

December 2021

RV PRO

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TOP

40

Spotlighting 2021's Top 40 RV industry professionals under the age of 40.

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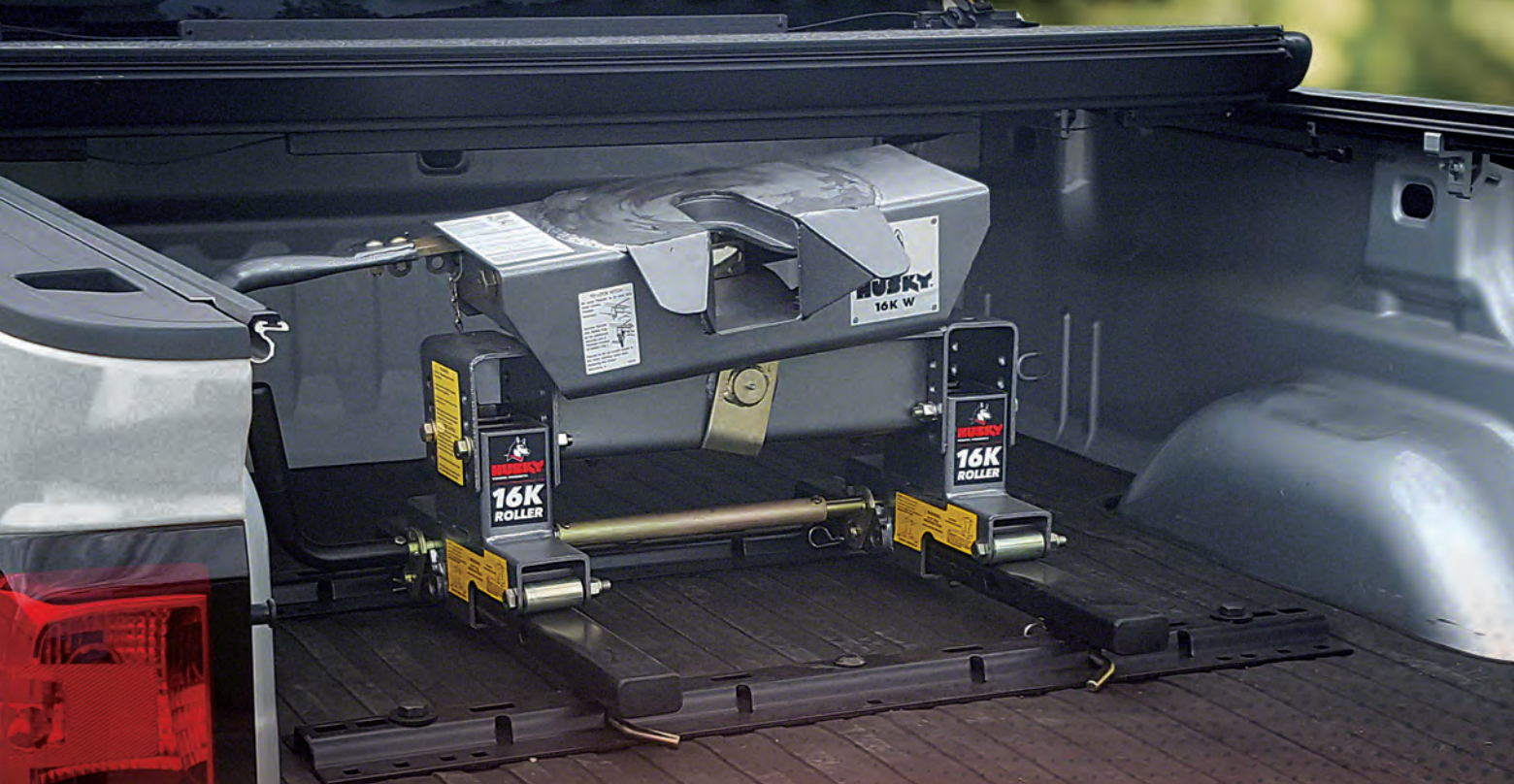
LOOK Trailers is Looking Good

Richloom: All About the Décor

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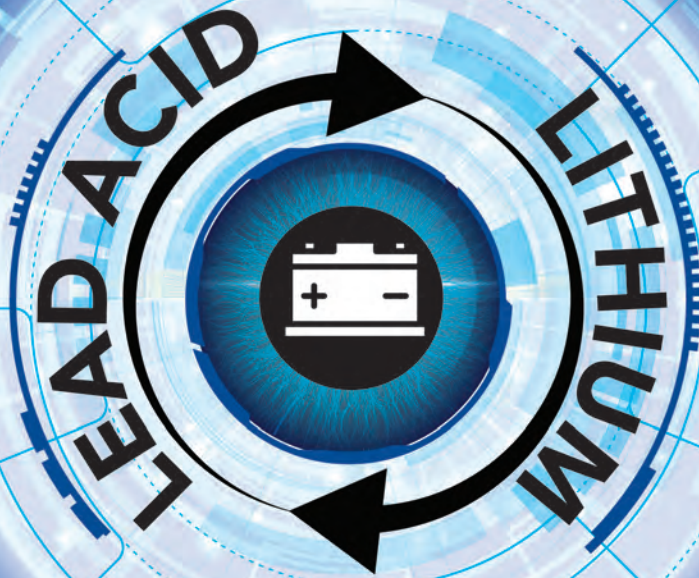
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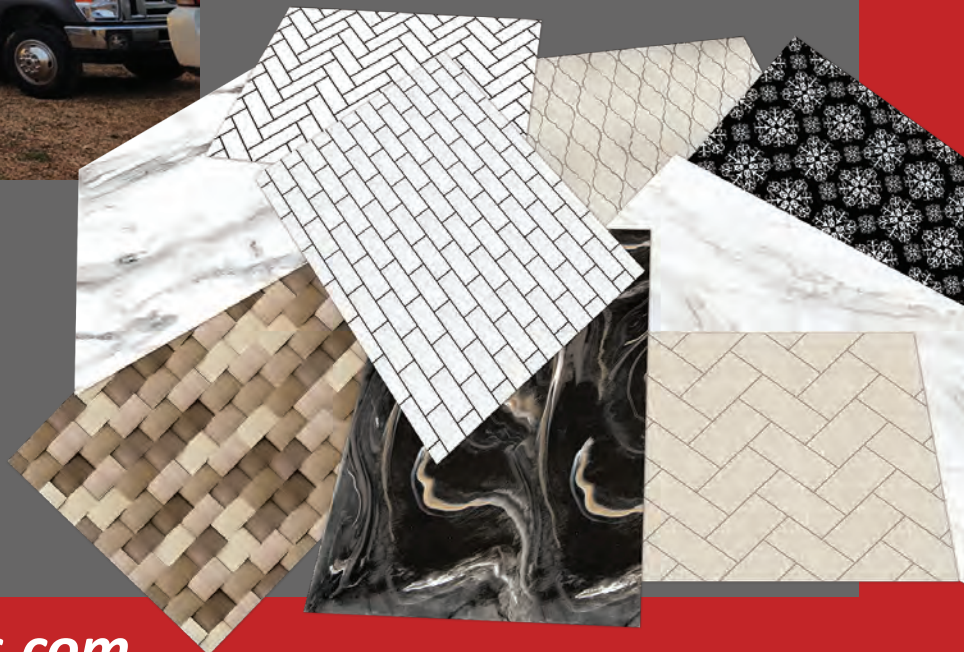
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Guest columnist and dealer consultant Michael Rees with A World of Training makes the case that sales reps need to sell customers on their dealership as much as they do on the product and the price.

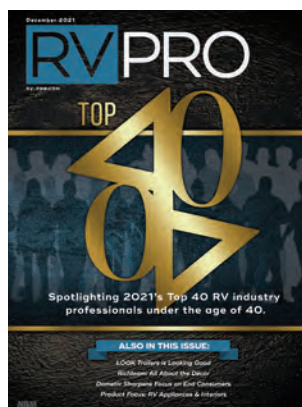
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"You also must convince customers that your dealership is the one they should be dealing with, and that the product you are offering is the best one to match their wants and needs. Show customers the value to match or exceed the price and then sell them on the fact that now is the best time for them to make this purchase."

– Michael Rees



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ABOUT THE COVER:
This month's cover pays tribute to RV PRO's '40 Under 40' up-and-coming RV industry professionals.

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RV Industry Shows Its Staying Power



Bradley Worrell
EDITOR
brad@nbm.com

The outdoor industry took a hit in 2020, largely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But while the outdoor recreation economy's impact dipped by nearly 13 percent last year, it still generated \$688 billion in economic output and employed 4.3 million people, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, which annually prepares a report assessing the impact of the outdoor economy.

And there was a silver lining in the report as it relates to the RV industry. Specifically, RVing's economic impact actually grew by 2.7 percent, to \$19.1 billion, according to the BEA. That makes RVing the second-largest conventional outdoor activity, just behind boating/fishing.

Commenting on the BEA report's findings, RVIA Vice President of Government Affairs **Jay Landers** noted that closed campgrounds and suspended operations at RV manufacturing plants and dealerships hampered the industry early in 2020, but he pointed to the industry's subsequent strong rebound, as well as indicators that the momentum will continue into the new year.

"The good news is that nearly 20 percent more RVs will be built in 2021 than in any prior year and the streak is expected to continue into 2022," Landers said. "This bodes well for the future of not only the RV industry but the wider outdoor recreation economy as a whole."

Meanwhile, the shift toward the RV lifestyle is expected to get an additional boost thanks to the passage of the \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill, which provides billions in funding for roads and bridges, as well as \$550 billion in new federal investments in America's infrastructure over the next five years.

Commenting on the passage of the bipartisan infrastructure bill, which the RV Industry Association has lauded, RVIA Director of Government Affairs **Chris Bornemann** said, "While fixing our roads and bridges on and around our nation's iconic parks, forests and gateway communities is a good economic investment for our country generally, these investments will also go a long way to improve the RV consumer experience and increase access to the great outdoors for all Americans."

Taken together, the BEA report and the infrastructure bill are very promising developments for our industry.

Honoring '40 Under 40'

Speaking of promising developments, our industry is producing a talented group of up-and-coming professionals who are making their mark in their respective fields – and *RV PRO* is proud to celebrate them in this month's issue.

For the second year, the magazine is recognizing 40 industry professionals under the age of 40 in our appropriately named '40 Under 40' special section. "Talented," "determined," "inspiring" and "tenacious" are just some of the words bosses, co-workers and fellow industry members are using to describe these emerging leaders, representing a cross-section of the industry, so you will want to be sure to read about these movers, shakers and future newsmakers.

As always, thanks for reading.

RV PRO

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LaBrie's RV Keeps RVers Camping

By Mike Harbour

The company's owners are rooted in RV service – and repair work is a cornerstone of the dealership.

Most dealerships across the country traditionally are built on the backs of sales departments. Yet two brothers, both second-generation RV technicians, are out to prove their new store will prove the exception to that rule.

Situated on a couple of acres northeast of Spartanburg, S.C., LaBrie's RV and Outdoors was opened in September 2020 by Tom LaBrie and Mark LaBrie II as a service center, offering on-site maintenance and repair as well as mobile work. The brothers chose a location that's a mile from the nearest freeway, as well as Spartanburg's Camping World store.

The LaBries, who have more than 35 years of RV experience between them, are well aware their strategies go against conventional industry wisdom, but Mark LaBrie says he doesn't mind.

"We can't tell you how many people complain about Camping World and come here on a daily basis," he says. "Our whole goal with the business isn't just to make money and become the next Camping World – because neither one of us have that dream. We want to be in business for a long time and give people the service that they deserve. They're making a huge investment."

Tom LaBrie, who was once in Camping World management himself, agrees with his brother and business partner.

"We don't want to compete with Camping World and Camping World can't compete with us," he says. "The difference is that we're a service-first company that happens to sell campers."

What perhaps isn't unconventional is how the brothers began: They got their start in the literal footsteps of their father.

Owners' RV Roots Run Deep

The elder Mark LaBrie's began his RV career repairing units for a small dealership in Webster, N.Y., on the shores of Lake Ontario, near Rochester. The brothers each held memorable summer jobs there, son Mark LaBrie recalls, including scraping putty from the shop floor and running wires for trailer brakes along the frames of customer tow vehicles. After graduating from high school in 1999, Mark LaBrie went to work full-time alongside his dad, while Tom LaBrie took a different path.





In addition to new inventory from KZ, the dealership carries a selection of pre-owned motorhomes and towables.



PHOTOS BY TIM KIMZEY

Mark LaBrie (left) and Tom LaBrie are pictured in front of a KZ RV Escape travel trailer on their sales lot. KZ was the first product line LaBrie's RV took on after deciding to sell new inventory.



"I decided that I wanted to try to do something different, so I went off to college after high school to get my computer systems degree. A year after college, I ended up going back into the RV industry and went down to Florida to help my father with a new mobile service there," he says. "Mark had just moved back to New York and I moved down there to supplement what he had left behind."

The younger Mark LaBrie had headed back north as a mobile technician for an independent Syracuse, N.Y., dealership in 2001 through its conversion to a Camping World in 2008 but started another endeavor shortly afterward.

"I had my own mobile RV service business in New York from 2008 until 2020," he says, "and then Tom and I agreed to partner up and start a joint venture here in South Carolina as this full dealership and service center where people are treated the way they should be treated before, during and after a sale."

The next step was finding a location. As it happened, the brothers found the perfect spot while looking for Mark LaBrie's new home. The 3-acre site was partially cleared and featured a 5,000-square-foot building with room for a three-bay service shop; plus, the property was being offered as a lease. After moving into their new facility, the LaBries and their sole employee, a technician, naturally, got to work.

"Mark and I are finally together," he says. "We grabbed it by the horns and here we are now a year from that day."

Of course, it has helped that Tom LaBrie knows much of the nearby RV retail landscape. He moved to the Carolinas when he helped open a new Camping World near Asheville, N.C., northeast of Spartanburg.

Disliking the corporate environment, Tom LaBrie went to an independent dealership in Duncan, S.C., where he stayed until last March, gaining experience as a regional service director after that store became part of RV Retailer in 2019. Consequently, he knew how to shape their new business.

Dealership Able to Tackle Most Repair Jobs

LaBrie's RV offers most types of service, from slides and sidewalls to roofs and floors. Due to the lease contract, chassis work, such as oil changes and paint and body repair, as well as diesel-related tasks, are referred elsewhere. That still leaves plenty of work and the shop has handled everything from pop-ups to diesel coaches.

Being independent means LaBrie's RV, which added a fourth technician in the fall, can get parts more easily and offers quicker service than some corporate-owned rivals, according to Mark LaBrie.

"Our turnaround times are usually one to two weeks, max. Usually, it's a week turnaround," he says. "If a camper is sitting here for a week, I'm getting upset. There are certain cases where something's out of your control and you just can't find a part, but if you take a little bit of time, you can usually find it out there. Yeah, you might pay a little more and your profit margin might be



LaBrie RV's talented techs are able to tackle nearly any job, big or small. Here, lead technician Anthony Dillard performs a check on a trailer's hot water heater and works on its air conditioner.

"We don't want to compete with Camping World and Camping World can't compete with us. The difference is that we're a service-first company that happens to sell campers."

– Tom LaBrie, dealership co-owner



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Tom LaBrie assists a customer seeking information on RV sealants. The dealership's knowledgeable staff are well-versed in the features and benefits of the products it carries in its parts department.

"If you go to them (customers) and give them the best service they've ever had, they're going to come back to you for everything – whether it's sales, service, parts, anything."

– Mark LaBrie, dealership co-owner



Travel trailers are particularly popular with LaBrie's customer base.

a little bit less, but guess what? You're going to have the happiest camper ever that he's got it back and he's going to be a customer for life."

Mark LaBrie also is not afraid to provide some honest advice, either.

"I'd rather do that than to take \$5,000 of somebody's money when their camper's not worth \$2,000. It's just the way we run the dealership," he says. "We had a customer come in with a camper from Montana. They brought it back and told us they paid \$10,000 for it and it was half-rotted. Did we want to give them the bad news? No, but we were straightforward and honest so they could make the proper decision on how to fix it."

Mobile Service Differentiates Dealership

Mark LaBrie's success with mobile service – he owned several trucks, each staffed with technicians in New York – and the fact he enjoys it, means he's the one driving around Upstate South Carolina while Tom LaBrie handles sales, F&I and other tasks.

"You get the scenery, you get the people – you're out there interacting with them," he says. "You're not just waiting for them. They're in need of your service. You help them the best you can and if you keep them camping, you keep them happy."

While Mark LaBrie concedes not everything that goes wrong on an RV can be fixed by a mobile technician, it's still a service that few, if any, of the eight or so area dealers appear to offer customers.

"If you go to them and give them the best service they've ever had, they're going to come back to you for everything – whether it's sales, service, parts – anything," he says.

Most of LaBrie's RV mobile service calls are made to units in local campgrounds where Mark LaBrie has been able to further spread the dealership name.

"Those are the types of relationships we're trying to build with our community to help other small businesses that help us and keep it so this industry grows in every way," he says. "That's the good thing about being on the road. You learn about all these different campgrounds, so when you have a customer ask what I recommend, I can ask, 'Well, what kind of campground do you want? Do you want a family-friendly one? Do you want a pet-friendly one? Do you want peace and quiet?'"

As LaBrie's RV matures, Mark LaBrie can envision adding more service trucks.

"I would love it," he says, remembering the days when he ran his own mobile service. "If I went to seven jobs in a day and I needed parts for two of them, well, guess what? My guys were good enough where they could go change that part and I could keep moving forward. I didn't always have to finish the job because I knew how to diagnose it and I had a guy behind me that could change that part. That's where the road service does become lucrative."

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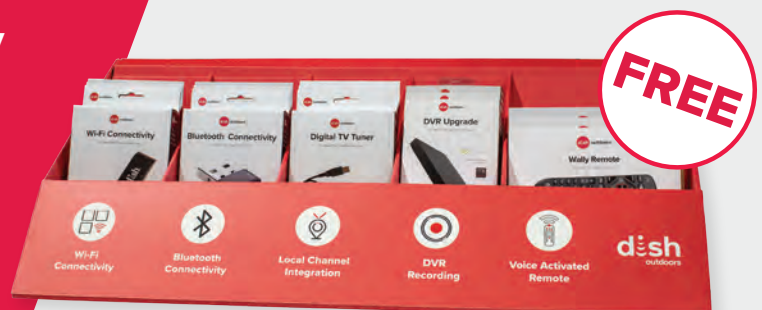
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Brothers Mark (left) and Tom LaBrie opened LaBrie's RV and Outdoors in September 2020 in Spartanburg, S.C., after spending several decades working in the service side of the RV business.

Securing the Right Inventory is Key

Meanwhile, the LaBries knew they would need to find an available line of RVs to be complete, so they queried KZ RV.

"What it came down to was what was available and what kind of quality do they have? What kind of history do they have? What is going to best fall in line with the support for the customer that we want to be known for," Tom LaBrie says. "KZ was the consistent one on that list as far as still offering a full hitch-to-bumper two-year warranty on their fiberglass campers, still using heavy-duty plywood floors and plywood walk-on roofs."

With the shortages caused by COVID, LaBrie RV has only managed to get nine new units from KZ thus far. The balance of the 40 units he has sold from January through mid-October were used units that he acquired through trades, Facebook and Craigslist ads, plus word-of-mouth and auctions. There's usually a dozen or so units on the lot at all times, but fall has seen a slight boost at 15.

In addition, LaBrie's RV recently agreed with Palomino RV to sell the company's PaloMini lightweight travel trailers and, in a departure from many dealerships, Real Lite truck campers.

"Nowadays, not everybody wants to be in the campgrounds. With this pandemic especially, more people are going to state parks or explore mountains or fields or sand dunes or work from home. They just move from place to place," Mark LaBrie says. "A truck camper gives people options of still having all your necessities and yet you could tow a boat or a toy."

Given that those units are not easy to move or display like towable or motorized units, Tom LaBrie says he believes their rarity will be result in a boon for his store.

"It's a natural moneymaker. You're almost locked into the hitch work that you're going to get from that unit because they have to have those tiedowns before they get this camper off your lot," he says. "You can put a travel trailer on a ball and tow it down the road. There's nothing I can do to stop you from doing that, but you can't throw a truck camper on the back of your truck and make it out of my driveway."

"If you can get that margin as a guarantee on every single sale of a truck camper, why wouldn't you?" he asks rhetorically.

Tom LaBrie also is working with Riverside RV to bring its lightweight Retro and Intrepid travel trailers to Spartanburg. Still, with gross revenues derived equally from sales and service, he won't forget why LaBrie's RV was created.

"We never want to get to the point where we can't service the customer," he says. "We enjoy having sales on the lot and giving ourselves a new aspect and something to learn about this industry that neither one of us had really been a part of before. It's fun to learn that, but we don't want it to become the main focus of our dealership. We would like to have a certain number of sales in a month but honestly, if we sold 10 or 15 units in a month on a regular basis, we would be more than happy." **RVF**



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Dometic Sharpens Focus on End Consumers

By K. Schipper

The new president of Dometic Americas highlights the company's efforts to better connect with its product users while supporting its OEM and dealer partners and continuing to emphasize new product development and sustainability.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DOMETIC

In the crush of day-to-day business, it can sometimes be easy to lose focus. It might be meeting a deadline or hitting a sales goal or just completing a routine project, but sometimes professionals lose sight of what they are really doing and for whom.

At Dometic Americas, new President Oliver Bahr says his main job is to get the company to focus more on its end consumers.

"In the past, maybe we haven't taken as much of a focus on the end consumer as we could," he says. "My background is in the consumer-goods space. I want us to understand RV consumer needs, RV consumer pain-points and then develop solutions for those consumers."

Aimed at the New

From an RV perspective, Dometic couldn't be a better partner. Just about everyone in the industry recognizes the name, and the company has a reputation for understanding mobile living and the mobile lifestyle.

Additionally, the 2020 annual report by its parent, Sweden-based Dometic Group, shows its sales are almost equally balanced between OE sales (54 percent) and aftermarket (46 percent). About the only thing that might cause confusion is that to one person the name means refrigerators, while to someone else it might be air conditioners ... or toilets.

Spun off from Swedish appliance manufacturer Electrolux early in this century, the company has subsequently gone on to expand into several broad markets, including climate, power and control, food and beverage and other applications.

In other words, it's a company that isn't afraid of the *new* – whether it's new consumers, new products or new markets. Although he took over from predecessor Scott Nelson near the

Dometic's leadership team (from left to right) includes Tom Montague, vice president of RV OE sales; Michael McCaslin, vice president of RV aftermarket sales; Sara Dover, brand manager, RV OEM and aftermarket; and Oliver Bahr, president of Dometic Americas. The four are pictured on the production floor of Dometic's facility in Elkhart.



“My background is in the consumer-goods space. I want us to understand consumer needs, consumer pain-points and then develop solutions for those consumers.”

– Oliver Bahr, president of Dometic Americas

end of June, Bahr is only one of several *news* Dometic has seen over the past couple of years.

The Americas group moved into a new headquarters building in Elkhart, Ind., near the end of 2019, specifically to stress its emphasis on the RV market. The parent Dometic Group also has done some reorganizing, so that along with its Americas, EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) and APAC (Asia-Pacific) groups, it also has a Global group.

Bahr explains that, while the other three groups focus on the RV, commercial passenger vehicle (CPV) and outdoor segments, the Global group focuses on products and companies where the customers are, well, more global.

“The product orientation is far less, and the cultural nuances and differences are far less,” Bahr says. “Boats are generally the same across the globe. When you’re looking at minibars and refrigerators – except for maybe some voltage changes – those are fairly similar as we distribute them across the world.”

Rather than the RV industry, Bahr comes to his new position with a strong emphasis in sales and marketing of consumer products for the decorative plumbing market. He most recently worked for Hans Grohe Group, a Germany manufacturer of commercial and residential shower systems. Before that, he was with Franke, a Swiss maker of kitchen sinks and faucets.

“I really enjoy product,” Bahr says. “I like the tangible product that we can offer. And I get drawn into innovative and iconic products. I feel like Dometic has a lot of that and has a lot of opportunity to continue to develop that.”

More Than RVs

The issue that Bahr – and his boss, Dometic CEO and President Juan Vargues – sees is that the market is expanding, but also becoming more fragmented.

“There are more competitive players – and more outside competitors from around the world,” Bahr notes.

And, make no mistake, Dometic is worldwide, although 51 percent of its business comes from the Americas group. The company sells products in more than 100 different countries, offering



Montague shares insights on the inner workings of Dometic refrigerators with Dover on the production floor. Dometic has long been known in the RV market for its refrigerators.



Dometic awnings are found on many RVs today, including this Newmar Ventana luxury motorhome.

products from 22 different manufacturing and assembly facilities.

Fortunately, Bahr adds, “There’s a tremendous amount of synergy within our segments, not just from an operation standpoint, but there are a lot of synergies with crossover customers. There’s a lot of conversation back and forth. Our common thread is mobile-based activities.”

However, he says, the market for Dometic’s products is changing. Only part of that is due to the explosive growth the RV industry has experienced thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Dometic makes a wide variety of RV refrigerators for the U.S. and European RV markets. The company also makes refrigerators for the marine market and other mobile-focused markets.

"I like the tangible product that we can offer. And I get drawn into innovative and iconic products. I feel like Dometic ... has a lot of opportunity to continue to develop that."

**– Oliver Bahr,
president of Dometic Americas**



Not everyone who uses Dometic's products, like this cooler, is a traditional RVer. So, the company has broadened its marketing focus to include the larger outdoor market, as evidenced by its tagline: Mobile Living Made Easy.

"The biggest generation in America right now is the Millennials," Bahr says. "We know they're starting to enter the market, and specifically the RV market. But an RV to them probably means something different than it does to the Gen Xers or the Boomers. We have to make sure we have the right products that fit all these different generations and demographic needs or demographic nuances."

At the same time, he says the company needs to serve more than just RV customers, because the market isn't linear.

"These may be people who have backyard barbecues on weekends, or they may enjoy a boat ride on a Saturday," Bahr says. "They may simply want a weekend getaway into nature, and you don't necessarily need an RV for that. Our consumers are out there, and we want to make sure we're present in their lives so when they do step into an RV there's comfort and familiarity with our brand and a trust in our brand."

Product is vitally important to Dometic, and the company takes multiple approaches to it. Pre-COVID, the company indicated it would be bringing new products to market in the 2021-2022 timeframe, and despite the pandemic, Bahr says Dometic has done just that.

He highlights a new RV water heater design that provides two to three times longer showers, as well as a new 12-volt DC refrigerator that utilizes some of the technology and performance of residential refrigerators.

More importantly, he says the company's Product Innovation Index – which is determined by measuring the revenue of new products and service against a company's total revenue – most recently stood at 25 percent.

"That's a pretty big step from where it's been," Bahr says. "We're putting an increased focus on bringing more new products to market, whether that be bringing new innovation to market, or just making some of our existing products better."

To further make sure Dometic has a full complement of product to offer its customers, the company also doesn't shy away from making strategic acquisitions. Although its recent acquisition of Igloo, maker of iconic coolers, may have made the biggest splash, in 2021 the company also picked up four companies involved in solar power and power distribution for the RV industry. The two U.S.-based ones are Zamp Solar, and Valterra Products, which includes its Go Power! division.

"We also need to think about where the market may be moving, and that includes electrification," says Bahr. "Plus, sustainability is a big focus for us because it's high on the radar for the Millennial generation. We try to find companies that meet our consumer needs and improve on our core. This will allow us to be a more progressive, forward-thinking partner to the RV industry."

Sustainability is Key

When Bahr says sustainability is a big focus for Dometic, he isn't kidding. It carries over from the materials it uses in its products to the management of its manufacturing facilities to where it invests its charitable donations.



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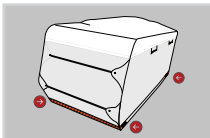
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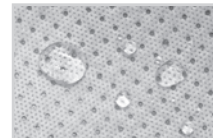
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STORAGE LOT



Dometic team members are pictured by company air conditioners, including the new FreshJet FJX3000 model, designed to deliver maximum cooling performance while reducing noise. It will be available for order in spring 2022.

“An RV to them (Millennials) probably means something different than it does to the Gen Xers or the Boomers. We have to make sure we have the right products that fit all these different generations and demographic needs or demographic nuances.”

**– Oliver Bahr,
president of Dometic Americas**

Its most recent announcement in that direction is the unveiling of a line of products made from a material called Redux, whose content is 100 percent recycled plastic.

“You’ll see it in products like camping chairs, tents and awnings in the near term,” Bahr says. “Although you may not necessarily *see it* in the actual product, as our goal is for the product not to look different. Obviously, we build it a certain way to meet a certain quality standard and perform to a certain level. That shouldn’t change the expectation of the consumer.”

And, he says, longer-term, Redux will expand into other products, even as Dometic looks for other recycled materials.

Part of the push for recycled materials is simply that sustainability is a message that rates high with Millennials. However, Bahr notes that not only are Dometic’s customers people who care about the environment because they spend time there, but so are the people who work for the company.

Perhaps nowhere is that more apparent than at the company’s Greenbrier, Tenn., manufacturing plant. There, through a suite of cooperative programs offered through the Tennessee Valley Authority, Dometic has been able to completely offset all electrical use through renewable sources, reducing an estimated 1,500 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions monthly.

The company also has reduced its CO₂ impact through truck utilization and capacity efforts and introduced a plant-wide single-stream recycling effort with the goal of getting the Greenbrier plant to “zero landfill” in 2023. A recently approved water heater wash line aims to reduce water use by 4.5 million gallons annually.

“We’re going to continue to expand that to our other facilities,” Bahr says. “And you’ll see this in our messaging in the future where we talk more about promoting a sustainable lifestyle.”

And early this year, Dometic announced it was joining the Conservation Alliance. A North American initiative, members are companies that support grassroots environmental organizations for the protection of wildlife and wild places.

Among other things the Alliance has done, Bahr says, is helped protect about 73 million acres of wildlands and 3,500 miles of rivers, along with purchasing 18 climbing areas and designating five marine reserves.

“It’s just helping to do our part,” he says. “We’re helping protect the spaces where we know people will enjoy the outdoors and enjoy our products. We feel like it’s a great opportunity to help.”

Positioned for Success

While some of Dometic’s sustainability goals are perhaps a bit aspirational, Bahr says both OEMs and the aftermarket shouldn’t see huge changes in the nuts-and-bolts side of the operation, even though there have been some changes in the leadership team.

“Dometic has a great foundation and a great legacy that we can build off of,” he says. “What the new leadership brings to the table is a fresh set of eyes and a new set of experiences.”

However, he stresses that he’s the only new executive from outside the industry, and that many of the others have years of experience in various aspects of the RV market.

Read More About Dometic:

<http://rvpro.link/o5-ln>

<http://rvpro.link/fjn64>

<http://rvpro.link/mp06h>

<http://rvpro.link/i79z5>

<http://rvpro.link/7iudx>

"It's a good blend and balance for us and helps us position ourselves for success down the road," Bahr says. "Ultimately, that will help us deliver on our customers' expectations."

A good example is the company's August announcement that technicians from Dometic Service would soon deploy a pilot program in the Orlando, Fla., area to help alleviate RV consumers' service backlogs.

"I believe that a non-functioning product somewhere on the road is just unacceptable and it hurts that experience for RV consumers," Bahr says. "We want to help our consumers so they don't spend their time worrying about a refrigerator that's not working or a broken awning."

So far, the pilot program in the Orlando area has done well, and Bahr hopes to see it expand into other key RV markets across the country.

"We're also continuing to do a lot of training at the dealership service level," he adds. "We want to support them so they can help our consumers."

Still, Bahr acknowledges that's an area where COVID has hurt Dometic a little, although it's a problem that's not exclusive to that company or even the RV industry.

"A lot of our training initiatives and practices were done in-person, and when COVID hit, we had to pivot and focus more on digital distribution of training materials," he says. "Now that post-COVID is almost here, it's about getting back in front of our customers, our dealer network, our partners and revamping our training initiative so we can ensure we can deliver our information in the most effective way."

Other problems: finding good employees and dealing with the supply chain. Bahr mentions the microchip shortage as a particular issue.

"We're competing, not just with other RV supplier manufacturers, we're competing with the automotive industry and many other industries out there that need these chips," he says. "That's a challenge, but then there are raw material prices, and freight costs. Those are issues every company faces right now, and we're managing through it as best we can."

At the same time, he acknowledges many of Dometic's OEM customers have units sitting in their lots waiting to be finished.

"It's travel trailers, fifth wheels and motorcoaches," Bahr says. "Maybe they're missing a windshield or an air conditioning unit or headlights or whatever. And our challenge is how do we cover those needs as quickly as possible so that our OEM partners can finish those units and get them into the market."

However, Bahr is optimistic about the industry's growth prospects moving forward.

"Our perspective is that they'll continue to grow, but also evolve," he says. "I think they'll change as this younger generation becomes part of the purchasing population in RVs. For that reason, the look and feel of RVs may shift a little and that's something we need to pay close attention to. For instance, we're seeing a growth in panel vans. But, overall, we expect the market to continue to build." **RV2**

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All About the Décor



Richloom helps create the look inside many of today's RVs.

By Darian Armer

For RV manufacturers and dealers alike, there's little worse than having a potential customer walk into their respective RV, make a five-second head swivel, and then move on down to a competitor's product without ever really giving that first RV serious consideration.

But why did the customer move along so quickly?

Ultimately, if a customer doesn't like the look inside the RV, it doesn't matter how many great features it has.

Creating an inviting and beautiful aesthetic can make the difference between the quick once-over look versus a potential customer

really evaluating a coach based upon its merits. Enter Richloom, a major supplier of textiles to RV OEMs and a company that's responsible for creating aesthetically pleasing designs for many RVs with the textiles it provides.

From Humble Beginnings

Richloom was founded by Chief Operating Officer Michael Saivetz's grandfather, Fred Richman, in 1957. Richman worked in his father's textile business before using a \$5,000 loan from his father-in-law to start Richloom.



RICHLOOM

Richloom COO Michael Saivetz is pictured recently in the company's Elkhart showroom. Saivetz's concerted efforts in the late 1990s to make inroads into the RV market have paid off, as the company is now one of the top three suppliers of fabric, upholstery and related materials to RV OEMs.

PHOTOS BY STEVE TOEPP/ MIDWEST PHOTOGRAPHICS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



Pictured here photos of Richloom's 2021 Tough Collection of fabrics, which come in a variety of colors, patterns, styles and design types. The Tough Collection is found in many RVs today. (Photos courtesy of Richloom)

"We began as a wholesaler of drapery weight fabric. Then, we evolved when my uncle Jim joined the company and we really grew from there," says Saivetz.

Richman's son, Jim Richman, joined the company in 1972. He now leads the company, which employs more than 250 people in the U.S. and more than 300 people globally.

Headquartered on Fifth Avenue in New York City, Richloom offers an expansive product range to many markets beyond just the RV industry, supplying the upholstery, decorative jobber, hospitality, over-the-counter retail and casual outdoor furniture industries. The company offers prints, wovens, dobbies and jacquard textiles to intricate decorative textiles with fine bead work, embroidery and embossed treatments.

In laymen's terms, Richloom helps make RVs look good.

During the past two decades, Richloom has expanded its global footprint, most notably with its Richloom Shanghai Trading Co. in Shanghai, China. When Saivetz joined the company in 1998, he helped cast a global vision and grow a vast supply network in Asia.

"We expanded rapidly in the 1990s and actually built our first domestic weaving operation in the late '90s," says Saivetz.

It's about that time that, he says, that he decided to start calling on the RV industry.

"We had always called on the RV industry, but after my first trip to Elkhart in August of 1998, I was very impressed with the industry and the potential for growth there," Saivetz says. "Just like any other family business, they said, 'OK, kid, if you think you can do it, go do it.'"

"So, I have been at the helm of the RV division since the early 2000s and have continued to expand our market share," he adds. "As a company, we identified the RV industry market as a growth opportunity. I was an obnoxious kid trying to make my mark."

RV Fabric, Color Trends Evolve

When Richloom first entered the RV industry, Saivetz says the trends were fabric materials and the color blue.

"It was always blue when I entered the business," he says. "It was all fabrics and the industry was using designs on the sofas. Now, our customers prefer to use all vinyl or polyurethanes. It's really evolved from old Italian-style tapestries or jacquard weaves



Saivetz is pictured with just some of the fabrics and textiles his company provides to manufacturers and OE suppliers. In Richloom's more than two decades of serving the RV market, Saivetz says OEMs have largely transitioned away from fabric to vinyl or other more modern materials, which are generally easier to clean and which provide a more contemporary look.

to more modern materials and different shades of gray with accent colors. It's easier to keep the vinyl and polyurethane products clean. It also gives the RV customer a leather-like look that's a little more modern, contemporary and easy to maintain."

Richloom can provide all the textiles that go almost everywhere in the unit, from furniture to valances and drapery and bedding. And it even supplies textiles for walls and ceilings.

Saivetz says when the company first started in the RV industry, it did a little bit of furniture, a little drapery and a little bedding.

"When we first got into the industry, we were a minor player, but now I would say that we're in the top three," Saivetz says. "Ninety-eight percent of our business is with OEMs. We have a couple of programs where we are working with an OEM, but it is really in the aftermarket."

"As a fabric supplier and component supplier to the RV industry, we work with RV manufacturers, as well as furniture and bedding manufacturers," he adds.

Richloom has an office and showroom in Elkhart where OEMs can visit and get design ideas, inspiration and available inventory, all at a competitive price, according to Saivetz.

"One of the things I always tell our customers is that everyone has quality problems," he says, quickly adding, "I don't like them. I would rather make a quality product and price it competitively rather than make an inferior product and deal with it on the back end. A lot of companies lose money that way because they have to spend a lot of money fixing those quality issues."

"I learned a long time ago it's better to make a quality product in the first place and avoid the problems."

An Eye for Design

Saivetz credits much of the company's success in the RV industry to his design partner of 20 years, Meta Steeb.

"The two of us entered the industry at the same time, and we've really worked together to learn about the RV business, learn what RV customers want and then design something the customer wants," Saivetz says. "When a consumer is shopping for an RV, most times the customer will pop her head into the unit. She might walk up a step or two, but if she doesn't like what she sees, she's going on to the next unit. The fabric is the marketing of the unit."

Current fabric is trending lighter and more neutral, and if there's a design at all, it's a smaller scale design for a more contemporary and transitional look.

"We see a little bit of color coming back into the design elements, but I think easy maintenance and quality of the product is going to be the most important thing to customers," Saivetz says. "If you spend \$100,000 on a fifth wheel, you don't want the interior to fall apart."

The company's Elkhart showroom allows Richloom to display all it has to offer. When an OEM customer walks in the showroom, they will initially see a couple of beds with new products and a wall of valances to show different valance styles and applications. There is a replica RV sofa and dinette kitchen area with new product featured.

"We walk customers through that before they come into our fabric showroom, where we present not only the newest line designed for the RV industry, but the newest lines designed for the residential furniture industry, the higher end decorative industry and outdoor industry," Saivetz says.

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Saivetz and Richloom sales rep Krista Horn (left) showcase the newest Richloom fabrics and vinyl on a sofa and valances with Keystone designers Amy Gray and Maria Gilbert. Richloom's products can be found in many of today's RVs.

"We had always called on the RV industry, but after my first trip to Elkhart in August of 1998, I was very impressed with the industry and the potential for growth there."

**– Richloom COO
Michael Saivetz**

He notes that Richloom has two sales reps in Elkhart, Gay Eby and Krista Horn, who are available to help OEMs with all their needs.

"Our sales team is the best in the business, both aggressive and eager to help our customers," he says. "Much of our success can be credited to our great team."

Looking Ahead

Saivetz says his goal as it relates to the RV industry is to help companies close the gaps in their business.

"I'm sure every company has their holes. My biggest priority is to plug the holes for those we do business with," he says. "We do that by constantly asking: 'What is the next design trend? Application trend? How can we be the leader in that?'"

Acquisitions have paved the way for more growth, including obtaining a domestic weaving operation in December 2019. In the early 2000s, Richloom acquired another outdoor printer converter, which allowed it to enter the outdoor casual industry more aggressively.

"We are definitely looking to grow our domestic footprint, as well as our global footprint. We're not afraid of expansion. Richloom's history has been growth by expansion," Saivetz says.

Saivetz and his uncle are the only family members currently involved in the business, and while Saivetz says his kids are too young to know what they want to do, he hopes it continues as a strong family-run business.

"It's a legacy that means a lot to me. Family values are important to us," he says. "It's how we run our business. We're all one big family."

As for why he enjoys working with the RV industry, Saivetz says he likes the people.

"I have met a lot of different people I enjoy spending time with, to be quite honest," he says. "It's kind of cool to be driving down a highway, pass an RV and say to your children, 'Dad's fabric is in that unit.'" **RV**

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'40 Under 40'

***Spotlighting 2021's
Top 40 RV industry
professionals under
the age of 40.***

Compiled by
Jordan Benschop

Following a remarkable year touted as both the RV industry's best and its most challenging, the opportunity for younger leaders to make their mark has never been more apparent.

For a second year in a row, *RV PRO* is spotlighting 40 professionals under the age of 40 who are praised by bosses, co-workers and fellow industry members as talented, determined, inspiring and often tenacious. These emerging leaders – some of whom grew up in the industry and others who are recent arrivals – represent a cross-section of the industry, representing dealerships, suppliers, distributors, associations, OEMs and business services.

Building upon the success of last year's inaugural '40 Under 40' awards, this year saw a growing number of nominations, with 123 total submissions and some candidates receiving up to seven separate nominations, according to *RV PRO* Publisher Chris Cieto.

"We're excited to see how the industry has embraced our efforts to recognize up-and-coming leaders, as evidence by the growing level of participation in nominating young industry professionals," he says.

Read on to learn about this year's 40 Under 40 members and how they are making their mark on the RV industry.



Read About the *RV PRO* '40 Under 40' Awards Ceremony in Las Vegas:
<http://rvpro.link/zbhgc>



Ashley Lehman Founder/president and CEO – Ember RV

Years with company: 9 months

Known for: Lehman is committed to creating one of the most respected and sought-after independent RV brands in the industry, her company says. She immerses herself in every level of the RV

startup, providing a clear vision and empowering her team to find better solutions with a focus on design quality, manufacturing processes, material selection, strong company culture and better RV ownership experiences.

The granddaughter of Jayco founders Lloyd and

Bertha Bontrager, her competitive spirit and desire to spark positive change keeps “everyone at Ember RV fired up and ready to blaze new trails.” The young organization says its success is tethered to Lehman’s determination, indomitable character and inner fire – paired with a grit and intellect that “shouldn’t be underestimated.” Even in a post-pandemic economy, Lehman’s ability to effectively pivot and remain flexible with supply chain hardships and daily challenges that threaten progress has helped her company stay true to its bullish plans.

Achievements: As a young, independent, female entrepreneur in a largely corporate and male-dominated industry, “the deck seems stacked against Lehman’s success,” her company says. But that’s no match for the abundance of achievements she carries, including 12 years in the RV industry and numerous advertising and marketing-related awards throughout her career. Outside of being the founder, president and CEO of startup Ember RV, Lehman has been a long-time advocate for better educating consumers and dealers with “authentic and rich” content, informative apps and websites, partnerships with RV influencers and impactful training.



David Copeland Vice president of sales – Van Dyke Enterprises

Years with company: 7 years

Known for: Copeland “never lets good be good enough,” his company says – a nod to his efforts in going beyond the sale by investing in dealership partners and equipping teams with advanced product training. He doesn’t seek out the easy path, but rather strives to ensure dealers and distributors find success through education, leading to the right solutions for RVers. Copeland is well-liked and respected, the company says, striving for greatness over mediocrity. He solves complex situations by fueling partnerships with represented factories, and during COVID, led his team to growth through product training that produced “industry experts.” Outside the office, he proudly touts his 17-year marriage and role as a #GirlDad to three.

Achievements: A veteran who served in the Air Force as a jet engine mechanic from 2003 to 2007, Copeland says he learned a lot along the way – with a special salute to RV industry vets Jerry VanDyke and Marv Flak. Seeking ways to take his team to the next level, Van Dyke says Copeland was instrumental in helping the company be the leading manufacturer’s rep group in the western half of the U.S. In the last seven years, he helped grow Southwire by 300 percent.

Quote: Since his first day with Van Dyke, Copeland says he believes “no one sells anything they are not comfortable talking about.”



Eva Mitic Marketing manager – Go Power!

Years with company: 4 years

Known for: Mitic has a gift for taking complex subjects and making any audience understand them, her company says. Outside of her ability to navigate changing environments, multiple departments and shifting priorities with tight deadlines, Mitic produces quality ideas and innovative work practices in the marketing realm that reach new audiences and support loyal customers.

She is always available to clear the air about Go Power!’s products and position in the marketplace. She keeps the company’s internal and external teams “in the know” with new information, including RV-C and education projects. Exuding consistent leadership and quality work throughout her career, Go Power! says its future looks bright coming out of its 25th year with Mitic apart of the management team.

Achievements: Involved in every step of marketing from product development to launches, Mitic oversees a huge part of business – written and digital advertising, website, video content and technical communications like manuals, installation guides and spec sheets. The company’s social media presence has boomed more than 2 million interactions with campaigns Mitic implemented. She makes complex subjects, such as solar power, less of a “secret to the pros” and has educated Go Power! customers on mobile power systems – helping a massive influx of road-trippers generate power with solar when COVID hit. Outside of educating the company’s dealers, internal and external stakeholders with RV-C communications protocols, Mitic is a member of RVIA’s ad-hoc subcommittee on the subject. She is also a member of the RV Women’s Alliance.



Andrew Cooley**Chief revenue officer – Storyteller Overland****Years with company:** 3 years

Known for: Cooley didn't hesitate to join the RV industry – at 15 years old, he did everything from RV maintenance to service, sales and financing at his family's dealership. He joined the Storyteller Overland team as a co-founder with a wealth of knowledge and experience. A humble leader with excellent character, tireless energy and unrelenting passion, the company says Cooley is "key to its incredible success." Cooley will move heaven and earth to help a customer, coworker or even a stranger reach their goals, the company adds. A caring and inspirational individual driven by passion, faith and conviction, Cooley handles challenges with apparent ease and is dedicated not only to reaching his company's highest potential – but also to his role as a husband and father.

Achievements: Since making his first camper sale at 15 with the assistance of Bob Martin, now THOR Industries' president and

CEO, Cooley made his mark in the RV retail space with the 2015 launch of Yellowhammer RV – a dealership and campground in Clanton, Ala. He is also founder of Silent Funds, a seed-stage angel investing fund within Alabama's entrepreneurial and tech sectors, along with founding RightRV – an app-based aftersales customer service platform. At 36 years old, Cooley has been featured in media outlets such as Forbes.com and Business Insider, along with being a co-founder of Storyteller Overland – a brand now touting 50-plus dealer partners, a one-plus year backlog across all markets and more than \$100 million in annual sales revenue. *RV PRO* received seven separate nominations for Cooley's '40 Under 40' spotlight.

Quote: "Be where your feet are." – **Andrew D Cooley**

**Karen Arnold****Executive vice president – American Family RV****Years with company:** 11 years

Known for: Arnold carries a unique perspective that motivates, guides and mentors her team to strive for higher levels of success. She will work alongside any employee, from detailers and lot porters to upper management, in a manner that resonates individually and demonstrates patience and persistence. With a steel backbone, the company says Arnold handles herself with "maturity beyond her years," backed by daily consistency. American Family RV adds every team member respects and looks forward to working with Arnold, who exudes a superior work ethic that says, "no one is greater than the whole."

Achievements: Having worked her way through positions in service, warranty, parts and sales, Arnold was recently promoted from logistics manager to executive vice president of American Family RV in early October. Considered the "backbone" of the dealership's operations in Chesapeake and Salem, Va., she played a key role in moving the company forward through hardship by digging into each department and turning lost revenue into income. She helped decrease overhead, increased productivity and monopolized on every stream of possible revenue to ensure profitability – resulting in increasing revenue by 20 percent through parts, service, warranty, insurance and paint/body work. Arnold is a member of the RV Women's Alliance.

Quote: "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." – **Helen Keller**

**Destiny Tolliver****Inventory manager – Campers Inn****Years with company:** 6 years

Known for: Tolliver has grown quickly in the industry, her company says, succeeding in multiple roles over the last six years. She works to ensure dealer and manufacturer relationships are positive, going out of her way to establish fluid communication between both parties, with a demonstrated positive customer experience. Leading her team with poise and being a good steward of dealer/manufacturer relations, the company says Tolliver will be a force in the industry and "lead the way for other leaders and women who want to grow their careers."

Achievements: Starting in the company's business development center, Tolliver was the team's highest performing member before moving to marketing, where she led company efforts to develop online engagement with customers. She was promoted to management soon after, where she continued to develop the marketing team and its goals. Tolliver's current role includes managing all new inventory for the company's 28 locations. When COVID put a strain on business, she worked to ensure the company honored its commitments to manufacturers, securing pipelines and working with partners to ensure Campers Inn had inventory to meet spiking consumer demand. Tolliver is also a member of the RV Women's Alliance.

Quote: "Leave it better than you found it." – **Robert Baden-Powell**





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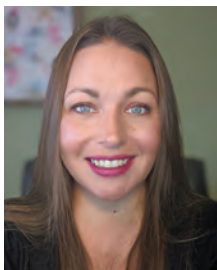


Monika Geraci**Director, PR and communications –
RV Industry Association****Years with company:** 11 years

Known for: Described as the “ultimate team player,” Geraci offers a wealth of knowledge and experience to ensure RVIA staff understand the intricacies of the RV industry. She is the go-to support resource for the industry at large – including RVIA, manufacturers, suppliers, dealers and campgrounds. Geraci’s ability to navigate a challenging time in PR and turn a massive positive spotlight onto the RV industry created an affect that RVIA says it may not be able to truly measure. In her own words, the job is to “make other people look good” – one that countless others acknowledge consistently.

Achievements: With a recent promotion to director of public relations and communications, Geraci is the spokeswoman of the RV industry. Her role greatly expanded from a communications position with RVIA’s Government Affairs team to serving the entire association and its signature programs – including virtual education efforts, the association’s Advocacy Day and the industry’s first-ever economic impact study. She heads content development for RVIA’s News & Insights blog, newsletter and social media channels, bringing data directly to members. In addition to handling hundreds of interviews with regional and national press, Geraci promoted the RV lifestyle by lobbying for more research into leisure travelers, using the data to navigate the pandemic – leading to what might be the industry’s best run of positive press ever, RVIA says. She is also a founding board member of the RV Women’s Alliance.

Quote: “Whether it’s promoting our members who are doing extraordinary things, announcing the latest piece of industry data or sharing the amazing work of my team members at RVIA, I get to communicate all of these great things and provide recognition to the incredible people in our industry, and that makes my job pretty awesome.” – **Monika Geraci**

**Stefanie Zalutko****President/CEO –
Zalutko Business Services****Years with company:** 5 years (in industry)

Known for: Even as a president and CEO, Zalutko doesn’t go seeking recognition – she just gets to work. Honesty and integrity are at the forefront, her company says, along with her encouragement of everyone to share in authenticity. Open to suggestions and always willing to have hard conversations, Zalutko’s enthusiasm and passion for camping is catching – and an effective way to attract newcomers to the RV lifestyle. She’s the hardest worker, the company says, and it’s not just ambition – she loves what she does, and never asks an employee to handle a task she wouldn’t do herself.

Achievements: Zalutko started in the industry with Keystone Automotive (NTP-STAG), aiding in multiple projects that helped advance the company’s presence. Now heading Zalutko Business Services, her work contributed to several contingencies in the RV market – the segment’s annual sales will post a record 2021, allowing new personnel and opportunities for existing staff. When COVID hit, she invested back into the business rather than cutting costs and re-branded to leverage crossover between the auto and RV aftermarkets. Zalutko is also a freelance journalist, contributing to syndicated trade magazines and news outlets to cover topics that educate industry pros to be successful in their everyday work.

Quote/motto: Zalutko says her business was founded on the tagline: “The answer is always in the details.” For her, “details matter” is more than a motto – it’s a way of life. Do it right, and do it right the first time, she says.

**Kristina Shrider****Head of marketing, Giant Recreation
World****Years with company:** 3 years

Known for: Giant RV says Shrider often mentors the younger generation on her team, helping many find passion in what they do and inspiring others towards excellence. She is passionate about creating emotional connections and always looking for a new way to assist our customers with unique benefits by partnering with leading brands and local businesses for mutual benefit, according to the dealership.

Giant RV also credits Shrider with being a skilled, professional woman who understands what it takes to succeed in current marketplace. She is passionate about creating emotional connection with psychology and neuromarketing to marketing/ad strategies. “One of the disrupters and the future of our industry,” according to the dealership.

Achievements: Received multiple recognitions, most recent for “strategies to build and de-escalate customer problems” by risk mitigation company Better Vantage Point.





Yuriy Katasonov
Operations manager, Indiana region –
Diamond Shield

Years with the company: 8 years

Best known for: Outside of being a natural leader and self-starter with a core value of “resilience,” the company considers Katasonov as the loyal face of Diamond Shield. He greets and coordinates with clients at the Elkhart service center, having received countless compliments for his customer service, dedication and enthusiasm – “we’ve never heard a customer say a negative thing about him,” the company says. Katasonov has been known to visit local body shops in and out of town to get the job done – he gets calls all summer from clients in places such as Rochester, N.Y., asking for him to service their coach, even if they bring it some 500 miles to Elkhart. A hard-working, genuine person with a big heart and positive mindset, the company says Katasonov exudes professionalism, innovation and a long-term vision that inspires the Diamond Shield team from its lowest-level workers to upper management.

Achievements: Katasonov started in the installer training program, working his way from an entry-level position to his most recent promotion as operations manager. Considered “instrumental” in creating new accounts and tackling increased business, the company says it has grown more than 35 percent since Katasonov joined the team. He helped tackle team planning and restructuring when COVID hit, keeping the company “afloat and profitable” and, in 2021, was a big piece of the company’s partnership with NeXus RV. Outside of high standards and quality installs, Katasonov’s biggest metric is the company’s overall work environment – “employees are happy to follow his direction, encouraged to make decisions and turnover is now a non-issue,” the company says. *RV PRO* received seven separate nominations for Katasonov’s spot on the ‘40 Under 40’ list.

Congratulations LACEY PINTADO

Coach-Net would like to congratulate **Lacey Pintado** on being named to RV Pro’s “40 Under 40” Class of 2021!

Thank you, Lacey, for your tireless dedication and continuous contribution as a leader in the RV industry.



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Jonathan Krawchuk
Channel account manager,
RV & marine – Samlex
America



Years with company: 5 years

Known for: Krawchuk is Samlex America's "up-and-coming bright star" and RV expert that his company says it counts on to make top-level decisions. Bringing customer service with dealers and distributors to the next level, his attitude has brought him great success in his career and life at 30 years old, the company says. A genuine desire to offer RVers a better experience, Krawchuk is known to respect competitor's innovation. He goes the extra mile, and along with being actively involved in industry events, is the first to volunteer his time to provide training, product advice and assistance to anyone in need. Samlex says it considers Krawchuk the foremost expert in all things RV.

Achievements: Since Krawchuk took charge five years ago, the company says its RV market has grown each year. With an employment status considered "high performer and high potential," the company noted an expected promotion within the next 12 months. He pushed Samlex America to engage with digital marketing, including how-to videos and educational email campaigns for dealers. Product management and engineering teams use Krawchuk's RV knowledge to design and produce relevant products. His loyalty and commitment to business goes above and beyond, the company says – Krawchuk has tackled special projects, including supporting RVWA's Drab to Fab project, producing his own training videos and helping with the company's donation to Habitat for Humanity. He recently spearheaded project management, research, pricing and new ideas to launch a new set of RV solar power products.

Lisa Liegl Rees
General manager –
East to West RV

Years with company: 4 years at Forest River

Known for: Raised in the RV capital of the world, Rees is general manager of "one of, if not the" fastest-growing brands in the industry, her company says. A hands-on leader with an open-door policy, she continually develops and innovates current and new products while seeking solutions to become a better manufacturing partner. Rees is known for looking outside the box and leading by example, fueling an overall growth for East to West RV that "speaks for itself." Her innovative ideas have and will continue to change the RV marketplace. Paired with loyalty and a natural talent for original designs, Rees is considered "one of the hardest-working individuals you will find in the industry." Family is a big component of her life – whether that's part of the Forest River empire or being a proud wife and mother of two.

Achievements: Rees curated her eye for style before joining the RV industry, earning bachelor's degrees in fashion design and marketing. After moving to Chicago, where she began her career as the Chicago Bears' retail and stadium buyer, she stacked more than a decade of outside business and sales experience – including ownership of an import and distribution company for a European fragrance brand. Rees then decided to follow her father's footsteps into RV manufacturing, and in 2017, founded East to West, North to South Inc. She developed the first of six East to West brands, dubbed Della Terra, and after selling the company to Forest River in 2018, became general manager of the division. Rees is a member of the RV Women's Alliance and holds a role as Education Committee chair. She helped sparked numerous awards for ETW brands, most recently including *RV PRO's* Best of 2022 for the Ahara fifth wheel.

Quote: "Sing like no one is listening, love like you never been hurt, dance like no one is watching and live like it is heaven on earth." – Mark Twain

Alex Yerman

Claims adjuster – United States Warranty Corporation



Years with company: 8 years

Known for: With an empathetic ear and calming demeanor, the company says Yerman completes claims in a concise manner and educates customers whenever they call. He handled an abundance of calls due to labor shortages and parts sourcing during COVID to ensure customers' needs were met, developing "sound,

timely and practical solutions – not just problem identification." His experience and ability to translate electrical, mechanical and hydraulic components into everyday language is "huge" for a service contract provider. The company's CEO says Yerman is very

reliable, always available and handles large volumes of calls in a professional manner.

Achievements: At the age of 30, Yerman is a trainer for new employees and consistent in customer service, with satisfaction scores always upwards of 90 percent. Due to his skills and positive attitude in parts and service, the company says it believes he provides the reassurance that extended warranty providers were created to do – helping customers with high-cost repairs and aiding a revenue stream for the F&I side. Yerman is also a "subject matter expert" with the company's watercraft contracts in the marine and powersports segments. He has completed RVTI certified technician Level 1 training and was tapped to attend this year's RVDA Convention/Expo to network and educate members about USWC product lines due to his technical expertise.

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Matt Olds**Sales manager – East to West RV****Years with company:** 2 years

Known for: Leading by example, offering innovative ideas and genuine hard work define Olds' style in the office. He is always willing to take time out of the day to help customers get back on the road for their camping experiences. Olds goes above and beyond normal sales manager tasks, the company says, ensuring purchasing and production teams have the necessary tools to deliver product to dealers on a timely and consistent basis. His 15 to 20 years of experience and leadership in the RV industry's retail and wholesale sectors make it so "dealers are willing to follow him anywhere," the company adds. And the commitment doesn't stop at work – Olds brings his dedication home as a father of three young girls.

Achievements: East to West RV (ETW) believes Olds' efforts have grown the company's ability to deliver a better product and buying experience to consumers, including first-time buyers and prospectors of the outdoor lifestyle. Olds brought numerous relationships with dealer partners and vendors with him to ETW, becoming a huge component of the company's success. Olds cultivated the division's growth by working in harmony with its partners during "a few of the hardest years to accomplish those tasks," the company adds – including delivering the best products possible in a timely manner. Overall, ETW says its "overall growth with the division and dealer partnerships/customer relationships have never been stronger."

**Justin Carlton****Vice president of sales, finance and marketing – Carlton Camping Center****Years with the company:** 6 years**Best known around the office for:**

According to the company, "He is one of the few RV professionals that actually owns a camper and does extensive camping. He is also a role model to employees, by guiding and leading them in how business should be conducted and ways to improve their company so the customers have a better experience." Carlton is also recognized for installing a rental division to the company.



Achievements: Carlton was elected to the Michigan Association of Recreational Vehicles & Campgrounds board of directors. He started in service roles and worked his way up to management and leadership. Carlton recently started his own marketing company with his wife, dubbed Ramble + Roam Marketing, which is aimed toward assisting RV dealers and campgrounds grow their marketing efforts. He won several "salesman of the month" awards at a former dealership and has grown sales 314 percent since rejoining the Carlton team. He helped to guide the dealership to more than 200 sales a year within the first year. Carlton was recognized as an RVIA '40 Under 40' class member in 2019.

Quote: "Don't ever let someone tell you, that you can't do something. If you have a dream, you have to protect it. When people can't do something themselves, they are going to tell you that you can't do it, either. If you want something, you go get it. Period." – **Will Smith**, in the movie "The Pursuit of Happyness"

**Volodymyr Kilchytskyi**
Chief assistant of operations – Micro-Air**Years with company:** 9 years

Known for: Kilchytskyi immigrated to the U.S. from Ukraine, rising from his assembler position to chief assistant of operations. Capable of nearly every position in production, shipping and receiving, eCommerce and testing, the company says his abilities make Kilchytskyi invaluable to the industry. His "no-nonsense" business approach – with a smile nonetheless – sets an example for staff, Micro-Air says. Clearing production hurdles and keeping up with demand are in Kilchytskyi's toolbox. Described as a fast, accurate leader in its

organization, the company says he's the "real deal." At 33 years old, Kilchytskyi is going places – including a foreshadowed "long career" at Micro-Air, if he so desires.

Achievements: For Micro-Air, Kilchytskyi is the epitome of customer service. He works alongside five others from his country and was credited for helping produce more quantity and lower sale prices for the company's EasyStart 364 and EasyTouch RV products – the first having reached its 50,000th manufactured product this year. In a year of thermostat production, he chaired a team that made triple the number of thermostats the company aimed to sell. Kilchytskyi has received Micro-Air accolades for his productivity and leadership, the company says.

Quote: "Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else." – **Margaret Meade**

Nick Francis Product manager – KZ RV

Years with company: 2 years (18 in industry)

Known for: What sets Francis apart, his company says, is his team player character, hard work ethic and dedicated focus. He leads by example, never shying away from new challenges and easily earning respect from everyone he interacts with. He likes to have fun but gets the job done, KZ RV says, with a natural affinity for engaging with customers, peers and his team. The wealth of knowledge Francis brings from various roles in the RV industry is “outstanding,” the company adds, along with his ability to look at situations in a different light than others, aiding in his successful communication skills.

Achievements: Since his promotion to product manager, KZ says Francis has exceeded expectations. From different positions in the manufacturing sector, including production line worker, purchasing agent and sales representative, he carries vast insight on the entire organizational process of an OEM. Even before COVID, Francis overcame challenges by critiquing product lines to create “hot and fresh” offerings for dealers to buy, and quickly catapulted said products into top performers. He designed floorplans and features considered industry firsts and was “instrumental” in KZ’s success with its lightweight laminated segment. Francis created the Escape Hatch product line that won *RVPRO*’s Best New Model 2021 award.

Cortni Armstrong Owner and RV renovation specialist – The Flipping Nomad

Years with company: 2-plus years

Known for: Considered a trailblazer in the RV industry, Armstrong is recognized for her entrepreneurial spirit and innovative ideas with RV design. Her work brings consumers and RV professionals together in understanding and improving the industry, the company says, and fellow RVers appreciate Armstrong’s talent and expertise. She is kind, friendly and “real” about her projects and ideas – which, although contemporary on the interior and exterior, don’t neglect function nor safety. Her company expressed excitement in seeing how Armstrong will grow the business and serve more people with customized, contemporary RVs, while educating consumers and DIYers about the industry.

Achievements: Armstrong moved her business across state lines to create a larger shop for RV builds, scaling her company in less than five years. She was commissioned by Keystone RV, in partnership with GMC, to build the industry’s first and only high-concept RV – the ultimate Montana build. An Instagram-famous designer, multiple consumer publications have featured Armstrong’s work. Her company noted she also started her own industry conference.

Quote: “Dreams don’t work unless you do.” – **Unknown**





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Faith Palmer

Co-owner – Atlantic RV Body Repair & Service

Years with company: 8 years

Known for: As a small business owner, Palmer wears many hats. Using knowledge gained through positions as service advisor, parts manager and advisor, title work and sales department assistant, she is adept in training employees and helping clients within the RV aftermarket. Her professionalism, problem-solving ability and customer service helped shed positivity on what parts and service “can and should be” for RV owners after the sale. Palmer is skilled in cultivating inclusivity for employees and clients through active listening, empathy and communication – making her a role model who leads by example, the company says. Her tenacity and focus helped overcome many company challenges. As a female owner of an RV service-only facility, Palmer is “the type of leadership role model the RV industry can be proud of.”

Achievements: Palmer started in the RV industry in 2003. She is skilled in managing service advisors, the service schedule and creating policies and procedures, along with being the dedicated parts person and bookkeeper for her business – a shop reaching \$1.2 million in sales the previous year. With a bachelor’s degree in psychology, she began her career with Camping World and progressed to service and parts roles with dealerships in New York and Virginia. Her company says Palmer’s experience allowed her to take the “best of different worlds” to help create Atlantic RV. She became an RVDA-certified parts manager in 2010 and is a member of the RV Women’s Alliance.

Quote: Palmer says the team runs their repair shop by a set of two rules: “Our success will be the byproduct of doing the right thing and being fair, even if it’s challenging” and “No shop can be perfect – but how we choose to handle imperfections when they arise will set us apart.”

Mike T. Keller

Director of sales – Keller Marine and RV

Years with company: 16 years

Known for: Born into the industry as the son of owner Michael Keller and grandson of the company’s founder, Keller is a “stabilizing force” and great mentor to his fellow employees, both younger and older than himself. Described as a very intelligent, compassionate and humble man in his 30s, the company says Keller has a gift with numbers and an ability to be tough when necessary. He is the third generation involved with Keller Marine and RV, always willing to help where it counts – whether with coworkers’ family emergencies or when COVID affected staff’s ability to travel. He helped the sales force organize its warehouse for efficiency and was credited for assisting when the “boom” occurred in May last year.

Achievements: Keller heads a team of 25 inside and outside sales staff, coordinates store setups, rallies and promotions, and is responsible for keeping sales and delivery drivers’ trucks on the road. He also oversees accounts receivable and collections. The company says its sales have increased to the double-digit range under his and his father’s leadership. Keller was nominated to the PRVCA’s board of directors several years ago, becoming the board’s youngest member who had significant input into America’s Largest RV Show in Hershey, Pa.



Ed Sikes

**Vice president –
Truist Bank**

Years with company: 17 years

Known for: Sikes is always seeking ways to be better for dealers, retail clients and the bank, focusing on making dreams come true and creating lasting joy by getting RVs where they need to be. As the liaison between the bank and the dealer, he is passionate about how to make a difference in every transaction, the company says. Sikes’ youth and hard work will propel him to “great opportunities” in the future, where his company says he’ll continue to build relationships within the industry. He is not only a relationship manager, but a die-hard RVer with a towable he hauls to events to promote the RV lifestyle.

Achievements: Sikes was promoted from dealership relationship manager to vice president in April. A corporate trainer for his company’s new F&I dealerships, Truist Bank says Sikes’ territory has grown 100 percent in the last two years. He continues to be the bank’s representative in projects for RVIA and TRVIA, along with providing internal training outside business lines. He helped rebuild the territory from the ground up – assisting even when his home area of Houston was under water in 2020. Sikes more than doubled the dealership RV sales numbers from less than 100 to 299-plus in four years, while helping grow the business in closed loans. He was a finalist for the Truist Performance Award last year and won the Q1 solution manager for the company.





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Neal Stewart Dealer – RV Connections

Years with company: 8 years

Known for: Stewart is a leader and top operator in the RV industry, his organization says, who created a positive, customer-centric culture at his two locations. He provides guidance for every department, believes in clear communication of expectations to management and holds peers to industry benchmarks.

Leading by example, the company says Stewart values humility, hungriness and smarts. He embodies the team player and constant improvement, especially when Florida-based RV Connections was hit by a Category 5 hurricane in 2018 – which, according to the company, damaged 75 percent of inventory and left hundreds of uprooted customers seeking help. Stewart coordinated with manufacturers to deliver campers to meet abnormal demand and provide housing, while rebuilding the dealership, handling insurance claims and working to locate employees for more than a week after the storm.

Achievements: Outside of Stewart's humbling work following Hurricane Michael, he brought the company's fixed operations ranking in an RV Profit 20 Group from dead last to first place in two years. In 2013, he was promoted to vice president, in addition to serving FRVTA's board and Government Affairs committee. Stewart is a deacon of his church, serving as chairman of the finance committee, as well as a board member and treasurer of Humble House Ministries. He currently sits as an elected member of a 20 Group's executive board. RV Connections is also part of the Route 66 RV network.



Chelsea Campbell Shipping manager – Keystone RV

Years with company: 18 years

Known for: All about positivity and solutions, Campbell must constantly balance the Keystone team's needs with capabilities of industry transporters. She consistently seeks the "win-win" solution no matter the challenge, evident through her team's appreciation of her positivity and drive. Campbell was tasked with finding creative answers to post-

COVID questions, with an "unwavering" desire to be a good partner to dealers, transporters and the industry at large. She practices the "golden rule" better than most, the company says, leading her team but never asking of anything she isn't willing to do herself. Long hours in her department are common, as is her selflessness. The company describes Campbell with a quote spoken of Michael Jordan: "Everything is easier when your best player is also the hardest worker." She is a beloved and valued member of the management team, her company says.

Achievements: Campbell started with Keystone in 2003, working her way from receptionist to shipping coordinator before leaving in 2006 for the birth of her first daughter. She returned a few years later, moved to the Dutchmen division, and landed as Keystone's shipping manager in 2018. In her tenure, Campbell navigated through drastic swings in volume, gas prices, driver shortages and border closings. She helped grow the company's sales and shipment complexity, maintaining industry lead times for dealers as a solutions-based leader.



Sara Porosky Operations manager – Thetford Corp.

Years with company: 1 year

Known for: A natural leader with a calm, data-driven mindset, the company says Porosky was sought out for her role due to her technical strength and knowledge of the commercial market. She has a great relationship with sales staff and customers, bringing a competency to operations the company says it didn't used to have. Porosky's composure within the facility created an "amazing" culture of people who make decisions driven by data, not emotions. When COVID hit, she helped keep production output strong, employees "happy and healthy," and optimized operation processes – allowing the company to minimize shutdown impacts on the end-consumer.

Achievements: Porosky started at Thetford as a chemical product manager, with a duty to help launch a new portfolio that made sanitation chemicals safer for customers and the environment. Eight months later, after the product's successful launch, she took an opportunity to manage the entire chemical plant. She also internally promoted a group leader she mentored. In post-pandemic circumstances, Porosky helped reduce backorders by 85 percent, changeovers by 50 percent and kept employee turnover flat. To find someone like Porosky, who made a successful transition from product manager to operations manager within one year, is considered rare by the company. She is also a member of the RV Women's Alliance.

Lacey Pintado

Technical services director – Coach-Net

Years with company: 16.5 years

Known for: Considered an “incredible” leader, Pintado is credited by her company for continually motivating others while using her RV knowledge to problem solve with her RV technician team. Continuous learning is essential to Pintado, the company says, and necessary as technologies and RVs advance and change. As part of Coach-Net’s culture, she embodies its seven core values of honesty, humility, integrity, family, excellence, courage and a servant’s heart, the company says. She has maneuvered her team and adjusted to growth by coordinating on-demand training she leads herself, adapting to daily demands and increased calls, and ensuring her team is up-to-date and certified. Pintado encourages women who want to become RV techs, the company says, inspiring and setting an example of strong work ethic that extends to the entire Coach-Net family. Outside the office, she is an avid RVer alongside her husband, Jeff, and daughter, Zoey.

Achievements: Pintado is credited for numerous achievements, including starting an “RV Core” team that follows an advanced training curriculum she developed for interested certifications

as an RV technician. She and her team built a “tech table” that gives agents hands-on training and visibility to components not normally seen on a fully built RV. Pintado is a member of the RVTI Curriculum Committee and the RV Women’s Alliance, along with being a six-time winner of Coach-Net’s RV Awards for embodying company values. She recently organized a training session with Lippert for her staff, and her team has responded to more than 18,000 service requests year-to-date in 2021. She started as a roadside assistance dispatch agent, working her way to RV technician and later, director of the entire RV tech team, backed by multiple certifications as an RVTI Level 4 Master Tech, service writer/advisor and service and technician training for Winnebago Industries and Airstream.



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Tommy Hall
Product manager,
Solitude –
Grand Design RV**Years with company:** 5 years

Known for: Leading with passion, creativity and a natural ability to bring colleagues, business partners and customers together, Hall enhances the overall experience at Grand Design RV through his enthusiasm and tireless effort with product. The company says maintaining strong dealer relationships and applying customer feedback hold tremendous weight for Hall in the pursuit of the ultimate outdoor products. His emphasis on focused connection advance not only customers' knowledge, but the workflow of classic dealer-manufacturer exchanges. He respects dealers as an extension of the team, the company says, and advances the RV industry through transparency and higher quality interactions. Willing to take charge, listen and find solutions when faced with hurdles are "necessary and honorable" characteristics in Hall's position.

Achievements: Hall oversaw the marketing team for 18 months when the country experienced setbacks with communication, supplies and consistency, helping the company to perceive a "new normal" as a growth opportunity. He restructured the marketing team to improve training and communication between product and marketing brand management, resulting in more efficiency. Advancement in sales is seen through Statistical Surveys data, the company says, along with social media growth and leads reporting on the marketing end. Hall was promoted from regional sales representative to marketing director, and finally to Solitude's product manager.

Andrea Graves
Director of design –
Cruiser RV and DRV
Luxury Suites**Years with company:** 7 years

Known for: Graves is a leader and a visionary, her company says, not only in interior design but with the overall brands she supports. She wears many hats, brings new and creative ideas to floorplan designs and presents new trends for vendors to explore. Graves' abilities with engineering software to enhance her designs is "truly unique to the industry," the company says, giving her represented brands a competitive edge through critical thinking and problem-solving. She is consistent, determined and always available, which allowed her to gain trust and relationships with all departments, the company says. Skilled at adapting designs to keep brands in-style, Graves' opinion is highly respected and valued – with most of her talents being self-taught through her perseverant personality, the company says. Outside her professional duties, she is a wife and mother of two, with a passion for animals.

Achievements: Graves was promoted last year to director of design for Cruiser and DRV and was featured in the "Women of the RV Industry" article in a trade magazine. She was part of two patent-pending design features at Cruiser RV. Responding to the industry's recent supply shortage, Graves was credited for bringing in new materials from outside the industry for product use. She was "instrumental" in developing new lines, such as Cruiser's Hitch product and DRV offerings in its triple-axle and Full House models. She is also a member of the RV Women's Alliance.

Paxton Jensen
Operations manager – General RV**Years with the company:** 12 years

Best known around the office for: "He meets weekly with every department and has the tools to motivate and teach correct principles to his staff," according to the company. "His work with quite a few GMs in the manufactory side has always impressed us here at General RV."

Achievements: Jensen's store in Salt Lake City went from a startup to having sales over \$125 million. His leadership allowed Winnebago Towables to invest in growth strategies that led to market share and increased profitability spearheaded by product portfolio. Jensen's leadership was "instrumental" for keeping his store open when COVID-19 hit, according to the company. Jensen is also proud that he has been able to work hard and create something that he's proud of, as well as being a family man.

Quote: "People may forget what you say. They may forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." – **Carl Buchner**

Darrin Caldwell Director of marketing – National Indoor RV Centers (NIRVC)

Years with company: 2 years

Known for: Caldwell joined the RV industry after being recruited by Michael Griggs, general manager, from his marketing position with online shoe seller Zappos. Taking his online marketing knowledge into the RV world, Caldwell increased consumer interest in the company's products and established a partnership giving NIRVC an ability to track and manage sales data like "never imagined." He always has an open phone line and screen share to solve problems and collaborate. Caldwell is a family man who relocated from Las Vegas to Dallas with the company and is described as "absolutely one of my favorite teammates" by a colleague.

Achievements: The NIRVC sales team has more than doubled its product size over the past year since Caldwell joined the team. Curating a partnership with Salesforce, he helped create a CRM with customized workflow, giving the company an ability to track effective lead origins to create a stronger workforce and better managers. Previously the head of internal marketing for Zappos, Caldwell joined the company and worked through pandemic aftereffects, such as worker shortages and spiking RV demand. The company says it "can pull all kinds of Salesforce data to show impact" that Caldwell and his innovations have had at NIRVC.



James Bonin General manager/dealership operations manager – Pan Pacific RV Centers

Years with company: 24 years

Known for: Since 1997, Bonin spent years training under company founder James Shields. His advanced knowledge of the RV industry has been the "catalyst" for his successful leadership, carrying a unique energy, enthusiasm and focus on the industry at large. His use of current, effective methods of operations and training are apparent in his desire to keep

staff advancing, which the company says he exhibits as an example of pride. His leadership tools are inspiring, including consistent training and measured results that establish him as a role model and "perfect representation" of company values. Starting from a young age, he has worked tirelessly with all departments, reaching for excellence while displaying pride in his own dealership.

Achievements: Bonin was recently promoted to general operations manager for all three dealership locations, where he added six key positions including technicians, writers and dispatching. Since the inception of his dealership in 2012, sales have increased by 85 percent, gross margin by 86 percent and net profit by 83 percent. Staff has grown from nine to 30, and Bonin is currently working to build a larger shop for service to accommodate staff and customer growth. He attended several Spader Management training workshops and leadership courses, is active in a Spader 20 Group, promoted in-house A World of Training for operations and acts as a brand ambassador of Route 66 for his dealership in Morgan Hill, Calif. Bonin also sits on the CalRVDA board. He has been involved with RVDA's Young Executives program, and also has a heart for charity – he and his wife, Coreena, have sponsored an annual cancer charity event and lot promotions for Hero's Day, which honors first responders and members of the military.

Quote: "Focus on what you can control." – **Unknown**

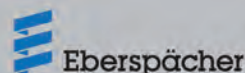
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Nick Ebenroth
Product manager, Fuzion/Impact and
Outback divisions – Keystone RV

Years with company: 8 years

Known for: In an unrelenting wave of challenges post-Covid, Keystone RV says it wouldn't have continued its success without the leadership of people like Ebenroth. He leads by example, not only for his divisions, but Keystone's sales department at large. Ethics, ingenuity and hard work contributed to Ebenroth being "one of the sharpest young leaders in the industry," the company says, with an ability to lead a veteran group in thinking outside the box. He holds himself and his peers to high standards, benefitting the company's dealers, retail customers, suppliers and competitors with the manner he conducts himself with. In a world with no playbook, the company says dealers and organization members look to Ebenroth to provide a calm, rational approach no matter the challenge's size.

Achievements: Starting as a Fuzion district sales manager in 2013, Ebenroth was promoted to Raptor/Carbon product manager, then Outback product manager soon after. In 2020, he took on the Fuzion/Impact product manager role in addition to his duties with Outback. As a college baseball catcher, his leadership and athletic background are "seen every day," the company says. Ebenroth's divisions are both seeing market share increases, with Outback travel trailers up 23 percent and Fuzion/Impact fifth wheels spiking 44 percent in year-to-date national stats. He kept the Outback brand on the "cutting edge" and developed a handicap-friendly travel trailer, and on the Fuzion side, is currently working on a project that will bring "patent-pending innovation" to toy haulers.

Mary Kate Haller
Sales professional –
RV One of Fort
Myers

Years with the company:
2 years

Best known around the office for: According to the company, Haller "volunteers for projects to enhance the customer experience for the customer and the dealership."

Achievements: Haller is consistently in the running for top salesperson of the month and has won the title many times, according to the company. She was nominated for secretary with FRVTA while she was still employed by Palm RV before it was bought out. She worked her way from a sales coordinator to internet manager, inventory manager, and working with customers directly in sales today. Haller also fills in as second finance chair when needed.

Quote: "Stay focused on your mission, remain steadfast in your pursuit of excellence, and always do the right thing." – **Mark Esper**



Ryan Hadley
Owner – TRIC RV Repair and Maintenance

Years with the company: 2 years

Best known around the office for: "The self-motivation, self-education, and a keen sense of what customers expect when they need service on their RVs," the company says, adding that he has earned recognition, "Through his work ethic, professionalism and responsiveness to consumer repair and maintenance requests."

Achievements: Hadley has completed his RVTI Level 1 certification and is enrolled in Level 2. He has established a consistent customer base within just a few years, as well as providing mobile services. "He has also earned the respect of many campground owners in New England who have established Ryan as their 'go-to' technician," the company says. Hadley started his business and runs his independent mobile RV service business. He received 17 five-star ratings on the first 17 reviews since he started his business and grew his presence on social media.

Quote: "Small steps in the right direction can turn out to be the biggest step of your life." – **Unknown**



Jason Haugen
Owner and CEO –
Haugen RV Group

Years with the company: 4 years

Best known around the office for:

According to the company, Haugen has “humility and self-awareness beyond his years. And he really cares about his employees and goes out of his way to empower and appreciate them.”



Achievements:

Haugen became the CEO in December 2019. The company says it finished that year as a \$12 million in revenue company. Now, Haugen has led it to become a company that will surpass \$100 million in revenue this year. The company says Haugen “is building a foundation of trust and accountability” that has positively impacted his employee and customer bases. Haugen also has invested resources in upgrading facilities, acquiring new dealerships, and invested in training that allows his employees to succeed. “Jason and his senior management team have created a new culture and new processes that have increased sales by a significant amount, not only financially, but from an employee satisfaction metric as well,” the company says. “Jason engages every employee, regardless of role or responsibility, when business decisions are made that impact the operation.” Haugen has increased his company’s locations from having one in 2019 to having six in 2021. Haugen has been awarded Top Executive Under 30 in the state of Utah, as well as being a part of the Utah Top 100 fastest-growing companies.

Quote: “Pain is temporary, championships last forever.” – **Unknown**

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Matthew Fuller Mechanic – Fuller Motorhome Rentals

Years with company: 23 years

Known for: With continuous problems arising with new units turning into rentals, Fuller has adapted and been inventive with solu-

tions, going above and beyond problem solving to get RVs on the road. He has an “impeccable” way of handling customers, answering questions and educating with his knowledge of the RV industry. Fuller is tactful and patient with his training and instructions, with a dedication considered “overwhelming” and an availability to help at any time. He keeps costs down while keeping all departments working smoothly and uneventfully.

Achievements: Fuller has received multiple raises, rising from positions in cleaning, mechanics and RV prep. As a small, family-run business, the company says he always makes sure things are running right, clean and mechanically ready. Many professionals comment on how Fuller handles himself, awarded by the company with paid vacations and assistance with his ownership of a travel trailer.

Josh Murdock Shop foreman – Hemlock Hill RV

Years with the company: 9 years

Best known around the office for: “Josh is always willing to take on more and do what it takes to get jobs done,” the company says. “Whether it is washing trailers or replacing roofs on RVs, he does it.”

Achievements: Murdock was recently promoted from service technician to shop foreman. He has completed advanced training at Keystone RV and several LCI tech trainings as well. Overall, Murdock is proud of how often he completes manufacturer trainings and he takes frequent tech training courses.

Quote: “Always be prepared to be the hardest worker in the room.” – **Unknown**



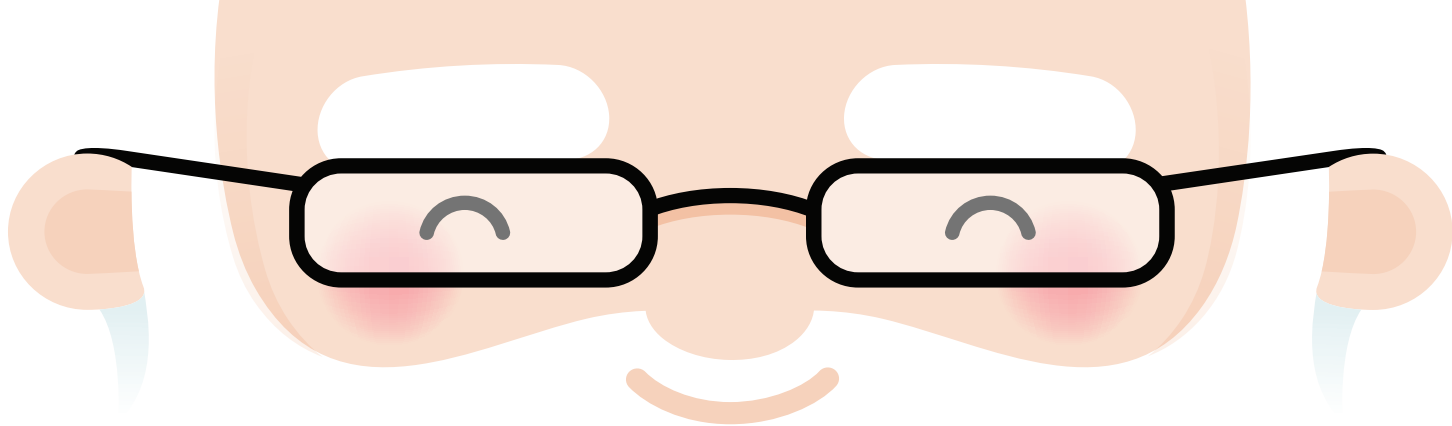
Chase Youngblood Sales director – Youngblood's RV and Outdoor

Years with company: 15 years

Known for: Youngblood first stepped foot in the RV industry at 2 years old, with his father. Since then, he became a leader who exemplifies high standards, intentional connections and hard work, who is never “too good” for a task – even if it’s taking the trash out. He pays attention to small details, including what customers desire in their units, which his company says makes the difference in the sale. Curating great relationships with manufacturers result in Youngblood being part of enhancements to products, sometimes resulting in mid-production floorplan changes for manufacturers. His integrity, noble character and trustworthiness make him admirable, the company says, including creating the “best place possible” for his employees and customers. Successful in his professional and home life, he is noted for prioritizing his spouse and children while pursuing a passion for work beyond the paycheck.

Achievements: Youngblood is part of an organization that owns three locations in Kentucky and Missouri. At the Paducah location, Youngblood’s leadership doubled the number of units put out the year he became general manager – a continuing growth that can “no longer be contained” in the same location, now slated for a new store with 10 service bays and space for more than 300 units. Youngblood was awarded the Duane Spader Leadership Development Scholarship in 2019.

Quote: “Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try.” – **Unknown**



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Jason Riley Director of marketing – Rollick

Years with company: 6 years

Best Known for: Heavy role on the sales side of marketing, working directly with OEMS. Riley works to provide lead management and customer satisfaction tools to OEMS so they can monitor progress and implement strategies to elevate the customer experience.

Riley provides thought leadership and content to dealerships and OEMS that help them think of the buying experience in a different way. Riley has a way of engaging clients that is friendly and professional and really provide manageable data and processes for RV professionals that in turn can use that information to increase sales.

Achievements: Rollick CEO Bernie Brenner says, “Jason has been integral to Rollick and the RV clients we serve. He has led our company’s marketing and sales enablement strategy for more than six years, most recently focusing on launching our new inventory and digital retailing solutions in the RV industry. Not only does Jason guide the marketing and brand direction for Rollick, but he also works directly with some of our largest RV OEMs to implement strategies and tactics to elevate the shopping and buying experience for their customers. His leadership in this role has made a direct impact on Rollick and the RV industry overall.”

Quote: “You get one life. Fish it well.” – **Simms Fishing**

Nicholas Rudowich Senior manager of government affairs – RV Industry Association

Years with company: 4 years

Known for: With a thorough knowledge of state government processes and “high-quality” communication, Rudowich has made strides in helping resolve issues that could negatively impact RVIA members and the RV industry at large. He is described as a dedicated, diligent member of the association’s Government Affairs team who “meets or exceeds all goals he sets.” In his short time with RVIA, Rudowich has become a respected leader with an ability to consider both small details and the bigger picture of how the association benefits the industry, RVIA says.

Achievements: Rudowich has taken on several special RVIA projects, including a major victory in getting legislation to allow longer travel trailer lengths in Washington – a solution for manufacturers seeking plan approvals for new units. He leads most of the association’s park model RV issues, helping solve problems for manufacturers in several states. When COVID hit, he analyzed state policies on allowing manufacturers, dealers and campgrounds to stay open. Rudowich also lead efforts in Florida and Texas for line-make issues manufacturers were experiencing with licensing and titling at the Department of Motor Vehicles. In just over four years, he was promoted from RVIA’s legislative analyst to manager of government affairs, landing as senior manager of the team soon after.

Quote: “Some dream it, some do it, some do both.” – **Walt Disney**



Austin Meadows RV sales manager – Duo Form

Years with company: 8 years

Known for: When the RV industry experienced a sudden boom from COVID shutdowns, Meadows hit the ground running without missing a beat, the company says. His years on the show floor demonstrate how determination and dedication can move one up through company ranks. A friend to everyone and great mentor to sales staff, the company says Meadows’ years of knowledge helps customers resolve issues on the spot. He transitioned through several roles, tackling each with enthusiasm and positivity, and is “always there” for customers no matter the time – even with a new baby at home.

Achievements: Meadows started with Duo Form during his summers off from college, quickly rising in the ranks from a sales team intern to management in the RV segment. Within one year, he managed a sales increase. Duo Form says Meadows’ contributions to product development – including residential-style shower walls and backsplashes – brought a modern touch to company offerings and new units’ interior design throughout the industry. While being active at work, he also contributes to his community and church.

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LOOK-ing Good

By Mike Harbour

LOOK Trailers' winning ways – including offering a wide product selection that's available across the U.S. – have catapulted it to the top of the cargo trailer market.

Demand for cargo trailers, like RVs, has been insatiable as of late, and an Indiana company meeting that need has become the country's largest manufacturer in the market after being established just 11 years ago.

"We've been on a pretty strong growth path since Day One," says Matt Arnold, CEO and founder of Middlebury-based LOOK Trailers. "In the last year, we've made some major changes that have been really great for our company."

With six plants scattered among five states making seven brands of trailers, the company recently divided operational management into two divisions, each led by seasoned vice presidents. Two facilities in Indiana and one in Pennsylvania comprise the eastern division and are handled by Jeff Troyer, while Ray Salley supervises the Texas, Arizona and Utah plants of the western division.

"It really allows us as an organization to have continuity of leadership, and continuity of how we manage our values and our vision, to be not just a cargo trailer company, but to be a great company," says Arnold. "This also has allowed us to focus on our operational strengths and look at the strengths of the managers and let them really take this vision and do something with it."

PHOTOS BY STEVE TOEPP WITH MIDWEST PHOTOGRAPHICS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED





“It (the company’s leadership structure) really allows us as an organization ... to be not just a cargo trailer company, but to be a great company.”

– Matt Arnold, LOOK CEO and founder

The company – makers of LOOK, Cargo Express, Pace American, Compass, Everlite, Formula and Impact trailers – already has accomplished quite a lot. Within its first year of existence, it created three plants and formed a dealer network of 300. Today, LOOK employs 560 people, serves 500-plus dealers and has made more cargo trailers than any other manufacturer annually since 2019, according to Statistical Surveys, the market data firm that also monitors the RV industry. Statistical Surveys also recognized LOOK in 2012 for the largest market share gain – just two years after the company’s creation.

Offering a Variety of Cargo Trailers

LOOK’s offerings consist of a wide variety of mostly enclosed aluminum trailers in numerous widths and lengths with up to three axles. They are designed to haul everything from general cargo and powersports equipment to race cars and mobile offices.

“One of our hottest ones right now is a UTV trailer with a UTV-specific door. That’s been a good seller for us,” Steve Hartman, Middlebury, Ind.-based vice president of sales and LOOK’s first employee, says of the LOOK MOAB. “UTVs are extremely popular out west, and our Utah and Arizona plants saw the UTV market expanding before we did. Now, out here, it’s gotten more popular, so we’ve been able to use what Ray’s facilities came up with as far as UTV doors and putting a door where a door should be for a UTV instead of just guessing at it.”

The MOAB is a rugged, off-road-capable trailer that, when upgraded to the Slickrock Edition, isn’t too far removed from a toy hauler. Among its features: a Porta-Potti cassette toilet with sink and vanity, a HappiJac Power Bed Lift, an insulated ceiling, plus a solar panel and controller. Available in six standard colors, two widths and four lengths up to 20 feet, the MOAB is



LOOK Trailer’s facility in Middlebury, Ind., is bustling with activity these days. The trailer manufacturer is seeing the same strong growth as the RV industry.



Jasmine Galvin Sanchez uses a nail gun to work on a trailer's top trim.



“When we hire somebody, we go through a really good onboarding process. ... Part of the retention is just making sure we’ve got a mentor program,

ensuring that they’re happy, that they understand their job, and that they’re confident in what they’re doing.”

– Jeff Troyer, LOOK vice president, eastern division

just one of many models the manufacturer has created based on customer demand.

Another example is the LXT Contractor, a tandem-axle trailer designed to be both workshop and tool barn for those who projects take them on the road. A tongue-mounted stepladder allows easy access to the ladder rack atop the reinforced flat roof, while external doors reveal tool compartments that also can be reached from inside; one door even opens downward to serve as a workbench.

Mostly, LOOK's best-selling units are general cargo trailers, such as the Element. Available in four different widths and lengths from 6 to 24 feet, it's a customizable trailer that can fit the needs of lots of users, whether for professional or personal use.

Serving Markets Across the U.S.

With plants spread throughout the U.S., LOOK is able to get trailers like the MOAB, the LXT Contractor and the Element to its retailers much more quickly than if production was limited to a single facility. That's important to the mom-and-pop dealers that make up most of LOOK's network – especially given that demand is so high, according to Hartman.

“The inventory is moving quick. We had dealers that normally have 100 units on their lot and they're down to 15 units,”



Walter Aguilar (right) and Raul Hernandez inspect a trailer hitch



Left: Jasmine Galvin Sanchez (left) Audiel Machuca (middle) and Raul Hernandez (right) finish up a trailer's bottom trim.

“The inventory is moving quick. We had dealers that normally have 100 units on their lot and they’re down to 15 units.”

– **Steve Hartman, LOOK vice president of sales**

he says. “We want to take care of those who’ve taken care of us. We have lots of dealers that started with us on Day One and we still have them.”

Part of that reason: LOOK has been able to weather the pandemic fairly well. Protocols were put into place to keep the workforce healthy, according to Troyer. Production stopped at only three of its factories, and even then, shipping continued to take place. No one was laid off, although some temporary furloughs were required while the assembly lines were quiet.

Things didn’t stay that way for long, however.

“So, now all of a sudden with COVID, the demand is at record highs. At the same time, unemployment is at record lows. At the same time, parts shortages – because we do deal with them, even those we do make our own subassemblies, have been a challenge,” Troyer says. “But I’ll tell you we have such an experienced group of individuals, that for the most part, we’ve been able to navigate our way through these unprecedented times.”

As cargo trailers require far fewer parts than almost any RV, and most assembly is done stateside from raw materials, overseas supply chain issues haven’t been as critical for LOOK as they have been for other industries. Usually, the company imports tires, axles, and chassis parts.

“We’ve worked really hard to establish relationships with multiple vendors and we have gotten really great at crisis management and jumping through hoops to make things work,” Salley says.

Great employees are at the heart of that effort, according to Troyer, who says LOOK’s people aren’t simply there to fill a position.

“When we hire somebody, we go through a really good onboarding process. We do intense training to make sure the employee understands our expectations. Part of the retention is just making sure we’ve got a mentor program,” he says, “ensuring that they’re happy, that they understand their job, and that they’re confident in what they’re doing.”

Pay, he says, naturally plays a part of keeping turnover low. Workers in LOOK’s Middlebury and Bristol, Ind., plants, for example, are surrounded by RV and marine plants that offer more compensation. To that end, Arnold and his executive team take care of their employees in other ways.

For example, all plants run a single Monday-Friday shift that starts at 5 a.m. local, ending at 1:30 p.m. There’s occasional overtime, but only rarely does the workweek spill into Saturday. When it does, it’s a strictly voluntary shift. For Arnold, 40 hours means everybody wins.

“If they have family time and they’re happy and they’re doing



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Pictured here is one of LOOK Trailer's Cargo Express models. The company also produced trailers under the brand names Pace American, Compass, Everlite, Formula and Impact trailers. (Photo courtesy of LOOK Trailers)



"The biggest thing we work on is we know that 99.9 percent of the time, we're going to provide a safe working environment. We continually have to work toward making sure our people work in a safe manner."

– Ray Salley, LOOK vice president, western division

Quality Control Inspector Arlene Hart examines the door frame to a finished trailer. Maintaining product quality controls and making sure safety protocols are followed are two imperatives for LOOK Trailers.



Nicolas Mendoza, group leader, plywood, secures base boards for an Everlite utility trailer. In addition to cargo and utility trailers, the company makes auto haulers and trailers for hauling off-road vehicles, motorcycles, snowmobiles, plus mobile workspaces and more.

things outside of work, that's the work-life balance that we want for our employees. When we have that, our quality's up, our customer satisfaction's up, our employee satisfaction's up and our turnover's down," he says.

Emphasizing Safety a Top Priority

Like most manufacturers, safety ranks high on the list of non-negotiables, and Salley says it requires daily emphasis. Near-miss incidents, for example, are followed by on-the-spot retraining and videos on the subject are shown regularly on each plant's CCTV system.

"Safety is always a challenge. The biggest thing we work on is we know that 99.9 percent of the time, we're going to provide a safe working environment," he says. "We continually have to work toward making sure our people work in a safe manner."

"We do talk safety every day, every week, all the time," Troyer says. "The one thing every employee will know when they go home is we care about them and we care about their safety, period."

LOOK's executive team has placed a particular emphasis on helping its people develop their careers – not just by promoting from within but also putting them through management programs or funding their MBAs.

"When you can take somebody with desire, with drive, with great ability to communicate vision and a great person with good values, you can give them an opportunity. And when you do, they pick it up and they run tremendously well and it's for them and their families," Arnold says. "Not everybody will stay with us. But someone like that, you're going to make them better. And they may be at another company but, hey, you know what? You took them from a role where you saw the value and the stability and you give them this opportunity and you get to watch them



"We want to take care of those who've taken care of us. We have lots of dealers that started with us on Day One and we still have them."

— Steve Hartman, LOOK vice president of sales

further their career and enjoy what they're doing."

In contrast to the RV market, LOOK's growth has been organic, according to Arnold, not via mergers and acquisitions. He doesn't see that changing anytime soon, either, but he is open-minded.

"We've worked on quality initiatives, Lean objectives, and we've focused on making the operations better. If an opportunity comes along where we could do another operation, we will do it and we will have people here that will get an opportunity to be a part of that," he says. "The goal is not focused on a dollar amount or a company size. The goal is to focus on how to do continuous improvement and how to improve quality."

"It's not an easy task, but we continue to improve and we continue to look at how we run our operations and we're getting more efficient, so we're putting more product out there, but I also think we're putting more quality product out there," he adds.

As efficiencies have gone up, Arnold says the result is higher wages for his employees.

"We're winning together and continuing to bolster the culture because, at the end of the day, it's about every employee and what they get out of it," he says. "That goes back to our real focus on making sure the plants are safe and people go home without injury. That's what I think about every day." **RV**

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SPECIAL PRODUCT FOCUS:

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With “residential-style” gaining a larger segment of the RV interiors market, dealers are increasingly able to offer their customers not just the next-best-thing to home, but the true comforts of home on the road, whether it’s furniture or appliances or other creature comforts, as demonstrated by the multitude of listings in this special product focus section.

For more information on any of the products listed here, visit the website that appears at the bottom of the respective listing. Readers of the online issue can simply click on a listing to be taken directly to a company’s website.



STAINLESS-STEEL DOOR FRIDGE

Dometic, Elkhart, Ind., brings a fresh design to the RV kitchen with the DMC 4081. The refrigerator features stainless-steel doors with tight radius corners, rolled edges, and a recessed side-pocket latching handle. Inside the fridge are glass shelves, clear door bins, dual crisper drawers and LED illumination. The DMC offers 8 cubic feet of storage. Digital controls provide flexibility between performance and power consumption. Dometic’s variable speed compressor is purpose-built for the RV industry.

www.dometic.com

PEDESTAL RV RANGE

Suburban, a brand of **Airxcel**, Dayton, Tenn., presents its Pedestal Range, which is designed to provide the comforts of cooking at home while on the road. Product features include a fully integrated warming drawer, illuminated control knobs, an extra-wide oven that can accommodate residential-sized trays, an adjustable three-position rack, a deep-recessed porcelain-coated cooktop, a cast-iron grate, fully sealed burners, and towel-style handles.

www.airxcel.com





RESIDENTIAL-STYLE RV FURNITURE

Lippert, Elkhart, Ind., offers its Thomas Payne RV furniture lineup, which is designed to help RVers relax on the road, just like they would at home. The lineup is built specifically for RVs, and the company says the furniture line was designed with craftsmanship, comfort and quality in mind. Whether upgrading old, worn furniture, or could simply use a style enhancement, Thomas Payne RV furniture is designed to help RVers customize their interior.

www.lippert.com



OVER-THE-RANGE MICROWAVE OVEN

Contoure USA, Boca Raton, Fla., has expanded its aftermarket options for the built-in Over-the-Range Convection/Microwave ovens with the addition of four new models. The combination microwave and range hood can be easily installed over an existing stovetop. The new models offer more efficient ways of cooking that will improve the camping experience. Models are available now in stainless steel or deluxe black stainless steel.

www.contoureusa.com/contouremicrowaveovens

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TWO-HANDLE PULL-DOWN FAUCET

Valterra Products, Mission Hills, Calif., offers its two-handle pull-down faucet, which has a retractable spout that allows RVers to toggle between stream and spray. It has three finishes: brushed nickel, bronze and chrome. It also has a low-flow aerator, quarter turn, and washerless cartridges. All hardware included.

www.valterra.com

10.7-CUBIC-FOOT REFRIGERATOR

Way Interglobal, Elkhart, Ind., offers its flagship Greystone 10.7-cubic-foot, 12-volt refrigerator. The company says the Greystone refrigerator features high capacity, offers powerful and fast cooling, includes premium storage and has the capability to work off-the-grid.

www.wayinterglobal.com



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MOTORHOME SEAT COVER

RV Designer, Wheeling, Ill., offers its Motorhome GripFit seat covers, which feature a leather-like fabric for a rich feel and long wear. GripFit seat covers are designed to expand and contract to fit most cockpit seats, with tapered arms for a better fit. The product features a padded seat and back, with side storage pockets. GripFit covers are fire-retardant, pet-friendly and easy to clean with a damp cloth.

www.rvdesigner.com



TANKLESS WATER HEATER

GE Appliances, a **Haier Co.**, Louisville, introduces the GE Tankless Water Heater. The GE Tankless Electric Water Heater installs at the point of use for instant, unlimited hot water where it's needed. Designed with ease of installation in mind, the wall-mounted unit requires a 120-volt outlet, standard 1/2-inch NPT water connections, and does not require venting. The scale reduction technology helps extend the life of the unit by shielding the heating element from water and scale build up. It easily adjusts the temperature with the remote control or easy-use touch screen.

www.geappliances.com



ROLLER SHADES

Maxxair a brand of **Airxcel**, Wichita, Kan., offers its Maxxshade and Maxxshade Plus for RVers to be able to control the light in their RVs. The shades are fully retractable, spring-loaded, and have reflective backing to block light and heat from entering a coach and deflect harmful UV rays. Maxxshades are easily installed over standard roof vents or powered ventilation fans using an existing garnish ring. The Plus also features cool, white LED lighting.

www.airxcel.com

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SUPER COMBO WASHER-DRYER

Pinnacle Appliances, Houston, offers the Super Combo 21-5500 – an all-in-one unit equipped with sanitize, allergen, quiet, and winterize cycles. The 18-pound washer-dryer uses smart technology so it can clean and sanitize clothes, self-clean after each cycle, eliminate dust mites, and calculate the exact amount of water and heat needed without wasted time, energy or money. The washer-dryer measures 33.5" by 23.5" by 23.8" (HxWxD in) and runs on 60 dB.

www.pinnaclecombos.com



TWO-PIECE INTERIOR RUG SET

Prest-O-Fit, Chandler, Ariz., offers its Decorian two-piece rug set: Runner (26" by 72") and Mat (24" by 36"). The stylish trellis design rugs are sized specifically for RVs and are available in two fashionable colors to complement a variety of interior motifs. The low-pile height allows for easy door clearance, and the skid-resistant latex backing works great on carpet and hard floors. These rugs are easy to vacuum and can be spot-cleaned; they should air dry only.

www.prestofit.com

Progressive Industries

Portable Surge Protection

Portable surge protector kits contain a separate receptacle tester to detect wiring faults at the pedestal and surge module to attach to the detachable power cord. Separating the two functions reduces the size of the product while increasing protection from inclement weather.

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Surge Module

progressiveindustries.net

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RESIDENTIAL-STYLE KITCHEN FAUCETS

Dura Faucet, Camas, Wash., offers heavy-duty, residential-grade, spring-coil kitchen faucets (NMK504-MBSN) that bring a modern look to RVs. In addition to offering a full line of metallic and nonmetallic kitchen faucets, the company also offers metallic and nonmetallic bathroom faucets, nonmetallic shower valves, metallic and vinyl shower hoses, a variety of shower wands, shower boxes and quick connect spray ports. The company's full line of faucets are available through aftermarket distribution centers.

www.dura faucet.com

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COCKPIT SHADES

United Shade, a brand of **Airxcel**, Elkhart, Ind., introduces its custom cockpit shades for class B motorhomes. The product is held in place by magnets and can fold down when being stored. The shades are designed to maintain structural integrity for a snug fit against the windshield.

www.unitedshade.com



REFRIGERATOR WITH FRENCH DOORS

Norcold, Sidney, Ohio, introduces its Norcold Polar Elite NDC15 refrigerator, which the company says is completely redesigned from the ground up for RVing. The new design features residential styling with French doors and easy-open handles, DC compressor convenience, and 15 cubic feet of storage into an existing 12-cubic-foot refrigerator cut-out.

www.norcold.com



AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEM

Furrion, Elkhart, Ind., offers its Furrion Chill air conditioning system, which is mid-profile system that is designed to be ultra-quiet. It is aerodynamically designed and powerful, with high cooling capacity.

www.furrion.com



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WATER TREATMENT SYSTEM

Blu Technology, Portage, Mich., offers its No Dirty Water RX water treatment system, which is a multi-stage, self-contained system featuring an onboard 12V pump and a 0.2 micron filter. The RX has 5" filters and weighs 13 pounds.

www.goblutech.com



FRESHWATER RECLAMATION SYSTEM

Aqua View, Temecula, Calif., offers the Showermi\$er, a freshwater reclamation systems for RVs. Aqua View says its patented Showermi\$er freshwater reclamation system recirculates unused fresh water before it ever goes down the drain, saving money and extending RVers' fresh and graywater tank capacities by up to 40 percent without changing tanks or adding weight. Imagine: No more wasted water – and money – down the drain. Now being factory-installed by some of North America's leading RV manufacturers, the product is available for retrofitting existing RVs.

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INSTANT WATER HEATER

Truma, Elkhart, Ind., offers the AquaGo, an instant water heater that provides continuous hot water regardless of flow rate. The AquaGo mixing vessel maintains constant water temperature with no scalding and has all-season use with optional anti-freeze function (comfort and comfort plus). The Truma AquaGo also can be decalcified. Winterization is also simple thanks to the "Easy Drain Lever." Truma AquaGo is available in three models: AquaGo Comfort Plus, AquaGo Comfort and AquaGo Basic.

www.truma.net



PROTECT THE REFRIGERATOR

ARPC, Butte, Mont., offers the Fridge Defend, which is a patented product designed to solve the boiler overheating issues associated with absorption-type refrigerators. Boiler overheating leads to the failure of the fridge, which can lead to devastating fires. The Fridge Defend is designed to keep the heat below 400°F, whereas it says the factory devices allow the temperature to soar up to 1,200°F.

www.arpv.com



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HYDRONIC HEATING SYSTEM

Aqua-Hot a brand of **Airxcel**, Frederick, Colo., offers its 125 hydronic heating system, which is an ultra-compact, all-in-one unit with up to three independently controlled heat exchangers. The company says it is high-altitude ready with passive altitude adjustments. The product has an LCD controller capable of diagnostic readouts and it comes in diesel and gas models or can run on 120V shore power.

www.aquahot.com



RV CLOTHESLINE

Stromberg Carlson, Traverse City, Mich., offers the Extend-A-Shower, which creates more room in an RV shower. Extend-A-Shower pivots into the shower, folding out of the way, when not in use. The product also can be used to drip dry laundry over the shower basin. Extend-A-Shower does not require any special tools to install. It is available in three models: EXT 3542 (white), EXT 3542ORB (oil-rubbed bronze), and EXT 35425 (satin).

www.strombergcarlson.com/product/extend-a-shower-for-35-to-42-openings/

TANKLESS WATER HEATER

Girard, San Clemente, Calif., offers its GSWH-2 tankless water heater, designed to provide an unlimited supply of hot water with less weight and less propane gas consumption. It is a suitable option for new RVs or as an upgrade to an existing RV.

www.greenrvproducts.com





STOVETOP OVEN

Omniasweden, Chicago, offers the Omnia stovetop oven. The Omnia boasts a simple, robust design and features three parts that work together to provide heat from above and below: the pan, the base and the lid. These three parts must always be used together. The Omnia works on all heated sources except induction stovetops and heat will vary in relation to the heat source used. RVers can use the Omnia to make fresh-baked bread and oven dishes directly on the stove.

www.omniaseden.com



LINE OF VINYL FABRICS

Richloom, New York City, introduces its 2021 Tough Collection, which expands the company's polyurethane library and adds various textures and prints of all sizes. RVers can mix and match textures, patterns and colors, or layer them with jacquards and woven textures from the company's Hit the Road and Residential collections for maximum visual impact.

www.richloom.com



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TOILET SEAL CAP

Pure Essence, Boerne, Texas, offers the patent-pending Outhouse Toilet Seal Cap with Conditioner for use with Dometic 300, 310, and 320 toilets. The cap helps to prevent toilet seals from drying up during RV storage. The cap also prolongs the life of the toilet seal and will keep the valve lubricated for a smooth opening and closing, preventing any sticking issues. This conditioner is a proprietary silicone formula that is freeze-resistant down to -55 degrees F.

www.pureessence.life



ROLLER SHADES

MCD, a brand of **Airxcel**, McKinney, Texas, offers its American Duo Day-Night roller shades, designed to provide light control and privacy. The product is a two-shade system comprised of a daytime shade to filter light but maintain outward visibility and a nighttime shade to block incoming sunlight for darkened interiors. It is available in various colors and patterns, as well as manual, switch electric, remote electronic or hybrid operating systems.

www.mcdinnovations.com



VOLTAGE PROTECTOR

Camco Mfg., Greensboro, N.C., presents the PowerGrip Voltage Protector. The PowerGrip Voltage Protector and Circuit Analyzer (55306) protects RV appliances from high-voltage surges, such as lightning, as well as low voltage, which can be equally harmful. The Voltage Protector automatically disconnects from dangerous voltage and reconnects after power stabilizes. It is available in 50-amp or 30-amp configurations and is available from authorized Camco distributors.

www.camco.net



COMBINATION STOVE/HEATER

Scan Marine Equipment, Seattle, presents the Wallas Nordic Dt, a fully controllable diesel-fired stove and heater combination suitable for RV, trailer and marine use. Variable power produces up to 1,900 watts (6,600 BTU/hour) of cooking or heating power, which means the Nordic Dt can heat most Class B vehicles effectively, using less than 7 ounces of fuel per hour. Incorporating altitude compensation, thermo-roam sensing and push-button starting, the Nordic Dt is designed to be quiet and easy to clean.

www.scanmarineusa.com

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The Importance of No. 2

Savvy sales reps recognize they need to sell potential customers on the dealership at least as much as they do on the product and the price.



By Michael Rees

Michael Rees is the president of A World of Training, a Valrico, Fla.-based firm that provides parts, service, sales, F&I and management training to industry professionals in the RV, auto and marine industries. Rees also facilitates some Spader Business Management groups. For more information, visit <https://aworldoftraining.com>.

Many of you reading this are in sales of one kind or another.

You could be selling parts, service or new or used RVs. Or, possibly you are in management, where you sell people on ideas and rationale.

Whenever you want to make a sale, you must remember, in the RV dealership environment, there are basically five things you need to sell:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------|
| 1. You | 4. Price |
| 2. The Dealership | 5. Time |
| 3. The Product | |

You are always going to be the most important of these five ingredients, being that if your customer does not buy into *you*, it is going to be very difficult getting them to buy into any of the others.

You also must convince customers that your dealership is the one they should be dealing with, and that the product you are offering is the best one to match their wants and needs. Show customers the value to match or exceed the price and then sell them on the fact that now is the best time for them to make this purchase.

The past 20 months have been frantic, to say the least. You likely have not had to do much selling, as you have had a spate of very strong buyers – customers who have been coming in ready to buy, to the extent that they have bought whatever you have had for sale.

Returning to Business as Normal

Traveling the country and visiting multiple RV dealerships, I am starting to see a change with customers. They are more like they used to be – a little more demanding and choosier. Of course, this means you need to get back to selling the way you used to –

by following a proven process that will enhance the customers' experiences and produce results.

The process I train dealerships on is designed to sell the five ingredients as mentioned earlier. This article is focusing on just one of those ingredients – No. 2: The Dealership.

More and more, customers are browsing the internet before visiting a dealership to get much more information on products before ever speaking with a salesperson, thus saving them time hopping from one dealership to the next.

Now, think about the parts customer: They not only shop dealerships, but other online retailers, too.

So, what can you do to make sure you sell your dealership? The good news is: You can do a lot!

As most customers start out by browsing the internet, you need to recognize that your dealership has to be well-represented on the internet. Not only should you pop up on the first page of searches, but when potential customers are directed to our website, it should represent your culture and be inviting and interesting enough for the customer to browse further on the site. Experts say that the more time a customer is engaged on your website, the more likely they are to post a serious inquiry.

Your dealership is no longer just a brick-and-mortar store. The top dealerships also have the best websites that are conducive to customer shopping and buying.

The goal of most dealership websites is to get the customer to text, email or call the dealership for more information, such as pricing, product details and more. Once this happens, your job is to converse with the customer to hopefully get them to your physical dealership. (I know, several deals are done without the customer coming in, but you still need to sell the dealership. Specifically, why buy from you?)



Potential customers should be introduced to a service advisor, parts counterperson or manager of the parts or service department as part of the sales process. This lets potential customers know that the dealership is well-equipped to take care of their wants and needs after the sale.



THE 13 STEPS

A World of Training uses 13 steps to sell the five ingredients needed for dealers to make the sale to customers. Those 13 steps are:

1. Meet and greet
2. Interview/Conversation
3. Touch the desk/Select the product
4. Feature/Function/Benefit presentation
5. Demo
6. Trial close
7. Service and parts tour
8. Buy the trade
9. Worksheet/Negotiations
10. Close or turn over
11. Introduction to business manager
12. Delivery and follow-up
13. Prospecting

Taking a Customer-Centric View of the Dealership

So, when the customer comes in – are you ready?

Your customers will judge you and the dealership using four of their five senses: sight, hearing, smell and touch.

This begs the question: How does your dealership look? When was the last time you looked at it from a customer point of view?

I challenge you to take a legal pad, start from the edge of your property where customers first drive in, and make a list of anything that could be made better. For example, are there weeds that need to be taken care of? How about the outside of the building, the signage and general tidiness? Are things clean? Does the signage paintwork need touching up?

It can be easy to look past these things you see every day, as you become use to it. So, ask yourself this question: If the most important person you know is due to visit your dealership, what would you do to make it look the very best possible?

There are several of you who belong to 20 Groups. Group members will normally visit one of their fellow member's dealerships in each meeting. Quite often, I hear: "We need to do this, or we need to do that before they (20 Group members) get here, so we give the best impression possible."

Now, let's consider that group. Are they the most important group of people to visit your dealership? No! Your customers are! If anything needs to be done, it needs to be done now, so your customers see you at your best – every day!

We have talked about what your customers see when they visit your dealership. Customers also will use their other senses, too, as mentioned earlier.

For example, what do they hear? Not that you would do this, but I have visited dealerships that like to have some background music playing. They have their P.A. system tuned to a local radio station. Once, while I was visiting a dealership, a competitor's dealer ad played on the radio! You should have someone check regularly as to what is playing on the radio through the dealership.

Smell and touch are important factors, too. As you are at the dealership every day, you possibly don't notice the pungent smells any more coming from the dampness in the corner that you didn't get round to repairing after the last storm.

Next, when it comes to cleanliness, some dealers leave it to individuals to clean their own workspaces. Here's the deal: Most customers won't notice how clean your desk is, but they will definitely notice it if it is dusty or unkempt.

These are all things within your control. Be proud of your dealership – how it looks, how it smells and what people hear.

Following the Sales Process

You can now promote different aspects of your dealership while customers are visiting, by following the sales process.

Many of you by now are familiar with our sales process, which is designed to sell all five ingredients as mentioned earlier in this article. Let's visit the steps that are specifically designed to sell the dealership – steps 3 and 7 (see the list at the top of this page for a description of all 13 steps).

Allow me to go through these steps with you. Step 3 is: Touch the desk/Product selection.

After the interview/conversation, salespeople should be trained to say something like this: "Mr. and Mrs. Customer, based on the information you shared with me, I think I have two or three units that will fit exactly what you are looking for. With the amount of business we are doing right now, I need to check with my manager to make sure the units I have in mind for you are still available. Wait here, I will be right back. Can I get you a coffee or water while you wait?"

The salesperson then goes to visit with the manager and share the information the customer provided. Between them, they should select the best units to fit their customer's wants and needs.

Here is where you help sell the dealership: The manager should go back with the salesperson and be introduced to the customer.

Why would that help sell the dealership?

Think about the most important aspect of any dealership – it is not the brick-and-mortar store and the physical layout. Instead, it is the people who work there that make the dealership what it is. So, you have a wonderful opportunity to introduce a manager – an integral part of the make-up of the dealership to your customer and enhance their experience.

Most sales managers were successful salespeople, which allowed their promotion to manager. To be a successful salesperson, you must be good with customers. Quite often, when salespeople are promoted to managers, it stops them from doing what made them successful in the first place – interacting with customers!

By putting this step firmly in place, the manager is now more involved with the deal, and the customer feels special because they got to meet and talk with the manager. How many of your competitive dealers do this?

By being one of the few dealers who do this, can you see how this will help a customer "buy-in" to your dealership?

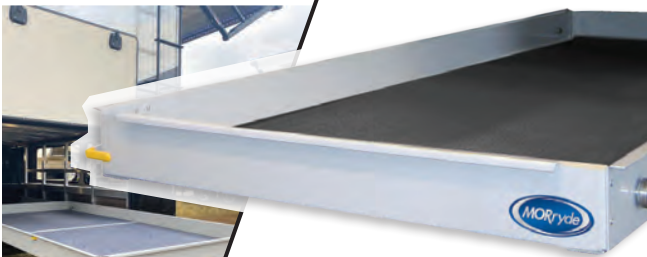
The normal routine follows: give customers "wow" presentations and demos, followed with a couple of trial closes to make sure you are on the right product.

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Next up is step No. 7, which is the service and parts tour.

Most dealership owners and general managers insist that every customer is introduced to parts and service personnel, which typically happens on the day of delivery. This is imperative to maximize parts sales and conduct an orientation on the customer's unit. I am not talking about this, however.

Instead, I am talking about making this introduction as a part of the sales process, which means that every interested customer (whether they end up buying or not) enjoys this experience.

The ideal way to do this is, once the trial close is done, say something like: "Mr. and Mrs. Customer, allow me to show you why so many customers do business here and continue to do business here at ABC RV."

Then, escort your customer to the parts and service departments and introduce them to either a service advisor, parts counterperson or a manager from either department.

Edifying the Parts & Service Operation

Edify.

What does it mean to edify? In a nutshell, it means to build up.

In this context, you might tell your customers: "Mr. and Mrs. Customer, this is _____, and she is the most important reason so many customers do business here and keep coming back. _____ is one of our wonderful service advisors. She will take care of you during the time you have your RV, to make sure it works as designed and to keep you camping and enjoying your RV. As a salesperson, I am thrilled that _____ is part of our team, knowing how well she takes care of our customers. _____, this is Mr. and Mrs. Customer, and they are buying the _____ (make and model)."

The parts and service personnel are trained to interact with these customers and let them know about how well-equipped they are to take care of all the customers' wants and needs after the sale.

Here's the deal: Most customers know that it is a matter of *when* they need your service and parts help – not a matter of *if*.

If you are proactive, and if edify your parts and service people during the sales process, what will your customers now think? Most likely they will think you are not only able, but very willing, to look after them after the sale, whereas some dealers simply want to sell the unit. That's important because the professional dealership knows the sale is just the beginning of a relationship – not the end.

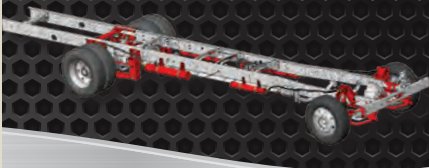
By putting this step in place, as described earlier, you are giving customers yet another great reason to do business with you. After all, they will not get this treatment at the majority of other dealers – because as much as some dealers might agree with having these processes in place, most dealers won't make the effort!

In summary, give every customer the "royal" treatment while at your dealership. Recognize that all five ingredients must be intact to make a sale. Ensure your team is proud of where they work and have them show this pride to each and every visiting customer – giving them yet another reason for them to buy from your dealership. **RV2**

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In Case You Missed it

Breaking news exclusives from RV PRO's website



Lehman is pictured with fellow Ember team members and guest in front of the first Ember trailer. The first trailer was promised to Haylett Auto & RV Supercenter in Coldwater, Mich.



Ember RV Celebrates First RV, New Facility

BRISTOL, Ind. – One Friday in early November, spectators, members of the press and production workers gathered around the bay doors of Ember RV's new facility here in a ribbon-cutting ceremony that celebrated the official launch of the first unit to leave the production floor.

In the background, construction loomed, a sign of growth to come.

Earlier this year, the brand-new RV manufacturer announced plans to invest \$4 million in an 87,750-square-foot-facility on a 15-acre plot of land in Bristol's Commerce Park. Additionally, the Indiana Economic Development Corp. (IEDC) offered \$1 million in tax credits on the condition that Ember RV fulfill its promise of creating 150 new jobs by 2023. It's a big step forward for a company that was previously operating in an 18,000-square-foot warehouse, dreaming up designs and prototypes.

Ember RV is the first woman-owned and operated RV manufacturer in Bristol thanks to **Ashley Bontrager Lehman**, granddaughter of Jayco founders **Lloyd** and **Bertha Bontrager**. Standing with the rest of the "ACES" team, Vice President and COO **Chris Barth** and Operations Directors **Steve Delagrang** and **Ernie Miller**, Lehman spoke of the future and congratulated the production team on their hard work, dedication, and effort that helped make Ember RV's dream come to life.

After the ribbon was cut, the bay doors opened and Ember RV's first trailer – a product of the company's 2022 Overland Series – emerged amid the backdrop of **Michael Buffer's** iconic "Let's Get Ready to Rumble" and a roar of clapping and applause.

Lehman ceremoniously handed the RV's keys over to **David Haylett**, owner of Haylett Auto & RV Supercenter in Coldwater, Mich., who received the honor of becoming Ember RV's very first dealer.

"Josh the RV Nerd", famous for his "Haylett Auto Reviews" and social media presence, had been building suspense in the days and moments prior to the event. "Today is the Day!" he posted on Facebook about 30 minutes prior the ribbon-cutting. "Not going to lie ... It's really, really fun being the first dealer of this exciting new offering!"

He promised fans and followers that videos, specs, details, and pricing would soon be made available.

Before awarding all those in attendance with burgers and lunch, Lehman insisted on a group photo and prompted everyone to pose with an index finger raised in the air, signifying the company's intention on being No. 1 in the industry.

As Lehman explained after most of those in attendance filed off to the mezzanine to enjoy their free lunch, "I always wanted to lead a company that I would want to work for."

Read more: <http://rvpro.link/dsssh>

Terry Town RV Going Big in Home Community

Tom Selvius and the team at Terry Town RV Superstore are closing out 2021 in a big way – with a multi-million-dollar investment at their flagship property in Grand Rapids, Mich., that Selvius said won't be like any other RV dealership in the country – or beyond.

"I guarantee you that nobody else in the world has this," Selvius told RV PRO. "It'll be something that people are going to want to come and see. This should be a U.S. destination for RV shoppers."

The plans involve rearranging how certain facilities – all geographically close – are being used now, and the introduction of what Terry Town is calling, "The World Largest Indoor RV Showroom" – totaling 207,000 square feet sitting on 5 acres.

The dealership has owned the warehouse for a few years, but it used to have access only to a small portion of it; the rest was rented to other companies. Over the years, the other tenants relocated and now it's all Terry Town's.

All but 24,000 square feet will be the dealership's showroom.

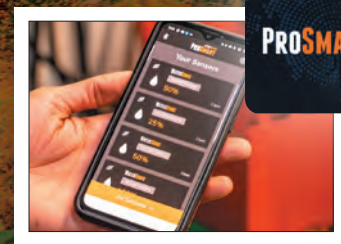
Another building just across the parking lot used to be a Terry Town-owned dealership called Motorhomes 2 Go, but Selvius said the company decided to merge the motorhome business into the rest of Terry Town. That building will be repurposed: The front will be a lifestyle/camping store, while the back section will be expanded and turned into a prep and delivery center.

What was the dealership's main building – at 7145 Division Avenue South – that served as TerryTown's showroom, parts store and service center for the past 45 years, will become the company's RV service center.

Read more: <http://rvpro.link/yppu7>

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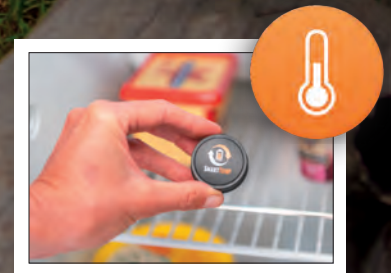
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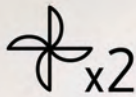


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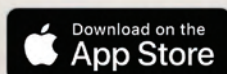
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