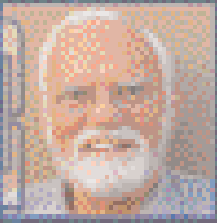


The Season's Over

By John Wyckoff

Now What?



As I write this, it is 99 degrees outside. When I tell that to people who know I live in New Mexico, they most often say: "Yeah, but it's a dry heat!" Well, an oven is dry heat too! This article, although written in sweltering mid-summer, is scheduled to be published in the October issue when things start to cool down.

OK, now that you're reading this in October, I'll tell you why we scheduled it to be published now. First, the peak-selling season is over. Second, now's the time to take a look back and think about what could have been done better or more efficiently. It's also a great time to get some quality training from true industry experts. There's an old cliché that says: "You don't know what you don't know."

Third, the only window of opportunity you have to advance your knowledge base is when you're not distracted by day-to-day business. You've spent the last 11 months virtually attached to the store. You've gone to your OEM's new-model introduction to discover what you'll be selling as 2005 models. Now that you know what the products are, you'll need to sharpen your management and sales skills.

Notice that the show's focus is MotoBUSINESS. That sets it apart from the other major trade events in the powersports industry.

There have been some substantive changes that have taken place during the last 11 months. Your competitors are getting more professional and looking to gain market share — yours! If you belong to a 20 club you probably already know what some of these changes are and how to deal with them. Is there an additional way to increase your knowledge? Yes! Get signed up for the 2nd Annual MotoBusiness Conference & Expo set for November 9-11 at the Mandalay Bay Resort in Las Vegas.

Notice that the show's focus is MotoBUSINESS. That sets it apart from the other major trade events in the powersports industry. Most of them focus on the displays and exhibits as the prime attendee motivators. However, it is nice to see the *Easyriders* V-Twin show in Cincinnati taking a page from MotoBusiness by adding comprehensive seminars relating to both products and marketing.

Peter Brown, the man behind *MPN*, sponsors several other trade events outside the powersports industry. His shows are among the best attended, primarily because the dealers in other industries are looking for ways to better their business, not just see new products. The training sessions and round-table events at these venues are by far the greatest draw. Dealers sign up to participate in the round-table events as early as six months before the date, knowing the space is limited to 20 participants per event. Many latecomers are disappointed when they learn there are no spaces open.

Last year I was appointed as the director of education for MotoBusiness, and I contacted

some of the best trainers and educators in the business to participate in and conduct training sessions. Most of the training events were very well attended and the participating dealers filled out their evaluation cards, which were, for the most part, very favorable. Some made suggestions for additional programs they'd like to attend, so this time the best are back and a few new ones have been added. All the seminars are new. There are no re-runs, folks!

It was a big gamble that Peter Brown took. He knew training programs are sparsely attended at other major trade shows in our industry. Some show promoters felt they were not worth the effort and have dropped them altogether. Fortunately for us, Peter believes in on-going education. Considering that last January was the first time for MotoBusiness, I believe the educational portion was a great success. I also suspect that this show will bring back most of the dealers who were there for the first one, plus others who heard about it and want to participate.

There are more than 50 hours worth of training sessions and seminars — and all are conducted at times when the exhibits are closed. The show and training schedule is arranged so that attendees are not pulled out of the exhibit hall to attend training sessions. However, you're still going to have to pick and choose the events you want to attend, since you won't be able to attend them all.

Michael Gerber, a true visionary, will present the keynote address. That event alone will be worth the trip, trust me. Of course, the fashion show and industry party at the House Of Blues was a party to be remembered for the ages and is expected to be even better this time!

I'll chair one of the three round-table events and also make a three-hour interactive presentation on team building. Last year I asked several of the participants if they felt the round tables were worth their time. Everyone said "yes." Several even asked if they could be assured of a space for this year's event. At the time that was not an option. I suggest you put your name on the list as soon as you can to be assured of a place on these panels.

Bring your ideas and questions. Be ready to share what you know with non-competing dealers. Visit the Expo and have the opportunity to meet with the vendors one-on-one. This show will be substantially smaller in terms of exhibit space than, say, Indy. However, it will be considerably larger when it comes to non-self-serving training sessions. The training is open to all franchised and non-franchised dealers and aftermarket stores. If you are an owner or GM, I believe you'll get a great deal of information, as well as the tools to incorporate what you learn into your business.

Want to register or get more information? Log on to the show's website at www.mpnshow.com. Want to contact me directly with questions or comments? I can be reached via e-mail at jwconsulting@comcast.net. See you in Vegas! 