

THE VOICE OF POWERSPORTS RETAILERS

Dealernews

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GEAR 2015

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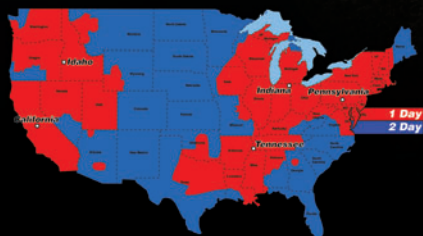
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FROM THE EDITOR

Mary Slepicka

Class ... and Character

OUR EDITORIAL MISSION IS, for all intents and purposes, a balancing act: helping you, as a powersports dealer, retailer, service shop, etc., combine your passion for the sport with your pursuit of profit. A noble cause, yes.

For as long as I can remember, we've been providing information on how you can make your business more professional, more "classy." Everything from merchandising product, to managing and training staff, to stocking inventory. The Top 100 Dealer competition (whose winners will be announced in early October) is designed to help you, as a consumer-facing powersports operation, stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the successful retailers of the world.

But do you really want to? I am wondering whether we went too far. Because, really, the novelty of this particular business is its ability to make money... from fun. Have we lost the fun? Have we created retail environments that have more in common with a national auto parts chain than being outside and HAVING FUN? Is there a reason for a customer to come through the door?

I think about this and recall the performance shop I sometimes visit. It's in an industrial park behind a bunch of big-box stores in a nondescript cube of a building and identified only by the sign on the front façade and the motorcycles parked on the side.

The showroom is small and kind of dark, and there are used

bikes for sale on the floor and product assortments on the slatwall. It's grungy but it looks really cool (yes, that's my middle-aged self, speaking, BTW), and by entering I suddenly feel cool, too. Within seconds, someone yells *hello...hey, good to see you...what brings you in...take a look at what we just got... how'd those gloves work for you...been out riding lately...* And you notice the din from the back where a couple of techs are working on bikes and talking about cornering techniques or ABS with customers who've ambled through the open garage door.

All sorts of riders go there — male, female, young, not so young, experts, novices, cruisers, sportbikers. They go to talk to the people who work there, because the people who work there are characters. They chat up the customers. They laugh. They're whip-smart about motorcycling. They are so in love with riding that they want everyone to be in love with it, too.

For many, especially those under 35, there simply isn't a need to head to a brick-and-mortar store if they're going to get the same experience online (i.e. no fun). And fun is there to be had, whether you're a small performance shop or a premium multiline dealer. A "class" operation can mean a lot of things — integrity, quality, design, assortment, size — but it's nothing without *character*.

Mary Slepicka, mslepicka@dealernews.com

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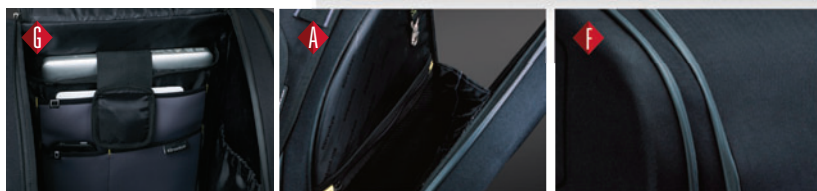
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RETRO BIKES: What's old is cool again

A ROUNDUP ENTRY-LEVEL SINGLES TO REFINED ROADSTERS

RETRO-STYLED MOTORCYCLES are growing in popularity and finding homes across a wide band of demographics. Younger riders like them for their "honest" styling and lifestyle appeal, while older riders love the classic lines that remind them of some of the great motorcycles from their own riding past.

Nearly every major OEM has an offering in the segment. Of course, while nearly every cruiser owes something to older motorcycle styles, let's focus on the various retro standards currently available. Here's a brief rundown of the options in the U.S. marketplace, from entry-level singles to refined open-class roadsters.

SUZUKI: On the lightweight, entry-level front, Suzuki offers the simple but stylish **TU 250X** (\$4,399). Built around a fuel-injected, air-cooled, counterbalanced two-valve 249cc single producing 16 hp, the TU 250X offers a combination of classic styling with a beginner-friendly performance envelope. Chassis parts are basic, but the lightweight components help keep curb weight down to 326 lbs. Seat height is a low 30.7 inches.



Originally built for the Japanese home market, the TU250X has a range of custom and performance parts available, with a growing following considering its entry-level status in the United States.

YAMAHA: Following Suzuki's lead, Yamaha has brought another retro-styled home market machine to the United States, the **SR400** (\$5,990). Derived from the larger, seventies-era SR500 single, and before that the TT500, the SR400 will be immediately familiar to huge swath of riders who owned one of the earlier machines.

Like the TU250X, the SR400 is a fuel-

injected, air-cooled, two-valve single with a claimed power of 26 hp. Similar chassis specs as the Suzuki lead up to a 384 lb. curb weight, with a similarly manageable 30.9-inch seat height.

Unlike the retro-styled but otherwise quite conventional TU250X, the SR400 offers several unique touches. There's no electric starter, only a kick-starter and decompression lever, just like "back in the day." Other touches include purely mechanical gauges and dials as well as a standard centerstand. And since the SR400 is nearly identical to the SR500 except for its different crankshaft (to reduce stroke), we imagine quite a few SR400s will turn into 500s shortly after their owners get their hands on them.

ROYAL ENFIELD: The **Continental GT** (\$5,995) keeps Royal Enfield's lengthy history intact but adds an aggressive dose of style to the largest and most powerful single-cylinder machine the firm has ever built. Although the 525cc non-counterbalanced motor only produces 29 hp, and vibrates quite a bit at high rpm to do so, it still sounds and feels period-perfect while doing so. More importantly, the entire machine was developed to provide significantly improved performance, with a steel frame developed by the UK's Harris, Paoli suspension front and rear, and new Brembo braking components.

Royal Enfield claims that the industry is entering a post-performance era, where riders are looking for something more evocative than yet another bike that is 2 percent lighter and makes another incremental increase in horsepower. The firm states that, to the rider looking for a more engaging riding experience, the Continental GT could be the answer.

TRIUMPH: A large section of Hinckley's reborn Triumph line has been based around its iconic retro bike, the "new" Bonneville, which accounts for 40 percent of Triumph's North American sales. Originally built around a thoroughly modern, yet still air-cooled, 61 hp 790cc DOHC parallel twin running a 360-degree crankshaft, the range has grown since the first model debuted in 2001; the 2014 **Bonneville lineup** features the larger 865cc powerplant, fuel injection and a variety of trim levels.

Riders can choose from the base Bonneville (\$7,899), aping 70s-era styling cues, to the



classic T100 model (\$8,899), the "desert-sled" Scrambler (\$9,099), a café racer Thruxton (\$9,099) and the America and Speedmaster, cruiser-esque models (starting at \$8,299) incorporating V-twin cruiser ergonomics and styling. In each version, Triumph's engineers have been careful to maintain the aesthetics desired for that model and not let the modern engineering detract from the retro appeal, even going so far as to disguise fuel injection throttle bodies as carburetors.

KAWASAKI: Now for something familiar, but, unfortunately, not destined for our shores, at least for now.

Introduced back in 2000, and only sold until 2001, Kawasaki USA imported its exquisite W650 retro standard. Although similar in spec and style to the Bonneville, the W650 actually reached into Kawasaki's own model catalog, namely the W-series parallel twins from the mid-1960s.

The W650's air-cooled 676cc, 50 hp parallel twin certainly presented a classic silhouette, but it distinguished itself from the Triumph with some very unusual features for a modern machine, including a bevel-gear-driven camshaft and a kickstarter (in addition to the electric starter).

Since 2011, Kawasaki has been manufacturing an updated **W800** for sale in Europe with a larger 773cc fuel-injected engine to meet stricter emissions laws. The high gloss two-tone paint and pinstriping would certainly look good in a Kawasaki dealership next to the new Ninja H2, but no word from Kawasaki whether the W800 will make it back to the States anytime soon.

MOTO GUZZI: Think of a motorcycle company almost entirely based around a single air-cooled, V-twin engine that has been in business for around for 100 years. (Not that one.) The Italian answer to the riddle is Moto Guzzi, whose 90-degree traverse V-twin is just as iconic to the brand as Harley's 45-degree is to The Motor Co. While much of

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SPEED READ

continued from page 10

Moto Guzzi's current range includes a bit of retro feel, such as the California 1400 cruisers and the Griso muscle bike, it is the **744cc V7** models that most directly target the retro-bike and café racer enthusiast.

Available in three trim levels — the basic Stone (\$8,490), the custom Special (\$9,290), and the chromed café-styled Racer (\$10,490) — each of the V7 machines is powered by the unique longitudinal fuel-injected V-twin producing 50 hp. Power is transferred via a dry clutch and five-speed transmission through Guzzi's trademarked C.A.R.C. shaft final drive. Ultralight, sub-400-lb. curb weights



and large 5.8-gal. fuel tanks on each model add real-world practicality as well.

Moto Guzzi finds that the V7 range contributes a full 40 percent of total sales for the brand, with market feedback showing that the company's average age for a customer has dropped to 42.

DUCATI: The Italian firm re-enters the segment in 2015 with a new Scrambler model (debuting in Europe at press time). Featuring a swoopy fuel tank mixing styles old and new, the Scrambler will likely be powered by the air-cooled engine found in the Monster 696, but in an even more compact and lightweight chassis. In theory, the new Scrambler could serve as a parallel to the Monster, creating a second lightweight machine to serve as the entry point into the Ducati brand.

HONDA: Although it took a few extra years, American Honda was suitably convinced to import its modern classic to the United States. Introduced at the Tokyo Motor Show in 2009, the **CB1100** (\$10,399) perfectly aped the classic air-cooled inline-fours that helped make Honda motorcycles into the powerful brand it is today. The new CB featured an all-new 1140cc fuel-injected 16-valve DOHC powerplant featuring finely wrought cooling fins and polished cases. Tuned for torque and an ultra-smooth delivery, the CB1100 only produced around 88 hp, but the smooth-revving motor provided enough thrust to motivate the 540 lb. pack-

age at an entertaining clip while still being easy to ride and economical.

A steel frame and relatively basic suspension provide friendly handling, but it's the detailing that sets the CB1100 apart, from its 18-inch Comstar-pattern wheels to the bench seat, deep paint and classic gauges. Unlike many bikes in the class, the CB1100 is also available with ABS for added braking stability.

While the United States only got its first taste of the CB1100 in 2013, for 2014, Honda Japan updated the model with a new trim level, which came to America as the CB1000 Deluxe (\$11,899). Besides standard ABS, the Deluxe included revised bodywork, a new saddle and a slightly larger fuel tank. A new 4-into-2 exhaust boosted power slightly, and both CB1100 models benefitted from a new six-speed transmission and high-contrast LCD instruments.

American Honda keeps mum about potential new models, but Honda's model history is quite prolific, and it's easy to imagine a 650cc or so parallel twin model built to replicate the old 350cc twins and complement the larger CB1100.

BMW: One of the newest, and most powerful, retro-styled machines available came this year from BMW in the form of the **R nine T** (\$14,900), which celebrates 90 years of BMW Motorrad engineering. Engineers didn't have to reach far into the past to source a powerplant for the R nineT, however, as the roadster uses the firm's proven air- and oil-cooled radial-valve 1170cc boxer engine to provide willing performance thanks to a claimed 110 hp and a wet weight of only 489 lbs.

While BMW's new precision-cooled K50-series boxer engines will be powering the various R-model BMWs going forward, the oilhead motor, complete with its dry clutch, separate transmission and shaft drive, serves as a perfect match to the more relaxed R nine T. The chassis also carries over much of BMW's previous R-model architecture, but BMW's familiar Telelever front suspension is replaced by a conventional fork. Svelte black bodywork presents a handsome art-deco profile, and a unique rear subframe allows the owner to easily unbolt the pillion saddle completely for a custom, cut-off solo seat look.

Unlike other BMWs, factory options are limited on the R nineT, dropping things like heated grips and cruise control, but ABS does come standard. Instead, riders can look forward to a range of custom accessories, including solo seat cowl and throaty Akrapovic exhausts, which further differentiates the R nineT from other options in the BMW range. — Bruce Steever



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LS2
PROTECTING DREAMS

TOP PRODUCTS from the Parts/Drag Showcase

More than 15 new product stories now posted from the big distributor show in Madison, Wis., and we're still adding to the list as we go to press with this issue. Visit **Dealer Operations > Management > Aftermarket** for more.

- Acerbis cranks up the lumens with LED headlight, handguard
- American Kargo makes NVP debut with full line of riding packs
- Back-Pack jump starter, power supply an ideal parts counter item
- Dowco expands Guardian cover line
- Icon expands 1000 line, refines Classic Overlord
- Moose motorcycle stand makes oil changes tidier
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- New Kuryakyn performance brand reveals first product
- New stator from Rick's gets Buell riders back on track
- Python Performance website offers product comparisons, dealer locator
- Roland Sands targets BMW customers with R nine T adds
- RunAround is Mustang's lowest, leanest seat
- ThreeD is EK's high-spec drive chain
- **PLUS**, read Beth Dolgner's take on the new helmet colors in her blog, "1985 threw up on the powersports industry" at blog.dealernews.com/bethdolgner

WHAT'S TRENDING ON DEALERNEWS.COM

DEALER OPERATIONS > MANAGEMENT

Motion Pro sets MAP policy. Says policy will be uniformly enforced for all resellers, including dealers, distributors and online retailers. (See page 44)

WPS gets Pro Circuit. Distributor announces it is already distributing Pro Circuit product from its five warehouses.

Dealer performance healthier, says GE Capital. Dealer financing volume was up almost 13 percent through June, reflecting healthy, more confident retail environment, the company said in September.

DEALER OPERATIONS > SALES

KTM to reveal lightweight sportbike in November. New RC 390, to debut Nov. 14-16 at the Progressive International Motorcycle Show in Long Beach, Calif., features a four-stroke DOHC engine that weighs less than 80 lbs. KTM says its top speed is 160 mph.

AJP enters market with niche enduro range. Portugal firm's flagship model for U.S. is the PR5, which features a fuel-injected, liquid-cooled 250cc engine, fully adjustable Sachs suspension and trick features

such as a transparent under-seat fuel tank.

Kawasaki announces returning models for 2015. Lists KLR650, six Ninja models, four Vulcans and the Z1000. Many sport new colors and graphics.

Yoshimura's new OEM accessory kits only for franchised dealers. Designed to help dealers overcome such challenges as Internet discounting and a lack of franchise-exclusive products available.

DEALER OPERATIONS > SERVICE

Honda recalls 126,000 GL 1800s and 1800As, for second time. Motorcycles that were remedied under a previous recall for rear brake drag must be repaired again, once Honda determines what the repair will be. Owners received an interim notification to inspect their bikes, and then will be notified when a fix is available, OEM said.

Yamaha recalling 2,500 sleds. Fuel hose joint may leak while vehicle is in option, according to CPSC. Involved are the SRViper and RTX SE, LTX, LTX SE and XTX models from the 2014 model year, and SRViper LTX SEs from the 2015 year.



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Can an OEM tell you where to go?

LAWUIT FILED IN FEDERAL COURT MAY DECIDE

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – A Southern California dealer filed suit in August against Harley-Davidson Motor Co., alleging that the OEM forced him to move his dealership from a busy metro area to a sleepy bedroom community, then skirted state law to summarily cut his Dealer Assigned Territory (DAT) by 60 percent.

(Dealernews contacted Harley-Davidson in early September; however, a company spokesperson had no immediate comment. Watch for updates on Dealernews.com)

Michael Moffett is principal at **Old Road Harley-Davidson** in Santa Clarita. Moffett bought the dealership in 2004 when it was still Van Nuys Cycle in Van Nuys, Calif., and signed a new dealer agreement with Harley-Davidson later that year. That agreement, which extended to 2009, designated Van Nuys as the dealer location, he says.

Moffett's complaint states that "in or around 2004" the Motor Co. began to complain that the Van Nuys location did not meet the OEM's facility requirements and design guidelines, and that the dealership would not be allowed to stay in its Van Nuys site. A district sales manager for H-D allegedly told Moffett that he would need to move the dealership 18 miles north, to Santa Clarita, and "further represented that [H-D] would not consider, designate or approve any location under the contract unless the relocation was in the Santa Clarita Valley," according to the complaint.

Moffett contends he spent the next four years unsuccessfully seeking a suitable site in Santa Clarita, due in part to "bureaucracies reluctant to allow a Harley-Davidson dealership in their area, permitting issues and a lack of economically viable locations that would be approved" by the OEM.

Meanwhile, due to H-D's insistence that the dealership be moved, Moffett said he was unable to renew his long-term lease in Van Nuys and instead went month to month. In late 2008 the property owner sold the lot and informed Moffett that the dealership would have to vacate. At that point, Moffett said he proposed that the dealership move to a site in Santa Clarita, but that he had reservations about the location. Harley-Davidson approved the new site as a temporary solution given that the dealer had to vacate the Van Nuys location, the complaint states. Moffett claims that the OEM "did not conduct any market study or analysis of the feasibility, viability or impact on business operations" resulting from the move to Santa Clarita.

DAT alteration. Moffett's complaint includes an August 2009 letter from Harry Nichols, then-manager of dealer markets for Harley-Davidson, informing Moffett that the move had triggered a re-examination of ZIP codes in his dealer assigned territory (DAT), and that more than half of the ZIP codes, all in established communities and most within Los Angeles city limits, had been reassigned to other dealer territories. The letter lists 60 ZIP codes that were removed from Moffett's territory.

"In 2009, the population of the dealer's DAT at the Santa Clarita location was approximately 380,000. By comparison the population within the DAT for the Van Nuys location was approximately 1.2 million," the complaint states.

Moffett is invoking the California Vehicle Code, which requires OEMs to provide dealers with a protest notice outlining "intent to modify a dealer franchise if the modification substantially affects the dealer's sales and service obligations and investment." Such a notice would have triggered Moffett's right to protest the changes to the California New Motor Vehicle Board, he says; however, he claims he never received such a notice from Harley-Davidson. He also claims that the Motor Co. continues to pressure him to find a new facility in the Santa Clarita Valley.

Moffett claims the OEM breached contract by refusing to consider properties in Van Nuys for the dealership; rejecting his request to renew his lease at the former location; forcing the move to Santa Clarita; "unilaterally modifying plaintiff's DAT" and failing to provide a protest notice. He is seeking compensatory damages and a court order barring Harley-Davidson from violating dealer statutes, on allegations of breach of contract, breach of implied covenant of good faith, and California Vehicle Code violations.

– Holly Wagner



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DON TILLEY, longtime Harley-Davidson dealer and

racebike builder, who died in a motorcycle crash Aug. 29. Tilley's wife, Robinette, was still recovering from injuries at press time.

"Don was the epitome of what a dealer ought to be," said Bob Althoff, owner of A.D. Farrow Co. Harley-Davidson. "He was unassuming, and a friend to so many people. So much humility, yet so many accomplishments. There will be another like Don Tilley. We have lost a real giant."

Dealernews columnist Dave Koshollek had just spoken with Tilley at the recent Harley-Davidson dealer meeting. "As always, it was a great conversation interrupted by others who knew and respected Don and listened closely to what he had to say," Koshollek noted. "When Don talked, we all listened."

An estimated 5,000 motorcyclists turned out for a memorial service and motorcycle ride in mid-September. Speakers at the service included NASCAR drivers Kyle Petty and Donnie Allison and executives from Harley-Davidson. Tilley's family requests memorials be sent to the Victory Junction Gang Camp in Randleman, N.C., which offers camping experiences to seriously ill children.

DEALER news

GEORGIA – Construction began in early September on a five-acre site that will be the new home of **Savannah Harley-Davidson**. Plans include a 50,000 sq. ft. rider training course. Savannah H-D has a sister store, Golden Isles Harley-Davidson, in Brunswick.

FLORIDA – Broward Motorsports (West Palm Beach) has added BMW to its multi-lineup, which includes Can-Am, Honda, Kawasaki, Polaris ATVs, Sea-Doo, Suzuki and Yamaha. **BMW Motorcycles of West Palm Beach** plans an open house in October.

ILLINOIS – J&S Cycles has opened in Lerna and is operated by Joe and Stacey Stewart. "We can do anything from a tire and oil change to a complete teardown of an engine," Joe said. "The mechanic is the busi-

ness owner, and that is a huge advantage for customers."

OHIO – Pony Powersports in mid-September celebrated the grand opening of its **Indian Motorcycles of Columbus** dealership with a five-day celebration at the retail complex in Westerville. Iron Pony is a Top 100 Hall of Fame dealership.

VIRGINIA – Scoot Richmond has doubled in size and added Triumph motorcycles to its lineup. **Triumph Richmond's** grand opening was in September. Meanwhile, in Richmond, **Renegade Classics** has opened its third store in the state, in Merchants Walk Shopping Center.

WISCONSIN – Sauk Prairie Harley-Davidson, run by Virgil Schulenberg, marked its 35th anniversary in September. The 8,600 sq. ft. store has won 17 Bar and Shield awards and twice was the No. 1 Harley dealer in the nation. "Our dealer assigned territory is the smallest in the United States in population," Schulenberg told local media. "We draw a lot of people from a long ways away."

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A MODEL STORE FOR MILLENNIALS DESIGNED BY ... MILLENNIALS!

HOW DO WE ENGAGE the next generations of riders? The average motorcycle rider is in his or her mid-40s, and in some areas of the country it probably is older. To ensure our collective future, we as an industry must engage younger customers — and that means breaking the mold in order to serve a very new, very different target market.

You've heard the term *millennials*. Researchers use it as a shorthand classification for anyone born between 1982 and 2004. Millennials are hard to define, because many of them are still reaching adulthood. What is certain is that they're individualistic but quite world-savvy. They interact with brands much differently than baby boomers or Generation X-ers do, and from what we have learned, they demand that brands fit them, not the other way around. And to say they're plugged into technology is an understatement — Millennials live in the digital world.

So how do you attract these future core customers to your brick-and-mortar business? Right — we didn't know, either. So we decided to go to the source.

The result: Dealer Expo's new Model Store for Millennials exhibit, which will feature design and merchandising concepts developed by the Millennial customer for the Millennial customer.

In partnership with the University of Minnesota's College of Design, this fall we asked students in the retail merchandising program to come up with powersports showroom designs that would specifically attract buyers ages 18 to 28. New color palettes. New ways to display vehicles and aftermarket products. New traffic flow patterns. New buying triggers. New in-store tools for customers. Everything's on the table.





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As I write this, students are starting to submit their presentations — renderings that incorporate all the wonderful and vibrant products of our industry — that Dealer Expo will then use to build out the Model Store for Millennials exhibit. Students submitting the most compelling presentations will receive scholarship awards from Dealer Expo. And we're going to bring the award-winning student designers to Dealer Expo, so you can talk to them directly about their approaches.

That's all I'm going to say because, quite frankly, we have no idea what's in store (pun intended)!

What is clear is that the Model Store for Millennials will inspire you. It will provide you with ideas you can implement now in a corner of your showroom, or later during a full renovation. It will get you thinking about your future customer base, and how your business will survive and thrive. We believe you will be surprised and enlightened. And we can't wait to see what these students come up with.



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Tracy Harris
Senior Vice President
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Tory Hornsby is the executive vice president of Dealership University and Powersports Marketing.



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Which half works?

ADVERTISING THROUGH MASS MEDIA MIGHT NOT PROVIDE THE BEST RETURN ON INVESTMENT

I'M SURE YOU'VE heard the old adage, "Half my marketing works; the only problem is I don't know which half!"

Today, more than ever, this is a big challenge for powersports dealers. My staff at Powersports Marketing talks to hundreds of dealers every month regarding marketing and advertising. We consistently hear a common concern from dealers about mass media: they aren't able to quantify it and aren't sure if they're wasting their money. At the same time, most dealers are afraid to stop their mass media (radio, TV, billboards, newspaper, etc.) because they think it may be working.

I'm not totally against mass media. However, I'm not a big fan of them either... especially in the motorcycle industry. One of my big reasons, and I feel like I'm always beating this drum (but it bears repeating),

is that less than 6 percent of people in America ride motorcycles. Therefore, based on the principles of math, I can quickly conclude that most of the folks that a dealer is paying to try and reach through mass media do not ride.

On top of this, almost all mass media is what I like to call 'passive advertising' that's designed to get a business's name out there and build its brand. In other words, there's no call to action, or if there is, it's usually terrible. Folks just see your logo and a picture of a unit.

You may be saying to yourself, "Well, my address and phone number are listed!" I'm glad you mentioned that. On more than one occasion we've added a tracking number to mass media. All of them get similar results. One time, a group of Harley dealers in the south added a call tracking number to their radio commercial. After 60 days the tracking number had three calls: One where we tested it, one where the dealer tested it and one where the dealer tested it again because no one was calling.

Speaking of radio, some dealers like it because they feel they're reaching new people. Let's think about that for a second. First, could you name one or two of the companies you've recently heard a commercial for on the radio? I know I can't. In fact, most folks just change the channel when commercials come on.

It's difficult to create a buzz from the riders in your market with radio. And even if you could remember a radio commercial, here is the key question: Do you typically buy something because you heard a radio commercial about it? I ask this question all the time and everyone says "No."

The bottom line is that if you feel your radio ad is reaching new riders, it's not doing as good a job as you hope. Imagine someone saying, "That was a great radio ad. Sounds like fun. I think I'll spend thousands of dollars on a bike and give motorcycling a try!"

I regularly watch football, and the only commercial I can remember seeing lately was a really funny one for beer. Before you say, "See, Tory, you remember it," I can't remember what brand it was.

Most people fast-forward through the commercials, and I do it too, as much as possible. When I can't fast-forward, I drive my wife crazy by changing

If you're advertising to 100 percent of the population with messages that are designed to 'get your name out there,' you're wasting money.

the channel when a commercial comes on.

Can you remember what companies were advertising on TV last night when you were watching? Did it sway your decision to go out and buy that product? Probably not.

A BETTER WAY

If you're advertising to 100 percent of the population with messages that are designed to "get your name out there," you're wasting money. There's a better way.

You can market to people who ride via direct mail, email, phone calls, web banners, social media, event signage, fliers/bag stuffers, etc. Utilize all of them during a single marketing campaign and use a consistent message across all media. Don't send them out all at once, but drip them out over a week's time.

Instead of promoting products and discounts, have an event/party/open house. When you focus on products, you alienate everyone you market to that isn't interested in those specific products, which actually trains people to ignore your ads. Be sure you answer the question "Why should I, your customer, come to your event?"

If you're uncomfortable dropping all of your mass media advertising, you don't have to. But I can personally guarantee that when you replace some of your mass media budget with direct response marketing done the right way, you will see an increase in your business. Period. If you need to take it slow, that's fine. The sooner you begin to allocate some of your budget toward direct marketing, the sooner you will see the results. **D**

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New Gear Roundup

WAYS TO COVER YOUR CUSTOMERS – FROM FAR OFF-ROAD TO THE MOST CROWDED OF CITY STREETS

By Beth Dolgner

IT'S BEEN AN ACTIVE FEW WEEKS for product launches in gear, helmets, casual apparel and luggage. Here are some of the highlights. Also visit dealernews.com (click on the AFTERMARKET tab on the home page) to read more extensive descriptions and additional product offerings.

OFFROAD OPTIONS KEEP GROWING

▶ JOE ROCKET BALLISTIC GETS ADVENTUROUS

Joe Rocket has expanded its Ballistic series with the addition of the Adventure jacket (\$299.99). The RockTex 600 outer chassis is resistant to both water and UV rays, and a waterproof liner is tucked away for the occasional downpour. Temperature control includes two front zip-out chest panels backed by mesh as well as rear vents. An eight-point adjustment system, plenty of pockets and CE armor are more bonuses. joerocket.com



▼ THOR THROWBACK

Thor went retro with the Throwback Collection. Three colorways for the Phase Pro-GP jerseys (\$29.95) and pants (\$89.95) all exude classic moto style. The Verge Pro GP helmet (\$324.95) has matching colors and design. Also noteworthy are the short Blitz LS boots (\$129.95), which are less motocross and more ATV and dualsport. thormx.com



▼ SNOW AND MOTO GEAR FROM FLY

Fly Racing's Formula Facet helmet (\$399.95) has a geometric design on its composite shell, and it comes in standard as well as high-visibility colors. The SNX Pro snowmobile jacket (\$219.95) is waterproof and breathable, and updates for 2015 are an abrasion-resistant poly exterior and redesigned vents. flyracing.com



▲ KLIM XC SERIES READY TO RACE

The XC Series of pants, jerseys and gloves is the company's inaugural line of off-road racing spec apparel. The XC pants (\$169.99) have stretch zones, semi-vented construction, waist adjusters and leather inner knees. The lightweight jersey (\$59.99) has non-restrictive binding on the cuffs and collar, breathable foam in the elbows and a more athletic fit than other designs. The gloves (\$39.99) feature grippy palms and a snug sport fit. klim.com



► 100% EXPANDS GLOVE LINE

The 100% brand has several new gloves, including the Cesium (\$29.50) and Airmatic (\$27.50). For young riders, three Airmatic colorways are available. ride100percent.com



▼ SCOTT REDESIGNS HUSTLE FOR AFFORDABLE PERFORMANCE

Scott's Tyrant (\$85) and Hustle (\$60) goggles used to be remarkably similar. For 2015, the Hustle has gotten a significant redesign to give it a little independence and a lower price. scott-sports.com



► ARAI REVAMPS VX4 FOR PRO MODEL

The VXPro4 (\$599.95-729.95) off-road helmet from Arai has been significantly updated from the VX4, and some of its finer points include a removable neck roll, redesigned cheek pads, extra vents and an updated emergency cheekpad removal system. The peak is 10mm longer and 5mm wider, and the chin grate has been moved to the outside of the shell, providing more space inside. araiamericas.com



PLUS: VONZIPPER GOES GLAM

There is no doubt that the gang at VonZipper has a good sense of fashion and fun. Case in point: the new "Tamo-flauge" goggles (\$75), with what can only be described as a stripper camo print on the elastic. Then there are the new golden GLAM (\$85) goggles, limited to a run of only 100. Check out the patterns at us.vonzipper.com.

SAFETY FIRST

► EVS SPORTS ADDS PREMIUM BRACE

The R4 Pro neck brace (\$179) from EVS Sports is a premium version of the brand's existing R4. Updates include a carbon fiber top and biofoam combined with an air bladder system to help disperse energy. A secondary strapping system gives riders more mounting options. evs-sports.com



► HIGH-TECH KNEE BRACE FROM MOBIUS

The Mobius X8 Brace (\$599.95 a pair) is a new approach to knee braces for motocross riders. It has a hard nylon shell, and a cable system that loops behind the knee tightens in response to external forces, providing extra protection on impact. (For a more extensive story, visit dealernews.com, search term **Mobius**)



STREET: STYLE + SAFETY

▼ RIOT AT ROLAND SANDS DESIGN

The ladies Riot leather jacket (\$650) from Roland Sands is so stunning that a certain editor (who shall go unnamed) tried to sneak this one out of the company's booth at the Tucker Rocky show. (Yes, we were kidding.) The smooth leather jacket with quilted accents is available in black and the dark red "oxblood." rolandsands.com



▼ ALPINESTARS ADDS TECH 5

The designers modeled the Tech 5 after the Tech 7 (below), but the Tech 5 comes in at a lower price point, retailing for \$269.95. alpinestars.com



▲ NOLAN ADDS PLUG-AND-GO OPTIONS

Nolan Helmets is selling N40 and N104 models with pre-installed headsets for Harley and Honda Goldwing owners, which means there is no setup necessary. The headset option will be available in select colors and graphics, and the technology tacks \$100 onto the MSRP. nolan-usa.com



▲ NELSON-RIGG SEES ORANGE

Nelson-Rigg says its high-visibility yellow rain suits sell better than all of the other colorways combined. For 2015, it will add orange to the high-vis mix for both the SR-6000 Stormrider (\$54.95) and the AS-3000 Aston (\$89.95). nelsonrigg.com

LUGGAGE LIST



▲ ADVENTURE POCKETS' SMALL STORAGE

Adventure Pockets designed the moto-POCKET Top Case (\$43.95) for those small but important items, like money and maps. It measures 11.5x9x2 inches. motopockets.com



▲ AMERICAN KARGO DEBUTS

Newcomer American Kargo has a full line of riding packs, hydration packs, gear bags and luggage. The new company's standout is the Trooper backpack (\$180), with pockets and cinch straps aplenty. americankargo.com

► OGIO OVERHAULS GEAR LINEUP

Ogio has new styles and colorways for the brand's gear bags, from the little Slayer (\$85) to the massive, you-can-pack-a-body-in-it Big Mouth (\$200). ogio.com



AND THERE'S MORE ...

Icon's fall/winter collection includes two new jackets in the Icon 1000 collection: the men's Hood and the women's Fairlady.

Speed and Strength's new gear and apparel debut includes the Rust and Redemption line, which is inspired by the café racer movement.

Fieldsheer's Adventure jacket and touring pants have high-tech touches.

HH Sports Protection is now distributing NiTek's Just1 J12 offroad helmet.

The Fly-N-Ride bag from T-Bags converts from a backrest bag to a carry-on roller board designed to fit in overhead compartments on airplanes.

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CUTTING EDGE

GEAR AND APPAREL DESIGNERS TALK ABOUT NEW TRENDS, TECHNOLOGY AND TARGET AUDIENCES

By Beth Dolgner

TAKING A DESIGN from the drawing board to the retail showroom often takes more than a year to accomplish – and retail fashion is integral. “Retail fashion is always going to play a part in the motorcycle gear design process so long as the motorcycle gear designer is open and interested,” says **Kurt Walter**, design director for and founder of Icon. “Most motorcycle gear companies/designers have a propensity to only look at the motorcycle industry for inspiration. This results in a regurgitation of the same ‘motorcycle’ styles year after year.”

We posted three questions to Walter, **Elyssa Mannina**, graphic product designer for Parker Synergies, where she concentrates on Speed and Strength as well as Honda Official Licensed Product, and **Melvina Kleverova Zilliox**, design director of general merchandise for Harley-Davidson.

WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

EM: Not all motorists want to look like the guy that stepped off the track. They want to easily go from the bike to work, or wherever it is — that seamless transition. So what are the typical, everyday items that most people wear? Putting armor in a hoody, or Kevlar-reinforced fabrics into flannel shirts. Having low ID and badging on the pieces is another thing that consumers want.

MKZ: Harley-Davidson has a customer base that loves customization. We do custom design work, which folds into a portfolio of products that appeal uniquely to our customers. We see trends in textile development, new ways to finish and treat leathers that show technological advancements, as well as aesthetic enhancements.

KW: We’ve seen a great increase in our textile garment sales. I think this can be chalked up to a tenuous economy over the last few years, but the textiles and synthetic jackets have made great strides in terms of wearability and crashability.

HOW DO TECHNOLOGY, TEXTILES AND SAFETY AFFECT YOUR DESIGNS?

KW: Blending and fusing are critical parts of the modern Icon product line. Splicing high-tenacity textiles and vastly-improved synthetics with injected polymers has allowed our products to fit and function at a superior level while maintaining the ever-important crashability standards. We’re continuing this push to be lighter and faster, utilizing a host of new materials and processes.

MKZ: We designed a new way to manage airflow with our Triple Vent System, which was

developed in tandem with the launch of the touring platform under Project Rushmore. Since the motorcycle fairing redesign was so significant, we engineered the functionality and placement of the venting components and materials to allow our riders to customize their riding experience and manage airflow.

EM: The team ...has designed race suits for some of the top racers, like Nicky Hayden,

different style motorcycles out there so we want to provide something for all types of riders. Lately we’re trying to get away from your basic shirts and trying to do some trendy stuff that can cross over from a younger to an older age.

KW: As the design director and founder of the Icon brand, I never set out to specially target a younger crowd. I think we appeal to the

“Since the [Rushmore] fairing redesign was so significant, we engineered the functionality and placement of venting components and materials to allow riders ... to manage air flow.”

Miguel Duhamel, Mat Mladin, Ben Spies, etc. There’s a certain way the suits are designed, as far as safety features, and figuring out how to bring that level of safety to the streets as a cost-effective jacket is a priority. We are constantly looking for inspiration outside of motorcycling, to see what other sports brands are coming out with.

HOW DO YOU CATER TO RIDER DEMOGRAPHIC SEGMENTS?

MKZ: We have taken bold strides with our Black Label designs and positioning to meet the specific needs of the young adult market. We are intentionally more trend-driven in this line, and develop products quicker in order to react to new directions.

EM: The women’s market can be a challenge; you have all types of women and the styles they prefer. We are a broad-based brand and we understand that some riders have more than one type of bike. There are lots of

younger market because they are mentally open to different ideas and our unorthodox approach. Every other motorcycle brand was producing the same tired silhouettes and styles — regurgitating the same worn-out ideas — until Icon came onto the scene.

My goal is to do things differently, to re-examine and re-imagine. I want to design and produce fresh products, combined with innovative marketing, aimed at those who want to “Look Flash and Go Fast.”

The sad old “Father Times” of our industry, with their dour and stale outlook on motorcycling, are hindering what the whole lifestyle is about. Remember when motorcycling was fun? Motorcycling needs a constant supply of fresh blood in order to survive.

I believe it’s Icon’s job to engage with the youth, in a language they understand, and bring them into the street motorcycle culture... and hopefully sell them some product while we’re at it.

It’s a win-win. **D**

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SCAN FOR VIDEO

Casual wear can be a hybrid option

By Beth Dolgner

IT USED TO BE that a brand's casual wear lineup consisted of a few T-shirts with a logo, and maybe a hoodie or two for colder weather. There is a lot more variety now, and while some pieces are distinctly casual, others cross the divide between riding gear and fashion.



▲ FLY RACING

Fly Racing's Street Armored Tech Hoody (\$99.95) is windproof and waterproof. Reflective piping and EVA armor in key areas make it a motorcycle piece, but it has all the looks of a casual windbreaker. flystreetgear.com

▼ ROLAND SANDS DESIGN

Perhaps no company is embracing the fashion-forward side of powersports more than Roland Sands Design. The company's latest apparel collection includes the Bandito men's wool shirt (\$120) and the Fulsom sweater (\$200).

The only badging on the sweater is a small leather icon on the lower left side, and the styling looks like something you might spy in a high-end retail store. rolandsands.com



◀ DVS SHOES

DVS Shoes are not motorcycle shoes at all, but rather casual "action sport" sneakers that have caught on with motocross riders.

DVS expects one of its biggest sellers to be the Kurt Caselli edition of its Elm shoe (\$75). A portion of the sales goes to the Kurt Caselli Foundation to support safety in off-road motorcycling. Caselli was a DVS-sponsored racer prior to his fatal accident during the Baja 1000 in 2013. dvsshoes.com



▲ ICON ON DECK

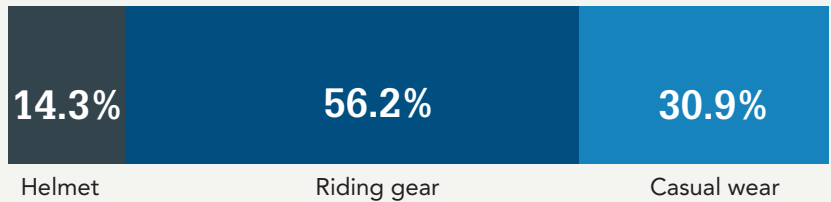
Knit seems to be a trend: Icon's fall/winter collection ushers in the Icon 1000 Quartermaster cardigan (\$125), which is a fleece-backed knit with distinct military styling. rideicon.com

► HARLEY-DAVIDSON FALL FOOTWEAR

Just in time for fall, Harley-Davidson Footwear has debuted the women's Leyda (\$170) and Shay (\$170), both casual boots with Harley styling cues. harley-davidsonfootwear.com

BY THE NUMBERS

What did you purchase or order at the Progressive International Motorcycle Show?



Survey of Progressive International Motorcycle Show 2013-14 consumer attendees conducted in spring 2014. Tour-wide average results across 12 markets (Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Minneapolis, New York, Northern California, Novi, Phoenix, Seattle, Southern California, Washington DC). Total respondents to this question: 2,672



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▲ SPEED AND STRENGTH

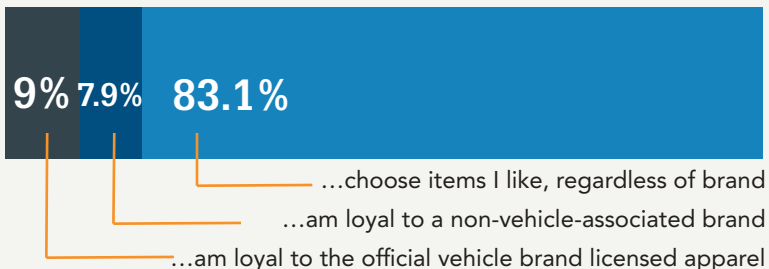
Highlights of Speed and Strength's 2015 collection are online at dealernews.com/speedandstrength2015, and the company has a wide variety of casual wear on tap.

In the crossover category is the Smokin' Aces reinforced moto shirt for women (\$99.95). Based on the men's Black Nine, the ladies' version of the plaid shirt has reinforced shoulders and elbows, Kevlar thread and a snap-down collar.

Meanwhile, the men's Rust and Redemption black leather jacket (\$449.95) comes with armor pockets but without armor so its stance on a hanger is more fashion and less moto. ssgear.com

BY THE NUMBERS

When I buy a helmet, jacket or other rider apparel item, I...



Survey of Progressive International Motorcycle Show 2013-14 consumer attendees conducted in spring 2014. Tour-wide average results across 12 markets (Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Minneapolis, New York, Northern California, Novi, Phoenix, Seattle, Southern California, Washington DC). Total respondents to this question: 4,101

ON DEALERNEWS.COM:

- Honda's thermals, old-school baseball T-shirts and ladies' wide-neck fleeces highlight the latest from the OEM.
- Highlights from Speed and Strength's 2015 collection
- Falco Motorcycle Boots offers up the ladies Kamila riding sneaker, which is designed to both look and feel like a street shoe.

Click on the **AFTERMARKET** tab on the Dealernews.com home page for more updates

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I have a few questions ...

... TO HELP YOU CREATE BLINDING-FAST CONNECTIONS WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS



Mark Rodgers is a best-selling author, speaker and premier expert on dealership sales. He can be reached at mark@peakdealership-performance.com



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"WHAT KIND OF RIDING are you planning on doing?"

Come on! You can do better than that when talking to would-be buyers. That question is non-differentiating (they hear it everywhere) and very often doesn't result in meaningful information for you ("Uh, I'm not sure, around town, maybe some trips").

Effective questions involve your customers more deeply in the conversation and give you important clues about themselves.

But before we get into the types of questions that will set you apart from the rest of the sales pack, here are two things to keep in mind:

Eschew dumb advice like "Never ask closed-ended questions." First, no one speaks in open-ended questions all the time; that's just goofy. Second, there are moments in the sales sequence when you want to have the customer make a particular decision. "Do you like the red one or the blue one?" The customer says, "Blue." Fine, blue it is. That's a solid, closed-ended question with a definitive answer. I'm not going to ask, "Can you tell me more about how blue makes you feel?"

Know when to be Philly or Fargo. Here's what I mean: Do you want to sound aggressive (Philly) or friendly (Fargo)? I use both approaches, depending on my target. The way to soften any question is to ask "rhetorical permission" before it: "May I ask, do you think you will own this motorcycle forever, or will you sell or trade it in a few years?" Rhetorical means you're not looking for the customer to actually answer aloud. Just remember that softer isn't always better — especially when dealing with an aggressive or time-crunched buyer. In this case, lose the "May I" to match their tone.

QUESTIONS THAT 'ACCSELLERATE'

Now we can focus on six terrific questions to accselerate your sales results:

Question No. 1: Wanna see something cool? I've never had a customer say "no" to this question. Never. Whether as a greeting or anytime during conversations, people always want to see something cool. So I show them the newest bike, or the oldest bike, or the highest horsepower bike. At all times, I have three cool items to which I can direct people's attention.

Bonus tip: Deliver this with a hushed, conspiratorial tone, and you'll really pique a customer's interest.

Question No. 2: Would you like me to tell you something about this motorcycle? Nobody says "no" to this one, either. Customers either want to learn something or match their knowledge with mine. And I'm fine with that; at least we're having a conversation.

Bonus tip: You actually must know something about the bike.

Question No. 3: Will you ride to work? Questions don't get much better than this, because it provides a subtle way of finding out what kind of work your prospect does. Compare "No. I drive the company truck to the construction site" with "I would, if I can figure out how to take my briefcase. I'm an attorney downtown."

Bonus tip: High-performing salespeople spend time with people who have money to spend.

Question No. 4: If you had one day to do nothing but ride, where would you go? This is one of those hypothetical questions that allow customers to suspend reality and daydream about possibilities. You'll receive a wide variety of answers: "Me and my buds would cruise down the shore looking for chicks." "My wife and I would love to ride to the mountains and enjoy the scenery." "I would ride everywhere, as fast as possible." This information can help shape your sales conversations.

Bonus tip: Beware of the bail jumper. ("Where would you go?" Mexico.)

Question No. 5: Sounds like you know what you're talking about; where have you done your research? I'm hardwired so when a customer says something intelligent about a bike — "The 2015 model has some improvements to the fuel injection, doesn't it?" — I bounce back with this: "It does! Hey, it sounds like you know what you're talking about. May I ask, where have you done your research?" If he's on 1130cc.com, the leading Harley-Davidson V-Rod forum, guess where I'm headed? If he's been dialing dealers or visiting other stores, I want to know that, too. And if he says, "I have a brother-in-law who knows what he's talking about," I'll now know there may be a maven in the offing.

Bonus tip: Customers can't wait to tell you what they know. So don't hesitate to ask.

Question No. 6: What are the two or three motorcycles here that most capture your interest? Speaking of 'accseleration,' here's one that cuts to the chase. Look, the person is standing on the showroom floor of a motorcycle dealership; they're not out looking for pastrami on rye. They came to talk bikes, so get to it. This question focuses their attention (and yours!).

For more distinct and meaningful questions, check out my latest blog post at blog.dealernews.com. Get great at asking these questions, and watch your sales performance accselerate dramatically.

I've saved my best questions for the Dealer Expo National Retail Conference 'Accseleration' sales workshop on Dec. 4 at McCormick Place in Chicago. During that half-day session, I'll give you three competition-crushing alternatives to that most banal of salesperson inquiries, "May I help you?"

See you there. **D**





WIDE RANGE

CENTRAL TEXAS POWERSPORTS FEEDS THE SXS, CRUISER AND COMMUTER LIFESTYLES

By Beth Dolgner • Photography by Gary Rohman

GEORGETOWN, Texas – Central Texas Powersports just celebrated its 10th year in business, hosting a big celebration fitting of a store decked out like an Old West town. Several business strategies for vehicles and PG&A have helped owner and GM Steve Littlefield weather economic ups and downs.





Littlefield has a collection of more than 40 classic motorcycles, which every new visitor gets to glimpse in a special “behind the scenes” dealership tour. The tour is Littlefield’s way of helping customers understand just how much is going on in the warehouse and service department; it also gives them a more personal connection to the dealership.

“I don’t think you can stock singles and be successful at selling apparel.” – P&A Manager Brad Brown



Steve Littlefield, owner and GM of Central Texas Powersports, was a dishwasher at a barbecue restaurant during his teens, eventually saving enough money to buy a 1966 Honda S90. He then spent so much time at the local Honda dealer that the owner finally gave him a job. Littlefield eventually opened his first motorcycle store in 1981, focusing on parts, accessories and service. He purchased half of a dealership in 1990, and in 2004 sold it back and moved to Georgetown to open Central Texas Powersports.

When Littlefield first bought the Yamaha and Suzuki dealership in 2004, it was 6,500 square feet. In 2005, Littlefield added Kawasaki to the lineup. Business started growing so rapidly that Central Texas Powersports needed a larger home, so it moved into its current 43,500 sq. ft. site in September 2008 — just in time for the Great Recession.

Littlefield prepared to weather the storm, but also pursued a number of opportunities. He added BRP, Polaris and Honda in the two years following the store’s expansion. A new PG&A “consignment” program from his distributor also helped the dealership maintain business levels during the recession.

Tucker Rocky’s Vendor Maintained Inventory (VMI) program was a new approach to PG&A stocking and sales. Central Texas Powersports was one of a handful of dealers who participated in the pilot program that began in 2009.

“They had a warehouse full of merchandise because they hadn’t seen the downturn coming,” Littlefield recalled. “They came to us and basically put a lot of merchandise in our store on consignment. It filled our Parts and Accessories department, and it turned out to be a good program for them. It’s nationwide now.”

Stocking parts, gear and accessories at Central Texas Powersports is no easy feat: PG&A takes up 7,400 square feet of the dealership. All of the merchandise sits on the showroom floor, “corralled” inside a wooden fence that keeps with the Western theme and funnels customers past the cash registers for improved traffic flow.

Over the years, the dealership’s customer

base has shifted from a motorcycle focus to side-by-sides and ATVs. The majority of Littlefield’s current customers are local farmers, ranchers and hunters, which means big sales of side-by-sides like the Polaris Ranger Crew line.

But Central Texas Powersports has a diverse mix of other customers, including college students, military personnel from a nearby U.S. Army base and riders commuting to Austin, the state capital. All gear and apparel collections on display have to cover a wide range of riders, budgets and needs.

“That’s the trickiest part of the ordering process. You have to cater to the market, but you don’t want to be stuck with inventory,” said Parts and Accessories Manager Brad Brown.

VMI allows the dealership to try out products with a lower financial risk. “I try to stock full-size runs of products. I don’t believe you can stock singles and be successful at selling apparel. [With VMI] we can do trials on apparel and products,” Brown said.

Winters are short in Texas, so some gear is a big seller almost year-round. “With the hot weather, everyone wears the mesh stuff and the ventilated products,” Brown said. The store has had success with Speed and Strength, and with the ventilated items from Joe Rocket and Alpinestars.

These days, as business continues to improve, Central Texas Powersports typically employs about 28 staff members. “Nearly every employee is an enthusiast of some sort,” Littlefield stressed. Their riding interests range from ATVs and cross-country to track days and stunt riding.

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Dave Koshollek teaches sales and service classes for dealers. Contact him at dakoenterprises@cs.com, or via editors@dealernews.com.

IN THE PARTS, gear and accessories (PG&A) department, we think of gear as what we wear to go riding or racing, such as helmets, armor-equipped jackets, gloves, Kevlar-reinforced pants and riding boots. In service, our gear has more to do with the service reception design, staff attire and the attitude we project. To attract and retain the best customers and grow our business, our "service gear" should send a message of being professional, knowledgeable and personable.

First impressions are often set at the service reception area when the customer arrives. The furnishings, decor and condition of this area should appear as an organized effort with a singular message: the quality of service.

We need to keep this area clean and neat, without girly magazines lying around, dirty dyno graphs pinned to the walls or product banners haphazardly

hung to add a dose of color. Nothing goes on display in the service reception area unless it supports the message of being professional, knowledgeable and personable.

One idea to personalize the area is to hang framed 8 x 10 pictures of your service team with their professional

bios and favorite personal pastimes. The bio should include their years of technical experience, areas of specialty and the technical training each has completed. You can also make the bio fun, like the folks do at McHenry Harley-Davidson. Check out what they have to say about their team at www.mchenryhd.com > Dealer Info > Staff. It's very entertaining.

PERSONAL PRESENTATION

Next up is how we, working in service, present ourselves. First up is personal hygiene. It's not the cut of our hair or beard or what we do to our skin. It's about being clean and neat, like we invested at least a few minutes to tidy up our appearance before we went to work. Along this line of thinking are the clothes we wear. There is no good reason not to wear service uniforms. Uniforms will pay for themselves by sending the

message of professionalism, which will in turn attract customers. When staff is represented professionally with uniforms that are clean and pressed, your customers will perceive that your techs operate on their vehicle in the same way — in a professional manner.

At the least, the dealership should provide uniform shirts and provide either a cleaning service or an allowance for employees to keep the uniforms clean and pressed. And remember, a clean uniform shirt is pretty much negated by a dirty, offensive hat. Headwear should be approved by dealership management.

Now, I know some of you don't like when I use Harley-Davidson dealerships as an example, but the truth is that they do a lot things right, and we can learn from that. Technicians working at most Harley dealerships around the world wear uniform shirts with patches that represent their level of technical accomplishment in Harley's PHD program. That tells customers that the techs are knowledgeable and experienced, and the techs I've met are proud to wear their technical recognition on their sleeve, which is an excellent morale booster.

The last point is the attitude we project. The best way to treat customers is the way we would treat our best friends if they showed up at our shop. Greet customers with a smile and a handshake, compliment them or their bike and ask a question to get them talking about what's most important in their life. Every customer interaction operates more smoothly when we grease the conversation with compliments and care.

In all of this, we need to keep in mind that it's not the customer's fault when your service department is slammed with work, the bikes on the rack are behind schedule and one or more of the techs are being difficult. When you're upset, you cannot transfer that mood to the customer or you will pay the price of their attitude shift to become more demanding, rude and unreasonable.

If I'm upset and I have to teach a class, I take a couple deep breaths and remember that I can at least act like I'm in a good mood. Amazingly, that works so well that usually within 10 minutes, I'm back on track and we're all having a good time. It most certainly doesn't pay to greet the class — or in your case, your customers — in a foul mood.

This concept is so important that I'm going to make a wild suggestion: Take an acting class. I did years ago, just for fun, and I use that experience to help me do a better job when dealing with others. It could be the best thing you've ever done; for yourself, your customers and your co-workers. And who knows? You might be discovered. Those work boots would look cool on the red carpet. **D**



A customer rides his bike up to the counter of the service reception area at Tucson Harley-Davidson. Three adviser counters, uniform shirts and displays with seasonally-appropriate accessories encourage a very profitable service department.

On the Web:

Visit www.blog.dealernews.com to read more of Dave Koshollek's columns for parts and service managers.

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SKF fork seals offer 'better mousetrap' levels of performance

SKF's FORK SEAL technology, already adopted by OEMs such as KTM, offers real-world benefits that can be immediately felt by the rider. On the KTM 1290 Super Duke R, for example, we found the front fork's plush response to rival some of the best units fitted to any production streetbike in memory.

The SKF fork seal kits are built from a self-lubricating NBR elastomer that all but eliminates stiction while still providing race-ready durability. SKF claims a 20 percent reduction in friction compared to conventional OEM seals, but the difference is dramatic, with SKF-equipped forks gliding effortlessly compared to standard items. The end result is significantly improved feel and damping performance thanks to the reduced stiction and more consistent response.

SELLING POINTS: In spite of the super slippery seal stiction, the SKF kits are able to handle abuse and still provide greatly enhanced service life, with bench-testing surpassing 1 million cycles and real-world



testing giving over 50 motocross hours without maintenance. This is not only due to the material's durability, but SKF's unique seal profile and geometry built to maintain sealing performance.

OPTIONS: Wiper seals are also available in a dual-lip design to resist even more extreme environments. This means fewer blown seals, less oil contamination, and reduced air suction into the damping system.

SKF seals are available to fit a wide range of common fork sizes, and are compatible with a wide range of OEM and aftermarket fork oils.

MSRP: SKF fork seal kits retail for \$33.85 per fork leg. – Bruce Steever



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Motion Pro establishes MAP policy for all resellers

SAN CARLOS, Calif. – Motion Pro's Minimum Advertised Price policy, which activated Sept. 1, applies to all resellers – including distributors, dealers and online retailers.

The step was taken "in order to protect the Motion Pro brand as a premium offering and preserve the company's reputation for

providing customers with quality products, best-in-class support and protect the company's competitiveness in the marketplace the image of its products," the company announced.

The policy will be uniformly enforced, the company noted.

"We believe that this policy is fair for all

customers and will help to protect the value of our products and our brand for everyone involved," said Brandon Baldwin, sales and marketing director.

The tool company's MAP announcement followed similar announcements this past summer by CST/Maxxis tires and Arrow exhausts.

Counter item idea: Basic offroad tools in a smaller package

CruzTOOLS is offering a toolkit that complements existing DMX kits and is aimed at offroad motorcycle, ATV and UTV customers.

"Our full-feature DMX fanny pack and fender mount kits have set the standard for off-road tool packs," stated Dan Parks, president of CruzTOOLS. "Our goal was therefore to condense their essence into the format of our popular SPEEDKIT Tool Kits."

SELLING POINTS: The Speedkit DMX is smaller and costs less than DMX Fanny Pack and Fender Mount tool kits from CruzTOOLS. The pouch is 7 inches x 2 inches x 2 inches, and weighs less than 2 lbs., so it will fit into many OEM tool cavities.

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You can read Mike Vaughan's interview with Richard Beattie in its entirety on www.dealernews.com (Search term=Beattie).

Is simpler better?

MOST MOTORCYCLE OFFERINGS INCLUDE AN EMBARRASSMENT OF OPTIONS

I RECENTLY INTERVIEWED Richard Beattie, the new executive vice president of marketing and sales for Kawasaki (Speed Read, September). I was astounded by what he told me about the total number of products, considering category, models, paint schemes and options, that a dealer would have to inventory if he were to represent the entire line.

It got me thinking: If there were that many for Kawasaki, then there's got to be a similar number for virtually every full-line OEM. Obviously, I don't have access to all the information that Beattie has, so I couldn't do a total evaluation. I decided to narrow it down to just motorcycles: On-road, off-road, competition and scooters. I counted paint schemes and carryover models if listed on their most current page (some OEMs have a separate tab for non-currents). Those that did the former got counted, those that used a tab didn't. This isn't real stimulating work.

(After Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Suzuki, I then looked at American and Canadian ATVs, UTVs and side-by-sides, PWCs and snowmobiles, but I won't include them here. If these are thrown into the mix, the possible inventory numbers become mind-numbing. I'll save these for another time.)

Once you get into it, you discover lots of little glitches and differences in how OEMs list their products. Some list options and some don't. Most list them as accessories. Some list all their carryover and some don't.

Some list the various color options and some (mostly the Europeans) don't. Then you have to search for that information using several different websites. Fortunately, most Euros don't have terribly long model lines, so it isn't that difficult, but it is time-consuming.

I'm sure I've missed some models and some colors, and probably screwed up in some other fashion of which I'm not aware.

I only counted models from OEMs that report their sales to the Motorcycle Industry Council, so there are a number of brands out there that didn't get counted. These are probably not very big statistically by themselves, but by the sheer number of them would add a significant number of units and color options to the pot.

645 COLOR OPTIONS

So, what did I learn from all this fiddling about? Well, dealers trying to stock a line of motorcycles that they think will sell are faced with an almost unmanageable task.

If you're a multiline dealer carrying Yamaha, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Triumph, for example, you're faced with 158 motorcycle and scooter models, with a total of 222 color options.

Fortunately for you, off-road and competition bikes are usually offered in only a single color. If you carry ATVs, UTVs, PWC and snowmobiles, the numbers become almost astronomical, and that doesn't even account for new and carryover models on your floor.

You kind of expect that if you're a dealer for a Japanese brand, you'll have a lot of options for colors, but choices and color options are also plentiful for some Euro brands.

For example, Triumph has 26 bikes and 58 color options, but that's simple compared to Harley-Davidson's 29 models and 144 color options. Then again, H-D is half the market.

A consumer who hasn't made a brand, model or color choice would be confronted with a total of 346 different models, and 651 color choices.

If this year's sales increase of 2 percent holds through the end of the year, it means that the industry will sell around 475,000 units. According to the most recent analysis of new unit retail outlets, there are about 5,000 franchised dealers. Now, I don't know how many dealers move more than 1,000 units, or how many there are in the less-than-50 unit category, but if you divide the estimated number of dealers into the projected unit sales, it works out to something less than 100 units per dealer.

In our interview, Beattie summed up the problem pretty well when he said that the current policy of most OEMs of slightly tweaking a model with either different forks, windshield or paint job, did result in more sales, but as he said, "just a few more." However, the process was damaging to the brand, eroded prices and made distribution a nightmare.

Looking back to my days at Kawasaki — and granted, things were different then — you usually only had two color choices. For a while it was red and black, then silver and red. We wouldn't even consider two color options if we weren't importing 5,000 of a specific unit.

Now I know this is really simplifying, but if you divide the 645 color options into 475,000 units retailed, you come up with an average of 736 of each color imported or built, and we know that some color options will forever remain orphans, or be severely discounted in order to move them off the floor.

Kawasaki introduced the Ninja in the United States 30 years ago with one color option, and no one seemed to mind until it was recognized that Canada had imported Ninjas in blue. KMC stood its ground and virtually sold out of red Ninjas.

Seems to me, simpler is better. What's your opinion? Send me an email at editors@dealernews.com **D**



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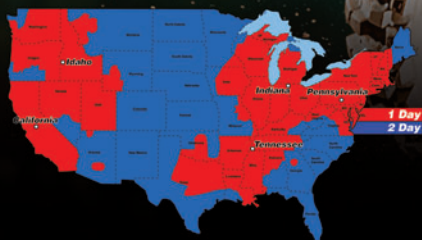
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