The Parts Department Is Carrying More Profit Than You Think

Most RV dealerships treat parts as a support function, not a profit driver. In a recent webinar, dealership expert Kevin Gribble breaks down how the best dealers close that gap by running parts with the same discipline as sales.

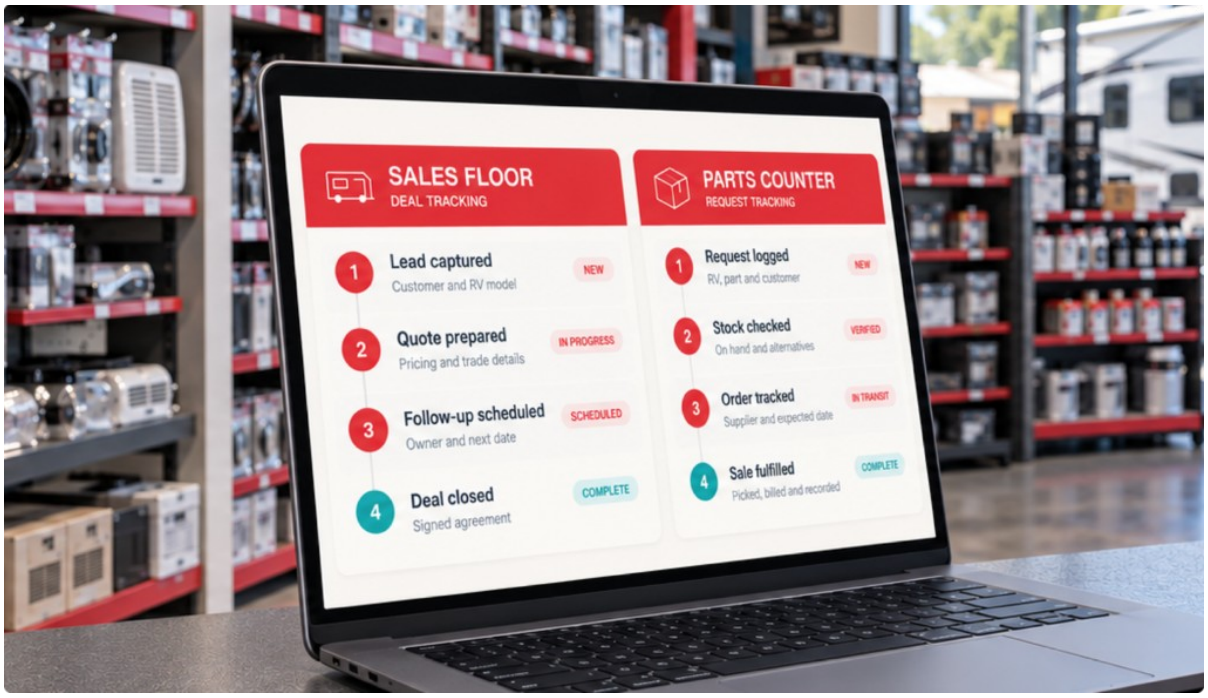


The department is usually judged on whether it kept service moving, not on what it earned on its own. That framing hides a real profit center. A parts department that orders well, sells well and tracks its own numbers can carry margin that most dealerships are not currently measuring.

Run Parts With the Same Discipline as Sales

Sales teams track pipeline and margin by deal. Gribble's session makes the case that parts deserve the same treatment: real-time inventory and seasonal ordering thresholds set ahead of the busy season, instead of restocking by guesswork.

In practice, that starts with visibility. A manager who can see live counts, incoming shipments, and seasonal demand patterns can set reorder points instead of reacting to an empty shelf. Setting those thresholds before the busy season starts, rather than adjusting mid-season, is what separates a department that runs ahead of demand from one that is always catching up.



Cut Duplicate Orders & Slow-Moving Stock

Duplicate and emergency orders erode margin. Slow-moving parts tie up capital that could be used elsewhere. The webinar covers both as fixable operational problems, not fixed costs of running a parts department.

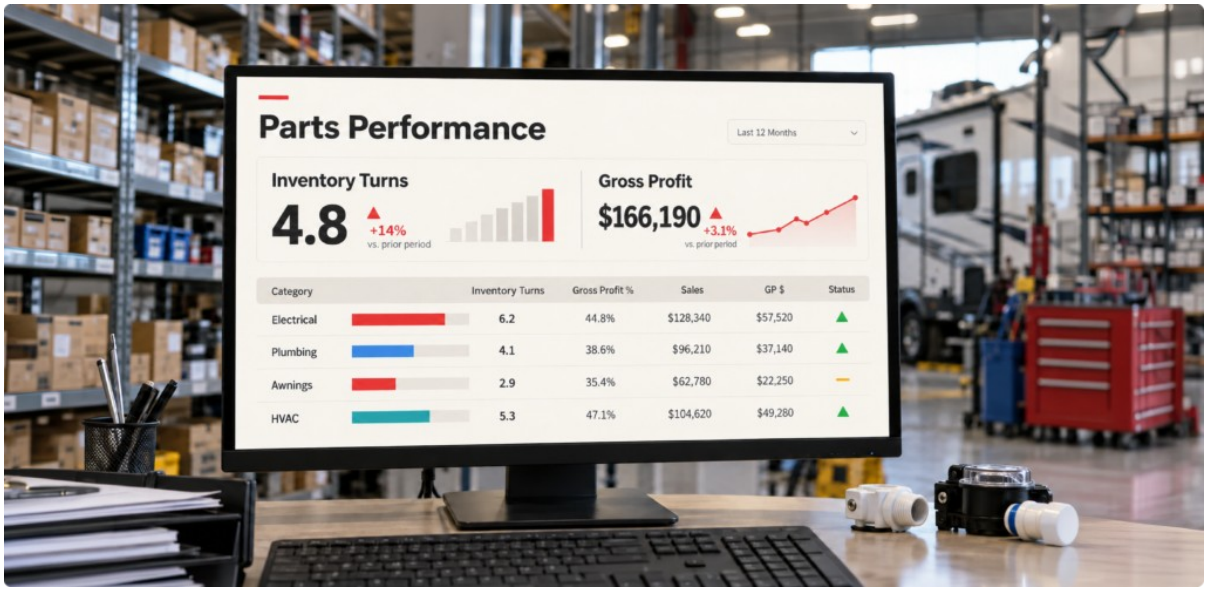
A duplicate order usually happens because nobody had a clear, current view of what was already on the shelf or already inbound, so the same part gets ordered twice, once on regular terms and once rushed to cover a job. Slow-moving stock is the mirror problem: parts that seemed reasonable to stock stay on the shelf long after the vehicles they fit stop coming in for service, quietly tying up cash that could go toward parts that actually turn.



Track Turnover Like You Track Gross Profit

Most dealers watch gross profit closely. Fewer track parts turnover with the same regularity. Gribble recommends tracking turnover the same way you track gross, so problems surface early instead of at year end.

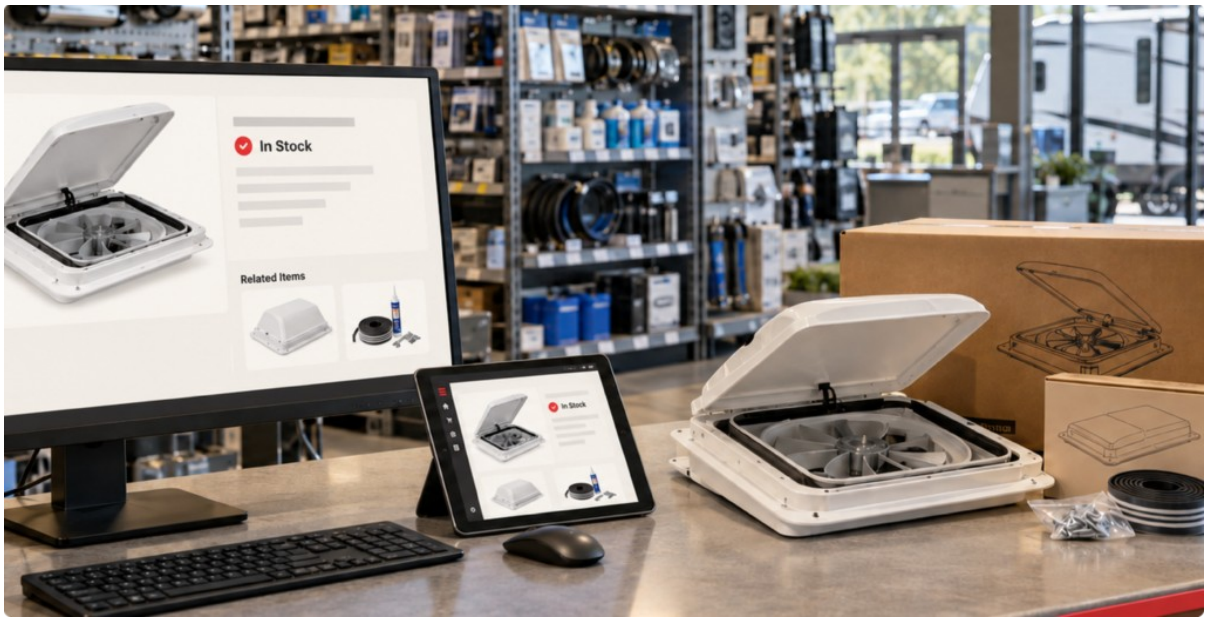
Turnover by category tells a manager which parts are earning their shelf space and which are not, the same way a sales manager tracks which models are moving and which are sitting on the lot. Without that view, a department can look profitable overall while individual categories quietly lose margin.



Give the Counter Team Room to Upsell

A counter team that can only fulfill requests is leaving sales on the table. With real-time visibility into stock, staff can upsell instead of just filling orders.

That means showing the counter person not just what is in stock, but what commonly pairs with it, so a routine part request can turn into a slightly larger, still relevant sale instead of a missed opportunity because nobody had the information on hand.



The Bottom Line

None of this requires a bigger department or a bigger budget. It requires running the one you have with real-time inventory, tracked turnover and a counter team equipped to sell.

The dealers Kevin Gribble describes as getting this right did not add headcount or expand their footprint. They changed how the existing team orders, measures, and sells, and started holding parts accountable for its own numbers instead of treating it as a cost center that just supports everything else.

Watch On-Demand