

## A View from Here

### Bill's Sisson's weekly Trade Only blog



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### [Boaters and Bikers Out There?](#)

Posted by Wanda Kenton Smith on May 31, 2007

I'd love to connect with boating industry folks who ride! Fun to get a bunch of us together at a boat show or something and ride together! Please – tell me who you are, where you're from, how long you've been riding and what you ride! Wouldn't it be great to have a boating industry and bikers bash? I'll plan it if you'll come!!!

Wanda Kenton Smith  
 President  
 Kenton Smith Advertising & Public Relations

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### Comments

16 comments on “Boaters and Bikers Out There?”

1. [Duke Waldrop](#) May 31, 2007 at 3:15 pm

Hi Wanda, I could attend in the Orlando/Central Florida area. Sounds like fun. Like your articles. Hope all is going well for you. Best wishes.  
 Duke

2. [John Strong](#) May 31, 2007 at 3:19 pm

Wanda,

I just read your piece on your good experience with your H-D dealer, and their marketing and sales skills. I'm glad you had such a good experience. It's true that Harley-Davidson is a very marketing-savvy company – moreso than any competitor. BMW is the only MC maker that comes close, in my opinion.

I'm a NAMS-CMS marine surveyor who works for an insurance company. I rode Hondas in college 40 years ago, and have returned to riding in the past couple of years. My first bike on getting back into the sport was a Moto Guzzi California, a cruiser with lots of Italian character. I have since added a Honda ST1300, a truly amazing long-distance sport-touring bike, which I call “an old man's sportbike.” I still have the Guzzi, too. How many motorcycles are enough? “Just one more.”

If you decide to have a party for marine folks who love to get around on two wheels, I'd love to come!

Keep the shiny side up, and GO RIDE!

John

3. [John Strong](#) May 31, 2007 at 3:20 pm

PS – I'm in Seattle...

4. [Brian Barer](#) May 31, 2007 at 3:38 pm

Great idea!!!! I ride a Harley and have for as long as I have been in the business 25 odd years. Anywhere in New England works for me...

5. [Patrick Sweeney](#) May 31, 2007 at 4:35 pm

Wanda,

What an excellent follow up idea to your "Introductions to Boating Could Lead to Sales" post!

I have recently joined the staff of the Motorcycle Industry Council in the Research and Technology Standards group. The MIC works for the motorcycle industry, continuously striving to provide products and services designed for the benefit of riders and everyone who makes a living in our industry.

The Marine industry and the Motorcycle industry share many of the same challenges and business models. Collaboration between industries to share "best practices" seems like an obvious mutual benefit, not to mention, a lot of fun!

Maybe think about a "biker's bash" in Miami at IBEX, October 10-12...

Patrick Sweeney  
Vice President, Business Development  
Motorcycle Industry Council  
Research & Technology Standards  
Irvine, CA

6. [Nyla Deputy](#) June 1, 2007 at 10:22 pm

Wanda;  
Bikes & Boats do go together. I think you have a great idea.  
A bikers bash for boaters sounds like fun.  
Wonder how many women would be interested??  
I have a boat and a 2006 HD Ultra touring bike.

7. [Capt Russ Cohen](#) June 4, 2007 at 11:05 am

Hi Wanda,

I've been wanting to write you for years! I love your columns and agree with almost all of your ideas pertaining to the marine industry. I think the industry can be it's own worst enemy at times, especially when it comes to education! We're a "Hands-On" Training company and train hundreds of boaters successfully on their boats in their waterways and also deliver a few hundred boats a year for some prominent dealers as well. It still amazes me how little the dealers want to spend on delivery when I personally (so does Boating Industry Magazine & Soundings Trade) think it's the most important part of the sale!

But I digress, what does this have to do with riding bikes? Guess what the Motorcycle Industry does that we don't? Yes, that's right, they promote, advertise and even pay for riders to take a "Hands-On" course from a professional school so they become safe riders and don't kill themselves on the road. (Hands-On that is, Not just Classroom!!) In fact, most states will allow a safe riding course to take the place of the practical on-road test given by the state. (This is the case in NJ) I've contacted NASBLA several times to have our "On-Water" course approved and they gave me the bureaucratic runaround so much that I've abandoned the battle for now!

BTW, great idea on the Bike & Boater Bash, I rode a classic 1984 Honda V65 Magna (which could walk a Harley in no time!) for 10 years and now mess around with my cousin's Road King and classic 1992 FLH Shiner's Show Bike! Nothing beats a Sunday, early morning ride with cool weather, as the sun begins to shine and the road still belongs to you, with your friends to your favorite breakfast place and then finish the day taking a great boat ride enjoying the water and the boating lifestyle.

Thanks for all you do in the industry! Take care and we'll See Ya On The Water! (& The Highway!)

Capt. Russ Cohen, Founder & President  
BOATBOY MARINE TRAINING  
W: <http://www.boatboymarinetraining.com>

8. [Patience Cohn](#) June 5, 2007 at 3:39 pm

National Marine Supplier and Interlux organized a ride the opening night of the Miami Boat Show expecting 25 riders and 42 showed up. Understand they are planning a repeat prior to the Ft Lauderdale International Boat Show in Oct.

9. [Norm Schultz](#) June 5, 2007 at 10:36 pm

Hello Wanda:

As usual, you have brought good things to the table with you column in Trade Only. Based on the knowledge that a significant number of boaters also love bikes, we experimented by adding a special feature section called "Boats & Bikes" to our North American In-Water Boat Show at Cedar Point in Sandusky, OH, last September. The response was excellent. Local dealers for all the major brands displayed their bikes (they readily saw the boat show's demographics as attractive.) The bike displays got plenty of traffic from the boaters. On the flip side, several motorcycle groups organized rides on the weekend to the boat show. One group came from more than 125 miles away! For obvious reasons, we're going to increase promotion of the show to the motorcycle audience this fall. Yes, boats and bikes go very well together and the success being experienced by the motorcycle industry offers us some interesting lessons indeed.

10. [John Wisse](#) June 6, 2007 at 2:52 pm

Wanda —

As an avid motorcyclist, recreational boater and media relations professional, I have clearly envisioned there are some similarities shared by the motorcycling and boating industries. Potential customer bases, consumer dynamics, business models, marketing tactics, product inventory, industry sales and service frameworks, and available recreation time, are just some of the areas where there seem to be many shared similarities and perhaps areas for improvement. Through supportive communications, we have been able to encourage at least two boat show producers to include motorcycle dealers at their respective shows in Ohio and the initial response has been satisfactory.

Bringing together marine marketing and media professionals who share a passion for boating, motorcycles and perhaps some other recreational activities is an exceptional concept that certainly has my individual support and merits indepth thought by others. Bringing together a diversity of marketing, public relations and media relations talent that lives life outside the box may in deed generate some creative solutions that are yet to be realized within the boating industry.

11. [Kenton Smith](#) June 7, 2007 at 12:03 pm

I'd like to engage further conversation with Patrick Sweeney about the ways in which we might share some best practices between bikers and boaters. Please email me or post how I can reach you. Sounds like a very interesting dialog!

Wanda Kenton Smith

12. [Bill Lindsey](#) June 7, 2007 at 2:51 pm

Wanda,

I too was impressed by the sense of community the Harley dealers and owners exude. It is a very welcoming, "Come on in, we're glad you're here" type environment. This is something our industry could certainly use, by the way. I was all set to buy a Harley and join the club, but Sandy is not keen on bugs in her teeth, so she got me a Porsche 911 instead. Oh well. 😊  
FWIW, the Porsche owner's "community" is not as well-developed as that seen in your scenario, but it is still a lot better than what we as boat owners have. A few forums have sprung up, such as raft-up.com that are working in this direction. We should consider supporting them to make sure they thrive adn in turn support us. We as a company will do so. We need to make new boaters feel "part of the club" so they stick around.

13. [Patrick Sweeney](#) June 7, 2007 at 5:26 pm

Hi Wanda,

I'm happy to speak with you to share ideas and best practices between our Industries. The timing is perfect, especially in light of the work that we at the Motorcycle Industry Council's PSP Standards group and NMMA's MATES group are doing in support of our dealers "to do more business by making it simpler to transact business"...John Warnik, Executive Director, MATES.

Please feel free to contact me or John directly for more detail on our collaborative efforts. I'm looking forward to speaking with you soon!

My contact information:

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[psweeney@mic.org](mailto:psweeney@mic.org)

14. [John Murch](#) June 7, 2007 at 9:25 pm

Wanda do you own a boat too? What kind of boat? I would love to read about the positive experience you had purchasing a new boat from an enthusiastic boat dealer.

15. [Easy "Boat" Rider](#) June 11, 2007 at 3:18 pm

John you are the king!

16. [Chuck Gilchrest](#) July 31, 2007 at 3:47 pm

Wanda,

Having spent 18 years in the motorcycle industry, I feel a vast improvement in public perception of motorcycling happened when dealers, often at the insistence of the manufacturer, made capital improvements to their physical plant and surroundings. The dirt floor of the greasy local biker shop was transformed almost overnight to a "Lexus-like" buying environment that welcomed the doctors, lawyers and businesspeople. Bringing the level of service and quality up to motorcycle standards would be most welcome in the marine industry. Since the mid 1980's it became hard to buy a "bad bike". The same can not be said about boats, however..

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