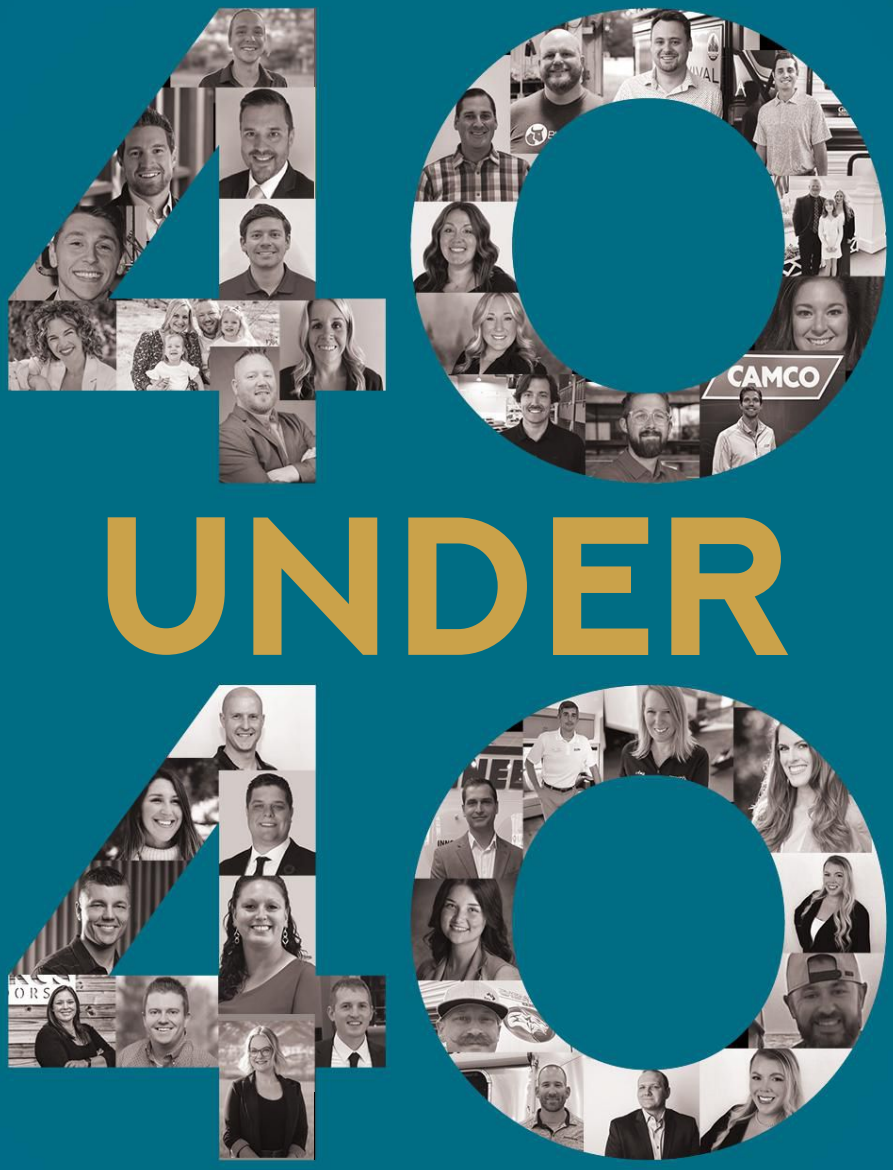
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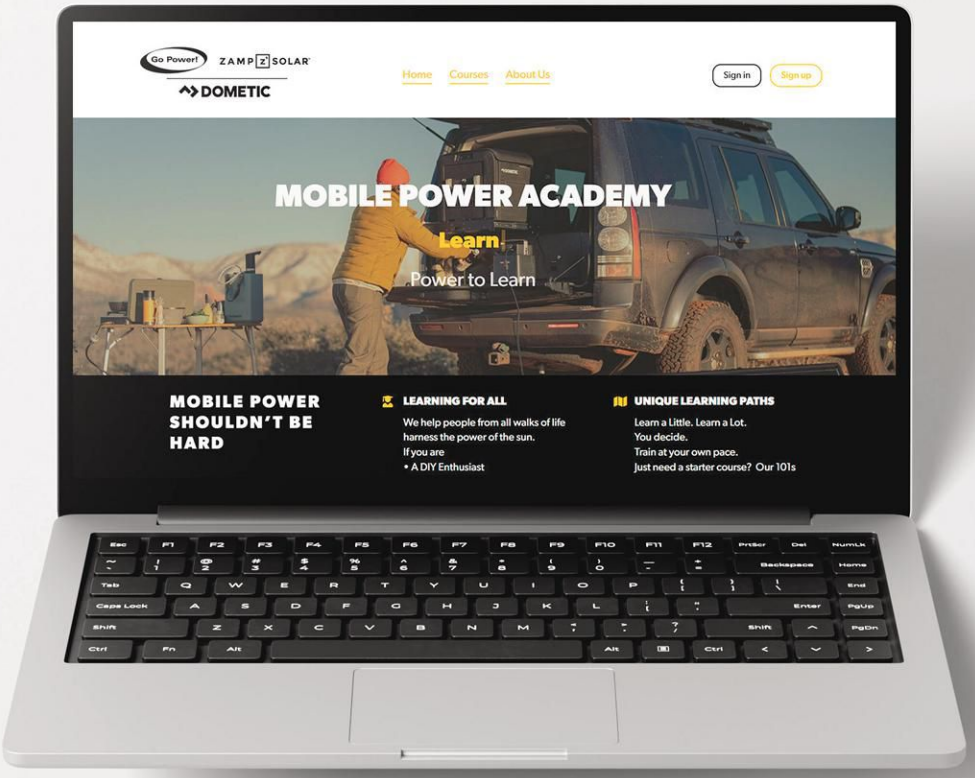
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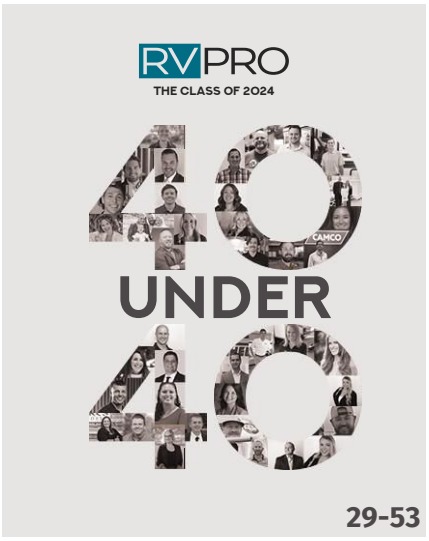
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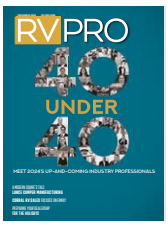
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CERTIFIED AUDIENCE

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Managing Editor
Jordan Benschop

Dear Readers,

The colder months have officially settled in. If you were at Open House this September, the shift in both weather and product development was evident — read more about the event's debuts at rv-pro.com.

With the changing leaves and advent of the holidays, the RV PRO team is celebrating a few exciting updates.

First and foremost, it is our privilege to spotlight the industry's avant-garde leadership through our fifth annual 40 Under 40 recognition. Over 130 nominations for this year's class have again left us humbled by our community's vibrant spirit of innovation and initiative. From young company founders to behind-the-scenes drivers, the Class of 2024 has no shortage of success stories, with origins as different as they are remarkable. Read about an X Games gold medalist gone off-grid aficionado, a 21-year-old marketing guru and much more — including their advice for emerging leaders — starting on page 29. This year's feature includes a nod to the heartfelt resilience of Midway RV Center and the family of Kyle Walcott, who is recognized posthumously as this year's 41st honoree.

Additionally, and on par with fresh perspectives, our team is thrilled to announce the formation of our inaugural Editorial Advisory Board (EAB). These 17 esteemed industry experts — introduced starting on page 10 — will help guide RV PRO's editors on topics that matter most to our readers. The goal is to better understand widespread challenges and changes. Insights from EAB members will be invaluable in our commitment to fostering dialogue and collaboration within the RV sector. RV PRO is always seeking ways to connect with thought leaders and boost our content's ability to be useful, informative and sharp.

And that's not all, folks! Read about Lance Camper Manufacturing's latest truck camper ventures on page 22, Corral RV Sales' customers that "are more like family" on page 18, and more business acumen thereafter.

Looking ahead, I invite you to engage with us. Share your thoughts on what you'd like to hear from our EAB, what up-and-coming leadership looks like at your company, and how RV PRO can better serve you.

Thank you for being a part of our journey!



The RV PRO ladies at the RV Women's Alliance breakfast event during Open House

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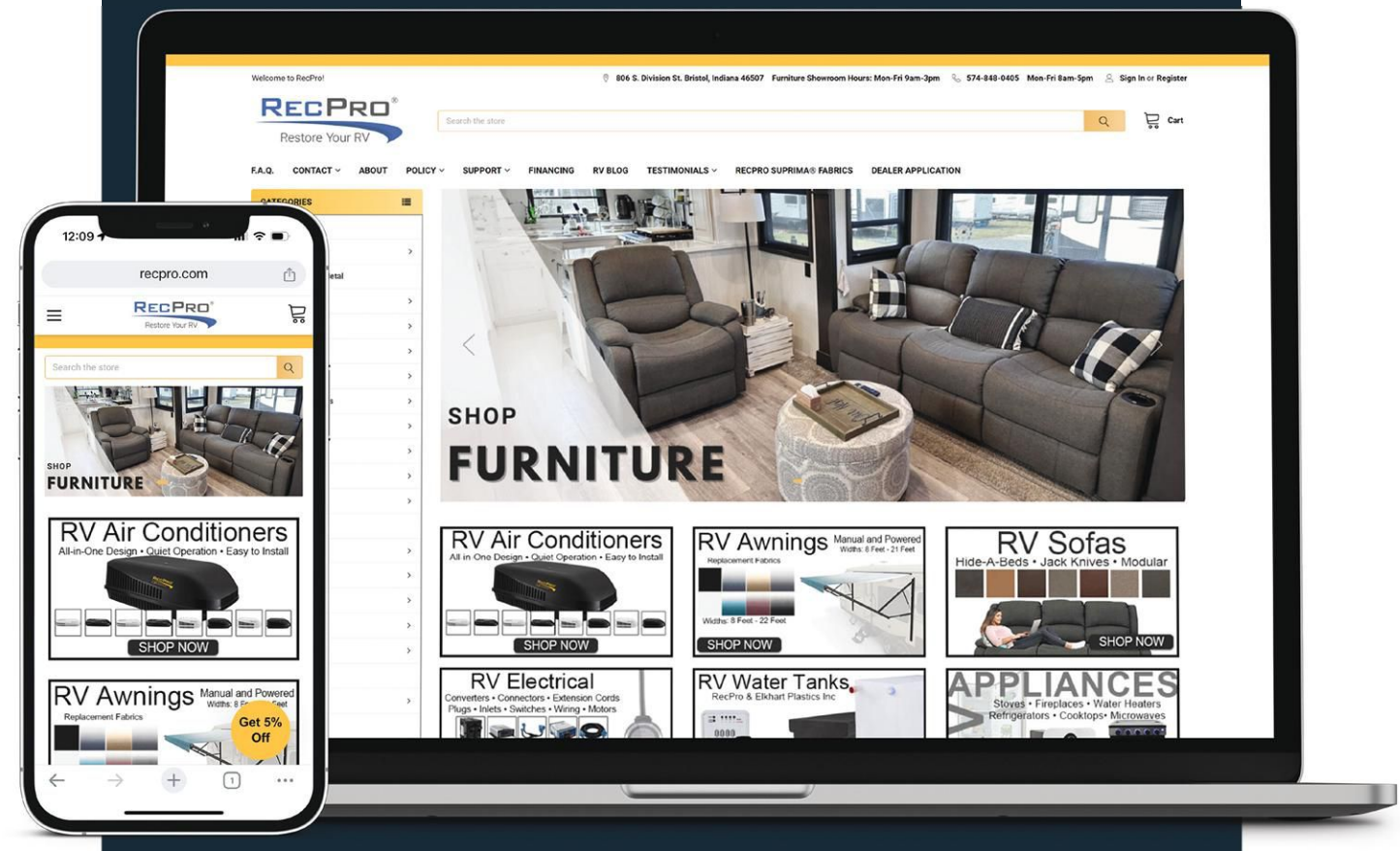
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RVIA Unveils Election Results for 2025 Board of Directors

Voting for the 2025 RV Industry Association (RVIA) board of directors election closed in September, and the final results are in.

Official representatives from member companies cast their votes during the Sept. 3-23 balloting for the three open seats announced in August. From that pool, the successful candidates for two RV Manufacturer seats and one Supplier seat have been elected.

"Please join us in congratulating the elected members of the RV Industry Association's Board of Directors. We are excited to welcome these exceptional industry leaders to a three-year term, set to begin Jan. 1, 2025," the association said. Elected officials below:



Supplier: Mary Pouliot, executive vice president of the Americas for Thetford



RV Manufacturer: Coley Brady, co-founder and CEO of Alliance RV



RV Manufacturer: Geneva Long, founder and CEO of Bowlus

The board of directors is the highest level of authority in the association's organizational structure and is responsible for setting and overseeing strategy and policy related to critical topics such as standards, marketing, government affairs, events, industry education and association finances. The new 2025 board will hold an organizational meeting to elect officers for the next year following the board of directors meeting taking place during the RV Dealers Association (RVDA) Convention in November.

Grand Design Appoints Matt Eppers as Serenova Product Manager



Grand Design RV announced the appointment of Matt Eppers as the new product manager for the Serenova product line, a significant addition to the company's expanding portfolio.

Eppers, who has successfully managed the Transcend line — another popular travel trailer series within Grand Design — will now oversee both Transcend and Serenova moving forward, bringing his innovation and customer-driven vision to an entirely new market segment.

The Serenova product represents a bold new direction for Grand Design, the company said, offering a lightweight, single-axle, narrow-body travel trailer that combines innovative features with unmatched towability. Designed with versatility and ease of use in mind, the Serenova product line brings premium quality to RVers looking for a more compact yet fully equipped travel trailer, Grand Design said.

Eppers, who has already made a name for himself in the industry with his hands-on leadership and deep understanding of RV consumer needs, is excited to take on this new challenge.

"I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to lead the Serenova product line and bring an entirely new segment to Grand Design's customers," said Eppers. "My vision for Serenova is to deliver something that's not just a trailer — it's a lifestyle solution. I am more than thrilled to offer campers an exciting, innovative and quality-built solution to their recreational vehicle needs. With Serenova, we're offering numerous features, towability and lifestyle content that have never been available at this size and weight in our portfolio."

Tony Lizzi, general manager of the Reflection, Imagine, Transcend and Serenova product lines, emphasized Eppers' leadership and future-focused vision for Serenova.

"Matt's expertise and commitment to delivering innovative, customer-focused solutions make him an ideal fit to lead the Serenova line. His passion for quality and his forward-thinking approach ensure that Serenova will continue to set new standards for what a compact travel trailer can be. We're excited to see the positive impact he will have on both the product and the overall customer experience."

Eppers' leadership will focus on delivering a travel trailer that meets the needs of a diverse range of RVers, from first-time owners to seasoned adventurers. The Serenova line is ready to break new ground by combining advanced features typically found in larger models with a compact design that ensures ease of towing and superior functionality, the company said.

Eppers' appointment as product manager for Serenova marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter, with a strong emphasis on quality, customer satisfaction and the creation of innovative travel trailer experiences.

Eppers was also named to RV PRO's 40 Under 40 Class of 2024.

'Fore the Kids' Golf Tournament Raises $20K for Care Camps Foundation

Kampgrounds of America (KOA) held its third annual Fore the Kids Golf Tournament, a fundraising event to support the Care Camps Foundation. The event, which took place at The Briarwood Golf Club in Billings, Montana, raised $20,000 for the foundation.

The Care Camps Foundation is a national nonprofit organization that funds medically supervised pediatric oncology camps across North America. The amount raised during the golf tournament will go to support sending children and their families affected by cancer to summer camps staffed with medical professionals and camp counselors, allowing an opportunity for kids to experience the outdoors.

"KOA is a proud supporter of the Care Camps Foundation," said Toby O'Rourke, KOA's president and CEO. "KOA's mission, to connect people to the outdoors and each other, aligns seamlessly with Care Camps' mission to create opportunities for healing, hope and connection in the outdoors for children experiencing cancer."

The third annual event hosted 30 teams from across the country. Participants traveled from as far away as Indianapolis, Indiana, and San Diego, California, to take part in the event. Unlike traditional golf tournaments, Fore the Kids incorporates interactive activities designed to provide a camping experience while on the course; activities included a cornhole contest, water gun races and relay tic-tac-toe.

"We heard from so many participants that this tournament has become one they look forward to every year," said O'Rourke. "It is great to bring so many partners, volunteers and supporters together for a fun and meaningful event."

The Care Camps Foundation board and staff were also on-site during the event to promote and thank attendees. George Laufenberg, the executive director of

Camp Make-A-Dream out of Goldcreek, Montana, was also on-site to provide insight on the significance of KOA's donations to Care Camps.

"Care Camps Foundation is immensely grateful to everyone at KOA and all who participated in and sponsored the Fore the Kids Golf Tournament," said Gwynn Sullivan, Care Camps executive director. "The enthusiastic support and generous donations received from the proceeds will help fulfill KOA's mission of providing transformative camp experiences for children and families navigating a cancer journey."

Lazydays Names Amber Dillard Chief Operating Officer



Lazydays Holdings announced that Amber Dillard, vice president of operations, has been promoted to chief operating officer, reporting to interim CEO Ron Fleming.

Fleming said, "I have worked with Amber for over a decade and am extraordinarily pleased to see her continue to exceed expectations and further extend her contributions to Lazydays. In her new and expanded role, Amber will continue to lead our work with our OEM partners and dealership general managers to drive operational performance and meet the needs of our customers."

Dillard said, "It has been a privilege to continue to grow within the Lazydays organization. Over the last 13 years I have had the pleasure of working across most of the functions in our business and with all of our OEM partners as we adapt to and meet the needs of our customers."

Dillard joined Lazydays in 2011 and has worked across the organization in various capacities including accounting, supply chain, vehicle purchasing, inventory management and dealership operations. Prior to joining Lazydays, Dillard worked in public and nonprofit accounting, with an emphasis in internal audit. Dillard sits on the board of the Lazydays Employee Foundation, which is dedicated to contributing to at-risk children in the communities we serve. She holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Florida State University and furthered her education at the University of South Florida. Additionally, Dillard was named to the inaugural class of the RV Industry Association (RVIA) 40 Under 40 award winners in 2017.

Erwin Hymer Group Reports Record Results

In the 2023/24 fiscal year, THOR Industries achieved a turnover of $10.04 billion with just over 22,000 employees and 186,908 vehicles sold. The Erwin Hymer Group, as a European subsidiary with close to 8,900 employees and 55,317 vehicles sold, contributed $3.36 billion to the total turnover. The company thus achieved the highest turnover in its history and exceeded expectations.

The Erwin Hymer Group was able to increase its market share of new registrations in Europe by adding 3.5% of market share in the first half of 2024. With a total market share of 23.6% EHG is the leading manufacturer of recreational vehicles in Europe and is ranked No. 1 in several categories:

- Total recreational vehicles
- Motorized recreational vehicles
- Camper vans
- Urban campers (manufacturers of recreational vehicles without automotive OEMs)

"Our figures demonstrate the attractiveness of our brands and the high demand for our products. In a challenging market environment, we've succeeded in achieving our ambitious growth targets and significantly increasing our operating profitability," said Alexander Leopold, CEO of Erwin Hymer Group. "This gives us the tailwind we need to implement our strategic goals in the areas of sustainability, innovation and digitalization."

Texan RV Park & Campus Taps New General Manager



The Texan RV Park and Campus, home of the National RV Training Academy (NRVTA), announced the appointment of Heather Bradley as general manager.

Bradley brings a unique blend of leadership, community-building and hospitality skills, honed through years of experience in ministry, to her new role at the park.

After dedicating much of her life to full-time ministry, where she focused on building communities, providing guidance and fostering connections, Bradley has seamlessly transitioned into the world of RV park management, the park said. Her ministry experience has instilled in her an understanding of the importance of creating a welcoming and supportive environment — a skill set that is applicable to managing an RV park where guests seek not only a place to stay but also a sense of belonging.

"Stepping into this role at The Texan RV Park and Campus feels like a natural extension of the work I've done in ministry," Bradley said. "Just as in ministry, where it was important to create a supportive and connected community, my focus here is on building a team that is committed to providing an exceptional experience for our guests and students. We're not just managing an RV park; we're creating a home away from home for people who travel from all over the country."

Bradley's leadership style emphasizes teamwork, cross-training and continuous improvement among the staff, ensuring that every guest feels welcomed and cared for. She understands that, much like a congregation, the RV community thrives on strong relationships and shared experiences. Under her guidance, The Texan RV Park and Campus is poised to become an even more vibrant and connected community, it said.

As Bradley and her husband, Kelly Bradley, NRVTA chief operations officer, embrace the new chapter as empty nesters, she remains passionate about her online social media ministry and podcast, which continue to inspire and connect people. Her dedication to serving others, whether through spiritual guidance or providing a memorable RV experience, remains at the heart of everything she does.

The Texan RV Park and Campus, located in Athens, Texas, is more than just an RV park — it's a hub for RV enthusiasts and home to the National RV Training Academy. With Bradley at the helm, guests and students alike can look forward to a warm, welcoming environment where they can learn, relax and connect.

GOT NEWS? Send your company news items to jbenschop@cahabamedia.com or mmoore@cahabamedia.com.



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Meet RV PRO's Inaugural Editorial Advisory Board

17 RV industry professionals join the board as a resource for editors on technical content, trends, industry insights and more.

BY JENNIFER KING

As a leading resource for the RV industry, RV PRO is always looking for ways to become better connected to experts and thought leaders who can shed light on their particular segment of the industry. With this goal in mind, we created an Editorial Advisory Board including a variety of RV industry professionals who can advise editors on topics such as the global economy's impact on the industry, legislation and regulations, technical advancements, best practices for service and F&I departments, and much more. We hope consulting with the industry's brightest minds will allow us to better understand widespread challenges and boost our ability to bring our readers informative and useful content.

James Ashurst

RV Industry Association – Executive Vice President



Ashurst currently serves as the executive vice president at the RV Industry Association. In this role, he oversees teams leading the association's membership, research, finance, IT, events, communications and marketing efforts — including the RV industry's popular Go RVing campaign. Prior to joining the association, Ashurst served as vice president of communications for Travel Channel, the cable television network now owned by Warner Bros. Discovery, where has oversaw communications strategy, media relations, industry events and campaign executions to support the key programming, brand, marketing, advertising and affiliate sales.

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Chris Barth

Ember Recreational Vehicles – Founder / VP / COO



Barth, known for his trendsetting designs and product innovations, has over 28 years of experience in the RV industry. He began his career working as a supplier to the industry before moving to the OEM side. Since 2009, he has used his innovative and creative skill set in RV sales management and product development to grow market share, continuously challenging the status quo. Throughout his career, Barth has established strong team, supplier and dealer relationships, where he has earned trust and respect for being an industry mover and shaker. He currently serves as vice president and COO of Ember Recreational Vehicles, which he cofounded in 2021.

Susan Carpenter

RV Women's Alliance – President



With over 30-plus years of experience in the RV industry, Carpenter has held key leadership roles in various companies and associations. Since 2019, she has led the aftermarket division at B&B Molders and also serves as the founder and president of the RV Women's Alliance (RVWA).

Paul Choquette

Blue Ox – Vice President of Operations



Choquette is the vice president of operations at Blue Ox and has a background in engineering. An employee with Blue Ox and in the RV industry for 15 years, Choquette enjoys coaching youth sports and spending time in the outdoors with his wife and two kids.

Travis Creech

Rex & Sons RVs – Operations Manager



With over 26 years of experience in the RV industry, Creech is a seasoned operations manager at Rex & Sons RVs, a family-owned and operated RV dealership in Wilmington, North Carolina. Creech says he is passionate about providing quality products and services to his customers, ensuring their satisfaction and loyalty. Creech is a certified RV technician from the RV Technical Institute (RVTI), serves as president of the North Carolina RV Dealers Association (NCRVDA) and serves on the board of directors for the national RV Dealers Association (RVDA).

Earl B. Hunter, Jr.

Black Folks Camp Too – President



A seasoned outdoor industry executive focused on ROI, Hunter launched Black Folks Camp Too to help the outdoor industry invite and welcome more consumers to the lifestyle while increasing unity in the outdoor community and beyond.

Jeffrey Hunter

Storyteller Overland – Founder / CEO / Chairman



Hunter launched Storyteller Overland LLC in 2018. Previously, he served as CEO of McSweeney Designs LLC from 2012-2018, focusing on product innovation and business development in luxury automotive manufacturing. His leadership centers on teamwork, creativity, customer experiences and community engagement. Hunter and Storyteller have been members of the RVIA since 2018, and he introduced the innovative MODE Adventure Van lineup to the world at the RVX event in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 2019. Beyond his professional endeavors, Hunter lives in Helena, Alabama, with his wife, Lisa, and their three children. In his free time, he enjoys playing guitar and embarking on his own off-grid adventures with family and friends in his Storyteller MODE van.

Jennifer C. Johnson

RV Park Management – Southeast Regional Manager
Florida RV Trade Association 2024/2025 Region 7 Treasure



As a native of Key West, Florida, with four children and a fulfilling marriage, Johnson's career in the RV industry spans over 15 years, starting at Monaco Coach Corporation in 2008. In 2020, Johnson transitioned into the campground sector where she collaborates with the Florida RV Parks and Campground Association and holds the officer position as Region 7 treasurer for the Florida RV Trade Association (FRVTA). Johnson oversees multiple RV resorts and campgrounds, driven by her enduring passion for the RV industry.

Tom Kline

Better Vantage Point LLC – Founder / Lead Consultant



Kline's specialty consulting firm is focused on protecting and safeguarding dealers by employing targeted risk transference, regulatory compliance and risk mitigation techniques. Kline works with both publicly held and private dealerships, routinely speaks at national conferences and 20 Groups, and frequently presents webinars on current events. Kline's writing and ideas have been featured in multiple prominent national publications, such as the Wall Street Journal, RV PRO and more. He is also an endorsed expert by the RVDA and is a sought-after podcast guest.

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Eva Mitic

Go Power! | Dometic – Marketing Manager, Mobile Power Solutions



With a foundation in journalism and a passion for technology, Mitic is a dedicated learner who prioritizes education and clear communication in everything she does. A member of the Go Power! Solar team since 2016, she has been recognized as one of RV PRO's 40 Under 40 honorees. She is a leader in making mobile power education accessible and known for her ability to translate complex technical concepts into simple, everyday language.

Trey Miller

Jayco Family of Companies – Vice President of Marketing



Miller has been in the RV industry for nearly 25 years, holding executive leadership roles in some of the industry's largest companies. Since 2020, he has been in charge of marketing for the Jayco Family of Companies, including the Jayco, Entegra Coach, Highland Ridge RV and Starcraft RV brands.

Randal Murray

Pete's RV Dealer Group – Director of Orientation



Murray says he is a father to a wonderful, intelligent, beautiful daughter whom he adores, and he loves what he does for work. Daily he can be found educating customers and employees alike on safety, proper use and maintenance as well as the function of an RV. As a long-time tech specializing in troubleshooting electrical and appliance issues, Murray gets called in on the units that are more difficult to diagnose at multiple store locations. With his time in the industry, he has become the bridge to the OEMs for Pete's RV Dealer Group when help is needed from business partners at the manufacturing level.

Mary Pouliot

Thetford LLC – Executive Vice President of the Americas



Pouliot joined Thetford in 2006, and over the years, she has excelled in numerous strategic positions, including vice president of sales and marketing, director of customer service, and director of OEM sales, consistently driving growth and innovation within the organization. Her deep commitment to the RV industry is demonstrated by her broad leadership across several influential boards and committees. She currently holds key positions as vice chair of the RV Industry Association's board of directors executive committee, chair of the RV Technical Institute's board of directors, chair of the supplier committee, and serves on both the audit and awards committees.

Michael Rupchock

Lippert – Vice President of Marketing, Aftermarket



Over the past 13 years at Lippert (LCI Industries), Rupchock played a key role in guiding the company through its recent digital transformation. Drawing from his extensive experience in digital marketing, CRM, IoT, e-commerce and other innovative solutions, Rupchock is focused on collaborating with the aftermarket sales team to highlight existing and new products to dealer partners. His strategies are designed to strengthen dealer relationships and ensure Lippert's offerings align with retailer needs. A lifelong learner, Rupchock enjoys applying new digital trends to all aspects of his life and career, and in his free time, he loves spending time with his grandkids.

Jesse Stopnitzky

Performance Brokerage Services – Co-Owner



Stopnitzky is the director of the RV Division at Performance Brokerage Services and a proud RVDA Silver Partner. The family-owned company advises clients on the purchase and sale of automotive and RV dealerships. With 30 years of experience, 900-plus dealerships sold, a 90% closing rate and operating out of 10 regional offices, the company says it has the highest volume dealership brokerage firm in North America. As an expert on RV buy-sell activity, the company attributes its success to an unwavering commitment to honesty, integrity and ethical conduct.

Juan Tejeda

PPL Motor Homes – CEO



As chief executive officer at PPL Motor Homes, Tejeda is a member of the board of directors for the Texas Recreational Vehicle Association (TRVA). He graduated with his bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Texas at San Antonio and his Master of Business Administration from Baylor University.

Tony Yerman

RV Dealers Association – RV Fixed Operations Consultant



Yerman has been a consultant to RVDA and The Mike Molino RV Learning Center for 17 years. A Master Certified RV Technician, he holds all five of the RV Learning Center Fixed Operations Certificates. Yerman has worked on RVIA/RVTI Educational Review Committees for technician training and to develop Learning Center Fixed Operations courses. He has served as chair of the task force for the updating of the RVDA Service Management Guide and also authored and published the RV Damage Repair Estimator for RV collision and storm damage repairs.

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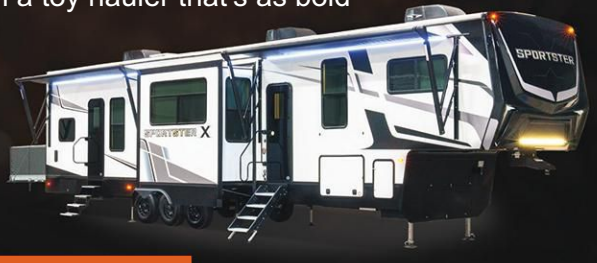
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TRENDING TRUCK CAMPER BRANDS & MODELS OF 2024 ON RV TRADER

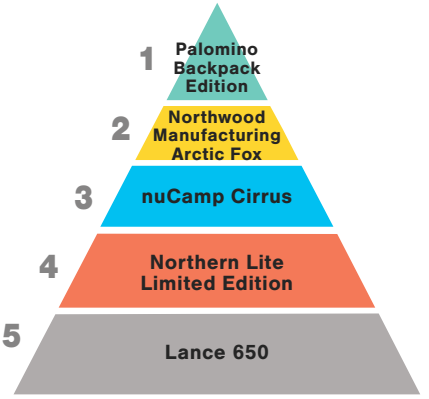


Top Truck Camper Makes by Searches

1. Lance
2. Palomino
3. Northwood Manufacturing
4. Travel Lite
5. Northern Lite

Lance Campers has remained the most searched for truck camper make on RV Trader since 2022, followed by Palomino. Northern Lite has grown to the top five most searched for truck camper make from 2022 to 2024.

Top Truck Camper Makes/ Models Based on Searches



Palomino Backpack Edition has remained the most searched for make/model for truck campers. From 2023 to 2024, Northwood Manufacturing Arctic Fox was the second most popular truck camper make/ model based on searches. In 2024, the Northern Lite Limited Edition rose to the top five.

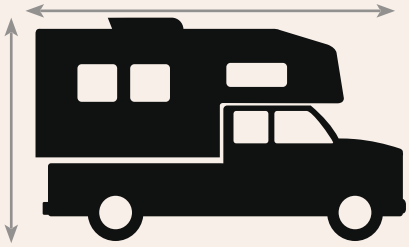
"This year is shaping up well for dealers advertising truck campers, with a 3% increase in used inventory on our marketplace. The key to driving truck camper sales in 2024 will be aligning your strategy with buyer search trends.

"Lance, especially the 650 model, has been the most searched truck camper brand on RV Trader since 2022, followed closely by the brand Palomino. The Palomino Backpack Edition, Northwood Manufacturing Arctic Fox and nuCamp Cirrus are also top choices, while Northern Lite has recently broken into the top five. Buyers are mainly seeking spacious campers with room for up to six people."

New vs. Used Truck Campers

The number of used truck campers on RV Trader has been steadily growing since 2022. We have seen an increase of 3% in truck camper RV inventory on RV Trader from 2022 to 2024.

Top Lengths for Truck Campers



The following are the top lengths (in feet) for truck campers from January 2024 through July 2024 on RV Trader, based on searches. Consumers are looking for truck campers between 15 feet and 19 feet.

1. 16 feet
2. 18 feet
3. 19 feet
4. 17 feet
5. 15 feet

Top Sleeping Capacity for Truck Campers

The following are the top five most searched for sleeping capacities for truck campers on RV Trader. Consumers looking for truck campers are most interested in units with sleeping capacities under six people.

1. 3
2. 4
3. 2
4. 5
5. 6



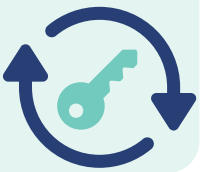
About RV Trader

RV Trader, a part of the "Trader" family of brands and owned by Trader Interactive, is a marketplace for advertising RVs, motorhomes and campers. With an average of 6.5 million monthly visitors, RV Trader offers innovative tools to help manufacturers and dealers make connections with customers, increase sales and maximize profits. For more information, visit rvtradermediakit.com.

Truck Camper Keyword Searches

Consumers who searched for truck campers on RV Trader also searched for the following keywords:

- "Slide in truck camper"
- "Pop up"
- "Arctic fox 811"
- "Camper"
- "Adventurer"



THE DATA ON TRUCK CAMPERS FROM RV TRADER WAS PULLED FROM JANUARY–JULY 2024.

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SPEAKER



Aubrey Amborn
Director of Sales
InteractRV

Aubrey Amborn has over 20 years of experience in dealer sales and marketing. Currently serving as Director of Sales for InteractRV and Net Driven, Aubrey has led teams across many LeadVenture brands, including Dealer Spike (formerly ARI Network Services) and TCS Technologies.

Aubrey has built strategic partnership programs with companies like NTP-STAG, Land 'N' Sea, U.S. Auto Force & Keystone that have allowed dealers and jobbers more turnkey online solutions to service their customers. Her exposure and experience in different verticals over the years has allowed her to maximize what works and what to avoid. She is passionate about her teams, our partners, and the dealers they serve.

REGISTER AT RV-PRO.COM/WEBINARS

North Dakota Dealership Focuses on Family

Corral RV Sales finds success in its fair, personal approach to doing business.

BY JENNIFER KING

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CORRAL RV SALES



Part of the Helbling crew ready to go camping.

Corral RV Sales in Mandan, North Dakota, has an origin story much like other businesses in the RV industry.

"It started with my grandpa," says Tim Helbling, co-owner and general manager. Helbling's grandfather Anton, or "Tony," had a motorhome that he wanted to upgrade, but he decided to buy a couple of them to work on and then sell. When those sold quickly, Helbling says "it just snowballed."

By 1968, the business had officially launched, and a 35,000-square-foot facility and service center had been erected, including some of the first hoists in the country so the motorhomes could be lifted in the air to be repaired.

While the business may have blossomed out of a whim, camping had always been a family pastime. Helbling's father, William, toured the country selling branding irons for the other family business, LH Manufacturing, a company specializing in livestock branding equipment. He had made several homemade campers to use while on the road throughout the country. The family would also take road trips in a converted Ford bus that had a top on hydraulics where Helbling and his 12 siblings would sleep. It was certainly a sight to see when the family traveled this way, Helbling says, garnering the attention of local news.

"We went to Disneyland, Disney World, all over the country in this thing, and didn't have hardly any breaks. It broke down constantly, but every time we would go, we'd be in a newspaper," Helbling says. "So my dad really was into camping and being together, and that's basically how it started."

FAMILY-CENTERED BUSINESS

Now, Helbling, who has worked at Corral RV since 1978, is co-owner with brother Donald (Don) who is president, and sister Sharon Lawler, office manager. There are three additional family members among the 18 employees, including Tom Schaaf (brother-in-law) as sales manager; Jacob Lawler, Sharon's son, parts manager; and Chad Hatzenbuhler, Tim's son-in-law, communications and marketing.

"We have very little turnover in our employees and the last few years have been tough," Helbling says, "like they have been on everybody, but it has been a really good run."

At one point, Corral RV had a location in Rapid City, South Dakota, as well — about 300 miles away from the Mandan location. However, it proved too difficult to run from a distance, so the location closed.

CUSTOMER-FOCUSED APPROACH

Taking a personal interest in its customers is a No. 1 priority — Helbling says they still do things with pen and paper much of the time, and customers seem to appreciate the time they take with each of them.

"At one time we were one of the largest [dealers] in North Dakota. But we want to just do the best we can. Our goal isn't to be the largest, it's just to be comfortable," he says. We want to keep treating people as





people and not a number."

Helbling says the dealership does try to stay up with the times somewhat, and that's where his son-in-law Chad Hatzenbuhler comes in. Chad and his wife Amanda's Camping in North Dakota Facebook group has taken off, leading to a lot of innovative marketing promotions for Corral RV Sales. This social media approach has helped connect RV enthusiasts and promote local camping opportunities. (Check out more on this topic in the October issue of RV PRO or online at rv-pro.com.)

Helbling says they try to also sponsor a lot of events and sports teams in their area — seeing it as a good way to reach out to potential customers but also to give back.

"A lot of times we don't even use our name when we do it," he says. "We just do it for the good of the community."



The converted Ford bus that served as a camper.



Chad Hatzenbuhler

BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY

Focusing on treating customers as a vital part of their community is what they focus on at the dealership, the co-owner says.

"We have to treat 'em fairly. A lot of dealerships are so focused on making so much money off F&I and detail protection and fabric protection and a lot of things that don't have any real value to the customer, [but] they bring a good bottom line to the dealership. We don't do that," he says. "We know that we need to get that customer back three to five times in their lifetime. There's not that many people in North Dakota, and the dealerships that are hammering them and putting all of the stuff on the back end are really hurting the industry.

"So, we just try to be fair with people, and they've been really good to us."

EMPLOYEE & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Being good to employees is important to them as well.

"The average tenure of our employees is about 25 years right now. That's combining the two businesses," Helbling says, referencing LH Manufacturing. "But we try to keep people, we treat 'em fairly, and they're more like family than they are employees."

In addition to the promotional efforts that Chad and Amanda bring to the table, Helbling says they learned during the COVID-19 pandemic — when more people than ever were camping — that finding off-the-beaten-path camping spots was really helpful to their customers. Helbling says some small towns may only have a handful of camping spots available, but they have other city parks that could be opened to the public.

"People are venturing out and sharing their experiences, and that's good for all the dealers. So, rather than trying to book a state park a year in advance, there's always different areas where you can camp





Corral RV Sales launched in 1968.

by going on this group, or if somebody cancels, they go on there and they're able to find a site," Helbling says, speaking to the Facebook groups who have learned to communicate with one another via the site. "It's built a really nice community of campers just talking about the camping experience."

PRODUCT LINES & SALES

This is Corral RV Sales' 20th year as a Jayco dealer, and Helbling says the dealership has done well with the Jayco brand.

"They're more of a family-oriented brand. It seems like they care about their dealer body and, in turn, they support the customer, they support the dealer, which supports the customer, and that's the type of manufacturer we look for," he says. "We've never been out to go find the cheapest unit that's out there, just to be the cheapest. We'd rather sell a quality product that the manufacturer backs up."

Helbling says the dealership averages 300 to 350 units sold a year right now — including new and used.

In addition to selling RVs, Corral RV Sales includes a "well-stocked parts department," including what Helbling calls "the oddball stuff" that customers will need. Toppers and bed covers have been popular products for them, and sell especially well ahead of the winter months.

Accessories used to represent half of the dealership's business, but Helbling says it's easier now for customers to turn to a store like Walmart and find RV winterization products or other supplies there. That wasn't always the case, so that part of the business has really changed.

He says the manufacturers are also doing a good job of including a lot of bells and whistles straight from the factory, that they're able to use that in their sales pitch rather than having to ask a customer to add on products such as solar after the fact.

"'Why don't you look at upgrading to a new unit that already has it?' So, that's just a selling feature of a lot of the new units now," he says.

While more "primitive camping," as Helbling calls it, is still attractive to some RVers, he says most people these days want full hookups.

"They want their TVs, they want their internet, they want their air conditioners, so yeah, the society has really changed," he says.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Right now, Helbling is hoping to get more younger family members involved in the business, stating that they have a lot of employees who don't want to work for larger chain dealerships.

"They want to work for a family-oriented business, so we're going to try to keep it in the family as much as we can," he says.

"I think the dealerships that focus on family and quality of life are the ones that are going to make it. I think you're seeing a lot of the big ones already really struggling because they back-ended all of their profit and it's getting harder for the average person to afford an RV. So I think we've got to, as dealers, we need to make sure that they have a positive experience and fun camping experience, and it's not all about [being] payment driven." RVP



Corral RV Sales keeps a well-stocked parts and accessories department and retail space for its customers.

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A Modern Squire's Tale

Aiming to boost market share within competitively priced truck campers, Lance Camper Manufacturing is bringing its circa 1984 brand back to life.

BY JOHN MCCURRY

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LANCE CAMPER MANUFACTURING



The theater seating slide option on the 2255 travel trailer.

Reaching back into its history, longtime truck camper specialist Lance Camper Manufacturing is resurrecting one of its venerable brands, Squire, as it seeks to broaden its market.

Lance debuted the Squire brand in 1984 but discontinued it in the late 1990s. Now, the manufacturer hopes to target RVers interested in "budget friendly" truck campers driving pickups such as the Toyota Tacoma, Ford Ranger, Nissan Frontier and Chevrolet Colorado/GMC Canyon.

The Lancaster, California-based manufacturer, founded in 1965 and part of REV Group since 2018, hopes the new line will increase its market share in the competitive truck camper market. The new Squire brand made its official debut at this year's Open House in Elkhart, Indiana. Lance had previously teased its release with a test product at last year's Open House and a soft launch at Pennsylvania's Hershey Show in mid-September this year. The early results from potential end users look good, according to Lance officials.

"We received extremely positive feedback from consumers at Hershey," says Gary Conley, vice president and general manager of Lance Campers. "It was like a validation and test marketing of the product."

Lance touts Squire truck campers as combining premium construction practices such as "computer design and composite material cutting, with a more minimalist design and an approachable price point." Included are tempered glass windows, fully fiberglass-wrapped nose caps and versatile Molle (modular lightweight load-carrying equipment) panel cabinets.

TRADITIONAL QUALITY

Recalling the original use of the Squire name, Conley says, "We had three trim levels at one time. We had Lance Legend, Lance Squire and Lance Squire Lite. It is a product line name that evokes a medieval theme, that went well with Lance, which is what you use in jousting."

Development of the new Squire line, which also includes travel trailers, has been in the works for more than a year. Squire is in production, and Lance is already distributing units to dealers.

The MSRP for units in the new Squire truck camper line will start with a base price around $25,900.

"We have three models we will be introducing on the truck camper side," Conley says. "On the travel trailer side, the base price will be around $42,000 for our 19-foot model. There will be some models that will be less than that, and some obviously will be more."

Lance will build a 7-foot camper for the Tacoma, Frontier and Ranger-style trucks. There will also be a model 805 and a model 825 built for standard domestic trucks, mainly focused on the 150 and 1500 series. These campers may also be installed on larger trucks, Conley says.





The rear U-shaped sofa option on the 2565.

With the return of the Squire name, Lance will feature two brand names with four products.

"We have Lance Campers, which is our truck campers, and Lance travel trailers. Then we have Squire travel trailers and Squire truck campers, all done by Lance Camper Manufacturing. The manufacturing part is what is being added to our company name, which has always been there. The brands will remain Squire and Lance."

During the first year of production, Lance plans to build 400 to 500 units on the truck camper side. Conley says that if market conditions warrant, Lance will build around 2,000 units on the trailer side during the first year.

Lance has plenty of manufacturing capacity for the new models at its California facility, which is located about an hour north of Los Angeles. Conley says Lance revamped its facilities when business was slow, which created additional production capacity.

"The Squire line has our traditional Lance quality and building style," Conley says. "Our Lance materials and construction methods will be the same, but the Squire will have new feature content. You are still getting a Lance, but you are getting more traditional components."

The company describes the new 805 truck camper as being inspired by its roots, and designed to be a value choice for a large range of trucks. Iterations of the Lance 805 were built up to



Exterior of the SQ605 prototype.



The new Squire SQ805 cabover.



Exterior of the Squire SQ805.



2008. The new configuration for Squire is updated with the latest materials and innovations, including fully laminated and computer numerical control (CNC)-cut components. It features an all-aluminum frame and dual layer Azdel composite panel walls. Lance's goal was to create a more "minimalist" space while remaining lightweight. It features 6-foot countertop, the longest of any of the company's campers. It has a built-in sink, a two-burner cooktop, two drawers and two under-sink cabinets. Across from the countertop is large U-shaped matching dinette with Molle panels on either side to serve as structure for the cabinet.

Other highlights of the Squire 825 truck camper include a queen-size bed, a convertible dinette and a full kitchen.

Color-wise, the company will be segueing into a warmer range of colors.

"We are excited about the new color tones that we are going to be offering," Conley says.

GROWING THE PIE

Lance is seeking new opportunities with dealers across all of its lines. Some of the company's current dealers will carry both Lance and Squire models.

"We will be looking to expand our dealer body with additional dealers," Conley says.

The dominant geographical market for truck campers is the western U.S., Conley says, but he describes the East Coast market as "good."

On the Squire trailer side, the line will offer models ranging from a 14-foot trailer to a 30-foot trailer.

"It is a wide variety of trailers," Conley says. "One of the big things in the Squire line is that we will be introducing flush floor slides on 26-foot and above products.



Interior of the Squire SQ805.

> **"We have been doing it since 1965, and it has always been the core of our business. It has been a stable business for us. Regardless of what the market brings, the truck campers always seem to be stable. We don't have the big peaks and valleys."**

"Once you get into the 26-foot and above travel trailer, it almost doubles the potential market, so it is a huge opportunity for expansion for us. The dealers have loved what they have seen from us so far. It is a complementary product to our current line, so it is not like we are dividing the pie; we are just growing the pie."

Conley describes Lance's product development process as a combination of listening to feedback and input from consumer shows, analyzing feedback surveys from truck camper magazines and evaluating new truck and SUV sales.

"That all helps drive our direction," he says. "We monitor all these things pretty closely.

"Our manufacturing name carries a lot of weight, but the distinction in our two brand names is really important especially as we move forward and start to branch out into other products. We already have more products in the Squire line on the drawing board. This is a huge opportunity to own a quality brand from a quality manufacturer."

Lance showed some of the drawings of the proposed new models to dealers at Open House.

Conley describes the overall U.S. market for truck campers as stable.

"We have been doing it since 1965, and it has always been the core of our business. It has been a stable business for us. Regardless of what the market brings, the truck campers always seem to be stable. We don't have the big peaks and valleys." RVP

FIRE IT UP



Aquafire's water vapor fireplaces offer an RV-safe alternative to traditional open flames.

BY MAURA KELLER

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AQUAFIRE



There's something about a cozy, well-lit fireplace gracing a space. Regardless of the season or the geographic location of an environment, incorporating a fireplace adds a unique aesthetic by helping create a simplified, relaxing experience. And while an RV's interior is not appropriate for an open-flame fireplace, more RV owners are incorporating innovative electric fireplaces into their mobile abodes. Whether an RV is situated overlooking the stunning desert-scapes of Arizona or is tucked away in the mountains of Colorado, a fireplace is the ideal accoutrement to the RV environment.

Lumina Products has been a leading player in the ethanol fireplace market since 2006. By 2018, the company identified a growing demand for a fireplace alternative that offered a safe, high-quality, reliable and, most importantly, believable and realistic flame to be used within the RV industry as well as other environments — unlike traditional electric fireplaces, which often lacked authenticity.

"Safety became a top priority as our clients, particularly those in public spaces like hotels, restaurants, airports, spas and retirement facilities, were increasingly restricted from using open flames," says Alan Lewinger, founder of Aquafire, which is a registered trademark of Lumina Products Inc., the

North American distribution partner for Afire Design.

Consumers were also seeking clean-burning, easy-to-use options that required no storage of hazardous fuels and were environmentally friendly. As Lewinger points out, this need was further amplified by new legislation across the U.S. that limited the use of wood, pellet and gas fireplaces.

"In response, we collaborated closely with our European manufacturing partner, Afire Design, to develop Aquafire in 2018. This innovative product is now the most technologically advanced water vapor fireplace on the market. It is 100% safe, environmentally friendly, easy to install and cost-effective to operate, all while delivering the most realistic 3D flames that are cool to the touch, being solely powered by tap water," Lewinger says. And Aquafire exudes the contemporary linear design, which continues to be a favorite among consumers, especially those looking for a modern design with amenities aplenty. In fact, RV enthusiasts in warmer climes are drawn to electric linear fireplaces because they provide the ability to have the ambiance a fire brings to a space without the heat.





By focusing on a water vapor fireplace, Lumina Products saw a clear need in the market for an alternative to traditional wood, pellet and gas fireplaces. These traditional options posed various challenges: they could be dangerous, required the storage of hazardous fuels, negatively impacted air quality and were costly to install and operate.

"Additionally, they produced excessive heat, limiting their use to colder months," Lewinger says. "With increasing legislation restricting their installation and use, and the limitations of electric fireplaces in providing a convincing flame effect, we sought a better solution."





Partnering with Afire Design in Europe, they developed a product that offered the realism of a 3D flame you could touch without the risks associated with open flames — no odor, soot, dirt or high installation and operating costs.

"Aquafire allows for installation in places where real flames would be impossible, such as cruise ships, public spaces and RVs, and it can be enjoyed year-round regardless of the weather," Lewinger says. Aquafire's water vapor flame is created by ultrasonic technology that vibrates a small ceramic plate at high frequencies to create a fine mist, which is illuminated by LED lights that change color and intensity to create the appearance of flames.

RV owners' interest in this water vapor technology grabbed the attention of Lewinger and his team, who saw the opportunity to enhance the RV experience for owners and renters alike.

As he explains, installing a product with a real open flame in an RV is not feasible, making a traditional fireplace out of the question. Aquafire provides RV enthusiasts with the realism and ambience of a fireplace without the associated dangers, allowing them to enjoy a safe and entertaining fire feature. What's more, because of the installation flexibility that Aquafire offers, RV owners can enjoy contemporary styling and smaller footprints that allow these fireplaces to fit nicely in more intimate settings, such as an RV's sitting area or bedroom.

"The product is easy to install, requiring only 20 inches of linear space for our smallest unit, and is cost-effective to operate, using regular tap water and running for 20 hours on just 2 liters," Lewinger says. "It offers maximum enjoyment with realistic 3D flames that are cool to the touch — unmatched by any other product, except for a real fire." Aquafire's design and manufacturing embraces sustainability thanks to its limited energy usage and maintenance requirements.

Currently, Aquafire is available as an aftermarket product in the RV industry. However, the company is actively working to establish supplier relationships with key players in the RV market.

"We anticipate that Aquafire fireplaces will soon become an integral feature offered by several RV manufacturers," Lewinger says.

For RV dealers and installers who may be interested in expanding their fireplace offerings, it is important to note that Aquafire is simple to install, requiring only a standard 110-volt outlet — no hardwiring necessary. In addition, the unit can be either direct-plumbed or manually filled using the integral pump.

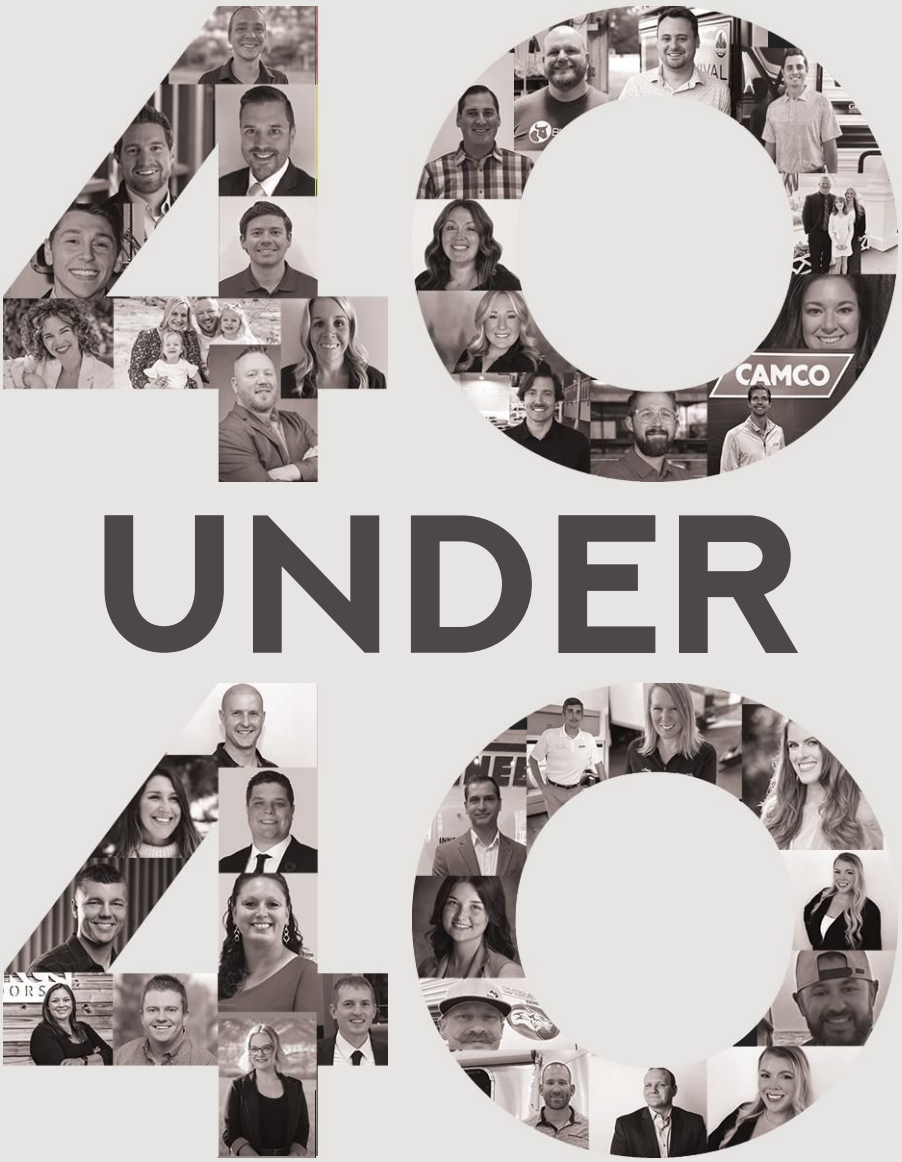
"It requires minimal power and water resources, produces no heat and poses no danger," Lewinger says. The Aquafire unit also includes germicidal UV-C lights in the tanks, which kill viruses, bacteria, spores, microorganisms and pathogens, ensuring a healthy environment in tight, constrained spaces. The unit typically requires quick cleanings two to three times a year to prevent scaling and general buildup caused by stagnant water.

"We offer comprehensive support through installation guides, videos and virtual assistance," Lewinger says.

For more information about Aquafire units, Lewinger says to reach out to the sales team at sales@aquafire.com or learn more at aquafire.com. RVP

RVPRO

THE CLASS OF 2024



40 UNDER 40

Now in its fifth year, the 40 Under 40 recognition for young professionals in the RV industry has become an annual highlight. RV PRO's editors were once again blown away by the impressive nominations we received, making our final 40 hard to narrow down. It is an honor to celebrate all of the industry's up-and-comers, and this year's class is no different. We are pleased to introduce you to the 2024 class of 40 Under 40 honorees.

By Darian Armer, Javacia Harris Bowser & Ronnie Wendt

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NICOLE SERWATUK

SICARD RV

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER

WITH COMPANY: 7 YEARS



When the pandemic hit, Nicole Serwatuk didn't miss a beat. She took COVID-19 challenges in stride, successfully managing through the pandemic without a single outbreak, while overseeing layoffs, return-to-work programs and position redesigns.

She has also spearheaded the remodeling of all Sicard RV departments to adapt to the growth of digital advertising.

These are but a few examples of the leadership Nicole is known for.

In her seven years with the company, she has shown leadership by consistently taking on new projects and naturally guiding all teams. She is widely recognized as a mentor and was promoted for her leadership abilities. Her adeptness at managing diverse employees and personalities further highlights her exceptional leadership within the organization and industry.

"Nicole has always demonstrated leadership skills, it comes so naturally to her," says one of her peers. "She leads the entire dealership in every project or meeting and is always there to support the rest of the management team in their challenges. She is the go-to person at the dealership."

Nicole is also a go-to person outside the company. She maintains a strong relationship with all Sicard RV manufacturers, as well as with the Ontario RV Dealers Association (ORVDA) and RVDA, which makes her even more successful as a leader.

"Within the industry, she is definitely making her mark, and making strong industry connections, and is involved with local groups on various projects or information gathering," says an industry leader. "She is one of the few young females making a wave in the RV industry in a leadership role."

Nicole began her journey with Sicard RV as the human resources manager and worked her way up to assistant general manager in May 2023. With every change of position and challenge, Nicole has effectively handled customer complaints and employee issues.

Sicard RV credits Nicole's leadership for securing the Top 50 Award for five consecutive years, including two blue ribbon honors. Prior to Nicole taking over the application process, the company had never won. When she began managing reviews and customer feedback, company reviews increased from 86 to 971.

"In a world that is very focused online, our brand is extremely important, and this proves her efforts are positively impacting the business," says a Sicard RV peer. "She has improved employee turnover and enhanced staff support to develop a stronger management team."

Her efforts earned her the inaugural 2022 George Goodrick Emerging Leader Award, which recognizes and encourages early career professionals who have demonstrated exceptional commitment, passion and promise of leadership to the Canadian recreation vehicle industry.

Nicole's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Embrace persistence and a positive mindset. Never give up, as every challenge you face has a solution — approach obstacles with this mindset to find creative ways forward. Surround yourself with like-minded, driven individuals who can inspire and support you. Use your leadership to foster growth within your team, building strong relationships both within and beyond the industry."

JEN HUDAK

ESCAPOD TRAILERS

FOUNDER

WITH COMPANY: 8 YEARS



Founded in 2016 by Jen Hudak and her husband, Chris, Escapod has grown to be one of the leading manufacturers of off-road campers. The company, founded in Jen's mom's garage, was ranked the ninth fastest-growing manufacturer in 2021's Inc. 5000.

"In the ever-evolving RV market, Jen has shown the ability to see market trends and nuances that give Escapod the leg up over competitors. She is able to identify areas of the business that can respond quickly to macro and micro changes," CEO Chris Hudak says.

A testimony to her competitive spirit, Jen was a former professional skier, two-time world champion and five-time X Games medalist in half-pipe skiing. That drive was taken into improving Escapod's business alongside her husband and business partners, Chris Eckel and Joshie Fishbein. Together, their commitment to compelling design and innovative manufacturing processes has set the company apart in the industry.

Over the course of five years, Escapod grew its revenue from $250,000 to more than $10 million under Jen's leadership. The company was also awarded two international design awards and became a leader in the overlanding community for product and customer experience.

"It is humbling to make the 40 Under 40 list for the RV industry. What started as a dream between a husband and wife has grown into something that has transcended us. It's an absolute honor," Jen says.

Outside of her success as founder and board member of Escapod Trailers, along with her impressive feats in skiing, Jen is a mountain biker and mother. She also appeared on the 30th season of the Emmy-Award-winning series "The Amazing Race."

Jen's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"People first. It's a principle that I hold dearly and juggle constantly. People can be your customers, and they can be your employees, but at the end of the day, nothing you achieve can be done without the people taking this journey with you. While it's impossible to keep everyone happy when balancing the expectations of board members, customers, employees and business partners, you can anchor every decision in trying to find the option that positively impacts the majority."

CONGRATULATIONS

RV PRO's 40 Under 40 honorees



Grant Smith
Product Manager, Winnebago



Jennifer McAfee
Purchasing Agent, Newmar



Matt Eppers
Product Manager, Grand Design RV

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NOAH CRONAN

CAMCO

DIRECTOR OF BRAND STRATEGY

WITH COMPANY: 6 YEARS



When Noah Cronan started with Camco, the company lacked a marketing department. But that didn't stop Noah, say his peers.

He quickly built a team of specialists to drive Camco's success in business-to-business and consumer-driven campaigns. Noah's approach to social media helped him establish a successful influencer program, which reaches millions of people and has expanded the company's social media reach.

In fact, his social media strategy expanded the company's followers from 5,000 to over 35,000 in 18 months, with many videos reaching over 1 million views.

He also developed a direct-to-consumer website that enabled Camco to adapt to changing consumer behaviors. The company's market presence is now stronger due to the launch of an additional revenue stream on this new site.

Noah also broadened Camco's reach in the consumer sector, realigning the brand strategy and recognition of Camco through integrated marketing, vendor negotiations, media outreach and market research.

"Noah leveraged SQL analytics to offer over 50 new product launches end-to-end within two years; formed Camco's merchandising team to sell 39% more displays by establishing dealer parts stores; and during COVID-19 directed the first-ever virtual dealer show by using 3D tech, which broke sales records to date," says one Camco leader. "It was such a success that Camco did it again in 2022, alongside an in-person show that he directed in Las Vegas."

Camco has promoted Noah three times in six years. His most recent promotion was to the role of director of brand strategy. Peers say the promotions show the organization's trust and confidence in his ability to advance the brand.

For over three years, Noah has been a dedicated manager, passionate about developing his team and fostering a collaborative work environment. His commitment to leadership has been a cornerstone of his success.

Noah also spearheaded the development of a cross-functional team within Camco to ensure all messaging and marketing aligned and followed best practices to overcome industry challenges as they arise.

"Noah has always demonstrated a hands-on leadership quality," a peer adds. "He tackles projects by asking a lot of questions from all areas and making an assessment. He listens, gets feedback and follows through. ... He inspires people to do their best by his own example."

As a member of RV Industry Association's (RVIA's) Public Relations Committee, he's offered Camco's support at every media summit and partnered with other members to drive consumer awareness on the ease and benefits of RVing.

"Noah is always available to support our industry in every way, whether it's contributing to RVIA and Go RVing's media endeavors, offering industry insight from an aftermarket perspective, cross-industry collaboration with Camco influencers, market research to support the industry as a whole, and so much more," says one industry connection.

Outside of work, Noah enjoys hiking, playing golf and traveling. He is also an avid long-distance runner and a passionate supporter of the Carolina Panthers.

Noah's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Remain curious and never stop learning. Embrace challenges as opportunities, prioritize building strong relationships and always keep the consumer experience at the forefront of your decisions. Success comes from a balance of resilience and adaptability in a rapidly evolving market."

RACHEAL CLYDE

CAMPERS INN RV

ASSISTANT REGIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR

WITH COMPANY: 5 YEARS



Racheal Clyde is a born leader, which shines through her trajectory at Campers Inn RV.

She started at Campers Inn RV as a service adviser with no experience in the industry. Within one year, Racheal had been promoted to parts and service manager at the company's Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, store. During her tenure as the parts and service manager, she continued to develop her skills and was promoted again in January 2024 to assistant regional service director with Campers Inn. And on July 1, Racheal began working with her own pod of four stores.

Racheal has played a key role in developing and enhancing stores under her supervision. Her commitment to learning is clear through her participation in various leadership training programs, including those offered by the Pennsylvania Recreation Vehicle and Camping Association (PRVCA), Campers Inn, Spader Service Management and Spader Pro-Daptive training.

"This training helped Racheal build her leadership skills, which has propelled her through several promotions to the point where she is leading multiple stores within Campers Inn," a peer says. "Racheal is part of the coaching of new and existing managers within her respective stores, which continues to cultivate the next leaders within Campers Inn."

Racheal builds the skill of new service managers through weekly meetings, to ensure they understand Campers Inn processes and are set up for success.

When the Pittsburgh store was being relocated, Racheal worked hard to find employees new roles within the organization. She helped transition the store, then traveled to other dealerships to train and hire new employees.

"When we have been short staffed at dealerships, she has traveled to those locations to train new staff and stabilize operations within the dealership," her peers say.

Another peer adds, "Racheal has proven her skills in the dealerships she oversees, with the overall improvement in AI generated by 25% as well as overall improvement in CSI [customer satisfaction index] that we measure internally."

Her primary goal is to stabilize turnover at store locations, which she has accomplished by hiring the right leaders at the right time, according to her peers.

Racheal then develops an individual training plan for managers to clinch their success at their respective stores. She continues to guide leaders through the company's internal coaching tools, which helps managers at the store level coach and retain talent longer.

"Through her effective training methods, she has improved customer communication, as seen through her CSI metrics, which exceed our company's minimums. Those same stores were below the minimums prior to her," company leadership says. "Our overall expense ratios in service have dropped by 30 points in the first seven months of the year in one store versus where they were before she started working with the store. "

Racheal is an avid pet lover who finds joy in her own dogs and any other ones she can rescue. She also derives joy from spending time with her nieces.

Racheal's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Embrace open dialogue and new ideas. Don't hesitate to ask questions or share your perspective. And always lead by setting a strong example."

RYAN FORGEY

JAYCO

VICE PRESIDENT OF ENGINEERING

WITH COMPANY: 5 YEARS



Ryan Forgey has his leadership vision hanging on his office wall: "Lead by Example! Have good values, maintain ethics and morals. Don't lose your drive to succeed and to care for those around you."

The phrase, inspired by a homework assignment from leadership coach Mike Testa, evolved into a commitment to be a role model who encourages team members to have genuine concern for one another and their jobs. His leadership style is to approach everything with a can-do attitude.

Ryan was promoted to vice president of engineering for towables after one year in the director of engineering for towables role. In 2022, he was promoted to vice president of engineering, towables and motorized for the Jayco Family of Companies and leads over 100 employees. Ryan is also involved with THOR's Innovation Committee.

During last few challenging years, Jayco's engineering group continued to lead, push the RV industry and break new ground under Ryan's leadership. For example, many suppliers have recognized the excellent job his team does with product and component testing.

"When parts were hard to get, Ryan's department began testing new parts in order to substitute and keep our lines running," a peer says. "Suppliers also tell us that other companies ask if our engineering department has approved certain parts, and if so, they will use them without doing their own testing."

Ryan has also hired top electrical engineers to make Jayco a leader in RV-C communication, working with suppliers to move the industry toward a standard RV-C protocol. "His stance is to not sit back and let others do the work, but rather work and meet with suppliers to be the lead on this protocol for the industry," says a peer.

A nominating peer says that Ryan's "improved processes and increased quality have led to market share increases across the board for Jayco and improvements in nearly all areas of RECT for the brands. He has also seen nearly no turnover in his manager- and director-level employees since taking the position."

Ryan's efforts have directly impacted Jayco market share from 2023 to 2024, where Class A sales are up 10%, Class B sales are up 22%, Class C sales rose 25%, travel trailers sales rose 4.3%, sales of fifth wheels increased by 12.7%, and toy haulers grew by 145%.

Ryan wants others on this team to enjoy the outdoors, too. To that end, he established a camping program for his engineering group where they have a fifth wheel and a travel trailer set up at a local campground.

"When he first came to Jayco, Ryan was shocked to learn most of the department had never camped in an RV before," says a peer. "He believes by using these units, the engineering group will design and think differently to make Jayco units stand out over the competition."

Ryan makes sure individual engineering product groups get out and have fun outside of work. A peer adds, "You can tell the chemistry is improving on every team because of this. ... The team building ... is priceless and something that was missing in the past."

Ryan is a member of Crossroads Community Church and vice president of the Long-Coverdale Lake Association, where he and his family spend time enjoying the summer months. He has two sons and a daughter with his wife, Lauren. They like to be outdoors and to spend time with their extended family.

Ryan's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"It all starts with people and communication. Whenever we are looking to hire, I always tell my managers to pick someone with good values and the right mindset. ... If you're fortunate enough to be on a great team, make sure you find other good people to join your team. If you are looking for a new team, make sure you find a company or person that is after the same values and ambitions you have."

STEPHANIE WALLS

OPTIMUM RV

RECRUITING MANAGER, HUMAN RESOURCES

WITH COMPANY: 2 YEARS



Stephanie Walls has a knack for identifying the right person for the job, every time.

Her peers say she exemplifies exceptional leadership at Optimum RV, where she has a reputation for finding the right candidates in record time, through a unique approach that helps her identify qualified individuals who are also prompt and committed to attending interviews.

The depth of her skills earned her a promotion to senior regional recruiter within four months of working with the company, and nearly as quickly, she earned the title of recruiting manager.

Today, as a full-cycle recruiter, Stephanie works alongside the company's chief human resources officer to develop and streamline the company's entire recruiting and onboarding process for nearly 500 employees. She has staffed five new dealerships in the last two years and maintained the staff of its headquarters in Ocala, Florida, which employs roughly 50 sales professionals.

Her communication skills are second to none, her nominator says, allowing her to connect with candidates and team members alike, fostering an environment of trust and collaboration.

Stephanie's punctuality is unmatched, setting a standard that others aspire to follow. "She consistently goes above and beyond, ensuring that every detail is handled with precision and that she is always on time, no matter the situation," nominating peers say.

"Stephanie Walls is truly an asset to Optimum RV, demonstrating leadership qualities that inspire and elevate those around her," says one of her peers. "Stephanie shines in today's challenging workforce landscape, where finding candidates willing to put in the grind can be a daunting task. Despite these hurdles, Stephanie has consistently overcome them with grace and efficiency, securing top-notch candidates for our company."

She has created a network that helps her identify and land top talent, according to her peers. "In a time when many struggle to find quality employees, Stephanie stands out by quickly and efficiently bringing in talent that fits perfectly with our company's needs," a peer says. "Her dedication and effectiveness in this role are a testament to her exceptional recruiting abilities, making her an invaluable asset to our team."

She accomplishes this by fostering relationships with local technical colleges and universities, such as Purdue University, and by launching the company's first internship program.

Stephanie has been on the board of directors for a local nonprofit since 2019, focusing on downtown revitalization and creative place-making. As vice president of the nonprofit, she oversaw the planning and installation of the first large-scale mural along the Route 30 corridor in southern New Jersey.

She also sits on the board of directors for her two sons' wrestling club and is currently developing their website and communications as active secretary.

Stephanie is a classically trained fine artist, painting in both oil and watercolor, and is a 200-hour certified yoga instructor. She also enjoys working out and walking with her dog, Bogey.

Stephanie's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Change is the only constant in this industry. We must continually evolve to meet its demands. In recruiting, as in the broader industry, adaptability is key; with each adjustment, we gain valuable insights and the opportunity to improve. Embracing this dynamic environment allows us to better serve our candidates, clients and employees."

TOM P. HANAN

AMERICAN GUARDIAN WARRANTY SERVICES (AGWS)

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT

WITH COMPANY: 1 YEAR, INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE: 16 YEARS



As a 16-year veteran in the RV industry, Tom Hanan has a wealth of knowledge and experience in the market space. "Not only does everyone know him, but they also love him as well," say his peers.

Tom has a reputation for integrity and a track record of success in every role he's held, leading him to his current position as assistant vice president (AVP) of sales at AGWS.

As AVP, Tom shoulders multiple responsibilities. For this, he draws on his years as a sales manager, turnaround manager and industry product manager to provide invaluable assistance and guidance to AGWS agents. His oversight helps agents create long-term business relationships with RV dealerships and develop wealth-building strategies for dealership clients.

Peers report that Tom is constantly helping his agents. "In this challenging market, we would be drowning without Tom," says one nominating peer. "Just recently one of our accounts with AGWS dropped us for another carrier. Somehow, Tom got the dealer to share why they were making this decision. He flew to the dealer that afternoon and met us there. Tom … saved the account. He used a combination of incredible knowledge and amazing communication to show the dealer how we were saving them $40,000 a year and would provide better service."

Today, Tom calls that dealer every week to keep the relationship strong.

Tom grew F&I sales by 13% in the western territory within a year. He also added five new industry partners representing in excess of $500,000 in annual revenue.

As turnaround manager, Tom helped dealerships navigate some of the industry's toughest years, tapping into his expertise and experience to help dealers improve inventory management, staff properly and structure cash flow management. As a result, untold members of industry employees kept their jobs, according to his peers.

Prior to his latest position with AGWS, Tom served as a dynamic sales leader for Forest River, pioneering the manufacturer's Evo line. Peers say his sales abilities pushed the new trailer line to the forefront of the industry.

"All who know, have worked with or for Tom over his many years in the RV industry would attest to the fact that he embodies the values and hard work that has made our RV industry such a fantastic industry," says a nominating peer. "Tom continues to strive toward helping RV dealerships improve wherever needed so they can be prepared for whatever tomorrow brings."

Peers say Tom is a true asset to the RV industry, possessing a deep knowledge and understanding of how the business works from the manufacturer to the dealer to the customer. "He brings people and resources together to elevate business performance and success," adds another peer.

Others in the industry say people seek out Tom for his wisdom and outlook on our industry, calling him "a true leader of people."

Tom is an active participant in charity events sponsored by RV dealerships, supporting various communities.

Tom is a devoted family man who cherishes his wife and time with his daughters; he is also dedicated to being the best role model possible for his young daughters. Outdoor activities with his family are a top priority.

Tom's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Understanding [that] although business is competitive and at times frustrating or stressful, always remember this industry is based on relationships, and everyone you come across can and likely will impact your career in one way or another."

TONI TAYLOR-WEHR

CAMPERS INN RV

MERCHANDISER MANAGER

WITH COMPANY: 4 YEARS, INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE: 10 YEARS



Toni Taylor-Wehr exemplifies what it means to be a genuine leader at Campers Inn RV. Across 38 locations, she consistently steps up to fill gaps and assist those in need, showcasing her unwavering commitment to the company's values, her nominator says. Toni's leadership is defined by resilience and adaptability. Peers say she never backs down from a challenge, no matter how complex. "She embodies the spirit of teamwork and dedication, often making personal sacrifices to ensure our stores continue to operate smoothly and our customers receive the best possible service," says one nominating peer.

Her actions inspire those around her to rise to the occasion, and she lives and breathes the Campers Inn values every day.

"Toni's ability to lead by example has helped maintain the company's strength and unity, especially during times of uncertainty," a peer notes.

In fact, Toni was a pivotal force in navigating the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 supply chain disruptions. By effectively handling inventory and merchandise during the pandemic, she ensured stores stayed well stocked and competitive with innovative products.

Her understanding of supply chain dynamics and customer needs helped her implement strategic initiatives to secure high-demand items, optimize inventory turnover and streamline purchasing processes.

"Even amid shortages, she successfully balanced stock levels across our locations, ensuring that our stores looked favorable and fully prepared to meet customer demands," a peer notes. "Toni's foresight in identifying alternative suppliers and her skillful negotiation during supply crises allowed us to keep the latest and most relevant products on the frontlines. Her commitment to excellence and adaptability has helped to ensure our customers continue to trust us as the 'Trusted Resource,' despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic."

Another peer says Toni has helped ensure parts offerings remain aligned with the ever-changing RV industry and broader market trends. "Her forward-thinking approach has allowed us to stay ahead of the curve, consistently providing customers with the latest and most relevant products," the peer adds.

Toni closely tracks industry shifts and customer preferences to refine inventory to meet evolving demands.

"Her efforts have directly contributed to enhancing the customer experience, ensuring that we not only meet but exceed expectations with a superior range of products," says another peer. "Toni's ability to adapt our offerings to stay relevant in a dynamic market has reinforced Campers Inn's position as a trusted resource in the RV industry. "

Peers say exceptional relationship-building skills have been the cornerstone of Toni's success.

"She has cultivated strong, trusted partnerships with all our stakeholders and distribution partners, ensuring seamless collaboration and communication across the board," reports a peer. "Toni's dedication to fostering these connections not only enhances our operational efficiency but also contributes to a more robust and reliable customer experience."

Toni embraces the RV lifestyle and enjoys golfing in Michigan as she travels with her son's baseball team.

Toni's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Build strong relationships: The RV industry thrives on relationships — with customers, colleagues and industry partners. Prioritize customer service and foster a culture of trust and collaboration both internally and externally."

NIK RISSER

GEN-Y HITCH

VIDEOGRAPHER/MARKETING

WITH COMPANY: 1.5 YEARS



Nik Risser understands that if a picture is worth 1,000 words, a video has an even greater impact.

He shows leadership within the GEN-Y Hitch marketing department as he manages all the video content the company publishes and assists with all other marketing projects. In fact, Nik has grown the company's YouTube subscriber base from 1,000 subscribers to 25,000. He also worked on several video projects to catapult the company's growth on the platform and created a video that has almost 1 million views.

Nik uses video and other marketing efforts to help GEN-Y Hitch better communicate about its products to customers. For example, in working directly with Brinkley RV, he successfully marketed the company's partnership with the RV manufacturer and educated consumers about GEN-Y Hitch and Brinkley RV's products, according to one of his peers.

When asked about his accomplishments, Nik says, "As part of a small marketing team, every day is a new project, whether it's a lifestyle photoshoot, designing product flyers or coming up with a new apparel design. Sometimes it's hard to see success in all the day-to-day projects. However, the easiest way to see accomplishments are seen through our videos. GEN-Y Hitch has over a million views on new videos this year, best highlighted with a collaborative two-part series with Brinkley amassing over 1.4 million views. The company has also seen YouTube subscriber growth of over 450%."

Within GEN-Y Hitch, Nik is known for his strong work ethic, commitment to quality and dedication to clear consumer messaging.

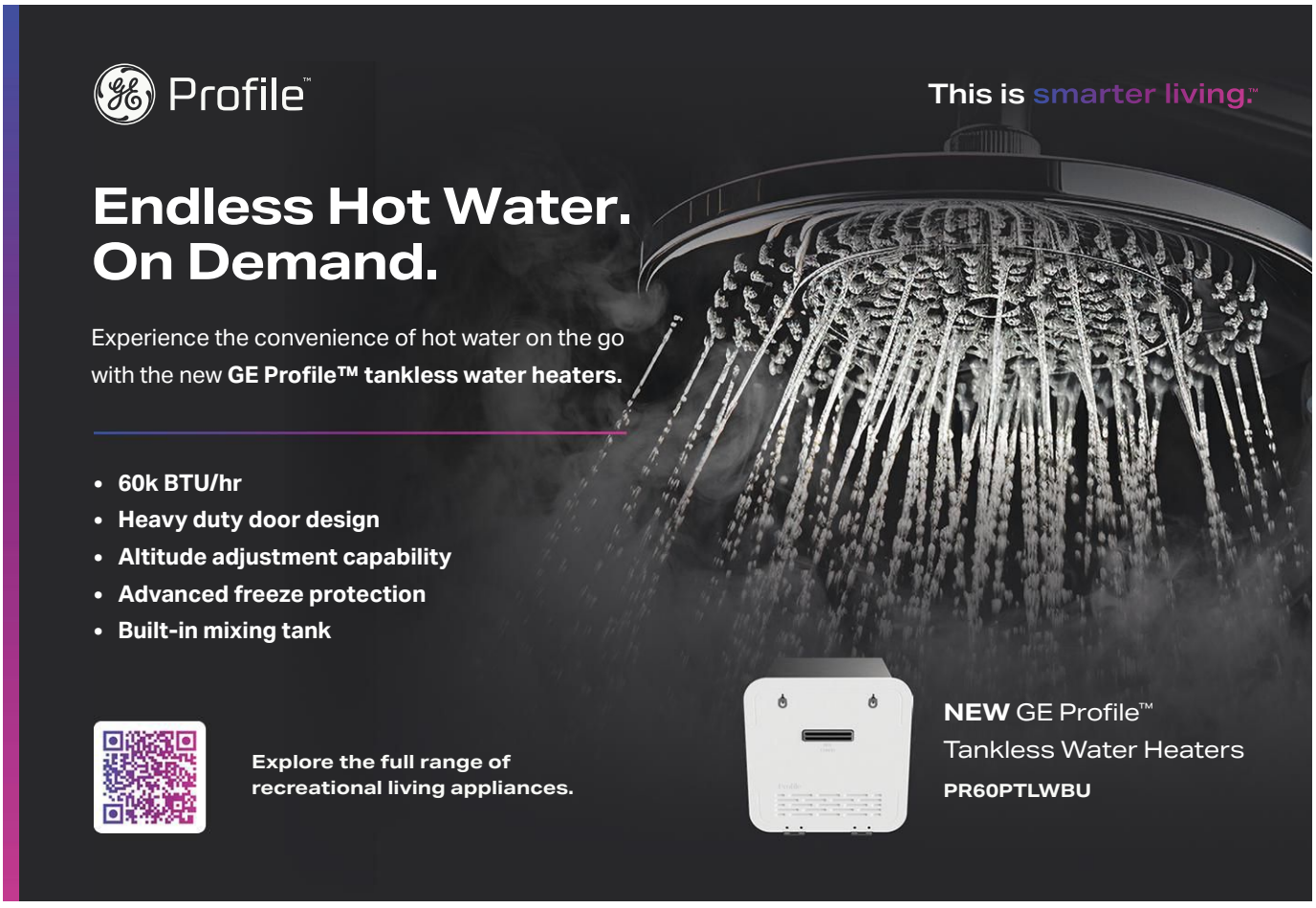
When not creating content, Nik enjoys watching movies with his wife. He also loves going on outdoor adventures and exploring new places.

Nik's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"For me, it's important to really like where you're at and who you're working with. When you find that, it makes the work and passion easy. What we have at GEN-Y is really special in terms of culture, so it makes it easy to want to go above and beyond to see the company succeed."

What it means to Nik to be a 40 Under 40 honoree:

"As someone always behind the scenes and with a camera, I'm not used to the spotlight. I love giving the spotlight to others and showing off our brand and great partnerships. So I am honored because of the success of projects I've put so much time and effort into — it's really special."



TRIP WHITE

UNITED RV CENTER

FINANCE MANAGER

WITH COMPANY: 12 YEARS



Trip White has worked in the RV industry since he was a kid, beginning at United RV Center in 2013 at 16 years old.

He worked summers and school holidays at the business throughout high school. Trip attended college at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas, which let him continue working at United RV Center due to its proximity to the university.

"Trip's hard work, dedication and long hours have earned the respect of his peers and coworkers," says a peer.

After graduation, Trip began full-time employment at United RV Center in May 2019, just a year before the pandemic shutdown. Peers say Trip worked tirelessly along with other management to steer United RV Center through this stressful and uncertain time.

The RV industry has faced significant headwinds over the last 18-plus months. United RV recognized the need for improvement and invested in a state-of-the-art CRM (customer relationship management) company to support its sales team in obtaining leads and more prospects. Trip spearheaded the implementation and training of this new CRM, which has driven additional RV sales.

Trip often dons an IT hat for the company. In early 2023, Trip assisted United RV's dealer management system (DMS) software provider in moving the company's data to cloud storage.

He also was an integral part of the successful launch of United RV's second e-commerce RV parts site in October 2017. The objective of this AI-enhanced site is to take advantage of the growing RV aftermarket customer and their willingness to shop online. Trip has been one of the driving forces behind the growth and development of this multimillion-dollar division, which now comprises two separate e-commerce sites and sells across multiple third-party channels.

Nominating peers say that since Trip's promotion to finance manager in 2019, the F&I department's penetration benchmarks have risen to the top end of industry standards across all back-end product offerings.

Trip also implemented and incorporated the Route 66 Network's F&I electronic selling menu process in the dealership, which has consistently increased the finance department's penetration rates, peers add. Trip has attended multiple F&I trainings at the Route 66 Network's facility in Overland Park, Kansas. He is currently serving as a member in the Route 66 Network's F&I Council.

Trip actively works with United RV's e-commerce consultant to look for ways to improve sales, remarketing efforts, profit margins and advertising metrics such as ROAS (return on advertising spend).

Trip was nominated and elected as a Texas Delegate Member for the RV Dealers Association (RVDA) in 2023. He has been attending RVDA since 2015. In the same year, Trip was also invited to serve on the RV dealer panel during the Kenect sponsored workshop at RVDA.

Trip enjoys spending time with family and friends and has an active lifestyle, including running half marathons, surfing, golfing and snow skiing. Trip is an avid sports fan and has season tickets to Texas Christian University football games.

Trip's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Stay adaptable and open to change. Success in this industry often comes from embracing new opportunities, taking calculated risks and being ready to pivot when needed."

TYLER KELLY

APPONE INC.

MANAGER OF RECREATIONAL DEALER SALES

WITH COMPANY: 11 YEARS



Shortly after being hired at AppOne, Tyler Kelly volunteered to accept the newly created recreational dealer sales role.

In this role, he quickly built a relationship with the only lender sales rep at the time, David Mitchell. They worked together to show customers how AppOne would make RV financing more efficient.

Since then, Tyler has mentored many of the AppOne sales reps and has become the go-to guy for many of the company's integrated partners.

"As the RV industry continues to evolve at an exponential pace in recent years, Tyler has contributed considerable time to working with the AppOne product development team and integration partners to create functions and features that support the diverse business models of the RV industry," a peer says.

Tyler's role initially involved one RV dealer group, but at the time of his promotion, he was handling the top 25 groups in the country.

"Tyler has contributed to AppOne becoming a premier F&I workflow tool in the RV industry with over 87% penetration in RV dealerships across the U.S.," says an industry peer. "Tyler started as recreational dealer sales rep for AppOne and was then promoted to corporate accounts manager, assigned to the largest dealer groups and finance service company relationships in the industry. In August, he was promoted to manager of recreational dealer field sales for AppOne, Motility DMS and VTR 50 (formally Opus VTR)."

The industry has taken notice of his efforts. Tyler has achieved the prestigious Reynolds and Reynolds President's Club award three times and the 300 Club award three times.

When asked about his accomplishments, Tyler says, "[I] started [my] career in banking with a passion for finance, and completed a master's degree at St. Cloud State University and exited retail banking to work as business development manager at AppOne, working with independent auto dealers. [Realizing] the potential AppOne had in the RV industry, I took on the task of marketing AppOne to the recreational business. Over the last 11 years, [I] grew AppOne into a necessary workflow solution for dealership financing efficiency."

In his free time, Tyler, a true Minnesotan, immerses himself in nature with his family, enjoying activities like hunting, fishing and camping in the woods, waters and even on the ice. It goes without saying that he's a Minnesota Wild fan.

Tyler's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"'There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, learning from failure.' – General Colin Powell"

What it means to Tyler to be a 40 Under 40 honoree:

"Being acknowledged as a leader in such a wonderful industry is an honor. The most important part of being a leader is surrounding yourself with good people. Your inner circle plays a significant role in shaping mindset, influencing decisions and ultimately impacting your success. As leaders, we move the industry forward with optimism toward a bright future."

WESLEY KOWAL

INTECH

MARKETING PROFESSIONAL

WITH COMPANY: 6 YEARS



Wes Kowal exemplifies leadership in the industry by leveraging his extensive marketing expertise to drive many successful projects from concept to completion. As a versatile marketer, Wes possesses the ability to execute every facet of a marketing strategy, from creative development to campaign execution and analysis.

Within inTech, Wes' leadership is evident in his proactive approach to problem-solving. His peers say, "he consistently identifies opportunities for growth and innovation, pushing us to explore innovative ideas and strategies that elevate our brand. His hands-on involvement in every project guarantees high-quality outcomes and sets a standard for excellence that motivates his colleagues."

Wes played a pivotal role in helping the company navigate and overcome challenges in recent years by demonstrating adaptability and a commitment to continuous learning. A peer explains that in "an extremely lean environment, Wes often faced projects that were outside of his immediate skill set. Rather than being deterred, he embraced these challenges head-on, seeking online education and self-directed learning opportunities to acquire the skills."

This self-driven approach not only allowed Wes to execute projects critical to the company's growth but also enabled him to expand his own expertise across multiple areas of marketing, according to his peers.

Wes educated himself in various areas like digital marketing tools, data analytics and brand campaigns to prevent any skills gaps from hindering projects.

Wes' adaptability and ability to learn on the job have played a crucial role in the company's growth, despite its lean structure. By stepping outside his comfort zone and staying dedicated to delivering results, he has successfully completed many high-stakes projects that contributed to the company's success and positioned Wes as a key leader within the organization.

Peers say he has inspired them with his continuous skill development journey and has fostered a culture of resilience and lifelong learning.

"Wes' impact on inTech's organizational success is clearly reflected in the company's continued year-over-year growth, even in a challenging market," says a nominating peer. "His unwavering commitment and dedication have been vital in supporting the company's resilience and expansion during these times. As a key member of the digital advertising team, Wes has played an integral role in driving the company's digital performance."

The digital marketing initiatives at inTech have led to a steady improvement in key performance metrics, including higher engagement rates, conversion rates and web traffic. These metrics demonstrate the effectiveness of the team and Wes' contributions and his ability to adapt and optimize digital campaigns in a constantly evolving landscape. His support boosted the company's brand presence, solidifying his impact on inTech's success.

"Wesley has a great attitude. He is well liked at inTech. Our customers like him. He is able to communicate with our customers and form lasting friendships, helping represent inTech in a positive light," a peer adds.

Wes has a 1-year-old son named Atlas. He and his wife, Shelby, are expecting their second child, a little girl, who they have decided to name Jade.

Wesley's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Stay adaptable and customer-focused. The industry is evolving with changing consumer preferences and technological advancements, so it's crucial to keep an eye on market trends and be willing to innovate."

NICK DUNNING

TRUMA NORTH AMERICA

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

WITH COMPANY: 6 YEARS



Nick Dunning has been a driving force behind the growth and success of Truma North America's Business Development team.

Under his leadership, the team has grown its capabilities, providing support for a range of tasks, including new product launches, project management, OEM engineering assistance and market analysis. Nick is leading the way in establishing standardized processes for product development and project management on a global scale.

One of Nick's most notable achievements has been his role in advancing product quality and innovation, particularly for the North American market. He has led several key initiatives, including the development of new products like the Truma Aventa Ducted Ceiling Assembly and the Truma Aventa + Soft Start integration.

His skill in bringing teams together across departments and locations, even internationally, has been vital in delivering better solutions for Truma's customers, according to his peers.

When asked about his accomplishments, Nick says, "I am proud to be part of the team that launched the Truma Aventa, which is the first Truma air conditioning offering in North America. I am also proud to have helped develop and be part of a team that is so focused on delivering great products and support to our customers."

Nick's leadership has enhanced the customer experience, particularly in North America, where his innovative approaches have improved product installations. By automating line audits at OEMs and increasing them by over 100%, Nick has maintained consistent build quality, resulting in a notable decrease in warranty claims and customer complaints related to installation problems.

Despite his busy schedule as business development manager, Nick remains actively involved in the industry, attending RV Industry Association (RVIA) leadership events and serving on RVIA standards subcommittees.

Outside of work, he's just as committed to his family, coaching his kids' baseball and soccer teams. When he's not on the field, you can often find him enjoying a round of golf.

Nick's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Be flexible, be persistent and believe in your goals and your mission. The RV industry can change quickly, but the end goal should always be to help create great experiences and memories for RVers."

What it means to Nick to be a 40 Under 40 honoree:

"It means a lot to me to be recognized as a leader in the industry. There can be lots of highs and lows in any job or career. An award like this gives you an opportunity to reflect on all of it and provides some encouragement moving forward."

NICK LENZO

COLONIAL AIRSTREAM

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

WITH COMPANY: 13 YEARS



Nick Lenzo consistently reaches for the gold as chief operating officer (COO) of Colonial Airstream. That is, he's committed to establishing a gold standard in customer satisfaction and promoting the RV industry.

Over his 13 years with Colonial Airstream, Nick has shown a steadfast commitment to establishing a gold standard in customer satisfaction and driving the RV lifestyle forward. As COO, his exemplary leadership has helped position Colonial Airstream as one of the top Airstream dealerships in the United States.

Nick's dedication to prioritizing the customer experience has yielded remarkable results, reflected in an outstanding Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 75.44 in sales and 74.28 in service. Under his guidance, Colonial Airstream has earned its place among Airstream's top dealer partners nationwide.

His consistent focus on delivering a superior customer experience has led Colonial to maintain the prestigious Five Rivet Dealer status every quarter since the program's inception, an honor only two dealers in the U.S. have achieved consistently. It's worth noting that while Airstream sets the standards for the Five Rivet Program, it is ultimately the voice of the customers, through surveys, that determine which dealerships earn this recognition.

Nick's leadership is highly valued within Airstream, as evidenced by his role on the Dealer Leadership Council, where he serves as a model for others in the industry. His adaptability and forward-thinking mindset have allowed Colonial Airstream to navigate the ever-evolving RV landscape. Whether it's embracing innovative technologies, understanding shifting customer demographics or seizing opportunities for growth, Nick's ability to monitor market trends and apply fresh perspectives has been crucial.

Emerging from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Nick has steered Colonial Airstream through uncertain times, maintaining profitability with limited aged inventory and high turn rates on Airstream products. His efforts to grow market share within his territory have been impressive, further cementing Colonial's status as a Five Rivet Dealer.

"While change can often be challenging, Nick stands out as one of the few individuals who brings a fresh perspective to these developments. While under 40, Nick is one of the best at adopting innovative technology and a fresh way of thinking," says a nominating peer.

Beyond his professional achievements, Nick is married and an outdoor enthusiast. He enjoys fishing, biking, hiking and spending quality time with his family. He also takes part in philanthropic endeavors, having participated in the Pelotonia Cancer Research fundraising ride along with the Airstream team in Columbus, Ohio.

Nick's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Work hard, support your teammates and, most importantly, treat everyone with kindness and respect."

What it means to Nick to be a 40 Under 40 honoree:

"I'm extremely grateful to be a 40 Under 40 honoree as part of the RV industry. I owe a big thank-you to those who nominated me and acknowledged my dedication to excellence."

NICOLE ING

THETFORD

SENIOR MANAGER, FORECASTING & PLANNING

WITH COMPANY: 12 YEARS



Nicole Ing is a dynamic leader within the RV industry, bringing her expertise and collaborative spirit to her role at Thetford.

As an active member of the RV Industry Association's Market Committee and the RV Women's Alliance, she consistently shows a commitment to driving the industry forward.

Nicole's leadership at Thetford shines through in her cross-functional collaboration, particularly in her work with the sales team. Here, she plays a critical role in collecting and analyzing forecasts for customer needs, ensuring products are manufactured, ordered and ready when customers need them.

Nicole leads the buyer/planner team, but her influence extends far beyond that. Her indirect leadership across various departments helps unite teams and fosters a culture of cooperation and shared goals.

Given the cyclical nature of the RV industry, Nicole's ability to deliver quick, accurate forecasts has a direct impact on Thetford's success. She has continuously refined these processes to ensure customers receive their products on time and in full, a testament to her commitment to excellence.

Throughout her career at Thetford, Nicole has been promoted six times, reflecting her impressive performance and leadership abilities. She has also been recognized with intercompany Values awards and earned the coveted "Golden Plunger" award for her contributions.

Outside of work, Nicole enjoys spending time outdoors, whether it's swimming in her pool, tubing or camping with her husband, Kenny, and their son, Lincoln. An avid cat mom, Nicole has recently expanded her family with a bearded dragon and baby chicks. Her infectious personality and ability to form lasting connections have made her a respected figure within both Thetford and the broader RV industry.

Nicole's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

My advice for aspiring leaders is to BE YOURSELF. Don't pretend to be someone you're not just because of a title. Stay humble, appreciate your team, and embrace empathy and vulnerability. Encourage your team to make smart, strategic decisions independently and motivate them to come to the table with solutions rather than complaints.

What it means to Nicole to be a 40 Under 40 honoree:

I am grateful and humbled by this recognition. I love my career, and it reaffirms that what I do every day truly makes a difference in the RV industry.

JODI KEENA

DRAGONFLY ENERGY

SALES OPERATIONS MANAGER

WITH COMPANY: 6 YEARS



As sales operations manager at Dragonfly Energy, maker of Battle Born Batteries, Jodi Keena is charged with leading a team that serves as both sales representatives and technical support. Jodi has made her mark during her six years at Dragonfly Energy and, Tyler Bourns, chief marketing officer at Dragonfly Energy, describes her as a "cornerstone" of the sales team.

"As the head of our inside sales staff, she ensures that customers receive timely and comprehensive support in building their power systems, a complex process that requires both technical proficiency and exceptional customer service," Tyler says of Jodi. "Managing a team that serves as both sales representatives and technical support can be demanding. Jodi effectively balances the workload of her team, ensuring that customers receive timely assistance and that orders are processed efficiently. Her ability to prioritize tasks and allocate resources effectively has been instrumental in overcoming challenges and maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction."

Jodi's leadership extends beyond her direct team.

"She has played a critical role in mentoring and developing new sales representatives, sharing her industry knowledge and best practices to help them succeed," Tyler says. "Her ability to inspire and motivate her team has contributed to a positive and productive work environment."

Jodi has helped Dragonfly Energy generate tens of millions of dollars in annual revenue.

"Her effective management of the inside sales team has ensured a steady flow of incoming orders and contributed significantly to the company's overall growth and success," Tyler says.

When she's not working, Jodi enjoys hiking, biking and camping. Her love of nature and adventure aligns with the lifestyle of many Dragonfly Energy customers, allowing her to connect easily with fellow outdoor enthusiasts.

Jodi says being part of a company that is "revolutionizing sustainability in the RV industry" is incredibly rewarding.

"I'm proud to contribute to a cleaner future and am excited to continue this journey," she says.

Jodi's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"The RV industry is constantly evolving, especially in technology and sustainability. Keeping up on these trends, as well as having a clear vision and strategy of where your company is heading, is crucial. And having a strong team that believes in the vision of the company."

JORDAN MOORE

MEDALLION BANK

NATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

WITH COMPANY: 6 YEARS



As national business development manager at Medallion Bank, Jordan Moore helps bring RV dreams to life by providing customers with the financing they need. Since joining the team at Medallion Bank, Jordan has worked to elevate the institution to be the premier provider of subprime and near-prime financing in the market.

"The subprime market is one of the most challenging markets in the industry," says Kenny Matthews, who has worked in finance and insurance for several dealerships. "Despite the higher rates, the company, under Jordan's leadership, has listened to the industry and tweaked their programs to evolve as the marketplace evolves. For example, the extended terms that Medallion offers are second to none. This allows credit-challenged customers to be able to purchase an RV that may be out of their budget with other lenders, within budget."

If these customers make their payments on time, they can later refinance at a lower rate. Jordan has also helped save Medallion Bank time and money by implementing e-contracting.

"The company has thrived under his leadership," Kenny says. "Innovation has been a cornerstone of Medallion Bank since Jordan joined the team."

That innovation allows him to offer top-notch training to RV dealerships, teaching them how to generate more business through financed sales.

"Jordan has been a nationwide advocate for Medallion Bank," says John Haymond, vice president of consumer lending management at Medallion. "He has been instrumental at developing the Bank's dealer group business."

That includes Camping World, General RV, Bish's RV, Campers Inn and a host of others. Jordan has spent the last several years managing 61 dealer groups totaling 903 dealership locations. The loans generated in these relationships have achieved over a half a billion dollars in financed RV loan volume.

"This is a huge value add to these dealerships, dealer groups, Medallion Bank and the RV industry in general," Haymond says, "not to mention all the joy the RV owners have experienced in going out and camping."

Jordan says developing long-lasting relationships with countless individuals throughout the industry at both personal and professional levels is a big accomplishment.

When he's not working, Jordan is an outdoorsman who loves to fish, hunt, camp and spend time with his family.

Jordan's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Get out and be involved with as many state and national industry organizations as you are able. The more time and effort you put into the RV industry, the more opportunity comes your way."

KRISTEN RAMIREZ

HAWKES OUTDOORS

PRESIDENT

WITH COMPANY: 2 YEARS



Kristen Ramirez, recently named president of Hawkes Outdoors, is described by her colleagues as a tireless leader who works day and night to help the company soar.

Her hard work has paid off with Hawkes Outdoors' gross revenue growing four times since the start of the year. The San Antonio, Texas-based company is preparing to build a second location.

"Her grit and perseverance have allowed our small company to grow leaps and bounds," says Jon McGinn, Hawkes Outdoors operations manager. "South Texas was an underserved RV and overlanding market for a long time, but Kristen has been able to create a foothold in San Antonio and Hawkes is fast becoming a dominant player in the RV market."

Kristen started her RV career with ExploreUSA RV Supercenter as an office manager in 2016, joining the team at Hawkes Outdoors in 2022 and moving from operations to being chief operating officer to the company's president in just two years. She graduated in 2009 from Sam Houston State University and transitioned into a career focused on customer service, operations and sales. She made a brief career change in 2020 but realized her passion lay in the adventure and outdoor industry. Kristen continues to elevate Hawkes Outdoors to new heights with dedication to delivering exceptional value to customers and partners, enhancing offerings and maintaining commitment to excellence in the overlanding, off-road and outdoor adventure space.

When she's not working, Kristen enjoys spending time at the beach with her husband, Luis, and her two children. She's also a voracious reader and is always looking to learn something new.

Kristen's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

1. *Actively listen to your customers. If you focus on the customer experience and prioritize their service and feedback, your customers will tell you everything you need to know.*
2. *Take care of your team! You would not be an up-and-coming leader without the team who supports you. Embody a culture of enrichment and growth, then give your team the opportunity to show you what they can do. Always lead by example.*
3. *Seek out mentors and develop your leadership skills. I personally have an amazing mentor (shout out to Brian Booker, an absolute legend in the RV industry) who has taken my knowledge and skills to the next level while giving me an opportunity to utilize those teachings in a position I love. Find those who are successful in the industry, ask questions, listen to their stories and learn from them. In addition, practice what you have learned by beginning to mentor other up-and-coming leaders. Sharing knowledge is a valuable skill!*
4. *Focus on building relationships. Spend time networking by attending events to meet other industry professionals and connect with vendors/manufacturers to understand their processes and how you can better work together.*
5. *Be flexible! The industry and your customers' needs can change on a dime. It is important to be able to adapt to any situation and have a plan to pivot if needed.*

LEIGH TIFFIN

TIFFIN MOTORHOMES

PRESIDENT

WITH COMPANY: 3 YEARS



Leigh Tiffin starts his day around 4 a.m. and diligently works — often until 8:30 p.m. — on making Tiffin Motorhomes a stronger company. His wife, Baylee, gets to see his hard work firsthand.

"I'm not sure there is anyone who's as ambitious as Leigh Tiffin," Baylee says of her husband, who's been in the RV industry for 10 years. "His desire for excellence is unmatched. His passion for customer service is top tier. He truly cares deeply about both his employees and customers."

One of Leigh's objectives is to make the workflow at his company as efficient as possible to help both Tiffin Motorhomes and THOR Industries (which acquired Tiffin Motorhomes in 2020) continue to thrive. He has led Tiffin through significant enhancements in quality and design while maintaining strong customer loyalty; successfully navigated the company through its acquisition by THOR Industries, ensuring its core values of quality and service remain intact; and spearheaded initiatives that increased Tiffin's market presence in the Class A, S2RV, Class C and van segments, positioning the company for future growth.

"He carries a heavy load of trying to keep so many people happy and content and does it so very well," Baylee adds.

"As president of Tiffin Motorhomes, I'm committed to building on our legacy of quality, value and exceptional customer service. With over a decade of leadership in the RV industry, I've had the privilege of guiding Tiffin through key growth phases while maintaining our deep connection to the customers we serve," Leigh says.

Being named to 40 Under 40 is a huge honor and a testament to the team he's had the privilege to lead, he adds.

"It represents the hard work of everyone at Tiffin, and I'm excited to keep pushing the boundaries of what's possible in the RV industry. This recognition motivates me to continue building on the legacy of excellence that Tiffin Motorhomes is known for."

Outside of the office, Leigh loves spending time with his family. He also recently became a pilot and always enjoys working out before heading to work.

Leigh's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"The best advice I can offer is to stay grounded in the values that matter most — integrity, passion and a relentless focus on quality. Always be willing to listen, adapt and evolve. The RV industry is fast-moving, and the leaders who will thrive are those who embrace change while staying rooted in their core principles."

JENNIFER MCAFEE

NEWMAR CORP.

PURCHASING AGENT

WITH COMPANY: 8 YEARS, IN THE INDUSTRY 10 YEARS



Jennifer McAfee began with Newmar in 2016 in an entirely new position for the company: cycle counting. She spent a couple years launching and perfecting the position before being promoted to buyer, where she was responsible for the day-to-day buying of basic commodities. After a few years in this position learning purchasing and understanding expediting, she was then promoted to purchasing agent, where she's taken on the most complex and line-stopping commodities.

Jennifer manages nearly 100 suppliers and more than 7,000 part numbers in her new role. Her supplier on-time delivery exceeds 95% while her shortages to the line are commonly zero.

She proved her salt when, during the COVID-19 pandemic, she managed the complexity all supply chain personnel were facing while taking on incremental responsibility of new parts.

"She jumped in to perform other department tasks and train new personnel for cycle counting," a nominator wrote.

If it's lunchtime, you'll often find Jennifer having lunch with her key receiving personnel. She's built relationships with them, and in return, they give her respect and deliver high performance. Her positive relationships with suppliers also result in maximum performance on their part. She is regularly at the plant interacting with installers and group leaders to understand where BOM [bill of materials] may be inaccurate or point out where the incorrect materials may be in use. Her nominators write it is through her proactive collaboration with production, engineering and external suppliers that she ensures accurate deliveries of all her required commodities on-time.

"Jennifer is very passionate about her position. She is continuously striving to meet the expectations of the production line while continuously minimizing on hand inventory — key metrics in the business. External stakeholders to Newmar regularly state, 'We want to keep working with Jennifer.'"

Jennifer says, "In the eight years I have been at Newmar, I have been able to advance my career multiple times, quickly. Starting out as a cycle counter, advancing to a buyer, and now a purchasing agent, I, along with my peers, consider myself a trusted resource."

Jennifer lives the lifestyle outside of work, spending time in the outdoors where she enjoys riding her ATV. She purchased a toy hauler trailer for that specific reason: so she can camp and ride. She has begun training her puppy for dock diving and has entered numerous competitions.

Jennifer's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Hard work pays off. Don't be afraid to do the dirty work. Go out on the production floor, learn the parts and the process, because it will be time well spent."

Congratulations,

Tyler Kelly!

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to our RV dealership partners over the years.

Congratulations on being named to RV Pro's 40 Under 40 Class of 2024!



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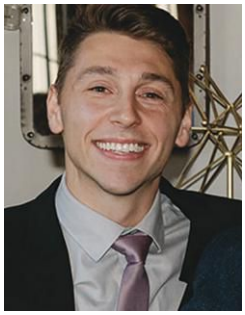
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THOMAS JOZWIAK

DUO-FORM PLASTICS

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

WITH COMPANY: 4 YEARS



Thomas lives the saying, "There's no 'I' in team." His peers say he's a driven employee and team player who cares about his customers and his fellow employees at Duo-Form.

No job is too small for him, his nominator says. Thomas is known to pitch in and help when needed,.

His charismatic personality draws people to him. His knowledge base in thermoforming make him a go-to sales trainer when onboarding new sales employees and the logical choice for hosting plant tours with prospective customers.

Thomas grew RV market share for Duo-Form Plastics by almost 20% in his four years as sales representative. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he made a rapid transition from sales trainee to sales rep and experienced significant success during a challenging time. That success has carried over year after year ever since.

He is a family man and loves to be with his wife and two young daughters, along with his cat. He enjoys golfing, playing volleyball and basketball, and going to the gym. He is also active with his home parish, St. Pius X, in Granger, Indiana.

Thomas' advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Seek truth, goodness and beauty in all you do. Do everything with a purpose and more importantly have someone worth doing it for."

What it means to Thomas to be a 40 Under 40 honoree:

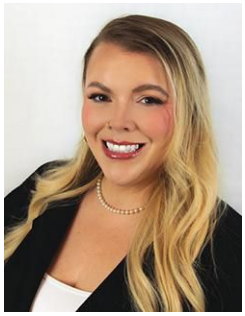
"I am thrilled to bring recognition to Duo-Form. It's an honor to be a part of the Duo family. I'm but one cog in the machine."

CASEY KING

PETE'S RV CENTERS (SOUTH BURLINGTON, VERMONT)

NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF FIXED OPERATIONS

WITH COMPANY: 12 YEARS, INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE 20-PLUS YEARS



Casey King began her career as a receptionist in the RV industry more than 20 years ago. From there, she worked her way up to general manager of a single lot dealer. At Pete's RV Centers, she started as general manager of the acquired dealership and progressed to a multilocation parts director. She was recently promoted to national director of fixed operations.

Nominators say Casey demonstrates her leadership abilities daily with her team. She is quick to identify issues that could have a negative impact on people or the company and resolves them to everyone's satisfaction with achievable solutions.

"She is process driven and documents them so that they can be understood by the employees, eliminating confusion or misunderstanding. Casey comes from an accounting family and can find errors in numbers or simplifies financial processes with continuous business process improvements."

Casey is known as one of the highest parts margin producers in her 20 Group. As the service director, she has attained an exceptional profit level for the four stores that she is responsible for.

"Casey creates a welcoming and appreciative work environment with minimum employee turnover and hires people that fit well in the Pete's RV culture."

A family-oriented person, Casey enjoys spending time with family and is the proud homeowner of a townhouse she restored herself. She is active with the local police department and helps in the community.

"Casey has performed exceptionally well in a male-dominated industry and has earned the respect of her peers, business partners and the senior management team."

Casey's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

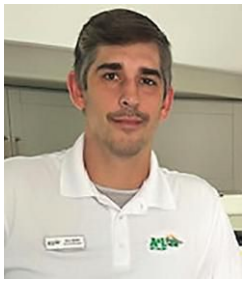
"Focus on developing strong problem-solving skills and staying open to learning. The industry is constantly evolving, so being adaptable and willing to embrace change is key. Surround yourself with a good team and listen to feedback. Leadership isn't just about managing; it's about inspiring those around you to grow and succeed alongside you."

ALEX WALLIS

A&L RV SALES

GENERAL MANAGER

WITH COMPANY: 5 YEARS



Alex Wallis' ascent at A&L RV Sales has been quick, thanks to his willingness to be hands on and go the extra mile. He started as a salesman before being promoted to sales manager, and one and half years later, was promoted to general manager, a title he earned during his five years with A&L.

For Alex, no job is too unimportant, and he's always looking for opportunities to help others. Described as having a knack for sales leadership, Alex also communicates well, is on top of things and provides valuable feedback. He has continued to grow the A&L Columbia store in Tennessee by maximizing the space they have and increasing sales.

"Alex has helped us by staying focused on our core values and what makes us different from our competitors. He has built a strong sales team as well as parts and service. He is a family-oriented person that genuinely cares about everyone at the dealership," a nominator says of him.

Alex says his hands-on approach with all departments has helped the dealership.

"I am very hands on with all departments, including working in the shop. When I was promoted to this location as the general manager, I focused on fixing their inventory situation and getting the store back on track. I have good relationships with the manufacturers, promote positive morale and create a fun work environment. I do this by being hands on with everything and showing everyone that the phrase, 'Well, that's not my job,' is not part of my vocabulary," he says.

Outside of work, Alex enjoys spending time with his wife and three children. Growing up camping, Alex and his family go fishing, camping, golfing and hunting.

Another nominator says, "He's a dedicated, hard-working, family man who operates from Christian values. He loves the RV business and our customers. Great leaders set the tone and lead the way that Alex always demonstrates. I believe to really be successful in this business, you have to truly love our customers. We are so blessed to have the customer base that we do in the RV business. Alex fits this mold perfectly."

Alex's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Always look a step ahead, and never have the words 'That's not my job' in your vocabulary. Be willing to learn, be hands on and think outside of the box. Most of all have fun, and be friendly with everyone you meet."

MIKE DEPOSITAR

ENCORE RV

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

WITH COMPANY: 6 MONTHS



Mike Depositar has been chief operating officer at Encore RV for less than a year but has already made a noteworthy impact on the company.

"We were searching for the right leadership to guide our young company and found it in Mike Depositar," says Rich Schnippel, founder of Encore RV. "One of the most notable changes was a stronger culture within the company. Our team started to feel not only the support they needed but also a sense of accountability that had been lacking between departments."

Rich says that thanks to Mike, Encore RV operates more cohesively than ever before.

"Mike quickly recognized that while we had a mission statement, we lacked a set of core values to guide our daily operations," Rich adds. "He took the initiative to meet with each department and employee, asking them what core values they expected at Encore. By involving everyone in this process, our team felt genuinely heard and invested in defining who we are as a company."

Mike has used his 11 years of experience in the RV industry to help Encore operate more efficiently. For example, while working with the company's purchasing department, Mike identified areas for potential savings.

"He introduced us to new vendors who not only helped reduce costs but also improved the quality of materials we use in manufacturing our products," Rich says.

Most of all, Mike helped to inspire a sense of ownership and accountability for the entire team.

"Mike is a dynamic, high-energy individual, and his enthusiasm is contagious throughout our company. Over the last six months since he joined the team at Encore RV, I've seen his leadership traits in action. He has a clear vision of who Encore RV is and where we are headed. Mike displays genuine empathy — he truly cares about the needs, emotions and perspectives of our team members. He also believes strongly in accountability, holding not only the team but also himself to the same high standards."

Mike says the launch of Encore's new Revue product this year was a big accomplishment while being able to maintain the company's mission of making wood-free trailers.

"It's an accomplishment to be able to make quality and composites affordable," he says.

When he's not working, Mike values family time with his wife and two children. He's also an avid golfer, enjoys fishing and has a passion for collecting and trading sports cards.

Mike's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Put the end consumer first and always be willing to learn. This industry is really easy to over complicate, but in the end, we get the awesome opportunity to sell fun and a vacation."

IN MEMORIAM

KYLE WALCOTT

MIDWAY RV CENTER

MOTORHOME SALES

WITH COMPANY: 20 YEARS



Kyle Walcott joined Midway RV Center in 2004 at 15 years old, tasked with cleaning up shop and detailing RVs. It didn't take long for the dealership to see that Kyle was very good at his job, says Sales Manager Dave Ballast. He was naturally a good mechanic, too, making minor repairs to the rigs he detailed.

"It also didn't take long to notice his outgoing personality," Dave says. "He quickly caught on to all things of the RV world and had aspirations of moving some day to the sales staff."

Once out of high school, Kyle took business classes at a local university while selling for Midway part-time and taking on a management role.

"Who better to manage the detail team than someone who was as fussy as Kyle?" Dave says. "His cars were always spotless, as well."

During that time, Midway hired another "just as fussy" detailer named Colleen — a perfect match for Kyle, Dave says. The two married shortly after Colleen left for nursing school and eventually they had two children — a daughter and a son.

Kyle continued to learn more about the RV business, specializing in travel trailers and fifth wheels for a few years before joining Midway's motorhome sales team. Within a short time, he was consistently a top Newmar salesman.

"Having worked through different areas at Midway, Kyle was a friend to all of us. We all loved who he was and what he brought to our dealership and our customers," Dave says.

Kyle's battle with cancer started after Thanksgiving of 2022. A scan revealed a tumor near his brain and spinal column, prompting immediate surgery that exposed a rare form of cancer and left Kyle with impaired vision. Over the beginning of 2023, he endured aggressive chemotherapy and radiation treatment. By late April, he was able to return to work with some physical limitations.

"He never complained. He still cared for his customers and was still the personality of our showroom — he simply did it typing with one hand and using a walker," Dave says. "His smile remained, and his strong faith was a testimony to many."

Over the next year, Kyle received chemo treatments every six to eight weeks. Side effects would take him out of the office for nearly a week, but then he would return smiling and happy to be at work, Dave says. His doctors seemed content with his progress throughout 2023.

It was early 2024 when Kyle started to experience less mobility and balance, among other prediagnosis symptoms. By March, Dave says his team's fears were realized. The chemotherapy hadn't stopped Kyle's cancer from returning, and over the next few months, his body had used its remaining strength.

"But through it all, Kyle continued to be Kyle. Rarely complaining and usually smiling," Dave says.

Kyle Gordon Walcott passed away on June 27, 2024, at 35 years old. He was a devoted husband and father, his obituary says, with a love for his family that was evident in every aspect of life. He was an active member of Providence CRC, where he was a leader and singer, and enjoyed being outside in God's creation — especially camping, hunting and snowmobiling.

Kyle is survived by his loving wife, Colleen, and two children, daughter Nora (who just turned 5) and son Cade (2.5 years old).

MATT EPPERS

GRAND DESIGN RV – TRANSCEND

PRODUCT MANAGER & NATIONAL SALES MANAGER

WITH COMPANY: 1 YEAR, INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE 7 YEARS



Matt Eppers has only been in his current role at Grand Design RV since November 2023, but he was making his mark in the industry long before he became product and national sales manager of the company's Transcend brand.

During his seven years in the industry, Matt has become recognized for making RVing more accessible to a wider audience.

"By focusing on affordability and customer satisfaction, he has influenced industry trends and set a new standard for what RV consumers can expect," says Tony Lizzi, general manager of Grand Design RV. "His leadership is not only about product excellence but also about fostering a community of loyal customers who feel truly connected to the brand."

Matt came to Grand Design with an impressive track record.

"If you look at Catalina, where he was the national sales and product manager just prior to accepting the role at Grand Design, that brand is up 36.4% in market share," says Destiny Tolliver, inventory manager at Campers Inn RV.

Catalina was the 20th-ranked travel trailer brand when Matt started at Catalina. As of June this year, they were ranked 11th. Matt is making moves with Transcend, too.

"His deep market knowledge and intuitive approach to product development have positioned Transcend as a top choice for budget-conscious RVers, without sacrificing quality or features," Tony says.

Matt has been pivotal in helping Grand Design RV navigate significant industry challenges, including supply chain disruptions and economic pressures.

"By leading efforts to optimize materials and components for the Transcend line, Matt ensured production stayed on track without sacrificing quality," Tony says. "In response to rising inflation, he expanded the Transcend product line to include more affordable models, making RV ownership accessible during tough economic times. His focus on innovation and customer satisfaction has also helped maintain strong customer loyalty, keeping the Transcend line competitive and relevant. Through his proactive leadership, Matt has helped Grand Design RV overcome obstacles and emerge stronger, with a product line that continues to lead the market."

Matt also serves on the Michigan RV and Campgrounds (MARVAC) board of directors as a manufacturer representative.

When he's not working, he enjoys playing pickleball, golf and spending time with his family. Walking the Camino de Santiago — a Catholic pilgrimage in Spain — in 27 days (one day less than his brother) is a big life accomplishment, he says.

Matt's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"First, find a great role model, and second, learn something from everyone and every situation that you work with or encounter. Some teach you what to do, and some teach you what not to do, but the key is to learn and grow every day. And then realize that this is a team game — it takes a team to win!"

MATT VEURINK

VEURINK'S RV CENTER

GENERAL MANAGER

WITH COMPANY: 14 YEARS



As general manager of Veurink's RV Center, Matt Veurink is charged with overseeing the entire Michigan-based, family-owned and operated company across two locations.

Before taking his current role, Matt led the sales team, during which time RV sales for the company nearly doubled, rising from an average of 350 to more than 600 vehicles per year. One year, the company sold nearly 800 units.

"It's clear his leadership has driven impressive growth," says Mollee Veurink, who works with the company's marketing team.

What stands out most about Matt's leadership, however, is his focus on taking care of his employees. To improve employee retention, Matt has an open-door policy and fosters a culture of communication, striving always to be accessible to his team.

The company hosts a variety of events like baseball games, cottage parties, cornhole tournaments and potlucks to boost morale and help employees build relationships outside of work.

Furthermore, to make sure a person is a good fit for the company before they join the team, Veurink's RV Center has an in-depth interview process that focuses on conveying company culture and values.

Though employee retention is important to Matt, he is still eager to see his team members soar.

"He is deeply committed to the development of his employees, not only providing them with the tools for success within the company but also supporting their growth beyond it," Mollee says. "Notably, he has mentored two individuals who have gone on to start their own businesses with the skills and training they received under his leadership."

Matt is actively involved in the RV Industry Association (RVIA). He has participated in RVIA's Emerging Leaders Coalition, where he was a featured speaker at its leadership summit, and RVs Move America Week events. He enjoys speaking at industry leadership conferences where he can share his insights.

Matt's hobbies demonstrate why he's the perfect person for his job. He enjoys hunting, boating, camping and hiking. His recent 4,000-mile motorhome trip to explore national parks shows his passion for travel and spending quality time with his family.

Mollee says, "He really enjoys blending his personal interests with his professional life, creating a fulfilling and balanced lifestyle."

Matt's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

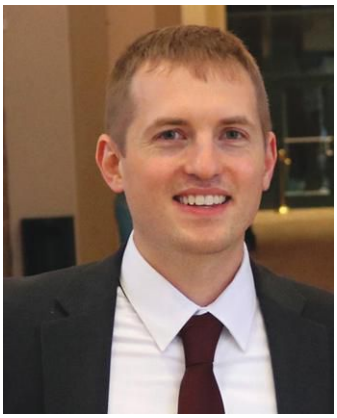
"Continue to strive to make this industry better. We have a responsibility to make this industry better every single day and provide our customers with an amazing experience. We can't grow this industry without our customers — we need to show them RVing is a way of life!"

JEREMY YODER

JAYCO

DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING – MOTORHOMES

WITH COMPANY: NEARLY 14 YEARS



What Jeremy Yoder does at Jayco is mostly behind the scenes. Most people won't recognize how important Jeremy's role is until something goes wrong with the electrical on their motorhome — but considering the complexity of the components inside what is essentially a home on wheels, electrical engineering is essential.

"This award is so well deserved for someone whose role is typically behind the scenes. In this industry, sales/product development is most celebrated," a nominator wrote.

Born and raised in Elkhart, Indiana, Jeremy was always around the RV industry. His father, grandfathers, uncles and friends all worked in RV manufacturing.

"I'm thankful for support from my family that gives me opportunity to learn and grow," Jeremy says. "I'm curious to know how things work and find satisfaction in improving them, whether that be a machine or a process."

In his current role, Jeremy leads internal product development to correct decisions, staving off shortsightedness for the greater good of consumer experience and quality execution.

He leads a team of electrical engineers of all ages, showing them the path to success and fostering trust with his team.

"He displays strong leadership in navigating challenges with poor electrical system execution (decisions that were made before he had oversight/was responsible for correcting the problems). He brings premium products to his team with success in getting them spec'd in units and overseeing the quality execution in engineering, customer service. He does well at aiding the product development team's understanding of new solutions."

One nominator writes that from the vendor side, "it's unanimous — Jeremy Yoder is the best electrical engineer in the industry, ask any vendor. He leads all vendors toward a path of quality and success."

For fun, Jeremy enjoys cycling, travel, concerts and the occasional football game.

Jeremy's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Leadership is a journey for every individual. There is no shortcut, no quick fix. You must learn how to work with people and how to get them to work together for a common goal. Talk to people in your organization and your network, find books and articles to read. I still have a lot to learn myself. I'm convinced that good leadership is the key to success for individuals, business and the community, all by providing solutions that satisfy customer needs.

Stay humble — it's good to celebrate wins, but be sure to share recognition with people on your team. Stay hungry — be curious to learn more, be willing to help others and don't stop until the root of the problem has been addressed. Learn to work with people, practice empathy and read some psychology — you'll also learn more about yourself."

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MICHAEL PAUL

FIREFLY INTEGRATIONS

DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

WITH COMPANY: 9 YEARS



Michael Paul is an innovator. As development manager for Firefly Integrations, he oversees all research and development of new products and is constantly exploring, planning and drafting business cases for those products. He's brought two new products to market in the last 10 months.

Michael believes the key to success as a leader is encouraging his team to be innovators. too.

"I believe in empowering my team members to take full responsibility for their areas of expertise, which has led to greater innovation and efficiency across our projects," Michael says.

Marketing Content Specialist Amani Simon describes Michael's leadership style as transformational.

"He has fostered an environment of ownership and accountability among his team members through culture-building and personal interactions," Amani says. "This has given Firefly Integrations' app group the autonomy to adopt new technologies and the embedded screen team the freedom to explore and implement a new, more advanced program. By giving them the tools, resources and support they need to succeed, he has created the space for everyone to excel and deliver exceptional results."

Michael's team's employee retention rate has reached 100% since he implemented major initiatives that improved project management and fostered a more collaborative work environment. This is especially notable, considering the industry average turnover rate for embedded engineers is 21.7%.

The innovation Michael has inspired within his team resulted in the use of complex new technologies, which have set a new standard for Firefly's products.

"By giving his team the freedom to think innovatively, they can adapt quickly, overcome challenges efficiently and deliver high-quality results," Amani says.

Michael has held many different positions at Firefly Integrations. He began in 2015 as a technician, focusing on integrating and testing A/V control systems. In 2017, he advanced to engineer, where he developed embedded systems and hybrid web apps. Michael then led a department of 15 people as engineer manager, concentrating on mobile app and future product development.

Since November 2023, Michael served as development manager at Firefly Integrations. In this role, he leads multiple teams, including app developers, embedded developers and graphic designers.

Outside of work, Michael spends time outdoors camping and gardening with his wife and three children. Even when he's not at the office, Michael is helping others. He serves as a financial coach for individuals and families looking to build sustainable budgets.

"This same drive to help others succeed is a core part of what makes my role as a manager so fulfilling," Michael says. "I'm able to support my team in reaching their goals and navigating obstacles."

Michael's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"My favorite leadership quote right now is 'People over projects.' It emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the well-being and development of team members over the success of any individual project."

MICHAEL WURTH

WILKINS RV

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

WITH COMPANY: 6 YEARS



Michael Wurth may be the human resources (HR) manager at Wilkins RV, but this only scratches the surface of all he does for the company.

"He has served as my right hand," says Brian Wilkins, third-generation owner of Wilkins RV. "Mike does everything for me ranging from accounting, miscellaneous projects, report creation, as well managing his department. Mike is an invaluable member of the corporate team."

Michael helped Wilkins RV navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, economic roller coasters and hiring challenges, all while building a stronger team of leaders, reducing turnover and recruiting costs. During the pandemic, he single-handedly developed a COVID-19 handbook that the company later shared with other dealers.

In the face of the recent economic downturn, Michael was able to reduce expenses by 15% without compromising quality or workforce morale. He also led the adoption of AI-based technologies that increased task efficiency and accuracy by 30% in key HR processes.

Michael was project manager of both of Wilkins RV's recent acquisitions of Jim's RV and Great Outdoors RV.

"Mike played a pivotal role in ensuring a smooth transition, maintaining open communication and fostering a positive organizational culture," Brian says.

Under Michael's leadership, company turnover was reduced from over 75% to 23%. He revamped the company's recruiting and interview process while also moving to a new applicant tracking system that saved the company nearly $75,000 in recruiting costs.

Michael manages a two-person HR department that faces the tall order of servicing more than 270 employees across seven locations, traveling to each site to help staff enrich their leadership and problem-solving skills.

"He is committed to the professional development of the organization, offering mentorship, training and opportunities for growth," Brian says. "Michael develops and leads bimonthly training sessions with managers across the organization working to develop our leaders, as well as prepare them for a myriad of situations."

Committed to his own professional development, Michael obtained an MBA while working full-time in his demanding position. He also spent 11-plus years in the U.S. Air Force, leading Airmen in multiple missions and training the next generation's leaders for four years.

"My experiences in both the military and civilian sector have given me a different way of looking at situations that arise," Michael says. "In my off time, I enjoy camping as much as possible, as well as coaching both of my lovely daughters' softball teams alongside my lovely wife, Stephanie."

He also sits on the board for Erwin-Valley Painted Post Softball, an organization of 240 girls ages 4 to 16. An avid camper, he enjoys traveling to local campgrounds in his Arctic Wolf 321BH with his family, including three dogs: Thor, Jedi and Buster.

Michael's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Always be learning and growing. Those who are not growing are dying. There are always new things to learn and innovation to be had. Be bold enough to put yourself out there and bring others up alongside yourself."

JASON FINK

VALLEY SCREEN PRINTING

DIRECTOR OF SALES

WITH COMPANY: 5 MONTHS, INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE: 12 YEARS



Jason Fink has generational ties to the RV industry. His grandparents started Summit Seating in the 1990s in Elkhart, Indiana, which operated some in the RV industry. Calling Elkhart home, Jason has worked for Lippert, Durashox and Summit Seating, where he experienced success in growing those businesses.

As the director of sales for Valley Screen Printing, he provides large format printing and graphics for major players in RV, marine and fleet, both locally and nationally. He implements strategies, procedures, market diversification and culture development within his team at Valley Screen, helping to build strategic plans for short- and long-term goals.

"His leadership is rooted in his ability to build meaningful relationships. He invests time in building up his team members as part of the leadership team at Valley Screen and is committed to having a proactive approach to building the culture at work. He stays up on emerging trends to ensure his organization remains forward-thinking. As a leader in the community, he has genuine concern for people and his drive for innovation has and will continue to make a difference in the community and the broader RV industry."

During his time on the SEMA PRO Council, Jason was part of the ASE Certification Committee that designed and wrote ASE Certification and Training Tests. He was also a member of the SEMA Rep of the Year Task Force.

"Jason is the type of leader that any company would benefit from having. He leads by example, with integrity, commitment, drive, community-mindedness and he brings results," one nominator wrote.

Jason has been recognized for many awards, including being named to the Michiana 40 Under 40 by the South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce (2011), SEMA 35 Under 35 (2020), Elkhart County Vibrant People (2019) and SEMA Young Executive Network Member of the Month.

"Within his career, Jason has been recognized at an early age for his talent and hard work in many industries including RV, automotive, marine, commercial bus, transportation, ag/turf, construction equipment and powersports."

A husband and father of two boys, Jason and his family enjoy boating, attending sporting events, playing golf and traveling. He volunteers in the community in various capacities. He has served on the board of directors for Big Brothers/Big Sisters Elkhart County and volunteered teaching financial literacy and career readiness classes for Junior Achievement.

For the better part of two years, Jason served on a committee of young professionals who ran Pillars of Elkhart, a group dedicated to revitalizing downtown Elkhart by bringing in fun, family-friendly events to downtown.

Jason's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Focus on building strong relationships and being a team player.

'If you make a mistake, use it as a get smart lesson.' — Ray Fink (my grandfather)."



CHAD HATZENBUHLER

CORRAL SALES RV

MARKETING STRATEGIST

WITH COMPANY: 17 YEARS



When you see striking graphics or a robust social media presence for Corral Sales RV, Chad Hatzenbuhler likely had part in creating the behind-the-scenes magic. As a freelance designer for Corral Sales RV, Chad provides services in graphic design, web development and marketing strategies.

He also serves as the director of communications and marketing for a university in South Dakota — demonstrating his ability to excel in leadership roles across different sectors.

With a passion for the RV industry, Chad is dedicated to customer satisfaction and promoting the industry across multiple demographics. In 2020, he took the initiative to create two Facebook communities for campers in North and South Dakota. The North Dakota group has grown to more than 18,000 members, while the South Dakota group is expanding with over 2,000 members.

"By balancing his role in the RV industry with a leadership position in higher education, Chad brings a unique perspective that can drive innovation and best practices in both sectors. This diverse experience likely enhances his ability to think creatively and apply cross-sector solutions to industry challenges."

Through his online communities and professional work, Chad actively contributes to the growth and vitality of the RV and camping industry in the Dakotas. His efforts to make the industry known across multiple demographics show leadership in expanding the market and ensuring the industry's future success.

He spearheaded the effort to bring Corral Sales' marketing into the 21st century. He recognized the need to adapt to changing consumer behaviors and implemented crucial digital upgrades. He developed and maintains a website for the dealership that keeps pace with current trends.

"Over the past decade, Chad has been instrumental in helping our family dealership overcome significant challenges and modernize our operations," a nominator wrote. "He implemented a robust online inventory system, which has been transformative for our business. This system allows customers to shop for their next RV online, significantly expanding our reach and improving the customer experience. This advancement has been particularly crucial in recent years as more customers prefer to begin their shopping journey online before visiting a physical dealership.

"Without Chad's expertise, we would have struggled to establish and maintain an effective social media presence. His guidance has been vital in navigating the ever-changing landscape of social platforms. After years of experimentation across multiple platforms, Chad honed our strategy to focus on the channels where our target customers are most active. This targeted approach has greatly improved our engagement and return on investment in social media marketing."

Chad embraces the camping lifestyle — which also influenced his professional path — spending quality time with his family in various outdoor activities. He enjoys camping, hiking, bike riding and kayaking.

Chad's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"My advice is to always prioritize the customer experience. The RV world is unique, filled with people looking to disconnect and enjoy quality time outdoors. It's not just about making a sale; it's about sharing the joy of camping and ensuring customers have memorable experiences. Remember, the best moments are often spent around a campfire with family and friends — make that experience your focus."

AMBER FRIEDMAN

ROLLICK

DIGITAL ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

WITH COMPANY: 2 YEARS, INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE: 8 YEARS



While working at ExploreUSA (now Blue Compass) as one of its top sales leads, Amber Friedman also freelanced for Rollick, creating content for its consumer blog. When she became available full-time, the company says they "immediately moved to bring her into the company."

Now, Amber manages multiple RV manufacturers in her current role as a trusted adviser and educator. She leverages her extensive knowledge to guide and teach others about the RV industry.

"Amber uses her talents and deep understanding of the industry to educate those working with other RV manufacturers and dealers on product categorization and benefits, to name a few," says one nominator. "She demonstrates strong analytical skills and focuses on solution-oriented strategies, making her invaluable to the organization."

Amber works to build and foster strong relationships with her team and customers, to earn their respect. She communicates empathetically to help provide actionable insights and assist clients in finding solutions to challenges.

A nominator wrote, "Amber is a proactive problem-solver who tackles challenges with determination and a clear strategy. She's known for addressing client concerns quickly and effectively, ensuring that high-risk issues are escalated and resolved before they impact the business. Amber manages some of our most strategic client accounts in her role, leading them with both a steady hand and a keen eye for detail.

"Her collaborative nature is one of her greatest strengths. She works seamlessly with the sales team and leadership, ensuring that client satisfaction is always top of mind. Her ability to build and maintain strong relationships has been key to overcoming obstacles, allowing her to navigate challenges with a solutions-focused mindset."

Beyond her client-facing role, Amber's deep knowledge of the RV industry has been invaluable to the entire team. She takes it upon herself to educate and empower her colleagues, boosting their confidence and effectiveness in dealing with RV dealers and clients.

Since Rollick works with OEMs representing more than 50% of the RV industry, Amber's investment in her coworkers strengthens the team and enhances Rollick's overall service quality.

Amber has earned many awards and accolades while at Rollick — including Top Achiever in Sales over multiple months — earned most repeat clients and referrals, and was recognized for exceptional RV training.

Amber loves exploring AI tools, especially tools to create creative content and imagery. She also loves art, creative design and illustration. Outside of work, she loves animals, especially her cats, Ezra, Squirt and Flint.

Amber's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Remember that leadership doesn't require a title. Embrace what makes you unique, and be genuine in sharing your story, including both your wins and losses. Offer your insights and knowledge, especially in areas you're passionate about, even if it's outside your role. Help others by listening with compassion and connecting them to the right resources. Be someone others can approach for advice, and always embody the culture you want to create by caring about others and supporting their growth."

NATHAN MUELLER

BLUE OX & HESSE ENTERPRISES

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

WITH COMPANY: 10 YEARS



As chief financial officer (CFO) at Blue Ox & Hesse Enterprises, Nathan Mueller does much more than accounting. Mike Hesse, CEO of Blue Ox & Hesse Enterprises, notes that Nathan actively engages in production, pricing and sales, and over the past few years, has emerged as a steady leader at the company's plant in Pender, Nebraska.

"Although initially a reluctant leader, Nathan has stepped out of his comfort zone to mentor and advise others within the plant and throughout the community," Mike says. "His leadership extends to working closely with suppliers and dealers to ensure that our products and services consistently meet customer needs."

Nathan started his tenure at Blue Ox & Hesse Enterprises in 2014 as an accounting manager. Two years later, he was promoted to director of finance and in 2020 was tapped to be CFO.

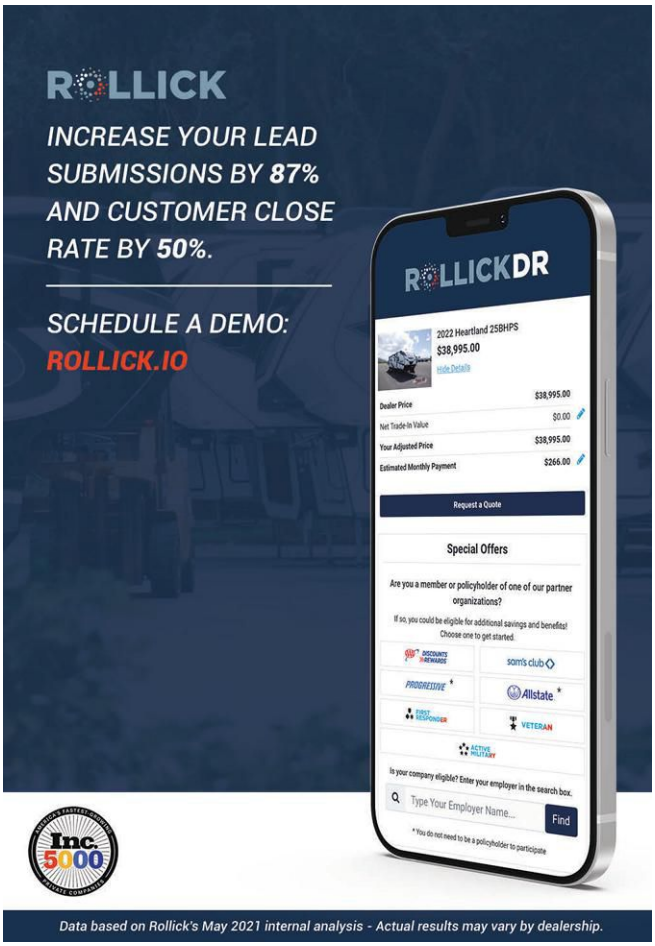
Nathan played a pivotal part in helping Blue Ox & Hesse Enterprises navigate economic downturns.

"When the RV slowdown began, Nathan was the first to raise concerns about controlling spending," Mike says. "As the situation evolved into an RV recession, he was instrumental in rightsizing our business and inventories while maintaining our commitment to customer service. Thanks to Nathan's efforts, Blue Ox is well-positioned to capitalize on even more business in 2025 and beyond."

But Nathan isn't all about numbers — he values a healthy company culture too.

"He helps to cultivate an environment where everyone feels they are contributing, valued, and heard," says Human Resources Manager Tricia Luber. "Nathan's door is always open. He will always stop what he is doing to say hello, greet new employees during introductions, and guide those who need it. Nathan's leadership is above any I have ever experienced."

When he's not working at Blue Ox & Hesse Enterprises, Nathan is usually hard at work somewhere else. He helps his father and brother farm roughly 5,000 acres of corn and soybeans, and he's president of his neighborhood's Grocery Store Co-Op board. His kids' extracurricular activities also keep him busy.





AMY VERWEY

OWASCO RV CENTRE

GENERAL MANAGER

WITH COMPANY: 12 YEARS



As the general manager for Owasco RV Centre, Amy Verwey is not afraid to roll up her sleeves and get to work. She's familiar with almost every role, having held nearly every position as she worked her way up to general manager.

"During department shortages, you can find Amy behind the counter stepping in to support her team side by side, whether it is making parts sales, writing service ROs or cleaning RVs to get a rental unit out on time. Amy is always stepping up to support her team any way she can."

Amy focuses on developing and promoting from within, helping her employees set personal goals and using internal metrics to monitor performance. She provides consistent personalized feedback to help her team members grow, many of which have developed from entry-level roles to current management roles.

Amy has been working in the industry since she joined her family dealership right out of high school. From there she moved to Europe, where she worked as a travel agent selling motorhome vacations to Canada.

After returning home, she spent a few years working in parts, not long before being promoted to parts manager. At that point, Amy began exploring options outside of the family business, applying for roles in western Canada. She took various roles with other dealerships before returning home.

"Over the past few years, Amy has primarily focused on her team, knowing that a happy and fulfilled team provides a better customer experience. In addition to this, she has also focused on partner relationships, working closely with the factories to ensure her store has the right product mix and supply for the current market demands."

Not immune to the challenge of hiring quality and consistent team members, Amy implemented her own internal career paths, training logs and goal-setting to drive local demand for applicants to join her team.

When Amy took over as general manager in 2018, the business had only 20 team members. Today, that number has grown to just under 50 team members with a current turnover ratio of only 5%. In addition, 40% of her team is made up of women who came from careers outside of the RV industry.

Amy is an advocate for the RV industry, working closely with local high schools, colleges and universities, engaging with students to showcase and encourage career paths in the industry.

Outside of the dealership, Amy was recently asked by Jayco's executive team to join their dealer advisory council. She also sits on the Ontario RV Dealers Association's government relations committee and was a past member of her local tourism committee.

When she's not working, Amy enjoys spending time with her two kids, along with reading, traveling and sports such as running, swimming, waterskiing and snowboarding.

Amy's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"When it comes to team building, my favorite quote is 'Chemistry is better than talent.' You can coach talent; you can't coach chemistry."

BEN HOLDREAD

FOREST RIVER

PRODUCT MANAGER

WITH COMPANY: 11 YEARS



Ben Holdread took over as sales/product manager for Forest River's Surveyor brand during the pandemic when the industry was booming and volume seemed more important than the staple traditional floorplans Surveyor was known for. At a time when it would have been easy to sit back and rest on his laurels, Ben worked tirelessly to get ahead of the market as it transitioned, and the bubble seemed to burst.

He completely overhauled the product and returned to what Surveyor had long been known for, being one of the industry's first fully laminated aluminum brands. Because of his effort and the departure of another product manager, Ben was also given responsibility over RPOD. As regional sales manager of both brands and growing three different territories, Ben has an authentic pulse on what the brands truly are.

"He has done the same to RPOD and 2025 is sure to turn heads, just as Surveyor has been doing. Ben has truly put his touch on two of the strongest brands available today. The stats have shown both growth in market share in a down market and growth in overall standings by units shipped and retailed. Outside of the metrics, what is often not measured, is simply the efforts and talent being displayed daily that is recognized by colleagues and competitors. It is a tight-knit industry and even though we compete, we are all working hard to see this industry succeed and he gets it."

He leads by example and doesn't put himself above his peers. Nominators say he comes to work with an unmatched work ethic and a positive attitude daily. Ben says his biggest accomplishment so far is helping create a strong team of amazing people who not only want to win but also care about the way they do it and the products that they're creating.

"He is respected by coworkers in his division and others. His efforts are recognized by colleagues and the competition. He has a passion for delivering the best possible product day in and day out. Most importantly, if your effort is there, he is behind you 100%, understanding it is a cumulative effort. He is inclusive, decisive and, in an industry of egos, he checks his at the door. He is, without a doubt, the type of person that pushes our industry forward and has been doing it for more than a decade."

Ben is a family man who loves spending time with his wife and two girls. He enjoys playing and coaching sports, swimming, hanging out at the lake with family and playing a round of golf with his dad, buddies or customers. He also volunteers at school, church and in the community whenever he is able.

Ben's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Try to surround yourself with driven, kind and humble people who will help you build your business the right way. Treat your teammates, customers, etc., with respect, and build those relationships on your honesty and hard work. Fiercely lead by example and never settle. Do something to improve yourself, your team and your position on the path to your team's success every day. Most importantly, learn to really listen to other people, accept criticism and put your pride aside. You can never be great if you don't learn from others."

CHANSE WALKER

AIRSTREAM

DIRECTOR OF MANUFACTURING – TOWABLES

WITH COMPANY: 21 YEARS



Chanse Walker is a second-generation Airstream associate who is described as having unmatched passion and dedication to the Airstream brand. With such a long career, Chanse and his leadership team were able to navigate the contraction of the RV industry post COVID-19.

Chanse and his team helped Airstream navigate the resulting dip in production levels with skillful management of staffing, implementing aggressive cross-training programs and repurposing of personnel to avoid losing key skills in a rapidly changing workforce.

"Chanse has been instrumental in overseeing the growth of our Lean department and company culture, instituting a rewards program that has resulted in significant cost savings for the organization. He managed a Lean-focused internal training program that resulted in nearly 2,000 training guides for our production associates."

Chanse was a key voice in the process as Airstream constructed a new manufacturing facility for travel trailers that opened in 2020. Since moving to his role as director of manufacturing, the production processes have improved, resulting in higher quality metrics and lower warranty costs. He worked his way up from the production floor, earned his engineering degree and held positions in product development and as the leader of the Lean/Continuous Improvement department before recently taking over as director of manufacturing for the towables division, Airstream's largest manufacturing group.

Chanse says his biggest accomplishment is personally being involved in Airstream's growth over the years. While the journey hasn't always been easy, he says the good days far outweigh the bad. As a leader, he notes it has been rewarding to see team members advance their own careers as they're promoted within the company.

"Having started at Airstream barely old enough to vote and going from assembling trailers to currently leading that same trailer plant is incredibly humbling," he says. "It is truly an honor to be nominated by the people I work with — the Airstream leadership team."

In his spare time, Chanse and his family are active in the outdoors and have a passion for fitness and well-being, even converting their barn into a fitness center.

Chanse's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Don't forget the roots you came from — we are all human, given life and owed nothing. Go into everything you do with standards you refuse to lower, have a high moral code and be respectful to everyone no matter their stature. I learned early in my career, as a leader you take care of the people who take care of you. The people you lead every day deserve the support and respect from you to help them be their best every day, but also want to be their best every day."

CODY NUSS

JOHNSTON RV CENTER

HEAD OF OPERATIONS

WITH COMPANY: 8 YEARS



If you've been around the RV industry for even a short time, you understand how heated and charged conversations around service and warranty can get when customers come in with a unit for service at a dealership.

"Anyone who knows Cody well or has watched him work has noticed his ability to remain open, fair and to not allow the emotions of the situation to dictate the outcome of the situation. His ability to lead our service personnel through the challenges that the RV service industry can present — needless to say, that's proven to be an incredibly valuable skill, one that influences our staff to learn as he leads by example."

Cody has worked to foster a team of technically skilled individuals who demonstrate respect in customer relations and problem-solving. As head of operations, Cody has stepped in to lead the dealership's Decatur, Alabama, service department. This was in the height of the COVID-19 boom, when service departments everywhere were stretched thin.

"Over the course of two years since that change, Cody created a positive work environment that utilized organization and process to whittle down the stress chokehold that had seized the service department."

He also created a KPI process that challenged the service staff while holding them accountable. Nominators say he has built a blueprint for success in the Decatur service center that he is working to implement in the dealership's Cullman, Alabama, service center as well.

"He fosters a team environment in which each staff member is acutely aware of the effect their overall work has on every other individual in the department. We have witnessed occasions where a staff member has identified a performance issue and worked to figure out the problem and resolve it with his coworker so the service department could function at its highest level."

Since Cody has taken over as head of operations, the store has seen a 58% increase in profit since 2019, a 24% increase in retail service work and a 54% increase in average RO cost.

"Since he has managed our service department directly, we've increased profits by 6.5% over our banner year in 2021, while also decreasing expenses 6.5%. Sustaining this kind of growth and expense control in a post-COVID environment is phenomenal and unexpected as RV sales were not able to maintain that trend."

Cody manages people just as well, raising up other leaders within the company. He selects associates to cross-train in various positions.

Cody received the Johnston RV Center Employee of the Year award in 2023. Outside of work, he spends time with his wife and kids skateboarding and biking on their city's local greenways. He is an avid reader and musician, loves to golf and is a UFC fan who loves to grill steaks on a good fight Saturday.

Cody's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Listen more. The pursuit of a team is to accomplish a goal together. This happens when we as leaders communicate a clear vision and why that vision is important to not only serve our customers and the company at large, but also each individual team member. Once the goal is understood, we need to listen to our team as we discover impediments, allow our team members the freedom to propose solutions to those impediments, and support our team members as we all attempt to implement and execute those solutions."

EMMA STARETT

MOUNTAINEER RV & OUTDOOR CENTER

MARKETING ADMINISTRATOR

WITH COMPANY: 6 YEARS



A natural leader, Emma Starett graduated high school with more than 35 credit hours of college courses. She then graduated college Magna Cum Laude in two and a half years, with a four-year degree in business and marketing. At the age of 19 and with an entrepreneurial spirit, she launched her own marketing business dubbed East Marketing before joining Mountaineer RV & Outdoor Center.

Mountaineer RV & Outdoor Center is young itself, having just completed its sixth year in business and having opened a second location in 2023. Emma contributed to the marketing of the second location's branding campaign through geo-fencing, ad campaigns, digital footprints and video content creation.

"Emma has a very organic approach that depicts her abilities and skill set," a nominator wrote. "Upon launching the second location for Mountaineer RV, the company faced challenges in gaining traction of this new location with its local and surrounding communities. Emma began an all-out pursuit of an innovative branding campaign that has been of great success. The customer base has extended far beyond the regional area of West Virginia, well into Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky and North Carolina within a short year's time period."

In her role, Emma manages a quarter-million-dollar marketing budget and is responsible for the overall direction of Mountaineer RV's marketing tactics and platforms, including two Facebook accounts, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, content creation, ad design and campaigns, plus overall website and Google business accounts for each location.

The marketing initiatives Emma has employed have no doubt helped lead to Mountaineer RV recently being nominated as one of the Top 50 RV Dealers in the nation. Her "Experience the Difference" campaign has targeted families searching for something different while saving money overall.

"Within one year's time, our marketing efforts, driven by Emma, have reached millions across the platforms. These efforts have reached all up and down the East Coast, leading West as well and expanding our customer base. We are thankful to have Emma's leadership and innovative abilities driving behind the scenes to show exactly who Mountaineer RV is and what we have to offer the RV industry."

Emma looks to draw other young people to careers in the industry by guiding young interns under her, with a heart to pass along the skills she has acquired.

Emma loves to spend time with her friends and family outside of work. She is a talented singer, as well as being gifted with music and instruments. She enjoys a beautiful sunset, loves to laugh and enjoys people.

Emma's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Never stop learning. I would advise them to try every avenue on any project, task and/or endeavor, to see what works best for them and their company. Do not fear the errors and mistakes that come with trying new tactics, for this will only improve and narrow what makes your business uniquely stand out and compete with those around you. Even outside of the RV industry, it is important to seek out continuous knowledge to become a successful, efficient and trustworthy leader."

GRANT SMITH

WINNEBAGO

PRODUCT MANAGER – TOWABLES

WITH COMPANY: 6.5 YEARS



When he began with Winnebago in 2018, Grant Smith quickly learned the culture, product and industry, getting promoted to district sales manager until he took on a hybrid role managing a sales district and Winnebago's Minnie and Voyage lines. In 2023, he was promoted to product manager and assumed full responsibility of all product lines within the Winnebago Towables portfolio.

Grant says a big accomplishment was developing strong and lasting relationships with Winnebago's dealer network as a sales trainee and district sales manager.

Within that role and as the market normalized to post-COVID-19 conditions, Grant was instrumental in helping deliver two new products, Access and M-Series, overseeing the floorplan development and interior/exterior design of the Access series of travel trailers. The two lines maintain the market strategy and consumer expectations while offering a more affordable price point for consumers who want to enter the Winnebago brand earlier in their buying journey.

"Grant was instrumental is collaborating and driving operational efficiency within this calendar year, resulting in about a 10% labor hour reduction to reduce SKU and product complexity. This is one example where Grant thrives at the little details in product improvement, not always focusing on the 'new floorplan' or the 'next' in the portfolio of products," one nominator wrote.

Prior to becoming a successful product manager for Winnebago Towables, Grant spent five years as a successful district sales manager building strong relationships with dealers. His experience allows him to listen well to many departments while seeking to understand different organizational needs within the different departments, balancing them well with ever-changing dealer and consumer needs.

"He articulates well internally as to 'why' we need to change or shift in product strategy and leans into each department to properly support them to help meet those needs. He has earned the trust of many internal team members to follow his vision and deliver on those changing consumer demands."

Grant is an avid outdoorsman who enjoys hiking, fishing and disc golf. His latest hobby is accessorizing his Jeep Gladiator so he can continue backcountry camping trips with his wife and son.

Those who know Grant well say he is a foodie who's always looking for the next great restaurant to try out.

Grant's advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"The people you work with are your biggest asset. There is no job position or status that should keep you from getting to know the individuals you work with."

JAMES FIELD

MDC CAMPERS & CAVANS

GENERAL MANAGER – COMMERCIAL & PRODUCT

WITH COMPANY: 4 YEARS, INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE: 18 YEARS



A pattern begins to emerge when you look at many who made the 40 Under 40 list this year — most came from humble beginnings in the RV industry, often starting at the bottom and working their way through the ranks to leadership positions.

James Field of MDC Campers and Caravans is no exception. From his early 20s, he began managing RV workshops in Australia with a passion to instigate positive change, moving into a technical training role with a training institute specializing in the RV industry. From there, James joined the Caravan Industry Association of Australia as the chief technical officer. He was heavily involved in several industry and government technical committees, facilitating industry education sessions before starting with MDC as technical and compliance manager in 2021. He was recently promoted to general manager of commercial and product and is a member of the senior management team at MDC. He leads all model and product development, and marketing and technical operations for the company in both Australia and the United States.

"In his time at MDC, James has been instrumental in not only building a comprehensive range of overlanding travel trailers and campers for the U.S. and Australian markets but also building and leading strong teams with a shared passion for a better RV industry," one nominator wrote.

"James is a proactive leader in the industry, contributing his time and expertise to a number of industry boards and technical committees across Australia. He volunteers with a commitment to collaborating and advancing the RV industry."

In his career at MDC, James has contributed to the continued growth of the company in both Australia and the U.S. He was a key part of MDC USA's drive to become members of the RV Industry Association (RVIA) and the National Association of Trailer Manufacturers (NATM) compliance verification program, both of which were vital to the company's dealer expansion strategy.

In Australia, James has helped the company successfully navigate mandatory government regulatory changes covering gas, electrical and vehicular compliance requirements. MDC consistently tracks as one of the top five brands in the RV market in Australia. During his time at MDC, James has contributed to their RV range growing to more than 40 travel trailer and camper models sold in about 30 showrooms and dealerships across Australia and the U.S.

James has received many awards and recognitions, including an RV Industry Future Leaders Award finalist, received Highly Commended for the RV Industry All-Rounder Award and was selected to participate in the Standards Australia's NEXTgen Program and Roads Australia Fellowship Programs.

In his spare time, James enjoys the outdoors and spending time with his family, often going off-grid for a weekend getaway.

James' advice for upcoming leaders in the RV space:

"Throughout my career in the RV industry, I've found that maintaining an open mind for continuous learning, being consistent, accountable and diligent are essential for success in any leadership role. Given the diverse and dynamic nature of the RV industry, I believe it's crucial to actively appreciate the various sectors and their interconnections within the 'RV ecosystem,' including service providers, suppliers, campgrounds, industry associations, dealers and RV manufacturers/OEMs."





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What Are Your New Year Plans?

Set your dealership up for success in 2025.

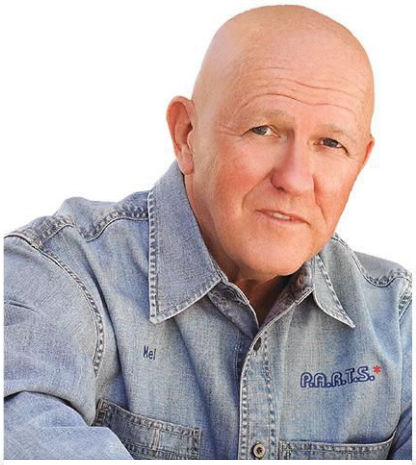
In a few weeks, we will bid adieu to 2024 and greet the new year of 2025. As in the lyrics of one of The Beatles songs, it could be as easy as "You say goodbye and I say hello…"

Yet in a business, saying goodbye to 2024 and hello to 2025 might involve several important tasks to ensure that this year ends smoothly and next year begins correctly. In this month's column, we will review some of those tasks that might be necessary to process, and we will identify other projects that could also enhance the transition from 2024 to 2025.

Your Dealership Management System (DMS)

Was your DMS installed during 2024, or have you been using your DMS for longer than the current year? This is important because if the DMS was installed in 2024, the year-end processes and functions might not be familiar to your personnel. If this is the case, then I suggest that now is the time to research the functions and processes that will need to be performed to finish up 2024 smoothly.

Whether your DMS was installed in 2024 or in a prior year, these questions



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could assist you in bringing 2024 to an easier close:

- What must you do to ensure that Dec. 31 ends one year of business transactions and that Jan. 1, 2025, commences another year? Do you "throw a switch"? Or do you answer a question in a specific file or field?
- Who is responsible for performing this function? Is there a detailed written procedure (DWP) to guide this person through the correct steps?
- Must this function be accomplished before any business transactions can be processed in 2025? And if this is the case, on what date will this be performed? Has the responsible person been scheduled to work on this date?

In regards to the parts and accessory department, it is important to know the number of months of transaction history that will be available for view and for data calculations commencing on Jan. 1. This could impact the suggested order calculation algorithms, especially if stock orders are calculated with seasonality being a factor. Are there any specific functions that must be performed in the parts portions of the software in addition to those processed for the overall DMS software? If there are parts-specific year-end functions, who will be processing them and on what date? Will these need to be coordinated with the overall year-end functions?

Personnel Scheduling – Parts Department

Do the quantity of parts department transactions historically increase or decrease during the last week of the current year and the first week of the new year? Have you scheduled your personnel accordingly?

If it is necessary that specific year-end functions are processed before any parts department transactions are posted for the new year, who has been scheduled to perform these functions? As mentioned previously, if your DMS was installed in 2024, this will be the first time that any year-end functions have been performed. Is there a detailed written procedure (DWP) available for this person's reference? If there isn't, when will you contact the DMS support department to research the proper procedure for any year-end parts department functions?

Yes, I know this might require extra effort; however, you might recall the five P's, which are: Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance.

Your New Year's Plans

Overall plans for the entire business are important to develop prior to the new year so that your personnel can hit the ground running. Since it is November, for what date have you scheduled the 2025 company plan meeting? These are some questions that could assist your management team in developing your 2025 company plan.

- Who should attend the meeting?
- What topics are included on the agenda? When will the agenda be distributed?

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- What is the anticipated level of business for each department in 2025? E.g., increase, decrease, remain relatively flat
- What changes could be planned to achieve the forecast objectives for income and expenditures for each department?
- When will each of these changes be implemented?

Since my columns frequently relate to the parts department, and since the parts operations impact each of the other departments, which inventory performance factors (IPF) have been or will be identified as needing improvement? Some possible IPFs could be:

Slow Moving Inventory (SMI) — If the SMI value is greater than 15% of the total inventory value, what plans have been developed (or could be developed) to reduce this to less than 5%? If your total inventory value is at the planned level, then any of the money realized by eliminating the SMI could be invested in goods that are better aligned with the needs of your internal customers (other departments) and external customers (RV owners). Also, important to your SMI reduction plan would be to include methods of eliminating the SMI and methods of preventing future accumulation of SMI. Please refer to my columns in this year's May and June issues of RV PRO for some information on SMI elimination and reduction.

Gross Turn (GT) — What overall gross turns are you currently achieving for your parts and accessories inventories? You might recall that I suggest an overall GT of six turns. If your overall GT are less than six, what plans could you develop to increase those turns? One of those plans could be to identify the days of supply (DOS) for your parts and accessories categories because if you are carrying more than two months DOS, then you cannot achieve six turns.

There are other IPFs that you could include in your parts department plan for 2025. Having said that, I think a review of some of these IPFs would be a good topic for my December column.

"PLANS FOR THE ENTIRE BUSINESS ARE IMPORTANT TO DEVELOP PRIOR TO THE NEW YEAR."

Why Plan?

By establishing objectives as part of your 2025 plans, as the year progresses you can more easily evaluate your performance and modify your methods of achieving any performance indicators or perhaps implement other methods. To paraphrase a line from a song by Bloody Mary in the musical "South Pacific," "If you don't have a plan, how ya gonna have that plan come true?" RVP





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IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO FA LA LA

Tips for simple holiday dealership decor.

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY LINDA CAHAN

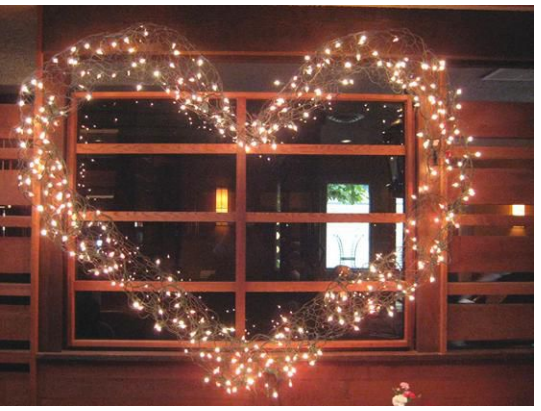
I got my start in visual merchandising working for large department stores. We would start planning for the holiday season in early spring and start prepping for the setup in September. Too much was never enough. I saw so much red at Macy's, I never wanted to see it anywhere again! The expectation customers have of RV dealerships is not of a Christmas wonderland, but there is an unconscious letdown if your selling floor is devoid of holiday decor.

If you don't have much time and/or money to spend on holiday decor, find your five prime focal points in your showroom and put something in each of those areas. Coming through your front door, write down (or photograph) the first five things you see as you scan your showroom floor. If your parts/accessories area is in a separate location, do the same for that area as well. Some of these five areas will (hopefully) be ideal for a holiday message or decor item. It can be as simple as a tree with lights or more complicated with garland on the columns — preferably with lights. Lights are the key to prettier and more festive holiday decorations. Strings of LED lights are available everywhere — Ace Hardware usually has a good selection, as does Costco and pretty much every big box store in the U.S. Please make sure the string color of the lights matches or blends with your garlands/wreaths/trees. Also, white lights are fine, mixed colors are fine — but blinking lights will make your customers and staff crazy!

Some dealerships have Christmas and holiday decor they have been using



Linda Cahan is the president of Portland, Oregon-based Cahan & Co., a consulting firm that works with retailers of all sizes and categories to improve their bottom line through affordable and appropriate visual merchandising, store design and renovations. For more information, visit lindacahan.com.



Chicken wire can be rolled into many shapes. Use thick garden gloves to shape it and add warm white LED lights — the more, the better. Hang it in your window or on a wall.

for years and years — and it looks like it. If your trees, ornaments, garlands or whatever you've been hauling out in early November are over five years old, chances are it's all a little faded, definitely dusty and probably well past its prime. Of course, the time to replace large quantities of holiday decorations is right after Christmas when the sales start.

But if you're blowing the dust off your decor this month, here are some ideas to refresh what you have by adding a few simple elements.

Lights are always No. 1, but once those are installed, ornaments are a good complement to add to any greenery. Unbreakable ornaments are your best bet for safety and longevity. An easy-to-assemble display I saw years ago could work well for your showroom focal areas. Find a long dowel or PVC pipe. Paint it with metallic spray paint (Krylon works well), wrap or loop pine garland around it, add some hanging ornaments (make sure they are 7 feet, 6 inches up from the floor), put an eyebolt on each end to hang it from the ceiling and if by some miracle you have an electrical outlet nearby, add lights! This can be a simple, nonreligious but festive element that can be used for (about) five years.

If you are running late with finding and installing holiday decor, luckily you can purchase almost anything online. But if you want to buy locally in person, you'll pay more at independent retailers and but chances are good you'll find something no one else has. If local isn't working for you, check out Michaels, World Market, HomeGoods, Target, Walmart, Costco, Lowe's, Home Depot — you get the idea. You can also try one of the many dollar stores. The secret to buying at big box stores is how you combine and use the products creatively so they feel unique to your dealership and brand.

While not everyone celebrates Christmas, pretty much everyone is accustomed to seeing Christmas decor in every store they visit. If you have a more mixed customer base, pick a color theme that says "holiday" and add a metallic color to make it special and more elegant. For example, bright red and metallic gold are classic Christmas, but if you use maroon (a darker red) and gold, it feels different.

A store I worked for years ago picked a purple/blue tone mixed with silver for all the garlands, ribbons and ornaments. It was beautiful and unusual. If your dealership has a signature color

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combination, consider using that with fun ornaments, ribbons and lights. Add a pop of metallic silver, gold or bronze in either the ribbons or ornaments. I've seen many RV logos with orange. Bronze or copper can stand in for the orange and mix it with one of your other logo colors — other than black. One company that can ship quickly is Oriental Trading (orientaltrading.com) and their prices are decent. They even have some RV ornaments, although they are priced around $20 per ornament. On Etsy, Hello Sunshine (etsy.com/shop/HelloSunshinePaperCo), a company out of Brooklyn, New York, die-cuts paper ornaments. They have a quick turnaround and do excellent work. Plus, their prices are very reasonable. I used their cutouts for a party I gave, and many people asked if they could take some home with them. (Of course I said yes.)

Inside each of your RVs put one piece holiday decor. It could be a bowl of candy canes, an Elf on the Shelf, a wreath on the door, a few red pillows on a bed, a bowl of ornaments or a string of LED fairy lights in a clear jar. I bought four dozen of battery-powered lights from Michaels' website (a six pack of LED warm white battery-operated fairy lights, 10 inches long). The only downside to these lights is that someone needs to turn them on and off.

Tip: Always buy warm white LED lights! The plain white lights are an ugly bright tone that gave early LEDs a bad name.

Consider asking your staff if they have any holiday pillows, tchotchkes or knickknacks that they want to donate to decorating each of the RV units. Will something be stolen? Probably. So in the giving spirit of the holidays, you'll live with it as long as you don't spend much money on any of the items. Thrift shops also can be an excellent source for these little pieces.

Finally, your windows are ideal for lit trees. Even one will shout "holiday" across a parking lot or roadway. If you don't have windows, a wreath will tell the story just as well.



Using a wire wreath form from Michaels or other crafts store, add ornaments, warm white LED lights, poinsettia flowers or whatever ties in with your overall holiday decor. Make it fun! If it can be seen from both sides, make sure both sides are filled with the same elements.

When you make an effort to decorate your surroundings and get in the holiday spirit, it shows your enthusiasm for what you do and people appreciate it. Wishing you all a successful, prosperous and peace-filled holiday season! RVP

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Leveraging Social Media Marketing To Connect With Your Ideal Customer

Why social media benefits your dealership and tips for how to get started.

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY SCOTT & VANESSA RUSSELL

Are you looking for new ideas to connect with your ideal customer and grow an audience of brand fans? Social media marketing is a powerful tool that can help you achieve just that. In this article, we'll explore why social media marketing is valuable for RV-related brands, how to get started and what types of content should be a part of your brand's social media strategy.

Why Social Media Marketing?

Social media marketing is crucial for brands because it allows you to sell RVing as a lifestyle. This lifestyle is, of course, possible or made better by your product. By showcasing the adventures, freedom and experiences that come with owning an RV and the products that go along with them, you can attract potential customers who are passionate about travel and

outdoor living. Social media platforms provide a direct line of communication with your target audience, enabling you to build relationships, foster brand loyalty and ultimately drive sales.

In today's digital age, social media marketing is indispensable for RV-related brands. Here are some additional benefits and advantages:

- **Building Community:** Social media provides a platform to build a community of RV enthusiasts around your brand. This can lead to higher engagement rates and brand loyalty. It's also a place to showcase product promotions.
- **Instant Feedback:** Social platforms allow for immediate interaction and feedback from customers, enabling brands to adapt and improve quickly.
- **Cost-Effective Marketing:** Social media marketing is often cost-effective and can provide a high ROI (return on investment).
- **Targeted Advertising:** Social media platforms offer advanced targeting options, allowing brands to reach specific demographics and tailor their messages accordingly.

How To Get Started With Social Media Marketing

When it comes to implementing a social media marketing strategy, you have several options. You can handle it in-house by assigning the responsibility to a dedicated team member or hiring a social media manager. Whichever direction you take, consider adding RV niche influencers into your strategy. Collaborating with influencers and content creators can be an effective way to tap into existing audiences that align with your target market. Influencers offer authentic endorsements and engagement, often generating high-quality content that attracts new customers and drives visibility. This option can be particularly effective in conjunction with an in-house position or social media manager, as it allows you to leverage the influencer's reach and credibility while maintaining control over your brand's messaging.

As content creators ourselves, we not only create engaging social media content for businesses, but we also provide brand exposure across our RV travel audiences on each social media platform. We specialize in targeted social media ads for an even greater impact. There are many possibilities for working with content creators to further your social media marketing strategy.

What Types of Content Should Be a Part of Your Brand's Social Media Strategy?

1. **Engaging Content Creation:** To capture the attention of RVers, focus on creating engaging content that resonates with their interests and needs. Examples include RVing tips, travel hacks and DIY RV projects. Share videos that showcase exciting RV adventures and encourage user-generated content by featuring photos and stories from your customers. Go beyond "selling" and offer helpful, relatable



and entertaining content that your audience finds valuable and shareable.

2. **Visual Storytelling:** Use high-quality images and videos to showcase the RV lifestyle and the adventures that await your customers. People are not just buying an RV or RV products; they are investing in a lifestyle. Your visual content should highlight how your product enhances the adventure travel experience they are seeking.
3. **Customer Testimonials & Reviews:** Encourage satisfied customers to share their testimonials and reviews on your social media channels. This user-generated content builds credibility and trust, as potential customers are more likely to be influenced by the experiences of their peers.
4. **Interactive Posts:** Engage your audience by creating informative polls and fun quizzes that encourage interaction and participation. This not only helps to build a sense of community around your brand but also provides valuable insights into your customers' preferences and



opinions. Another strategy to boost engagement and attract new followers is through contests and giveaways.

5. **Behind-the-Scenes Content:** Give your followers a glimpse into the human side of your brand by sharing behind-the-scenes content. This could include videos of the service or repair process — or as an OEM, the manufacturing process — plus your team, the office, employee spotlights or a look at your company culture. By humanizing your brand, you create a stronger emotional connection with your audience.
6. **Seasonal Campaigns:** Create seasonal campaigns that align with RV travel trends. For example, promote summer road trip essentials during the warmer months or highlight the best winter camping destinations for snowbirds. This helps to keep your content relevant and timely.
7. **Educational Content:** Position your brand as a valuable resource by providing educational content related

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to the RV lifestyle. Share how-to guides, maintenance tips and travel advice that helps RVers make the most of their adventures. By offering this value-added content, you demonstrate your expertise and build trust with your audience while also enticing viewers to hit the follow button.

8. **Influencer Collaborations:** Partner with influencers and travel bloggers who align with your brand's values and target audience. These collaborations can help extend your reach, gain credibility through authentic endorsements and provide quality content that is unique from what your business usually creates.
9. **Live Streaming & Virtual Events:** Embrace the power of live streaming and virtual events to engage with your audience in real time. Host Q&A sessions, virtual tours of your latest product or product launches to create a sense of exclusivity and immediacy. This interactive format allows you to build stronger connections with your followers and address their questions and concerns directly.



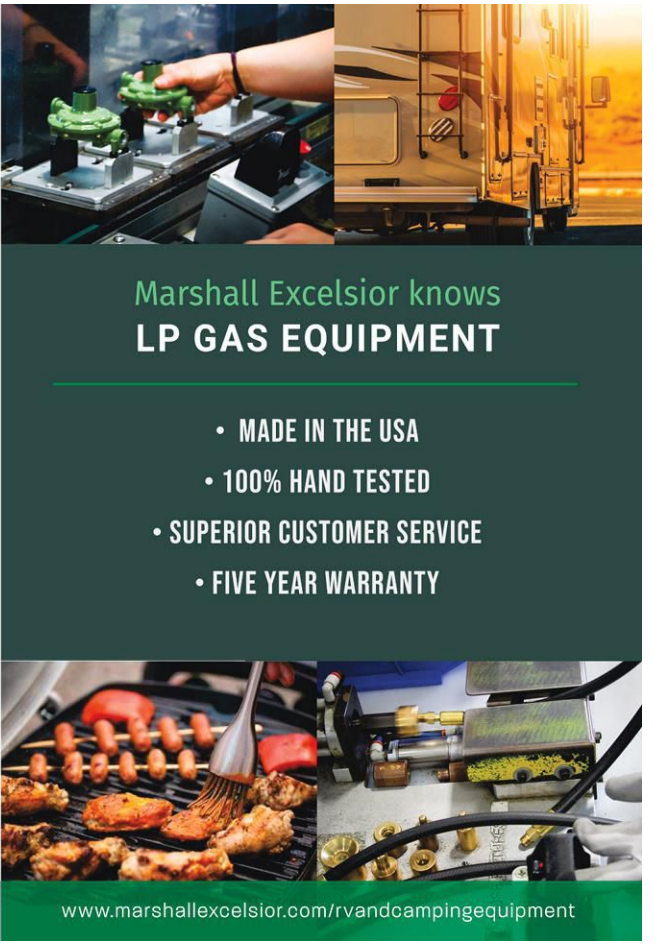
How To Streamline Your Social Media Strategy

Developing content pillars is an effective way to streamline your social media marketing efforts and ensure that you're consistently creating a variety of helpful and entertaining content surrounding your brand's niche. Content pillars serve as a framework for your social media strategy, helping you focus on key themes and topics that resonate with your target audience. By organizing your content around these pillars, you can maintain a cohesive brand message while keeping your followers engaged and informed.

Examples of content pillars for RV-related brands include:

- **Product FAQs:** Address common questions and concerns about your RV models, features and accessories. This pillar helps to educate potential customers and demonstrates your expertise in the industry.





- **RV Lifestyle Tips & Hacks:** Share practical advice and innovative ideas to help RV owners make the most of their adventures. This could include camping recipes, packing tips, RV DIY and storage solutions.
- **Customer Pain Points Your Product Solves:** Highlight how your RV models or accessories address specific challenges faced by RV enthusiasts. This could include features that enhance comfort, convenience or safety on the road.
- **Funny Memes Related to Your Niche:** Inject some humor into your social media feed by sharing relatable memes that capture the joys and quirks of the RV lifestyle. This lighthearted content helps to humanize your brand while creating a sense of community among your followers.
- **Inspirational Quotes or Stories:** Share motivational quotes or inspiring stories from the RV community to encourage your followers to embrace the adventure and live life to the fullest. This pillar helps to create an emotional connection with your audience and reinforces the values associated with the RV lifestyle.
- **Customer Reviews & UGC Content:** Showcase positive customer reviews and user-generated content (UGC) to build social proof and credibility. This pillar helps potential customers see the value of your products through the eyes of satisfied owners and reinforces the sense of community surrounding your brand.

By incorporating these content pillars into your social media strategy, you can create diverse and engaging content that attracts and retains your ideal customers. Remember to maintain a balance between promotional and value-added content, and always prioritize the needs and interests of your target audience.

Final Thoughts on Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is a game changer for RV-related brands looking to connect with their ideal customers and foster a loyal community of brand fans. By understanding the value of social media marketing, exploring different implementation options, focusing on creating engaging, diverse content and leveraging content pillars to streamline your strategy, you can effectively showcase the RV lifestyle and attract passionate customers.

Authenticity, consistency and value are key to building a successful social media presence that drives business growth and customer satisfaction. So hit the road with your social media marketing strategy and watch your brand connect with your target customers. RVP

Scott and Vanessa Russell have been full-time RVers with their daughter since 2015. They work from the road as freelance social media influencers/content creators for RV manufacturers, RV dealerships, campgrounds and outdoor brands. They are also full-time freelance RV travel writers for RV magazines and websites. Contact them at scott@theadventuredetour.com, on their blog theadventuredetour.com or on Instagram @theadventuredetour.





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Reading Your Customers' Body Language Cues

Make your customers more comfortable and build trust by reading their signs.

In these slow economic times for the RV business, salespeople are under constant pressure to find a competitive edge against the salesperson at the dealership down the street. Between learning ever-evolving product lines and their features, mastering the selling system their company has chosen to use and keeping up on the ever-changing mindset of customers who are hyperconscious of prices and interest rates, they are faced with constant challenges to sell product and enjoy commissions.

However, the top salespeople who consistently hit good numbers and make a solid income regardless of the product shortages and economic conditions that can affect all that, are doing one thing the others are not.

You may have heard the term that most successful salespeople are "canned," meaning that through trial and error they have refined and crafted an approach that seems to work with their customers, and they roll that out in exactly the same way with each one of them.



Thomas Morin is an author and owner of Unlock Your Career Coaching, a North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, company that coaches salespeople in all industries on how to build the rapport and trust that customers must feel to be comfortable buying. Contact Morin at bookauthorcoach@gmail.com.

However, the really great salespeople, those who are the best of the best, realize that every customer is different — and needs to be handled in a way that they prefer, not the way the salesperson prefers. We've all heard the saying "treat others the way you would want to be treated." But there is a saying that's been around for a while now that makes even more sense and resonates much better with today's individualistic customers. It's a saying that was promoted in Tony Alessandra's book "The Platinum Rule": "Treat others the way *they* want to be treated."

In the critical first few minutes of the meet and greet with customers, the top salespeople tend to listen a lot more than they talk and combine that with sharp, perceptive skills to read and identify the "type" of customer standing in front of them for the expressed purpose of adjusting their communications and presentations to a way that their customer finds more receptive and pleasing.

Why is this important? Because customers, like most people, are attracted to people who are like them. They're not interested in canned, robotic, rehearsed presentations. They prefer to buy from salespeople who are like them. A great start is to find ways to help your customer feel comfortable in the early stages of first meeting them, before any conversation about products or budgets, to discover what kind of person they really are.

Breaking Through Customer Anxiety

In addition, if you're like most salespeople, you likely overlook the fact that most of the customers who walk into your dealership are very anxious about working with you. Some are actually scared. Most of us have had at least one awful encounter with a salesperson, regardless of business or industry, and not only does that tend to stay with us, it also affects our customer's perception of the salesperson when they walk in. The customer's prior discomfort with salespeople also causes a great deal of anxiety and stress that affects how much information they are willing to give you, how much of that will be honest and whether they will listen to anything you say.

So how do we break through all this customer stress? None of us are psychologists or mind readers, but there is a great way to get a better read on how your tight-lipped customer is feeling, and that's by reading the nonverbal cues that are right in front of you. My observations have taught me that 90% of all salespeople overlook this with a new customer.

I would like to refer you to a great book by a University of California professor, Albert Mehrabian, called "Silent Messages: Implicit Communications of Emotions and Attitudes." In this book, Mehrabian cites a few statistics that are notable and important to remember:

- Only 7% of the effectiveness of communications is based on the actual words we use.
- 38% is based on not what we say but the way we say our words.
- 55% of effective communication is based on nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions.

Customers might not tell you that they are uncomfortable or anxious. In fact, they will seldom do so. But the cues are there if you're looking for them, and how they feel around you will directly affect their ability to be comfortable enough to trust you when making a purchase.

This reminds me of my wife, who after all these years still might not say exactly what she wants but will insinuate how she's feeling with nonverbal cues and body language. It's up to me to be aware of those cues to not miss the message that is right in front of me. Sound familiar?

In the early stages of meeting a customer, when they have not yet decided that they trust you, being more perceptive and able to read these nonverbal cues is something everyone can improve with focus and practice. In doing so, you will also increase your odds of determining the type of customer in front of you that can lead you to


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adjustments in your communication and presentation in a way that is more likeable and trustworthy to them.

At the very least, being more perceptive of your customer's body language and nonverbal cues can help confirm that what you're hearing verbally is a true reflection of how they feel. It's important to keep in mind that an uncomfortable, untrusting customer will not be emotionally capable of buying three hours later, no matter how well your song and dance product presentation is.

Look for These Negative Cues

So what negative cues are we looking for? I go through them in detail in my book, but a few here to look for are:

- A lack of eye contact. The customer looks away from you or past you. They just won't look you in the eye.
- Disinterested facial expressions. The facial expressions with some customers are a massive stop sign, and a cue to stop what you're doing and find out why they are uncomfortable.
- Body positioning that points away from you. Customers will use their body as a system of defense.
- Unusual movements with hands and arms. Customers will do awkward things with hands and arms that aren't typical of a normal stance.
- Reading a brochure or other material. Uncomfortable customers will overly focus on something other than the salesperson.

Once you sense those negative cues, pausing to address those with subtle and curious questioning is a must, because the customer might not give you another chance to help them feel comfortable, so you must grasp the opportunity to do so in those first few minutes.

What does this mean? It just means asking questions to confirm that they are feeling comfortable with what you're doing, such as:

- How are we doing so far?
- Are you comfortable with our approach, or would you like to adjust?
- Does what we're doing feel OK to you? Any adjustments you would like to make?

In order to ease tension and help your customer relax, I recommend "announcing" your planned next steps. Say something like, "In order to put you in front of a product that is perfect for you, I would like to ask you a few questions about where you plan to go and how you plan to use it. Does that sound OK?"

Customers love this, because it lets them know what is coming and eliminates the fear that you might be doing something sneaky or that might make them feel uncomfortable. Doing this is an upfront approach that all customers, especially the anxious ones, really appreciate and it can go a long way to increase the comfort that leads to them to trust you. It is important to remember that an untrusting customer will not be emotionally prepared to buy from you at any point.

In addition, understanding the type of customer in front of you can help you make adjustments to be more compatible with them. The analytical customer will want specific, detailed, fact-based answers that are backed up with written documentation, brochures or handouts. This customer prefers a professional, businesslike approach with just the facts. They are not interested in "yucking it up" for three hours just for the fun of it. On the other hand, the outgoing customer will want to have fun looking at product and will quickly get bored with an overly technical presentation.

Being a good listener, combined with being a perceptive reader of body language cues, will help clarify the type of customer standing in front of you, which can lead you to adjustments in your communications and/or presentations that will be more accepted by your customer. When this happens, a true comfort-based connection will be formed and bring the trust right along with it that must be present for the customer to be able to say "yes" to buying from you. RVP

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USING LISTENING To Increase Presence & Evolve Your Leadership

Changing the way you listen can improve communication, engagement and rapport in the workplace.



Margaret Graziano, known as the Evolutionist, is the founder and CEO of KeenAlignment, as well as a Wall Street Journal bestselling author for her book "Ignite Culture." She has been recognized as one of Silicon Valley's Top 100 Women Leaders and her groundbreaking work is driven by her power to uncover and catalyze human potential. For more information, visit margaretgraziano.com.

Being present in today's world is more difficult than it has ever been before. Everyone is constantly bombarded by emails, text messages, social media, news, advertisements and all the other distractions of the modern world.

A lack of presence, especially in leadership, can often lead to poor communication, a lack of rapport with those around you, and volatility, uncertainty, confusion and ambiguity in the workplace. One of the easiest ways to solve this problem is to understand and change the way you listen to those around you.

Most people don't focus on or participate in listening in a way that actually makes a difference. Learning to truly listen and engage with whomever you are talking to enables connection, builds trust and elevates flow across the board. When you strengthen your ability to listen, you become a better communicator. When you level up your ability to hear, you show up as somebody who is more open to feedback and who appreciates the contribution of what others are thinking and feeling.

Upleveling your listening begins first with understanding what, how and when you aren't really listening.

Listening From Obligation

When this happens, there is little to no effort from the listener, either due to various distractions or a lack of caring about what the speaker has to say. Common behaviors when you're listening at this level are multitasking, such as playing on your phone or scrolling through emails when someone is talking to you, tuning out or daydreaming, and anticipating what you think they are going to say and interjecting words for them. This kind of listening makes it impossible to develop rapport.

This level of listening also includes pretend listening, where you are not paying attention to the speaker; however, you still act as though you are listening. This listener's brain is paying attention to other things, but they are maintaining involvement in the conversation. Think of sitting next to someone very talkative on the plane or talking on the phone with a chatty family member. You aren't absorbing or understanding the information the speaker is sharing.

Listening From the Inside

This is selective listening or downloading. At this level, you are only listening for what someone else is saying to confirm facts you already believe to be true. You are listening inside of your existing context. You screen out information that you perceive to be uninteresting, lacking in value or that doesn't conform to your biases and preconceived notions. This level of listening is problematic because you only hear what you want to hear. When you listen this way, it's all too often to brush feedback aside and/or filter it out altogether.

You know you've been listening like this when you come out of a conversation and everything you expected to happen happened. This type of listening is all about you. Your purpose in listening is to validate yourself and invalidate another if they disagree with you. There is no freedom, and nothing new will be created in this kind of listening.

Listening for New Information

This level of listening is about seeking new information, new data and new perspectives. It's listening to learn. However, you are still listening for what's in it for you. You're not curious but listening to gain knowledge or get something out of the conversation. You are taking what you already think and building on it.

At this level, you are open to hearing something you haven't heard before. You have some new data points and information that challenges your assumptions. Perhaps it exposes some new content or new reality to you. Here, you can actually walk away from the conversation with a memory of what was said and how it changed your perception. You leave the conversation thinking new things or in new ways.



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Listening With Curiosity & Compassion

At this level of listening, you are really connecting to the other person. You've got an empathic, emotional connection. This is when you're listening soul to soul, heart to heart, and seeing the experience through another person's eyes. You're not only challenging your own assumptions but also actually considering that the other person's reality is valid. You get to experience that person's experience. Most one-on-ones should be done with this empathic, emotional connection. You're letting go of your agenda and having an open mind and heart, building trust and deepening your relationship with this person. You're curious.

This is when you are fully engaged and focused on the speaker's words and what those words mean to you and to the speaker. Nothing distracts you from the person with whom you are speaking. They have your full, undivided attention, and it is clear to them that this is so.

Listening for What's Possible

This level of listening is generative. You have moved beyond any friction and are completely immersed in flow. Everybody is participating. You both are in service of something bigger than the agenda and listening with an open will. At this level, you aren't just listening to the person but acknowledging the future that wants to be created. This is where innovation happens. This is where the collective genius is not just tapped into but also realized.

"THE MOST EFFECTIVE LEADERS LISTEN FROM THE HIGHEST LEVEL."

This is the highest and most meaningful level of listening and where you want to spend as much time as possible.

Listening at the Highest Level Every Time

We all need diverse opinions and viewpoints. When you listen from the lower levels of listening, which is not really listening at all, you miss out on so much, from critical information and feedback to a chance to develop rapport with your team, a loved one or even a total stranger.

The most effective leaders all excel at listening from the highest level. They make people feel valued, respected and understood. They are also always honing their skills and becoming better listeners. They continually work on opening their mind, heart and will. It's a continual process of evolution. They are present and focused on whatever or whomever is in front of them. Meaningfully listening to those around you enables you to elevate yourself as a leader, build trust and rapport, and empower the people you're listening to. Evolving your leadership and achieving optimal results begins with listening. RVP

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The Habit Hack:

Rewire Your Brain for Better Customer Service

Leverage brain science to create beneficial changes in your professional routines.

Companies invest millions of dollars in training each year. Yet even after extensive education and successful performance in a classroom environment, many seasoned professionals struggle to implement new techniques. Why? The answer lies not in a lack of knowledge but in the power of habit.

Meet Lisa, a customer service manager with 15 years of experience. Despite her expertise, she finds herself



Kate Zabriskie is the president of Business Training Works Inc., a Maryland-based talent development firm. She and her team provide on-site, virtual and online soft-skills training courses and workshops to clients in the United States and internationally. For more information, visit businesstrainingworks.com.

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stuck in a rut, unable to elevate her team's performance. "We attend workshops and get fired up about new strategies, but within weeks, we fall back into our old routines. It's so frustrating." People like Lisa and her team aren't outliers. In fact, they are very often the norm.

The culprit? Our brains. Neuroscience reveals that habits, both good and bad, are deeply ingrained neural pathways. These mental shortcuts allow us to navigate daily tasks efficiently, but they can also hinder growth and innovation.

This phenomenon is not unique to customer service. Across industries, from healthcare to finance, professionals find themselves trapped in difficult-to-break cycles of behavior. The brain's preference for familiar patterns can be both a blessing and a curse. While it allows us to perform complex tasks without conscious effort, it can also make us resistant to change, even when that change is beneficial. So how can we break free from this cycle and leverage brain science to create lasting change?

Identify Habit Triggers

The initial step in rewiring neural pathways is recognizing the habits that hinder progress. Common pitfalls include:

- Reverting to outdated business practices
- Taking shortcuts under pressure
- Becoming overly comfortable with routine tasks

Dedicate time to observing behavior. When do old habits emerge? What triggers them? Identifying these triggers is crucial to interrupting the habit loop. It's important to note that triggers can be both external and internal. External triggers might include a ringing phone, a crowded queue or a particularly challenging customer. Internal triggers could be feelings of stress, boredom or even confidence that leads to complacency. By mapping out these triggers, you create a road map for intervention.

REWIRING YOUR BRAIN IS A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT. NEUROSCIENTISTS SUGGEST IT TAKES ABOUT 66 DAYS TO FORM A NEW HABIT, SO PATIENCE IS NECESSARY. REMEMBER, PROGRESS ISN'T ALWAYS LINEAR.

Disrupt Established Patterns

Once triggers are identified, it's essential to introduce disruptions. This process is not about willpower but about creating new neural pathways.

Consider these approaches:

- Engage in positive self-reflection: Regularly remind yourself of the habits you aim to cultivate.
- Practice mindful pauses: When faced with an urge to react, take a moment to breathe deeply. This simple act can interrupt automatic responses.
- Modify the environment: Rearrange workspaces or introduce visual cues that reinforce desired behaviors. The key here is consistency. Each time you successfully disrupt an old pattern, you're laying the groundwork for a new, more beneficial habit. It's like creating a new path through a field — the more you walk it, the more defined it becomes.

Cultivate Improved Habits

Eliminating undesirable habits is insufficient; they must be replaced with positive alternatives.

Consider these strategies:

- Think about what should occur: Consider all options, not just the tried-



MARINA ZLOCHIN – STOCK.ADOBE.COM

and-true choice before responding.
- Embrace thoughtful pauses: Resist the urge to rush. Quality interactions often require patience and careful consideration.

This step is about actively choosing new behaviors that align with your customer service goals. It might involve implementing a new problem-solving approach, adopting a more empathetic communication style or using technology in innovative ways to enhance customer experiences.

Reinforce

Neuroscience demonstrates that repetition strengthens neural connections, making new behaviors feel more natural over time.

Think about the actions you can take to carve new mental pathways:
- Engage in daily reflection: Allocate time each day to review customer interactions, identifying successes and areas for improvement.
- Acknowledge progress: Set achievable goals and recognize when they are met. Positive reinforcement can significantly impact habit formation.
- Establish accountability partnerships: Share objectives with colleagues. Regular check-ins can enhance motivation and commitment.

Consider implementing a reward system that recognizes both individual and team efforts in adopting new habits. This could range from public acknowledgment in team meetings to more tangible rewards for consistent improvement.

Embrace the Journey

Rewiring your brain is a marathon, not a sprint. Neuroscientists suggest it takes about 66 days to form a new habit, so patience is necessary. Remember, progress isn't always linear. You might have setbacks, but each time you choose a new response, you're strengthening those neural pathways. Viewing these setbacks not as failures but as opportunities for learning and refinement is crucial.

"It was challenging at first," Lisa reflects, six months into her team's transformation. "But now, our new approach feels second nature. Our customer satisfaction scores have never been higher."

Understanding the science behind habits and implementing these strategies allows you to break free from old patterns and elevate your customer service to new heights.

The result? Happier customers, more engaged employees and a stronger bottom line. RVP



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EQ Systems, Cassopolis, Michigan, presents its EQ Smart-Level Hydraulic Leveling System for Mercedes Sprinter Chassis. This EQ Smart-Level hydraulic system is specifically designed for Class C motorhomes built on the Sprinter 3500 cutaway chassis. This comprehensive kit includes clamp-on brackets for easy mounting of the jack legs to the Sprinter chassis and a dedicated bracket for the hydraulic pump. This Sprinter-specific leveling system requires no frame alterations, such as cutting, drilling or welding, for installation. The system ensures a seamless setup, providing a hassle-free leveling experience for Sprinter Class C motorhome owners.

eqsystems.us



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online.meyerdistributing.com



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viantp.com



ELECTRIC JACK

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riecotitan.com







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Stromberg Carlson, Traverse City, Michigan, presents Stromberg's Family of Jacks. Stromberg's family of electric tongue jacks are available in capacities from 2,500 to 5,000 pounds. JET-2500 supports lightweight trailers pulled by smaller tow vehicles. JET-3555 (white) and JET-3755 (black) jacks support trailers using weight distribution hitches pulled by SUVs or lightweight trucks. The JET-4500 uses half the power of other jacks and features ball screw technology to ease setup and teardown. The JET-4500 and JET-5000 are great for large, heavy load trailers pulled by tow vehicles with stiff suspensions that cause more resistance when setting weight distribution bars.

strombergcarlson.com







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TRASH CAN TURKEY

Want a Thanksgiving feast, but don't have a large enough oven on the road? Try this unconventional recipe to cook your holiday bird:

1. Lay a 3-by-3-square-foot piece of aluminum foil on the grass.
2. Pound a wooden stake into the ground in the center of foil.
3. Fill the lid of a (new) metal trash can with lots of charcoal and light.
4. Place whole seasoned turkey onto the stake, legs down.
5. Turn trash can upside down over the turkey.
6. Place lighted coals on top and around sides of the can.
7. Cook for at least 1.5 hours.
8. Brush charcoal off the can and lift carefully.
9. Make sure the thigh's thickest part is 180 F and enjoy!

For more turkey-cooking methods, including using beer cans and campfires, visit **Outdoorsy.com** *for "7 ways to cook a turkey."*



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29,105 (units)
Total RV shipments

3.7% increase compared to August 2023 (28,071 units)

To date, RVs are up 8.6% with 231,817 units shipped through August

"RV manufacturers and suppliers continue to build RVs and components with **new technology and features** to appeal to today's RV buyers," said RVIA President and CEO Craig Kirby. "With RVs available at nearly every price point, RVing remains one of the most affordable ways for people and families to travel and make lifelong memories."

RV Park Disaster Relief Support

The Outdoor Hospitality Industry (OHI) Foundation is seeking support for its disaster relief efforts amid Hurricane Helene and other natural disasters occurring.

Parks must apply for Disaster Relief Funds within 60 days of experiencing a disaster, and can apply for the following:

- Up to $1,000 Grant for Interim Relief for personal use
- Up to $3,000 Grant for Interim Relief for business use
- Up to $1,000 Grant for providing shelter, food, clothing, etc. to natural disaster victims including park staff

All donations help support members of the outdoor hospitality industry. Disaster relief is 100% funded through donations.

To donate, visit ohi.org/ohi-foundation.

Convenience continues to push camping behavior, with 8 in 10 noncampers and 7 in 10 campers stating they are interested in staying at a campground where the RV is set up before arrival.

More than half of campers say they'd choose a campground with sustainability practices over one that doesn't have any — 54% of millennials are more likely to stay at a sustainability-minded campground.

SOURCE: KAMPGROUNDS OF AMERICA 2024 REPORT

I SUPPORT THE GIRLS

I SUPPORT THE GIRLS

The RV Women's Alliance (RVWA) launched a six-month donation drive in partnership with *"I Support the Girls"* — a charity dedicated to collecting and distributing essential items for women in need. RVWA's Open House breakfast, in lieu of traditional fees, collected 11,738 individual products to kick off the drive. The goal is to supply 80,000 sanitary items — enough for five women's lifetimes.

"Through an international network of affiliates, I Support the Girls collects and distributes essential items, including bras, underwear and menstrual hygiene products, allowing women and folx experiencing homelessness, impoverishment or distress to stand tall with dignity."

Members can set up donation boxes at their workplaces or shop from Amazon wish lists, directing products to RVWA's main donation sites.

For more information or to set up a donation box, contact Savannah Henry at shenry@rvwa.org.



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