

Boating Industry

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WISDOM YOU CAN PROFIT FROM

MOVER & SHAKER OF THE YEAR

CECIL COHN

PRESIDENT, FREEDOM BOAT CLUB



2023 BOLD MOVES
SALES & MARKETING
PREVIEW: ELEVATE SUMMIT

17 top marine industry trailblazers share insights & strategies for success

This month, *Boating Industry* spotlights Movers & Shakers so with this extensive coverage, I opted for a different tact for my “Profiles in Leadership” column. Over the past 1.5 years, I’ve interviewed 17 incredible, forward-thinking industry champions whose grit, relentless spirit, drive and passion have positively impacted their organizations. Each of the 10 men and seven women profiled vary in age, years in the industry and job responsibilities/experience.



By Wanda Kenton Smith

I’ve assimilated a sampling of my favorite outtakes from these marine industry leaders. Enjoy!

Power mantras

“Never give up. Lead from the front. Be willing to learn. Be humble and treat people just as you would like to be treated.”

– Dr. Guy Harvey, Founder, Guy Harvey Inc. & Chairman Emeritus, the Guy Harvey Foundation



Guy Harvey

“To whom much is given, much is expected. Best leaders are the best servers. We’ve all been given so much; it’s our responsibility to give back and help the next generation find their place in this awesome business.”

– Glenn Hughes, President, American Sportfishing Association

“Honesty builds trust. Respect, because that builds trust. Faith in your people, because that builds trust. Trust builds success.”

– Susan Bonivich, Senior Dealer Business Manager, Volvo Penta



Susan Bonivich

“... it captures how I feel about collaborating, creating positive synergies and working with other stakeholders throughout the industry to collectively accomplish important boating safety goals: Together, we accomplish more than anyone alone.”

– Jim Emmons, Executive Director, Water Sports Foundation

“In the context of people thinking they are the only one who can do their job, I always respond: ‘Cemeteries are full of irreplaceable people.’”

– David Parker, President, Parker Business Planning



Randall Lyons

“It’s go day!” I always find something positive to look forward to in the future, and that attitude has always helped me face obstacles over the years.”

– Randall Lyons, Executive Director, Massachusetts Marine Trade Association

“Persevere by finding the way over, under, or around the roadblock.”

– Natalie Briggs Carlson, Former Executive Director, MRAA Foundation

Top leadership traits

“Be a positive leader, communicate and teach! People never come to work to do a bad job, but as an industry, we often don’t provide the proper training, support and resources to do a good job. It’s important that we take the time to understand the processes we subject them to that prevent our employees from doing a great job. Now, more than ever, we need to focus on workforce development. Having employees to make products is key, but their training must keep pace with the industry’s technological development and advancement.”

– Dave Marlowe, Sr. Director, Product Integrity/Government

“If the most successful companies are going to be adaptable, agile operations, then the most critical leadership traits will be the ability to inspire change right throughout every layer of a team and bring everyone along on the journey.”

– Alisdair Martin, Former VP Business Development, NMMA



Alisdair Martin

“We must be willing to change and adapt. Customer expectations have changed dramatically in the past decade due to technology and we need to move faster to keep up. We have to take a hard look at how we do things and be open to moving ahead in a different manner.”

– Kristen Frohnhoefer, President, Sea Tow Services International

Strategies for success

“After a few years launching my career at Chaparral, I realized I wanted a seat at the table. I began to take on more and more responsibilities and never backed down from a challenge. You must be patient and realize you must prove your worth to your company and be willing to grow in stages and become valuable with every learning opportunity. Always surround yourself with others that complement your mission and work ethic. Work hard, work smart and work well with others. You lead by example when you don’t ask more of others than you are willing to give yourself.”

– Ann Baldree, Sr VP, Chaparral & Robalo Boats



Ann Baldree

“An executive in the boating industry is not unlike many other executives in the world. One must deal with the ‘today’ company and plan for the ‘tomorrow’ company at the same time.”

– Peter Granata, President, Granata Design

“Many companies view marketing and customer service as different areas, but we treat it as one department. We believe a happy customer can sell way more boats than any ad we might purchase. Customer satisfaction starts the day they start shopping our brand; our goal is to keep that relationship a positive one for many years.”

– Victor Gonzalez, Director of Marketing, Sportsman Boats

Hiring, recruitment and retention

“For those with an interest in launching a career, start by finding a company that you really want to work at; the role/position is less important. Build your competency, as this will become incredibly important if you want growth opportunities down the road and want to be respected. Don’t be in a hurry; it’s easy to get caught up in wanting to do more or to have a bigger title. If you take your time, stay humble and do it right, you will be rewarded and given opportunities.”

“For those in the industry with leadership



Paul Kuck

aspirations, put God first. Lead your family well before trying to lead at work. Focus on getting better every day. Use the time that you have been blessed with wisely, focusing on things that only you can do and things that you are talented at. Do hard things. Leading isn't just doing the things you want to do or the things that are easy." – *Paul Kuck, Chief Operating Officer, Regal Boats*

"Show up every day with your game face on, saying "Put me in the game, coach!" I look for team members I can count on, who arrive on time, finish their tasks, take responsibility for their assignments and meet deadlines. I look for people who want to be part of the solution, not the problem. Rather than being told what to do, I urge my team to be proactive and look for opportunities to contribute. Be curious and ask questions. If you're not a team player, find another profession. I look for people who engage with teammates, customers and vendors. They must be supportive, respectful and, most impor-



Kim Sweers

tantly, inclusive. I look for people who can resolve conflict, communicate clearly - early and often. Strong communication skills and being a good listener are vital to success." – *Kim Sweers, BOAT BOSS, FB Marine*

"Every dealership should be actively involved in growing our next generation of technicians. Get involved with your local schools, offer job shadowing and apprenticeships. You must grow your techs for tomorrow. Unfortunately, not enough of us in the industry are doing enough now to ensure we have young people ready as our current skilled techs age out and retire. Don't let the wisdom of these career marine technicians go out the door when they wheel their tools out for the final time."

– *Valerie Ziebron, Owner, VRZ Consulting*

"Typically, people will only leave their employment if two things are in place: desire and opportunity. You cannot control the opportunity, but you can have influence over the desire.

Create an environment where people want to come to work. Try to match talent with the tasks: match personalities with the right kind of jobs. I recommend using Omnia Profiles for

this. Another important suggestion: work hard yet have fun doing it. If people love their jobs, they will not consider it work. Have social functions where employees can get to know each other. I'm aware of one business that has employees exchange jobs for a short time... it gives everyone a renewed respect for one another's positions. Train, train, train your employees! Henry Ford once said long ago: The only thing worse than training your employees and having them leave is not training them and having them stay." – *David Parker, President, Parker Business Planning*

Poster child for boating

"I am the poster child for living the boating lifestyle, so I am completely happy when I am on or around boats. We own multiple boats, both sail and power, and we use them all, so working in this industry is a perfect match for me.



Anne Dunbar

I get paid to go to boat shows, AND talk about boats and boating." – *Anne Dunbar, IBEX Show Director*

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