

A View from Here

Bill's Sisson's weekly Trade Only blog



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Posted by Wanda Kenton Smith on July 24, 2007

In my August Trade Only marketing column, I proposed that we seriously consider boating's overall brand image. When you think of boating, what should be the first image that comes to mind? I submit that regardless of the make, model or brand of the boat, when it comes to consumer marketing, that image should focus foremost on FUN. Everything about the boating experience should embrace FUN ... from the dealership introduction and sales process, to the actual on-the-water experiences using the product of choice.

Agree or disagree?

I'm particularly interested in learning about specific tactics that dealerships or other organizations use to make the buying experience fun for their prospective and existing customers!

Wanda Kenton Smith
 President
 Kenton Smith Advertising & Public Relations

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7 comments on "Boating brand image"

1. [Chuck Gilchrest July 24, 2007 at 3:38 pm](#)

I will particularly interested if any life raft companies reply. In all fairness, there can be a broad interpretation of "fun" if one was to include peace of mind with regards to a product presentation or purchase experience. Edson thrives on our brand identity of safe reliable products that will give a customer confidence in their boat's steering system. Fun is an integral part of the boating experience, but not at the expense of safety and reliability.

2. [JOHN PETERSON July 24, 2007 at 3:41 pm](#)

HI——

I—Hunter continues to participate in the Discover Sailing events at the in-the water boat shows—we are at every sail show that will have us...introduces new people to sailing. Over 800 people taken this past show season.

2—Hunter historically supports 20 regional rendezvous with over 920 boats and 2,100 sailors and family members in attendance.

3. [CarlMJuly 24, 2007 at 4:21 pm](#)

Hi Wanda

We realized a long time ago that no one needs a boat. We also understand the FUN that can come from having a boat (we are boaters) and how Fun can be had by using a boat. Our most successful partner's (dealers) get this. That is why we always have Fun building, selling, and sharing our FUN by showing our friends (customers) how to have the Fun of boating.

That's why our Company name is always followed by "It's a Party".

What's more fun than a party?

When you stop having fun doing what you do it's time to get out. We are having a ball of FUN!!!

Could this be why we are up over 15% for the second year in a row when the market is other wise??? You bet it is!!!!

Carl Morahan

Fiesta Marine Products, Inc.

4. [John WisseJuly 25, 2007 at 10:09 am](#)

Wanda —

I wholly agree with Chuck's last statement and this perhaps remains the bane of the recreational marine industry. There are many "fun" leisure activities that also embrace safety and reliability. Some examples include scuba diving, parasailing and parachuting, general aviation, horseback riding, motorcycling, paddlesports, whitewater rafting, and general pleasure boating. What these "fun" activities commonly share are a primary focus on safety and training that equates to fun and improved enjoyment of the activity. The first image of boating should be to portray the activity and lifestyle as equally fun and safe, which is precisely what the motorcycle industry has done since the 1980s and that industry continues to enjoy many consecutive years of record sales, vehicle registrations and participants.

5. [Peter Mitch--August 1, 2007 at 7:38 am](#)

The FUN coalition needs to surpass the safety entity in their marketing efforts. Too much marketing is scaring the consumer. SAFE boating, MADD boaters, etc are getting accidents down because less people are boating. Just remember boating isn't FUN it is a time to be serious, or your family and friends are at risk!

6. [Capt. Jim BattyeAugust 29, 2007 at 11:55 am](#)

Boating (driving a boat) ain't FUN if you don't know how to drive a boat. The person (dealer) who sold me my last boat won't drive one; she's afraid to. Is boating FUN for her? Thom Dammrich, of NMMA, doesn't drive them.

How many boating industry people aren't good enough at boating to have FUN doing it?

7. [Gary ONeilNovember 19, 2007 at 5:39 pm](#)

The funny thing is...boating is NOT about fun...until you get a boat. The boat-buying PROCESS is about DREAMS! Go there with your branding and you'll win big-time!!! If you jump right to fun...you're stating the obvious, with a great sense of discovery! To get someone to place a boat ahead of other priorities and/or choices these days is asking a lot for the boat to achieve. Get into the customer's head and DREAMS...and then see how quickly that the boat jumps to the top of the list. And you wonder why I know all of this? Simple...I've had boats, planes, horses, ski condos, and golf condo!

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