

Boating Industry

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INTELLIGENCE YOU CAN PROFIT FROM



BEST IDEAS WHITEPAPER

46 profit building ideas from the dealer attendees of MDCE

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MARINE MEDIA



LEARNING FROM THE BEST

You're about to dive into one of my favorite projects we produce here at *Boating Industry* – the annual Best Ideas White Paper.

Every day, the *Boating Industry* staff is talking to the best dealers all over the country about what makes their businesses successful. This white paper is a collection of the best ideas we've heard from those dealers over the last year.

The Best Ideas white paper collects the best ideas from dealers for marketing, management, employee incentives and more. These are all proven ideas that have worked for dealers like you.

All too often, small business owners feel like they are on their own. It's easy to feel like that in the day-to-day as you deal with the struggles of running a business in our increasingly challenging industry. In more than 15 years of working with small businesses, the biggest mistake I've seen is simply not taking advantage of the help that is out there.

This white paper is a great resource, as are the articles, webinars and more at BoatingIndustry.com or in print.

Take advantage of the other opportunities available to learn from your peers as well. The vast majority of our Top 100 dealers are members of a 20 group or some other business peer group. That's no coincidence.

Join your local marine trade association. Join the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas. Attend MDCE. These are the things the best dealers do and this constant quest for improvement is what sets them apart.

A great way to get started is to dive into the following pages to see some of the Best Ideas of the year.

Out of the 46 ideas included in this white paper, we invited four of the dealers to present their ideas at the 2013 Marine Dealer Conference & Expo as part of the Best Ideas panel. Those four dealers – Desmasdon's Boatworks, Lake Union Sea Ray, Marine Connection and Seattle Boat Co. – all are recognized in the following pages.

The Best Idea of the Year, as voted on by the attendees of MDCE, was the new app created by Desmasdon's. The panel discussion and this white paper are both made possible by Dominion Marine Media, who has sponsored the Best Ideas program for the last several years.

Jonathan Sweet

Boating Industry Editor-in-Chief

BoatingIndustry



DEAR COLLEAGUE,

Like many of you, I spent the last few days of 2013 reflecting on year-end results. And the one that sticks out most is a particularly popular post on the Boat Trader Facebook page.

It reads, "They say you can't buy happiness, but you can buy a boat and that's pretty much the same thing." It's the most popular post on our Facebook page, but that's not why it stuck in my mind.

I often think about how fortunate I am to be a part of the boating industry, but this quote put it into perspective a little differently. This idea of delivering happiness is what drives us to be successful, to push ourselves beyond the boundaries and to collaborate with one another. It's this idea that often inspires us to think of the best idea - the one that takes our business to the next level.

Dominion Marine Media is proud to partner with *Boating Industry* to celebrate this pursuit of delivering happiness. The Best Ideas white paper is a culmination of creative ideas, best practices and helpful tips from some of the industry's most recognized leaders. Dominion Marine Media 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 happiness. After all, that is what makes our industry so invigorating.

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 2014,

Courtney Chalmers
Director of Marketing, Dominion Marine Media

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MARINE MEDIA
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Created a new lounge featuring "spa-style" furnishings, drinks and food

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A 10x20 billboard that can be towed behind a vehicle to promote events

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Changing marketing to promote the benefits of the boating lifestyle, not the boats

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Making sure customers have all contact info and communicating by text

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Quickly allows sales team to create quotes and track inventory

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Invested in new portable displays that can be used in the showroom when not at a show

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Setting aside time each day when the head tech is available for telephone consultation

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Setting standard rates for repairs, eliminating customer uncertainty

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Investing in equipment to make moving boats easier

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Created a storage rack for lower units and drives during repairs

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Daily monitoring and reviewing of tech efficiency

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A system that channels all work through a central hub, the shop foreman

Enclosed Service Bays

Remodeled service bays to make them self-sufficient and more secure

Technician Parts Counter

Working with the parts manager, service department sets up needed parts ahead of time



Click on images to download the full resolution.



SPARKING A MARINA REVOLUTION

Desmasdons taking its innovative DBW Hub mobile app to the industry

Entrepreneurs who hatch innovative new ideas often keep them close to the vest to reap the rewards. It's the foundation of patent law, after all, and of businesses seeking to leverage a competitive advantage. But sometimes an idea is so good that it has to be spread, both for the benefit of its inventor and for an industry as a whole.

While it may not be the next Angry Birds, the DBW Hub mobile app developed by Desmasdons Boatworks in Ontario may soon find its way into the phones and tablets of marina professionals across North America.

DBW Hub gives customers instant gratification and immediate feedback that tells them their request – be it for service, dry dock or anything else – has been received and is immediately being acted upon.

This idea is so good in fact, and rife with potential, that attendees at this year's Marine Dealer Conference & Expo Best Ideas panel chose it as the industry's Best Idea of the Year.

Improving communication

Using an example provided by Matt French, director of sales and marketing at Desmasdons, let's say you're an executive in a board meeting on a Friday afternoon who's anxiously awaiting the end of the workday to head to your summer cottage. With a few taps on your phone, you can tell Desmasdons you'd like your boat in the water and ready to go by 6 p.m. with a tank of propane for an evening family BBQ.

Once you've made the request, a notification immediately arrives stating that your order is being processed and who is handling the request. Instead of waiting and wondering, another notification arrives shortly thereafter confirming that your boat is ready for your arrival.

This presents a completely new way for customers to communicate with the marina's staff. Judging from early users and staff, who also use the software to track job tickets, it's

is a huge improvement over the past when customers would tell anybody wearing a Desmasdons shirt what they needed, regardless of whether it was the right person. That often meant dock staff hearing about maintenance issues with a boat, which then needed to be relayed to the appropriate person on staff.

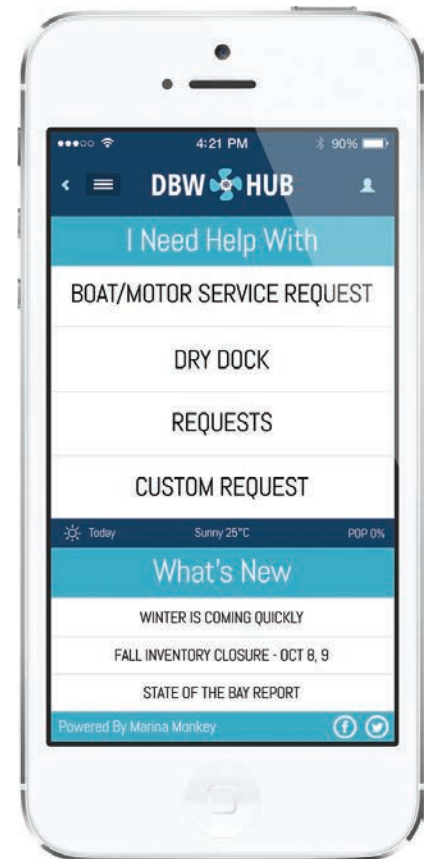
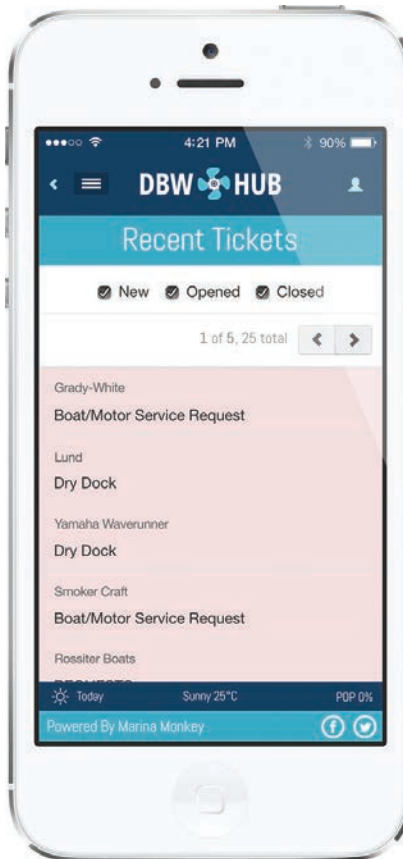
The goal of DBW Hub is to eliminate handing off of vital information, and it also provides a way for management to track and monitor every service item to make sure it was completed in a timely manner with nothing slipping through the cracks.

"If I tell you I want my boat in the water by

Winner continued on page 6

"WE WANTED SOME MEAT AND POTATOES BEHIND OUR APP, AND WE WANTED IT TO BE SOMETHING THAT ACTUALLY ENRICHED SOMEBODY'S LIFE WITH US HERE."

- Matt French, director of sales and marketing at Desmasdons





Winner continued from page 5



Tonia Blenkarn of Desmasdons Boat Works presents the dealership's winning idea at the 2013 MDCE Best Ideas panel.

11 p.m. on a Friday night, I want to know at 6 p.m. that it's actually in the water and not have any fear that I'm going to get there and my boat's not in," said French.

Desmasdons began its development process nearly two years ago, when French set his sights on building a mobile app, both for its cool factor and as a way to streamline the store's operations.

Deciding what exactly it should do was a project unto itself, and the company used its customer focus group to find out their desires, which strongly suggested communication was an area that could improve. Desmasdons staff was also polled throughout the process to ensure the significant investment would pay off on both sides of the counter.

"We didn't want it to be just flashy and have somebody go on it for the first time and say, 'Oh that's cool, but it didn't do anything,'" French said. "We wanted some meat and potatoes behind our app, and we wanted it to be something that actually enriched somebody's life with us here."

Two years of development

Taking an idea and translating it into a func-

tional, trouble-free mobile app required a lot of time in terms of hours billed to their web developer and in-house "sweat equity" to create a massive Microsoft Excel database containing copious amounts of data about the customers and their boats.

Because many of Desmasdons customers have multiple boats and don't always refer to them by their proper names, the database includes a physical description of every boat and motor, all available identification numbers, any onboard equipment and also the boat's hull name.

"When we send the app to the customer, they enter their customer code, they register for it putting [in] their own password and ... their name, their phone number so we can have multiple family members register for it," French said. "We know which individual is making the request, and by putting in their customer code it then populates their boats for them."

That attention to detail paid off. Before customers enter a specific request, they must select which boat they're talking about – a seemingly simple element that has greatly reduced misunderstandings.

DBW Hub is currently being used by 20 to 30 percent of Desmasdons' customers, with a full rollout planned for the spring season to

20-30%

DBW Hub is currently being used by 20 to 30 percent of Desmasdons' customers

make sure it wasn't lost in the shuffle at the end of the 2013 boating season.

"We're going to have people using it for requests to put their boat in the water in the spring, wax their boat, clean their boat, whatever they need to do there's a button on there for it," he said.

Marina staff has also embraced the technology more than expected, French said, with employees and customers involved with the focus group pushing management to start a new company devoted to setting up other marinas with the software to make the same improvements in their own operations.

They've chosen the name Marina Monkey for the venture, and in the next year Desmasdons will reach out to the marine market to offer the app and their personal services to get other marinas up and running with the software.

Building the DBW Hub was a major undertaking, one that cost "more than \$20,000" not including staff hours, but the company feels its in-house benefits alone justify the cost. Now that its focus shifts to spreading this technology through the marine industry, under the name Marina Monkey, Desmasdons hopes to create a new profit center for a relatively minor investment.

"Andy and Tonia Blenkarn, who are the owners, are absolutely committed to this business and growing it and making sure their customers are the happiest customers in the boating industry," French said. "Obviously there's a little resistance when you are talking about numbers [in that range], but we worked together, we worked with a great developer, we came up with some interesting partnerships and we forged ahead and got it done." 🚣



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

FINALIST

DISASTER PLANNING

CHRISTINA PROBER
SEATTLE BOAT COMPANY

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Few other businesses have faced what unexpectedly struck Seattle Boat Company on July 4, 2013, when a random firework dropped from the sky landing in one of the SkyLaunch Marina dry docks down at the Seattle harbor. It ignited a massive fire that dominated the area's TV news coverage in the coming days.

When the fire broke out – at night and during a holiday when many members of the leadership team were out of town – staff immediately sprung into action on many fronts.



To watch the Best Idea's video submission from Seattle Boat Company, click [here](#) or scan the QR code with your smartphone



Some of the news coverage inaccurately speculated about the cause of the fire, falsely pointing to a grill sitting on the docks. Management used its pre-made phone and email lists of customers, employees and key external contacts to inform customers, provide the media with accurate information and also reach its public relations firm to begin crafting a formal press release about the disaster.

CEO Alan Bohling listed the ability to communicate as one of the key priorities in the immediate aftermath while firefighters worked to extinguish the boats. That communication was enabled by the contact lists that were accessible off-site as well as within the multiple locations.

Another part of the disaster planning was more mundane, but equally crucial – maintaining proper safety certifications throughout the organization.

One of its forklift operators immediately tried forking the first burning boat out of the SkyLaunch Marina. He was unsuccessful, and 14 boats were ultimately destroyed in the blaze.

That employee risked his own safety, something that is being reviewed in retrospect. Aside from risking personal injury, his actions could have opened the company up to costly fines if his certification was not maintained in the months and years prior to the incident.

Lastly, the company fosters an environment where it seeks to hire smart people and then empowers them to make right decisions whatever the situation.

RESULTS:

We are lucky to have retrospection that allows us to see what went right in the middle of the destruction and untimely publicity. We are fortunate no one was hurt and also fortunate to receive an outpouring of support from our customers and fans during a difficult period.

While no company should have disaster preparation plans for every type of disaster, basic planning will give your company the ability to handle the most important issues when something happens. In this case, that meant contact-

ing the customers to put them at ease, providing staff with immediate directions and informing the local media of the key facts of the fire.

All customers that lost boats were offered boat club memberships to ensure they were able to get on the water with friends and family during the holiday weekend. Multiple efforts showed genuine compassion to all impacted parties and helped the team maintain its good standing with its customers.

Reacting quickly wasn't enough to stop the fire from spreading through the dry dock, but its sincere, careful, timely and accurate reaction created goodwill throughout the industry and Seattle metro area.

CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING

NANCY SMITH
COLORADO BOAT CENTER

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Every year we set aside either the last day before Christmas break or the first day of the New Year to devote to mapping. At the 2012 MDCE, I purchased a DVD from the keynote speaker, Robert Stevenson. I knew that the material would be something that our staff could relate to and the presentation would be well received. When the DVD was over, we then went into discussion of customer service.

A week prior to our meeting, each employee received a survey to complete and return by the end of the day. I wanted their most spontaneous answers to their buying experiences, interests and hobbies and purchase priorities. After discussing the DVD presentation, the first thing they were handed were the results of their surveys and all of the responses that included favorite places to shop, eat, etc. and why. Also included were places they didn't want to return to and why, and the various activities they enjoy away from work and why.



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RESULTS:

Our employees found that no matter how different their personal interests were or where they chose to shop, eat or stay, they all had some common denominators that made their experiences exceptional or not. This was a key to bringing them closer to understanding our customers and their passion for boating. Now we were onto something!

The large sticky notepads came out and everyone started analyzing the information from each category and how it applied to our boating customers. When all was said and done, everyone agreed that price was not the most important thing and friendly, knowledgeable service was everything. In essence – good value! It was a very successful training session and the sticky pads now adorn our staff meeting room for a reminder.

CLOUD-BASED HOSTING SOLUTION

BENNETT RAMBO
RAMBO MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We just finished the process of moving our entire business network to the cloud. Before this was available dealerships have struggled with the management of in-house servers. We have always been fortunate to have an employee that was very dedicated to our IT, but even with a great in house IT you have several risks. Outsourcing servers to the cloud eliminates the dealerships dependency on that one guy and creates a safer solution



to complex servers and systems.

Our server housed two components of our business:

- Shared documents, pictures, files, etc. that are used by employees in various depts.
- Our dealer management system

We used BOX.com to move all our shared documents, forms, pictures, etc., to a cloud service. This enables employees access to those items 24/7 from any type of device. We also found it provided additional improvements like having all our inventory spec sheets in the cloud and available on any phone all the time.

Our DMS began offering a hosted server option, where they manage, update, back-up, etc., your data. We completed our migration to this service last month. Our operating system can now be accessed anywhere we have internet access.

RESULTS:

We found having everything in the cloud made access much easier and more secure. We reduced risk of downtime by outsourcing the systems management. We are multi -location and the cloud also helped system speed and stability. We are also able to collaborate on documents now.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS AND LOW-INTEREST LOANS

PAUL BERNEY
LEGEND BOATS

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Pretty much all marine dealers are lean and just

don't have time or resources to turn over all the stones out there for secondary sources of revenue to enhance and or expand their businesses. Most, if not all provinces, states, municipalities, regions or national governments have programs for grants and low interest loans. My idea is awareness and how to best tap into these pools of cash.

Grant writing is a science and skill and the "I can do it myself idea" lowers your chance of getting approvals. Engage with an expert and let them turn over the rocks out there to find what is available to your business and do the grunt work.

RESULTS:

My work with Legend allowed me to focus on grants and low-interest loans to which we have turned up hundreds of thousands of dollars for the expansion of the business, much of which is grant money.



COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY PROGRAM

ROD MALONE
THE SAIL & SKI CENTER

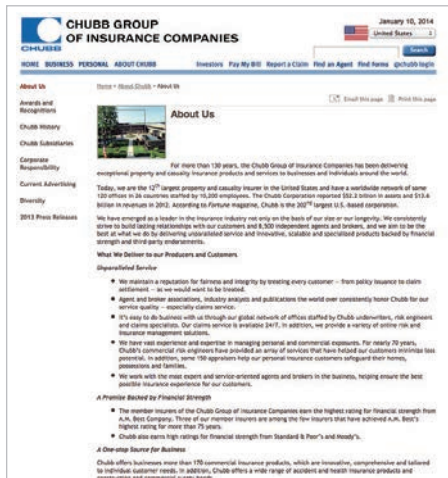
HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Starting in 2011 we formed a Safety Committee comprised of three corporate executives and 10 department managers from five different locations with a mission of creating a comprehensive safety program.

Prior to holding our first Safety Committee Meeting, we scheduled a series of risk assessment site visits whereby our CHUBB Insurance Property Casualty Risk Engineer, along with our Safety Committee Chairperson and/



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or location manager, performed a detailed inspection of each of our facilities and documented all visible and potential safety concerns. These site visit recommendations provided the framework for our Comprehensive Safety Program and quickly led to the development and implementation of our Fleet Management & Safety, Self-Inspection, Driving & Use of Vehicle, and Accident Investigation & Reporting policies and procedures, which we determined were critical first steps in the process of developing a solid safety program.

Throughout 2012, we continued to hold quarterly Safety Committee Meetings with our CHUBB Insurance Property Casualty Risk Engineer. The Safety Committee took action, as needed, to modify, improve, and finalize safety policies and procedures, address and eliminate known or suspected safety hazards, and foster employee support of and participation in the Comprehensive Safety Program.

RESULTS:

Total employee work related claims decreased 75 percent in 2011 and remained at the 2011 level in 2012. Total dollars paid for actual losses decreased by 49 percent in 2011 and decreased an additional 65 percent in 2012. In addition, our Workers Compensation Experience Rating has improved significantly since 2011, which indicates that we're making good progress toward our ultimate goal of minimiz-

ing the risk of employee injury and company loss by creating a "safety culture" that encourages all employees to work safely and actively participate in the safety program.

HIRING A LEADERSHIP COACH

TRAVIS HAYES
HAYES MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We developed a relationship with a Leadership Coach, Bill Hill. Bill has been a Hayes Marine customer for several years and approached us about developing a professional relationship. Bill comes in twice a month and provides coaching on personal effectiveness (i.e., leadership, communication, interpersonal skills, time management, goal setting, and action plans) and business effectiveness (i.e., marketing, sales, customer service, human resources, financial management and systemization).

RESULTS:

Areas of improvement as a result of our coaching include: refinement of mission and vision statements and pull through these ideals in plaques in our offices, on our website, posted in our service area and at the parts counter;



the identification and leveraging of the Hayes Marine advantage; mystery shopping of our competitors and using this information to improve upon our customer service; enhancement of our Internet leads follow-up process and a process to encourage increased engagement with Internet leads by developing specific open-ended questions for our email responses; increased delegation of responsibilities and training of our core staff; role-playing and coaching telephone skills for customer service follow-up calls; and a decrease in the owner completing tasks others are skilled and capable of and reserving his time for higher level activities and activities that grow the business.

SUMMARY RECAP SHEET

TIM LEEDHAM
BOSUN'S MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We have developed our own internal "summary recap sheet" that gives both financial and non-financial management an up-to-date snapshot of our business at any point in time. The recap sheet uses information generated by our complex IDS accounting system, including balance sheets, profit and loss statements, accounts receivable aging and accounts payable aging for all three locations and then combines it with other information gathered from internal and external sources, including our Excel-generated budgets, to provide management with a one-page, user-friendly document so that top managers can monitor the status of several key business and financial indicators. For 2012 we improved upon this format even more with the addition of the tracking of Service Labor Sales by location vs. prior year and budget on the same overall page format.

RESULTS:

What we have developed and use here, twice a week is, we believe and have been told by fellow Spader members, the most thorough, easy



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to review, easy to understand and most relevant financial management tool we have seen used anywhere. The benefit of this report is that management can review all key financial, budgeting and tracking aspects of the business on a one-page, easy-to-read and understand report, rather than arduously generating IDS reports and filtering through volumes of various non-user friendly reports for multiple locations and multiple years.



VOIP PHONE SYSTEM DOUGLYSS GIULIANA ADVANTAGE YACHT SALES

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We changed our phone system to allow us to be better connected even when we aren't in the office. We moved to RingCentral, which is a cloud-based, voice over IP system. This system gives us a number of features that allow us to stay available to and connect with our customers. We can forward our desk phones to mobile phones, receive voice mails as emails, make calls from our mobile phones as if we

were in the office, and more. The system is easy to administer and modify from anywhere, allowing us to quickly make changes when we add personnel or even remote offices.

RESULTS:

We are more accessible to our prospects and customers, poised for future growth, and don't have to worry about managing an on-site system ourselves. We are also saving about \$90 each month.

WEIGHT-LOSS CHALLENGE

LAUREN WOODARD-SPLATT
WOODARD MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In 2012, we constantly heard within our dealership how we wished we were in better shape, could paddleboard longer, where more awake during the day, etc. We decided to implement the Woodard Marine weight loss challenge! This 8-month program was open to any Woodard employee. There were two teams to choose from, the Fit Team and the weight loss team. If you were at a healthy weight and did not need

WOODARD MARINE INC. Weight Loss Challenge



WOODARD MARINE INC.
Weight Loss Challenge

PRIZES	MOST WEIGHT LOSS %	PRIZE
	5% to 9%	\$100
	10% to 15%	\$150
	16% to 19%	\$250
	20% to 28%	\$500
	29% to 32%	\$1000
	33% & More	\$1500

Notes & Regulations

- Cost: \$100 per person
- August 20th deadline
- Entry fee is \$100 (per team)
- Weight change will be based on 2012 at start of program
- Final members will be kept secret
- A before picture will be taken
- Weight in country
- No eat and drink programs weekly
- Final weigh in on Wednesday Aug 28th in morning
- Individual prizes and biggest loser will be based on total weight loss over an 8 month period
- A final picture will be taken

Slimey Crew Rules

- No entry fee
- If you don't gain more than 5% of your current weight you will get \$100 (but your name will be entered in a drawing)
- If there are no winners for the biggest loser, another total weight loss percentage prize is awarded

BIGGEST LOSER GRAND PRIZE
= Total Entry Fee (x persons entered) + 3 PTO Days!

to lose weight, you could join the fit team. If you wanted to lose weight under a controlled competition, you could join the weight loss team.

Woodard offered financial incentives for those team members who lost weight as well as fit team members that maintained weight.

RESULTS:

This eight-month team-building program has been one of our best ideas ever! All the team members are participating and everyone is losing weight, has more energy, and it has created a healthy competition within the dealership!

EMPLOYEE REWARDS PROGRAM

CARLY POOLE
BUCKEYE MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In 2012 we created an employee version that provides rewards for continued loyalty and commitment to the success of Buckeye Marine. The employee side of this program is designed to thank and recognize our staff for extraordinary actions and shows appreciation for years of service and customer referrals. Employees



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can be referred to earn points by customers, managers, owners and/or fellow employees. If a staff member notices a fellow employee going above and beyond the call of duty, they can reward them with points by filling out a form to tell us what they saw or heard. Once the department supervisor and an owner signs off on the request, points are received on their card.

RESULTS:

Once earned, staff are able to redeem points to get a number of great rewards such as gift cards, event tickets, travel packages, tools, electronics and more. A book outlining the details and specific reward items is housed in the main office and points can be redeemed at anytime.

STREAMLINED HIRING PROCESS

DEBORAH LINEBERRY
PARIS MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We streamlined our hiring process by having one trusted employee screen incoming resumes to narrow down the “candidate pool” prior to conducting interviews. This process allowed us to save time by only interviewing candidates who met the specific required criteria set out in our job descriptions.



We also made changes to the interview process itself by having two management employees conduct each interview instead of conducting multiple interviews with a single management-level leader. The team consisted of at least one owner and the manager of the department that the candidates were interviewing for. Having more than one interviewer gave

us the ability to eliminate/select candidates based on more than one person’s assessment.

RESULTS:

This process created far better interview results and zero employees who were terminated or quit due to inabilities to perform the specified duties. 📈



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION



SAFE BOATING COURSES

RYAN SLATER
CANDLEWOOD EAST MARINA

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We hold safe boating/personal watercraft courses at our dealership. It is mandated in our state to hold a certificate, so we offer the courses to our clients and hold the courses in our showroom.

We hold about two courses here a year which totals over 10 hours broken up between four nights. Having the class in the showroom allows the students to have a more hands on touch to the boats and I can demonstrate items such as lighting, sound signals, crossing situations as well as rope tying. With support from our Parts and Pro Shop Store, I am able to demonstrate different types of safety gear like various types of life jackets (PFDs), anchors, fenders, etc.

RESULTS:

We are currently at a 100 percent passing rate since we started these courses more than five years ago. We really provide the course for boating awareness and to make sure that other boaters that are on the same waters as us every-

day understand the rules of the road.

Having the courses at our facility has also led to some good referrals for both our boat sales and marina slips.

LOYALTY PROGRAM

JUSTIN PRETASKY
AMERICAN MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

As we came out of the recession the value of the purchase became more important to our customers again. I wanted a program that rewarded customers for doing business with us 12 months a year. The program was created with the interests of boaters in mind. Giving them something back was our way of saying "thank you" for doing business with us now and in the future.

It was determined that those who slipped (whether in the form of drystack or wet slip) and stored (in the form of outside, inside cold or heated) in the same year would qualify. The customers would receive discounts on fuel, electronics, winter work, boat rentals and more. We launched an advertising campaign to the

general public and sent an email/mailer to all our current database of 6,800 customers. For the boat show season, we would give the Loyalty Program to all customers who purchased a boat for the current year. It was added later that all customers who purchase a boat receive the program for the current year.

RESULTS:

Boat show results were up. New and used boat sales increased in part because of the program. Drystack saw an increase of more than \$16,000. Customers who purchased boats in January & February have signed up for \$4,800 in winter storage and \$3,300 in slip agreements (though slip agreements haven't even been sent out) for the 2014 season, mainly to keep their loyalty discounts in place. Slip sales for 2013 brought us from 84 percent full in 2012 to 93.5 percent full. Storage overall has brought in a 4.8 percent increase based on comparable time frames.

90% TRADE ALLOWANCE PROGRAM

JANI GYLLENBERG
MARINE CONNECTION

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We have a great base of first-time buyers who would like to discover boating by being able to try out a few different boats in their first five years of boating. We offer 90 percent trade value within 360 days of their purchase if they make a larger dollar purchase. We accept no more than 150 hours of use on these boats within the first year in order to be able to market the pre-owned boat and maintain our margins.

RESULTS:

Our customers feel more comfortable purchasing a boat that they want to try out for a prolonged period of time. We eliminate the

Click to download an example email/mailer



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

hassle of trade negotiations or a private sale and upgrade them to another boat. The sales tax savings is an additional benefit for these companies. The benefits to Marine Connection are extraordinary from a CRM standpoint and we save a lot of marketing dollars by investing in our existing customers.

GAS DISCOUNT SYSTEM

KYLE KELLY
KELLY'S PORT

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

If you are signed up as a Kelly's Port Preferred Customer then you get \$.10 off per gallon which encouraged us to sign up more people as customers, get their contact info, and ensure their loyalty through their "discounts."

RESULTS:

Signed up about 400 boaters for that program. We also gave an additional \$.10/gallon if they paid cash in order to cut back on our credit card fees. We sold more gas and our fees paid to the credit card company went down by 25 percent.



CUSTOMER WELCOME AND REFRESHMENT CENTER

FRED PACE
LEGENDARY MARINE

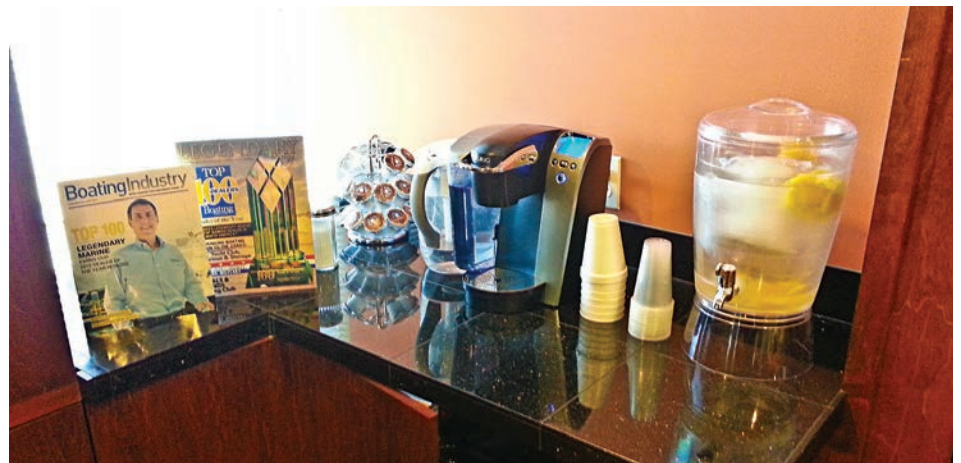
HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

A new effort to provide a warm and welcoming reception experience includes the addition of a "Customer Welcome & Refreshment Center." Legendary Marine invested in the design of a custom built wood cabinet for its foyer lounge area which accommodates an offering of single-serve coffee and tea products, along with spa-style fresh-sliced fruit and/or vegetable sliced ice water. In addition, the center is hand-

somely flanked overhead by a newly designed and installed trophy case that showcases the recognitions received by Legendary Marine. A series of beautiful awards are featured, with beautiful back-lit LED lighting. Select Legendary Marine publications and the custom produced, 28-page Legendary Boating magazine are also available on the coffee table.

RESULTS:

It has been well received by our customers! We believe the welcome center provides an immediate positive impression for our guests. Besides offering a refreshing beverage, we believe the trophy case subtly suggests and communicates that the customer is working with a winning team at Legendary Marine. 🏆





MARKETING

FINALIST

FEATURED BOAT OF THE WEEK

KAY WOLTMAN
LAKE UNION SEA RAY

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Our goal was to reach and engage the younger, first-time boater through social media and on-line marketing efforts at a very low cost.

We are providing a no-obligation, fun and easy opportunity to test drive a boat in a friendly, offsite, non-selling atmosphere. The focus is all about the hands-on experience which emphasizes the boating lifestyle while receiving education about the boat, features, benefits and performance.

The dedicated Featured Boat of the Week web page offers a "Vote for your boat" message area where we invite everyone to vote for their favorite boat which could be selected as the next Featured Boat of the Week & Demo. Voters of the selected boat are notified by email and receive a free Lake Union Sea Ray boater's gift bag at the demo.

"Vote for your boat" is also a lead generator. The voter must include their email in order to submit their vote.

A dedicated Featured Boat of the Week webpage provides details on demo boat and demo location, a Facebook post is "promoted" announcing the Featured Boat of the Week with demo location details and an e-blast is sent to our database of customers and prospects announcing the Featured Boat of the Week & Demo.

The Featured Boat of the Week is at the designated boat launch ready to go with a minimum of two salespeople and one support staff member. Test drives are provided on a first come first serve basis.

The total cost is \$10 to \$15 for Facebook promoted posts, plus the cost of fuel. We host the demos for 2.5 hours.

RESULTS:

Results were mixed for the three events:

■ For the first, demo ride was a Bayliner 185. The weather was terrible, with cold and pouring rain. No one was at the park. We still had three groups that braved the wet weather.

■ For the second, demo ride was a Sea Ray 190 Sport. Weather was nice, sunny and 70 degrees. Two previous Sea Ray customers were anxiously waiting while everything was being set up. We gave eight rides to 12 groups of people.

■ For the third, demo ride was a Sea Ray 220 Sundeck. Weather turned out fantastic, again 70 degrees and sunny. The park was not crowded, however there were two people waiting for us. One prospect, who had previously spoken to a salesperson was anxious to take a test drive. The very next week we sold and delivered a 240 Sundeck to this prospect. The event worked for this customer!

Although the Sea Ray 220 Sundeck Featured Boat & Demo event sold a boat, the best performing event for Facebook was the Bayliner 215 Bowrider demo, as 5,518 people saw the post and 31 people liked the ad.



and we are getting advertising everytime they wear them.

RESULTS:

We have received thank yous via phone, email and customers stopping into the dealership asking if they can have another. This ended up working out great, and is a nice way to say thank you to our customers for all their business this year.

CUSTOMER T-SHIRTS

AMANDA KANAS
HAMPTON WATERCRAFT & MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Every dockage customer and every winter storage customer receives a Hampton Watercraft & Marine T-shirt. We got three different shirts made up, with the Hampton Watercraft Logo on the front, and engine brand down one sleeve, the boat brand down the other sleeve, and a picture of a boat on the back with the words Hampton Watercraft & Marine.

We were trying to come up with the best way to use up some of our co-op money and decided our customers would love shirts,

"WELCOME ABOARD" TIRE COVERS

GREG BEAUCHAMP
ALBERTA MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We have tire covers made that have our name and "Welcome Aboard." We looked at towels, champagne, etc., but this tire cover not only gives the customer something they actually want, we get advertising up and down the highways, and more importantly on the trailers sitting at marinas, launches, etc.!



MARKETING



We implemented a VIP program, which is pretty normal for dealers who are trying to be a notch above everyone else. We have the life-time tax saving on parts and service (5 percent), front of line emergency service, boat loaner (if can't be repaired), referral program etc.

Part of the VIP program is the "Welcome Aboard Gift" tire cover.

RESULTS:

It is simple, relatively inexpensive and great advertising.

Customers love the cover and the message "welcome aboard"! Old customers and service customers ask to buy them, and we usually give one free to them. They are always very happy they got something free, and we get more advertising wherever that boat goes!

ANNUAL POKER RUN & AUCTION BENEFIT

DALE THOMAS
LAUREL MARINA & DEALERSHIP

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

As a Bristol business, our ties to the region's strong motorsport brand of Bristol Motor Speedway made Speedway Children's Charity a logical choice to derive benefits from our annual charity event. The Bristol Motor Speedway Chapter of Speedway Children's Charities donated just under \$800K to over 80 agencies

in the Tri-Cities region in 2012.

With priorities set locally, proceeds from the South Holston Lake Poker Run event directly enrich the lives of children in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia.

With this much-anticipated annual event, Laurel Marina has been able to harness a local passion for boating, and transform it into a driving force behind making a difference in the lives of regional children.

Cost for participation is a suggested donation of \$35, and a \$1,000 cash purse is awarded to the winning hand. Once the monies for the purse have been guaranteed, 100 percent of all additional proceeds derived from the event benefit Speedway Children's Charities. All together, prizes are awarded for the top four hands of the event.

Upon registration, participants are given clues to find four dealer boats on South Holston Lake. Each dealer boat was offered courtesy of marina customers, and was sponsored by a local business for \$700 per boat. The sponsorship fee gave that business the opportunity to promote their brand and sponsorship via a 6-foot banner produced at their own expense. Sponsorship was easily sold for all five dealer stations.

RESULTS:

The 2013 event showed a \$4,000 increase from last year. That is nearly a 33 percent increase and we are happy to give \$16,015 to the charity in 2013.

There were about 50 boating participants in the Poker Run in 2013, and more than 250 in attendance for the live auction and music. Additionally, marina store sales that day showed a 75 percent increase over a typical summer Saturday.

Through our efforts, the annual Poker Run has created a major, long lasting, positive impact that will have benefit to the community and the region by way of supplemental funding for the educational and emotional basic needs for our children.





MARKETING

CELEBRATING HISTORY

ANDREW HODGE
ED HUCK MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We wanted to celebrate the history of the on-the-water marina and dealership business that spans 124 years and is now operated by the fourth and fifth generations of the family. We use existing archival materials that are scanned and restored so that they can be produced as



large display pieces both indoors and outdoors for everyone to see and also providing the historic captions to accompany these and tell the Ed Huck Marine story. The skills and knowledge of local historians and historical groups were also leveraged to help enhance the final product that also ties in with the branding of the picturesque village that the business is located in. The murals and photo displays that have been created have been done using high quality production standards that reinforce the quality of the brands of today.

RESULTS:

The response from everyone who experiences the displays is very positive. People love learning about the stories and it starts a conversation about their love of boating, good times, family and strengthens the customer relationship while offering an opportunity to find out what we can do to continue that enjoyment in the future.

TOWABLE BOAT SHOW BILLBOARD

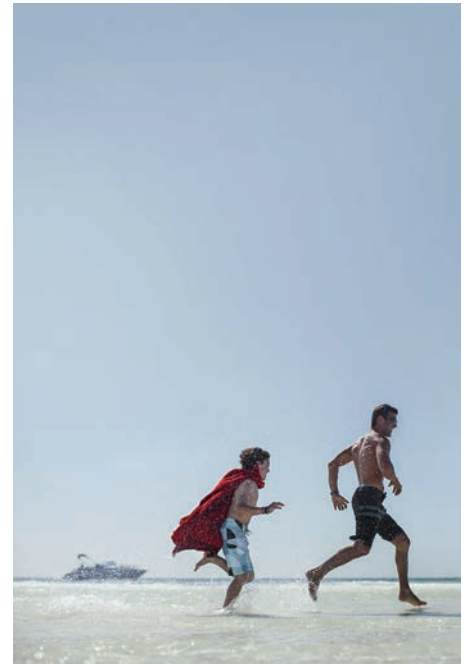
MICHELE PRICE
PRINCE WILLIAM MARINE SALES

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

This sign is two-sided, approximately 20 feet long and 10 feet high. We have it attached to the top of an old trailer we had. In the fall we had an employee drive the sign around the local areas and distance areas during the day and evening to promote our fall boat show. We also have been changing up the sign for different boat shows and events we want to advertise.

RESULTS:

It gets a lot of attention on the roads and when it is not out running the roads we have parked it in some malls and shopping areas to advertise. We believe the results have been good; we spoke to many during the show that saw the sign.



FOCUS ON THE "WHY"

ABBEY HEIMENSEN
MARINEMAX

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In 2012, Bill McGill, President & CEO, drove an initiative to focus on the "Why" of boating and the boating lifestyle rather than the price of a boat purchase. With this shift of focus, came many fundamental changes. Rather than looking to our competitive dealers, MarineMax choose to instead look at our competitive lifestyles: the other activities and hobbies people do instead of boating. This initiative was the



MARKETING

primary focus of the new MarineMax.com website project that was started in FY 2012. Visitors to MarineMax.com (launched FY 2013) will see that it is laid out by lifestyle as well as by product.

RESULTS:

We have made it easy for visitors to find their perfect boat, by picking the lifestyle that best suits them and their families.

COMPANY NAME CHANGE/BRANDING

JEFF HALL
HALL MARINE GROUP

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

As Hall Marine began diversifying and adding product lines it became very apparent that the company name and identity and those of the individual locations did not tell the whole story or represent all that we are in the market. For years our company name was identified and completely associated with our primary product, Sea Ray, i.e. Sea Ray of Savannah, Sea Ray of Charleston, etc.

With the addition of new product lines the old company names did not serve our mission and image well, nor did they communicate what we represent. Furthermore, these names, while recognized in their respective local markets, did nothing to promote the overall company as a regional business with significant presence outside of local markets. Customers were not aware of or appreciating all of the benefits and positive aspects that a multi-location, regional, marine organization had to offer because, frankly, we were not telling them.

Each location is now re-branded as "Hall Marine" with the geographic location sub-heading, i.e. "Hall Marine-Lake Wylie",

"Hall Marine-Greenville", etc. The new Hall Marine logo was designed and confirmed. The reasons and rationale for these changes were clearly communicated to all crew members and they were instructed on how to answer questions or concerns from customers like "Did you guys get bought out?"

RESULTS:

The results of this strategy have been very positive and it was implemented in a way as to not create confusion in the market place. Hall Marine is positioned as a large regional marine organization that is unique and able to offer resources and opportunities not available from most of our competitors. Instead of the name being totally product focused and centered around one brand, we now are a company focused on selling all of the benefits and resources Hall Marine offers who sells and services multiple major national brands.

'YES YOU CAN' CAMPAIGN

CLAYTON RAVEN
BOAT TOWN

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We designed a new marketing strategy for the boat show and direct mail pieces with the slogan "YES YOU CAN" own the finest luxury runabout boat in the market! For the boat show, we put bright yellow vinyl "YES YOU CAN" on the windshields of the boats and it allowed a lot of other consumers to look at the boat that normally wouldn't have because of the perception that Cobalt's are too expensive.

RESULTS:

This has been hugely successful. In the end, the consumer can clearly see that owning a Cobalt is the highest quality, highest value, most enjoyable, least expensive answer to their boating needs. These materials are displayed throughout our sales showroom as well as boat shows. We believe these materials set the tone for the types of products that we sell.





SALES

FINALIST

DIGITAL PRICE SIGNS

JANI GYLLENBERG
MARINE CONNECTION

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In the past, our in-house designed printed price signs have been a big hit with customers, competition and our manufacturers. The combination of bold photos, specifications, details and pricing in an easy to understand format



has often been imitated, but never duplicated. For 2012, our marketing department came up with a new concept: replacing our printed price signs with LCD panels and thereby replacing static photos with running video of each boat. These Digital Price Signs are used at boat shows and in our indoor showrooms.

By utilizing LCD panels and custom developed video playback servers, we were able to take our price signs to a whole new level. The photograph on printed signs were replaced with running videos of each boat, allowing customers to see how the boat performs in the real world.

RESULTS:

Even before the doors opened at the Miami

International Boat Show (where we debuted our digital price signs), the displays were an astounding hit between other manufacturers and competing dealers. While we were ready to answer any questions about the boats we were selling, we weren't expecting the "We'd like to license the technology" or "How much to buy the displays?" questions.

Customers have commented over and over again how easy the information is to understand, and we believe that having the customers see the boats in action on video just further excites them about getting out on the water. Our salesmen have found the displays to be a great tool to demonstrate ride characteristics of specific boats to customers comparing our brands to the competition.

From an investment standpoint, this technology has already paid for itself as we no longer need to pay for high quality print versions of our signs that had to be updated on a continuous basis.

DELIVERY PROCESS

LARRY TAGUE
LAKE VIKING MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Once a new owner has decided on a boat and a delivery has been decided on we transfer the customer to the Delivery Captain.

Our delivery captain is our new customer specialist whose duty is to completely present all features and functions of the boat to the new owner and family.

The captains duties are not limited to but include going thru and checking (with the owners' help) all safety items required by law, including and understanding the state laws, floatation, rating plates, lights, sounding device, fire extinguisher and such items that the Coast Guard recommend and require.



RESULTS:

The new owner and family is encouraged to drive and dock the boat so the captain can help them get used to the craft, when the owner is satisfied with the process, we will show them how to launch and retrieve the boat on the trailer or the hoist whichever they may have.

Last but not least, the new owner is introduced to the service writer, accessory manager while we wipe down there purchase and hook up to their tow unit, checking lights and tie-downs.

On departure the owner is encouraged to put our phone number in his phone, encouraged to always take his phone along with him, reminding them we and our shop are open all days except Wednesday the entire boating season and are as close as a phone call. There is no silly question except the one that is not asked.

PEEL-AND-STICK BUSINESS CARD

JEFF DUHAMEL
LEGEND BOATS

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED

We had beautiful folding business cards with our personal message inside a beautiful aerial shot of the dealership. People liked them when they were given one. However, when you gave the client a brochure on the product they opened the brochure and threw the card inside.



SALES

As they walked away the card would fall out. Or if I stapled it on, the card got ripped off when they placed it in the show bag with everyone else's card that was laying in the bottom of the bag.

I started thinking that when they took the brochure out when they got home what was the likelihood they would see my card and remember me as their salesperson. Even though I made an impression on them they may only remember me as the big blond guy.

The next day I called my local printer and had 10 rolls of 1,000 peel-and-stick fluorescent orange labels made with my name and our toll free 800 number on them in thick black print.

RESULTS:

Those clients would come back in with the brochure I gave them with my florescent orange name stuck in a professional manner on the brochure ask for me and the rest is history. My personal sales increased 40 percent that year. Today our entire staff has a nice card and the peel and stick one. They are made from a very thick stock to be handed out as a business card but in seconds it's on the brochure.

When I give a brochure to a client and stick the card on in front of them they are blown away. They all say, "Wow, what a great idea."

DUAL-UP SALES SYSTEM

MARK HELGEN
LAKE UNION SEA RAY

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Our dual-up system is one of our most effective sales strategies and has no cost! Our sales people take turns greeting guests as they arrive at the dealership(s) in our showrooms. From that point, they engage in the steps of the selling process. Often, this is called an UP System, or next UP, etc.

We have added a wrinkle by taking the last UP sales person and having them greet service and parts customers, assist in drop-off/pick-up

of boats, or just simply grab them coffee as they wait to be helped by our service and/or parts people. This allows a natural conversation about what they own, where they are in the ownership process, and really improves customer service.

RESULTS:

Recently, we had a customer come in for a new fuel cap on his Sea Ray 240 Cruiser and leave with a new 280! When the customer had asked for the fuel cap, the sales person simply said, "I have a brand-new one attached to this boat!" Many great prospects and eventual sales have heralded from this simple added process.

DIGITAL SHOWROOM MANAGER

MIKE THAYER
THAYER MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Digital Showroom Manager allows us to pre-populate all the specs, standard and optional equipment for any brand of boat our dealership sells. DSM allows us to preset our desired retail margin and factor in our factory discounts, which has greatly improved our price accuracy. We capture customer information on every custom quote, which improves the follow-up processes. During the configuration of a boat the salesman can work directly with the customer to choose

Specifications	Included Items	Price
Length: 19'	190hp Mercury EFI 4-Stroke	\$26,799.00
Width: 7'11"	High Series Pkg	\$3,450.00
Fuel Capacity: 32 Gallon	PrePacked Equipment Package	\$700.00
Max Horsepower: 170hp/100	Stainless Steel Package Upgrade	\$274.00
Person Capacity: 8	High Capacity Trailer Upgrade	\$1,165.00
Dry Weight: 2,399 lbs		
	Total MSRP	\$32,017.00
	Thayer Marine Inc Discount	(\$491.00)
	Thayer Marine Inc Sale Price	\$31,526.00
	Additional Items	Price
	Dealer Fees	\$65.00
	Taxes	\$1,091.56
	Thayer Marine Inc Total Sale Price	\$33,482.56

desired options and the total sale calculations are made automatically. If the customer would like a payment quote there is a payment calculator that automatically calculates the payment based on the boat we are configuring. For the sales manager we have a margin view tab so the sale percentages can be checked prior to completing a sale. If there is a need for additional discount a promotional discount can be entered which is subtracted off the selling price. Each deal can be handled from the greeting of our customer to the closing of the sale with our built-in purchase agreement and finance applications.

RESULTS:

Our price accuracy has improved dramatically. Our presentation of our product has improved because the showroom manager places the product information at our fingertips. If questions come up regarding additional options or specifications we use our tablet to help answer the questions. It saves time and creates a professional presentation as we don't have to thumb through the brochure or dealer manuals. DSM allows us to present a discount between factory MSRP and our selling price. The discount when presented virtually stopped the customer from asking for additional discounts. We have had so much success with this program that other dealers have asked to use the program.

SHARING CELL PHONES WITH CUSTOMERS

MICHELE PRICE
PRINCE WILLIAM MARINE SALES

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Many of our salesmen are finding texting to be a great form of communication especially for short conversations. When having that one-on-one conversation in the showroom, the salesman discusses follow-up calls and asks the client if they prefer texting.

RESULTS:

Many salesmen say they are getting better re-



SALES

COMPANY SALES CONFERENCE

JEFF HALL
HALL MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

For the last five years, Hall Marine has organized, paid for and conducted a multi-day Sales Conference in January, held at a marina/ hotel resort in Charleston, S.C. All sales team crewmembers and dealership managers from all six dealerships, company management and principles are required to attend and participate.

For 2012, Hall Marine stepped up this effort to include two sales conferences, the early season, pre-boat show, sales conference in January and a second conference in December. The new December Sales Conference was added as a way to “dig in deep” on the nuts and bolts of the sales process and was primarily an intense multi-day classroom sales training event. Hall Marine hired J.D. Schmid to lead and conduct this training which began in December of 2012 as a first session with a follow-up multi-day session as part of the January 2013 pre boat show Sales Conference. Both sessions were conducted out of town, away from everyone’s offices so that attention and focus could be centered on the training.

RESULTS:

There was considerable cost and time commitment required for these efforts, but the benefit and results were immediate and obvious as our early season boat shows resulted in higher closing ratios, increased sales, improved prospect management and better follow-up. Our sales people have a formal sales process to work with, better habits, increased product knowledge, better skills in handling objections, competitive comparisons, and better closing skills. Furthermore, the sales crew seems to work more closely as a team now having had an opportunity to get to know each other better during the Sales Conferences.



iPADS FOR SALES TEAM

PAUL NICKEL
PRIDE MARINE GROUP

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Several of our boat manufactures now have apps for iPads for their boat brands. We have capitalized on this new technology by introducing iPads to our sales force.

We didn’t just go out and buy new iPads for the sales team, they had to earn them. We created a sales promotion where the reward was a new iPad if the team met their aggressive sales target for the month. The team achieved the target and were rewarded with iPads.

RESULTS:

This sales promotion was a couple of months before the Toronto International Boat show. The entire team was able to use the manufacturer apps as part of the sales process with the customer on the floor. This was much more effective than bringing the customer to the back of the booth to look at brochures and pricing information. The sales person could quickly qualify the lead and move onto the next customer in a much shorter time span. The end result was that we had the best show in our history.

FREE WATER SPORTS LESSONS

JERRY BROUWER
ACTION WATER SPORTS

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Customers receive a free 1/2 water sports lesson with one of our local pros. We send an employee out who is very good at water sports. He calls the customer before the lesson to ask which products they may want to try. Our local pro takes the products with him and instructs the family on how to get up on skis/ wakeboards and can remind the family how to dock the boat or use the cruise control.

RESULTS:

The customers regularly ask us to leave the water sport accessories and have us bill them. We have seen a rise in the amount of accessory sales and hours on the boats with the imple-





SALES

mentation of the free lesson program. Our local pro instructors are very good at putting on a show as well by doing flips on wakeboards or 360s on surfboards. The families regularly write our staff thanking us for the lesson and explaining how it has enhanced their summer. This also creates a friendship between our staff and our customers and builds trust in our Pro Shop staff's credibility.

MOBILE PRO SHOP

ALEXIS PURNELL
N3 BOATWORKS

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

After opening a new proshop, it was decided it would be advantageous for N3 to present at the Spring 2012 boat show with a proshop. Toward the end of 2011, we prepared diligently for the boat show and began to stock the pro-shop more heavily. It was also imperative to work out the new procedures that came with the opening of the pro-shop so we could easily make our pro-shop more mobile.

RESULTS:

In 2012 N3 promoted the Boat Show Pro-Shop and we sold nearly \$8,000, which was close to

what our like-lined friendly competitors advertised they did on their best years. We did this with a fairly slim inventory and no real experience. We considered this a great success and the traffic increased in our booth we estimate two-fold at least.

CONSIGNMENT PACKAGE

ROSANNA AIELLO
DAVEY MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In 2012, we continued to see in our market an increase in demand for affordable fishing boats especially the continued rise in pre-owned boat sales. To optimize pre-owned boat sale opportunities, we introduced a new consignment package.

To promote the benefits of listing a boat for consignment with Davey Marine as opposed to just trying to sell it by owner, we explained how we would market the listing by placing it on our website, our social media and several other online boat sale sites such as boat trader, boats.com and iboats and be able to reach a much larger percentage of



interested buyers because of where our page ranks and our ads place and the volume of banners that we purchase on many of the sites that we use, resulting in greater success for a sale and Davey Marine's service manager performed evaluations and suggested minor or at times more detailed repairs or enhancement options to increase the consignment boats resale value. Our new 90-day consignment packages also offered the client storage and re-listing options.

RESULTS:

Within 12 months Davey Marine's consignment boat sales increased more than 70 percent. 📈



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

[Click here to download](#)



SERVICE DEPARTMENT

"TALK TO A TECHNICIAN"

CHRISTINE LADNER
BREATH'S BOATS & MOTORS

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

To avoid multiple interruptions during the busy work day and to increase service shop efficiency, we set aside two specific time periods during the work day when our technician is available by phone to answer customers' questions, trouble shoot service issues, and give care and maintenance advice. "Talk to a Technician" time is 8-8:30 am and 5:30-6 pm.

Our well-known, respected head technician makes himself available by phone each morning and evening to assist customers with service-related questions and maintenance advice. Callers use our main business phone number and are directed to our technician with their questions or concerns.

This new program was advertised to our boating community through our quarterly newsletter, our website, Facebook posts, Twitter posts and other social media outlets.

RESULTS:

As with any new routine our customers are slowly getting accustomed to having access to our head technician during those set-aside times. Our parts, service and sales personnel reinforce this new schedule anytime a customer calls to speak to our technician.

FLAT RATE SERVICE SYSTEM

TERENCE FOGARTY
FOGARTY'S LAKE FLOWER MARINA

We went to a flat-rate system that is modeled after high-end automotive service systems. Our system incorporates a \$100 diagnosis fee, then

from that point we come up with a firm estimate that is based on our managerial experience, technician experience, in-house flat rates and the Spader Flat Rate Manual. The service writer and the technicians agree on an estimate and what the techs will get paid for the job, then the service writer goes to the customer with a firm estimate.

The system is set up so that the technician knows what he is getting paid before the work is done and the customer knows the cost of the repair before the work is done. There are no surprises. The other upside to this process is that all of the "grieving" the customer does about the cost of the repair is done prior to the boat being worked on. Normally we estimate the job 10 percent high and charge the customer less when they come to pay so that they are actually happy to pay the bill.

RESULTS:

Our shop income in the first year went up 25 percent because the jobs that were too expensive for customers were weeded out prior to the work being done. The cost of the repair

was agreed upon ahead of time so that there was no negotiating the bill down after the work was done. From a technician standpoint, their pay also went up roughly 25 percent. More importantly from a billable efficiency standpoint, the techs are at 100 percent since they are only paid for what they bill.

CONOLIFT TRAILER

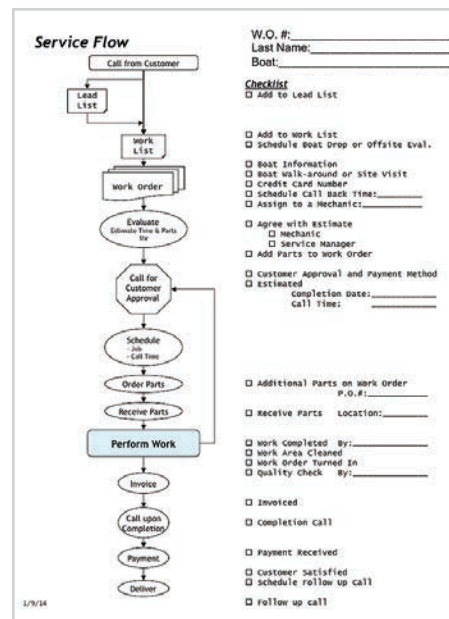
BRENTON CLOUD
CANNONS MARINA

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We streamlined the service yard by eliminating the use of trailers and vehicles and purchasing a Conolift made by Kropf industries. The Conolift is a hydraulic trailer that allows the marina to haul boats out of the water without the use of trucks and trailers.

RESULTS:

The boats can be placed on wooden blocks or yardarms and this allows the marina to save time, space and money. This machine is also gentler on the boats, to help maintain their value.





SERVICE DEPARTMENT

LOWER UNIT RACK

TRAVIS HAYES
HAYES MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Our technicians requested a place to store lower units and drives during the completion of repairs. As a result, we created a lower unit/drive rack. A rack was placed in the shop to provide a place to secure the lower units and drives.

RESULTS:

The results are that the lower units and drives being repaired have a common location, there is less likelihood of damage to these units, we have less clutter in the shop and we are better organized. More importantly, this was an improvement suggested by our staff and demonstrates their engagement in the business as well as our responsiveness to their suggestions.

NEW TECHNICIAN EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

PAUL NICKEL
PRIDE MARINE GROUP

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

Last year we introduced a new technician Time Tickets/Efficiency program in the service department on a trial basis. At the end of every day all technician time tickets are entered into our DockMaster system and compared against the standard time allowed for each job of the day to calculate tech efficiency. The diligence of the service manager doing it before leaving each evening has allowed for not only a scoring system for technicians, but it also allows us to compare and ratify the site punch in clock each day for every technician by the minute. The lag time at the beginning of each day and the drag time at the end of each day has been almost eliminated.

RESULTS:

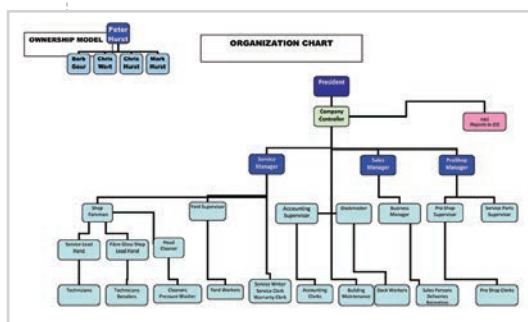
With each minute of the day now having to be charged somewhere, this reduction of internal accounts has forced difficult decisions to be made with respect to service comeback expense, sales make-ready and goodwill accounting in the service department. There are now fewer expenses charged to the internal account and more hitting the retail customer accounts for work we do. This trial was very successful, therefore we have rolled it out across the organization.

SERVICE DEPARTMENT CHAIN OF COMMAND

PETER HURST
HURST MARINA

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

The service, cleaning, detailing and fiberglass shops chain of command have been completely restructured to facilitate workflow. All work is channeled through a central hub, the shop foreman in service, in order to manage both internal and external work. Managers communicate their needs through the shop foreman rather than directly to the team members.



RESULTS:

The centralized process is a great improvement since the shop foreman works closely with the service writers and managers and has a sense of the entire organization's needs and is better able to prioritize the workflow.



ENCLOSED SERVICE BAYS

FRED PACE
LEGENDARY MARINE

HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

In the past, the service bays at Legendary Marine were open. Employee focus group feedback recommended that the bays be enclosed on three sides and to maximize efficiency, that all needed support functions be fed to each of the bays. A four-month project ensued, resulting in the enclosure of 18 service bays, all of which are self sufficient, with each having its own power, water, drain, sinks, towels, hose, reels, etc. Brighter paint and lighting were also added, providing a much more pleasant working environment. In addition, each member of the service team has assigned bays from which to work, which they can personalize.

RESULTS:

The result has been increased efficiency in overall operations, pride in ownership and a much cleaner and more professional working environment.



SERVICE DEPARTMENT

TECHNICIAN PARTS COUNTER


RON MARTIN
MARINE SALES OF PICKWICK

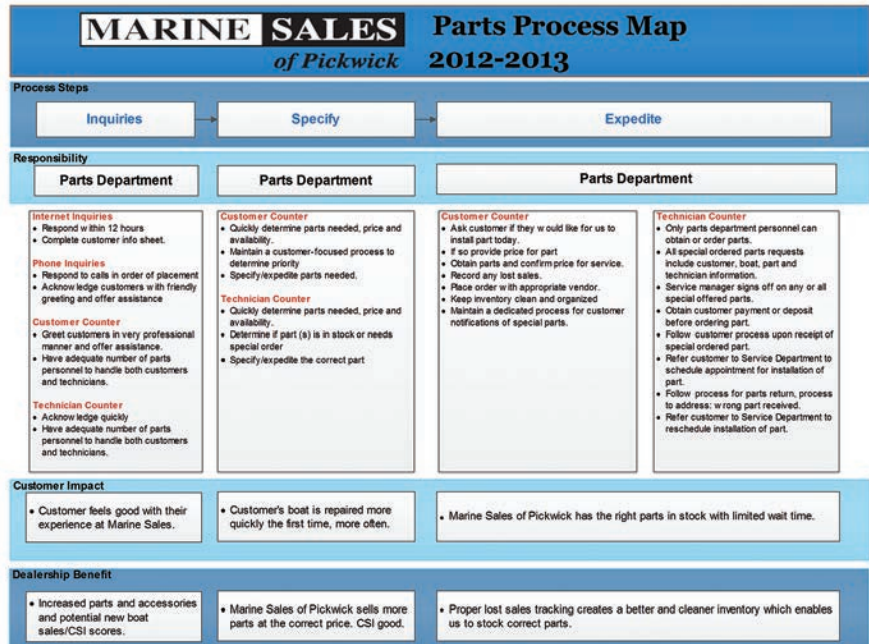
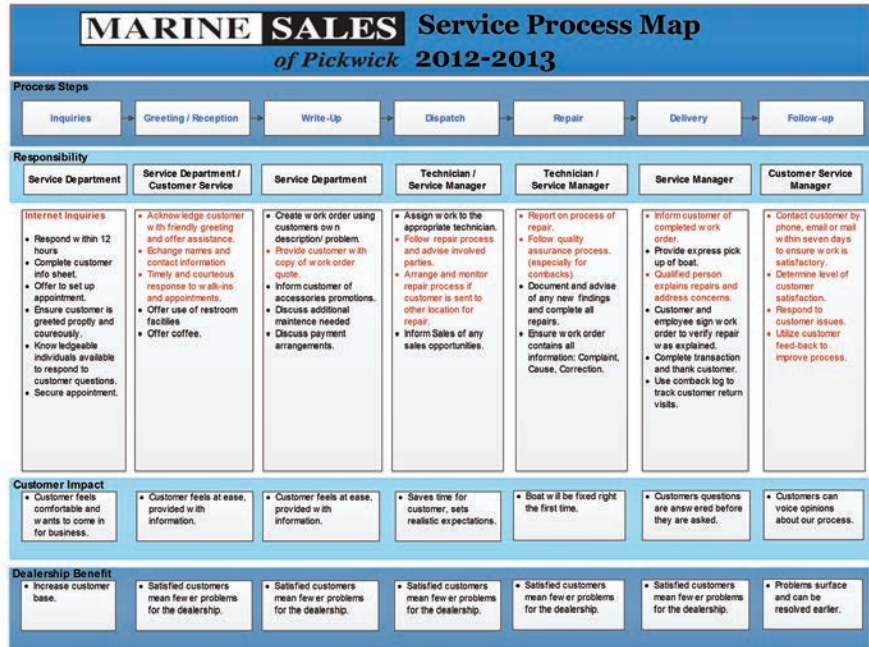
HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED:

We initiated a Technician Parts Counter process to expedite wait time to obtain parts for work orders in the queue. In previous years the technician would notify the parts manager at the time a part was needed. This often caused delay in the work as the part often needed to be pulled out of inventory or ordered. In addition the part could not be issued to the technician until the part was added onto the customers' bill.

Today all job orders are processed through the Parts Manager as the job order is being written and before it goes into the queue. Now technicians have all the necessary parts ready for them to pick up in our new shelving system which stores all these processed parts in alphabetical order.

RESULTS:

The technician counter process has greatly shortened our turn-around time on service jobs as well as greatly improved the communications between the Service Manager and Parts Manager. We are more successful at identifying those parts that need to be special ordered at the time the work order is being written rather than when the work is being performed creating a quicker turn-around time for each work order. We went from having no parts ready at the time a work order is scheduled to having nearly 75 percent of the parts ready for technician pickup at the time a work order is assigned and scheduled. 



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Michelle Shrider, Washburn Marine, Morgan City, LA



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