

THE VOICE OF POWERSPORTS RETAILERS

# Dealnews

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DEALERNEWS.COM

## BONA FIDE RIDER

SAN DIEGANS KNOW THAT GUSCIORA & CO. 'GET' THE TWO-WHEEL LIFE



### DEALER EXPO: THAT'S A WRAP!

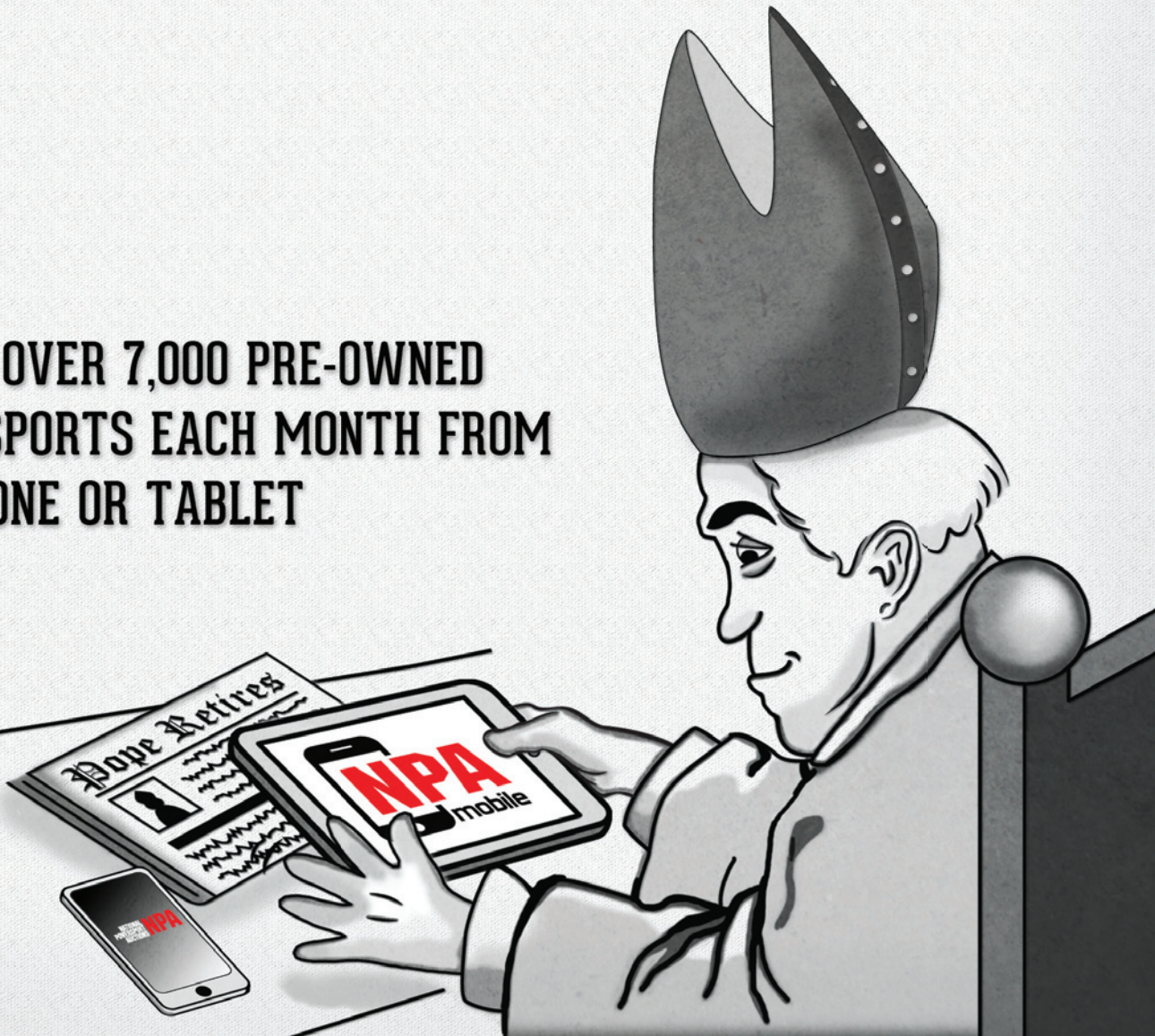
WE REVIEW THE BIGGEST TRENDS FROM THE BIG SHOW

### ERIC ANDERSON

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**We're in one of the few businesses where you actually want to hang out with the customer after you sell him a product.** — Alex Van Wey



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**MIKE VAUGHAN**  
Dealer Expo represents the state of our industry.



### On the cover

Photographer Joe Bonnello wanted a scene that would match the simplicity of Mark Gusciora's beloved Honda. A sales associate directed them to an abandoned house in Vista, Calif. "Mark was a moto-head long before he immigrated from his native Poland, and then eventually became the manager of one of the most successful shops in San Diego County," says Bonnello. "He rides to work on his not-so-pristine 1979 CB750F, one of my all-time favorites, despite the fact that he has an entire building of new, modern stuff to pick from."



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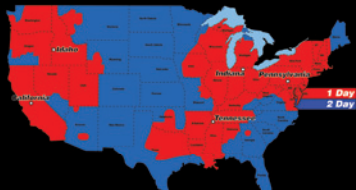
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## FROM THE EDITOR

Mary Slepicka

# Burning the blueprints

HARRIS WANTS TO BUILD A SHOW 'BY THE INDUSTRY FOR THE INDUSTRY'

**THE 48TH ANNUAL DEALER EXPO** has come and gone. How've you been? Sales doing OK? We've been a little busy around here. I think the staff's in need of some vacation time. I know I am.

Building a show isn't easy, and it ain't cheap. Everything from the renting of the venue itself down to the draping behind the booths to the carpet stickers to the security staff to the signage to the microphones the seminar speakers use — it all costs money, and is customarily supported by the payments companies make in order to set up a booth and/or sponsor an event or a feature. (Big kudos to operations director Lorri Monty; we remain in awe of your logistical prowess.)

As Mike Vaughan so eloquently explains on page 64, a trade show reflects the state of the industry it serves. Since the heydays of 2006-07, the industry lost 5,000 dealers and retailers, vehicle sales were slashed in half and about 20,000 people (we estimate) left the industry altogether to find employment elsewhere. I see that a former distributor executive has just returned to the motorcycle aftermarket after spending a couple of years in the irrigation business.

Show management has just released the onsite attendance figures. There were 5,400 registered attendees at the 2013 Dealer Expo; 1,400 were franchised dealers and 1,700 were non-franchised retailers. Another 500 identified themselves as specialty P&A retailers, and 450 registered as service-only shops. Just under 200 registered as online-only retailers. The number of people attending from each business hasn't fluctuated widely in the last three years; franchised dealers send an average of 2.8 people to Dealer Expo; independent dealers, 2.4; online retailers, 2.2; specialty P&A stores, 2.2; and service shops, 2.4.

So what does this mean for Dealer Expo? Well, first, given that there are fewer buyers in the market, I'm sure show management would like to see more of you — if not just to buy product, then to attend seminars or to just take it all in and gain a greater awareness of what the industry has to offer your store. And they hope that by seeing more of you they will be able to convince more companies that they should exhibit.

But the concept of the traditional trade show is changing. And in this day when we communicate via text, email and social posts, it's a rare and treasured opportunity when you can gather in one place to have a true conversation in real time. A "trade show" must shed the constraints of the past and be an event, a happening that opens your eyes, smacks you upside the head and blasts you with the simple affirmation that yes, anything is possible.

Advanstar, the parent of Dealer Expo (and *Dealernews*), produces some very large and unique events in other industries, from the PROJECT and Licensing Expos to the big MAGIC apparel events in Vegas, to the upstart Comikaze in L.A. These shows are about more than just the products exhibited; they are destinations — neighborhoods of lifestyles with vibrant décor, live-action big screens, constant entertainment and more. They excite the senses. Senior VP Tracy Harris has spent the last two years with these events. She is intent on completely relaunching Dealer Expo from the ground up for 2014 — and she's starting off by crowdsourcing it. "I truly want this to be an event that is built by the industry for the industry," she told me.

Has an industry show ever been crowdsourced before? Likely, but I can't remember one. "I would like to think that I am an incredibly unique individual," Harris deadpans, "but I'm sure this has been done elsewhere."

If you attended this year's show, by now you will have received a survey asking for your input. If you didn't, show management would like to know what would prompt you to reconsider; you can send them an email at [onevoice@dealerexpo.com](mailto:onevoice@dealerexpo.com) or call them at 855.DLR.EXPO.

Harris and her teams will take all of this input and go into a brainstorming and planning stage for the next several weeks. And when you see white smoke coming out of the rooftop AC unit at Advanstar headquarters in California, you will know we have a brand-new event for 2014.

Mary Slepicka

Content Director

[mslepicka@dealernews.com](mailto:mslepicka@dealernews.com)



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## Stealth lives a short life

ELECTRIC UTV MAKER GOES OUT OF BUSINESS AFTER ONLY THREE YEARS

Dealernews in March confirmed what some dealers had surmised for weeks: that the highly promoted electric UTV manufacturer, Stealth, had shut its doors.

The company reportedly struggled with lower demand than anticipated. CEO Greg Block blamed cost issues in a fledgling market. After three years, he said, the company just ran out of money.

"We were pursuing an investment or outright sale of the company, but time ran out," Block said. "My hope is that somebody... buys the assets out of liquidation and continues the company," someone with deep enough pockets "and the patience to wait for the market to mature."

In late February, collection firm Asset Recovery Associates notified creditors that they had until March 29 to file claims.

Dealers reported that they had been unable to reach the manufacturer in recent weeks. Many said the vehicles were a promising line they would be sorry to lose. "I did really, really well with them," said Lon Tesch, owner of **Valley Snowmobile & Powersports** in Hortonville, Wis. "The new Edge hybrid was going to be a fantastic vehicle" for northern dealerships, he noted.

Dealers that received Stealth vehicles with six months of free floorplanning from GE Finance were getting offers to buy their unsold stock for cash at deep discounts.

Tim Roach, owner of **Roach Golf Cars** in Cambridge, Minn., told *Dealernews* he took the deal for two units but would not disclose the final price. "It was good, though," he said. "I'm going to walk away better now that they discounted these."

While some dealers said they would still be able to offer service as many of the components are common across the electric vehicle range, others said they were struggling to get parts.

"I've got one. I'm still waiting for a windshield for it," said Bill Fischer, owner of **Fischer's Outback** in Graceville, Minn. "They grabbed my money and ran." Fischer added that he has not been paid for warranty service.

Valley Snowmobile's Tesch said some customers who bought vehicles in 2012 under a factory rebate program have not yet received their rebates. Still, he remains optimistic: "I'm not going to rule out Stealth coming back," he said. "You hate to see a company that is on the forefront go bankrupt. I hate to see it, because I stuck my neck out in the beginning to do it, financially."

Even Fischer is still a fan. "I still think they are the cat's meow," he said. "I have no idea why they couldn't make it. They're a heckuva machine as far as I'm concerned." — *Holly Wagner*



## DUCATI DEALERS GET AUDI FINANCING STARTING NEXT YEAR

Starting in 2014 Ducati dealers in the United States will have access to Audi consumer financing.

"We are working together with our Audi financing colleagues to make available a program to our customers in the United States," Ducati Motor Holding CEO Gabriele Del Torchio said in a March press conference. "I think this will be a tremendous improvement of our ability to further our presence in the North American market."

The OEM announced in January that U.S. dealers sold about 9,300 new units in 2012 compared to 2011, an increase of 21 percent. Sales here have been on the upswing for 30 months, making the United States the "primary focus market" for Ducati, Del Torchio said. — *Arlo Redwine*



**NORTON ABBEY.** Get your resumes ready: Norton Motorcycles has purchased historic Donington Hall on 26 acres in the English countryside, inside the Donington Grand Prix Circuit, and will turn it into its corporate headquarters. The main building was constructed in 1790; however, it features modern office and meeting facilities inside. The nearby 45,000 sq. ft. Hastings Hall will become Norton's production facility.

The Donington Grand Prix Circuit complex is home to the 2013 rounds of the World and British Superbike championship, along with motorcar road racing, vintage racing, rock concerts and a Formula One race car museum. "Where else in the world can one tour an 18th century Gothic Revival mansion, view a Norton Motorcycle being built, watch a World Superbike race and attend an Iron Maiden concert all at the same place?" said Norton's Dan Van Epps.



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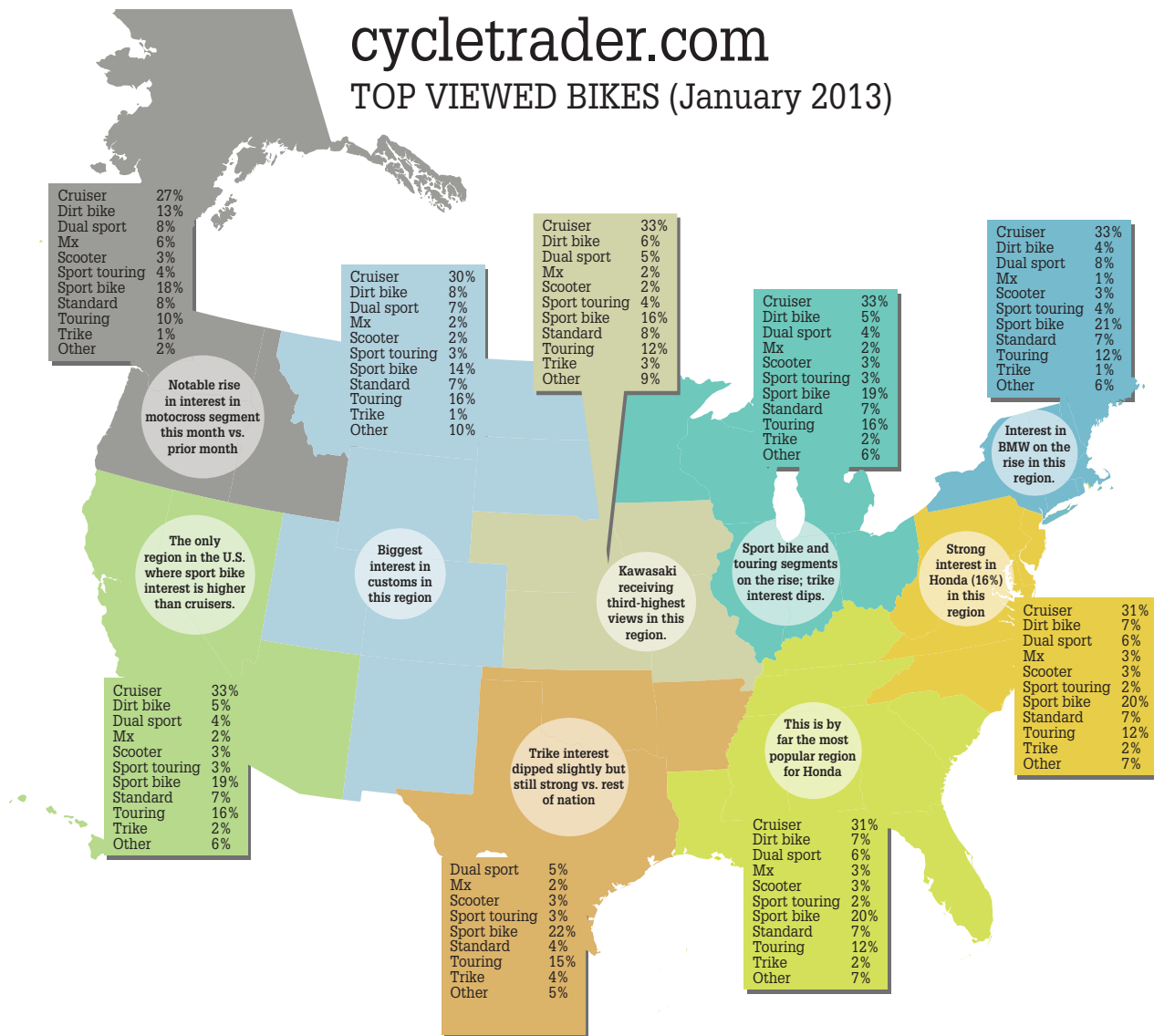
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## cycletrader.com TOP VIEWED BIKES (January 2013)



### Top OEMs by % of impressions

<b>Central Plains</b> ● Harley-Davidson 23%, Honda 18%	<b>Northeast</b> ● Harley-Davidson 18%, Honda, BMW 13%	<b>Rocky Mountain</b> ● Harley-Davidson 31%, Yamaha 13%
<b>Great Lakes</b> ● Harley-Davidson 20%, Honda 19%	<b>Pacific</b> ● Harley-Davidson 17%, Honda 17%	<b>Southeast</b> ● Honda 23%, Yamaha 16%
<b>Mid Atlantic</b> ● Harley-Davidson 22%, Yamaha 17%	<b>Pacific Alaska</b> ● Yamaha 18%, Harley-Davidson 17%	<b>Southwest</b> ● Harley Davidson 20%, Honda 18%

Consumer study of vehicles enthusiasts are viewing online at CycleTrader.com. Study conducted by Dominion Insights, which collects data and reports to dealers and OEMs. Find out which specific models received most consumer interest at <http://dominioninsights.com/dealernews>

## TOP VIEWED PRODUCTS on dealernews.com



- Indy 2013: Thirty products and services you may have missed
- Harley-Davidson debuts parts for Sportsters
- Honda's new F6B Gold Wing gets Motor Trike makeover
- Liner offers spray-on traction for ATV/UTV trailers
- Clubman-style bars transform Sportsters into ton-up machines (shown)
- Jardine's new exhaust system offers MotoGP looks, sound
- Bell Helmets offers big batch of new graphics for 2013

## What's trending on DEALERNEWS.COM

### STAR MOTORCYCLES UNVEILS

#### 'URBAN PERFORMANCE BOBBER'

OEM takes on Milwaukee with a stripped-down cruiser devoid of the bling common to the segment.

### FLORIDA DEALER OFFERS FREE GUN WITH MOTORCYCLE

**PURCHASE** "We think the timing is awesome, because it's the No. 1 subject people are talking about," store owner says.

### HARLEY-DAVIDSON REVEALS BREAKOUT CHOPPER IN DAYTONA

"We got down to motorcycle essentials, which means emphasizing the powertrain and the wheels," says Motor Co. styling manager Kirk Rasmussen.

### POLARIS EXPANDS INDY SNOW-MOBILE LINEUP FOR 2014

Includes seven new models for trail riders, touring riders, off-trail explorers and even young sledders.

### JUDGE APPROVES AMERICAN

**SUZUKI'S BANKRUPTCY PLAN** Paves the way for the new Suzuki Motor of America to complete its reorganization by April.

### YAMAHA TOP BRASS SHIFTS AS ARCANGELI MOVES TO CORPORATE PLANNING

Dennis McNeal to continue heading up motorcycle operations while Mike Martinez gets promoted to VP of the RV group, which includes ATVs, SxS and snowmobiles.

### INDIAN THUNDER STROKE 111

**ENGINE TO POWER NEXT SEASON'S LINEUP** Effort marks the first clean-sheet Indian Motorcycle engine design in seven decades.

### BILL TO RESTRICT LANE-SPLITTING IN CALIFORNIA ON HOLD (FOR NOW)

Legislator puts it on the back burner until results from a new safety study are released.

### RIDE IN PEACE: HENNY RAY

**ABRAMS** Longtime *Cycle News* editor passes away unexpectedly at age 57.

### THUNDERBIRD HARLEY-DAVIDSON COMPLETES MILLION-DOLLAR MAKEOVER

Four months of work to put in a café and a training facility, expand the showroom by 7,000 ft., deliver new bays and lights to the service department, and build a new entrance.

## ADP to integrate Accessory Smart into its DMS

ARI Network Services and ADP Lightspeed have signed a multiyear reseller agreement under which ADP will integrate ARI's AccessorySmart with its DMS and will resell AccessorySmart Essentials and Professional to its powersports customers.

AccessorySmart provides dealers with accurate, up-to-date vehicle fitment, product SKUs, price, description, specifications and images in an easy-to-use, online interface. It gives them quick and easy access to more than 500,000 SKUs, 1,400 manufacturers and \$71 million worth of PG&A products, ARI said.

"Delivering integrated solutions will help dealers grow their business and sell more stuff," said Jon Lintvet, chief marketing officer and vice president of product at ARI. "Bringing together AccessorySmart and ADP Lightspeed's dealer management system is a win for our dealers. Quickly and accurately finding the right part the first time, including availability and pricing across multiple distributors and on-hand inventory, just got a lot easier."

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# Destination Powersports has best January in four years

## A RECORD PERFORMANCE STARTS 2013 OPTIMISTICALLY — AND PROFITABLY

BY JOE DELMONT

The Dealer LAB is a real-world service from

**Dealernews**  
THE VOICE OF POWERSPORTS RETAILING



Read past reports, view additional tables and post your comments to Bill at [www.dealernews.com/dealerlab](http://www.dealernews.com/dealerlab)



*EDITOR'S NOTE: The Dealer LAB project is a joint effort between Dealernews and PowerHouse Dealer Services, a consulting firm run by Bill Shenk, detailing his efforts to return a Florida powersports dealership renamed Destination Powersports to profitability. Financial information in this report is sourced from the dealership's Composite Report supplied by Shenk and is prepared as part of the dealership's participation in its PowerHouse Dealer 20 Group. The Composite Report is produced from the store's monthly financial report. In preparing these Dealer LAB reports, Dealernews reviews the dealership's unaudited P&L statement and Balance Sheet and its Composite Report.*

**DESTINATION POWERSPORTS** charged out of the gates for 2013 with a record performance in January. It was the best first-month performance since Shenk and his partner took over the dealership four years ago.

For the month of January, the dealership earned \$42,339, on revenues of \$571,815 and a gross profit of \$159,038.

That compares with earnings of \$19,108 on revenues of \$399,326 and a gross profit of \$102,941 in January 2012. It's a huge jump in performance.

By comparison, the dealership earned \$21,019 in January 2011 and lost \$8,857 in January 2010. Total revenues for January 2011 were \$455,731; revenues for January 2010 were \$278,063.

Here's the bottom line improvement over

the last four years for the month of January: net income improved 578 percent, gross profit increased 85.2 percent, and total revenues increased 105 percent.

What caused such a big improvement? It's the people, says Bill Shenk. Where personnel problems derailed efforts in the past, he now reports that a savvy, more dynamic team is up and running. "Our processes have not changed since we put them in place. Our marketing has not changed since I have been involved.

"What has changed is our people. We have moved from good to great managers," he says. "We are doing good business —not great — but now have the ability to do great business."

Shenk goes on: "It takes time for any team to

### Month-Over-Month Comparisons and YTD Totals: January 2013

SALES	% of Total Dollars			% of Total Dollars				% of Total Dollars		
	Jan-13	Dealer	Top Gun	Jan-12	Dealer	Dec-12	YTD 2012	YTD 2013	PVS	DLR
<b>Units Sold (New &amp; Used)</b>	<b>53</b>			<b>43</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>53</b>		
Sales	444,008	77.6	72	298,175	74.7	275,943	298,175	444,008	8,378	77.6
F&I (net)	19,043	3.3	4	14,054	3.5	10,251	14,054	19,043	359	3.3
Parts	30,163	5.3	8	22,449	5.6	26,415	22,449	30,163	569	5.3
Accessories	34,757	6.1	9	33,331	8.3	29,754	33,331	34,757	656	6.1
Service	43,844	7.7	8	31,317	7.8	32,452	31,317	43,844	827	7.7
<b>Total Sales</b>	<b>571,815</b>	<b>100*</b>	<b>100*</b>	<b>399,326</b>	<b>100*</b>	<b>374,815</b>	<b>399,326</b>	<b>571,815</b>	<b>10,789</b>	<b>100*</b>
Total Cost of Sales	412,777	72.2	72.0	296,385	74.2	268,911	296,385	412,777	7,788	72.2
Gross Profit	159,038	27.8	28.0	102,941	25.8	105,904	102,941	159,038	3,001	27.8
<b>EXPENSES</b>	% of Dept. Gross Profit			% of Dept. Gross Profit				% of Dept. Gross Profit		
	Jan-13	Dealer	Top Gun	Jan-12	Dealer	Dec-12	YTD 2012	YTD 2013	PVS	DLR
<b>Payroll</b>										
Sales (5.25/4.0 empl)	33,467	36.4	42	16,917	32.8	20,718	16,917	33,467	631	36.4
P&A (2.20/2.5 empl)	10,175	38.6	70	7,934	38.6	10,094	7,934	10,175	192	38.6
Service (4.50/5.00 empl)	25,467	58.1	72	16,435	52.0	18,624	16,435	25,467	481	58.1
Flooring	8,394	9.1	16	5,065	9.8	9,370	5,065	8,394	158	9.1
	% of Dept. Gross Profit			% of Dept. Gross Profit				% of Dept. Gross Profit		
Admin Payroll	8,028	5	13	6,973	6.8	6,863	6,973	8,028	151	5
Advertising	3,263	2.1	2	3,843	3.7	4,711	3,843	3,263	62	2.1
Administration	21,390	13.4	21	12,667	12.3	20,622	12,667	21,390	404	13.4
Rent	12,797	8	16	12,167	11.8	15,058	12,167	12,797	241	8
Company insurance	2,098	1.3	5	1,814	1.4	1,992	1,814	2,098	40	1.3
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>125,079</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>83,815</b>	<b>81.4</b>	<b>108,052</b>	<b>83,815</b>	<b>125,079</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>78.6</b>
Misc. Expense	0	0	6			0		0	0	0
	% of Total Dollars			% of Total Dollars				% of Total Dollars		
Additional Income	8,380	1	1	-18	0	14,054	-18	8,380	158	1.5
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>42,339</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>19,108</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>11,906</b>	<b>19,108</b>	<b>42,339</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>7.4</b>
<b>Net Profit + Misc Expense</b>	<b>42,339</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>-5.6</b>	<b>19,108</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>11,906</b>	<b>19,108</b>	<b>42,339</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>7.4</b>

Notes: Top Gun = The top performing dealerships in the PowerHouse training group. PVS = Per Vehicle Sold.

## “Strategy gets you on the field, but execution pays the bills.”

— Bill Shenk

become efficient working together. The last six months has us back to the level where our customers are ‘working for us’ — talking good about us on the street — and that is the best growth there is because it comes in an amount you can handle, unlike a marketing event that creates the feast-or-famine environment.

“Strategy gets you on the field, but execution pays the bills and creates the win. We now have strong players following our playbook closer, and it shows,” he says.

New and used vehicle sales climbed from 43 last January to 53 in January 2013, and unit sales revenues improved from \$298,175 last January to \$444,008 in January this year. New bike sales were off five units, but used bike sales increased by the same amount. The big jump came in off-road sales — 12 units compared to six units — and watercraft sales, which were up from five units to eight units.

“The dealership only recently began focusing on the off-road part of the business,” Shenk says. “Two years ago, we started going to events and locations where those buyers hang out, and it is starting to pay off.”

He notes that Polaris has given the dealership a big boost. “We are starting to be recognized as a place to do Polaris business,” Shenk says. “That brand owns the SxS market. We also were able to get a couple [of] pre-owned ATVs and an SxS, as well as a few used personal watercraft and a used jet boat. That helped drive traffic to the showroom, and several of those leads were converted to new units.”

A solid selection of used vehicles will always drive more new unit sales, he notes. “I believe our new motorcycle sales would have been softer yet if not for our better-than-ever used selection drawing ‘lookers.’”

The big jump in unit sales revenues yielded a gross profit of \$72,816, up from \$37,500 in January 2012. The contribution to profit improved to \$6,925 from a loss of \$4,145 last year.

Gross profit per employee in sales jumped from \$11,207 to \$16,702. Revenues per sales employee improved from \$64,821 to \$80,729.

The increase in unit sales drove revenue increases in F&I, parts and accessories.

Service revenues climbed from \$31,317 last year to \$43,844 this January. Importantly, customer labor revenue climbed from \$24,020 to \$33,792 for the month.

Now that the Dealer LAB operation is off to a good start for 2013, Shenk is optimistic that the store’s progress will continue through the year, and will reflect improved performances at other dealerships.

“We still have more opportunity in all departments, and the management team understands where it is and is taking steps with the teams to seize that additional opportunity,” he says. **D**

*Bill Shenk is owner and 20 Group moderator of PowerHouse Dealer services, a dealership 20 Group provider and consulting/training company. He has worked full time in the industry since 1976. If you are interested in joining a PHD 20 Group, contact Shenk at 877-PHD-0911 or Bill@phdservices.com.*



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# Courting your custo-mates

THE NEW RULES OF DATING ARE THE SAME FOR SHOPPING



## CONFESSIONS OF A CUSTOMER™

**Eric Anderson**, CEO of Vroom Network, based in Southern California, is an industry veteran and has fathered several motorcycle apparel brands. Contact him at [editors@dealernews.com](mailto:editors@dealernews.com).

### On the Web:

In February Eric Anderson hosted “Rebuilding Retail: The State of the Dealer 2013” panel discussions on OEM-Dealer Relations and The Future of Aftermarket Sales at Dealer Expo. If you missed these events, read about them on [Dealernews.com](http://Dealernews.com) in the “Dealer Expo Updates” section.

**COURTING CUSTOMERS** is almost like courting a mate. I claim they’re identical, except the attraction to the opposite sex and procreation is even stronger than the desire to shop (at least for some of us). Since they are so similar, I took eHarmony’s “The Twelve New Rules of Dating” and turned them into “The Twelve New Rules of Shopping.”

Let’s go through these 12 dating rules and apply them to your retail store. Are you out of practice?

**1. No more waiting game.** Immediacy is what’s new. If your new custo-mate hasn’t come back in three weeks, he (or she) likely won’t. Reach out to him the day after his visit with an invitation to return to your store. Did you capture his email or phone number while he was there? Calling right away after the first date is how to build a long-term relationship.

**2. Be familiar with modern modes of communication.** Texting is big in the dating scene. Have you ever thought of texting your better customers with a personalized note? It’s more intimate than an e-blast or snail-mail flyer (cheaper, too). Posting pics (Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest) of your customers is another way to impress your audience, or at least make them jealous of all the fun you are having without them.

**3. Be careful what you share online.** We all know one bad post can ruin your day — or year. Stay professional. Assume plenty of prospective custo-mates are judging you by how you behave online. Fun, creative and professional pics, posts or videos always outweigh dull, boring and sleazy ones. Shorter, more frequent online activities are always better.

**4. Ethnic barriers matter less than ever.** Let’s expand *ethnic* to include other races and creeds of machine preferences. Riders are curious about one another’s machines, gear and culture. We want to understand the weird connection between Gold Wings and stuffed animals, or café racers and clip-ons. Bring us together occasionally so we can learn and expand our powersports horizons. Some may even cross-over to another “ethnic machine” and buy it from you.

**5. Your past is always your present.** You will be Googled or Yelped before your custo-mate ever walks in your front door. If you have a bad review somewhere, be prepared to overcome the objection, even though it’s not part of the initial conversation. If you are heavily reviewed on the positive side for service, special events and people skills, then prove it on the showroom floor when a new customer walks in unannounced. BTW: Aren’t they all unannounced?

**6. Play coy at your own risk.** Shopping choices are everywhere in our lives. You are only one of them, so if you like someone you had better let them know quickly (see No. 1). Custo-mates always prefer family or friends when it comes to building longer-term relationships. If you are only known for low prices, then

you have a lot more competition out there — and you are racing toward the bottom of customer service.

**7. Gender roles are negotiable.** Who asks who on a date these days? Why would you wait for a custo-mate to approach you? Approach them first. Speaking of genders, women still control more than 70 percent of the discretionary income in America, and I suspect they are less than 20 percent of your floor traffic. So either get more women inside your store, or go wherever they hang out. You’re dead without them, either as riders or purse string holders.

**8. Forty is the new thirty.** Personally, I’d like to expand eHarmony’s concept to “50 is the new 40” — it works better for our aging baby boomer riders, and for you, too. Your custo-mates need to represent every age demographic possible, from 7 to 70.

**9. Marriage is no longer always the goal.** Old School says we tie the knot and live happily ever after. New School says we can be happy without the tribal ritual and burdensome paperwork of tradition. Your custo-mates also are no longer married to your local brick-and-mortar store like they used to be, because so many new techno-savvy options are available at their fingertips. It’s not that we are unfaithful; it’s more about 24/7/365 convenience. Is your business conveniently available to service our motorcycle needs whenever we are ready to buy?

**10. Do not assume exclusivity.** Multi-dating is part of the modern scene and so is multi-shopping. Technology has enabled us to shrink our shopping circles closer to home. We don’t have to go outside and hunt around anymore. If we can get the love we need from a business that delivers the technical information we want and has it in stock, then that’s likely who we will “date” this time around. If our bike needs servicing, then convenience usually takes the priority again.

**11. The world is smaller than ever.** If you can break away from the barriers you put up in the 1980s to insulate yourselves (such as automated voicemail), you might have a chance to pull customers back inside. E-commerce stores are getting more personal and are now experimenting with video chat. What are you doing with technology that makes it easier for us to talk/Skype with a real human being?

**12. Charm matters more than ever.** Do you remember when written notes, thank you letters, phone calls and surprises used to be part of the dating scene? In the age of quick tweets, texts and posts, all that seems to have evaporated. So any examples of remaining charm are especially noted.

Ready to get back into the dating scene? If you have been married a while, you are probably nervous. Get over it. This is business, and custo-mates would love to be courted — and be the center of your attention. **D**



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Did He REALLY Just Mention

# EMPLOYEES ARE IDIOTS!



**A Google User** ★☆☆☆☆

Took my Ducati 1098s in for a tire change. The guy who was taking my info was definitely high and kept asking the same question over and over and kept trying to start my bike and kept cranking it and cranking it and asking stupid questions. It really ticked me off. Then I purchased a \$120 battery with a 2 year warranty. Took it back in 2 months later because it was near dead they said it was working like new and wouldn't cover it. Took it to auto-zone they said it was dead and took care of it. **EMPLOYEES ARE IDIOTS!**

## The proven way to PREVENT reviews like this from ever showing up for your dealership:

How your employees interact with customers and prospects on the phone, on the showroom floor, and after a purchase can determine the success of your dealership. The Local Web Dominator Program offers unlimited access to Dealership University's proven online training solution with 11 Certificate Training Paths (plus a robust Reporting Engine) for every department in your dealership, including:

Sales | Parts & Accessories | Finance & Insurance | Service | Management

### The Local Web Dominator Program by Powersports Marketing also includes:

- **Reputation Management** – Pro-actively manage your online reputation with a proven system to monitor and acquire reviews
- **Voice of Customer (VOC) Feedback** – Find and re-activate lost customers and boost your repeat & referral business
- **PDL Certification** – Premium positioning on the industry's leading dealer locator ([powersportsdealerlocator.com](http://powersportsdealerlocator.com)) that communicates your dealership commitment to professional customer satisfaction to your current and potential customers.

**What our clients are saying:** "The whole concept has been really well thought out."

- Alamo Cycle Plex



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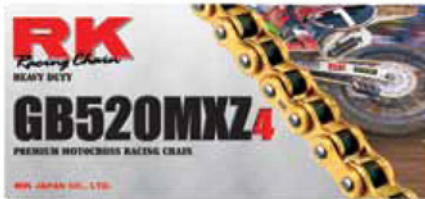
# 2013 OFF-ROAD



MX



ATV



## GB520MXZ4 HEAVY DUTY

### GB520MXZ4

(And Non-Gold 520MXZ4)

HEAVY DUTY MOTOCROSS

MXZ4 is one of the lightest motocross chains available on the market today. Made for the professional motocross racer, GB520MXZ4 is the next generation of motocross racing chains featuring RK's new deeper gold sideplates. MXZ4 chains feature chromoly steel construction with seamless rollers and bushings, and oversized special alloy pins for added strength. All components are heat treated using RK's exclusive HIT (Heat Induction Transfer) process. MXZ4 has a maximum tensile strength rated at 9,000 foot pounds, weighs a mere 2.99 pounds for 100 links, and can handle any MX race application from 125 ~ 500cc.

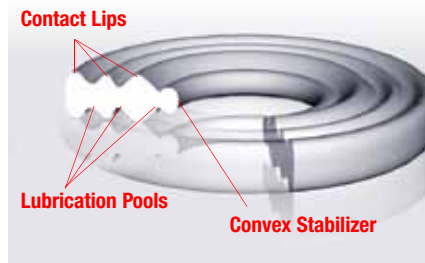


### MXZ4 IS NOW AVAILABLE IN COLORS



## GB520MXU UW-RING

### UW-RING CUTAWAY



### GB520MXU

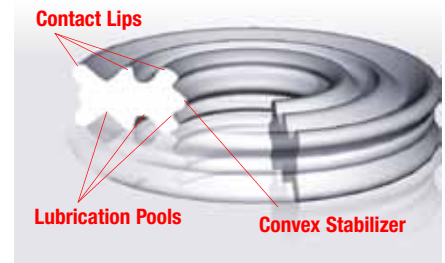
SEALED MOTOCROSS

Looking for longevity and performance? Check out RK's MXU chain. MXU is one of the lightest sealed-ring motocross chain available on the market today. Made for the professional motocross racer, GB520MXU is the next generation of motocross racing chains featuring RK's new UW-sealing rings. MXU's ultra thin UW seal is perfect for bikes with case clearance issues and the small seal contact virtually eliminates drag. MXU chain life expectancy is more than double when compared to a non-sealed chain. MXU chains are designed to provide the most consistent power delivery while increasing chain life. All components are heat treated using RK's exclusive HIT (Heat Induction Transfer) process. MXU has a maximum tensile strength rated at 9,000 foot pounds, weighs a mere 3.1 pounds for 100 links, and can handle any MX race application from 125 ~ 500cc.



## GB520EXW XW-RING

### XW-RING CUTAWAY



### GB520EXW

(And Non-Gold 520EXW)

SEALED ATV & OFF-ROAD

GB520EXW is specifically designed for ATV/Quads and Off-Road vehicles and is the best high-speed, extreme heat, off-road performance chain available today. EXW chains were developed to survive the abrasive conditions that exist in hostile off-road environments. EXW features XW-ring seals composed of Nitrile Butadiene with three contact lips and two convex inner/outer stabilizers. This means three lubrication pools to protect against high-speed abrasion, and the loss of lubricant under extreme conditions. EXW is available in Gold or Non-Gold.



## MINI BIKE CHAINS

### GB420MXZ & GB428MXZ

(And Non-Gold 420MXZ & 428MXZ)

HEAVY DUTY MOTOCROSS

These lightweight gold racing chains were developed using the same advanced alloy materials and manufacturing technology as 520MXZ. Both 420 and 428MXZ racing chains are the lightest and strongest in their class, giving you the best value-performance rating of any motocross racing chain in the world today.



MXZ4 SERIES CHAINS	
520MXZ4 =	Non-Gold
GB520MXZ4 =	Gold
NB520MXZ4 =	Blue
ND520MXZ4 =	Orange
NM520MXZ4 =	Green
NR520MXZ4 =	Red
BP520MXZ4 =	Black



V-TWIN

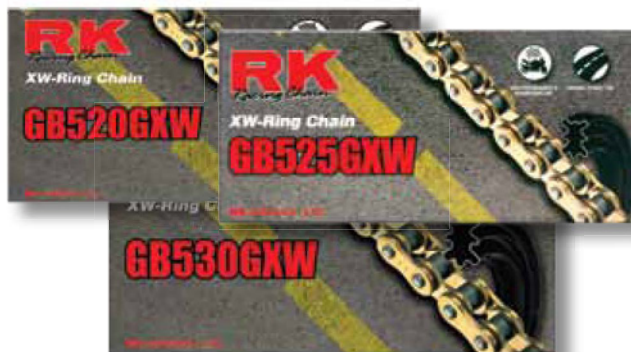


GENERAL STREET



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# 2013 STREET

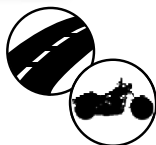


## GB520XSO, GB525XSO, & GB530XSOZ1

(Gold, Non Gold & Certain Colors XSO)

SEALED RX-RING SPORTBIKE CHAINS

Looking for an affordable, long lasting performance chain? Look no further, RK's XSO chains offer less torsional friction and increased high-stress, high-speed performance providing a longer lasting chain at an affordable price. All RX-Ring chains have "X" shaped seals and improved metallurgy giving you 7 times longer wearlife than standard O-ring chains. Viewed in cross-section, the RX-ring has two lubrication pools and contact lips versus the single contact design of a standard O-ring chain. Giving the chain a longer life gives you more value for your money.



### XSO IS NOW AVAILABLE IN COLORS



#### XSO SERIES COLORED CHAIN\*

520XSO = Non-Gold	530XSOZ1 = Non-Gold
GB520XSO = Gold	GB530XSOZ1 = Gold
NB520XSO = Blue	NB530XSOZ1 = Blue
NM520XSO = Green	NM530XSOZ1 = Green
NR520XSO = Red	NR530XSOZ1 = Red
NY520XSO = Yellow	NY530XSOZ1 = Yellow
BP520XSO = Black	BP530XSOZ1 = Black

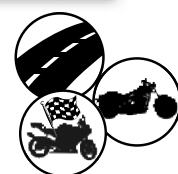
\*Not all colors are available for each pitch series.

## GB520GXW, GB525GXW, & GB530GXW

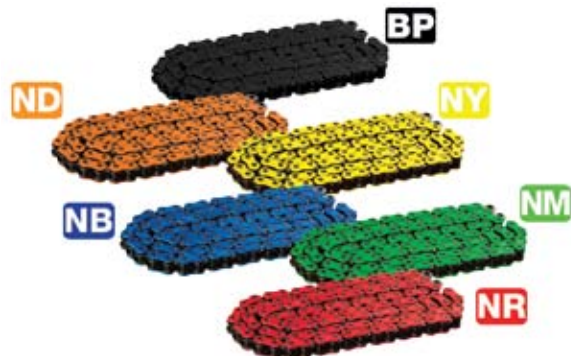
(Gold, Non-Gold and Certain Colors GXW)

SEALED XW-RING ROADRACING  
& SUPERBIKE CHAINS

RK's GXW series chains are the top of the line extreme performance chains. XW-ring chains are the best high-speed, extreme heat performance chains available today. The leading edge XW-ring seal is made of an advanced Nitrile Butadiene composite and features three contact lips and two convex inner/outer stabilizers. This means three lubrication pools to protect against high-speed abrasion, heat build up, torsional flex and the loss of lubricant under these extreme conditions. As a result GXW chains provide the user with 10 times longer wearlife compared to standard chains. GXW chain seals are compression and distortion resistant to provide the ultimate in rotating efficiency.



### GXW IS NOW AVAILABLE IN COLORS



#### GXW SERIES COLORED CHAIN\*

520GXW = Non-Gold	BP525GXW = Black
GB520GXW = Gold	GB525GXW = Gold
NB520GXW = Blue	530GXW = Non-Gold
ND520GXW = Orange	GB530GXW = Gold
NM520GXW = Green	NB530GXW = Blue
NR520GXW = Red	NM530GXW = Green
NY520GXW = Yellow	NR530GXW = Red
BP520GXW = Black	BP530GXW = Black

# 2013 RK CHAIN APPLICATIONS

RK Racing Chain	PIN LENGTH MM	PLATE THICKNESS		TENSILE LBS/FT	CLIP or RIVET	WEIGHT LBS/100 LINKS	MAX cc STREET / OFF-ROAD	Prices shown are for 120 links		
		INNER MM	OUTER MM					RETAIL PRICE*		
								GOLD	NON-GOLD	COLOR
<b>STANDARD</b>										
M420 RK-Malaysia	14.80	1.5	1.5	4,200	CLIP	1.60	80 / 80	-	\$ 13.73	-
M428 RK-Malaysia	16.85	1.5	1.5	4,500	CLIP	1.85	125 / 80	-	\$ 16.64	-
M520 RK-Malaysia	17.25	2.0	2.0	6,800	CLIP	3.28	250 / NA	-	\$ 30.16	-
M525 RK-Malaysia	18.70	2.0	2.0	6,800	CLIP	3.48	400 / NA	-	\$ 30.78	-
M530 RK-Malaysia	20.45	2.0	2.0	6,800	CLIP	3.71	400 / NA	-	\$ 31.41	-
<b>HEAVY DUTY</b>										
M415H mini bike chain	13.05	1.45	1.5	3,520	CLIP	1.47	NA / 50	-	\$ 13.73	-
GB415HR RS125 Race	13.65	1.45	1.5	4,800	CLIP	1.51	125 / NA	\$ 124.90	-	-
420MXZ & GB	15.70	1.8	1.45	5,000	CLIP	1.76	150 / 125	\$ 38.32	\$ 27.40	-
428MXZ & GB	17.60	1.8	1.8	5,800	CLIP	2.13	250 / 125	\$ 43.55	\$ 33.07	-
M428H RK-Malaysia	18.75	2.0	2.0	5,400	CLIP	2.26	200 / NA	-	\$ 19.79	-
520MXZ4 & GB	17.70	1.8	2.0	9,000	CLIP	2.99	NA / 500	\$ 104.83	\$ 87.07	\$ 120.17
M520H RK-Malaysia	18.80	2.3	2.3	7,700	CLIP	3.65	400 / NA	-	\$ 34.14	-
M525H RK-Malaysia	20.35	2.3	2.3	7,700	CLIP	3.85	500 / NA	-	\$ 34.53	-
M530H RK-Malaysia	22.00	2.3	2.3	7,700	CLIP	4.09	500 / NA	-	\$ 35.15	-
530KS	20.85	2.0	2.0	8,000	CLIP	3.75	600 / NA	-	\$ 81.25	-
530DR Drag Racing	23.35	2.6	2.4	10,400	CLIP	5.12	1500 Drag	-	\$ 148.93	-
<b>STANDARD O-Ring</b>										
420SO	17.05	1.45	1.45	4,420	CLIP	1.72	125 / 125	-	\$ 78.44	-
428SO	20.05	1.8	1.8	5,500	CLIP	2.26	250 / 200	-	\$ 86.42	-
520SO	19.90	2.0	2.0	7,700	CLIP	4.08	400 / 400	-	\$ 72.02	-
630SO	25.65	2.4	2.4	11,100	RIVET	6.50	1300 / NA	-	\$ 189.80	-
<b>PERFORMANCE RX-Ring</b>										
520XSO & GB	19.90	2.0	2.0	8,500	RIVET	3.36	750 / 750	\$ 124.15	\$ 108.03	\$ 138.03
525XSO & GB	22.85	2.4	2.3	8,850	RIVET	4.30	900 / 750	\$ 165.91	\$ 144.30	-
530XSOZ1 & GB	24.90	2.4	2.3	9,500	RIVET	4.48	1000 / 750	\$ 165.91	\$ 144.30	\$ 182.57
<b>PREMIUM XW-Ring</b>										
GB520MXU SX/MX	18.00	1.8	2.0	9,000	CLIP	3.10	NA / 500	\$ 124.15	-	-
520EXW & GB	20.80	2.0	2.0	8,500	CLIP	3.36	400 / 750	\$ 124.15	\$ 108.03	-
520GXW & GB	20.80	2.2	2.2	8,800	RIVET	3.75	1000 / 750	\$ 151.24	\$ 130.99	\$ 166.92
525GXW & GB	22.85	2.4	2.3	9,300	RIVET	4.30	1100 / 800	\$ 226.59	\$ 197.03	\$ 253.50
530GXW & GB	24.90	2.4	2.4	10,000	RIVET	4.63	1400 / 900	\$ 256.65	\$ 227.21	\$ 283.76
<b>GB = Gold Inner/Outer Plates</b> <b>40 Series Chain - 24.0 Links per foot</b> <b>50 Series Chain - 19.2 Links per foot</b> <b>60 Series Chain - 16.00 Links per foot</b>										
*Prices shown are for 120 links & are subject to change without notice.										

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# BONA FIDE RIDERS

EMPLOYING ENTHUSIASTS GIVES NORTH COUNTY'S HOUSE OF MOTORCYCLES STRONG TIES TO ITS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CUSTOMER BASE

By Dennis Johnson • Photos by Joe Bonnello

**ONE GOOD MEASURE** of a dealership is to survey exactly how many of its employees actually get out and ride. There will always be at least a handful; but a majority who regularly rip on track, trail and road? That's a really good sign.

At **North County's House of Motorcycles** in Vista, Calif., riding isn't just business, it's the passion that connects the dealership's employees to its large and varied customer base. A store full of enthusiasts is strong stuff when it comes to keeping up on product trends and knowing — on the deepest level — what your customers want.

"The majority of the store is involved in riding. We don't seek out

enthusiasts, but over time we turn a lot of employees into enthusiasts and they become part of the lifestyle," says Mark Gusciara, general manager of the Top 100 dealership located about a half-hour north of San Diego. "I think it changes the conversation with customers. It allows us to become the expert in their eyes, because we're involved on a daily basis. And that connection becomes much stronger."

Given North County's market share and location, maintaining connection is a strategic benefit. The dealership is located in the heart of San Diego County, a large chunk of Southern California that offers a multitude of varied riding terrains. From deep sand dunes and





rocky desert trails to mountainous twisties and epic coastal roads, the topography looks as if it were designed by an enthusiast.

North County's House of Motorcycles also is within shouting distance of three major military installations — Camp Pendleton, the West Coast base of the United States Marine Corps; Marine Corps Air Station Miramar (of "Top Gun" fame); and Naval Base San Diego, primary homeport of the Pacific Fleet.

Given the variety of terrain and customer profiles, it's important that North County's employees get it. And what the store's marketing director, Alex Van Wey, says next is the perhaps the most profound statement a dealership can make: "We're in one of the few businesses where you actually want to hang out with the customer after you sell him a product."

Van Wey continues: "We take advantage of this. You usually don't want to go hang out and play video games with your customer after

they buy an Xbox from you at Walmart, or make them dinner after a trip to the grocery store."

Indeed, after the sale is where the fun starts. At North County's HOM, there are charity events, autograph signings, track days, stunting exhibitions, ride nights, dinner rides, weekend rides and just riding-to-ride rides. This social engagement is completely organic, Van Wey says, because it's all about the riding.

The camaraderie doesn't stop with bikes or quads or watercraft; it extends into surfing and snowboarding and skateboarding and art and music — it's Southern California, you see, and these same interests flow unobstructed through the entire action sports-outdoorsy community. The store sponsors the Aura Skateboard Training Facility, a nearby indoor skatepark; and is supporting an upcoming Earth Day with the Surfrider Foundation, a nonprofit organization that works to protect the world's waterways.



"We have a lot of surfers here," notes Jennifer Gusciora, the store's customer relations manager.

During a recent autograph signing with Supercross racers, the dealership sold T-shirts designed by an artist on staff and gave the proceeds to the San Diego Blood Bank. A Toys-4-Tots run attracted about 400 riders — in the rain — a notable feat if you know how delicate So Cal riders are when it comes to inclement weather.

In addition to fostering relationships with its customers, such ongoing events, says GM Gusciora, provide a way to reach out to the transient nature of its military customers. "Riders in general are social creatures, and they like community. We have a lot of people coming into town and leaving town," he says. "The events give them a chance to meet fellow riders and have places to go. These are in addition to having a regular sale where we're trying to push product ... we're giving them a reason to come to the store. A busy store creates sales."

### MERCHANDIZE 'LIKE A MOM'

Take a look around the store's PG&A displays (see photos at left) and it looks as if its buyers are targeting every hot brand on the market. That's because they are. Mark Gusciora says the dealership prides itself on a wide selection of gear and accessories.

Dianese. Roland Sands Design. AGV Sport. Speed and Strength. Spidi. Sidi. Alpinestars. Joe Rocket. Leatt. EVS. Bell. Fly. Shoei. HJC. Gaerne. Troy Lee Designs. MSR. Oakley. Two Brothers Racing. GoPro. ASV. FMF. Moose Racing. Motion Pro. Spy Optic. Vega. RK Excel. Pro Taper. ODI. It's like a distributor's catalog exploded and scattered stuff all over the inside of the place.

"We watch the trends. We listen to what our customers are looking for. Ultimately our PG&A is the backbone of our dealership," Gusciora says. "Unlike with a lot of industries, we always need something for our toys. We always need new gear. It brings customers back into the store; it creates that activity."

Staying up with the latest trends is one thing. Displaying it all in an attractive setting is another — and often the Achilles' heel of a powersports dealership.

But not so with North County House of Motorcycles, says Jennifer Gusciora. First off, employees treat the dealership more like a retail store than a motorcycle shop. The retail space is large enough to give brands room to breathe. For example, gear and vehicles are merchandized together and casual apparel is given its own dedicated space.

## MILITARY TRAINING

Given the large number of military personnel in the region, North County makes it a point to offer everything from discounts and service specials to coordinating safety training and rider education. The store also offers to take military riders out for trips to local motocross tracks and road-racing venues. And if an Armed Forces customer takes the BasicRider Course through one of the local schools and then buys a bike from North County, the dealership will reimburse them the cost of the class. The dealership also counsels Marines how best to store their bikes while they're away on deployment.

But the big push is on rider safety, Van Wey says. North County works with Motorcycle Safety Foundation instructors on the nearby bases to display the latest safety apparel and other merchandise during the Marine Corps' Safety Stand Down exercises. The dealership takes entry-level bikes to the bases to show potential riders the options they have.

"A lot of them are looking to get a bike and we want to make sure they're getting on the right bike the first time," Van Wey says.

North County has received commendations from 1st Marines and 3rd Marine Air Wing for the dealership's work on promoting motorcycle safety.

As a mom, Jennifer knows how mothers shop, and arranges the store accordingly. This courts the families who come into the dealership to buy items for their young off-road riders as well as for the adults.

The staff also pays close attention to major surf retailers and to outdoor stores like REI. And then there's the undisputed heavyweight of retailing — Nordstrom. This is where the personal shopper service comes in.

Yes, personal shopper. Jennifer says many times entry-level buyers, busy moms and dads, and gift-buying relatives simply don't know what sizes work or which boot is best. "We do have people who will walk with the customers and hold their gear, or go and get them clothing," she says. "It's sort of a Nordstrom-type personal shopper feel, but if you want to be left alone, you can be left alone, too."

The store works closely with vendors and distributors to keep a fresh supply of products on the shelves so that people keep



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For more information visit [www.Dealernews.com/readerservice](http://www.Dealernews.com/readerservice)



**DEALER DATA**

**NORTH COUNTY'S HOUSE OF MOTORCYCLES**

1725 Hacienda Dr, Ste. C • Vista, Calif. 92081 • 760.433.4333 • houseofmotorcycles.com

**Owners:** America's PowerSports

**General Manager:** Mark Gusciora

**Number of Employees:** 50

**Years in Business:** 13 yrs with current ownership

**Years at Location:** 7 years

**Store Size (sq. ft.):** 30,000

**Annual Revenues:** \$21 million

**DMS:** Lightspeed NXT

**Hours Of Operation:**

Mon-Fri 9 a.m. -7 p.m., Sat 9 a.m. - 6 p.m., Sun 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**SALES DEPARTMENT**

**Managers:** Ciara Silfies GSM, Tyson McCardle

**F&I Managers:** Brendan Doyle, Ryan "Maui" Mauhili, Sarah Fite

**Showroom Size:** 12,000 sq. ft.

**PARTS DEPARTMENT**

**Manager:** Stephen Isenhower

**Size:** 10,000 sq. ft.

**ECOMMERCE DEPARTMENT**

**Manager:** Josh Keeler

**SERVICE DEPARTMENT**

**Manager:** Michael Green

**Technicians:** 6

**Lifts:** 9

**Size:** 8,000 sq. ft.

**Shop Rate:** \$95/Hour

**MORE INFO**

**Distributors:** Helmet House, Lynn Vick, Motonation, Parts Unlimited, Tucker Rocky, WPS

**Race Sponsorships:** Anthony Nunez Racing, BRC Racing/Evan Cox superbike, Fastlane Racing, Shane O'dor, SMX Supermoto, Valenti Racing Team

**Club Sponsorships:** Ruff Ryders, Southern Cruisers, Rival Riders, 2 Intenze

**Community Involvement:** United States Marine Corps Community Services, San Diego Blood Bank, Wounded Warrior Foundation, Rady Childrens Hospital

coming back. Whether the return is for a service appointment or simply a visit, customers know they'll find a whole mess of new merchandise to pick from, Mark Gusciora says.

**THREE TAKEAWAYS**

So, what are the lessons to be learned here?

1. Know your customer well enough to anticipate just about every need they might have when they walk in the door. How do you do this? *Get out and ride with them or simply get out and ride.*
2. Give them a good selection of the things they want and a reason to be in the store to buy it. *Your staff should know this because they want these things, too.*
3. Finally, if you've a niche audience in your area, cater to it. Quite simply, as the crew at North County says, *be their "house away from home."*

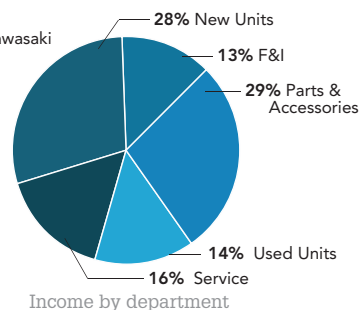
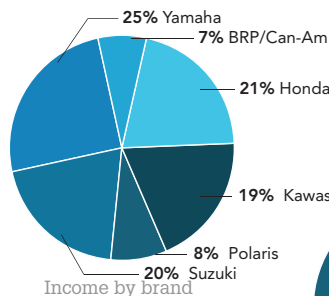
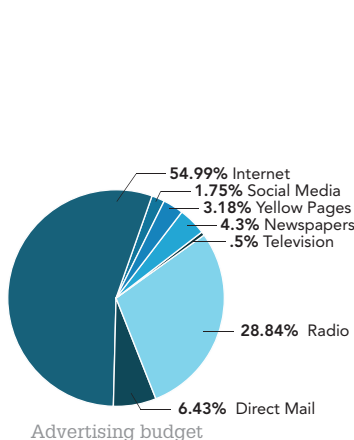
"Quality service will trump anything else," Mark says. "Customers will spend the money with you if you treat them right and provide them with the right product." **D**

**How big is the San Diego County riding population? Here's a breakdown of rider demographics from the Motorcycle Industry Council (2009 data)**

Total population: San Diego County (U.S. Census, 2010) : 3.1 million

MIC data for San Diego County: (2009):

- Motorcycle owners: 115,000 (approx);
- Motorcycle riders: 330,000 (approx)





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For more information visit [www.Dealernews.com/readerservice](http://www.Dealernews.com/readerservice)



# GE Capital

## GE CAPITAL BUILDS BUSINESSES

In today's environment, in which many consumer budgets are stretched, consumer financing programs provide numerous benefits. Just as there are different types of products and units designed for various Powersports activities, there are different financing options to fit the specific needs of the consumer.

GE Capital's Retail Finance business has provided consumer financing for 80 years, and has been a leading provider of installment lending in the Powersports industry for more than 25 years. This extensive industry expertise enables GE Capital to closely examine individual consumer needs, structure financing options, and meet the sale. GE Capital provides installment financing programs for new and used units with leading manufacturers including Yamaha, Polaris, Kawasaki, Suzuki, and KTM.



"Financing gives riding enthusiasts more choices, including the flexibility to get the Powersports products they want," said Stephen Motta, general manager, Power Products, GE Capital's Retail Finance business. "For dealers, it is a business-building tool, enabling them to drive more traffic and provide a wider range of options at affordable prices. Ultimately, that leads to greater customer satisfaction, loyalty, and referrals."

Offering a Powersports financing program provides consumers access to special financing and enables them to get the products, parts and accessories, and services they need or want without using savings or other credit cards they

may need for day-to-day purchases. Add to this the fact that financing is an important factor in a consumer's choice of a Powersports dealer, according to the Major Purchase Shopper Study\* commissioned by GE Capital's Retail Finance business. The study found that the vast majority of Powersports consumers describe their purchase as a need, spend an average of 65 to 76 days researching the model before making this major purchase, and say that financing is an important factor in the decision process.

The availability of financing drove the final choice of a dealer for 61% of all Powersports accountholders surveyed. Offering financing and making the consumer aware of available financing programs while they are in the research phase is critical. GE Capital's research indicates that 79% began their research online and 67% of consumers determine how they want to pay for the purchase prior to visiting the dealership. In addition, more than half (56%) of Powersports shoppers opted to use financing because it enabled them to buy a more expensive model.

These findings underscore the importance of offering financing to everyone and integrating financing messaging into all touch points including advertising, store signage, and early in the sales discussion to optimize sales opportunities, better satisfy customers, garner more referrals and future business, and to be more competitive.

"Successful dealers integrate financing into their advertising, traditional and online marketing, and make it an integral part of their sales process," said Motta. "These dealers offer financing to every customer, enabling them to choose the financing option that best fits their needs."

GE Capital, along with its lending entity, GE Capital Retail Bank, provides authorized dealers installment financing options that are easy for businesses to manage. In addition, GE Capital supports its clients with proprietary online technology such as Business Center, which includes service, marketing, and sales tools, as well as the newly launched Learning Center that provides businesses with fast and easy access to training tools and resources to better understand options and offer financing to consumers.

More than a bank, GE Capital helps Powersports dealers across the U.S. build their businesses through targeted programs that meet the needs of individual riders.\*\* To learn more about GE Capital's consumer finance offerings, how to leverage financing to drive more traffic to your business, and improve sales, visit [gogecapital.com](http://gogecapital.com) or contact 1-866-838-0655.



## ABOUT

### GE Capital's Retail Finance business

GE Capital's Retail Finance business is among the country's most successful retail lenders, with 80 years of experience in consumer financing. The business, with its lending entity GE Capital Retail Bank, provides customized credit programs to retailers and consumers in the United States and Canada that help drive sales. This includes private label and bankcard credit programs to major national, regional, and independent retailers. GE Capital has private label credit programs, promotional and installment lending, bankcards and financial services for consumers through dealers, contractors, manufacturers, healthcare practices, and service providers across nearly 20 industries. More information can be found at [www.gogecapital.com](http://www.gogecapital.com) and [twitter.com/GoGECapital](https://twitter.com/GoGECapital).



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\*The Major Purchase Shopper Study surveyed 3,000+ shoppers nationwide: 2,000 GE Capital Retail Bank (GECRB) accountholders and 1,000 random shoppers who recently made a purchase of \$500 or more.

\*\*Subject to approval and availability. A minimum purchase amount may be required and minimum monthly payments must be made.





DEBUTS RANGED FROM THE RADICAL TO THE RESTRAINED AT THE 2013 DEALER EXPO, BUT EVERYONE AGREES: PRODUCT DESIGNERS HAVE BEEN HARD AT WORK, AND AFTERMARKET SALES WILL BENEFIT AS A RESULT

A Dealernews Team Report

**ANOTHER DEALER EXPO IS IN THE BOOKS.** Finally, the industry is starting to see some upward potential again. Plus, signs have begun to appear in front of many OEM year-over-year sales figures.

Of course, the optimism is tenuous. Exhibitors, dealers and even some staff members were keeping cards close to their chests, cautiously watching consumer sentiment and bottom lines. But the overall attitude was far from doom and gloom.

While some brands choose to hold back this year, others instead chose to launch a variety of new products. Several new products took existing processes or materials and completely reinvented the wheel — sometimes literally. So without further ado, here's a brief rundown of some of the most technically savvy products we encountered during the 2013 Dealer Expo.

**Blackstone Tek (BST)** adaptable carbon fiber wheels, available through Brock's Performance, are not a new addition to our industry. BST has established itself as one of the premier wheel manufacturers in the world, with extremely light, strong and (dare we say) sexy products.



photo by Bruce Steever

For 2013 however, the company created a new hub design that uses interchangeable alloy adapters that allow the wheel to be moved from bike to bike by only changing the inserts. Besides greatly streamlining the production side of things, this allows a BST customer to invest in a set of wheels for his current bike and know that he'll be able to move them to his next bike for a significant savings, compared to buying an all-new pair of BST rims.

We've already had plenty to say about **6D Helmets**. After seeing the latest batch of production helmets in Indy and chatting with Bob Weber more about the design, we are still amazed at



the level of craftsmanship that has gone into these new-from-the-ground-up helmets.

Conventional production tooling simply couldn't build to the tolerances required by 6D, so all-new tooling needed to be designed (and patented) just to create the unique 6D helmet internal structure. Of course, customers will never see the tooling tech, but it is still an achievement that allows the 6D helmet to exist.

**MORE READING:** "Technology behind 6D Helmets elevates price point but delivers margin" on [Dealernews.com](#) > [Dealer Expo Update](#)



photos by Gary Rohman

Another helmet design caught our attention: the rear-entry **Voztec** (see photo, above). While not featuring any new materials or crazy ventilation technologies, the Voztec completely rethinks the very basics of wearing a helmet (see story at right).

The clamshell design allows a variety of benefits that no other helmet has been able to offer until now. The helmet can be split apart and pulled from a downed rider without disturbing potential neck injuries (several technologies have improved post crash safety, but none like this). And because the helmet closes around the neck, the lower bell of the helmet can be extremely narrow to reduce both wind noise and the possibility of catching the lower rim of the helmet on an obstruction in an accident.

Watch this market space — there will be increasing activity here.

On the new materials front, **Macna**, available through **Twisted Throttle**, featured the Night Eye version of its Concrete Jacket. By embedding glass spheres in the fabric, the Night Eye reflects light like a projector screen, and it just has to be seen to be believed. This is a truly better vision of what nighttime riding gear should be.

Courtesy of Bob Barnett of **ARC Levers**, Dealer Expo debuted another cool new material that offers clear-cut benefits over existing options in the market. ARC's new Memlon material is a patented flexible composite that is stiff enough to function as a replacement for alloy levers but is capable of being bent in half 50 to 100 times before showing any wear or failing to return to its original shape. This may be truly an unbreakable lever.

**Continental** brought its new Traction Skin Tech tires to Indy, but that's not why they earned a mention here; it's because Continental figured out a way to avoid the problem that occurs with new, pre-broken-in slippery tires. Instead of using a slick mold-release agent, Continental tires (including its new Trail Attack 2) feature the company's proprietary Traction Skin design that all but eliminates the need for the usual 50 to 100 miles of careful break-in riding. This is one of the smartest innovations we've seen in some time.

And there was a simple little tool that proves something doesn't have to be big or expensive to make a difference at the industry's largest trade exposition. The **Tirox Chain Brush** is a spiral brush that fits completely around a drive chain to provide 360-degree cleaning. The clever little brush eliminates the forceful scrubbing and repositioning required by conventional three-sided brushes to help prevent chain degradation and make a boring chore that much easier and more rewarding. — *Bruce Steever*

## A big year for new helmet designs

Every year at Dealer Expo, at least one helmet company wows everyone (or tries to) with a radical new design or technology. This year, a number of manufacturers got in on the act with debuts ranging from the rather modest to ingeniously bizarre. Before deciding what helmets have the perks your customers will want, you have to keep track of what everyone has to offer.

No one shook up traditional helmet design like Australia-based **Voztec**, which introduced the prototype Snakewind (see photos, left). The full-face helmet is hinged from the top, so the back of it swings open. Once the helmet is snapped shut, the rider is ready to go. The innovative design means the neck opening is smaller, and there is no need for a traditional chinstrap since the helmet itself curves under the chin.

Voztec's design is good news for those who wear glasses when they ride, and getting a helmet off and on with gloves is no problem. But the better news, according to Voztec President Mark Bryant, is that, in the event of a crash or other emergency, the design allows the Snakewind to be removed without disturbing the rider's neck. Voztec expects to have its helmets on the market by January 2014, with pricing ranging from \$300 to \$800.

**H&H Sports Protection USA** had a number of clever design features on its **NiTEK** helmets. The new Interceptor full-face helmet features a completely flush face shield, prompting the rest of us to ask, "Why didn't anyone think of that sooner?" The trick is a spring-loaded cam system: Instead of the usual up and down movement of the shield, the spring pops the shield forward to it can be raised, and everything snaps back into place when it's lowered.

Another NiTEK star at the H&H booth (frankly, the real stars were the cheeky Indy-edition helmets handed out to dealers) was the



photo by Gary Rohman

Diamond. It has the styling and function of a modular helmet; but quick-release buttons on the chin bar turn it into an open-face (see photo, above). Both versions utilize the same face shield and drop-down internal visor. Aerodynamics weren't forgotten, either: The rear spoiler has exhaust vents that move as speed increases, changing the airflow over the helmet. Solid colors are available for \$499 and graphics are \$529.

continued on page 30

IT WAS A NIGHT OF GOOD VIBES ALL AROUND when the 2013 Top 100 Dealers were feted at an awards gala held at the Indiana Roof Ballroom. The industry came together to honor the 100, applaud the Special Merit Winners and then cheer **McGrath Powersports** of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, named the 2013 Top 100 Dealer of the Year. The evening was emceed by Robert Pandya, with Mike Vaughan hosting on-stage interviews and Mary Slepicka dispensing the bling, which included a crystal trophy for the Dealer of the Year and a gold and diamond ring for its owner, Mike McGrath.

CENTER: McGrath (right) compares jewelry with the 2010 and 2011 Dealers of the Year, Chris Jones from Iron Pony (l) and Bill Cameron of Skagit Powersports (c).

BOTTOM: Bob Althoff accepts the Don J. Brown Lifetime Achievement Award from Stan Simpson, chairman of the American Motorcyclist Association (also pictured with DN's Angela Gibbs on the facing page). BOTTOM RIGHT: Wayne Jaecke and daughter Trudy Quelch of City Cycle Sales, the 2012 Dealer of the Year. **D**



# EXCELLENCE





merit

TOP 100 FOR

Superiority

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: GO AZ/H-D Scottsdale; Freedom Cycles; Mike McGrath; A.D. Farrow Harley-Davidson; Off-Road Express West; Vandervest Harley-Davidson; and First Coast Powersports. CENTER: Ray Price talks with Mike Vaughan. Below, McGrath team members celebrate the big win. (Photos by Gary Rohman)

**HELMETS**, continued from page 27

NiTEK wasn't the only company taking a different approach to half helmets. **Bell Powersports** — which arguably had some of the best new graphics at Dealer Expo — was showing off the Rogue, a half-helmet shell with open-face styling. The Rogue is a bold choice designed to offer the cruiser crowd more protection without giving

photo by Gary Rohman



up style. A "comfort shroud" below the fiberglass shell extends the helmet's coverage, including the EPS liner.

A detachable muzzle on the front, which gives the rider a fighter-pilot look, snaps in place for cold days or for keeping bugs out of teeth. Available colors are dark and mostly in a matte finish. It's a new take on an old style, and Bell is hoping that riders will want the extra coverage for the \$249.95 price tag.

Not everyone was making radical changes. **Shark** had good buzz during the Expo, especially when it came to its updated modular EvoLine Series3. The chin bar nestles snugly against the back of the helmet when not in use, and Shark says the result is better aerodynamics.

The sleek design sported by the EvoLine Series3 also means the helmet looks good in the full-face or open-face position.

All of the new designs bode well for those who want to get a little adventurous with their helmets, but rest assured that plenty of manufacturers are sticking to the tried-and-true styles and graphics. Everyone had a new helmet — or an updated version — to show off, but many of them were exactly what you would expect from the various brands.

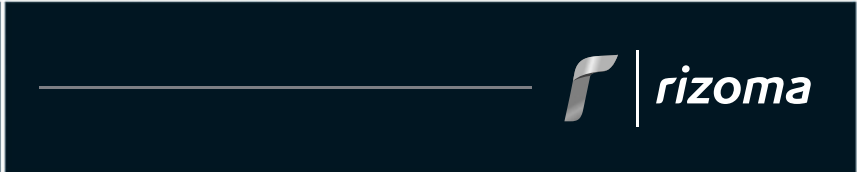
One notable addition that dealers will find of interest is the new "Sons of Anarchy" line from **Fulmer Helmets**. The half helmets feature the logo and graphics inspired by the popular FX show. Dealers can expect Fulmer to plan a few appearances by "Sons of Anarchy" cast members, as well as a sweepstakes for both dealers and consumers. The prize is a chance to attend a red carpet event.

Whether you prefer style or stardom, this year's Dealer Expo gave dealers plenty of options to stock alongside the regular helmet lineup. We have seen innovative new helmet designs come and go quickly in the industry, but the broad spectrum of new designs at this year's event suggests that riders are ready to trust their heads to something a little edgier, as long as it means more convenience alongside safety. — *Beth Dolgner*

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RK's performance XW sealed ring chain, chromoly steel front sprocket and either premium grade steel rear sprocket or Vortex 7075 T6 aluminum rear sprocket in clear or PTFE black hardcoat.

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This high mileage performance kit features hardened steel sprocket with matched OE gearing and RK's RX or XW sealed ring chain. Entire kit is warranted to provide 20,000 miles of street use.

## 520 RACE CONVERSION KIT

This 520 quick acceleration racing kit features chromoly steel front sprocket, Vortex 7075 T6 alloy rear sprockets available in clear or black hardcoat and RK's RX or XW sealed ring performance chain.

## Q/A 520 STEEL CONVERSION

Drop that 525/530 size chain for these 520 steel conversion kits. This kit contains RK's RX or XW sealed ring chain, with chromoly steel front sprocket and premium steel rear sprocket.

## 525/530 SUPERSTOCK KIT

Features RK's performance XW or RX sealed ring chain, Vortex 7075 T6 aluminum rear sprocket in clear anodized or PTFE black hardcoat and a chromoly steel front sprocket.

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## V3 Gas Caps

Made in the USA, V3 Gas Caps boast coarse thread enables quick closure without cross-threading; large, contoured finger tabs allow for easier opening compared to classic Vortex design; safety lock switch prevents accidental cap loosening due to vibration or contact; integrated dual check valve assembly eliminates fuel tank pressure issues; vent and chamber design helps stop leaks by containing any fuel that gets past the check valve; up to 50% lighter than stock keyed fuel tank caps; customize to match your bike with interchangeable, colored safety lock switches. Comes standard with Silver lock switch.



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# The Revolution Is Here.

## Performance Links Racing Chain

Available in Black, Performance Links V3 Racing Chain is available in our proprietary Duo Glide, Tri Glide and Non O-Ring technologies for street, racing and MX/SX applications. Available this year!

## V3 Race Stands

Made in the USA, our V3 Race Stands are lighter and stronger due to the one-piece, over-sized tube design. Optimized geometry allows proper lift leverage without the need for long handle, which create a tripping hazard while working around the bike. Our CNC bending process ensures dimensional accuracy. The unique fork lift design securely lifts the front end from the bottom of the forks to facilitate tire, brake and wheel service. The CNC-machined 6061 Aluminum lifting cups are light, strong and durable. Twin Spar lift arms with pinch screws tighten down securely and allow for quick adjustment without the need for tools.



Front Stand



Rear Stand

## V3 Race Stand Wheel Kit

Made in the USA, the V3 Race Stand Wheel Kit is sold separately with your choice of color-anodized aluminum wheel mount brackets. Make a statement by customizing your V3 Race Stands to coordinate with the colors in your pit or garage.



## Vortex is pleased to present more additions to the V3 Line!

Years of research, development and testing have gone into producing the fastest and strongest product offering yet from the proud team Vortex.

# Pro Series

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Pro Series' universal wheel system allows the user to mount the wheel from one brand or model to another using model specific carrier adapters. This unique system makes your investment in Pro Series long-term and doesn't end when you change models or brands. The aggressively styled Pro Series design is machined from forged aerospace aluminum for increased strength and the stunning anodized "Magnum Gray" finish compliments the look of any bike. Available for many Japanese sportbike models.

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CBR1000RR	2008-2012 / NON ABS
RC51	2000-2001
RC51	2002-2006
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ZX-10R	2006-2010
ZX-14R	2006-2012
SUZUKI	
GSXR1000	2005-2008
GSXR1000	2009-2012
GSX1300R	1999-2007
GSX1300R	2008-2012
TL1000R	1998-2003
TL1000S	1997-2001
GSXR750	1996-1999
YAMAHA	
YZF-R1	2004-2012

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WHERE THE INDUSTRY CONNECTS.



# Communication systems adding features to broaden their appeal

MOTORCYCLES CARRY THE STIGMA of being dangerous, but nothing sounded more dangerous at Dealer Expo than a communication system representative explaining how you can now take calls while you are skiing. It sounds like an invitation to get intimate with a tree, but it shows just how much in-helmet communication has grown. It's not just for road-trippers on Gold Wings anymore.

Now that everyone has embraced Bluetooth technology, companies are trying to define themselves by enhancing it with more practical designs and better reliability. During the Expo, **SENA Technologies** and **UCLEAR** stood

out as interesting alternatives to the traditional speakers-and-a-boom setup.

SENA focused on diversity, offering a variety of setups to fit particular helmet types and even style of riding. The SMH10R was designed to be as slim as possible and geared toward sportbike riders.



photo by Bruce Steever

The system mounts to the left side of a full-face helmet (see photo, above), and the battery compartment mounts on the back. Two smaller pieces, SENNA figured, is better than one bulky piece mounted to the side of a helmet. The result is better aerodynamics, and less pointing and laughing from your friends.

The SPH10H-FM has a control module that's removable via a clamp so that installation on half-helmets is quick and easy. Touring riders haven't been left out, either; the new SM10 is a Bluetooth stereo adapter that allows both rider and passenger to listen wirelessly to onboard audio on the Harley Ultra Classic and Honda Gold Wing.

UCLEAR, powered by BITwave, features a speaker in each earpiece, eliminating the need for a boom microphone. Built-in DSP noise and echo cancellation accommodates for the lack of a boom. The system works with voice-activated controls for making hands-free phone calls and communicating via intercom with up to nine other riders.



photo by Gary Rohman

**Blue Infusion Technologies** was displaying gear and gadgetry in one small product (see photo, left). The BEARtek audio regulation gloves feature six touch points on the fingers, and tapping the thumb against any of them controls a different function of a paired Bluetooth smart product.

While most communication systems boast hands-free usage, the BEARtek gloves are ideal for the solo rider who's looking to stick to a smart phone rather than a full in-helmet system.

For dealers, all of this means there is a wider variety of wireless communication systems available, ranging from things that will appeal to everyone — from the cruiser types to a sportbike club that wants to keep in touch during group rides. While each manufacturer starts with the same Bluetooth technology, how it's applied is where each product makes its mark. — *Beth Dolgner*

## A soft-baggage BOOM for hard-charging adventure riders

UP UNTIL RECENTLY it seemed luggage options for the adventure bike market trended toward big beefy boxes — large aluminum or plastic cases that made a KTM or BMW rider look as if he were running an international cargo service. Sure there's always been soft saddlebags, tank bags and other assorted bits, but for the most part, luggage for the AdvRider crowd was built with the American Tourister gorilla — or 1,000 miles of hell-shot terrain — in mind.

The hard bags of yore are still around, but the booming adventure bike segment has given rise to a number of companies producing rugged, waterproof, high-capacity soft bags that are lightweight and ready to rumble. At Dealer Expo were manufacturers

charging forth into the wild with soft-sided goodness that feature compression systems and the ability to mount to a bike with little to no special hardware.


The lineup includes Bend, Ore.-based **Giant Loop**; **Wolfman Luggage** out of Longmont, Colo.; and **Bags-Connection**, a German company distributed here in the U.S. by Twisted Throttle, to name a few.

Giant Loop's founder, Harold Cecil, told us that his business has evolved from two adventure bike riders with only a single saddlebag available into a company that, for 2013, launched four entirely new products and revamped its entire collection. Last year the company secured a Small Business Association-based working capital loan to

aid with brand penetration and hired a new design director.

The unique Giant Loop lineup includes a saddlebag/tail bag system, the Coyote, that resembles a life preserver and fits on a bike where a passenger would normally sit. The company's Siskiyou panniers require no rack or special hardware, and feature heat shields and two internal waterproof liner bags. Cecil pointed out that the bags accommodate a combined capacity of 70 liters, and riders can travel two-up without changing the configuration. Added capacity — 120 liters worth — can be added via the Fort Rock top case that easily handles bulky items such as sleeping bags or jackets, Cecil said.

continued on page 36



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**SOFT BAGS**, continued from page 34

Cecil said soft luggage such as the Siskiyou panniers are about 30 lbs. lighter than the typical hard-luggage system. They also help position the weight much closer to the center of the bike, he explained.



photo by Gary Rohman

Over at Wolfman Luggage, Eric Hougen explained that the company's new Rocky Mountain saddlebag has the same large storage volume — about 70 liters, all told — as a hard-sided piece, but can be much more forgiving in the case of a get-off. Hooking an ankle on a hard bag in a crash is a possibility,

but with soft luggage there's a lot more give. Additionally, the bags feature a compression system that keeps them in place while still allowing the luggage to be easily released from the side racks. The bags are also cone-shaped to ease packing and unpacking.

In addition to the Rocky Mountain bags, Wolfman was displaying its Monarch Pass saddle bags (see photo), a smaller, more straightforward setup available at a lower price point. These packs feature internal stiffeners — as does the Rocky Mountain — that help keep cargo stable, and a four-point rack attachment that reportedly makes them easy to remove from the bike.

One of the common themes running through all the pieces from the various manufacturers is that the soft bags — much like their hard-sided brethren — are built as rugged, utilitarian pieces of luggage, well-matched for the bikes upon which they will be installed. — *Dennis Johnson*

## Lots of options for riding... and driving

IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE we previewed the variety of vehicles to be seen at Dealer Expo. We reported on:

- Christini's new 450 Enduro and AWD 450 Military Edition dirtbikes,
- Tharo EV electric scooters,
- Yelvington Trikes' new kits and proprietary trikes,
- Ice Bear's lowered-and-stretched scooter, inspired by the Yamaha Ruckus, and
- Strider balance bikes for kids.

To read about the above new models again, visit [Dealernews.com](http://Dealernews.com) > [Issue Archives > February 2013](#). Here are four more companies that caught our eye on the show floor.

**Kandi USA** was showing a new 150cc go-kart, the KD-150GKM-2 (see photo). The model's single-cylinder four-stroke engine is air-cooled and paired with a chain-driven automatic transmission with reverse. Kandi claims a top speed of more than 40 mph. The go-kart's wheelbase is about 73.2 inches. MSRP is \$2,395. Kandi USA is based in the



photo by Gary Rohman

Los Angeles area with a 70,000 sq. ft. warehouse.

**Kuberg** is a Czech maker of electric motorcycles for children. The company's three kids models are The Start (seat height of 16 inches for ages 2 to 5), the Trial E (seat height of 21 inches for ages 4 to 10), and the Cross

continued on page 38

“It's a top-secret way to get men into the apparel department, even when they don't need something.”

— Seminar leader Jennifer Robison on why you should add a vehicle to a merchandising display



**Miss a seminar? Read about it at Dealernews.com > Dealer Expo Update:**

Dealers should create a sales process for digital leads: Rod Stuckey

**Don't 'drop everything' for social media, says Tory Hornsby**

Dynamic PG&A displays fuel increased sales, says Jennifer Robison

**Engage customers, inventory to compete with e-commerce: Aftermarket VIP panel**

“High focus” on U.S. market due to impression it makes offshore, says KTM's Jon-Erik Bureson

**Jan Kelly: F&I can be “most profitable square footage” at dealership**

Jim Rasmus: Simple remodeling solutions help boost traffic, sales

**Pedretti: How to launch a successful integrated marketing plan**

Pre-owned inventory: Reach for a shorter new-used ratio, says NPA

**Retention, conquest marketing will grow dealers' market share, says Rod Stuckey**

**Selling to the post-recession consumer: Five steps to follow from Mark Mooney**

Spader: If personnel costs exceed 50%, you're in trouble

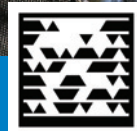
**Tony Gonzalez: Effective team building all about the right process**

Tune up the service department for big profit potential, says Dave Koshollek

**Where dealers drop the ball: Follow-up calls**



**RPHA SERIES**



# PERFORMANCE REINVENTED

With the introduction of the advanced-concept HJC RPHA series, HJC has pushed the boundaries of helmet performance across the board. The HJC RPHA 10 is a high-performance sport/street helmet; the HJC RPHA Max is a remarkably light and quiet modular helmet; and the HJC RPHA X brings the newest helmet technology to off-road riding. All three helmets incorporate the best of HJC technology: PIM shell construction that results in very lightweight helmets; wind-tunnel-developed forms for slick aerodynamics, a quiet ride and superior ventilation; plush, self-cooling interiors; new top-grade graphics, and much more. Add HJC's famous five-year warranty and it's clear the HJC RPHA series delivers cutting-edge technology at a significant value—it's helmet performance reinvented.



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NEW VEHICLES, continued from page 36



Kuberg photo by Arlo Redwine

(seat height of 23 inches for ages 5 to 12). All models (see photo, left) feature fully covered batteries, a chain guard, a parental speed dial control, and suspension comprised of telescopic forks and a spring shock absorber. MSRPs for the models, in order of increasing size, are \$1,099, \$1,499 and \$1,699.

Kuberg was also displaying a prototype motorcycle for teenagers that will be available later this year. Top speed will be around 40 mph, and its range will be around 40 miles. Already in production is a waterproof electric adult trials bike with electric clutch. It weighs only 157 lbs. and has a range of up to three hours.

Massimo has new side-by-sides for 2013: the Alligator 500 EFI (retailing for \$8,995), the Alligator 700 EFI (\$9,995) and the four-seat Alligator 700-4 EFI (\$11,499). Compared with other Massimo models, the Alligators are 8 inches wider through the suspension and have a new front-end design. Other features include reinforced A-arms, bucket seats, a top, doors, 26-inch aluminum wheels, an electric winch, a storage box and a full windshield.

Massimo also has redesigned its Croc 500 EFI (\$8,499) and Croc 700 EFI (\$9,499) side-by-sides. They have a new front end and feature liquid-cooled engines with pushbutton 2WD/4WD as well as new aluminum wheels. The Croc models come standard with an electric winch, full instrumentation, a windshield and a storage box.

SSR Motorsports, a decade-old importer based in Norwalk, Calif., introduced six 2013 models at Dealer Expo. One of them, the SSR Motorsports 500-LT UTV, is powered by a 493cc single-cylinder liquid-cooled engine. Maximum power is a claimed 30.8 hp at 6,500 rpm. The model uses double A-arms front and rear for suspension and front and rear disc brakes. Dry weight is 1,580 lbs. Available colors are black, red and blue. MSRP is \$6,999.

The SSR Motorsports SR250-R dirtbike is powered by a 249.6cc single-cylinder liquid-cooled four-stroke engine connected to a 34 mm carburetor and a five-speed transmission. Maximum power is a claimed 25.8 hp at 9,000 rpm. The bike's frame is made from an aluminum alloy. Front suspension is a 47mm inverted fork with adjustable rebound and compression. Rear suspension is a single shock with adjustable spring preload and rebound. Seat height, weight and wheel base are 38 inches, 260 lbs. and 60 inches, respectively. MSRP is \$3,599. — Arlo Redwine



Massimo Alligator 700 EFI. Photo courtesy of Massimo



SSR Motorsports SR250R. Photo courtesy of SSR Motorsports



SSR Motorsports 500LT UTV. Photo courtesy of SSR Motorsports

“Big companies do a lot of [image advertising]. So leave that up to the OEM. Let them do the expensive images to get their name out there.” — Seminar leader Rod Stuckey on marketing tactics



# NEW FOR 2013!

CST's new Pulse sport ATV tires are sure to provide heart-pounding, adrenaline-pumping traction! The rear Pulse features a tread pattern with optimal spacing for any terrain from loose loam to hardpack.

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Rear: AT20x11-9; AT22x11-9



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# PULSE

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IT'S ABOUT THE RUSH!

# UTVs: Product breadth = market strength

YOU ONLY HAVE TO LOOK at what's happening in the aftermarket to get a good idea of what types of units are selling. At Dealer Expo, the large number of companies offering up products for the UTV, side-by-side and ATV segments points to brisk business in the four-wheeled world. The range covered everything from recreation to agriculture, with a touch of hunting and mudding thrown in for good measure.

As a longtime player in this area, **Kolpin** had a number of goodies designed for hard use and the occasional good time, but the big push

install with quick clamps that attach the roof and rear glass panel, and the windshield attaches with four bolts. The doors are made to lift off with no tools.

The company uses automotive-type gaskets on all contact surfaces for a weather-tight seal, while the sliding driver and passenger employ tempered glass and a hard-coated polycarbonate to keep dust out when closed. The front panels open slightly for airflow or all the way for hunting.



Kolpin cab on Polaris 900 XP. Press image courtesy Kolpin

this year was the company's line of side-by-side cabs, said Tony Petersen, director of sales. Kolpin has cabs that fit vehicles from Can-Am, Honda, Kawasaki, Polaris and Yamaha. The cabs are reportedly easy to



DFK cab on Can-Am Commander. Press image courtesy DFK

Another manufacturer of side-by-side cabs is **DFK**, a company from the Czech Republic that now has a U.S. distributor in Downers Grove, Ill., just outside of Chicago. The company has cabs for just about every side-by-side out there, including one for the Can-Am Commander. The cab features a tempered safety glass front panel that tilts out and comes equipped with a wiper and washer assembly. The window locks in four different positions. Doors are built from UV-protected and hard-coated 5mm polycarbonate with metal piping reinforcement. Each door is lockable. Other features include a three-speed heater, a sheet metal roof, noise-reducing insulation and a rear panel made from the same materials as the doors.

For Kolpin's Cycle Country lineup, the Poly XT plow blades are big sellers, Petersen said. The plastic blades are lighter and quieter than steel, they don't rust, and they're a little more forgiving on the surfaces over which they're plowing, he added. The blades come in 60, 66 and 72 inches.

**WES**, out of Quebec, has been making ATV trunks for many years and reportedly was one of the first in Canada to do so. The Touring model is designed for two-seater ATVs and comes in two different trim levels, standard and deluxe. The basic model adds storage space, armrests and handgrips for passengers, while the premium setup comes with heated grips.

Tire-wise, **GBC Motorsports** had its new Kanati Mongrel rubber for UTVs and side-by-sides — a tire that ran on several vehicles in this year's King of the Hammers race. The Mongrel is DOT-approved for street use but is reportedly smooth on any hard-packed surface. It features an eight-ply radial construction and available in three sizes.

For the recreationalist blasting across the terrain in the Polaris RZR, **DragonFire** unveiled its entire trail-ready RockSolid line. Products include bumpers, utility racks and bolt-on components such as a winch mount, cooler rack and rear bars.

For tunes on the trail, **Wet Sounds** unveiled the Stealth-8 Sound Bar, an all-in-one audio system for four-wheelers. (If you were anywhere near the Wet Sounds booth, you likely heard this speaker setup.) The system has LED accent lighting, built-in Bluetooth, input and outputs for an amplifier or MP3 player, and a number of high-output 3 in. full-range marine drivers. — *Dennis Johnson*

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The combination of wind tunnel engineered aerodynamics, SNELL and DOT approved, full application, CARBON FIBER weave shell, and DUAL DENSITY EPS impact absorbing liner offers not only the ultimate in light weight protection, but exceptional stability at speed. Other significant details include; a CAD-SPEC INTERIOR for exceptional fit, an optically superior, hard coated, 3D face shield actuated by a tool-free closure mechanism, a QUADPORT™ 2.0 VENTILATION system with two adjustable front intakes channeled through to a streamline rear VENTURIEFFECT EXHAUST vent, literally pulling heat and humidity up and out of the shell for a cool, dry ride. And no fine detailing was overlooked, including; a fully removable and washable QWICKDRY™ INTERIOR and streamline injection molded bottom edge gasket for reduced turbulence.

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Community credit unions — that's going to save you. That's going to be the magic bullet ... to make this year a great year. [They] are buying deals that nobody else will touch with a 10-foot pole." — *Jan Kelly on F&I sales and credit approvals*

It's much like when my wife reminds me to get stuff done around the house. You want to do the same thing with your customers." — *Eric Pedretti on the benefits of Drip Marketing – slow and steady reminders of an event or promotion*



"Traffic flow gets your customers to go where you want them to go, and to see what you want them to see. If they have a direct path to parts, you lose."

— *RDA's Jim Rasmus on remodeling strategies*



If it's a race to the lowest price, we're going to lose."

— *Jared Burt of Rexburg Motorsports, panelist, Dealernews SuperSession on Aftermarket Sales*



I firmly believe that the average [dealership] experience is uninviting to the wife, the girlfriend or the daughter. We need a gut check about the intimidation."

— *KTM's Jon-Erik Burleson during the Dealernews SuperSession panel on OEM-Dealer Relations*



"The absolute maximum that we recommend that [dealers] spend is 74 cents of every gross profit dollar. That will convert for most dealerships to a net profit of 3 to 4 percent of sales."

— *John Spader on what high-performance dealerships look like*



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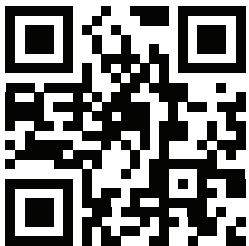
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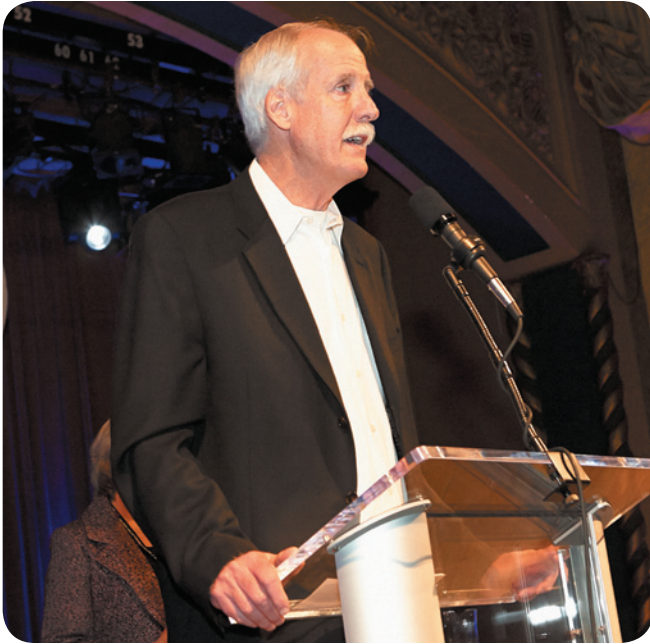
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# Althoff: Industry, dealers must be shoulder-to-shoulder

**Dealernews**  
**TOP 100**  
EXCELLENCE IN  
POWERSPORTS RETAILING



Bob Althoff (Photo by Gary Rohman)

THE DON J. BROWN Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Bob Althoff, owner of **A.D. Farrow Co. Harley-Davidson** in Columbus/Sunbury, Ohio, during the Top 100 Dealer Awards Gala on Feb. 15 in Indianapolis. Here are some excerpts from his acceptance speech:

"We change lives, in small and subtle ways, and in profound ways. And through these fun-loving and big-hearted and extraordinarily generous people we call riders, we change our communities. Sometimes we lead, sometimes we follow; but always, we are the glue of this community."

"We need to work with our OEMs and suppliers and consultants and industry press to support them in the issues they champion. And they need to support us in achieving sustainable profits as dealers.... And why do we deserve those profits? Because we need to replenish our inventories, fix the shop truck, buy a new tire changer, replace the trailer, pay our people fairly and train them, put on an event, and support a charity."

"There are those who don't care if we are able to sustain our businesses and our lifestyle. They would, with the stroke of a pen and an Executive Order, ban us from the millions of acres and thousands of miles of trails — trails we built 50 years ago and have helped maintain — now, only to have them say we don't belong there... The AMA is there to make sure this stuff doesn't happen [and] they deserve us to be shoulder-to-shoulder with them."

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THAT'S A WRAP!

## Designers focus on women's market

NOT THAT LONG AGO it was tough to find apparel specifically designed for the woman rider. Now the available options keep growing. Plenty of companies were introducing women's gear at Dealer Expo. Here are some of the standouts:

**Corazzo Design's** Adventura utility jacket — so new the name might not even stick — and the textile Brezzi have full zip-out linings, adjustable waists and reflective piping.

**First Manufacturing's** Star jacket, a top seller in its Classic line, has embroidered reflective stars on the front and back. The black leather jacket is quadruple-stitched, features zippered vents on the back and arms, and includes a full zip-out liner.

**FLY Racing's** Spring 2013 collection includes the Moto Love tee in red, white and gray. The Halftone Cami, with teal and pink options, features the FLY logo and retails for \$25.95.

The "Made in the USA" **Liberty Wear** casual apparel line includes hoodies, tees, tanks and even dresses.

There are motorcycle-specific designs, like the new Ride On T-shirt. Sizing, incidentally, goes all the way to ladies' 3XL.

**Roland Sands Design** debuted its women's line with the leather Maven and the waxed cotton Vada. There was plenty of casual apparel, too, and RSD plans to have a full lineup by the fall.

**Scorpion Sports** matches your customers from head to toe in three color- and design-coordinated ensembles, including the new R2000 premium helmet. The company's revamped line includes an updated take on the popular Dahlia design.

**Throttle Threads** offered ladies' shopwear — customizable plaid work shirts, thermal hoodies and a new pink Contrast Shop Shirt.

**Unik International's** new Vintage Leather line features a dark brown vest and jacket with classic styling — an alternative to traditional black. Unik also offers women's concealed carry vests.

— Beth Dolgner



Scorpion Sports (Photo by Gary Rohman)



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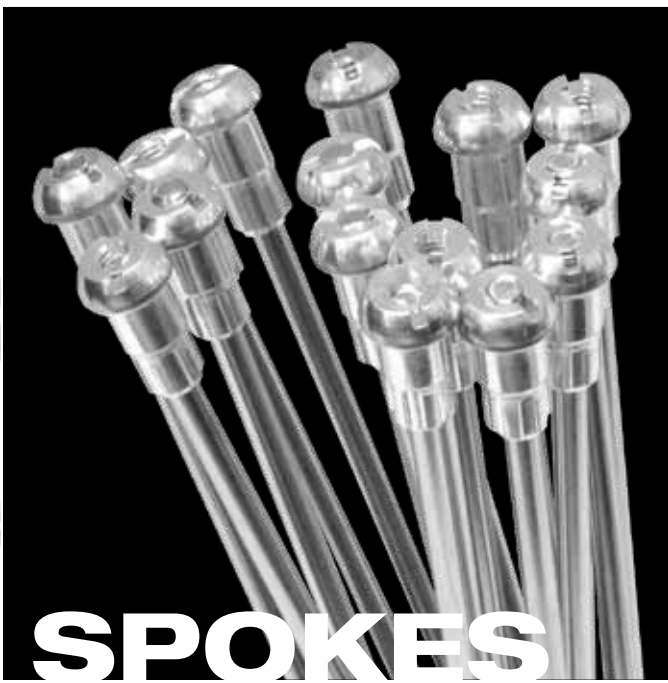
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\*When compared to comparable OE/Aftermarket steel/stainless spokes.





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# Integrating data across multiple platforms will make your life easier

INDUSTRY'S CURRENT SILO APPROACH IS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE



A former dealer principal, **Rod Stuckey** is the founder and president of Dealership University and Powersports Marketing.com. Have a question about marketing best practices? Contact him via [editors@dealernews.com](mailto:editors@dealernews.com)

## On the Web:

Did you miss Rod Stuckey's seminars on Internet lead management and retention marketing? Read about them on [Dealernews.com](http://Dealernews.com) in the "Dealer Expo Updates" section.

**YEARS AGO** a dealer friend shared his perspective on digital marketing by asking me, "Why would I spend my budget on anything other than Google AdWords? It's like having a 100 percent commissioned salesperson; I only incur the expense when the desired result is achieved."

Although I don't agree AdWords (*aka* pay-per-click) should be your only digital marketing strategy, I do feel that Google has taken data-driven marketing to a level that is so effective it's nearly hard to comprehend. Using a proprietary algorithm, Google AdWords allows you to bid on searches for keywords in your local market area and set a budget to exactly what fits your checkbook. You only pay when you get a click to your actual website. Unlike a billboard, impressions are free.

Google has forever changed the landscape of advertising by proving that with enough math and enough data you can create the largest and most powerful marketing tool ever.

Using data in your marketing allows you to make decisions based on key metrics as opposed to emotion, perception and gut feel. There are many ways beyond Google that data can be integrated into your marketing.

Your dealer management system should be your largest source of valuable data that can be leveraged in many beneficial ways. For example, with advanced list segmentation you could potentially identify customers in an equity position who can trade up without an increase in payment. You could find customers past due for service, customers most likely to buy more parts and accessories, expiring warranties, birthdays, vehicle anniversaries, and even "lost" customers who need to be re-activated. All of these are viable marketing opportunities.

In a perfect world, data could create big opportunities for dealers to increase sales and profits. Your data should serve as the foundation for relevant and compelling communications with your customer base, and ultimately be the driving force behind all marketing plans and decisions.

(Side note: To have accurate data in your DMS, your frontline staff has to be trained and diligent in capturing key customer and vehicle information. I recently popped into a Harley-Davidson dealer to buy a gift and *had to ask to be added* to the store's customer list. The gal behind the counter looked at me like I had three heads.)

There are other valuable sources of data, including your website and CRM system. Even the data collected by OEMs, the MIC, third-party vendors and auctions could be extremely beneficial to the dealer

network and overall health of the industry.

Imagine if you were taking a trade-in or buying at the auction and could view a snapshot of how many comparable vehicles were available in your market area and what they were selling for. Wouldn't that be a little more valuable information to make accurate decisions with than just looking in the NADAGuide? It's now possible — with enough data.

## HERE'S THE PROBLEM

Obviously, we're not in a perfect world. Most DMSs don't talk to CRM systems. Most CRMs don't talk to websites, and most websites don't talk to other third-party sites, making data hygiene and integration clumsy and, in some cases, simply not possible.

The goal of data integration to most dealers seems overwhelming, and rightly so. Sure, some of the big companies are trying to create one-stop shops, but ultimately our industry has to move toward a rising-tide-raises-all-ships mentality and develop some sort of cross-integration across multiple platforms.

Years ago in the automotive industry, 13 leading automotive-related Internet companies (some of which were competitors) developed the ADF standard. This is an open XML-based standard specifically for communicating vehicle and customer information from quote requests to dealers.

This auto dealer format (ADF) was the catalyst for an industry that now is able to integrate and share data through APIs (application program interfaces) across different technology platforms (including competitors). This is a huge benefit for the OEMs because the leads generated from their consumer sites are compatible with all of the vendors' CRM and Internet lead management (ILM) tools. It is equally beneficial for dealers, as it streamlines operations and provides the key data required to make smart marketing decisions.

Unfortunately, many OEMs in our industry are creating their own lead management systems, and although they have good intentions, they're simply spending a lot of money on custom software and adding to the dealers' challenges of multiple systems housing data that can't be integrated. Having nine logins to nine different systems housing leads is a mess, and is the reality of the challenges today's dealers face.

As Google has proved, with enough math, enough data and the right technology, you really can take marketing to the next level. I encourage you to share the need and importance of data integration with your OEMs and vendors. Ultimately it's the demand of the dealer body that will steer this ship. **D**

# Merchandising and sales work hand in hand, says TR's Robison

HAVING GREAT PRODUCTS and accessories in your dealership is important, but no less important is how it is all displayed. In "Visually Improve Your ROI," Tucker Rocky national retail merchandising specialist Jennifer Robison discussed key strategies for displaying merchandise to maximize sales. The seminar was part of the Dealernews Learning Experience presented by Dealership University.

"Making money is an art and takes a strategy," Robison said. Her seven-point strategy for effective sales displays includes preplanning, research, diversification, seasonal rotation, branding, staying ahead of the curve and keeping the customers a top priority.

When it comes to store design and how merchandise is displayed, understand your retail identity. Then, compile a list of the five retailers you love the most and study the elements that make those places so attractive, whether it's the way merchandise is displayed, lighting, or even something as simple as lack of clutter, she said.

Showing customers new options on a regular basis is where creative endcap design comes in, and those displays should be changed on at least a monthly basis. Robison suggests partnering with vendors to create dynamic displays utilizing signage and other available tools.

That signage, Robison said, can be key in conveying information to a customer, even if it contains something unrelated

but similar, such as an upcoming dealer-sponsored track day next to a display of leathers. Relating events to product can have an impact on sales, as can relating certain products with a lifestyle. Robison suggested culling your photo archives for interesting lifestyle-oriented displays and corresponding merchandise. — Beth Dolgner



photo by Chris Bucher, Banayote Photography

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# Never ignore an Internet request, cautions Rod Stuckey

YOU MAY BE USED to catering to customers with a need for physical speed, but have you caught up to the ones on the infobahn? Maybe not, Dealership University's Rod Stuckey told attendees during a seminar on CRM and Internet lead management at Dealer Expo. And if you aren't, you may be losing tens of thousands of dollars in profits for each customer lost.

Customers who contact you electronically have already done their homework by the time they request a quote. The first staffer on the reply buzzer is likely going to be the one to ultimately make the sale, he said.

Stuckey exhorted dealers to create a sales process for digital leads. "The interesting thing about Internet leads: They are farther down the sales funnel than a walk-in," he noted. "If they submit a quote request, they are serious. They want an answer, quick."

That's daunting if you're filtering leads from multiple

sources (your OEM to Cycle Trader). So having a system is critical. "There is an argument now that Internet leads are more important than phone-ups," Stuckey noted.

"You have to have the mindset that each quote request that you don't close puts you one lead closer to closing one," Stuckey said.



photo by Chris Bucher, Banayote Photography

"Statistically, customers [who] request a quote are unhappy if they don't get a price back.

"Without that call, the only thing that sets you apart is your price," he continued. "It's a dangerous game for you to commoditize yourself with a quote."

With fast follow-up, the average consumer buys a new vehicle every 18 to 24 months, he said. That one loyal customer can add up to more than \$80K in profits over 10 years, he added. — Holly Wagner

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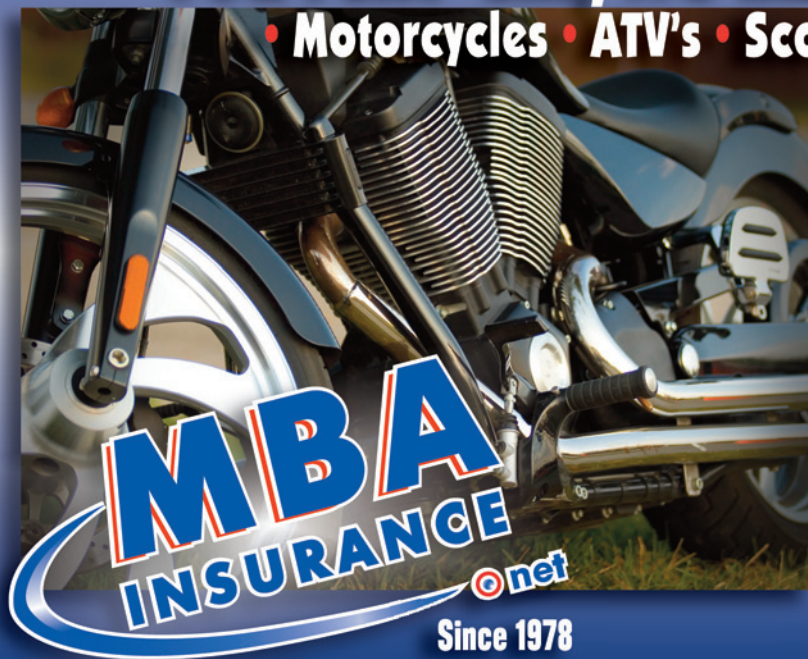
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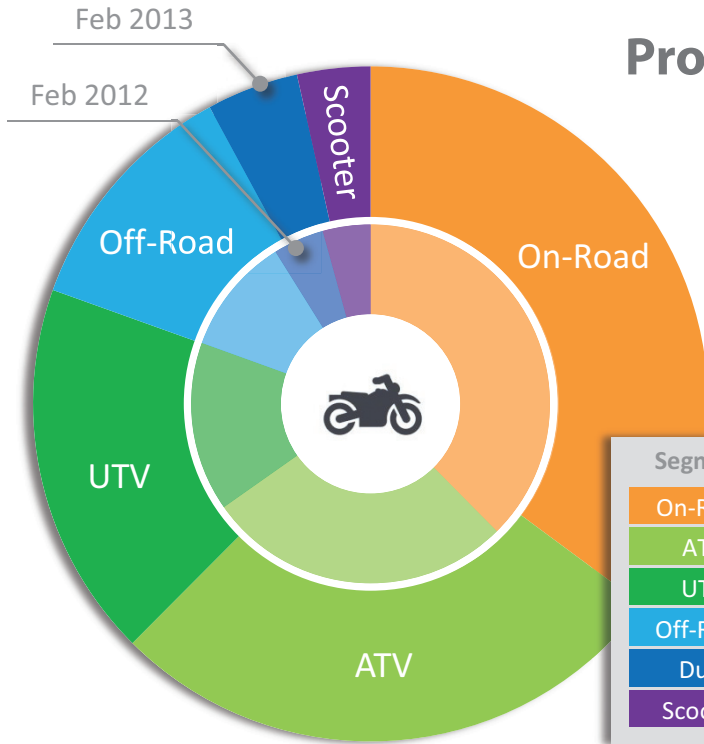
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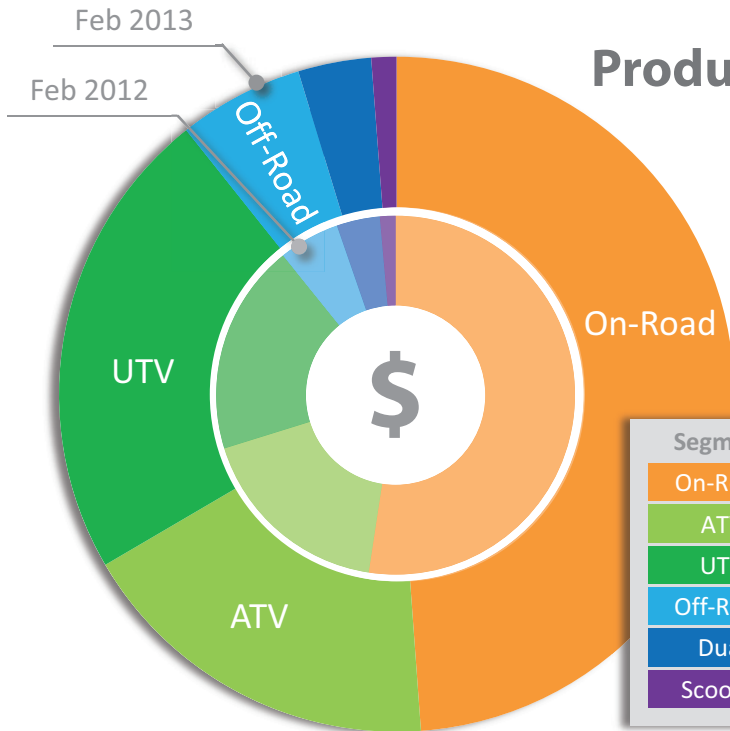
## Product Mix by Units Sold



What type of units are selling better, or possibly worse, this year versus last year? This chart shows shifts in market share earned by the six major segments of Powersports unit sales. Change in share is expressed as a gain or loss when compared to unit sales in the same month as last year.

Segment	Feb 2012	Feb 2013	Diff
On-Road	37.6 %	35.1 %	-2.5 %
ATV	27.7 %	27.3 %	-0.4 %
UTV	15.3 %	18.0 %	2.7 %
Off-Road	10.6 %	11.6 %	1.0 %
Dual	4.6 %	4.4 %	-0.2 %
Scooter	4.3 %	3.5 %	-0.8 %

## Product Mix by Sales Dollars



What type of units are generating more or less cash than last year? This chart shows shifts in market share earned by the six major segments of Powersports sales measured in dollars. Change in share is expressed as a percentage gain or loss when compared to dollar sales in the same month as last year.

Segment	Feb 2012	Feb 2013	Diff
On-Road	52.4 %	48.8 %	-3.6 %
ATV	17.8 %	17.7 %	-0.1 %
UTV	19.0 %	22.7 %	3.7 %
Off-Road	5.5 %	6.0 %	0.5 %
Dual	3.9 %	3.5 %	-0.4 %
Scooter	1.4 %	1.2 %	-0.2 %

Reports provided by ADP Lightspeed's Data Services team. All reports are a sample of North American dealers using the Lightspeed DMS. For further information please contact Dave Johnson at 800.521.0309. Also visit [adplightspeed.com](http://adplightspeed.com) for more reports.



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# Make way for the three-wheelers

TRIKES HELD CENTER STAGE at Dealer Expo, with a handful of the main manufacturers sitting smack in the middle of the Indiana Convention Center. And in talking with the various companies, it appears that the trike market is growing as more older riders,

holm said that the company made improvements to the manufacturing process to help ease installation, such as the new running boards that he said are not only easier to install but also offer a sturdier base. Paint-matched side panels also offer a more

first forward controls built specifically for the Wing, Lindholm said. In addition to working with a converted bike, they will also work with the stock touring motorcycle. He added that the product is a good item for dealers who have a lot of Gold Wing riders in their customer base. The controls move both foot pegs and the brake and shift levers forward 3 inches and down 1 inch. The changes, he said, go a long way toward addressing one of the most common complaints from Gold Wing riders — the cramped cockpit, especially for those with long legs. Moving the pegs and controls forward also help a

**MORE READING:** *“Trike market may be fueled by well-educated, well-financed buyers”*  
[Dealernews.com > Dealer Expo Update](#)

women and entry-level enthusiasts are seeking out three wheels over two.

Doug Lindholm, **Roadsmith Trikes’** general manager, said the company’s new conversion kit for Honda’s venerable Gold Wing (a wildly popular platform for the trike treatment) is applicable for 2012 models and upward. Lindholm pointed out that the new conversion uses the same chassis and driveline as the older kit, but matches the revamped Gold Wing’s body styling.

In addition to building the matching styling features, Lind-

streamlined transition from bike to trike. Roadsmith redesigned the bumper to make it more “body-oriented,” he continued, and the trunk is slightly larger and includes a retractable wire support for the trunk lid.

The company’s Comfort Controls are the



photo courtesy of Lehman Trikes USA

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rider reach the ground more quickly when coming to a stop, he explained. The controls are designed to work with floorboards and aftermarket heel-toe shifters.

South Dakota-based **Lehman Trikes** was showcasing its new Monarch II LLS conversion kit for the Gold Wing and Renegade LLS kit for Harley-Davidson FLH models. Both kits feature the company’s new independent rear suspension (LLS is an acronym for Limited Lean Suspension) and an optional adjustable lean control, a system that allows riders to control their desired level of cornering performance.

The bodies in each of the kits were redesigned to house the new suspension setup, which also includes dual coil-over shocks and dual H-arms. The Monarch features a reverse as standard, while the backup gear comes as an option for the Renegade. Both have standard parking brakes and a number of available accessories.

Shortly before Dealer Expo, Lehman unveiled its new EZ Steer accessory and Hawg EFX running boards. The former is a rake kit designed to improve handling and ease of steering, while the latter offers style and function. The platforms feature a steel subframe and weather protection, and reportedly help reduce vibration in the fenders. — *Dennis Johnson*

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# Making the wrong impression

WHETHER YOU GET A JOB, OR EVEN A WORK ORDER, MAY DEPEND ON HOW YOUR WORLD IS ORGANIZED (OR NOT)



## FUEL FOR THOUGHT

Dave Koshollek teaches sales and service classes for dealers. Contact him at [dakoenterprises@cs.com](mailto:dakoenterprises@cs.com), or via [editors@dealernews.com](mailto:editors@dealernews.com).

## On the Web:

Miss Dave Koshollek's workshop in Indy? Read about it on [Dealernews.com](http://Dealernews.com) in the "Dealer Expo Update" section.

**WE ALL KNOW** first impressions run deep, but do we realize impressions can include our personal vehicle? Like a calling card, in this business our personal vehicle says a lot about our character and talent. Our personal ride can further our careers or put obstacles in our path.

Here's an example: During my years at MMI, I interviewed hundreds of techs looking to fill instructor positions. Many applied from out of state, so I first performed phone interviews that included questions to help me form a picture of attitude, character and experience. If the phone conversation went well, the next step was an in-person interview.

I remember doing a phone interview with a guy who had an extraordinary background in motorcycle mechanics. I looked forward to meeting him and expected the onsite interview to go well, which it did. The obstacle appeared when he insisted on driving me to lunch to celebrate what he thought was a job "in the bag." What caused me to do a 180 was the condition of his van.

From the outside it appeared a little worn, which wasn't an issue. After all, being a wrench-twister barely earned you fame and almost never fortune. It was the interior — which was chaos from front to rear. It was filled with clothes, parts, tools, food and camping gear. I was taken aback and worried that I might be hiring someone who would apply similar disregard and disorganization in our school environment. I wanted instructors who would be a model of professionalism, not a poster child for disaster. I didn't hire that guy due to the condition of his vehicle. Out of curiosity I followed his career via the motorcycle tabloids,

and I have to admit he earned a solid reputation for his mechanical expertise.

You may think I screwed up by not hiring him, but what would you do? His calling card said "chaos and potential catastrophe." Like

any employer, during an interview I was hypersensitive to red flags. The condition of that guy's personal vehicle triggered my inner alarm. It's interesting, though, that his life could have been completely different if he hadn't insisted on driving me to our destination. I think the lesson is, if you aren't proud of your ride, hide it.

## THIS GOES BEYOND WHAT YOU RIDE

Years ago I was working as a commissioned tech alongside four others. We all wanted customers who tipped, and we preferred to wrench on bikes in superb condition.

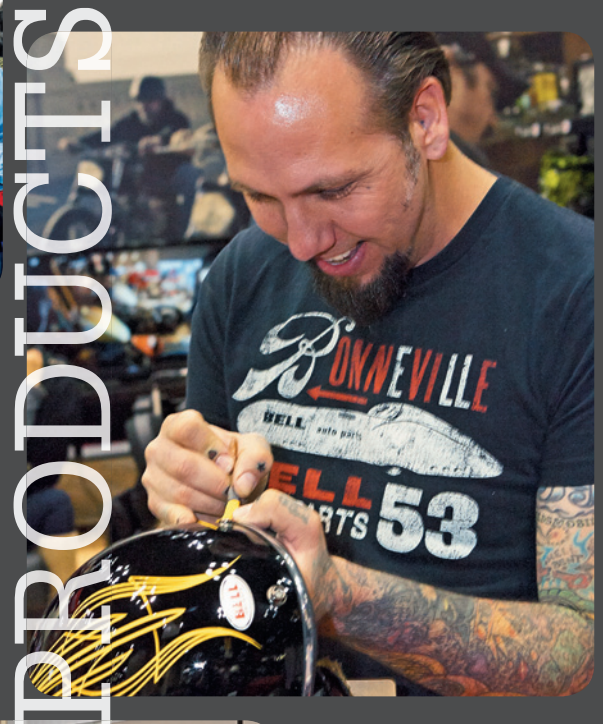
There was a wealthy doctor who owned a meticulous and highly accessorized Gold Wing. His first visit to our dealership resulted in another tech getting the work. I was up for the repair order, so I griped to my service manager about the override. He informed me that the doctor picked "Tech X" based on inspecting our shop area. The doc felt Tech X looked the most professional and he wanted the best tech for his bike. I was pissed at first, but had to confront reality when I did the comparison myself. Tech X wore a uniform (which he purchased) and I wore dirty T-shirts and jeans. Tech X had a large upper and lower set of tool cabinets and I had been doing it on the cheap with just a medium-sized top box. And Tech X always kept his work area clean and organized, where mine was often in disarray. One can gripe, which doesn't achieve much, or one can change for the better, which I did — and I eventually earned the doctor's respect and his work.

Like a calling card, smart employers and potential customers will inspect our ride before entering into business with us. So the question we should ask ourselves is, "What's in our garage?" Is our ride a calling card that says we pay attention to detail? Is it an example of how we want customers to maintain their vehicle? Or are we making the old proverb come true — that the "cobbler always wears the worst shoes"?

If you're not getting the jobs you want, the breaks you deserve or the career advancement you feel you earned, the reason may be no further than where you parked this morning. What's your calling card saying to others? **D**



I built this bike when I was 17. It demonstrated a talent for fabrication, custom painting and mechanical aptitude. Originally I installed a carved wooden hand giving the world the finger on top of my 6 ft. high sissy bar. I thought I was pretty cool, until one day my boss, who was grooming me for a service writer position, saw it and was noticeably dismayed. Out of respect for him I replaced the "finger" with a white skull, but a little too late. I never got the promotion because the impression had been set.





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**Mike Vaughan**  
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**IF YOU DIDN'T GO** to Dealer Expo in February, you missed a pretty good show. I've been going to Expo steadily since 1991 — actually, I think I've been to all of them since then, but I may have missed a year.

Attending Expo the past few years has often made me feel like 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick trying to run through the Ravens' defensive line. If you've been there, you know what I mean: bumping and thumping through overcrowded aisles, thousands of dealers, dealer staff, hangers-on, baby carriages and wheelie bags, all competing for the same aisle space. More often than not it's been a show almost too big to take in.

Frankly, I don't miss the days when the show sprawled from one end of the convention center to the other with exhibitors tucked into every room, cranny and closet space. Some even spilled into a couple of the adjacent hotels. It was difficult if not impossible to cover it all. At the end of the day, your feet hurt, your head ached, and you knew you didn't get to see everything and had a nagging suspicion that you missed something you really needed to see.

Attendance and exhibitors at this year's Expo were noticeably down. Adding up the companies listed on the exhibitor map, and only counting as one booth the multi-booth displays for large distributors like Tucker Rocky and WPS, there were about 600 exhibitors at Dealer Expo.

I'm told about 10,000 people were in Indianapolis, which would include exhibitors, staff, dealers and others allied to the field. Of that total, about 5,400 registered as attendees, and roughly 3,700 of that number identified themselves as franchised or independent dealers.

Most of the exhibitors I spoke with were generally pleased with the quality of the traffic, but all voiced some concern of the fact that traffic wasn't what it was a "few years ago."

Well, that's true, and there's a good reason: 2007 was the industry's last retail "up" year. Sales of motorcycles, scooters and ATVs hit just about 1.5 million units. There were, at that time, according to the *2008 MIC Statistical Annual*, 13,333 retail outlets in the United States, split about 50/50 between authorized new vehicle dealers and the independents and service and accessory outlets. (Oddly enough, in 2009, as the industry's sales began to fall, the number of dealers rose by almost a thousand to 14,127 with an 8 percent uptick in independents and a corresponding fall for authorized new vehicle dealers.)

In the intervening years, as we all know, there were a few radical changes. In 2008, the economy

made a trip to the basement and took our industry along with it. According to the most recent MIC statistics, 2012 retail sales of motorcycles, scooters and ATVs were at 677,630, a drop of about 54 percent from peak. During the same time the U.S. dealer base winnowed from the 14,127 dealers we saw back in '09 to 8,985 in 2012 — a 36 percent reduction.

It seems logical to assume that if you have 54 percent fewer sales and 36 percent fewer dealers, you're also going to have fewer vendors as well. Dealer Expo's peak number of exhibitors a few years ago was at about 1,000. This year's 600 exhibitors represent a 40 percent reduction. Not a bad number in light of sales and dealer declines.

## SO WHERE'D THEY GO?

Well, some just chose not to be there. Others financially couldn't make it. Still others had gone out of business. And then some brands left the display and sales of their products to their exhibiting distributors.

What did this mean for the dealers that attended? There actually were some benefits. First, the show was more manageable; you could take your time traversing the aisles and didn't have to put up with the tsunami of people you've had to deal with in the past. You could actually see all the exhibits. Second, you could spend quality time with those vendors whose products sparked your interest. Third, you were able to take the time to attend the seminars and group discussions that you previously wanted to attend but never found the time.

I spoke to Wally Harrison, a sales rep with EMGO, a longtime Dealer Expo exhibitor. I asked him what he thought of the show; he told me that it wasn't the busiest one they've attended over the years, but it was the most productive. Later on, I was talking with Skip Van Leeuwen when he was snatched away by his son, Karl, to help process orders — and this was on Sunday morning, the final day.

My point is that while the show was smaller, enthusiasm for new and existing products was high. The people attending the show wanted to do business and had ample opportunity to do so.

The lesson I walked away with was similar to my experience at Kawasaki in the '70s, when KHI declared that market share (numbers) wasn't as important as profitability. In this case, numbers aren't as important as the attendees' desire to see new products, speak directly to vendors and colleagues, and listen to and offer up new ideas. Both dealers and vendors benefit from that kind of dialogue, and Dealer Expo provided the forum to do exactly that. **D**

## On the Web:

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