatic impact on the margins that you can hold and the branding of your overall dealership.”

strategy. He sent his customers a follow-up email after their purchase offering any assistance they may need to make their summer enjoyable and requesting a photo of them enjoying their boat for his “Wall of Fame.” Afterward, he asked if they would do him a favor and post a review on Google, using specifics about the experience.

To help customers who may not know what to write beyond “he was great,” he provided these four questions for customers to answer:

1. Why did you buy from Matt & Hall Marine vs. other dealers?
2. Why did you buy your boat vs. other manufacturers?
3. What surprised you about your experience?
4. Why do you love boating?

A week before he sent this email, he makes a call to the customer to ask if everything is going well with the boat and if there is anything he can do to be of service. If the customer mentions any issues, he works to make those issues right and waits to send them the email until after a resolution is reached.

“I’ve qualified my prospects but I’ve also made sure they’re having a great experience, so when I ask them for a favor, they’re going to do it for me,” said Sellhorst.

He also created a follow-up auto responder sequence that highlights Hall Marine Group’s Google Review Pages so everyone who enters Sellhorst’s funnel has an opportunity to read those reviews, even if they don’t find the reviews on their own. Even the best reviews and testimonials don’t do your business any good if no one sees them.

“The idea is to provide a ‘Preponderance of Proof’ that we are the right choice,” said Sellhorst. “[The reviews] all tell a story of their experience that people can relate to, because they are going through it as well, and they are less price focused when they come in to buy.”

His strategy cost zero dollars to implement and is a time commitment of 5 to 10 minutes a month – very little investment. Sellhorst

developed this idea while working as a pleasure boat specialist at Hall Marine Group. He now works as a consultant training boat dealers, brokers and manufacturers.

Sellhorst first came across this idea at a car dealership. He found postcards scattered around the service department prompting customers to post reviews on Google. However, he chose to tweak it by continuing his original practice of calling the customer to check in on their boat.

“Every now and again some bad stuff happens that you need to get fixed before, so I thought if I took that idea and added the double-check,” said Sellhorst, “I thought that might be a really good combination.”

Sellhorst found it odd that, with all of the reviews car dealerships and restaurants receive on Google, the only review his dealership had was a negative one. In three months, the dealership gained 16 new reviews. Sellhorst’s response rate

of clients who were asked to submit a review is about 50 percent, producing more reviews – powerful reviews, at that – than ever before. None of his reviews mention “lowest price” – they all speak to the quality of the service.

“The reason these work so well is not because your salespeople are saying ‘We do a great job.’ Your salesperson isn’t saying ‘We’ve got the best manufacturers,’” said Sellhorst. “It’s your happy clients who are saying it on your behalf, and what they say is much more believable than what any salesperson can say and has a dramatic impact on the margins that you can hold and the branding of your overall dealership.”

Listen to one reviewer glow about his experience with Sellhorst: “We just purchased our first boat and we found the best deal from Matt at Lake Wylie Marina. ... The buying experience was great, Matt was very clear about the terms, pricing and there were no hidden fees. ... I am sure that when it comes time to buy another one, I will come here first.”

“Imagine being a prospect who sees our reviews and our competition’s reviews,” said Sellhorst. “Which dealer and salesperson do you know, like and trust more?”

Sellhorst offers a DVD training program, which focuses on both video and written testimonials, at his website www.boatdealerprofits.com. Anyone interested can contact him through the website and mention the Best Ideas white paper for a free copy. \$





▶ BUSINESS MANAGEMENT



LONG DISTANCE HAULING WITH BRINKS TRUCK LINES ▲

Tom Mack, South Shore Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We established a relationship with the Brinks Truck Lines company. The company, which is based in Michigan, owns several empty trucks that travel south and come back north, traveling between the Tiara and Pursuit factories. The company picks up numerous loads on this journey and we have built the relationship with them, as we are a Pursuit dealer.

RESULTS:

Because of this relationship, we have saved thousands of dollars in hauling fees and reduced the amount of “fire drills” associated with hauling boats. Thanks to the professionalism of Brinks, our stress is reduced in our logistics department and they have helped us develop consistency in dealing with haulers.

LICENSED INSURANCE AGENCY

Bennett Rambo, Rambo Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In 2013, I became a licensed insurance agent. My status as a licensed insurance agent enabled us to participate in Global Marine’s Licensed Insurance Agency Program.

RESULTS:

The program has provided our company with additional revenue through premium commissions and renewal commissions.



BOAT SHOW MOBILE OFFICE ▲

Josh Valley, Valley Sport & Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We have converted an enclosed trailer into a full service closing and finance and insurance office, which we call our “mobile office.” We bring the mobile office to every boat show.

RESULTS:

The mobile office works great for our F&I department, as it allows the employees to privately collect confidential information from customers. Additionally, it gives our customers a real sense of professionalism and confidentiality they would not have at a boat show otherwise.

CORPORATE IT IMPROVEMENTS

Rod Malone, The Sail & Ski Center

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Sail & Ski continued an aggressive computer server and infrastructure upgrades effort in 2013. To accomplish our goals, we implemented the following solutions:

■ **Installed Dell Server**

Windows Server OS with Exchange Server – Sail & Ski hosts all email internally. This modern server features a quad core CPU that is approximately 20 times faster than our previous system. The configuration also raised our RAM to 16 gigabytes versus 2 gigabytes in our prior system.

Increased data storage capacity to a usable 2 Terabytes. The hard drives are set up with Raid 5 redundancy so any one drive failure does not take down the system. The drives can be hot swapped if one fails.



▶ BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

We can also add up to 8 more drives as our storage needs grow.

■ **Backup Solution** – Our previous back-up solution employed two external Sata II drives that held 1 Terabyte of data each. The backup speed was approximately 500 megabits per second. We had reached a point where we could not back up all of our data in one night. So we were backing up half of our data each night, alternating between the two drives.

■ **Complete a fiber point-to-point connection** between all of the Sail & Ski locations including the Sail & Ski Yacht Club marina location.

■ **Transition from the Astra Edition to the G2 Edition** of our IDS Business Management System. The IDS G2 system incorporates a much more robust CRM (Customer Relations Management) for Sales and Lead management plus an improved Service Scheduling module.



RESULTS:

Employee productivity has dramatically increased as a result of our improvements, as has the reliability and connectivity across all of our connections. The costs of moving to the cloud for our IDS was substantially less than the cost of maintaining a separate in-house server with the added responsibility for maintaining a reliable back for such a critical portion of our business. We believe we are well positioned for the future as the marketplace continues to become ever more a digital marketing and Internet-based arena.

DEPARTMENTAL ROADMAPS ▼

Christina Prober, Seattle Boat Company

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED

Seattle Boat Company was first introduced to the “roadmap” tool by planning consultant Bob Li. Li presented the roadmap tool during an annual planning summit in 2012 and we loved it. In 2013, Seattle Boat Company took the tool presented by Li one step further – we created a roadmap for each department within the dealership in order to develop departmental goals more clearly.

RESULTS:

We outlined Key Goals and Critical Objectives, among other details. Moreover, departmental worksheets have helped us all understand who

2014 SBC MARINA ROADMAP

		MISSION	VISION	VALUES	
FOUNDATION	IDENTITY	Creating Fun and Memorable Boating Experiences	As the country's best choice for access to fun on the water, SBC's seamless teams take great pride in delighting new and loyal customers with a full array of high quality recreational boating services and products. Its excellent financial performance enables it to provide a great environment for its people and make meaningful contributions to the community.	We Care, We Are Ethical, We Are Driven, We Are Leaders	
	KEY GOALS	A Offering a broad spectrum of services presenting unique value to recreational boaters	B Delighted and Loyal Customers	C A happy and committed team environment	
	STRATEGIES	1. Lead Marketplace with profitable innovative products and services	2. Employees are leaders dedicated to a unique and exceptional customer experience	3. Retain and hire staff that is motivated to and serve our customers with passion	
INFRASTRUCTURE	CRITICAL PROCESSES	1. Managing Financial Performance Using metrics and Reports - Manage productivity and efficiencies - Team leaders entrusted to affect change	2. Adopting Strategies for Customer Impressions - Exceptional facility care and repair - Leading technology aiding customer service - New business strategies	3. Outperforming Everyone - Communication initiatives and events - Earning customer love and respect - Self ownership among each staff member	
		4. Employee Value and Contribution - Celebrate Success - Expect exceptional performance - Diligent healthy and cheerful habits			
EXECUTION	MAJOR PROGRAMS	MARINA SLIP GROWTH *Customer Referrals*Sales Processes*Slip Reporting*VIC Rewards*Storage Center*	SITE+TECH IMPROVEMENTS *Creating "Escape" *LUG Fuel Dock*Improve "S&S" w/ right side*	TEAM BUILDING *Attitude GREET*Standard Behavior*	COST CONTROL *Start Allocation*and Damage*Equipment*and Maintenance*
	2014 OBJECTIVES	A *Customer Referrals (2) for Seattle (15) to LUG (Aug 14)*Sales Process Right Side (Jan 14)*Slip Opportunity Reporting (Mar 14)*	C *Attitude (Jan 14)*Greet5 mandated behaviors (Jan 14)*One off-site (Feb 14)*	D *Create plan for Call member allocation (Jan 14)*and Damage-ZERO*Improve Equipment Maintenance Plan (Jan 14)*	

is ultimately responsible for goals and tasks, which increases the likelihood of those goals getting accomplished!

INTERNET-BASED SECURITY CAMERAS

C. Brian Valot, Atwood Lake Boats

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We installed Internet-based security cameras in key positions within our dealerships, as well as on our rental and gas docks. The cameras are available to management through desktop computers, tablets and smart phones.





▶ BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

RESULTS:

The security cameras allow us to monitor employee service procedures, cash drawers and customer flow on our rental and gas docks so we don't miss any opportunities. In addition, the cameras allow us to monitor our showroom entrance with the office staff in the off-season and continue to work from their offices more efficiently.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS - HEALTH & SAFETY

Ellen Soper, Pride Marine Group



HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED

We changed our recruitment process in 2013. During the onboarding process the new recruit is required to complete a comprehensive online health and safety training course. The new recruit is not allowed to start work until all of the courses have been completed and they have passed all of the exams.

RESULTS:

As a result of this change, Pride Marine Group is now 100 percent compliant with its health and safety employee training.

SPONSOR AN ETHICS INITIATIVE

Michael Hebert, Texas Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In 2013, we became a sponsor with the Better Business Bureau of Southeast Texas in the T.O.G.G.L.E. Program. T.O.G.G.L.E. is an ethics-based essay initiative that encourages junior high/middle school students across Southeast Texas to reflect and write about their "laws of life" or ideals by which they strive to live their life. Also included in the program is "In Pursuit of Ethics," a video-based program for high school students that poses common ethical scenarios and questions that they will encounter. The acronym stands for Teaching Our Generation Great Leadership Ethics.

RESULTS:

This allows us to generate sales and gain recognition throughout the community.

INVEST IN TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Jamie Dewar, Legend Boats

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We continue to invest more and more in training and educating our team members. The most significant change we made this year was to create a position in our company called the Oracle. This person is dedicated to developing processes and training our new and existing team members on an ongoing basis.

RESULTS:

This focus has resulted in significantly reduced training time for new team members along with much better performance in a much quicker time frame. This position has also significantly reduced the number of repetitive issues due to poor processes or lack of knowledge as these issues can be addressed with a new process, enhanced by training almost immediately. In addition to now having a dedicated trainer, we continue to invest in sending our team members to numerous conferences, seminars, and industry events which has resulted in an incredible number of new ideas, new tools and new processes that contributed to the our organization's growth.

NEWS FROM THE BRIDGE ▼

Mark Helgen, Lake Union Sea Ray

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We invested in and implemented a private website called News from the Bridge. All employees were asked to make this their "home page" when accessing the Internet. We recognize employees on this local Intranet with an Employee of the Month award that includes a cash prize, special parking spot (and sign), certificate and bragging rights. There is a small fun blurb about them on the site, as well. We celebrate anniversaries and other milestones here, too.





▶ BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

RESULTS:

After meeting with all of our stores and staff, we heard that we had too many avenues of communication and also not enough. Not all information was flowing through to all employees the same way or not at all. News from the Bridge was created to be a one-stop area for our employees to glean up-to-date company information, anniversaries, events and sales, general messages from senior management, HR forms and links, photos, and even a classified ad section.



WINTER WORK ▲

Paul Davis, Omaha Marine Center

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED

Many of Omaha Marine Center's customers are also winter sport enthusiasts who needed a place to tune their skis and buy their gear. I had a background in winter sports from skiing to snowmobiling, as did several key employees, so we invested in \$100,000 of ski tuning equipment in 2008. Even though Omaha is located about eight hours from the ski hills, there is demand for the service so people don't have to spend time dealing with it when they get to their destination.

RESULTS:

We have expanded to offer skis, snowboards, boots, clothing and other accessories. Omaha Marine Center focuses on carrying items that are of a higher price and quality than the local big boxes carry. We built a new showroom building that will allow an expanded accessory area to house the growing winter gear department. While initially launched with the idea of offering services to our existing customers, the business has quickly grown beyond that group. It's brought in people who never knew we existed. They're finding us on the Web because we're the only ones in town that can tune their skis the same day.

TEAM-BASED BUDGETING

Rob Soucy, Port Harbor Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Our budgetary process is a total team effort and involves the input of all of our directors, location managers, salespeople and even technicians. We utilize past company data, trends and local economic information. During our strategic planning sessions, we as a team agree on a percentage of growth and begin working on a growth plan for each profit center. Recently we invested several thousands of dollars into a budgeting program called Budget Maestro. This system allows us to budget, compare with prior year's performance and also make hypothetical assumptions and what affect it would have on the bottom line. The process takes several weeks and once completed is entered into the IDS dealer management program. Once it is "live" in the IDS system, all directors and location managers have access to their location and department information. At the end of the month the IDS system also generates a DMS report for each location as well as the total company. This report is a complete financial and profit report, and operating analysis.

The process of reviewing actual performance to the budget is the fun part! You will not find a dealer more focused or in tune to informing their team as to what the score is. Each location manager and director is sent a report four times per month to let them know "Where are we?" This report is sent halfway through the month, with one week to go, with three days to go and where we ended. This report shows the percent towards their income goal for the month and compares it to the previous report.

RESULTS:

This whole process has helped with accountability and is one of the reasons I believe in our continued success in a challenging environment. Knowing what the goal is and knowing where you stand towards that goal with an opportunity to affect change helps keep you focused. Recently we have taken this process a step further by bringing individual profit centers goals and status to the frontline level. Now many of our frontline crewmembers are exposed to the monthly income goal and their progress towards the goal. \$



▶ **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

BMC Boats
Bonus Boat Show Savings

FREE New Boat Trade Back Value Guarantee

- **FREE** Seatow for 90 days (new boats) or 60 days (used boats)
- **FREE** Boat Detail Certificate
- **CHOICE** Airfare Anywhere offer providing you with two (2) coach class roundtrip airfares within Continental United States **OR** 7 Day Cruise Vacation for two to Bahamas, Burmuda, Mexico, Canada and Caribbean

Details: Leave a minimum \$500 deposit on a boat from BMC Boats at the show and receive the above Savings when you take delivery of your boat. See sales person and voucher for more details.

SPIFF PROGRAM ▲

Paula Fulton, BMC Boats

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We came up with a special “spiff” program for all customers whom refer us a customer, including referral of service customers. It is a sliding scale in which the spiff is increased significantly for each referral given over the course of the year by the referring customer. We have also put much more emphasis on sales people, and make it a part of their bonus program, to get referrals. We give every customer who leaves a deposit at the boat show of at least \$500 and takes delivery of their boat a vacation cruise or airfare tickets.

RESULTS:

Our dealership’s overall revenue and net profit increased as a result.

UNHAPPY CAMPER PROGRAM

Kyle Kelly, Kelly’s Port

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In 2013 we started the “Unhappy Camper Program.” This was the brainchild of Randy Kelly – he had a negative experience with a local car dealership where he communicated an issue and they basically did

nothing about it. Then, he had a negative experience at a small motor dealer (a weed whip of all things) and when he told this to the employee the owner of the store called Randy personally and apologized. Needless to say, the fact that the owner of the smaller dealership took the time to call was just above and beyond the call of duty and Randy



ended up buying another weed whip and a pressure washer from them the next week. Drawing off of that experience, Randy asks that anytime we encounter a customer that was unhappy with something, however small, he is notified so he can touch base personally. The program goes like this: Kyle talks to Mr. Customer at the boat show, who says he is unhappy about how much his service bill was last month and the issue was not resolved. Kyle then sends an email to Randy stating what the customer said, at which point Randy does the research with the respective areas on what took place, and then calls the customer directly.

RESULTS:

Most of the time, the customers are just blown away that the owner of the dealership called to apologize directly to the customer and they continue to do business with us and even appreciate us more given the fact that we cared enough to take the time to call. This program has been great for us as it doesn’t cost us anymore money besides a phone call and it almost always turns a negative experience into a positive one for the customer, therefore, increasing and maintaining our CSI scores.



GOLD MEMBERSHIP WITH SEA TOW ▲

Travis Hayes, Hayes Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

When a customer has a problem on the water and one of our technicians has needed to take a boat to assist or tow the customer, we lose valuable service time in the shop. This year we partnered with the Sea Tow



▶ CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

franchise on our lake for two initiatives. The first is all new boat purchases include a one-year Gold Membership. This covers any difficulties the customer may have including mechanical, out of gas, etc. For these customers, Sea Tow provides the on-water assistance and will tow them to our facility. We do not have to tie up a technician or lose billable shop time. We also partnered to create a Mobile Service Package for those customers who live on the lake. Sea Tow will provide dock-to-dock towing which allows us to provide an amenity service to these customers with pick-up and delivery of their boat.

RESULTS:

This partnership with Sea Tow has been very positive. Our customers are grateful for the membership as it provides them added peace of mind. Again, it benefits our business by eliminating the need for our technicians to be out of the shop. Our Mobile Service Package is off to a slow start but we think it is a valuable service and will continue to market it to those customers living on the lake.



WARRANTY ADMINISTRATOR ▲

Jeff Wilcox, George's Marine & Sports

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In 2013 we added a warranty administrator who speaks to the customers directly regarding their warranty claim. With this position, a customer now has a knowledgeable liaison and a direct contact with the manufacturer.

RESULTS:

This position has been instrumental in our overall higher CSI scores based on the feedback. Having a dedicated employee who can speak to customers directly has become invaluable. We are far more organized with our warranty claims since this position was creative a few years ago. We've also noted how much more efficiently a claim proceeds when one person deals with the manufacturer who knows and understands the issues.



HIGH-CLASS VIP WAITING ROOM ▲

Allison Smith, Paris Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

The VIP Room, a 25- by 25-foot area that had served as a supply closet in the past, was transformed in short-order by our staff into a high-class waiting area, customer lounge and closing area for the show. We secured sponsorship of the room by a local cottage furniture trading company who provided luxury furnishings, artwork and lakeside cottage-style accessories that enhanced the overall experience for our clientele. We also featured a coat-check station, refreshments and games and puzzles for the kids, all of which were complimentary. The room was highlighted with hospitality staff provided by a local temp agency in Toronto who looked after all of customer's needs. Finally, we incorporated a large custom-built Welcome Kiosk positioned at the entryway of our main booth, which was also manned by members of the hospitality staff who greeting customers, provided assistance where possible, and took care of any administrative related needs.

RESULTS:

The incorporation of the VIP Room, the Welcome Kiosk and the hospitality staff drew multiple laudatory comments from our customers and other dealers and will sure to be included in all subsequent boat shows.



▶ CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

PROMOTING SOCIAL MEDIA REVIEWS

Debbie Poole, Buckeye Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We are seeing the trend toward social media/online reviews and blogging as a form of buying influencers. This is very prevalent in other related markets with the likes of websites like Zagat and Trip Advisor and customers expect that the marine industry is the same. Therefore, it has been of utmost importance to us to increase our online presences and professionalism. Yelp and Foursquare allow visitors to rate us in an online community once they have checked in at our dealership. It allows us the ability to market to those checking in with us and offer special incentives to those who do.



FOURSQUARE

RESULTS:

We have noticed in using both Yelp and Foursquare in both Canada and the U.S. that these mediums are used as much in Canada as they are in the U.S. They are growing in popularity and we were able to get in on the ground floor. In 2012 we added our Muskoka location to these sites as well to try to increase awareness of its exact location. We also know that by adding your location to Yelp you can tag the location on other social media streams such as Facebook and Instagram. The majority of the management and ownership at Buckeye operates iPhones, which has really helped us to step up our game as far as mobile media is concerned. With both we are able to offer incentives for check-ins and reviews to Foursquare and Yelp clients and also we are able to communicate with these followers and urge them to join us on other social media outlets.



DO-IT-YOURSELF SEMINARS ▲

Donald Short, Short's Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Our dealership offers "Do-It-Yourself Seminars" for spring and winterization of their boats. All of these seminars are free to the public. We are the only dealership on the shores of Maryland and Delaware offering them. One of our employees of nearly 30 years helps with these events and has earned a reputation in our area as the go-to guy for marine service knowledge. He is a great representative for our store and the industry.

RESULTS:

They have been successful in bringing in different groups of people who want to learn from knowledgeable Short's employees. \$



▶ **MARKETING**



Boatpooling with Uber & Sky Launch Marinas:

Looking for an alternative to I-90 and 520? We are excited to announce that we've partnered with Sky Launch Marinas to introduce a creative solution: **Boatpooling!**

Drive your boat to the Sky Launch Marina on North Lake Union, enjoy **FREE** mooring and they'll hook you up with **50% off your ride** to the office!

Be everyone's favorite co-worker by inviting them to start their day off with a boat ride and half price Uber!

Good Luck and Uber on, Seattle!

Love,

Team Uber Seattle

FINALIST

BOATPOOLING WITH UBER ▲

Christina Prober, Seattle Boat Company

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

This promotion was conceived out of necessity. A major westbound freeway was going to be under heavy construction and reduced to one lane, slowing drivers significantly during a regular, popular commute. Seattle Boat Co. reached out to reputable car service provider Uber and was able to secure discounted car rides for our customers who were willing to commute by boat into Seattle, moor for the day at our SkyLaunch Marina at no cost and take an Uber car to their workplace for a heavily discounted rate. "BoatPoolers" were encouraged to invite co-workers.

RESULTS:

While communications were done by email from Seattle Boat to its customers, the promo got a bit of PR attention and the promo (plus customer interview) was featured on King 5 News (the local NBC affiliate)! A win-win.

INCREASED PRESENCE IN NON-TRADITIONAL SETTINGS

Phil Daniel, The Great Outdoors Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We are increasing our presence in non-traditional settings, such as home and garden shows, hunting and fishing shows, parking lot displays at malls, and leaving a couple boats inside a mall for a month or two.

RESULTS:

The home shows have much larger attendance than boat shows, and there are people that have been thinking about purchasing a boat but not seriously enough to attend a boat show, so this gives them a chance to check the boats out in a low-pressure setting. This gives us another touch or contact with a potential boat-buying customer. We also see current and previous customers there, and often line up service jobs. We promote the marina there and make a lot of contacts for boat and slip rentals.



RIDE & DRIVE SHOW ▲

Rick Kesterson, Futrell Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We decided to implement a Ride & Drive Road Show to direct market our product. We think this will improve our connection to our regional marinas and boaters, provide a subtle and more personable marketing approach, and increase brand recognition.

RESULTS:

We achieved tangible new and used boat sales from this show, and we increased the number of events in 2014 to meet demand.



▶ MARKETING

LEASE BOATS TO YOUTH PROGRAMS

Evan Davis, Singleton Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Singleton Marine provided 67 boats to the YMCA and other camp and rental programs on a low-cost “lease” type of program. With a guaranteed buyback at the end of the term, the boats were completely refurbished upon their return and sold as late model, high-quality used boats.

RESULTS:

This program was designed to get our brands in front of thousands of young and future boating enthusiasts. By building brand affinity at a young age, we’re planting the seeds for future sales.

BRANDING THROUGH INSTAGRAM ▼

Anthony Villareale, Hampton Watercraft and Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We added an Instagram page for MasterCraft only where we post pictures of our customers with their new boats as well as our boats in stock. We have also been re-posting things directly from the MasterCraft Wakeboarding and Wake Surfing Team.



RESULTS:

The MasterCraft-specific Instagram page has been helping us to get the word out for the younger generation of exactly what wakeboarding and wake surfing has come to be over the years. Our reposts from the Master-Craft Wakeboarding and Wake Surfing teams seem to get people very interested in the MasterCraft product.

SHOWCASING THE LAKE LIFESTYLE

Bob Cox, Starboard Marinas/The Harbor

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We formed a production partnership and produced our own show in the market, and invited any and all fellow boat dealers and others who could contribute to celebrating the “lake lifestyle.” We designed the Lake Life Expo to be “more than just a boat show.” In addition to boats, we have real estate agents, cabin decor and outdoor furniture stores, dock companies, ATV dealers, golf car companies, resorts, developers, apparel retailers and more all under one roof celebrating the lake lifestyle in the middle of winter.

RESULTS:

It was very successful and we contracted for 50 percent more space in the local convention center for 2014, which is the entire building.



RIVERFRONT WAKEBATTLE ▲

Dave Commander, Russell Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In 2013, we teamed up with the city of Montgomery to add an additional wakeboard tournament, known as the Riverfront WakeBattle, to compliment the Spring2Summer Wakeboard Tournament. Dozens of participants came from all over the southeast to compete for more than \$10,000 in prizes during this two-day competition.

RESULTS:

The tournament was a huge success and was awarded by Nautique as the “Event of the Year.” Riverfront WakeBattle was also another event hosted with the intention of promoting and selling Nautiques. The



▶ MARKETING

two-day event brought dozens of competitors from around the south-east and helped bring in several buyers.

WWS SHREDFEST

Bill Bistline, Wakeboard and Waterski Specialty

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In June 2013, we held our very first WWS Shredfest which was the third stop of Tige's Endless Wave Tour. The WWS Shredfest was the first wakesurfing competition in our area and served as a first competition ever for many of our customers.

RESULTS:

Through Shredfest, we had over 50 wakesurfers compete, some local and some from around the world, and over 75 board and boat demos. The weekend was incredible and we were proud to spread the wakesurf fever again with Shredfest in 2014.



SPIN THE WHEEL PROMOTION ▲

Lauren Woodard-Splatt, Woodard Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

This year Woodard Marine had a wheel to spin at the boat show. Anyone 18 years or older could spin this wheel (similar to the "Wheel of Fortune" wheel). On the wheel, we had a winner on every portion of the pie on the wheel. The winning wheel options were: Free Woodard Marine t-shirt, Woodard Marine Gift Card, key chain, Woodard Marine boat rental discount or the grand winner of a chance to crack the safe!

RESULTS:

In order to get a chance to spin the wheel and to comply to the rule books of the promotion company, the potential customer would have to give their contact information, email address and phone number in our contact book. Not only did this satisfy the promotion companies regulations, but also gave us instant leads without any tension or stress. Once the customer spun the wheel, we documented what prize they landed on. We had on-site the free giveaways and the safe for instant gratification.

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT CENTRE

Jeff Wilcox, George's Marine & Sports

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

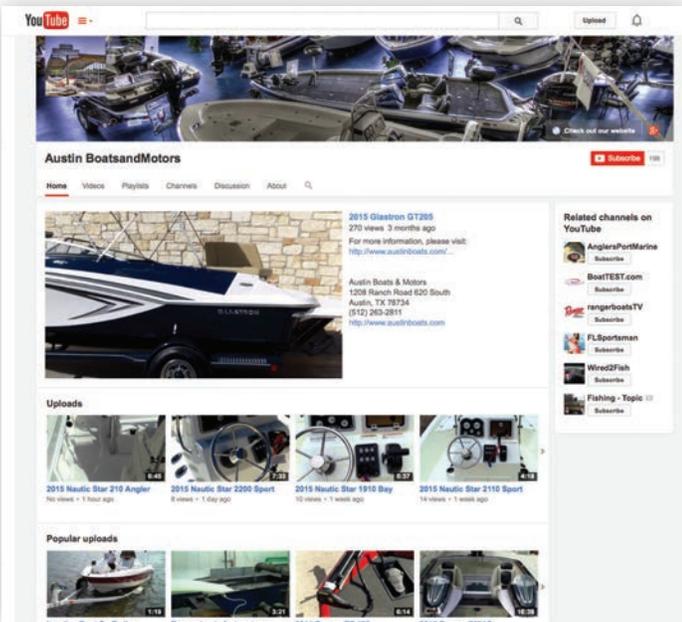
In 2013, we implemented the Relationship Management Centre department within our dealership. We strive for 100 percent of our customers to be 100 percent happy and if that has not been achieved it is the RMC's responsibility to go back to the drawing board until the customer is 100 percent happy. The department is also responsible for communicating with the owner or managers regarding any occurrence that may potentially lower the overall CSI of the dealership. In addition, it is the RMC department's responsibility to follow up with all customers who have used our service department. The current manufacturer surveys only target units that are under warranty. We want our repeat customers thoughts captured as well. Having a relationship with all customers is crucial to our longevity, plus they are more willing to share when we keep the dialogue open. Sharing can uncover greatness, but also weaknesses that we need to be aware of so they can be addressed and fixed.

RESULTS:

With the addition of the RMC our CSI score continues to increase, as this is the fundamental objective of the department. We have seen a measurable, positive impact in the last year by having an RMC for filtering our leads. The ability to manage leads through a centralized system gives us control over a process that was extremely difficult to monitor in the past. We now have the ability to determine how well our Internet marketing is working, and what ROI each produces. In addition the client is now handled by the RMC department until they show for an appointment, giving the sales staff the ability to do what they do best and that is dealing face to face with a client and not over the phone or on by digital means like email. This system has become our most important lead generation and strategy compared to others we have tried over the years. Managing the lead from the time it comes into our RMC department until the customer takes delivery of their new product is a huge advantage over our competition and ensures that no one falls through the cracks.



▶ **MARKETING**



YOUTUBE INVENTORY ▲

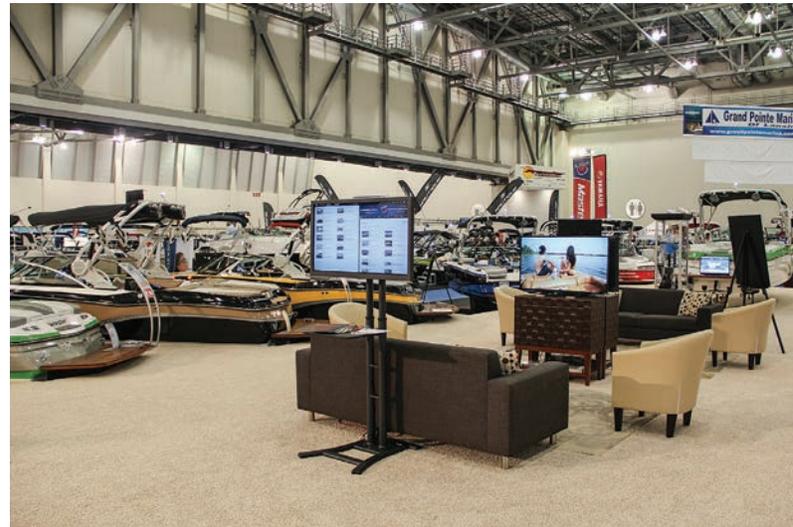
Martin Boyer, Austin Boats & Motors

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We have developed a very efficient practice for getting every inventory item we have onto our website and YouTube. The way it works is each sales rep takes turns (in rotation) creating custom one of a kind walkaround videos of each boat that arrives. It not only gets the customer excited that they get to see the boat via a custom virtual tour video, but they also get the opportunity to get to know our sales representatives before they come in to see the boat. Thus building relationship and trust along the way. It is common for customers to call and ask for the specific salesman on the boat of interest because of the trust that is earned through the exhibition of that specific salesman's expertise in the video.

RESULTS:

This gives our staff an advantage when it comes to building a relationship with the client and helps us earn appointments for in person showings that were not previously possible just via email or phone. Videos have changed the way our dealership interacts with customers. They have also changed the way we convert our prospects into actual customers.



TOUCH SCREEN TV FOR USED BOATS ▲

Jerry Brouwer, Action Water Sports

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We added a used boat touch screen TV originally seen at MDCE in 2013 at the Dominion DX1 booth. We took the touch screen concept and used it to show our used boats. The board was also outdated quickly as boats would sell and the sales team would have to find time to keep it updated. The new system runs off our website which is updated daily. You can see the display at <https://vimeo.com/88286737>

RESULTS:

It has been a hit and adopted by at least three or four of our 20 Group members. The touch screen allows visitors to quickly access details and more photos on the TV and replaces our tack board that could only show one picture and limited information of each boat. \$



▶ SALES



FINALIST

DELIVERY FOLDER WITH CONTENTS FOR NEW AND USED BOAT SALES ▲

Rob Brown, Clark Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We implemented the folder as a sales tool to show our prospective customers who we were and what services we provided. The folder tells the company story and it also includes documented competitive advantage information as well as results of our tracking and trending. I've seen service and slip pricing flyers, though nothing quite like this. Developing the criteria, especially the track and trend results, took us a couple of years to make sure it was totally accurate.

RESULTS:

It worked well in leading folks to our website and influenced a number of sales. In almost every case when people returned after a period of thought (shopping) they came in holding the folder with all their brochures and notes inside. (Many times it included brochures of our competitors too!) Whenever someone came in carrying one we knew we were about 90 percent home on the sale. We would answer a few lingering questions and write the order.



IN-HOUSE BOAT SHOW ▲

Jim Rautio, Traverse Bay Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We have started to have our own in house boat show that runs simultaneously with our little and only local boat show. Our market area has no facility to hold a boat show except for one small show in mid April at a 9,000-square-foot civic center hockey rink after they melt the ice on it. We contract for a small booth space in the show and place signage of our new and used unit inventory as well as brochures of all products. We staff it with our salespeople. Customers seem to "come in more" as it looks very non-threatening as compared to booths that have boats. Our salespeople get to talk to the show attendees and offer them their admission fee refunded by Traverse Bay Marine if they stop out to our dealership, which is open the same hours as the show. We market it as being a complete show. Instead of people going to a boat show to just look at boats that are there, we offer more. We not only have our complete inventory for their viewing instantly, we also offer the boaters answers to questions about service and parts and accessories. We don't just staff our dealership with salespeople; we have our expert trained service and parts & accessory personnel on hand to answer ALL their boating questions. We hear comments like "the show was not even close to the value of the small \$5 admission fee, and we were there less than



SALES

5 “minutes.” What we have started to do for the prospects that visit our showroom during the show is to refund their admission fee and thank them for visiting our showroom.

RESULTS:

This has proven positive results and each year has gained sales momentum. Also interesting to note is that the people coming in to our dealership during this time make positive comments on our showroom having more total boats to choose from than the entire boat show location combined. It is amazing the positive response we get from the prospects. The people say they are glad to visit our dealership because it is a short drive from the show and because they can see all boats and the choices of what they are interested in, and in all the colors and equipment available, rather than just one model that may be at the show. Our customers tell us they love having all members of the dealership staff on-hand to answer questions – not just salespeople. Further they say that we have so many brands and types of boats to choose from that it is like a boat show everyday right at our dealership. They have one location to choose from boats that are the best selling boats in the world.



FRIDAY NIGHT ‘UNDER THE LIGHTS’ ▲

Jana Wood, South Florida Mastercraft

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Our dealership hosts and plans monthly “Under the Lights” in-house boat show promotions for Friday nights. These monthly events allow customers to visit our dealership on Friday nights after business hours. We offer discounts on new in-stock boats at these events.

RESULTS:

Overall revenue in the dealership increased as a result.

WANTED: YOUR USED BOAT ▼

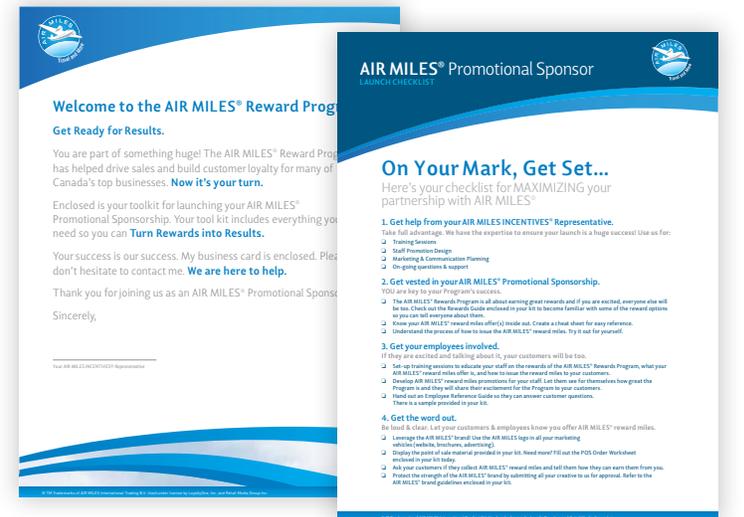
Rod Malone, The Sail & Ski Center

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We have begun using Google Ad Words to promote our website’s “Wanted: Your Used Boat” page. We focus on this promotion to encourage those who are looking to get out of boating to use Sail & Ski to sell or help them sell.

RESULTS:

As a result of this digital promotion through Google Ad Words, pre-owned sales are up at our dealership.



AIR MILES PARTNERSHIP ▲

Matt French, Desmasdon’s Boat Works

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

This year, we partnered with Canada’s largest customer loyalty brand, AIR MILES. We signed an exclusive geographical agreement to use AIR MILES to promote our sales and services through rewarding our customers with AIR MILES. We partnered in early 2014 and went right to work on creating cool and unique promotions to keep our various aspects of our business busy. Our promotions ranged from sales promotions, to service promotions, to boat detailing promotions, really anywhere we needed to get the business moving. We negotiated a rate with



▶ SALES

AIR MILES to buy their reward miles in bulk that worked out such that we were giving people enough miles to do something without really costing us all that much. Each month, we create a unique program to drive business that might otherwise be lacking at that time of year. For example, January is the Toronto International Boat Show, customers who purchase a boat from us there receive 1,000 bonus AIR MILES, enough to fly round trip from Toronto to New York City.

RESULTS:

The AIR MILES brand is so strong that by placing their branding around our marina and in our boat show space, we received business we otherwise would not have. We incentivize people to do midseason tune ups to keep our shop in business. Because the AIR MILES brand is so strong (Seven of every 10 Canadians in our target age range has an AIR MILES card, and of those, 85 percent actively collect Air Miles), we were able to promote our partnership and grow our business. We advertised our partnership through Facebook, our website and signage at the marina and boat shows. Overall this year our business grew, but the real benefit was driving business to areas of our business that were generally slow and thereby keeping our employees busy. August is often a slow month in our shop as all the boats are in and people have not started bringing their boats back for winter, so we offered a August Tune Up promotion. In July, we offered a boat detailing promotion. We are big advocates for the environment, so in May we had a “turn in your 2-stroke motor for a 4-stroke motor” promotion that helped us as well as the environment. The biggest win for us was being able to keep some of our staff busy during months they otherwise would not be busy or would normally be laid off.

BOAT DISPLAYS AT THE AIRPORT ▼

Ray Jahn, Fish Tale Sales & Service

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We are currently displaying two boats at the Southwest Florida International Airport. I first contacted the local port authority when I was



ready to display a boat. I met with Sue Phelan, manager of business and development services for the Lee County Port Authority, her director and the airport director to discuss the possibility. They felt this was an exciting, fresh opportunity and chose to move forward with an exclusive agreement for Fish Tale Sales & Service. A kiosk containing model specifications and contact information for Fish Tale Sales & Service is featured with the boats, as well as a QR code leading to our dealership’s website, but the boats mostly speak for themselves. The boats at the airport provide hands-on advertising. Most people can touch it, feel it, look at it – almost experience the boat itself right in front of them. When people get off the airplane or they’re walking into the airport, it’s the first sight.

RESULTS:

We first featured the Grady-White 225 Freedom at the airport for some time beginning in August 2013. We replaced it with the Robalo 226 Cayman Bay Boat and the Grady-White 251 Coastal Explorer Bay Boat due to the large success we experienced with the 225 Freedom. In the first couple days we started getting phone calls asking us about the boat in the airport. We’ve had a number of sales, not only locally here at Fish Tale but I know it has spread to other Grady-White dealers around the country just because it gives a visual. It has generated a lot of calls here to the business asking about Grady-White. Thanks to the success of the boat displays, Fish Tale Sales & Service has become the number two dealer in the world for Grady-White sale with about 10 boats sold per year from airport leads.

MOBILE SALES BUS

Alexis Purnell, N3 Boatworks

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

N3 Boatworks built a mobile sales bus. This bus includes seating from a Nautique that can accommodate 14. The tremendous Polk audio system is the epitome of the N3 Boatworks way of upgrading and



▶ **SALES**



customizing. A large screen television is also aboard in addition to a removable table for closing deals and a computer system to handle a boat sale and now pro-shop sales from beginning to end. The exterior of the bus contains large N3 Boatworks logos.

RESULTS:

The N3 Boatworks mobile sales bus has the “wow factor” to attract lots of attention and increase brand awareness. It has been used in many ways from delivering boats after service and sales to a mobile pro-shop at local wakeboarding events.

BOAT SHOW QUOTE FORM

Daniel M. Bair, Quality Boats of Clearwater

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Because our average new boat sale exceeds \$175,000, we cater to a different clientele than most other dealers. Customers seldom make an impulse buy of one of our boats. For those prospects who are unsure, hesitant or do not want to buy a boat at a show, we adopted a ‘boat show quote form’ so that we are able to informally contract those customers on boats that they are interested in, but have no obligation to buy. This allows the customer to lock-in boat show pricing and incentives for one week following the show without the commitment or pressure to buy at the show.

RESULTS:

This program has resulted in additional sales after the show and gives us another tool to get customers back to our showroom to show them who we are, what we have to offer, and how our treatment is different than our competition at the boat show.



BOAT SHOW DISPLAY OF LIFESTYLE PACKAGES ▲

Christina Prober, Seattle Boat Company

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

At the 2014 Seattle International Boat Show, we decided to stage our boats with props (similar to staging a house for sale with furniture) showing off the best known use of each boat (ie. water sports activities, destination cruising, tailgating, etc.) while also communicating the boating lifestyle. Props also served a second function: on Opening Night (always a VIP Event) we brought in a professional roulette dealer and



▶ SALES

played custom Seattle Boat clay chips on Red or Black to win prizes from the display.

RESULTS:

Staging our boats was not only FUN, but it also enhanced the display in a way that helped people really imagine themselves out on the water. It brought an otherwise static display of boats to LIFE! We plan to repeat this model of display in 2015.



20TH ANNIVERSARY SMALL BOAT PROGRAM ▲

Timothy W. Leedham, Bosun's Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We created the Bosun's Marine and EdgeWater Power Boats 20th Anniversary Small Boat Program. By working with EdgeWater and committing to them that we would "every day price" their small boats very aggressively with this program, we received the full support of EdgeWater to let us select the equipment and motor sizes for each model as we thought our customers would want and to sell them to us at an additional discount. We locked in this C.O.D. price with them for the year and had them agree to a fixed freight load rate for the year as well. We elected to purposely offer 15' to 20' models on special incentives to super charge sales for the entire line at a sustainable dealer bottom line profit. We trained our sales team to present this pricing program as a no-hassle, best deal up front, no negotiating price. First and foremost, however, we weren't selling price. We were taking the time to sell the Bosun's Marine brand (premium products, offered by caring sales experts who never over sell, with the absolute best delivery and after the sale customer service) and selling the superior design, features (benefits), construction, lifetime warranty, unsinkable safety and superior on water performance of an EdgeWater Power Boat.

RESULTS:

In 2013 we achieved a higher net profit on the sale of 36 15' to 20'

EdgeWaters vs. only 14 EdgeWaters in 2012. And, even more importantly, we did this by being true to our commitment to the consumer to offer uncompromised products, services, expertise, guidance, transparency, integrity and good will. We proved you can offer the consumer a true, uncompromised value at a fair and sustainable dealer margin! Integrity in pricing and selling does not mean advertising the lowest possible price at the dealers' expense or at the expense of giving the customer what they need and deserve in products and/or services. It means the uncompromised retail execution of an honest combination of products, services and pricing to achieve true superior customer value.



SHOPPING MALL DISPLAY ▲

Ken Grant, Midway Auto and Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We displayed 24 of our new and used boats at the Rimrock Mall in Billings, Mont., in a space formerly occupied by a Scheels Sporting Goods store. Originally, I contacted the mall and reached an agreement to display two of our boats, but the mall contacted me and offered the 40,000 square feet that was temporarily available for use. I include two Internet kiosks with the boats to provide shoppers with accessible details on the over 100 boats we currently have in stock, as well as marketing signs that outline the benefits of buying from our dealership.

RESULTS:

It has been a great way to gain exposure for the dealership and get our new brands out there to the public. The better you can make your product look, it becomes more effective for people to want to become involved in boating. The boat displays helped us plant the seeds of interest during the holiday season. Every time I'm up there washing the boats down or dusting them, I strike up conversations. There's a constant flow of people going through the mall. I've had conversations that have generated several really good leads. \$



▶ **SERVICE DEPARTMENT**

TWO-YEAR PREPAID MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE PROGRAM

Phil Miklo, Oak Hill Marina

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

The service manager created a two-year prepaid maintenance and storage program that is offered at a discounted price and shows the importance of maintaining the proper service of your boat. He worked with the finance manager on the sales strategy of selling this program, as it is only offered to boat buyers. The importance of this program for Oak Hill Marina is retaining our boat buyers as service customers and increasing service sales.

RESULTS:

Our penetration percentage rate from boat sales was 33 percent.

BOAT IDENTIFICATION PLATE NUMBERS

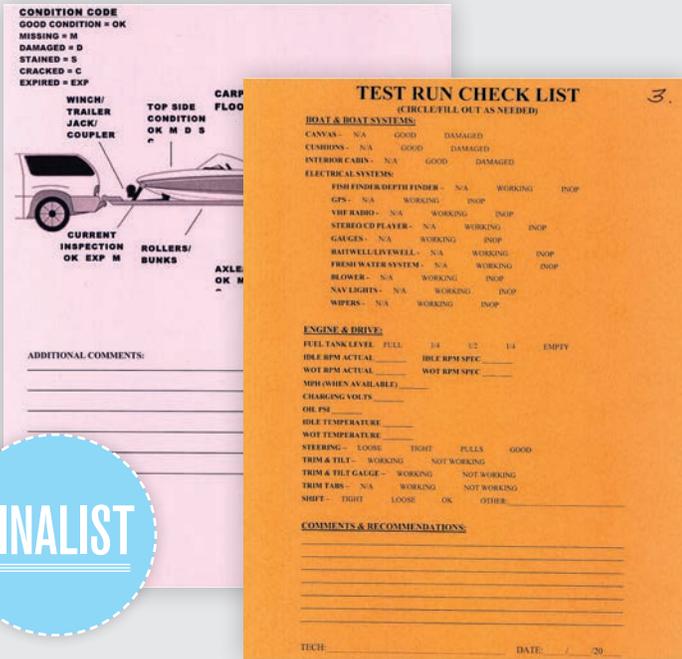
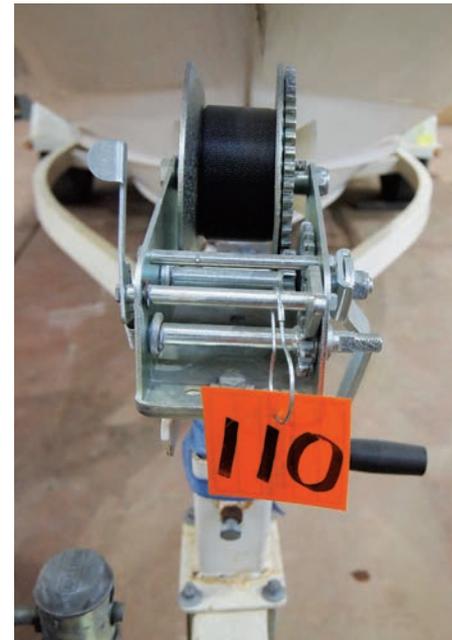
Jeff Wilcox, George's Marine & Sports

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We had a technician who wanted to help improve our efficiency and suggested that instead of using plate numbers to identify a boat that we should have reusable numbers made up that would mount to the front of a boat allowing the lot techs to easily identify the unit that was needed without leaving the tractor cab.

RESULTS:

This has saved approximately two to three minutes per repair order and given that we put about 4,500 ROs yearly per store the amount of time saving is incredible.



FINALIST

DIG DEEPER FOR SERVICE REVENUE

Chuck Guthrie, Lynnhaven Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

There is always additional work on any work order. But it is not found just with a walk around of the boat or with the service writer trying to upsell. Finding additional work has two purposes: making a happy customer with service completed (not just what he asked for) and increased staff productivity. What is one thing you can never get back? A lost hour of service labor. Did you find a future problem before it happens? We look for problem/additional service work up to four times: 1. Your normal complimentary check sheet during repair. 2. On the Customer Bill Of Rights at write up time, we added on the bottom "Can we do these things for you?" We always get light bulbs and fluids checked and more. 3. On any in-water test run, a tech or tech helper carries a checklist to complete during run, which in our case we have a 12-minute no wake zone and 24 minutes total. This gives us time to look for other issues along, while checking actual work that necessitated the run, i.e., Motor runs great but not to full spec RPM – Wrong Prop? This is NOT an Appraisal Trade Sheet. 4. Walk around sheet for Service writer when the boat arrives via trailer 20 percent of shop work.

RESULTS:

As a result of our thorough reviewing process, something is almost always added to a work order in our dealership's service department, which has helped us increase service revenue in the dealership.



▶ SERVICE DEPARTMENT

‘SPRING CHECK OUT’ MAINTENANCE PACKAGE

Michael Hebert, Texas Marine

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We have periodic service specials such as a “Spring Check Out” maintenance package offering deep discounts on some basic services such as changing oils, lubricants and water pumps. We post these promotions on the website, usually with a call to action, i.e., print this coupon and bring it to our service department to redeem your discount.

RESULTS:

As a result of these new maintenance packages, our business’s revenue increased in 2014.

BEFORE-AND-AFTER SHOTS

Ron Martin, Marine Sales of Pickwick & Kentuckiana

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In 2014 a customer notified us that their boat was not returned clean. It wasn’t that we were careless, the techs just got busy and the boat got moved before the final clean inspection was complete. In addition there were several indications that the boat was not in the best condition when it arrived. Our problem at the time of this complaint is that we had no way to confirm the condition of the boat when it arrived. This set off a Red Flag. Bottom line, the customer was not completely satisfied when we returned the boat. It has always been our service policy to return a boat in the same or better condition, regardless of the condition of the boat when it is brought to us for service. We implemented the “Before and After Shots” to avoid this ever happening again. We now have a digital camera in our service department. Every boat that comes in for service now gets three pictures – one interior and two exterior shots when it arrives. Then three pictures are taken again at the time service is complete and the boat is returned. The images are kept in our camera’s memory card until the boat is returned and the customer satisfied. Each year we intend to purchase a new memory card to store the images for that specific year.

RESULTS:

Our staff uses these shots in their final inspection to ensure they have kept the boat in the same condition it was received. We also use these shots to consult with the customer and suggest improvements to their boat. We even increased our detailing services. If necessary, staff reviews the shots with the customer at the time of delivery. If there are any questions or concerns that need attention they notify the customer of ways to improve. We haven’t had any complaints since the initiation of the “Before and After Shots.”



IN-GROUND SERVICE BAY PITS ▲

Alexis Purnell, N3 Boatworks

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

The N3 team came up with, designed, constructed and implemented the use of in-ground service bay pits. These pits hold nearly 100 gallons of water for water testing and can also be used for winterizations where the antifreeze is recirculated through the engine rather than it being wasted. In between the two pits, we added a staircase for easy access to both boats over the pit area. This staircase also contains a platform that holds toolboxes and supplies needed for these types of services. There is enough room on the platform for two technicians to move easily about while only utilizing space that would have otherwise gone unused. Our technicians assisted in the cutting of the concrete floor in the shop and built forms to use as the basis of the new concrete pits. These pits are cut to a width of 5 feet by 7 feet long and are 2 inches deep at one end and 8 inches deep at the other. They were also formed to hold a steel grate over the top so that the tech can walk over the area when those bays are not in use. Drains were installed in the pits and vent to the outside for a much cleaner and efficient waste removal.

RESULTS:

The time was cut in half for winterizations and summerizations. Utilizing the area where the pits were placed has freed up all the service bays and the main entrance to the garage, which is where these services were performed in the past. Less time is being used to move boats around in order to work on them. The amount of waste has significantly dropped because of the circulated antifreeze and sustained water basin. We have seen an increase in profits for these jobs and a decrease in technician hours. The expense of creating these pits was less than \$1000 and the increased profits just in the first week after they were installed rose more than 50 percent for those jobs.



▶ SERVICE DEPARTMENT



GEL COAT AND FIBERGLASS REPAIR BOOTH ▲

Greg Beauchamp, Beauchamp Alberta Marina & Auto Ltd.

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In 2014 we converted a big storage area within our dealership into a fully contained and working gel coat and fiberglass repair booth. We hired a gel coat tech from Calgary who had his own business and did our work for us. We insulated and sided the room, installed high efficiency lighting, indirect heat, fan system and workbenches. We now are doing everything in-house.

RESULTS:

Because all of our gel coat and fiberglass repair work is done in-house, our gel coat bay is booked for months. Not only do we save all the travel and time to Calgary, but we are now getting warranty payments direct, plus customers are adding on additional repairs when booking their boats. This fall, when we check boats in for winterizations, we will do our usual walk around, but now we can point out possible body repairs as well. We are currently looking for a second gel coat tech, as we can get two big boats in the booth, or three smaller ones! He is booked 7.5 hours every day and we are already booking winter jobs, for customers who want work done while boats are stored.



DIGITAL CUSTOMER SCHEDULING SYSTEM ▲

Craig M. Brosenne, Hagadone Marine Group

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

The service department in our dealership added a digital customer scheduling system displayed in real time on a large TV screen behind the service desk and a matching one in the shop. The system is available to service writers and the service manager from any mobile device and at their desks. We use a color key to quickly identify the status of a job. When the job is crossed out, it is completed and ready for pickup.

RESULTS:

The addition of the TV screens allows real-time changes and quick communications within our service group, achieving superior on-time completion of jobs. With this google scheduling system, we have a bird's eye view of the whole month. We can prepare for jobs a well in advance, it allows us to be flexible, and properly communicate with customers if there are any changes.

It also serves as a safety net so we do not forget any details. Our customers love to watch their name typed into computer. Instant gratification and ownership. It also holds them accountable to confirm to their appointment, just like at a doctor's office. \$

