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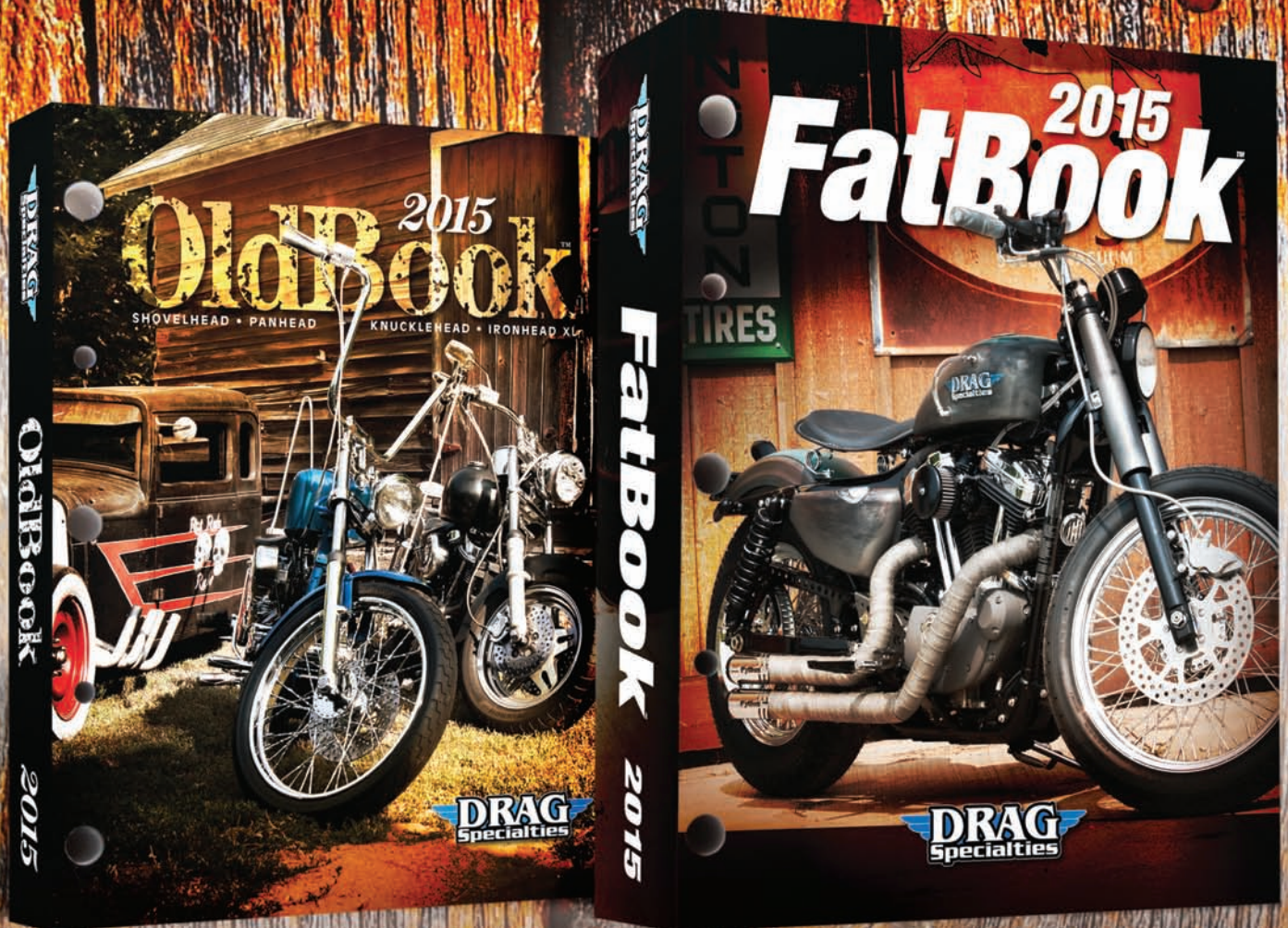
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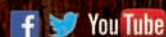
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Delicate balance

OUR SOCIETY FEEDS on mass generalizations. And industry marketers, researchers and media have a (bad) habit of characterizing a national market as a homogenous one.

That may be OK if we're in, like, Holland, but it's a reckless habit in the United States, which comprises a multitude of microcosms based on many factors, including where people live, what they do for a living, what their transportation infrastructure is like, how much open space is near them and how much disposable income they have. For example, the lament of "why we don't use motorcycles for transportation like the Europeans do" may apply in some areas of the country, but not all. Some people on the coasts don't understand the domination of V-twin cruisers in the center of the country, and some Midwesterners don't understand how

powerful the sportbike markets are on the coasts.

We're increasingly hearing from dealers complaining that their OEM requires them to order across the entire line when only 60 or 70 percent of the model range will sell in their area. And we hear from manufacturers about the need for their dealers to stock said models, even if they are lucky to sell only one or two (or worse, none) in a 12-month span.

The manufacturers must drive market growth, especially from new, diversifying sources as the traditional customer base begins to age out. Many dealers are also concerned about market growth, but they need the units that they know will sell well, and those sales then give them the resources to address new customer groups.

It's a delicate balance that requires daily monitoring. But in the end, manu-

facturers have to trust their dealers, and dealers must *prove* to the manufacturers that they understand their local market better than any other. The best dealers, large or small, do this well. And the most successful brand in any microcosm is due in part to a true team effort, involving retailer and manufacturer rep, to constantly analyze customer behavior, identify changes and tinker with the recipe for what will sell in any given quarter.

Broad brush strokes are essential when you're building a brand—you have to make sure that everyone stays on message and that integrity remains intact. But there must be certain allowances to help dealers address conditions in their own microcosms, as well as proper tools to help them maneuver. **D**

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History of the Brand Barnett Tool & Engineering

MANY SMALL BUSINESSES get started because someone solves a problem of his or her own and then discovers a market for the solution that was developed. It explains, at least in part, the origins of Barnett Tool and Engineering.

Still a family-owned and -operated business after 67 years, the company actually began before its first storefront opened in 1948, since Charlie Barnett had been moonlighting several years in his home garage. That may be Barnett's genesis, but it's clear from talking with Mike Taylor, Charlie's son-in-law and company CEO, that Charlie's work ethic, persistence and can-do attitude were the real secrets to Barnett's success.

Taylor said Charlie Barnett had just an 8th grade education when he hopped a freight train from Oklahoma to California. He wanted to be a machinist but had no skills. "The story goes he had over 20 different jobs in one year," Mike said. "He'd learn as much as he could before they found out he didn't know anything."

Still, through the early 1940s, Charlie continued to learn. He bought a motorcycle for cheap transportation, met other riders and used his abilities to keep his pals' bikes running. Before long, this was earning better than his day job, so Charlie and wife Afton rented a small storefront in Huntington Park, Calif. Mike started working for the company in 1968, the year after he married Colleen Barnett.

Charlie "was one of those guys that would do whatever needed done; he was never afraid to try anything," Mike said. "He'd say, 'If other guys can do this, I figure they aren't any better or smarter than me, so I can learn how to do it, too.'"

Colleen Barnett Taylor remembers when the family would load up the Chevrolet and hit the road, visiting motorcycle shops. Dealers told Charlie that OE cables commonly failed and clutches were problematic, especially when inserts in the friction plates became contaminated with oil. Charlie developed a material for making replacement inserts that combined cork with neoprene and other elements for greater oil resistance. As time went on he made the plates and built improved cables.

"Those are the parts Charlie decided to concentrate on, and that's still basically what we do today," Mike said. "In fact, I still have some of those inserts on the shelf for guys restoring old bikes."

When Charlie suffered a stroke in the mid-1970s, Afton, Colleen and Mike took over daily management. By 1979 Barnett expanded to a new facility in Santa Fe Springs, moving again in 1999 to Ventura. Over time, the product line grew as well. Cables and clutches remained the core business, but as technology and materials improved, so did offerings. "Everything we make today is so much better than what we made in the old days," he noted.

Though parts for V-Twins have been prominent in their catalog for decades, Barnett's makes cables and clutches for most makes and models of motorcycles, as well as ATVs.


Charlie's philosophy was to maintain control over production, quality and costs, so the company still handles many operations in-house, sending out only plating, heat treating and polishing. "When we decided to start making billet parts, we bought the CNC equipment and taught ourselves how to do it, the same way Charlie did," Mike said. "Sometimes the learning curve has been steep, but we get there."

Another guiding principle: pay as you go. "We avoid going into debt. When we need something, we earn the money then buy it." This has helped the company weather tough times. "It may have restricted our growth to



Charlie Barnett (top); Mike Taylor (above). Photos courtesy of Barnett Tool & Engineering.

some extent, but you sure sleep better at night when you're not worried about money."

Mike and Colleen's son, Chris, has been active in the business for some time, and now granddaughter Jennifer Darling and her husband, Chance, are taking on more responsibility, keeping the family brand intact. All things that would make Charlie and Afton Barnett justifiably proud. — Marilyn Stemp 

REARVIEW From the Dealernews archives

This month in 1976

Gene Comella, Dave Dewey, Ray Farrell, Jack Gillis, Gary "Jet" Johnson, Paul Krause, Ron Liles, Bob Moffit, Tony Murr, Gary Richards, Henry Schnittker, Dave Stone, Lee Stone, James Van Buren and Gary Voth were named **new district sales managers at Kawasaki.**

Tom Heininger sold his interest in Webco Inc. to his partner, R.L. Hughes. "I'm going to do a little fishing and enjoy my family for a while," he said.

Couple sitting on a Honda for 307 hours at Ed Lemco's dealership in Albany, Ore., set a Guinness World Record.

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The Principle of Nudge

HOW TO MOVE CUSTOMERS THROUGH A SERIES OF 'YES' ANSWERS

EMAIL MESSAGES DON'T sell motorcycles. Neither do phone calls. Face-to-face interactions sell motorcycles.

Oh sure, we all know one guy, who one time, sold one customer with just one email message. But you can't build a career on exceptions. What you can do is accellerate your sales by using a concept I call the Principle of Nudge—gently but confidently moving customers through a series of small agreements.

Sales success is seldom one colossal, ear-shattering, cosmic "YES!!" People often can be persuaded most effectively when they are casually shepherded along, not yanked through the streets. A great example of this comes not from a shepherd but from my sister-in-law's goldendoodle, Lucky.

At one family gathering in her home, Lucky was acting particularly affectionate toward me. He kept rubbing against my legs and looking for attention, which I happily gave him. After a few minutes, I realized we were no longer in the living room but in the kitchen. When I mentioned my surprise at the change of venue, my sister-in-law replied matter-of-factly: "He does that all the time. He brought you out here, because this is where we keep his treats."

Ah, the power of nudge.

That power begins in the earliest stages of your interactions with buyers, nudging them from tech to talk to touch—a customer conversion strategy I call "T3." Email communication and online sales chats are one-dimensional. The phone is better, but limited. Your best chance of creating deliriously happy customers and ridiculously large commissions is when you are face-to-face, knee-to-knee and toe-to-toe with people who can buy. "T3" begins with "technology" but evolves with a real conversation ("talk") and peaks with a handshake and person-to-person interaction ("touch").

How might the Principle of Nudge help you reach the "talk" stage? Well, customers' first interactions with your dealership are often electronic. Perhaps

that approach is more convenient for them, or they aren't ready to interact with a salesperson quite yet. But whenever I ask salespeople what their next objective should be, they always say, "Get them in the store!"

Whoa! Slow down, tiger. That's not nudge; that's a yank.

Your next yes is singular: You want

kind of way, but rather in a way that piques the customer's interest. Don't tell customers everything you know, just enough to advance to your next yes in the conversation: "Plus, there's a ton of info about this motorcycle you won't find online or in the brochure. Would you like to know more?" Trust me, they will.

In-person interactions—a series of small agreements—sell motorcycles.

this prospect to email you back! So start a conversation. Here's how:

- **Be fast.** As we've covered previously, replying to an online chat must happen within five to 15 seconds of that chat's initiation. Otherwise, experts say your likelihood of engagement drops significantly. Replying to an email doesn't have to be quite as immediate, but the faster the better.
- **Be professional.** Poor grammar, misspellings and text-talk can hurt your efforts, especially early on in a new buyer relationship. Best to play it straight. No emoticons, please.
- **Be complimentary.** This is the persuasion principle of ingratiation, and humans are powerless in the face of it: "You're interested in one of our most popular motorcycles—I like you already!"
- **Be informative.** If I'm your would-be customer, and you can tell me something that other salespeople don't know about the motorcycle I want, I'll keep working with you because interacting with you improves my condition. Try replying to a customer's email with something like this: "Do you know that the combustion chamber in the new EBR 1190 RX you're interested in is created in such a way that the fuel/air mixture tumbles instead of swirl, like most others. This creates better combustion." Oh, yes.
- **Be mysterious.** Not in a creepy

- **Be authoritative.** Humans defer to experts, so use the language of expertise: "recommend," "suggest," "advise." Try this: "I recommend we compare calendars and pick a time we can talk live."
- **Be flexible.** Don't leave the next step to chance. Give the customer a few options to choose from: "I've got time to chat this Wednesday at either 2:15 or 3:15. You?" Now, it's not about if the customer will talk to you, it's when.
- **Be proactive.** I prefer to call the prospect, rather than wait for him to call me, because I want to be in control of the action. I rarely write an email that includes this line: "I'll wait for you to contact me next Tuesday at 1 p.m." Instead I say, "Let's talk next Tuesday at 1 p.m. What's the best number for me to call?" I do everything humanly possible to be in charge of the contact. Some people will agree to a call right away. Others will opt for more email exchanges before they agree to an actual conversation.

Remember, there are multiple sales processes and buying processes involved here, and it's imperative that they sync. You must match your customers' comfort level before you get them on the phone.

Once that happens, what next? Check out my blog post this month to learn how you can nudge the caller toward becoming a customer. **D**

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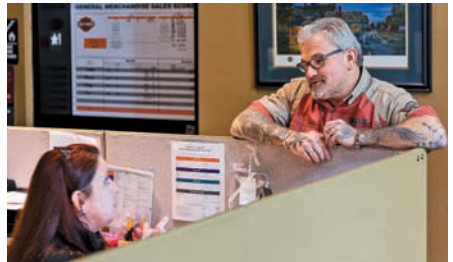
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TOP: MotorClothes Manager Jan Hawkins, right, and MotorClothes Associate Tina Burton, left, go over new inventory in their department; Sales Associate Rick Bishop, left, works with a customer on the showroom floor; General Manager/Dealer Principal Ray Perry checks in on the status of a training initiative with Hawkins; Perry leads a weekly staff meeting at Smokin' Harley-Davidson in Winston-Salem, N.C., to go over numbers and staff awards from the past quarter and the training schedule for the upcoming quarter; Master Technician Charlie Fried services a customer's ride.



From Navy blue to Harley orange

S.O.P. AT SHD? THRIVE WITH STRUCTURE

FROM MACHINE GUNS mounted on sidecars in Black Jack Pershing's pursuit of Pancho Villa to brigades of Harley-Davidson WLAs used by the United States and its allies in World War II and Korea, motorcycles—particularly Harley-Davidson—and the military have always gone hand-in-hand, as military strategists grew to appreciate the motorcycle's versatility and dexterity. This affinity isn't lost on dealerships near military bases where a ready crop of potential buyers turns up with each new infusion of recruits.

Ray Perry knows this; he was one of them.

Perry, general manager and principal at **Smokin' Harley-Davidson** in Winston-Salem, N.C., was in the U.S. Navy, stationed on board the USS Nimitz in Norfolk, Va., when Bayside Harley-Davidson opened nearby in 1998. An avid rider, Perry quickly became H.O.G. chapter director and helped in sales as his schedule allowed.

When he retired from the Navy in 2004, Perry continued his second career by managing Bayside until he got a call from Greg Cooke and Bob Rubin, owners of Revolution Motorsports. The three had met in a 20 group and kept in touch. Cooke and Rubin were searching for an onsite partner for their Winston-Salem dealership. Perry bought in and became GM and partner in 2012. (In addition to Smokin' H-D, Revolution Motorsports also includes New Orleans H-D, Cool Springs H-D, Emerald Coast H-D, Voodoo H-D and Bourbon Street H-D.)

Master Chief

Perry runs a tight ship. Much of the dealership's rapid success can be traced back to military habit and training. Perry was a command master chief in the Navy, the most senior enlisted sailor in a unit. As the primary liaison between commissioned officers and enlisted sailors, the CMC is charged with morale, discipline, training and job satisfaction—sort of the Navy's version of human resources. Perry brought his thor-

ough knowledge of process and procedure to motorcycling, along with a solid commitment to constant and ongoing training.

One of the first things Perry did was to get the employees into uniform collared shirts. The staff started feeling better and acting more professional. He also dubbed the receptionist "director of first impressions" and insisted that no customer should get more than 10 feet into the dealership without at least a greeting. Then he learned where local riders congregated and hung out there, doing reconnaissance to get a bead on Smokin' H-D's impression in the community.

"I learned that Smokin' was the place to buy a bike because they had the best selection, but it wasn't the place you wanted to have your bike serviced," he said. "I had to change that."

Smokin' already had great people in place when Perry arrived. But Perry looked to consultant Sam Dantzler, who said, "A store must add good people to good systems (policies and procedures)... in that order." A store that runs on systems can survive the loss of a good employee, if need be. But chaos can ensue when a good employee departs a store without good systems.

For Perry, establishing a firm set of policies and procedures had proven successful everywhere he'd worked, so that was the plan for Smokin' H-D. "We are very process-oriented here," he said. The framework has become standard operating procedure and Perry believes that employees appreciate systems they can rely on.

Policies and Procedures

All departments are required to follow up with their customers weekly. Sales and service teams follow up more frequently but parts and MotorClothes must make calls, too. Sales has a six-step process that each team member must follow, and it includes all paperwork during the write-up stage. Further, every customer engaged by the sales team must be logged into the DMS as soon



Ray Perry's frequent walkarounds keep tabs on the various departments. "I lead by walking around. Not sitting in my office," he said. "If I had my way I would never sit here [at the desk]."

as the team member finishes the exchange.

Managers have authority to make decisions. "When you empower your managers, it's amazing what they will do and what they can accomplish," said Perry. "We'll sit down and talk about how things might be handled differently next time, but no one has ever been fired over a mistake."

A policy or procedure is only a suggestion unless consequences are in place. "I don't want to sound heavy-handed, but I won't tolerate people not following the policies and procedures," he said. "Especially with my managers, because leading by example is so important."

Training is essential, every week, in every department. "I never give up the opportunity for training. You can



always find time to accomplish it. If done correctly, it is the single most important thing you can do for your staff and your customers," he said. "One military saying is, 'You're always training your relief.'"


Weekly manager and monthly associate meetings happen like clockwork. When Perry has to travel, the schedule is not altered; the process stays in place. "I have managers who will step right in and handle things if I'm not there," he said.

Rounding out the shop's culture is Perry's own active, engaged leadership style. He credits his military training for setting expectations and instilling behavioral habits. He's infusing his staff with similar qualities.

"I lead by walking around, not sitting in my office," he said. "If I had my way I would never sit here [at the desk]. I hate these," he says, pointing to the computer. Instead, he visits every department several times a day and makes it a point to be available to anyone, keeping an open door policy. It's not so much micromanaging as consistent goal-setting.

Perry's commitment to facing issues head-on is evidenced by his accessibility. "If someone wants to talk to me they should be able to. If they can't, that's not good service," he said. "I give every new bike owner my card. I want them to call me." (Note: We cold-called the dealership to line up the interview for this article, and got Perry on the line without delay.)

The shop's service department is now highly recognized, and overall customer service marks are stellar. The shop holds co-op events with the adjacent Southern Smoke Eatery and Tavern, hosts a H.O.G chapter, and stays active in the community. The dealership's grounds are spacious, with room for concerts and events. They've even hosted a couple of weddings.

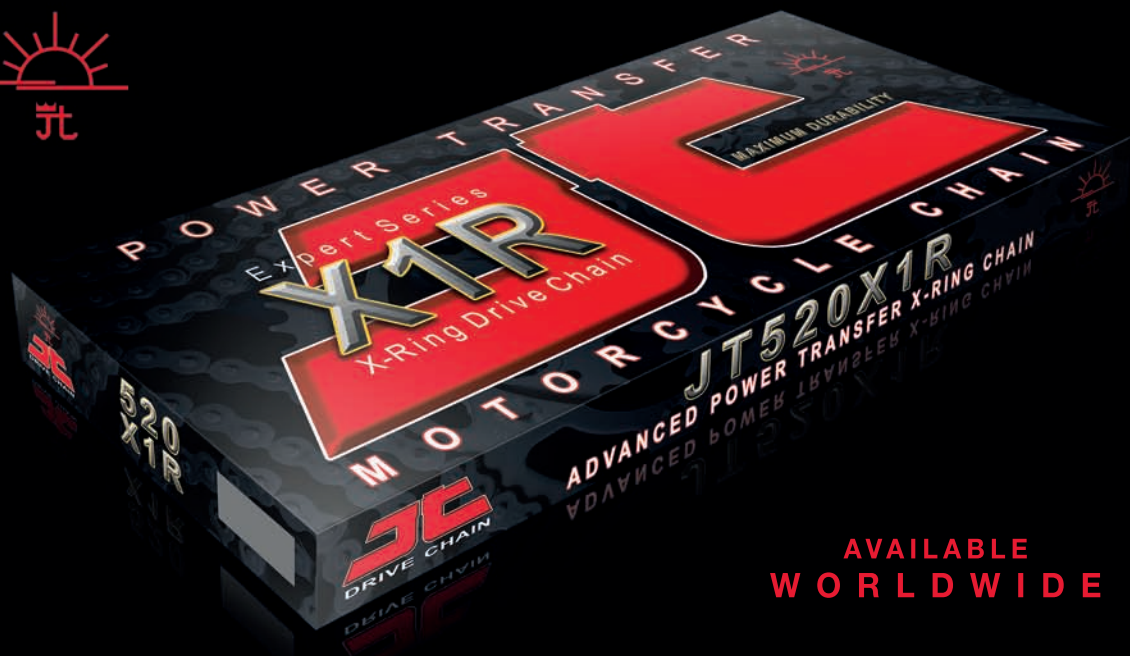
And just for the record, Perry's days of stealthy information gathering are long gone. After garnering many H-D Bar & Shield awards and several Dealernews Top 100 recognitions, he can't go anywhere in Winston-Salem now without someone stopping him to shake his hand and say, "Hi, Ray!" And that's just the way he likes it. 



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'15 Scout a canvas for custom builders

FOR THE 2014-15 Progressive International Motorcycle Show season, Indian Motorcycle challenged two custom shops to take a 2015 Indian Scout and run with it. The results: "Scout 42" by John Shope of Dirty Bird Concepts in Scottsdale, Ariz., and "Outrider" by Karlee Cobb of Klock Werks Kustom Cycle of Mitchell, S.D.

Custom work on Shope's "Scout 42" (see top photo, right) pays homage to the performance characteristics of the Scout model and was designed to increase the sport appeal of the bike without sacrificing stock handling. It has a custom fairing and chin spoiler, changing the lines around the stock radiator to bring a sportbike aesthetic. The footpeg location remains stock; however, Bear Claw pegs provide increased foot traction.

A Renthal handlebar pulls the rider forward into an aggressive stance and shifts more weight to the front end. A custom front fender complements the tighter look. Shope developed frame inserts to add details to the stock cast aluminum frame. The fuel tank remains stock. "I just love the shape," he said.

He kept stock rim sizes to maintain handling but used custom rims from Gorby Machine. Stock shock springs were custom powdercoated. The forks remain stock but the seat is recovered in a diamond patterned suede from Guy's Upholstery. The bike is painted Candy Blue with tape fading style and gray inserts from Steel Vision Garage. There's also a darkened tail light, a blue tinted instrument pod, side-mounted license plate, drilled-out levers, chain guide and sprocket cover, and a tight exhaust system.

Home builders in mind. Cobb has custom blood in her veins as the daughter of Brian and Laura Klock. She created "Outrider" to convey the rough and ready attitude of the 2015 Scout. "Outrider is a bike that pumps up the attitude of the 190 hp bike in a design that will inspire home custom

builders," Klock Werks stated.

"My goal was to design something that looks completely customized but yet is simple enough that someone could do something similar to their own Scout in their garage," Cobb said. Preserving the ride-ability of the stock bike was key, she added.



International Motorcycle Shows photos: Manny Pandya

Outrider adds a 180 tire to the rear with a 19-inch front tire, both wrapped around PM Reveal wheels. Flat-track bike builder Kully Millage created the one-off stainless-steel pipe. The custom handlebars feature black powdercoat and the back of the bike has tucked-in rear signals from Motogadget to provide a clean, tight look. The front fender is a Klock Werks custom, trimmed to fit, while the rear is an upswept traditional bobber look with a "half-frenched" oval taillight that splits the fender's surface. A low-profile seat pan was designed to give the rider the feel of being "in" the bike. Brad Smith at The Factory

Match in Tea, S.D., laid down PPG Paint in various panels of gray and earth tones to blend in with the stock cast frame.

Klock Werks has now developed several Outrider parts for the Scout, including front and rear fenders, the seat pan kit and the Outrider Rad Guard Radiator Screen, and plans to release them for sale during first quarter.

“I want the fine citizens of Transylvania to be able to see and experience the BIKES, BABES and BEER and everything else we have to offer. Why should they be spared of our mirth making?”

—Rick Fairless on the launch of www.strokersdallastv.com, a new 24-hour live video feed from the tie-dyed HQ.



See Rick's 'Tie Dyed Tales blog:
<http://blog.dealernews.com/RickFairless>



RACING CONTROLS, WITH RSD STYLE

LOS ALAMITOS, Calif. – Control systems on modern motorcycles emphasize efficiency. Calipers and master cylinders use radial mounting solutions and drive layouts to apply force as efficient as possible.

The result is better braking, with more feel, less flex and more power.

Roland Sands Design combines racing principles with style to offer contrast-cut billet radial mount levers and master cylinder sets. Fully compatible with OEM switchgear and wiring for bolt-on ease of installation, the RSD master cylinders are designed to put modern braking technology into a stylish package. The lever blades are machined for a comfortable grip, and bore diameters are available in 9/16" and 11/16" sizes to suit single- and dual-disc applications. For bikes with cable clutches, a matching clutch lever set is also offered to maintain a nicely symmetrical style.

Each radial master cylinder set retails at \$469.95, while the cable lever set sells for \$329.95. All of these new control kits are designed to fit one-inch handlebars, with styling cues that will match other items from RSD's Radial product line.

—Bruce Steever

LEGEND SUSPENSIONS UPDATES AERO, REVO LINES

STURGIS, S.D. - Legend Suspensions is adding Softails to its AERO suspension line. The AERO-ST models have been redesigned with aramid fiber air spring technology that provides improved spring rate adjustability and ride quality for better comfort and overall handling, the company said.

AERO-ST models are now available for 1989-later Harley-Davidson Softails, with Kawasaki Vulcan Vaquero fitments due to arrive later this year.

The REVO coil suspension line gets several new applications. REVO and REVO-AS standard and heavy-duty applications are available for FXRs, Sportsters and Dynas and will be offered in 14-, 13- and 12-inch lengths.

REVO's unique spring rate offers the ability to soften pre-load, reducing ride height and maintaining a smooth ride; the REVO-As offers the same benefits plus external rebound adjustment, the company added.

➤ ALSO...

Mustang goes low and lean for Softails. After launching its RunAround seat last summer for Dynas and FLs, Mustang in December expanded the offering for 2000-present Softails. The controlled-density polyurethane seat is 10.5 inches wide at front and keeps to a low profile.

And more Mustang news: The company in early January released a trio of seats—the Fastback, Vintage Touring and Vintage Touring with backrest—for Harley's 500 and 750 Street models.

European expansion. BikeSheath and Butty Buddy Seats have new European distribution through separate agreements with Netherlands-based Zodiac.



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Yamaha's SMAX: Small scooter filling big shoes

THE 155CC COURTS SMALL-SCOOTER RIDERS WHO NEED OCCASIONAL HIGHWAY SPEEDS

CHINESE-MADE CSC CYCLONE GETS 49-STATE APPROVAL

AZUSA, Calif.—California Scooter Co./CSC Motorcycles announced that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved the CSC Cyclone motorcycle as compliant with federal motor vehicle emissions requirements. Approvals for the State of California and for the Canadian market were pending at press time.

The Cyclone is a 250cc water-cooled adventure-touring bike that includes engine guards, luggage, a windscreen, 6-speed transmission, a 4.2-gallon fuel tank and a counterbalanced, fuel-injected, overhead cam engine as standard. It is manufactured to CSC specs by Zongshen in China.

"The CSC Cyclone is an adventure touring bike that makes sense, and we believe its 250cc engine size is a perfect solution to real-world adventure touring needs," said Steve Seidner, CSC president and chief executive officer. The company said the Cyclone is the only motorcycle of its type in the 250cc range.

Combining the adventure-touring and 250cc size segments "represents a tremendous opportunity for CSC Motorcycles and for our customers," Seidner said. "We know that the Cyclone's quality is as good as or better than any other motorcycle on the market today, including expensive European imports that cost eight times as much as the Cyclone."

The company said Cyclone units will begin arriving in the United States in February.

IMPERIAL BEACH, Calif. — On the heels of another small scooter launch for the U.S. market,* Yamaha has unveiled the new-for-America SMAX, a 155cc step-through machine that aims to be a "Goldilocks" for existing scooter riders.

Gas prices be damned, the United States never saw the scooter 'boom' we were hoping to see, but it is fair to say that scooter sales have slowly crept up over the years. But because this is America, and bigger is always better, much of the effort has been aimed at full-size maxis-cooters like the Burgman 650 or the new C600S and C650GT BMWs.

Yamaha's own scooter lineup offers several choices in the 50cc class, as well as a single 125cc Zuma, but then nothing until the 400cc Majesty, which was dropped for 2015. Thus, Yamaha identified a gap the new SMAX could fill: at 155cc, the new machine is just large enough to meet many states' requirements for freeway legality (typically 150cc), but thanks to a light weight of 328 lbs. and a step-through floorboard design, it's just as easy to handle as a smaller machine.

The powertrain is pretty conventional, for a scooter: the engine serves as the swingarm and the drivetrain is 'twist-and-go' thanks to the automatic Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT). But the rest of the engine is actually pretty high-tech, featuring fuel injection, liquid cooling with a clever side-mounted radiator design and a four-valve head running an 11:1 compression ratio.

Power isn't pavement-rippling, but the engine is responsive and was more than capable of nipping through and past car traffic in urban San Diego. But here's where things get interesting: the 155cc powerplant is not only freeway-legal, but is actually quite capable, too, quickly reaching highway speeds and still able to pass as required. The little motor is near redline to keep up with traffic

in the fast lane, at around 80 mph indicated, but it's glassy smooth while doing so.

So with the SMAX, Yamaha has brought just enough scooter to satisfy the needs of riders looking to extend their commuting range onto the highway without losing any of the simple appeal of a smaller scooter.



Yamaha reps stated that a large target for the new SMAX are existing scooter riders, which also makes perfect sense—the SMAX isn't going to woo too many motorcyclists but is a perfect step-up machine for existing 50cc riders from a variety of brands.

The obvious target for competition is Honda's PCX150, a similarly sized machine that is courting the same buyer. Compared to the PCX, the SMAX offers a (very) slight performance advantage along with more traditional scooter styling and the convenience of the taller standard windscreen, but the Yamaha does retail for \$240 more, at \$3,690.

Only time will tell if Yamaha manages to significantly boost its overall scooter sales, but it's good to see OEMs finally focusing on the needs of practical riders here in the States.

— Bruce Steever



*See Bruce's review of the Suzuki Burgman 200, "How big is big enough?" at his Dealernews blog: blog.dealernews.com/BruceSteever

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AMA VINTAGE DAYS SET FOR JULY 10-12

PICKERINGTON, Ohio – The AMA's Vintage Motorcycle Days will be July 10-12 at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Lexington, Ohio.

The vintage fest is a fundraiser for the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame.

Tickets for AMA members are being offered at a discount until May 29: \$45 for the weekend, \$25 for a one-day pass Friday or Saturday and \$20 for a Sunday pass. There is no service charge for AMA members when purchasing through the AMA. Call 800-262-5646 or 614-856-2222 for more information.

U.S. SENATE BILL WOULD DE-FUND CHECKPOINTS THAT SINGLE OUT MOTORCYCLISTS

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A bipartisan bill introduced in January by U.S. Sens. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.), Joe Manchin (D-W. Va.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) would prohibit the use of federal funds in establishing motorcycle-only checkpoints.

The "Stop Motorcycle Checkpoint Funding Act" would restrict the Secretary of Transportation from granting funds to any government entity for a program to check helmet use or to create checkpoints for an operator of or passenger on a motorcycle.

California, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina, Illinois, New Hampshire and Virginia already have passed legislation curbing motorcycle-only checkpoints.

MOTO-D ACQUIRES STRAPLESS TRANSPORT STANDS

ARMONK, N.Y. – Moto-D Racing has acquired certain assets of Strapless Transport Stands.

"The addition of Strapless Transport Stands trailer restraint for sportbikes will greatly enhance Moto-D's ability to meet the needs of trackday, race and sportbike motorcycle riders," stated Scott Diamond, president of Moto-D.

The Strapless Transport Stand is an upright removable steel tower stand designed to secure a motorcycle, without tie-downs, while in transit using a stainless-steel rod that inserts into the hollow rear axle of most modern sportbikes. The stand is reportedly removable in seconds, using two mounting plates that bolt to the floor, and can work in a variety of applications, including enclosed trailers, open trailers, shipping crates or long bed pickup trucks.

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Deadline to be in compliance with Pro Taper's MAP policy. "Anyone advertising products at lower than 10 percent off suggested retail prices will be subject to immediate termination," said Pro Taper Brand Manager Paul Perebignos. "By leveling the playing field we are protecting our dealers and increasing ProTaper's competitiveness in the marketplace." Internet resellers have until Feb. 28 to comply.

Deadline to comply with MSR Hard Parts' new MAP policy. Internet resellers again got an extension to Feb. 28. "The MAP policy is being implemented in order to preserve our reputation for providing customers with high value products," explained MSR Hard Parts Brand Manager Jason Gearld. Like Pro Taper's policy, MSR warns immediate termination for any retailer advertising products at more than 10 percent off suggested retail prices.

Deadline for U.S. and Canadian dealers to comply with RK Excel's new MAP policy. Contrary to the Pro Taper and MSR policies, RK Excel is providing a four-tier process for MAP violations based on number of offenses, with no financial penalty for first- or second-timers. But there's no intent clause in the policy: "RKEA believes there is no reason that would be acceptable beyond a second offense to entertain an unintentional violation of policy conversation," said RK Sales Manager Robby Roberts.

FOX EDITION RZR XP 1000 UPS THE SUSPENSION GAME

FIRST RZR XP TO FEATURE A FRONT SWAY BAR

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn.—Polaris knows it has a good thing going with the RZR line, but it has upped its game with the new Fox Edition RZR XP 1000 EPS which, according to the OEM, offers the best performing suspension ever on a side-by-side. This model features Fox Internal Bypass Shocks, retuned coil-over springs and new front and rear stabilizer bars.

The Fox Podium Internal Bypass Shocks found on the Fox Edition RZR have been developed in racing conditions to generate highly-progressive damping that gives the vehicle a plush ride without losing the bottoming-out resistance expected from a high-performance ORV. The shocks have large diameter bodies, expanded reservoirs and increased fluid capacity for improvements in heat dissipation, fade resistance and durability.

But the key is the internal bypass technology, which offers distinct damping zones compared to a conventional shock, allowing the internal piston to travel with less restric-



tion through much of the shock's stroke. As the piston nears either extreme of travel, the bypass circuits are closed, and oil is forced through the conventional damping shim



stacks for progressive damping control. The end result: better tune-ability and performance, a smoother ride and better handling over a wider range of terrain at any speed, Polaris said.

To complement the new shock package, Polaris outfitted the RZR XP 1000 EPS Fox Edition with redesigned coil-over springs. The progressive rate upper spring is lighter weight, absorbing small impacts while the stiffer main spring maintains ground clearance and absorbs bigger impacts in rough terrain.

The RZR XP 1000 EPS Fox Edition also is the first RZR XP to feature a front sway bar, which operates in concert with a redesigned, and 25 percent less stiff, rear sway bar. Combined with the Fox Podium shocks, the sway bars dramatically decrease body roll and improve vehicle handling and comfort.

The RZR XP 1000 EPS prices at \$22,999 and Polaris said dealers will begin receiving it in February. —Bruce Steever

The Fox Edition RZR XP 1000 was one of several special or limited-edition intros from Polaris in early January. To read more about the diesel Rangers, Sportsman XP LEs and RZR 4 900 EPS shipping to dealers now, visit Dealer Operations > Sales > Sales Resource Center: ATV/UTV

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**> ALSO**

Polaris Industries Inc. will build a 600,000 sq. ft. off-road vehicle production facility in Huntsville, Ala. The new plant, set to go online in second quarter of 2016, will employ 1,700, said Ken Pucel, executive vice president of operations, engineering and Lean for Polaris. The Alabama plant, which will support vehicle assembly, chassis and body painting, welding, fabrication and injection molding, will reduce pressure on other facilities nearing production capacity, Polaris said.

BRP will use Mossy Oak's Break-Up Country pattern on its Can-Am vehicles, the result of a marketing agreement signed between the OEM and the West Point, Miss.-based firm. Break-Up Country features "dramatically larger limbs, leaves, bark, branches and other digitally enhanced natural elements" and is considered "revolutionary" for hunters regardless of terrain, according to Mossy Oak executive Ben Maki.

Congress gets dirt-friendly (maybe). The National Defense Authorization Act and the so-called CRomnibus spending bill include hundreds of attachments, some of them beneficial to ATV and dirtbike riders. Among them are newly-opened areas in Nevada and Colorado, and delaying protections for the sage grouse under the Endangered Species Act. But it also may designate more than 200,000 acres for non-motorized wilderness. *For more information on the Act and CRomnibus, visit the REGULATORY tab on the home page at Dealernews.com*

PRO CIRCUIT UNVEILS FOUR-STROKE EXHAUSTS FOR 2015 MODELS

CORONA, Calif. - For AMA Supercross and Motocross competitors, the Ti-6 Pro full-race system is designed to pass AMA/FIM sound regulations. It features titanium construction throughout the head pipe, mid-pipe and canister; carbon fiber end cap construction; RC-4 Resonance Chamber on select models; machined aluminum muffler bracket for strength and durability; asymmetrical muffler configuration for increased packing volume; machined mid-pipe to head pipe joint for a leak-free fit; and TIG precision welding.

The Ti-6 Titanium Exhaust System offers maximum performance and is "perfect for any closed course or off-road racer looking for improved performance, durability and a professional look," the company announced. This system meets AMA amateur

racing sound requirements and is equipped with a U.S. Forest Service-approved spark arrestor, making it easier to alternate between off-road and closed-course riding, Pro Circuit noted.

The T-6 Stainless Steel Exhaust System has stainless steel throughout the head pipe, mid-pipe and end cap, with an aluminum canister. It also meets AMA amateur racing sound requirements and is equipped with the USFS-approved spark arrestor. It offers the same performance as the Ti-6 with lower cost and increased durability, the company noted.

Retail prices range from \$780 to \$1,400, depending on application. In addition, Pro Circuit has a T-6 stainless system for the Honda Grom with an MSRP of about \$390.

Check out Pro Circuit's 2-stroke news on dealernews.com: *searchterm=Pro Circuit*



Western Power Sports adds HiPer Technology ATV/UTV wheels, D'Cor graphics, expands FOX line

BOISE, Idaho - WPS has added FOX Moto shocks and fork components and D'Cor Visuals dirtbike graphics to its off-road catalog, and HiPer Technology wheels to its ATV/UTV catalog.

WPS already distributes FOX's snowmobile and ATV products, so the addition of the Moto line rounds out the FOX offering.

D'Cor Visuals, created by Danny Dobby, is the official graphics sponsor for Monster Energy Kawasaki, GEICO Honda, Star Racing Honda and the Yamaha Factory ATV race team.

HiPer's Carbon Composite beadlock wheels boast Dakar Rally and Baja 1000 pedigrees. The 14-inch wheels, available in single or dual beadlock versions, reportedly weigh less than

most available wheels, which in turn provides improved acceleration and braking. HiPer Fusion wheels come with a precision-machined 6061 billet center, except for the Sidewinder model which has a cast center.



COMING IN APRIL:

Spring Off-Road and Adventure Touring market update. In your mail (and email) boxes April 1.

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 -Velocity Cycles



Skully heads forward

LIKES PERFORMANCE, SAFETY, TECHNOLOGY? THERE'S YOUR KEY CUSTOMER, COMPANY FOUNDER SAYS

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. – There has been a spate of successful crowdfunding campaigns in the industry, but none of them created as much buzz or as much funding as Skully did. The AR-1 smart helmet has not yet arrived on the market but has already proven that there are willing customers for wearable technology.

Skully was founded by Dr. Marcus Weller and his brother, Mitchell. The main drawing point for the AR-1 helmet is its built-in heads-up display, projecting turn-by-turn GPS navigation onto the face shield. It also has a rearview camera that projects its images up front for the occasional quick glance.

In August, Skully launched a crowdfunding campaign through Indiegogo. Their goal of \$250,000 was reached in eight minutes. The company crossed the million-dollar mark in 45 hours en route to an eventual \$2.8 million in pledged contributions, amounting to 1,950 pre-sold helmets.

For Marcus Weller, that campaign spoke volumes about the desirability of a smart helmet. “We wanted to make sure that we had the right product at the right time at the right price point. And so we set our goal at a quarter million because we felt that would give us a qualitative, solid assessment of our market fit. What we could not have predicted is how much the product fit the market,” he said.

Interestingly, it's the rearview camera that generates excitement from those who have tested the Skully AR-1.

“This rearview camera is actually a blind spot camera,” Weller explained. “What the camera sees is so wide that it overlaps your own peripheral vision. You effectively have a 360-degree visual awareness. [So] a person wearing a helmet could have another person walk all the way around him in a circle, and they would never lose sight of that person.”

‘The right kind of customer’

Skully plans to ship its first helmets in May, and the company spent the fall and winter meeting with prospective dealers. Weller feels that the success of the Indiegogo campaign should equal retail success, especially since the helmet is designed with a fundamental difference: It is designed not

just to protect the head in a crash but to help prevent the crash in the first place.

The AR-1 will not suit everyone, Weller said, “but for the rider who likes performance and likes safety and likes technology, this is going to sell itself. And also there definitely will be opportunities. If we do demonstration

said Weller. “The better our relationships are with these OEMs, the better integration we can achieve with their bikes. The reality of it is that our product and their bikes are going to live side by side

“Prior to our delivery, we’ll have a full customer care system in place with live operators, and support videos on our site. Resellers will have virtual and/or live support for everything from selling the product, to a quick start guide, to deep answers on more technical questions.”

units at dealers and have a place where someone can try it on and experience the heads-up

in the industry; people out there who are buying a bike



Left: Skully founders Mitchell (right) and Marcus Weller. Above: The big helmet-to-bike unveil at EICMA.

display, I think what that ultimately is going to do is bring the right kind of customer into their stores.”

Phil Ammendolia, an industry veteran who last fall joined Skully as vice president of business development, added, “Prior to our delivery, we’ll have a full customer care system in place with live operators, and support videos on our site. Resellers will have virtual and/or live support for everything from selling the product, to a quick start guide, to deep answers on more technical questions.”

During EICMA, Skully partnered with Aprilia to demonstrate helmet-to-bike connectivity, with the heads-up display transmitting information such as vehicle speed, engine speed, gear position and fuel consumption.

“We’re so much more meaningful with great partnerships across the industry,”

are also buying a helmet.”

But Weller’s vision does not end with helmet-to-bike connectivity. He said, “The biggest thing that we’re trying to accomplish at Skully is to proliferate vehicle-to-vehicle communication, and what I mean by that is that we want more people, more pedestrians, more helmets connected to each other to create a network of devices that are self-aware. When you do that, the whole transportation system gets safer. And the more helmets there are in the network, the safer we all are. That’s really our goal.”



SCHAMPA FACEMASKS provide custom contouring. Schampa's newest facemask line features the adjustable Face Fit System, which offers a contoured fit that will not slip while riding, according to the company. The system does this with an internal wire that bends to fit over the rider's nose and cheeks.

There are a variety of options, including traditional bandana styles; facemasks made of CoolSkin, fleece-lined neoprene, and some with windproof and waterproof panels and reflective panels. Most retail for \$23.99 with some of the cold weather options approaching \$30.

Joe Rocket adds versatile multiseason jacket to Ballistic line

THE BALLISTIC series expands with Adventure, a jacket designed for all-weather multiseason riding.

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The outer chassis has double overstitched, water- and UV-resistant RockTex 600 with double storm flaps covering the zipper. There is a waterproof liner and a full-sleeve insulated liner for cool weather riding. On warm days the liners can be removed and the Variable Flow ventilation system zipped open. Riders who want even more airflow can zip off the lower sleeves.

CE armor at the shoulders and elbows combine with a spine pad and nylon reinforcements in impact areas. Comfort and convenience come by way of an eight-point adjustment system, an integrated hydration system pocket and port, an extended back with zipper gussets, and seven pockets.

Options: The jacket comes in black/gunmetal and silver/gunmetal in sizes S-3XL. MSRP: \$299.99.



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Thinking outside the cell

WHAT'S THE REWARD (AND THE RISK) FOR HIRING AN EX-CON?

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But you've never written that ad. But before dismissing the idea, remember: celebrity builder Billy Lane is now an ex-con. Other ex-offenders were mechanics or fabricators when they went in, and still others are training in prison to give themselves a chance on the outside.

Question is, should you give them that chance?

Despite the initial reaction, former offenders might be a viable source of labor for some dealers. At least two state prisons, one in Colorado and another in Nevada, have custom motorcycle shops training inmates to work for dealerships, and custom and repair shops when they get out.

Government entities also have an interest in ex-cons getting decent jobs. It helps people turn their lives around, which reduces the recidivism rate. The federal government offers tax breaks, bonding and insurance for employers who hire ex-offenders, and six states offer tax breaks of their own to sweeten the pot. Some of those breaks extend for five years if the employee stays that long.

Old Max Choppers

www.oldmaxchoppers.com/contact.html

It's almost a cliché to think of inmates stamping out license plates in a prison shop. But that was the genesis of Old Max Choppers at the Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility in Canon City. Of 80 inmates in the license plate shop, five are in the Old Max Choppers program, which started three years ago.

Inmates built five custom bikes from the ground up, and even sold one. The shop mostly performs repairs on consumer bikes.

"We have turned this into repairing bikes. We've done about 30 of those," said shop manager Dennis Dunsmoor. "It started about a year after we started building the bikes. It was OK to invest in them, but you can't keep selling bikes."

Inmates make about \$4 a day working at Old Max Choppers, and state law would require that they be paid more if the bikes, which have been on display at local shows, were sold outside the state. The shop would

work with a dealer if someone wants to sell them on consignment, Dunsmoor said.

The shop also sells logo T-shirts and commuter mugs, as well as custom-painted tanks and accessories. The corrections system does not track released inmates, but Dunsmoor said he knew of at least one ex-offender who went to trade school to continue his motorcycle career after his release, and another that opened an auto shop in another state. He also said the graduates who have been released after the program have not been back.

Big House Customs

www.ssi.nv.gov/Big_House_Choppers/

In Nevada, inmates at Southern Desert Correctional Center outside Las Vegas also build custom bikes. The Big House Customs website touts the tongue-in-cheek slogan "We have the time to do it right." If that wasn't enough to get customers interested, every Big House Chopper incorporates actual prison bars into the designs, and inmates sign all of their bikes under the clearcoat.

The program had a similar beginning to Old Max: the shop was already teaching skills like fabrication and welding. The program, which started in 2006, has built four customs to fill customer orders and five more just as shop projects. Two of those have sold, and the other three are for sale "at a huge discount" on eBay, shop supervisor Craig Korsgaard said.

Big House workers are paid minimum wage so the bikes can be sold outside the state. In the Nevada shop, "You are going to learn either to do upholstery work, mechanical work or body work. Or you can sort playing cards for casinos," Korsgaard said.

The motorcycle program has supported up to eight inmates at a time, but right now has just one, he said. The motorcycles, as well as logo polo shirts, T-shirts, hats, bandanas and cups, are sold through the prison's administrative shop in Las Vegas.

The 'local' challenge

RNR Cycles in Sterling, Va., crossed the Rubicon in 2010 when the shop hired a man who served time for (cringe) stealing motorcycles. The shop posted on a local online forum to let the public know they had hired an ex-con: "He did the crime and he's already done the time.



Inmate photo: Getty Images


It was hard time, and he is sorry for what he did. He knows it was wrong and he's trying to get his life back on track," the post said.

RBR co-owner Rick Beggs said the hire lasted about a year and when he left, it wasn't because of his criminal past.

"I didn't hold that against him. Other than that, it seemed like he was OK," said Beggs. "The biggest problem was that he had an ex-wife that publicized everything. I think that might have affected our business. Sometimes you can say any publicity is good publicity. We got a lot of attention from it. I don't know that it hurt us but it definitely did affect us."

One customer remained convinced that the worker had stolen the customer's motorcycle before he was arrested. "He thinks they stole his old wreck motorcycle, but those guys only stole new motorcycles," Beggs said.

Beggs heard about government incentives for hiring ex-cons, but never took advantage of them.

"I don't think that I made a mistake in hiring him," Beggs said, adding that any problem "wasn't because we hired an ex-con, it was because it was local." 

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Treat your best customers best

ARE YOUR PRIORITIES MISPLACED WHEN IT COMES TO SERVICE WORK?

THERE'S A SAYING I created a while back that relates to how we communicate with our customers, prioritize their needs and use their feedback to improve our business: "Treat all customers well —treat your best customers the best." In your shop I'll bet you can name the best and worst customers you've done business with over the last couple of years. Chances are good that you've bent over backwards to appease the "squeaky wheels" who criticize and complain about every little issue. Chances are also good that you've leaned on your best customers when you needed a favor, such as pushing their work off to complete the work of others.

But is placing our best customers lower on our list of priorities really the best way to serve them? No.

Back of the line

I recently received an email from Logan Harvey, service manager at **Antelope Valley Harley-Davidson** in Southern California, who recently attended one of my service operations classes. Among the many processes and procedures discussed in the three-day course was the art of prioritizing service work when creating a daily schedule. We start the section by using class input to list all of the different types of work that the service department manages: boss's friends, comebacks, demo vehicles, first services, fleet vehicles, new vehicle setup and PDI, pre-accessorization of floor stock, pre-owned refurbishment, rental vehicles, travelers, vehicles waiting on parts, walk-ins, warranty repairs, wreck repairs ... and that's just a short list.

A busy shop will manage the workflow of these different types of customers in the span of only a week. But which take top priority? One could argue that new vehicle PDIs need to get done first, because if they're not on the floor the dealership may miss a sale, and selling motorcycles is the most important goal of the dealership. In that regard, pre-owned refurbis-

would follow as a close second. OK, but what about warranty repairs and first services? Aren't those the type of work that determines if the new owner's relationship remains on a positive note? Of course. And then there are fleet vehicles. For many dealerships, the police and corporate-owned vehicles they service are a top priority. When compared to other customers, fleet vehicles represent the greatest service revenue stream. Shouldn't they get top priority?

It's interesting to do this section in the course. Interestingly, no one has ever identified "best customers"

still been able to do same day service on the travelers. I never thought that would happen, but I can't complain."

Your best customers make or break the dealership. They provide the consistent revenue that keeps the lights on and that grows the business by perpetuating your positive reputation. Wouldn't it be a good idea to move your best customers to the top of the list? After all, the traveler may never set foot in your store again. Sure, they may write something nice for your Facebook page, but realistically for most dealerships, if you never served

Best customers never seem to make the top priority list, but travelers do.

as a top priority. Best customers are those who have purchased multiple vehicles from you, get all of their parts and service at your dealership, are understanding when there's a hiccup on getting the work done correctly or on time, and have referred friends and family to your dealership.

Best customers never seem to make the top priority list, but what does make the list every time, usually voted into the top five, are travelers. There are hundreds of incredibly generous stories about how dealers and independent operators have stopped every other task and driven great distances to pick up a broken-down traveler and stayed late to get them back on the road as quickly as possible. It is the unwritten law to take care of travelers at just about any cost.

But what if the cost is to impo- sition your best customers?

Harvey found a way to treat his best customers the best and still serve the needs of travelers. "I have been pushing travelers back to get our big spenders and routine customers done first," he said. "This worked great. It seemed to light a fire for my higher level techs to push through our work to make sure the traveler gets done also. And we have

a traveler again with VIP treatment, it would not make or break your business.

My new saying is, "business first, big brother second." As a motorcyclist, I want to be taken care of as quickly as possible if I'm broke down during a vacation. As a businessman, I understand that dealerships need to take care of business first if they want their business to thrive. That means taking care of those who take care of you: your best customers, who will appreciate the attention and spread the good word in your community. That, in turn, will grow your business and make life a little easier. And you can still take care of travelers, as noted by Logan's mode of operation.

Consider this the next time you have a moment with a best customer. Thank them for their friendship, their business and their referrals. Ask why he or she likes doing business with you. That will tell you what's most important and should be continued. Then ask the million-dollar question, "How can we make your experience even better?" The answers to that question will give you direction on the things you could do to attract and retain more best customers. ①



Lucky dealer. In addition to meeting racer Valerie Thompson, Buck Motorsports' Lisa Buchanan of Greencastle, Ind., won a Coats tire changer in a drawing held during December's Dealer Expo. The drawing was hosted by The Carlson Company, which distributes Coats products.

SpeedMob adds Core Moto, LynxHooks

RICHMOND, Calif. – Core Moto brake lines and LynxHooks interlocking tie-down systems are now being distributed through SpeedMob.

LynxHooks was conceived by four partners who wanted a better solution than standard tie-down and bungee cord configurations. The LynxHooks are adjustable, flexible straps with a unique interlocking hook system that allows customers to add straps to build a larger tie-down "platform."

The Core Moto line, created by Luke McCracken, is the first offered by SpeedMob for off-road vehicles. SpeedMob's Tim Calhoun said street offerings will be available in spring.

RECALL UPDATE

Harley-Davidson recalls 19,000 Dyna, Softail models. Threads for the brake line banjo bolt in the front brake master cylinder may corrode.

KTM recalls 36 Huskys. Piston rod could loosen and detach from the fork cap on the 2015 Husqvarna FE 350, 351S and FE 501S.

➔ For more info on recalls, visit Dealernews.com > Dealer Operations > Service > Repairs

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blog.dealernews.com/rodstuckey

A former dealer principal, Rod Stuckey is the founder and president of Dealership University and PowersportsMarketing.com

Winning formula

SMALL, SMART CHOICES AND CONSISTENCY OVER TIME = NET GROWTH

GETTING FIT IS a process, not an event. Doesn't it sound ridiculous to say, "I went to the gym and worked out once, so now I'm in shape?"

Yet all too often I see dealers making this same mistake with their training and marketing. Having a one-and-done sales meeting or a single marketing event and expecting continuous improvement is just as silly as eating fruits and vegetables one day and expecting to lose 15 pounds.

In his book, "The Compound Effect," author Darren Hardy does an amazing job of illustrating how small, smart choices + consistency + time = RADICAL DIFFERENCE. And this is exactly what is required to maximize the performance and profitability of your dealership.

If you were given a choice between taking a \$3 million cash payout right now, or a single penny that doubles in value daily for the next 31 days, which would you take? If you've ever heard the story of the magic penny then you know that after 31 days the penny is worth a whopping \$10,737,418.24. So why is it so hard to believe choosing the penny is the smart decision? Because it takes calculation, planning and time to see the payoff.

Three dealer example

Let's look at three dealerships in different market areas, with similar population and demographics, carrying the same brands. Each dealership has been in business for about 10 years and has a new owner. And let's say at the time of the buyout, each store does \$5 million in annual sales and puts 3 percent to the bottom line.

We'll call the first owner Average Al. After taking over the store he pretty much gets trained on how the business works by the current employees and decides to leave good enough alone. Al is pretty content with business "as is" and, for the most part, is a pleasant guy. He watches the news and reads the

papers regularly, which occasionally leads to him complaining about how much the market, the weather and the economy affect business.

Owner number two is Motivated Mike. After taking over his store, Mike starts making small, seemingly inconsequential positive changes. He begins reading Dealernews in print and online, then attends the Dealer Expo industry trade show and goes to all of

to focus on how to cut expenses. If you charted the three dealers' financial performance at this point, there would be virtually no difference.

After six months, and with minimal operational changes, Al is trending right on track to hit the \$5 million mark. Mike has been working diligently on installing the nine-step sales process through weekly sales meetings and has developed a marketing plan which

Having a one-and-done sales meeting or a single marketing event and expecting continuous improvement is just as silly as eating fruits and vegetables one day and expecting to lose 15 pounds.

the seminars. At the show, he meets a presenter who invites him to a 20 group meeting and he accepts. At the 20 group meeting he learns the importance of a sales and marketing process as well as benchmark statistics that he should strive for to maximize his store's financial performance. Thirsty for more knowledge, Mike starts reading business books on a regular basis.

Owner number three is Lame Larry. After taking over the store Larry starts making some poor choices. He decides that the best way to increase profitability is to lower expenses, and the best way to accomplish this is to cut payroll and advertising. Over time Larry's perspective becomes, "Why should I hire people to do work I can do myself," and "Why should I advertise when none of it works, anyway?"

At the end of the first three months, there aren't major differences in the performance of Al, Mike, or Larry's stores. Al continues to rock along, hoping the economy will improve after the next election. Mike continues his studies, reading a little each night before going to bed and listening to audio books on his commute. Larry continues

focuses on targeting his database and those in his market area who ride but haven't done business with him. He's started to see a slight uptick in business and is now projecting to do \$5.25 million, a modest 5 percent growth. Larry is lagging behind a little as sales have dropped off slightly, but he plans to make up for it due to his reduced expense. He's trending to do \$4.9 million.

At the end of 12 months a small but noticeable difference is taking place among the three. And at 18 months, the financial statements are starting to look significantly different. But it's not until month 24 that changes are drastic. Al is still doing \$5 million, with a net profit of about \$150,000. Mike has grown to a \$6 million store and is now putting 8 percent to the bottom line (nearly \$500,000). Larry is working himself to death and continues to shrink sales, and is now down to \$4.5 million with still only the 3 percent net (\$135K).

Whether diet and exercise or your dealership's business, it's the small, smart choices + consistency + time that separate the high performers from the average and the lame. **1**



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CHANGING OF THE GUARD AT CYCLE GEAR

New owners, newly promoted president as Bertram steps back

BOSTON, Mass. - J.W. Childs Associates LP, a Boston-based private equity firm, announced in early January that it acquired a majority share of **Cycle Gear Inc.** from Harvest Partners LP as Cycle Gear's founding chairman retires from day-to-day management. Financial terms were not disclosed.

William E. Watts, partner at J.W. Childs, is now chairman of Cycle Gear. Dave Bertram, founding chairman who grew the company from four locations in the San Francisco Bay Area back in the early 1980s to becoming a publicly-held network of 112 retail locations in 34 states, will remain on Cycle Gear's board of directors.

Tracy Wan, chief operating officer at Benecia, Calif.-based Cycle Gear since 2009, was promoted to president; she joins the board of directors and assumes executive management of the company.

In connection with the acquisition by J.W. Childs, Joseph Fortunato, CEO of GNC from 2005 to 2014, joins the Cycle Gear board as lead director and consultant. Peter Laughton, longtime director of Cycle Gear, will remain on the board, according to the announcement.

"Tracy has played a key role in Cycle Gear's recent success and I look forward to working



directly with her and the senior management team to further extend the company's leadership position," Fortunato said.

"Partnering with an experienced investment firm like J.W. Childs is a logical next step in the evolution of Cycle Gear," Bertram said. "I'm confident that under their stewardship we will accelerate the company's growth.

"It's been an honor working with an incredible team of passionate motorcyclists and retail professionals to grow Cycle Gear into a dominant force in the motorcycle industry," Bertram continued.

"Cycle Gear has the leading omnichannel footprint in the motorcycle accessories category and we see significant market opportunity for the company," said Watts.

J.W. Childs specializes in leveraged buyouts and recapitalizations of middle-market growth firms. Its portfolio of investments includes The Tile Shop, NutraSweet and Sunny Delight Beverages Co.

Lightspeed EVO 6.1 gets users out from behind the counter

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah - CDK Global Recreation's latest LightspeedEVO version, 6.1, gives users new features and functions to improve efficiency and profitability within multiple areas of a dealership.

VIN decoding allows dealers to type in a VIN and have the year, make and model populate automatically. This feature speeds up data entry and eliminates data entry errors on units in the parts, service and sales modules.

Another new feature is Service in Progress, which allows dealers to add color coding, giving technicians a better view of job types, complexity, assigned technician and length of time needed.

In addition, dealers can enter curtailment fees on specific units as well as set terms for the payment.

The mobile app for iOS and Android was upgraded to allow for more dealer functions to be performed away from the counter.

Dealers can now perform a service check-in from anywhere including the parking lot, boat dock or roadside.

The app also allows for customer lookup, service scheduling, photo uploads, and can even capture the customer's signature directly on the screen.

Slingshot is not a motorcycle, state tells Polaris



WETHERSFIELD, Conn. - When is a motorcycle not a motorcycle? When it's a Polaris Slingshot, according to Connecticut motor vehicle officials.

Polaris executives failed to convince the agency to allow its sale and registration in Connecticut. The DMV reaffirmed an earlier ruling that the reverse trike cannot be classified or registered as a motorcycle.

"It is the consensus of the DMV that this vehicle closely resembles an automobile in appearance, and is equipped (brake, clutch, accelerator, steering wheel, four cylinder engine, seatbelt, gear shifter, etc.) and handles like an automobile rather than a motorcycle," DMV senior attorney Sharon Geanuracos said in a December letter to Polaris.

The state is urging Polaris to approach legislators about creating a new classification for three-wheelers.

VISIONARY MOTORSPORTS IN RECEIVERSHIP

Vehicle brands maneuver to find new distributors in Canada

EDMONTON, Alberta – Canadian distributor Visionary Motorsports Ltd. is in receivership and appears headed for liquidation.

Deloitte Restructuring took over as receiver for the company with court approval Dec. 19. Deloitte did not immediately return calls seeking comment, and Dealernews has been unable to reach Visionary Motorsports' director of business development, Neil Vanderkooi.

Visionary had billed itself as "Canada's largest independent motorsports distributor, selling multiple brands—Pitster Pro, Linhai, Cleveland Cyclewerks, Kipor and Hisun—nationwide." The company claimed dealer base of about 190, and Vanderkooi said in a news release in late 2012 that the company was expanding rapidly.

Cleveland Cyclewerks wasted no time finding a new distributor but said Visionary's decline came as a surprise. "They [Visionary] kept it pretty quiet for us. We didn't really get any feeling until a few weeks ago," said Cleveland Cyclewerks' co-founder Scott Colosimo. "We were just getting ready for a huge launch with them. We have to redo all the CMMVSS testing."

The boutique manufacturer has since signed a deal with GVA Brands Corp. of Richmond, B.C., which should be welcome news for Canadian dealers. "We've had about 85 calls from dealers freaking out in Canada. They don't know what they are going to do now," Colosimo said. "Some are current and some planned to sign up through Visionary."

Representatives from GVA are contacting existing dealers in Canada to address any support issues. In the interim, they may contact GVA by phone at 877-274-0480, or by email at info@gvabrands.com.

Visionary's listed creditors include the Canada Revenue Agency, GE Capital Commercial Distribution Finance (CDF) Canada, HSBC Bank Canada, John Deere Credit, MC Motorsports Canada, National Leasing Group, Rockford Capital Inc., and a handful of office services companies. —*Holly Wagner*



You can view the receivership order and related documentation on Dealernews.com:searchterm=Visionary

> ALSO...

FLORENCE, Ky. – Boogey Lights claims its new app is the first Bluetooth 4.0-compatible remote control that allows owners to create unique light color combinations on their vehicles, all managed from his or her smartphone. (Dealernews.com searchterm=Boogey)

TRUCKEE, Calif. – Aegis Specialty Insurance Services has partnered with California dealers to create a powersports offering that combines extended service contracts, road hazard protection, priority maintenance and insurance. Contracts will be backed by Aegis Security Insurance Co.

HOLLISTER, Calif. – The City of Hollister in January said it was seeking a new rally promoter, hopefully with enough time to put together an event still this year. The rally is traditionally held over Independence Day weekend in July.

“Now it seems to be mostly helmeted, faceless heads on bikes that are way above most people's skill level.”

— Mike Vaughan on consumer advertising and why “no one is selling fun anymore.”



Read more 'Out of My Mind' musings at Mike's blog: blog.dealernews.com/MikeVaughan



CALIFORNIA – A new sales contract form is available to all California motorcycle dealers from forms supplier Reynolds and Reynolds, the California Motorcycle Dealer Association reported. "This contract will better fit writing

up sales where the customer pays by cash, credit card or other means not involving a dealer's installment sale or conditional sale contract," CMDA said. For more information on the new Vehicle Sales Contract (With Arbitration Provision) LAW CA-ARB-BOS 11/14, contact Donna Faber at 800-767-0245 or at donna.faber@reyrey.com

GEORGIA – BMW Motorrad USA has added a new dealer: **BMW Motorcycles of McDonough**. The location is also home to Cycle Nation of McDonough.

MICHIGAN – **Bright Power Sports**, a Polaris/Kawasaki/Yamaha dealer in Lincoln Park, will put a new shine on an old shop, opening a

second location at the former Nicholson's in Ann Arbor. Nicholson's was sold to Coast-to-Coast Powersports in 2006; Coast-to-Coast in turn sold the property and building to Bright in 2014.

MISSOURI – Charges were filed against three suspects in connection with December burglaries at **Hideout Harley-Davidson and PowerSports of Joplin**.

NORTH CAROLINA – **The Bike Exchange** and **BX Custom Designs** in Gastonia have moved into larger quarters, and are adding parts and gear/apparel lines. "Not everybody can come in here and drop \$30,000 on a new bike, but just about everyone can order that new set of \$100 grips they're looking for," co-owner Steve Hardy told The Gaston Gazette.

TEXAS – The folks at **Longhorn Harley-Davidson** in Grand Prairie came to the rescue in December after a toy run organization's former treasurer was arrested for using more than \$70,000 in funds to make personal purchases. Longhorn H-D took over the ride, now called the Texas Toy Run, which reportedly went off without a hitch Dec. 14.

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from THE ARCHIVES



You'd expect to see the "inter-gluteal cleft" front and center in a parody ad for, say, an appliance repair service, but for way-cooler motorcycle mechanics? Say it ain't so! An amusing ad from Custom Chrome in the May 1996 issue of Dealernews.

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by THE NUMBERS

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26,112 (29,960)



THE TOUR SO FAR

Attendance results from the Progressive International Motorcycle Show tour stops October through December. 2014-15 attendance (vs. 2013-14)



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
(San Mateo)
28,462 (29,960)



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
(Long Beach)
57,253 (54,527)

PHOENIX, AZ
(Scottsdale)
19,562 (24,938)



NEW YORK, NY
63,515 (58,811)

Results from the first quarter shows (Washington, D.C., Miami, Fla., Dallas, Texas, Cleveland, Ohio, Minneapolis, Minn., and Chicago, Ill.) and entire season analysis will be available in the April issue and on Dealernews.com in March.

LEADING THE PACK: BIKES OF INTEREST

Top three vehicle types selected by Progressive International Motorcycle Show attendees in California (two shows), Phoenix, Seattle and New York who had previously indicated they were planning on purchasing a new vehicle within the next six months. Sportbike, cruiser and adventure/dual placed 1, 2 and 3 in each market. Full tour data will be published in the April issue and on Dealernews.com in March.



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MOTORCYCLE INJURY, FATALITY RATES DROP, REPORTS NHTSA

MOTORCYCLE fatalities dropped 6.4 percent in 2013, the first decrease since 2009 and the only other decrease since 1997, reported the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration in December. More than half of the decline was attributed to a drop in older-rider fatalities: 190 fewer in the 50-to-69-year age group in 2013 than in 2012. NHTSA also reported that the combined states without universal helmet laws reported 11 times as many "unhelmeted" motorcyclist fatalities than the group of states with universal laws (1,704 vs. 150, respectively).

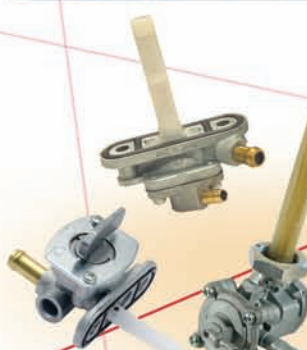
Motorcycle-related deaths accounted for 14.3 percent of all traffic deaths in 2013, down from 14.8 percent in 2012.

Motorcycle riders showed the greatest decrease in the number of alcohol-impaired "drivers" involved in fatal crashes from 2012 to 2013, dropping 8.3 percent, according to NHTSA. "This was both the greatest percentage drop and the greatest drop in actual alcohol-impaired drivers [among all vehicle classifications]," NHTSA reported. The study covers passenger vehicles, trucks and other transportation in addition to motorcycles. (Source: NHTSA)

	2013	2012	2011
Motorcyclist fatalities (U.S. nationwide)	4,668	4,986	4,630
Unhelmeted fatalities	1,854	2,039	1,852
Injuries	88,888	93,000	81,000
Registered motorcycles	not available	8,454,939	8,437,502
Vehicle miles of travel	not available	21.298 million	18.542 million

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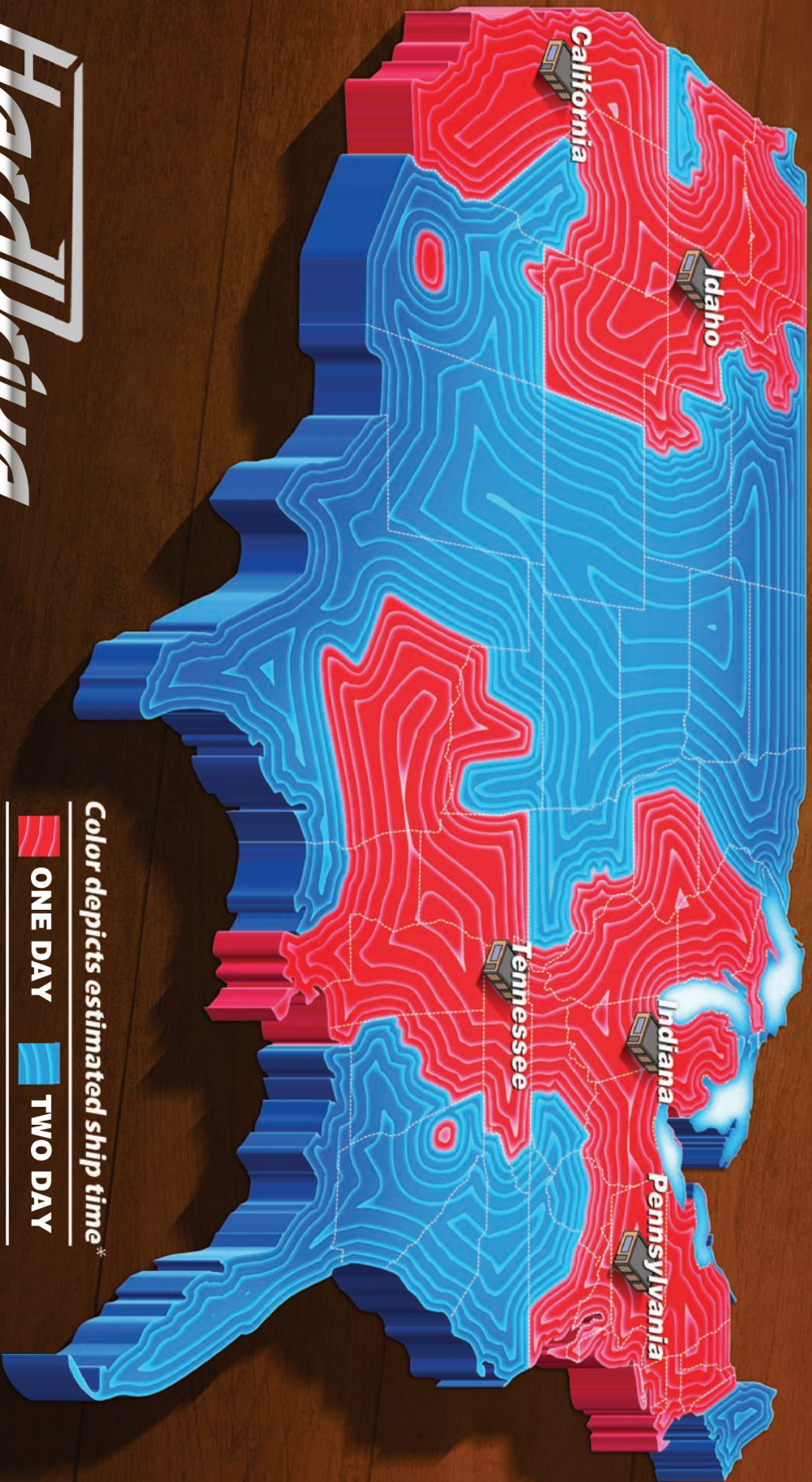
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