

HUNTING

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See page 4 for more info



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THIS ISSUE'S COVER BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



AMERICAN TACTICAL

**AMERICAN TACTICAL MILSPORT 450 BUSHMASTER**

American Tactical's AR-15 style 450 Bushmaster Rifle is affordable and optics-ready and built for today's modern hunter. Modern Sporting Rifles are fast becoming the preferred hunting rifle in the fields across the world. This Bushmaster Hunting Rifle features a 16" barrel with a 1:24 barrel twist and a 15" KeyMod aluminum free float rail. This handguard readily accepts KeyMod accessories. The picatinny mounting platform is designed to fit your preferred optic. Finally, it's built with an aluminum forged upper receiver and lower receiver that is not offered on any of the Omni Hybrid rifles.

American Tactical also offers another version that features a M4 Stock. Gas-operated AR platform rifles offer less recoil and a lighter weight than traditional hunting rifles, making it ideal for your next hunting trip.

You can purchase the 450 Bushmaster on American Tactical's website at www.americantactical.us. MSRP will be \$699.95

www.americantactical.us

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R E T A I L E R

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Socks for Heroes Partners With Sig Sauer

The Southern California Marine Corps Support Group (SCMCSG), nationally known as “Socks for Heroes,” has partnered with Sig Sauer for the “America Shoots for Her Troops” shooting events. All proceeds from this partnership will provide funding to provide socks and other essentials to American troops serving in places like Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq.

“America Shoots for Her Troops” is a program for firearm retailers and ranges to drive traffic to their stores and support our Troops through the “Socks for Heroes” program. Building on the “try before you buy” concept, shooters can experience various Sig firearm and optic combinations by making a tax-deductible donation to the organization. This is a five-gun format featuring Sig Sauer firearms and optics that can be tailored

to individual ranges for either indoor or outdoor shooting events. Retailers and ranges can also leverage this promotion by providing incentives for those participating in the “America Shoots for Her Troops” event to purchase Sig products.

SCMCSG and Sig Sauer, Inc. will provide all of the firearms, ammunition, optics and coordination for the “America Shoots for Her Troops” event. Participating retailers just need to assist with a shooting venue and marketing the event to their customer base. To learn more about this program and/or participate, please contact Jim Hogan at jim@scmcsg.org or (310) 728-9166.

Through participation in this unique program, retailers will drive sales to their stores and help America’s troops. It’s a win for all!

Taurus Adds Viridian Grip Lasers for 856, 856 Ultra-Lite

Taurus has enhanced the performance of its popular carry concealed revolver with the introduction of Viridian Grip Lasers. The new grip option for the Taurus 856 and 856 Ultra-Lite provides fast target acquisition under high-stress defensive situations.

Designed for everyday concealed carry in a robust .38 Special +P platform, the 856 and 856UL series pistols provide 6-shot capacity with spurred hammer, DA/SA performance. The new Viridian Grip Laser models now deliver a dual sighting system as a back up for the included iron sights or as a primary sight for both day and nighttime use.

The red laser is incorporated into the right side of the grip for clear illumination on the target. Integrated into the ergonomic grip is an intuitive switch that automatically activates the laser once the shooter achieves a shooting grip.

The laser range is effective up to 25 yards in daylight and up to one mile at night. Adjustable for both windage and elevation, the laser has a battery life of up to four hours.

For rapid target acquisition on the range or in a defense condition, the 856 and 856UL pistols with the Viridian Laser Grip option ensure on-target performance in any situation.

S&W Extends Military Appreciation Program

Smith & Wesson and Thompson/Center Arms have extended the “Thank You For Your Service” military appreciation program through Sept. 30.

This program applies to all active duty, honorably discharged, retired, or disabled members of the U.S. Armed Forces or Reserves. The program offers eligible United States Armed Forces personnel a discount on M&P Shield pistols and M&P 15 Sport series rifles, as well as other qualifying Thompson/Center and Smith & Wesson firearms purchased from Jan. 1, 2019 to Sept. 30, 2019.

Purchases of a new Smith & Wesson or Thompson/Center firearm from the categories below between January 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019, will be eligible to receive the following:

- \$75 Smith & Wesson prepaid card on any new, qualifying Performance Center T/C LRR rifle
- \$50 Smith & Wesson prepaid card on any new M&P, T/C Compass or T/C Venture rifle
- \$40 Smith & Wesson prepaid card on any new M&P pistol (excluding Performance Center pistols)
- \$30 Smith & Wesson prepaid card on any new Smith & Wesson, Performance Center, or M&P revolver
- \$25 Smith & Wesson prepaid card on any new T/C T/CR22 rifle (including Performance Center T/CR22 rifles)

To participate in the “Thank You For Your Service” electronic rebate program, customers must complete and submit the online rebate form at www.smithandwessonrebates.com. All submissions must include proof of purchase and be submitted on or before October 31, 2019.

Work Sharp Outdoor's "Sharp Matters" Campaign Celebrates Legacy, Preparedness, Success

Work Sharp Outdoor, manufacturer of knife and tool sharpeners, calls on hunters, anglers and all outdoorsy weekend warriors to share their success stories with their newest campaign, "Sharp Matters."

Media, brand partners and blade owners are encouraged to join the campaign by posting photos and videos on social media using the hashtag #SharpMatters, or by publishing a "Sharp Matters" story to an existing blog or content platform.

"As a brand, we share the conviction that 'Sharp Matters,'" said Josh Warren, Work Sharp's digital marketing strategist. "In fact, it's the underlying theme of everything we do and what inspires our brand ethos: legacy, preparedness, and success. Think of a time when a sharp knife or tool was critical. How did you prepare for this moment? What

skills paved the way for your success? What legacy will your story leave? This is the essence we're hoping to capture with 'Sharp Matters.' "

Whether it's field dressing an elk or deer in the backcountry, filleting a freshly caught trout campside, or the thrilling moment you bag a gobbler you've been chasing all season, these moments deserve to be celebrated. "Sharp Matters" provides a platform for blade owners to share their stories and pass down their legacy to the next generation of hunters, anglers, outdoor sportsmen and women.

In the field, on the water, and on the job — these are the places where sharp knives and tools matter most. What story will you tell?

For more information about Work Sharp Outdoor, please visit the company online at www.worksharptools.com.

Reno Cerakote Launches New Website

Reno Cerakote has launched a new website: www.renocerakote.com.

Reno Cerakote has been working toward rebranding the company in the last year, including a new logo prior to the 2019 SHOT Show.

"We're very excited about the rebranding, especially the focus on our most important assets, our employees. We can't wait for our existing and new customers to see the site," said Mike Orms, Director of Operations at Reno Cerakote.

"When creating the site, we wanted a

sleek and minimalist appearance in order to let the imagery of the Cerakote, Laser Imaging and Hydrographic work be the main focus," said Cassidy Blanton, Marketing Coordinator at Reno Cerakote.

The site is designed to look cutting edge and showcase the technology that Reno Cerakote possesses and the quality coating application they provide. The site includes photos and videos showcasing finished products, products in production, robotics, the supercell production line as well as the staff.

NSSF Renews Gold Level Sponsorship to Help USA Shooting Raise the Flag

The National Shooting Sports Foundation, a longtime partner of USA Shooting, has agreed to help Raise the Flag for America's Shooting Team by renewing its gold-level partnership agreement for 2019.

This show of support also includes being presenting sponsor of USA Shooting's National Sporting Clay Cup Fundraiser on June 7 to 8.

USA Shooting launched the Raise The Flag campaign on April 24, exactly 15 months until the 2020 Olympic Games get underway in Tokyo, Japan. The campaign is serving as the motivational driver used to pursue all available resources and sharpen the organizational vision on the mission of getting athletes on the podium and seeing that American flag raised in competition. The key element of the campaign is the Chairman's Challenge being initiated by USA Shooting Board Chairman Chad Whittenburg.

Recognizing the need to get behind the Team, NSSF pledged its support with hope that other companies will do the same.

"USA Shooting's athletes are among the best ambassadors of the shooting sports, and we at NSSF are proud to be longtime supporters of this outstanding organization," said Chris Dolnick, NSSF Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer. "We look forward to hosting our annual Industry Summit this June in Colorado Springs, when everyone in attendance will be able to see firsthand the awesomeness that is USA Shooting and the U.S. Olympic Training Center."

Hydra-Shok Bullets Available as Components

Federal Premium Hydra-Shok is now available as a component for handloaders, with shipments already delivered to dealers.

Introduced in 1989, Hydra-Shok remains one of the most popular choices for protecting home and family, thanks to a proven hollow point and iconic center post that provide extremely consistent and effective expansion. It is now available in a complete range of bullet weights and diameters.

For more information on Federal ammunition, see www.federalpremium.com. **HR**





Ground Blinds

Here are two innovative ground blinds receiving high marks from hunters.

BY DARREN CHOATE

While treestands continue to be the standard for game ambush, there has certainly been a rise in ground blind use in recent years. And why not? Hunting big-game species like bear, deer, elk and antelope at eye-level is an adrenaline rush.

Another good reason to hunt from a ground blind is the increased mobility a simple blind offers. Today's pop-up-style hub blinds are lightweight and set up and tear down rapidly. If you built it and they didn't come, simply take it down and go elsewhere where game movement might be better. To offer your hard-hunting customers the best in ambush choices, look into adding or adding to a ground blind offering. Here are two truly unique ground blinds that you should consider for your store.



PRO STAFF

Darren Choate is an outdoor writer and photographer who lives and breathes hunting. As a professional hunting guide in Arizona and New Mexico, he pursued big game with clients for three decades. Choate is now the editor of *Bowhunting World*, as well as two other Grand View Outdoors publications, *Archery Business* and *Whitetail Journal*.



Primos | Double Bull

For several years, Double Bull has been a premier name in the hunting blind market. The Minnesota company founded by two hunting buddies started small and grew to be a trusted name and the originator of the pop-up-style, five-hub ground blind.

Since the company unveiled its original product, Double Bull has continued to introduce advances, such as the double-wide door, 180-degree window, silent slide buckles and several other innovations. Throughout its history, Double Bull has been revered for producing products that are high-quality and long-lasting.

Double Bull engineers are first and foremost hunters, so they are always looking to advance hunting-related products. Furthermore, they are constantly on the lookout for innovations that provide true value to the user. A little over two years ago, Double Bull began experimenting with a new fabric technology. This exclusive fabric had unique properties that allowed it to function like a two-way mirror — hiding the hunter from game outside the blind, but offering a full view from the inside without loss of concealment for the hunter.

In 2018, Double Bull turned the hunting blind industry on its head when it released the first product based on this new technology, dubbed SurroundView, which is a unique tiny-pinhole pattern. When printed with a camouflage design, the holes are hidden and appear solid. Yet, when colored in solid black, they allow a near-transparent view.

↑ Double Bull Surround-View 360

FEATURES

- Dimensions: 60x60x70 inches
- Weight: 23 pounds w/bag
- Silent slide closure
- 180-degree full front shooting window
- Five shoot-through ports
- TRUTH camo specifically designed to hide ground blinds in any terrain
- Limited lifetime warranty
- Patent pending

CONTACT:
www.primos.com
MSRP: \$499.99



INCREASE SALES

As you can imagine, it's difficult at best for customers to completely comprehend how a ground blind – stuffed in a sack and wrapped in cardboard – will work for their needs. If space allows, open, unpack and set one up in your store. This will allow potential buyers to interact inside the blind to better understand its size, window openings, maneuverability and overall comfort. Better yet, allow customers to set up and take down the blind as they would in the field. After all, you want them to walk away satisfied with their purchase. At the end of the season, you can sell the demo blind at a discounted rate, donate it to a local conservation organization or give it away in a marketing contest.

DOUBLE BULL SURROUNDVIEW 360 INSTRUCTIONS

1. Square out one wall and expand with the palm of your hand.
2. Put the opposite wall hub in the palm of your hand. Crisscross the left and right hubs and make sure the roof hub (painted orange) is on top of them all.
3. Raise the four hubs off the ground towards the wall that is expanded.
4. Then pull the expanded wall over your head until the bottom corners are touching the ground.
5. Stand up with the roof hub in the palm of your hand and expand it.
6. Expand remaining walls out.
7. To reinforce the blind, stake it to the ground through the grommets.



“Hunting big-game species like bear, deer, elk and antelope at eye-level is an adrenaline rush”

↓ Shooters can see out of the SurroundView 360 from all sides, but animals can't see in from the outside.

Double Bull SurroundView 360

According to Double Bull, “The revolutionary Primos Double Bull SurroundView 360 Blind is the blind without a blind spot. It's constructed with exclusive one-way see-through walls that let you see all of your surroundings without being seen. Now you can spot all the movement you miss with traditional blinds, yet remain just as concealed. The SurroundView 360 comes with four one-way see-through walls with one movable blackout wall to place on any wall you choose.”





BECOME A DEALER

As an official Plano Synergy dealer, you'll receive access to a diverse collection of brands and products to suit the needs of outdoor enthusiasts and other specialty groups. They offer special pricing for independent retailers and buying groups, as well as a responsive customer service team to help you along the way.

You'll also benefit from the company's robust marketing strategies that send consumers in search of products, which can only be found through dealers. Plano Synergy's Point of Purchase (POP) displays and eye-catching packaging help drive sales further once people are in the door.

To learn more about becoming an authorized Plano Synergy/Ameristep retailer, fill out the online form found at www.planosynergy.com/become-a-dealer or send an email to dealerinfo@planosynergy.com.

PLANO SYNERGY | AMERISTEP

The element of surprise is key to successful hunting. Ameristep has been providing that element of surprise to hunters for more than 20 years with its ground blinds and accessories. These products cleverly conceal positions from above and below. Ameristep proudly conveys the message that it strives to be an innovator in the industry, continually seeking new solutions to help

hunters disappear. That disappearing act is only part of the story, though. Its products are built on versatile mobility, designs that let the hunter choose the location that's right — not the location that's convenient. Once there, ground blinds that allow simple setup mean the hunter can be at the ready — hunting — in no time. Additional key features eliminate elements like scent, noise and reflection to make sure you stay hidden. With an Ameristep ground blind, hunters have the element of surprise locked in. This is especially true with one of the newest products, the Deadwood Stump.

Deadwood Stump

According to Ameristep, "This is the most realistic portable tree stump blind you'll find on the market; its ability to mimic nature is undeniable. The addition of kick-out technology not only adds room and maneuverability inside the blind, but it also contributes to the Deadwood's realistic shape outside the blind. Further improving cover, all shooting windows display a natural, organic shape that blends with the environment. The windows have more than just the right shape — they have the

↑ The Deadwood Stump

FEATURES

- Dimensions: 70x104x84 inches
- Weight: 20 pounds
- Unique silhouette blends into environment better than square blinds
- Three floor kick-outs offer ample additional storage space
- Two roof kick-outs create more standing room and better shot for bows
- New hinged silent door for easy access and silent entry/exit
- Organic, natural-shaped window openings blend into environment
- Easily adjustable silent window cover and mesh attachment
- Blind wrap carrying case doubles as storage system inside blind
- Heavy-duty 300D fabric shell
- Mesh windows in roof kick-outs provide additional viewing options

CONTACT:
www.ameristep.com

MSRP: \$279.99



right materials and functionality, too. Shoot directly through the replaceable shoot-through mesh, or adjust the silent window cover to customize your shot without making a sound. Finally, access the blind via the new hinged silent door for quick entry that retains your cover. All this combines to let you hunt your way without compromise.” **HR**

↓ The Deadwood Stump



Bow Holders

Keeping a bow out of the way but still in reach provides hunters the best chance for success. Keep these products near your ground blind display.



HME | GROUND BLIND BOW HOLDER

The bow holder has three large accessory hooks to hold calls, rattle bags, binoculars and back packs.

- Easily attaches to any hub-style blind
- 360-degree fork rotates to accommodate any bow/position with secure lock
- Includes three accessory hooks

MSRP: \$19.99

DEAD RINGER | BOW FEET/ BOW STAND

A simple tool for bow stability when hunting from a ground blind.

- Lightweight, easy to install and remove
- Universal fit to most bows
- Coated jaws for added grip to the limb

MSRP: \$14.99



ALLEN | GROUND BLIND BOW HOLDER

Accommodates any bow, including solid and split-limb bows.

- Coated for silent use
- Rotates 360 degrees
- Elevates the bow off the ground for quick and easy retrieval

MSRP: \$12.99





Working Toward a Promotion

Want a promotion? Be noticed!

BY PATRICK MEITIN

An anonymous associate takes a job as a salesperson at a local sporting-goods outlet because the associate's spouse has been laid off from a lucrative position and they can't make ends meet. Each day our associate wakes at 4 or 5 a.m. to meet the demands of a second contract job, then commutes an hour to the sporting-goods gig. Our associate is put in charge of the camping/backpacking department after minimal training.

This is a sink-or-swim atmosphere, as salespeople are awarded a 2 to 3 percent incentive for each sale, and things are viciously competitive. Our associate receives no help from fellow salespeople. It takes a month for our associate to get into the swing of things, especially the company's point-of-sale and electronic inventory systems. Our associate is also naturally shy and

operates on the assumption that customers prefer to be left alone. But our associate is under unrelenting pressure to perform. Sales are tracked precisely and a weekly gold/black/red-star rating is applied. Too many red stars and you're let go. Our associate desperately needs this job, and especially the added incentive pay (2 to 3 percent is an "incentive," not commission).

As our associate's confidence grows, it's discovered that the contract work has provided a superior knowledge of gear that makes selling easy. More important than stacking up that bonus pay, this knowledge helps customers make informed decisions, preventing them from purchasing items they will later regret. Our associate answers questions honestly, quickly quoting product advantages or unique features and functions, regularly up-selling customers by offering

↑ An associate who can upsell without overselling a customer something that won't fit their needs is a valuable asset and should be treated as such.



PRO STAFF

Patrick Meitin worked in various bow shops off and on while in high school and college. More recently he worked as a low-level manager in a regional sporting-goods chain as a salesman, employee scheduler and mechanize specialist. He has been heavily immersed in the archery and firearms trade for more than 30 years.

informed sales pitches. This knowledge makes our associate a popular and sought-after fixture with the store's regulars.

Meanwhile, our associate begins coordinating with the store's merchandiser, discussing more effective ways to display wares. The entire camping/backpacking department is rearranged. Artful displays of expensive, slow-moving merchandise are created, and everything gets reorganized to help customers easily find what they want. The store manager frets. Customers complain — for a short period — that they can't find anything. But after a month, both manager and customers began to offer compliments. Department sales increase.

Our associate begins communicating with the store's buyers — some would say pleading with them — to receive selections of gear he deems more appropriate to the area's recreational opportunities, including items customers frequently request but are seldom on hand. Our associate also harangues buyers persistently to rid the store of products that sell poorly but continue to arrive with inventory deliveries, only to slowly accumulate in the cluttered stockroom.

Our associate continues to sell, moving into other departments as needed (which some salespeople view as trespass), cruising the entire store to ensure every customer is greeted warmly and waited on. Still, compared to the mentally engaging contract work our associate is accustomed to, things move pretty slowly most days. Our associate can often be found sweeping or mopping up messes, taking out the trash, stocking other departments to free up space in the cluttered stockroom, helping unload delivery trucks, and handling markdowns when the merchandiser becomes overwhelmed.

Our associate approaches managers and buyers, pointing out that the local archery shop has recently gone out of business. The sizable town's archery and bowhunting business is up for grabs. Our associate volunteers to build and handle a full-service archery department, including tech work, looking to stay busier. Our associate also offers to train employees to handle this archery department.

Truth be known, our associate is growing bored, and days pass more quickly when he is busy.

By contrast, other associates spend their days chatting with friends who use the store as a hangout. They're regularly seen talking on cell phones or texting while on the sales floor. Their departments' shelves/display racks often grow bare, despite plenty of boxed merchandise sitting in the storeroom. They're often short with cus-

tomers, they exude negativity, they're frequently late for work and they complain openly about management, buyers, their pay, their hours, etc. They offer many complaints but nary a solution.

↓ Do you confine your sales associates to specific departments? That might be a mistake.





↑ We get it – you don't have time to train every new employee as extensively as you'd like. That's why it's important to hire people who will take the initiative to learn on their own and who are quick to pick up on how things work.

Nine months in, when our associate is promoted to shift manager (including a substantial and highly welcomed raise), many of these very people — several employed with the company five to seven years — are resentful, openly hostile or completely uncooperative.

Our associate once owned a small outfitting business, frequently dealing with people who were readily available for seasonal work, but rarely held a real job for various reasons. Consequently, our associate has learned to manage “misfits.” Empathetic but firm, he eventually gains even the most resentful employees' respect, mostly through a willingness to do what needs to be done, including the dirtiest jobs, and striving to lead by example. Three months into the second year, the store's assistant manager develops serious health issues requiring surgery and a prolonged absence. Our associate is made

acting assistant manager, including associated the responsibilities: Opening and closing, hiring, placating disgruntled customers and dealing with the store's problem children.

Our associate's spouse eventually finds permanent employment, the original assistant manager returns, and our associate resigns, happily returning to a self-employed life.

This is a true story. And as they say, the moral of the story is ...

Quick Study

Few employers have the time, resources or inclination to offer extensive on-the-job training. I don't recall a “real job” for which I received even the smallest amount of training, making the first couple of weeks a real scramble. This is especially true if you've slightly exaggerated your qualifications in order to land said job — which

“A manager or shop owner wants employees who are adaptable and quick on their feet.”

I certainly did once while attending college many moons ago when a paycheck was desperately needed. One successful friend of mine put it this way after I complimented him on the quality of his employees, “We’re insanely busy here. I’ll show you how to do something one time. It’s then up to you to pick up and run with it. If you can’t catch on quickly, you’re gone. I don’t have time for unmotivated workers.”

Learning the ropes at any new job is stressful, sometimes even a little scary. You must get over those beginning jitters and focus. Pay attention. Observe how other employees operate for clues. Take notes when necessary, as you don’t want to become the pest who is constantly asking other employees for help. A manager or shop owner wants employees who are adaptable and quick on their feet. If you can’t hack that, look for a job more suitable to your skill set or aptitude. Show that you’re a quick study and willing to adapt, and you’re well on your way to impressing the boss — if not quite yet ready for a promotion. That comes later, after you have learned the ropes. Be realistic and patient.

Show Some Initiative

As a former employer (outfitting and publishing) and store manager (sporting goods and auto-body shop), I can tell you with great certainty that nothing frustrates a boss more than the need to offer constant direction. Any time a boss has to tell you to do something that you should have already done on your own, you’ve just received a mental strike against you. For example, in a former sporting goods manager position, each evening while I totaled cash registers, locked up certain firearms to satisfy insurance requirements, dealt with fish and game license paperwork and readied cash drawers for the following morning’s opening, associates were expected to sweep floors, empty garbage and generally tidy the place up for the next day’s business. Every single day associates had to be broken up from gossip groups and reminded of this basic cleanup duty. It was utterly infuriating. I had to will myself to avoid screaming at the top of my lungs! No input should’ve been necessary, as it was a daily routine.

Do you really want to show up on the boss’s radar next time a promotion opportunity surfaces? Be that employee who runs for the mop when a customer drops a soda, who shovels the

front walk when it snows, sprinkles some salt on that same walk when it’s icy, or breaks down cardboard boxes and carries them out to the dumpster when the stock room becomes cluttered — just as some easy examples. Take initiative and do this without being told. You might think your boss doesn’t notice, but make a habit of being the one who’s always thinking and taking initiative, and you will be noticed — I guarantee it.

Solutions, Not Complaints

Want to really impress the boss? Offer solutions, not complaints. Or maybe more accurately, never offer a complaint without also including a possible solution or solutions. No one likes a whiner. It takes very little imagination to grumble or criticize. To make matters worse, those who make a habit of constantly stirring the pot are generally viewed by superiors as a bad apple attempting to sour the entire barrel. As an employee, don’t get sucked into the misery-loves-company crowd while at work. You know who those folks are; the ones constantly badmouthing everyone and everything in the mistaken belief this somehow elevates them above others.

If you are going to approach your boss with a complaint, do so diplomatically, but also do so only when you have a potential solution to offer. Let’s say, just as a quick example, store bathrooms are regularly a bit fetid. You might complain to the boss, “The bathrooms are disgusting!” He then thinks, Why are you telling me? Do something about it!

A better approach might include, “I’m afraid it reflects badly on the store to have such dirty bathrooms. Maybe we could have a schedule so employees must take turns cleaning the bathrooms during closing cleanup.” The boss might not like your idea (whatever that might be), or it might prove impractical somehow, but this comes across as much more positive than complaints alone. Devise a lasting solution to a persistent problem and you will be remembered, rest assured.

Being a good employee, one worthy of promotion, requires a strong work ethic and requisite patience. It also requires common sense and taking initiative. Start by being a quick study ready to adapt to changing environments, and then show some initiative by offering solutions instead of only complaints. **HR**





12 Ways to Call In More Customers

Check out this retailer roundup of deer and elk calls.

BY KEVIN REESE

Calling on the hunt is a bit of a gray area. More often than not, we're mentored into our roles as provided by others around us. Whether they're our parents, friends, guides or other hunters, we listened, watched and learned the ropes, including "don't move around" and "keep quiet." Calling cuts across that grain in pretty dramatic fashion, but doing so can mean the difference between not seeing anything and filling a freezer.

Even armed with this simple truth, calling can be a bit uncomfortable, and learning is generally through observing and emulating, trial and effort, mentoring or some combination thereof. For novice hunters, breaking the silence can be difficult to overcome, and keeping quiet is downright deafening.

That said, comfort levels related to calling can benefit retailers and hunters alike. More often

↑ In addition to stocking popular brands of deer and elk calls, you want to make your customers feel comfortable coming to you for answers and advice. If they trust you, they'll keep coming back – and they'll buy more product.



PRO STAFF

Kevin is an award-winning outdoor writer, Marine Corps veteran and avid hunter. His favorite pursuits include feral hogs with a bow or with a thermal scope and AR-style rifle in his home state of Texas. Of course, he also loves deer, elk, turkey, duck and dove hunting – and the list continues to grow.

“You need to create a level of comfort in your store where customers know they can get useful, encouraging answers and advice, including game call suggestions.”

than not, customers are uncomfortable asking questions about calling and other basic hunting processes like field dressing. As retailers, building relationships with customers and helping them navigate through these issues, and others, not only helps them improve their skillsets, but it also bolsters our hunting ranks and increases your business, especially when it comes to repeat traffic and referrals.

Put simply, people go where they are comfortable. You need to create a level of comfort in your store where customers know they can get useful, encouraging answers and advice, including game call suggestions. To such an end, consider this roundup of great deer and elk calls when restocking or expanding your product offerings and how such a variety can help you convert customers with questions into long-term loyalists.

DEER CALLS

Flexitone Buck Collector Plus

A great example of a high quality and great value, the Flexitone Buck Collector Plus Deer Call delivers the all-in-one goods at a price point sure to catch your customers' wandering eyes. Simply use the Tru-Touch buttons to transition through realistic doe bleats, fawn bawls, buck grunts and, yes, even growls. The call body and mouthpiece are soft and flexible, making it easy to introduce inflection for more natural sounds. From early season clear through the rut, the Buck Collector Plus handles virtually every call a deer hunter at any experience level is likely to use.

Woodhaven Classic Deer Grunt

Whether we're ta of us are suckers for pretty wood, and the Woodhaven Classic Deer Grunt fills the bill with a hand-turned, laminated, weatherproof barrel. While the richly contrasted wood grain is sure to catch the eyes of your customers, the call's

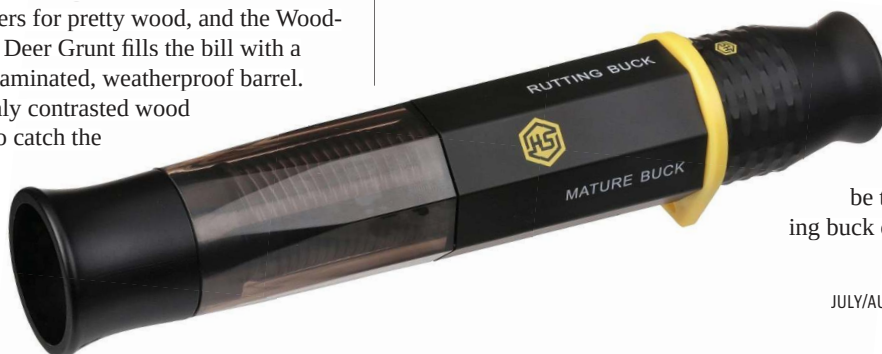
→ Flexitone Buck Collector Plus



↑ Woodhaven Classic Deer Grunt



↓ Hunter's Specialties Nemesis



design and functionality are even more appealing. Inside the barrel, an adjustable tone band makes calls at varying pitches, from young deer bleats to the raspy grunts of bruiser bucks. The Woodhaven Classic Deer Grunt Call also features a patent-pending Inflexor Tube, making sound control and realistic inflection ultra-easy for new hunters and seasoned veterans alike.

Hunter's Specialties Nemesis

Merriam-Webster defines “nemesis” as “an archenemy.” That might be the case for an unsuspecting buck of a lifetime, but the Hunt-





er's Specialties Nemesis 4-in-1 Deer Call just might be a hunter's best friend. The Nemesis was my go-to call last fall, and I'm looking forward to putting it to work again. True to its 4-in-1 name, the Nemesis produces remarkably natural, young, rutting and mature buck grunts, as well as doe bleats, simply by rotating the mouthpiece to each call type's marked position on the barrel. The Nemesis also features an expandable bellow for improved tone control and realistic inflection.

FoxPro BuckPro

Digital game calls have been incredibly popular among predator hunters, but did you know FoxPro offers a similar system for deer hunting? The BuckPro is essentially the same as those digital predator calls many of us already know and love; in fact, while the BuckPro includes 25 deer calls, the additional 10 predator calls make it a perfect system for double-duty. Of course, while the BuckPro comes pre-loaded with 35 sounds, it's capable of holding up to 300. The BuckPro includes a TX433 transmitter, remote with oversized elastomeric keys for gloved operation and a Mylar cone speaker. True to FoxPro innovation, the remote is capable of running three BuckPro calls simultaneously. Check your local laws about using electronic calls for deer.

Illusion Black Rack Rattling System

When it comes to deer calls, rattling is also an exceptionally popular strategy, especially during the pre-rut and rut; of course, even the differences in these times of the season call for different rattling strategies — from short stints of playful sparring to full-on out-for-blood clashes. Like mouth calls, rattling must sound natural to be effective. This is the greatest challenge synthetic antler/non-traditional rattling device manufacturers face, and by many accounts, Illusion appears to have mastered the art. Illusion credits its Bone Core technology and two-full-racks design for truly realistic-sounding antlers. As the name implies, Illusion's design mimics two complete racks for fuller,



↑ FoxPro BuckPro

↓ Illusion Black Rack Rattling System



↓ Knight & Hale Pack Rack



richer-sounding collisions and raking. The most noticeable feature, however, may be color. These synthetic antlers are black for improved concealment.

Knight & Hale Pack Rack

Knight & Hale's Pack Rack Rattling System is not new by any stretch of the imagination, but in my personal experience, it has been key in drawing in scores of bucks — in fact, six bucks on a single morning, including a 170-inch 11-pointer. Unfortunately, he hit a hot doe trail on the way in and headed off after her. The Pack Rack still occupies space in my fall hunting gear. The system is compact, stores together for quiet transportation and, although it's a bit peculiar looking, sounds incredibly realistic. The Pack Rack design also facilitates easy rattling, whether light pre-rut sparring or heavier-hitting fare. The Pack Rack's volume also carries, yet is still full and natural sounding. Like the Black Rack, the Pack Rack is colored, this time in olive drab, for improved concealment.

ELK CALLS

Primos Ivory Plate Single Diaphragm Mouth Call

Mouth, or diaphragm, calls are wildly popular among hunters looking for a little extra challenge. In the up-close-and-personal world of bowhunting, mouth calls are used extensively to keep hands free and movement to a minimum. The Primos Ivory Plate isn't flashy at all, but it's a favorite among elk hunters, especially during the rut. The call's single latex reed and sound plate, set at 30 degrees, positions the call perfectly in your mouth for easy, consistent calling. Some of the Ivory Plate's popularity comes from the ability to mimic several sounds out of a single diaphragm call, including cow, calf and even young bull bugles.

Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls Bully Bull Extreme Grunt Tube

The Bully Bull Grunt Tube is a perfect way to amplify and add more realism to your mouth-calling. The Bully Bull features a larger 1.5-inch mouth opening for better fit, more flexibility in inflection and proper seal to maximize air flow through the tube. Inter-

→ Primos Ivory Plate

↓ Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls Bully Bull Extreme

↓ ELK Reel Hardwood



nally, the mouthpiece is tapered to optimize back pressure against your diaphragm call for more consistent calling, especially during that all-too-familiar bugling high note. Elk grunt tubes are notoriously large and occasionally on the heavy side. The Bully Bull Extreme tackles both problems by coming in at just 12 ounces and an overall length of just over 21 inches.

ELK Reel Hardwood Call

ELK Reel raced to elk-hunting popularity with a one-of-these-is-not-like-the-others approach. Their Hardwood ELK Reel call is not a diaphragm call, nor a mouth; in fact, it's a call unlike any I've ever owned, but it sounds great! As a baffle-style call, the ELK Reel offers simple function and use, and the realistic, consistent-sounding calf, cow and bull sounds are surprisingly easy. While the ELK Reel Hardwood Call may come in the higher end of appealing price points for





“For novice hunters, breaking the silence can be difficult to overcome, and keeping quiet is downright deafening.”

your customers, the calls are constructed of quality materials, assembled by hand and individually tuned. Of course, great sound aside, these calls are different enough to make customers talk, buy and show their friends.

E.L.K. Inc. Cow Talk Call

The Cow Talk is quite a stretch from traditional diaphragm or tube calls but has proven to be effective over decades of elk hunting. Stating the obvious, the Cow Talk Elk Call is pocket-size for easy carry; however, it also boasts dual call functionality and is constructed of a durable plastic body. The Cow Talk was designed for both single-handed and hands-free use. Call through one end to produce realistic calf sounds and through the other for adult elk. The Cow Talk is easy to tune and made where folks know a thing or two about elk hunting, in Gardiner, Montana.

Phelps E-Z-Estrus Wildfire Call

Founded in 2009, Phelps became a must-have cow call brand for serious hunters, right out of the gate. Phelps calls can be found in the packs and on the lanyards of die-hard elk chasers with discriminant tastes for premium calls throughout the Northwest. Among the most popular, Phelps' E-Z-Estrus Wildfire Cow Call is an open-reed call with a perfectly rich, full, yet nasally estrus tone that brings in the big boys. Of course, Phelps doesn't end the E-Z-Estrus line with the Wildfire. This particular call is available in a wide array of premium wood and acrylic finishes and dresses up your call inventory quite nicely. The big retailer



→ E.L.K. Inc.
Cow Talk

↓ Phelps E-Z-Estrus
Wildfire Cow Call



↓ Carlton's Mac Daddy with
Mini Grunt Tube

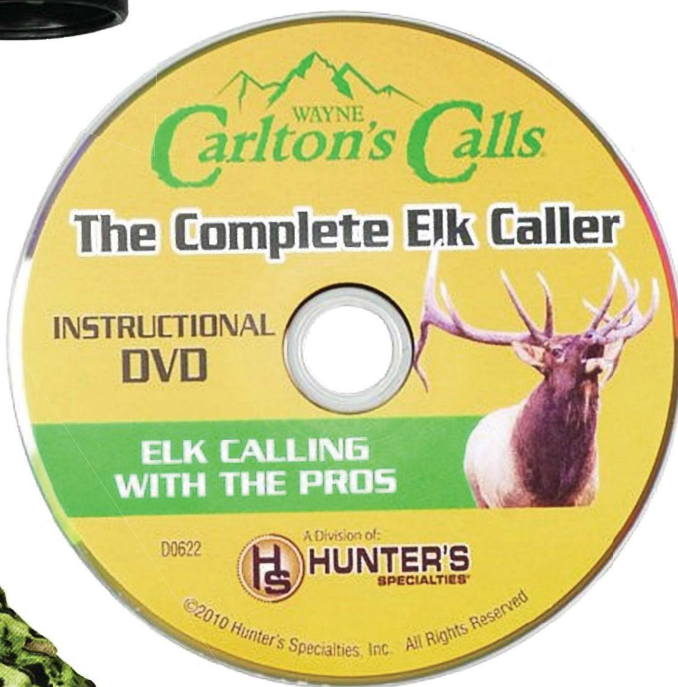
“Comfort levels related to calling can benefit retailers and hunters alike.”

win for E-Z-Estrus calls? At roughly the same cost as many other mass-produced calls on retailer shelves, hunters can garner premium, eye-catching calls that sound as good as they look.

Carlton's Mac Daddy by Hunter's Specialties

Carlton's Mac Daddy with Mini Grunt Tube provides the best of both elk call-

ing worlds — bugles and cow calls. The Mac Daddy is composed of a mouthpiece with Infinity latex, removable baffle and small grunt tube with a Realtree Max-1 camouflage cover. Using the grunt tube amplifies nasally cow calls and bugles while employing the baffle only results in quieter, up-close calling. Like traditional grunt tubes, the Mac Daddy's tube can also be used independently with any standard diaphragm call. Offering your customers a multi-purpose call like the Carlton's Mac Daddy is always a safe bet. And, as a call for hunters at all experience levels, the Mac Daddy also comes with an instructional DVD. **HR**





↑ Located in a very busy area of a large city, Mark's gets plenty of business.

Mark's Outdoors

New school meets old school at this Alabama shop.

BY MATT CRAWFORD

For more than a decade of television in the 1980s and early '90s, any of the regulars who walked into the fictional Boston bar *Cheers* were greeted by a chorus of folks calling out their name. "NORM!" they'd yell in unison as character Norm Peterson ducked into the bar

from where the sitcom took its name.

It's kind of the same way at Mark's Outdoors, a specialty hunting and fishing retailer in Vestavia, Alabama, a suburb about 15 miles outside of Birmingham. Behind the knife counter near the door, long-time employee Randy Yerkes

Mark's Outdoor Sports

WHERE: Birmingham, AL

SPECIALTIES:

Gunsmithing, safes, firearms, ammunition, archery, optics, knives, hunting accessories, fishing rods and reels, tackle, kayaks, hunting/fishing licenses, outdoor clothing, safes, shooting accessories and more.

PHONE: (205) 822-2010

WEBSITE:
www.marksoutdoors.com



PRO STAFF

Matt Crawford lives, writes, fishes and hunts from his home base in northern Vermont. He is the former editor of *The Burlington Free Press* and *Upland Almanac*. Currently, he works in a communications firm where he represents a number of brands in the outdoor industry.

greet regular customers much like the bartenders did on “Cheers,” shouting out their name as they saunter in.

“I know it sounds like a tired cliché, but the basic premise for us here is to treat a customer like you want to be treated,” said Mark Whitlock, Jr., who runs the store, a 25,000-square-foot shop that’s stayed in the same location since it opened its doors in 1980. “We try to make sure that when somebody walks in, we make a connection — whether we’re shaking hands with new customers or having Randy yell out the name of our regulars. We want to make people feel attached to the store.”

And attached they are. While much of suburban America is dotted with big-box retailers that suck consumers out from the nearby downtowns, it’s the family-owned Mark’s Outdoors that attracts hunters and anglers from Birmingham and beyond.

“We offer free coffee every day of the week and free popcorn on Saturday,” Whitlock said. “We have guys who stop in here on their way to work for a cup of coffee, and we have guys who come in for coffee in the afternoon, dressed

“We have guys who stop in here on their way to work for a cup of coffee...”

in business attire, as they wait for traffic to die down before heading home.”

The idea of having a welcoming, low-pressure outdoor shop began with Mark Whitlock, Sr., who started the business as a bait shop in 1980. Slowly and surely, the store expanded its footprint in a strip mall. When Mark Sr. lost his battle with cancer in 2012, his wife and co-owner Dana (now Dana Stockli) took it over. Mark Jr., 28, came onboard a few years ago, after graduating from the University of Alabama, but Dana is still at the store five days a week or more, giving her son guidance and business assistance.

Staying true to his father’s vision, Mark Jr. is a stickler for keeping the friendly atmosphere alive, but he’s doing so while balancing the changing pace of specialty retail in the United States. Just this year, the store finally began sell-

↓ A friendly, hang-out atmosphere coupled with good customer service keeps customers – and friends – coming back.



ing a limited number of its products online, a reality that Mark's Outdoors took some time to come to grips with.

"My dad hated the idea of online sales," said Whitlock. "It's kind of a race to the bottom to the lowest price. But it's also necessary in this day and age because of how drastic the changes in retail have been over the past few years. You can try to fight it as long as you want — and we did — but eventually you have to be where the customers expect you to be."

Mark's Outdoors puts only a limited number of items for sale on the website, and Mark Jr. is solely responsible for responding to, and filling, orders. "We have to keep focus on the idea that

The Leading Edge

Mark's Outdoors has many of the same products hunt and fish shops all across America carry: guns, hunting clothing and fishing tackle. But what Mark's has more of than most similar shops is knives. And for good reason.

"Our knife sales make up 8 percent of our total amount of sales," said Mark Whitlock, Jr., who manages the shop. "We have a massive knife display, but still the product display only takes up about 100 square feet. On a per-square-foot basis in a store that's 25,000 square feet, our knife sales are by far the most profitable part of our business."

Stores that relegate knife sales as an afterthought are missing a profit-making opportunity. With a number of respected brands on the market, decent profit margins and needing only a little space for display, knife sales are an easy way to bump up a store's total sales.

Mark's Outdoors, of course, sells knives designed specifically for hunting and fishing tasks, but the vast majority of the store's sales are to people who simply want an everyday carry model to put in their pockets.

"Eighty percent of our knives sales are folding pocket knives for EDC," said Whitlock.

Mark's offers free sharpening for any knife a customer brings in — whether that's a kitchen knife or a knife bought at the shop. Mark's also sells a number of high-end knives, with price tags in excess of \$1,000, to knife aficionados who come to the store specifically for the knife selection.

Top-selling brands for Mark's include common stalwarts like Benchmade, Kershaw and CRKT as well as William Henry, a luxury brand.

"The next thing I'd like to offer is laser engraving," said Whitlock. "As soon as I can find an affordable way to do that, we will. Knife sales are one of those things where it pays to provide extra special attention."

"My dad used to say we're not really salesmen, we're actually acting as therapists for people who walk through that door."

just because you're selling online doesn't mean you can't also have a rock-solid brick-and-mortar shop as well," Whitlock said.

Whitlock, whose college degree is in marketing, has started to use other modern-day marketing techniques well beyond just online commerce. Mark's Outdoors has a customer email list with more than 30,000 addresses and sends regular emails. The store has active social media accounts (the Facebook following is about 13,500) and buys targeted banner ads online. Whitlock also routinely turns to small, local T-shirt makers to simultaneously build community and supply his shop. He has also expanded the product offering to include more active lifestyle brands.

"We do well with brands like Mountain Khaki and KUHL," Whitlock said. "We're not just selling fishing and hunting gear; we're selling things for people who like to play outdoors."

But there is a small case study in hunting gear that strengthens the notion that Mark's Outdoors is a shop that deftly straddles the line between old-school outdoor shop where regular customers linger and new-school retail hotspot selling the trendsetting gear.

"We have absolutely crushed it with Sitka Gear," Whitlock said, "and I am as surprised as anybody. When we started thinking of carrying \$600 jackets to hunt whitetails in Alabama, I thought it was absurd. I didn't think we stood a chance of selling any."

But, Whitlock said, Sitka now makes up a solid 40 percent of the store's camo sales. "These guys here just eat it up," he said.

Part of that, naturally, goes back to the Mark's Outdoors sales force (27 full-timers and just four part-timers) who know intimately the products they sell and are able to talk to customers in a non-hurried, informed way.

"I like to think we stand out with our customer service," Whitlock said. "That's the big difference between us and the big box stores. Our employees live and breathe the outdoors, and they're knowledgeable about what's working and what isn't. My dad used to say we're not really salesmen, we're actually acting as therapists for people who walk through that door." **HR**



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← Stock multiple brands across a variety of price points so each customer can find a camera that fits their needs.

↓ Trail cameras are more popular than ever, with many users running multiple cameras on their property. This is a huge sales opportunity.

PUT THE RIGHT TRAIL CAMERA IN YOUR CLIENT'S HAND

Your customers can't go wrong with any of the 12 trail cameras highlighted here.

BY DARRON MCDUGAL

It's always exciting to hang trail cameras near stand locations to see what's roaming around and when. And while most folks automatically think whitetails when the topic of trail cameras arises, we simply can't ignore that trail cameras have become useful tools for scouting everything from wild turkeys to Rocky Mountain elk.

So, regardless if your store is located in Florida, the Pacific Northwest or anywhere in

between, trail cameras can generate some worthwhile profits if you're ambitious. Of course, 2019's trail-camera lineup offers features too numerous to mention, and the vast number of models available makes the prospect of choosing several to stock a bit perplexing.

To help you research and compare, I've compiled a list of 12 easy-sell brands that offer something for every customer's needs. Let's review.



“Whether your store is located in Florida, the Pacific Northwest or anywhere in between, trail cameras can generate some worthwhile profits if you’re ambitious.”

Covert

The Covert name is synonymous with quality and dependability. All the rage in trail-camera technology centers around wireless-equipped models that provide instantaneous feedback as data is captured. And while Covert’s Black-

hawk LTE and Code Black LTE are heavy hitters in this category, consumers demanded a more economically priced option. Covert answered with the \$130-cheaper E-1 LTE (\$309.99) wireless camera. AT&T- and Verizon-certified options meet coverage needs across the map. Trigger speed is .4 seconds, while 44 no-glow LEDs provide a generous night range of 100 feet. Still-image resolution is 18 MP, and videos are captured in 1080p HD. MaXimum Silence Image Capture manages camera noise to avoid spooking your prey. A 45-degree field of view makes images easy to review. Images can be viewed at the user’s convenience via the Covert Wireless app. 877-468-1799 • www.covertscoutingcameras.com





Moultrie

Scouting-camera customers on a budget should look no further than Moultrie's A-Series, which consists of the A700i (\$109.99), A700 (\$99.99), A300i (\$89.99) and A300 (\$79.99). All models record HD video and are compatible with Moultrie Mobile's new MA2 and MV2 Cellular Field Modems. The A770i and A700 include 14-MP resolution and .7-second capture speeds. The A300i and A300 deliver 12-MP resolution and .9-second trigger speeds. All four models boast 17,000-image battery lives and infrared-flash technology with a 60-foot detection range. A two-year warranty sweetens the deal. For budget-conscious customers hunting for big value, Moultrie's ultra-affordable A-Series scouting cameras are worth a second look.

800-653-3334 • www.moultriefeeders.com

Stealth Cam

Stealth Cam breaks ground with what it's dubbing "the world's first 4K digital trail camera." The all new DS4K (\$299.99) produces stunning 4K Ultra-HD video and brilliant 30-MP still images. A 100-foot flash range lengthens the playing field without tipping off subjects to the camera's whereabouts — the infrared LEDs use inconspicuous No Glo technology. A .4-second trigger speed via Reflex Trigger is designed to capture subjects in the center of images for optimal review. The DS4K is armed with dual image sensors for crisper night images and lifelike color on daytime images. A 16:9 image ratio expands the camera's field of view, and Matrix Advanced Blur Reduction ensures focused images so you can easily identify target animals. A special hybrid mode captures both video and stills and GEO-TAG GPS tagging capability rounds out this impressive, ground-breaking camera.

877-269-8490 • www.stealthcam.com



Primos

Hunters can expect clarity in 16-MP images and 1080p HD videos complete with audio recording from Primos Hunting's Auto Pilot No Glow (\$129.99). The camera boasts 100-foot detection, even at night; the product of 60 No Glow LEDs. Auto Exposure intuitively varied lighting, thus eliminating white-washed images and providing impeccable detail. Quick on the gun, the Auto Pilot features a rapid, .3-second capture speed. The Auto Pilot No Glow practically disappears from the human eye when hung against tree bark, thanks to Mossy Oak Bottomland camo. The camera gets its name from its incredibly user-friendly interface — hang the camera, flip a few switches and you're off to the races.

601-879-9323 • www.primoshunting.com



Wildgame Innovations

The minute size of Wildgame Innovations' Shadow Micro Cam (\$99.99) and its sub-half-second trigger speed are just two reasons why hunters will love it. Infrared illumination via 36 high-intensity LEDs reaches 80 feet. Video resolution provides great detail at 720p. Still images are captured at 16-MP resolution. TruBark HD camo hides the camera well against tree bark. Regular (4:3) and wide-angle (16:9) aspect ratios give the user versatility, and the backlit LCD display screen is easily referenced in even low-light conditions. A magnetic ball mounting bracket allows precise camera leveling/placement. Four AA batteries (not included) power the Shadow Micro Cam for up to 6 months. Time, date, location and moon phase all appear at the bottom of each photo so hunters can peg their target animal's tendencies.

800-847-8269 • www.wildgameinnovations.com



Bushnell

Dual image sensors — one for daytime and one for nighttime — ensure Bushnell's Core DS (\$119.99, low glow; \$219.99, no glow) captures optimal images and video around the clock. Miss nothing with rocket-fast .2-second trigger speed and .6-second recovery time. Capture stunning 1080p video clips complete with audio. Forget dead batteries; the Core DS has a 1-year battery life. The integrated color LCD provides fast field review of data. Stunning image quality is the product of 30-MP resolution, and a two-year limited warranty sweetens the purchase. The rugged, waterproof shell is finished in Treebark Camo, making the unit inconspicuous to both game and thieves.

800-221-9035 • www.bushnell.com



Spypoint

Spypoint needs no introduction, and its Link-Dark Cellular (\$349.99) trail camera promises to be a hit this year. It includes a pre-activated SIM card and offers the market's simplest cellular activation — Spypoint handles everything. The Link-Dark features an 80-foot flash range, and as the name suggests, the infrared LEDs are invisible. A large 2-inch viewing screen simplifies camera setup and image review, but with cellular connectivity, you won't need to visit the camera location to view data — view it on the go 24/7 via the free Spypoint Link app. Record HD videos with



Hot Trail-Cam Setups

If customers need help figuring out where to hang their newly bought trail cameras, here are five key locations they can home in on.

Fence jumps:

Game animals tend to cross fences in places where the top wire strand is lower, providing more leg and chest clearance. Antelope are the exceptions; they'll often seek crossings where the lowest strand is well above ground so they can limbo beneath it.

Open gates:

Open gates that lead to ag fields or other whitetail necessities often become the paths of least resistance and deer will funnel right through them.

Water sources:

From a children's-wading-pool-made-waterhole to stock tanks to natural ponds and even rivers, deer must drink from whatever water sources are available. This is especially true in arid regions with hot temperatures.

Mineral blocks or feeders:

Feed and/or minerals congregate deer, and there are few better places to hang a trail camera.

Forest trails:

Whether full-on logging roads or simple ATV-wide paths, any form of road that leads through otherwise-dense forest — especially a road that connects bedding areas and feeding areas — facilitates good deer traffic.

sound, or capture brilliant, high-res photos at 12 MP. Blur Reduction and IR-Boost technologies deliver crisp, clear images both day and night. Add to that a .07-second trigger speed, and you have the ultimate scouting tool.

514-868-1811 • www.spypoint.com

Hawk Hunting

Loaded with features is Hawk Hunting's Ghost Cam HD 16 Black (\$119.99). The IP67 Waterproof micro-sized case shields from the punishing elements, and Hawk Sync control provides smartphone connectivity via Bluetooth to check camera status and capture a test photo for peace of mind. Improved night-image quality is the product of Xfinity Infrared LED Illumination. The No Glow LEDs deliver a flash range that extends a full 10 feet beyond the camera's 70-foot detection range. Trigger speed is .6-second for still images and 1 second for videos. 1280x720 HD video gathers vivid detail combined with sound for the full effect. Four AA batteries power the Ghost Cam HD 16, and Hawk Chaos AE camo blends the camera into its





natural surroundings. With 16-MP resolution and a two-year warranty, what's not to love about this affordable, high-performance trail camera?

844-745-7723 • www.hawkhunting.com

Cuddeback

Landowners and property managers will love the ability to connect up to 16 of Cuddeback's CuddeLink Power House IR Cell (\$500) cameras on just one cell service plan. This saves users lots of money, but equally notable is that only one camera on the circuit is a dedicated "home" camera. From that camera, you can grab and review images captured by the remaining 15 cameras so that you need not visit each one and impose human disturbance in key areas of the property. The Power House Module features 56 high-powered LEDs, improving range and reducing blur. The results are well-lit nighttime images. A .25-second capture speed ensures you miss nothing. Verizon LTE service provides outstanding coverage, and 20-MP image resolution produces high-quality, crystal-clear images.

920-347-3810 • www.cuddeback.com

Spartan Camera

Spartan Camera's (770-582-0004) GoCam Model GC-W4Gb (\$409.95) features the market's most advanced wireless/cellular-camera technology. It is a self-contained, fully portable scouting or security solution that can accomplish many roles for both hunting and property surveillance. It requires no outside connection other than a cellular signal. The Spartan GoCam will capture images with either a PIR motion sensor or time-lapse function. It then transmits the files directly to a smartphone or web portal. It doesn't get any simpler than that!

770-582-0004 • www.spartancamera.com

Reconyx

Reconyx has been producing reliable trail cameras since 2002, and HyperFire 2 (\$399.99) epitomizes what the company is all about. In fact, Reconyx is so sure it's the company's best camera yet that it's backing the HyperFire 2 with a 5-year warranty. A fast-firing .25-second trigger speed combined with ultra-reliable motion sensing means you won't miss subjects filing by the camera. A No-Glow GEN3 HO Infrared flash stretches the playing field to an incredible 150 feet! BuckView software is included, and the date, time, temperature and moon phase info are stamped on each photo for fast comparison of your target buck's tendencies. 12 AA Lithium or NIMH batteries power the unit for up to two years or 40,000 images. Vivid detail is the product of 1080p wide-screen resolution, or you can capture in 3-MP standard aspect ratio — you choose.

866-493-6064 • www.reconyx.com



Browning Trail Cameras

When scouting for mature boars, bucks or bulls, reliable performance is irreplaceable, and Browning Trail Cameras' Dark Ops Apex (\$159.99) — part of the Sub Micro Series — brings it. For starters, it boasts a .22-second trigger speed with an unbelievable .6-second recovery time. Users can expect to study images in impeccable detail, thanks to 18-MP resolution. Innovative 1600x900 HD+ video raises the bar, and extended nighttime video lengths of up to 20 seconds advance the scouting experience. With six AA batteries, the Dark Ops Apex can capture more than 10,000 images, reducing obtrusive visits to the camera location. Zero Blur Image Capture Technology and Illuma-Smart Technology, which adjusts the infrared-flash intensity, combine to improve night-image quality. **HR**

888-618-4496 • www.browningtrailcameras.com



↑ Browning Dark Ops Apex



PRO STAFF - Darron McDougal has been part of the hunting industry for 18 years, first as a salesman and bow technician at a family-owned archery pro shop, then as an outdoor and trade writer/editor. McDougal is a passionate DIY hunter and travels extensively each year to hunt turkeys, hogs and big game across the states.

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precisionreflex.com





SELLING TO THE ATV/UTV CONSUMER

Chances are that many of your customers utilize ATVs or UTVs for hunting or managing their property. Have you thought about what you can sell to them?

BY RICK SOSEBEE

Hunting is a way of life for many outdoor enthusiasts, and many of them use off-road vehicles in their pursuits. For you as a hunting supply retailer, the consumer's modes of transportation

in the field can bring an extra advantage to your bottom line with just a little planning. More and more frequently, hunters rely on their ATV or UTV to get them into the hunting property as well as to manage food plots or maintain the property they



← Hunters use UTVs for everything from food plot planting to scouting to hauling gear.

“The impulse buyer will pick up maintenance items when they see them.”

hunt. Using these machines every season means that regular service will eventually be needed, and adding small items to your countertop or making room on a shelf can lead to options for the off-road consumer. Some would prefer to buy from local shops instead of visiting a dealer, and the impulse buyer will pick up maintenance items when they see them. This is an open opportunity for additional profit. You might also find ways to help accessorize these vehicles by simply adding product to your shelves.

Finding Shelf Space

Obviously, the first thing to consider is just how much floor plan you can devote to additional products in your shop. First and foremost you are a hunting retailer, and it might or might not be fair to the core business to take up valuable shelving where the latest hunting technology could be located. However, if you want to take advantage of the additional business, you may decide to create

↓ Accessories like vehicle-mounted lights can be popular add-ons to a customer's ATV or UTV.



3 GREAT SEED SPREADERS

Finding the right ATV-mounted spreader for the job can be confusing for a shop owner, but simply finding products that have a good brand reputation might be the best approach. Let's not forget about that coveted shelf space as well and use that information to determine which product best fits in the store. Here are three examples of compact spreaders.



MOULTRIE ATV FOOD PLOT SPREADER

- Durable plastic hopper
- Holds 50 pounds of material
- Heavy duty 12-volt motor
- Universal mounting brackets

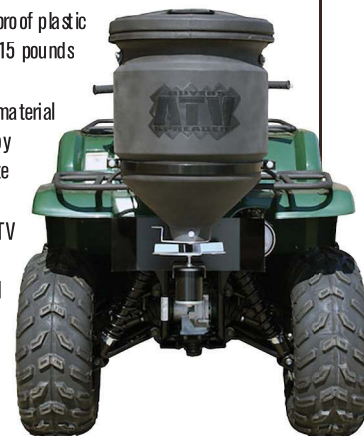
BUYERS PRODUCTS SPREADER UTVS16

- Durable plastic hopper – 15-gallon capacity
- Multi-purpose spreader for salt, seed, feed or fertilizer
- Adjustable shut-off gate for flow control
- 2-inch receiver hitch mountable



BUYERS PRODUCTS RACK-MOUNT SPREADER ATVS15A

- Durable rust-pro of plastic hopper holds 15 pounds of material
- Free-flowing material is controlled by adjustable gate
- Vertically mounted to ATV rack
- 12-volt sealed motor





4 CLAMPS FOR AN ATV/UTV

Carrying your prized hunting rifle or tools into the field to hunt or work can be somewhat of a chore, but with the proper clamps, your customers will have confidence knowing that their gear is in good hands. Here are four universal clamps for those specific consumers.

KOLPIN RHINO XL DOUBLE 21515

- Strong rubber over-molded heavy-duty nylon with rubber straps
- Universal mounting with hardware
- Tool-free quick-clip design
- 360-degree rotation for fine adjustment
- Holds firearms, fishing poles, farm tools and more



RHINO RACK MULTI-PURPOSE HOLDER

- Durable molded plastic with rubber straps
- Carries hammer, saw, small shovel or other tools as well as bows or small rifles
- Universal mounting brackets included



KOLPIN RHINO GRIP FLEX 3.0

- Mounts to flat surfaces or round tubes using included hardware
- Durable reinforced mounting base
- Adjustable strap fits items up to 3 inches in diameter
- Sold as a pair



SEIZMIK ICOS GUN HOLDER

- In Cab On Seat (ICOS) design utilizes center seat belt to secure to machine
- Dual fully-padded gun cradles
- Exo shell wraps armored foam
- Stealth compression straps
- Muzzle control





↑ Grips are a great accessory item that most ATV users will need, and they don't take up much shelf space – a win for you.

← Rack-mounted grips can hold anything from guns to tools, and hunters will consider them a must-have.

more shelf space instead of replacing items on existing shelves. Be creative with product placement and the types of products related to the ATV/UTV rider. Keeping this in mind, your sales counter might be the first spot to offer up a little taste or test run to see if your regular customers will bite on the future offerings. This leads us to the next subject.

Letting the hunting consumer know that you have product that might directly relate to their off-road needs is important. As you know, if they do not see it or there is no direct line of sight to these products, they may never even know you carry them. This is where signage and some education for your sales staff might help familiarize these customers with the new offerings. Up-selling from a situationally aware associate can be a great way to offer something new to the customer by simply telling them that it is available. ATV and UTV products are no different than a better tree stand in this regard.

Maintenance Products and Smalls

What would an off-road enthusiast who hunts look for or simply pick up while in your hunting store? Carrying simple products such as fuel stabilizers, heated grips or even waterproof phone storage pouches can be very productive, as the display boxes are small and can be moved around easily. Not to mention, they are inexpensive in comparison to larger items.

Other products like tire plug kits or even tow straps will remind the consumer of something they really need for the next trip. Even offering a first aid kit that is compact enough for a glove box or storage compartment on an ATV would be wise. A safety-minded hunter might purchase these items even if they don't own an off-road vehicle. Most everyone has suffered a flat tire that could have been plugged on their vehicle, and fuel stabilizers can be used in cars or trucks as well. Universal products that appeal to the power sports consumer and hunter alike are definite wins.

“The first thing to consider is just how much floor space you can devote to additional products in your shop.”

Let's not forget about protective items like eye-wear or gloves. Eye protection during work days or even while driving off road is important, and many will use gloves when handling a fresh harvest or when riding their machine. This is especially true in the winter months.

Fuel System Additives

Inevitably, consumers will suffer from fuel system nightmares due to the fuel that is offered today. Ethanol will clog the tiny ports in the naturally aspirated fuel systems and leave the machine hard to start and running rough. Not only do these small products give your customers a good way to cure the problem, but they take up very little counter space.

Ethanol Equalizer Fuel Additive

- Cleans fuel system
- Restores lost octane
- Stabilizes fuel for extended storage
- Increases horsepower



Stabil fuel stabilizer

- Stabilizes fuel for storage up to 24 months
- Effective in all gasoline
- Ensures quick and easy starts
- Blister packages available

Lucas Oil Safeguard Ethanol fuel conditioner

- Cleans injectors, valve seats and combustion chambers
- Prevents varnish from ethanol
- Protects engine oil lubricants from the harmful effects of alcohol combustion





FIRST RIDE AND REVIEW: 2019 CAN-AM OUTLANDER 850 XT

For a real-world test of the 2019 Can-Am Outlander 850 XT, Hunting Retailer's digital editor Dave Maas visited the massive – and rugged – Black Hills National Forest in South Dakota.

On this late summer day, as I ripped along the rugged, steep trails in South Dakota's Black Hills National Forest, one thought kept creeping to the front of my bouncing brain: This trail system would destroy my four-wheeler.

While it's true my aging ATV is firmly planted on the "utility" side of the sport/utility fence, the machine I was test-driving, a 2019 Can-Am Outlander 850 XT, also falls into this classification. So what made this machine superior to the one in my garage?

CAN-AM OUTLANDER 850 XT FEATURES

The Outlander XT comes in three engine sizes: 650, 850 and 1000R. All three have the same length/width/height (86x48x49.5 inches), wheelbase (51 inches), ground clearance (11 inches), suspension (9.2 inches of travel in front, 9.9 inches in rear) and seat height (34.5 inches), but differ slightly in weight. The 650 weighs 749 pounds (dry weight); the 850 is 800 pounds and the 1000R is 826 pounds.

While I have substantial experience riding ATVs, most of my time has been spent on 400s, 450s and 500s. I've driven bigger machines a few times, but even so, I wasn't prepared for the performance of the Outlander 850 XT.

I can think of no other way to describe this: The 78hp Rotax V-twin, liquid-cooled 854cc engine sounds pissed off. Angry. Really angry. At 20 mph, the engine growl seems to imply, "You have to be kidding me." At 30 mph, the deepening growl says "Finally, you're beginning to wake up." At 40 mph, the engine is just beginning to show its true capabilities. Now, I confess to not feeling comfortable taking the machine to much over 50 mph on the gravel straightaways in So-Dak, but I can tell you the 850 engine wasn't anywhere close to sounding maxed out.

As for ride: BRP (Bombardier Recreational Products) recently announced updates to the newest Outlanders. Company quote: "2019 Can-Am Outlanders feature a brand-new, purpose-built and recalibrated suspension with front arched A-arms, front sway bar and Torsional Trailing arm Independent (TTI) rear suspension that provides additional width and travel."

I'm a hunter, not a dirt track racer, so in layman's terms, I can tell you 850 XT rides exceptionally well. At no time did I feel the slightest bit out of control, which is saying something considering the rough terrain and many rocks and logs on the Black Hills trails. And believe me: For much of the time, I was traveling well over typical "on the way to the Back 40" hunting speeds.

Final note: In the past, about the only knock on Can-Ams has been cost. That said, BRP has actually dropped prices of Outlander 650s and 850s a few hundred dollars for 2019 even though the ATVs have been updated. Even with the new lower prices, Can-Ams still aren't in the bottom tier, but in my opinion, the saying, "You get what you pay for" is true when it comes to offroad machines that take a tremendous beating. – Dave Maas



Larger Products

Here is where the game gets a little trickier, and you will need to consider the retail space you have even more. Items like small LED fog lights or rack-mountable gun clamps are directly related to your business, and although the space required to add these to the floor plan is a little larger, the return could be worth the effort. Many ATV/UTV owners will carry a rifle or bow of some kind for hunting, and giving them a way to do this safely is also providing a service to the entire industry. ATV rack-mounted gun clamps can double as bow carriers, and bed- or passenger-compartment-mounted gun scabbards for the UTV owner give them confidence that the new deer rifle they just purchased from you is going to survive the ride to the stand.

One thing to consider is that large plastic or poly gun scabbards take up a lot of space, but having one set with the option to order more if the customer desires could be a good route. Let's not forget the tools that are sometimes carried into the stand or used to clear trails around their lease. These same clamps come in various sizes and can serve many uses during the season. For example, clamping a small axe or limb trimming saw to the ATV/UTV for those work days.

When you look at the pre- or post-season work that has to be done around a hunting lease, you might find that items like rack baskets or even a product like a small receiver hitch-mounted harrow or seed spreader could be a great investment for a consumer. These products do take up more retail



space, but are valuable even so. If you already sell standalone feeders, chances are the retail space may be ready for a small hitch-mounted spreader. The company making your standalone feeder might actually manufacture that ATV/UTV specific product. Finally, let's not forget storage and the use of a compact ATV cover when the season has ended, or riding would be halted for a few weeks. Covering the ATV or UTV that sits in the weather ensures that the seating as well as overall appearance of that vehicle greatly benefits from this. Consumers who value their investment are always looking for ways to protect it.

Finding what your specific customers will buy is as simple as educating yourself in the community area you are anchored in. Ask those regular customers casual questions about their off-road experience, how they use their machines and what they might purchase outside their machine's dealer if they found it elsewhere. If you have a large agricultural community, you will find more of the off-road power sports owners will use their ATV/UTV for both work and harvesting wild game, thus increasing service intervals required to maintain the rig. It only translates to even more potential profits for you the store owner. **HR**

↑ UTV- or ATV-mounted gun scabbards offer more protection for hunters who are transporting firearms in and out of the field.

→ Food plot accessories might be a hot seller depending on your location.



PRO STAFF -

Rick Sosebee is an avid outdoor enthusiast and has been writing about the sport of off-roading in the ATV/UTV industry for more than 18 years. Living in Dawsonville, Georgia, Rick enjoys the hunting and fishing lifestyle as well as any chance he can get to explore in his UTVs.





← Waterfowling is a gear-heavy endeavor. Your customers will be loading up with product, and you should be ready to sell it to them.

DUCK, DUCK, GOOSE GEAR

Waterfowl hunting is big business. Are you cashing in?

BY DAVID HART

It takes more than a gun and some shells to hunt ducks and geese. It takes a lot of equipment, in fact — practically no other sport is more gear-dependent than waterfowl hunting. Decoys, waders, calls, blinds and a host of accessories are vital for a successful day in the field or marsh.

The good news is that waterfowl hunters are willing to buy that gear. According to a 2011 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Survey, those who hunt both ducks and geese spend an average of \$1,324 annually. All together, they spend nearly \$700 million each year. Waterfowlers also spend a lot of time afield, 27 days each, on average. That means they not only put a lot of miles on their trucks, but they also put their gear through the wringer. Nobody is more demanding of their hunting equipment than the men and women who cherish a day in a duck or goose blind.

What you stock should reflect the most common hunting styles in your area. Waterfowlers in the Great Plains, for instance, often hunt dry corn fields with full-body decoys and maybe a couple of battery-powered spinning-wing decoys. Standing in knee-deep water among a flooded forest is a popular hunting method in Arkansas, which means you'll need a good selection of waders, a few types of mallard decoys and plenty of accessories vital for a successful timber hunt. East Coast waterfowlers often hunt big water, where diving ducks are abundant. The right decoys and high-quality ammo are in high demand around the Chesapeake Bay and the Carolina coast.

No matter where or how they hunt ducks and geese, though, America's 1.5 million waterfowlers need many of the same things. Calls, decoys, waders, non-toxic ammo and a host of other essential gear are standard in every

duck and goose hunter's garage. Those items have a wide range of price points, too. Decoys can retail for as low as \$40 per half-dozen to \$100 or more. Goose decoys are often twice as much. Even calls have a broad price range. Mass-produced mallard calls made overseas, for instance, can run as low as \$20, while a high-quality, American-made goose call can cost as much as \$200.

These days, a growing number of hunters are willing to spend the extra money on those higher-end products. They just look or sound more realistic than less expensive options, they're more reliable and they can help increase success in the field. And those more expensive products are often backed by a solid warranty.

In other words, stocking your store with waterfowl gear can increase your bottom line and draw more traffic through your door. Stocking your store with the right waterfowl equipment can lead to a long and prosperous business life.

Not sure what to buy? Don't worry. The sales representatives for the top waterfowl equipment companies know exactly what you need. They not only sell that gear, but they use it, too. They are hardcore hunters who spend every spare minute in the field, talking with their fellow hunters and putting the products they sell to the test.

DECOYS

Higdon XS Pulsator

Battery-powered and portable, the Pulsator creates lifelike motion among otherwise lifeless decoys by shooting a gentle stream of water into the air through a 750 gph bilge pump. The rechargeable 12-volt lithium ion battery lasts up to seven hours. The self-contained motion decoy comes with a charging cord and instructions. MSRP is \$129.99 www.higdondecoys.com

↓ Higdon XS Pulsator decoy





↑ Mojo Mini Mallard

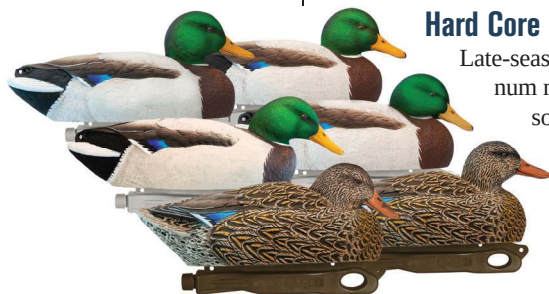
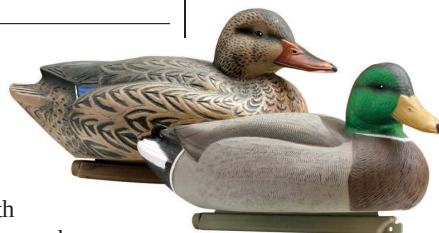
Mojo Mini Mallard Spinning Wing Decoy

Mojo's Mini Mallard is the perfect addition to any decoy spread. The spinning wings mimic a duck landing among the decoys, coaxing passing birds to come for a closer look. They are so effective, in fact, that a few states have placed restrictions on them, so check regulations. It runs on four AA batteries (not included), comes with a mounting pole and is small enough to pack into hidden spots. MSRP is \$89.99. www.mojooutdoors.com

↓ Greenhead Gear (GHG) Essential Series Magnum Mallards

GHG Essential Series Magnum Mallards

There are decoys and then there are decoys that stand out from the crowd. GHG's magnum mallard decoys are larger than standard decoys, giving hunters an edge in the field. The Essential Series are no-frills decoys that look great and take a beating for seasons to come. They come with weighted, self-righting keels and realistic postures that fool even the most wary ducks. MSRP is \$49.99 per six. www.averyoutdoors.com



↑ Hard Core Rugged Series Magnum Mallards

Hard Core Rugged Series Magnum Mallards

Late-season hunters will love Hard Core's Rugged Series magnum mallards. The paint scheme perfectly matches late-season decoys, right down to the lighter, more visible colors on the hens. And they are magnums, meaning they stand out among all the other spreads in the marsh. Each decoy in the six-pack has a different pose for added realism. The WhaleTail keel creates lifelike movement with little current. MSRP is \$79.99. www.hardcore-brands.com

GHG Pro Grade XD Series Full-Body Canada Goose

A good decoy spread can mean the difference between a good day and a great one. That's why GHG's new XD series goose decoys should be a part of every dedicated goose hunter's spread. The harvester pack of six decoys includes semi-permanent bases, GHG's Real Motion system, and five different head/neck configurations for added realism. The soft, one-piece bodies take a beating and are fully flocked to fool even the most wary geese. MSRP is \$199.99 per six. www.averyoutdoors.com



↓ GHG Pro Grade XD Full-Body Canada



SHELLS

Winchester Blind Side

- Unique hex steel shot for more pellets per load
- 1,400 feet per second
- 12 and 20 gauges available
- Shot sizes from BB to No. 6
- From \$204 per case of 10 boxes

www.winchester.com



Hevi Shot Hevi-Metal

- Dual load packed with steel shot and Hevi Shot
- 1,500 feet per second
- Available in 10, 12 and 20 gauges
- Shot sizes from BBB to No. 6
- \$278.61 for 10-box case, 25 shells each

www.hevishot.com

Federal Black Cloud

- Flitecontrol Flex wad for improved patterns and performance
- 1,500 feet per second
- 40 percent Flitestopper pellets, 60 percent round steel
- Available in 10, 12 and 20 gauges
- Shot sizes from BBB to No. 4
- Starts at \$219.50 per case

www.federalpremium.com



Remington Hypersonic

- 1,700 feet per second, the fastest waterfowl load available
- Excellent knock-down power for fewer crippled birds
- Xelerator wad for tight patterns • Available in 10, 12 and 20 gauges
- Shot sizes from BBB to No. 6 • Starting at \$209.99 per case

www.remington.com





CALLS

Duck Commander Flash Mallard Hen

- Crisp sound creates smooth cadences
- Short barrel
- Modified from the Pro Series reed system
- Easy to blow
- Duck Commander signature double-reed, friction-fit system
- Jase Robertson Pro Series reed design
- MSRP is \$34.99

www.duckcommander.com

Buck Gardner Double-Cross Short Barrel Poly Mallard Call

- Spit-Tech toneboard design won't stick, even when the call is wet
- Shorter barrel allows for better air control
- Each call is hand-tuned and tested
- Double reed
- Also available in diamondwood and acrylic
- MSRP is \$25

www.buckgardner.com

Zink Long Neck Rocker

- Versatile for multiple Canada goose species
- Short reed
- Worn-in tone channel
- Acrylic and wood available
- Available in multiple colors
- Includes extra reeds, hard case, leg band and instructional DVD
- MSRP is \$160

www.zinkcalls.com

↓ Buck Gardner
Double-Cross



↓ Banded Red Zone 2.0



↑ Duck Commander Flash

↓ Zink Long Neck Rocker

WADERS

Banded Red Zone 2.0 Breathables

- CLINCHFIT strap system with over-the-boot, removable protective pant
- 1600 gram Thinsulate Insulated Boot
- Mobility-enhancing articulated knee design allows maximum range of motion
- Fleece-lined hand-warmer
- Internal flip-up device pocket allows touch screen use while enclosed
- 900D Reinforced Knee for maximum durability
- MSRP: Uninsulated \$329.99; Insulated \$359.99

www.banded.com



↑ Drake Eqwader MST

↓ Hard Core Finisher

Drake Eqwader MST Neoprene

- HD2 Hydro-Flex knees
- No-buckle shoulder straps
- Large front cargo pocket, vertical call pocket
- Waterproof wallet/key pocket
- High sides for less spillover
- Horizontal shell loops
- MSRP is \$299.99

www.drakewaterfowl.com

Drake Guardian Elite Breathables

- Tear-away insulated liner
- Removable protective outer camo bib
- Buckshot mudder boot
- Vertical call pocket, vertical waterproof pocket
- Large front cargo pouch
- Against-the-body handwarmer
- Articulated knees with Hydro-Flex
- MSRP is \$499.99

www.drakewaterfowl.com

→ Hard Core Breathable



→ Drake Guardian Elite Breathables



Hard Core Finisher Neoprene

- 5mm neoprene
- Reinforced Dura Span knee and shin guards
- 900 denier coated nylon butt and leg pad
- Three accessory D rings
- Two zippered pockets
- EZ access neoprene shell holders
- MSRP is \$299.99

www.hardcore-brands.com

Hard Core Breathables

- 4-Ply High Density Polyester Shell with Single Seam Crotch
- 120 Gram Removable Poly-Quilted, Insulated Washable Liner
- Dura-Span/Neoprene Reinforced Knee and Shin Guards
- 900 Denier Coated Nylon HD Butt and Leg Pad
- 3-N-1 BAP pocket system with zippered pass through pocket, zippered storage pocket and hook and loop storage pocket
- Exterior Shell Loops
- MSRP is \$299.95

www.hardcore-brands.com





↑ Sitka Delta Zip

“Stocking your store with the right waterfowl equipment can lead to a long and prosperous business life.”

Sitka Gear Delta Zip Wader

- Waterproof AquaSeal zipper for easy on/off
- Durable and breathable GORE-TEX Pro laminate
- Warm, lightweight LaCrosse AeroForm insulated boot
- Reinforced shins and knees
- Made in the USA
- 100 percent serviceable by Sitka
- MSRP is \$949

www.sitkagear.com

OTHER GEAR

Avery Marsh Seat

No more squatting on your knees or searching for a place to sit. Avery's marsh seat allows hunters to sit anywhere in comfort. The lightweight stool has retractable sink-proof feet, fluted aluminum tubing and an adjustable and removable carrying strap. The tube extends from 27 to 37 inches so you can sit comfortably in a variety of situations. It weighs just 4 pounds and is foldable for easy, convenient storage. MSRP is \$59.99

www.averyoutdoors.com

↑ Avery Marsh Seat

Drake Stand-Up Decoy Bag

Lugging a few dozen decoys to your favorite spot is a whole lot easier with a bag designed for the job. Drake's large decoy bag holds more than two dozen standard duck decoys and comes with a built-in steel coil spring for easy loading and unloading. It is constructed from heavy-duty, rot-proof polyester and comes with two-inch polyester shoulder straps for comfort. The bag collapses for easy, convenient, off-season storage. MSRP is \$54.99

www.drakewaterfowl.com

↓ Drake Stand-Up Decoy Bag

↓ Avery Floating Blind Bag

Avery Floating Blind Bag

Keep your gear in one place and keep it from falling to the bottom of the lake with Avery's floating blind bag. Built to last a lifetime, this bag is made with metal buckles, an armor-coated bottom and closed-cell foam floatation. The roomy 16x8.5x10 interior compartment holds everything a hunter needs for a full day in the marsh. Interior and exterior pockets add to the storage space. It comes with a shoulder strap and carrying handle. MSRP is \$64.99

www.banded.com

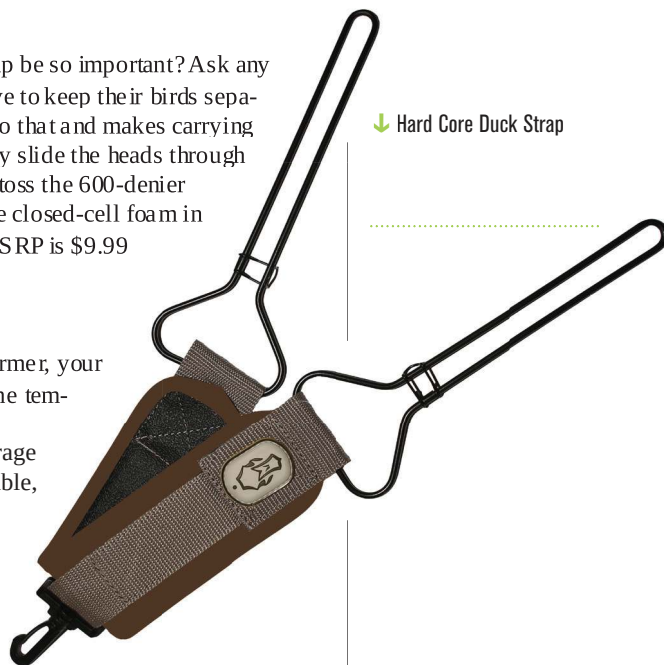
↓ Banded HEAT electric hand warmer

Hard Core Duck Strap

How could a device as simple as a duck strap be so important? Ask any successful duck hunter. Legally, hunters have to keep their birds separate. Hard Core's duck strap helps hunters do that and makes carrying a limit of birds out of the marsh easy. Simply slide the heads through the powder-coated stainless steel loops and toss the 600-denier polyester duck strap over your shoulder. The closed-cell foam in the strap takes the strain off the shoulder. MSRP is \$9.99 www.hardcore-brands.com

Banded HEAT Hand Warmer

Thanks to Banded's HEAT electric hand warmer, your hands will stay toasty, no matter how cold the temperature. The battery-powered, fleece-lined gram, Primaloft-insulated warmer has a storage pocket with an iPhone charging cable, eight shell loops and a zippered rear storage compartment. Say goodbye to numb fingers and missed shots. MSRP is \$119.99 www.banded.com



↓ Hard Core Duck Strap

Rig 'Em Right Step-Up Jerk Cord

Bring lifeless decoy spreads to life with Rig 'Em Right's Step-Up jerk cord system. It's a great option where battery-powered motion decoys are illegal or just to any spread. It comes with custom-designed swivels for attaching four decoys, 100 feet of line, a heavy-duty string winder, a floating stuff sack and a 1.5-pound floating anchor. MSRP is \$39.99. www.rigemright.com **HR**

↓ Rig 'Em Right Step-Up



PRO STAFF David Hart is a full-time freelance writer from southern Virginia. He is an avid hunter who has chased waterfowl, big game and predators across much of North America.





HUNTING APPAREL FOR 2019

Here's what's new and trending in clothing and boots — and how to sell it.

BY BRIAN MCCOMBIE

Take even the quickest glance at the new hunting apparel for 2019 and it's obvious

the high-tech trend is here to stay. You'll find new materials; different, more ergonomic designs; and clothing that can do everything from keeping us warm and dry to deadening human odors and even warding off insects! Much of the new clothing focus, too, is on the active hunter, giving him or her protection from extreme elements and the ability to change up on the fly.

Of course, standard cotton clothing in basic camouflage patterns will always be popular; the smart independent retailer will always stock some. But the tech trend in outdoor clothing that started over a decade ago is still pushing the apparel envelope.

For example, at the 2019 SHOT Show, SITKA Gear debuted its all-new Women's Waterfowl System. Tailored specifically for female hunters, the new Women's Waterfowl System combines moisture-wicking base layer pieces and form-fitting polyester blends with a GORE-TEX laminate.

NOMAD, meanwhile, has launched its all-new Cottonwood line of outer wear and base layers. The Cottonwood outerwear features a facing

layer of very quiet Berber fleece over a windproof membrane, with amenities like articulated sleeves for easier movement and strategic venting to keep a hunter cool when needed.

And ScentLok, creator of the original Scent Blocker technology, has incorporated its ScentLok Carbon Alloy odor-adsorbing technology into one of its new lines of hunting clothing, combining it with a new No-Sheen fabric to reduce visibility in the field.

Also, 2019 offerings include options for casual wear around the hunting camp.



“The tech trend in outdoor clothing that started over a decade ago is still pushing the apparel envelope.”

↓ Blocker SHIELD Series
Drencher Jacket

Among the new-for-2019 hunting apparel products you might consider:

Blocker Outdoors

www.blockeroutdoors.com

Parent company of several outdoor apparel brands, Blocker Outdoors turned 40 this year, and part of the b-day celebration was the launch of the ScentBlocker Cold Fusion Adrenaline Catalyst line. After years of development, Blocker Outdoors learned how to combine the power of activated carbon with the benefits of Merino wool. This one-two punch delivers quiet, comfortable gear that's effective in reducing and preventing odors. The Merino blend yields excellent warmth, even when wet.

The Scent Blocker Cold Fusion line includes jacket and pants, with more offerings to come.

Blocker Outdoors' all-new SHIELD Series is a massive new collection of high quality, affordable clothing, very effective in the field and featuring the company's exclusive S3 technology. One line in this collection is the Shield Series Drencher apparel, a mid-to-late-season solution for hunters who demand waterproof performance. Proven S3 antimicrobial technology is built into the structure of the garment and won't wash away, providing odor prevention over the life of the garment. Ultra-quiet, soft to the touch, quick-drying and durable, Drencher is also very comfortable due to its slight stretch.

The versatile Drencher series includes a Jacket, Pant, Insulated Jacket and Insulated Bib.



For Deer Camp

Walls (www.walls.com) has actually moved away from the hunting apparel market. Yet, true to the company's work and outdoors focus, many items in the 2019 Walls lineup are perfect for casual wear around hunting camp.

Nothing says “deer camp” quite like Walls' new Thurber Vintage Plaid Shir (top right), a casual-looking flannel with a relaxed fit, double needle stitching for durability, adjustable cuffs, and extended body length.

Walls' DitchDigger Pants will also look right at home in camp – or in the field, for that matter. Made of durable brushed duck cotton, Ditch Diggers feature a relaxed fit and Walls' Smooth Move Waistband and articulated knees. And, they are water repellent.

The new Heavy Weight Bonded Jac Shirt (bottom photo above) sports 100 percent cotton-brushed flannel bonded to polyester Sherpa for lightweight warmth in those cooler fall mornings and evenings. Features include an adjustable cuff, front patch pockets, and hand warmer pockets.

Who says you have to wear camo all day at hunting camp?





← Blocker SHIELD SOLA
Arctic Weight Top, for women

→ Guide Gear Defy



← Blocker SHIELD SOLA
Arctic Weight bottom, for women

Blocker's new SHIELD Series SOLA Arctic Weight Top and Bottom are designed for the female hunter and promise ultra-comfort. An exclusive high-loft, super-brush fleece provides the warmth, comfort and mobility needed when layering, while Blocker's S3 technology helps control odors, even after long hikes.



Guide Gear

www.sportsmansguide.com

Guide Gear introduces its line of Performance Hunting Shirts with Defy Technology. These shirts are built around technologies that defy heat, scent, insects and sun.

The Defy Heat hi-tech, for example, helps to regulate a hunter's body temperature and is built into the yarn of the fabric, so it won't fade or diminish over time. Defy Scent helps to suppress body odors, while Defy Sun provides UPF 50+ sun protection.

The Defy line is sold in long-sleeve shirts, long sleeve with a quarter-zip, a short sleeve version and are patterned in Mossy Oak Break-Up Country.

NOMAD

nomadoutdoor.com

Nomad's new Cottonwood Collection is especially suited to the bow hunter on the stand and exposed to the elements — though, of course, rifle hunters can appreciate what the new line offers, too.

For the Cottonwood Collection, Nomad took

→ Nomad Cottonwood Jacket



Berber fleece and backed it with a windproof membrane. The Berber of the ½ Zip Jacket and pants is warm and doesn't make noise when brushed against trees or rustle when a hunter draws back their bow. The underlying membrane blocks out the wind. The Cottonwood base layers feature a heavy-pile layer to enhance fit and improve layering for warmth.

The EmmaGrab waistband on the Cottonwood Pants keep the pants in place; the ½ Zip Jacket has many well-thought-out features like articulated sleeves for ease of movement and a drawcord cinch along the bottom hem to keep out wind.

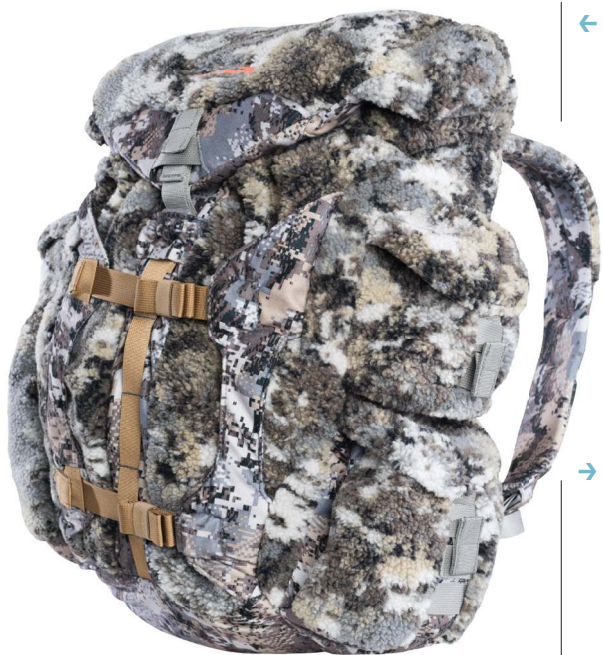
SITKA

www.sitkagear.com

Sitka's all-new Fanatic System is all about the science of "silent hunting." To that end, the Fanatic line is constructed with ultra-quiet fabrics along with Gore-Tex Infinium with Windstopper Technology. Pockets were relocated to reduce bulk. Zippers were updated for noise reduction when layering or venting. Also, a patent-pending Constant Connect Safety Harness Port in the jacket

→ Nomad's Cottonwood series is designed to protect bowhunters on stand. Berber fleece with a windproof membrane makes this gear super quiet and warm.





← Sitka Gear Fanatic Pack



→ Sitka Fanatic Jacket



← Sitka Fanatic Bib

allows hunters to easily and quickly adjust layers, while keeping the safety harness tether connected to their tree.

The line includes a jacket, bib and vest, plus a new Fanatic Pack with no exposed plastic parts or buckles, making it the quietest pack Sitka Gear has offered to-date.

Sitka's new Women's Waterfowl System was tailored specifically for female hunters and offers her 13 separate items. Each new product was designed with specific textiles and features that allow hunters to integrate them as a layering system or wear them separately based on weather conditions.

The new product line offers moisture-wicking base layer pieces comprised of form-fitting polyester blends. The Cadence Hoody and Pant featuring water-resistant insulation combined with comfort-stretch fleece, and the Fahrenheit Jacket and Dakota Vest are made with Gore-Tex Infinium with Windstopper Technology for added protection against the elements.

Under Armour Hunting

www.underarmour.com

For 2019, Under Armour (UA) Hunting comes on strong with several new lines of hunting apparel. For the Eastern deer hunter, UA offers the Revenant Parka and

↓ Under Armour Revenant Jacket





→ Under Armour
Revenant Pant

Pant, currently the warmest outerwear system designed by UA in any category. A five-layer, wool-faced, insulation system excels at extreme late-season warmth and quiet movement. Big-game hunters in Western states can outfit with the new Raider Jacket and Pant, early hunt season essentials that thrive down into the 40s and 50s when worn with base layers. Along with all Ridge Reaper Western items, this system focuses on fabric and design innovations to increase speed and silence in the field. UA's Alpine Ops Parka and Pant received a soft launch in 2018, and UA is expanding their marketing presence in 2019. The Alpine Ops garments are go-to kit for warmth when glassing and working around camp. Depending on the hunter, the system can be bought as a midlayer or

sized up as true outerwear. Hip-length zippers on the pants make the 800g down-filled, packable pieces easy to get on and off.

For women, UA offers the Women's UA Latitude Jacket and Grit Bib, a new mid-season system. A continuation on the form-fitting, athletic-focused women's line, both items boast the UA Storm water-resistant finish. The Latitude Jacket is the first women's hunt item to incorporate Sherpa fleece for maximum warmth and comfort. Increased full-draw mobility is built in with a lightweight, four-way stretch woven fabric. Both items come in RR Barren Camo for versatility in sparse foliage, mid-season whitetail woods and Western backcountry.

Selling It

Nice selection, you say, but can the independent retailer actually sell — and profit from — this bounty of high-tech, usually high-dollar hunting apparel?

"We advise all our clients to sell apparel," said Miles Hall, senior advisor at Hall-N-Hall Advisors (hallnhall.com). "You can make really good money selling clothing. But it has its own challenges."

Hall-N-Hall advises independent firearms and outdoors-focused retailers on how to grow and

→ Under Armour Raider
Jacket





improve their bottom lines. And Hall actually knows what it takes to move firearms and related items. He and his wife, Jayne, operated H&H Shooting Sports for over 25 years in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. H&H grew from a small indoor shooting range to a \$25-million-a-year retailer, selling everything from firearms and ammunition to optics, range gear and, yes, hunting apparel.

Based on his experiences, Hall said retailers can expect 30- to 35-percent profit margins on clothing sales.

He added, “But once a store gets settled in with clothing, trains the staff and figures out some best practices? A retailer can see a 50-percent profit margin with apparel.”

Hall’s best advice: Thoroughly train your sales staff so they can tell a customer what exactly one

↑ Under Armour Raider Pant

→ Under Armour Alpine Ops Parka and Pant

“Nice selection, you say, but can the independent retailer actually sell — and profit from — this bounty of high-tech, usually high-dollar hunting apparel?”

line of hunting apparel does that other lines can’t and don’t. Point out the high-tech features of the clothing and how it aids the hunter. Stress the “cool” factor, especially with younger customers.

“You have to get the word out about your apparel, too,” said Hall. “Donate some shirts or a jacket to a local sportsmen’s banquet raffle. Promote your clothing on your store’s social media platforms. Ask the clothing company’s sales rep if they will help pay for advertisements.”

The aforementioned challenges?

“It’s all about floor space,” Hall said. “Apparel needs to be on display, in its own racks, and that takes room. You are also going to need a fitting room. More floor space!”

However, Hall noted, much of the clothing here is seasonal, so a store can pull clothing racks up into high-traffic areas when needed and push them to the rear or disassemble when the season is over.

Independent retailers can also receive some sales help from the apparel companies.



Sitka, for example, is doing a good deal to promote its new Women's Waterfowl System line. According to Theresa Spangler, Sitka's Wholesale Marketing Manager, "Our message here is that the new waterfowl line is 100 percent for women and by women. This message will come to life through in-store fixturing, female mannequins and visual signage."

The fixtures, mannequins and signs will be provided free of cost to Sitka's key dealers.

"We are also investing in associate product knowledge," Spangler added. "Along with new products in the men's waterfowl line, we'll be highlighting the custom features in the women's line through digital training with retail staff."

At Nomad, the plan is to provide key Nomad retailers with special fixtures to bring attention to the apparel. Nomad sales reps will also visit stores and provide staff training.

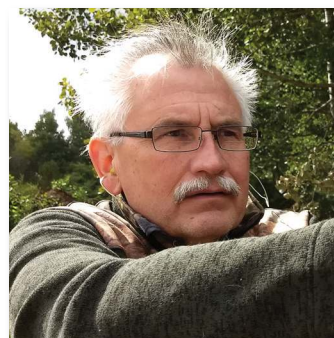
Like most of the apparel companies, Nomad does a good deal of general marketing to get the word out on their product lines.

"Social media is a very strong outlet for us," said Drew Herma, Nomad's Vice President of Marketing. "We grow our audiences organically, and our platforms are getting significantly larger every year, thanks to our focus on strong, original content."

Nomad is featured on two different outdoor television hunting programs, produces and promotes its own videos and advertises in major outdoor and hunting publications, both in print and digital.

The independent retailer would also do well to ask their apparel sales representatives for things like display apparel, a few extra shirts and jackets to donate to the above-mentioned sportsmen's banquet raffles, plus brochures and point-of-sale displays.

"Asking never hurts," Hall noted. "Many retailers don't ask because they don't want to be seen as pushy. But that's what your sales rep are there for. So, ask!" **HR**



PRO STAFF -

When he's not hunting, Brian McCombie writes about hunting and firearms for a wide variety of publications, print and digital, from his home in Wisconsin. In particular, he's a huge fan of AR-style rifles and 1911s.





HUNTING RETAILER

GEAR ROUNDUP:

HIDE & SEEK

BY MIKE SCHOBLASKA



1 TREE THRASHER | Call

The Tree Thrasher is a lightweight call that replicates three unique sounds related to deer activity. It opens up like an accordion, with a noisy cloth interior that sounds like rustling leaves and walking deer when opened and closed. Three pegs allow the hunter to replicate the sounds of antlers rubbing on trees and saplings. A spring-loaded gear clip can be clicked to sound like snapping branches and twigs and easily attaches to a bow hanger, tree branch, backpack or pocket. The Tree Thrasher's heavy-duty nylon plastic covers are tough and quiet, while the rubber-coated steel spring holds the call together silently when not in use.

2 FLEXTONE | WTF Grunt'R

Developed by Flexitone and Whitetail Freaks, the WTF Grunt'R uses Inflection Chamber Technology to mimic the natural inflection in sounds made by rutting deer. By compressing, expanding or bending the chamber, hunters can instantly change the sound of the call. The chamber can even cut off airflow, creating the sound of an out-of-breath buck. The WTF Grunt'R also has patented Tru-Touch buttons for failure-proof doe and fawn sounds, as well as a durable snort-wheeze chamber. This call can replicate the entire communication between rutting bucks and estrous does.



3 HUNTERS SPECIALTIES | True Talker OG Deer Call

The True Talker OG from Hunters Specialties features a soft rubber exterior for enhanced grip and a rubber sleeve over the bellow/grunt tube that allows for the manipulation of volume, tone and direction of the call sound. Like True Talkers of the past, the OG produces mature buck grunt, young buck grunt, doe bleat and fawn bleat sounds. The True Talker OG also features an improved reed design which not only resists freezing, but produces a fifth sound, an aggressive growl sound for getting the attention of aggressive mature bucks.



4 LUCKY DUCK | Revolt E-Caller

The Lucky Duck Revolt is a remote-controlled, high-output e-caller with motorized decoy, tweeter speaker and a remote-controlled rotational base system that broadcasts sound 360 degrees. The erratic motorized decoy draws predators in close and stores conveniently in the handle. The Revolt has 100 preloaded sounds and can hold up to 2,000 sounds total. The four-channel remote can play different sounds simultaneously on different callers. The Revolt e-caller operates on 10 AA batteries and the remote operates on three AA batteries.



5 CODE BLUE | Doe Estrous

Doe Estrous

Code Blue's Doe Estrous urine is collected from an individual deer and guaranteed to be 100 percent pure. Since bucks can only trail one deer at a time, From One Deer to One Bottle collection provides unmatched true-to-life effectiveness that rutting bucks can't resist. The amber glass bottle locks in freshness and potency and is labeled with the deer's unique registration number.



6 ROCKY MOUNTAIN HUNTING CALLS | Rogue Bugle Tube

Rogue Bugle Tube

The Rogue Bugle Tube from Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls was designed by World Champion elk caller Rockie Jacobsen for Steve Chappell, host of Elk Camp TV. The Rogue has a blow molded tube that is 17.5 inches long with a large chamber to create extra realistic calls. The V.E.T.T. mouthpiece utilizes a tuned coil spring that helps create more volume, stabilize higher notes and maintain high pitches, and it takes less air pressure to operate. The Rogue also has an internal Tube Tamer to eliminate plastic vibration sounds. The Rogue has a King's Camo Cover for concealment and a lanyard for easy carrying in the mountains.





7 PRIMOS | Dogg Net

The Dogg Net system from Primos consists of three e-callers and a decoy that can be wirelessly paired to work together or run separately, controlled by a single remote. The e-callers in the Dogg Net system, Triple Dogg, Horn Dogg and Top Dogg deliver sounds in all directions at levels up to 95 dB, 100 dB and 110 dB, respectively. The Triple Dogg comes preloaded with 75 sounds, the Horn Dogg is preloaded with 100 sounds and the Top Dogg has 150 sounds. The Wireless Sit N Spin decoy attaches to all three e-callers and imitates an injured and panicking critter with stop-and-go movement and realistic fur. The Dogg Net system is controlled by the Dogg Caller remote that runs for 40 hours on three AA batteries, with four customizable Hot Buttons to activate most-used commands and full color screen display with night mode.



11 TREE STAND BUDDY | Starter Kit

The Tree Stand Buddy Starter Kit includes all the hardware needed to attach the stand bracket to single bar/post or double bar/post hang-on treestands, now with ratchet straps. Designed for added safety and protection, the Tree Stand Buddy offers a convenient way to set up a tree stand with a bracket that attaches to the stand and a receiver that attaches to the tree. The Tree Stand Buddy allows for easily moving a single stand between multiple locations. The Tree Stand Buddy Starter Kit weighs 14 pounds.



8 HAWK | Helium Pro Hang-On

The Helium Pro Hang-On stand from Hawk weighs 12 pounds and is built from lightweight aluminum. The Helium Pro features a 3-inch-thick, 10-inch by 16-inch pressure-relieving Hawk memory foam seat. The Helium Pro platform design is welded at all contact points and features an adjustable footrest and self-lubricating Teflon washers between metal-to-metal contact points to help reduce noise. Stability comes standard with the included Tree-Digger Teeth to bite and grip bark, and the Helium Pro is compatible with the Hawk Cruz Bracket to making hanging the stand safe, quick and easy. The Helium Pro includes a 1-inch cinch strap with silent overmolding and backpack straps, as well as a full-body harness.



9 SUMMIT | Featherweight Switch Hang-On Stand

The aluminum Summit Featherweight Switch Hang-On stand weighs only 17 pounds but holds 300 pounds. The Featherweight Switch comes equipped with a comfortable and quiet 2.75-inch-thick padded seat and features a large, adjustable platform that measures 28 inches by 23 inches wide. The included Switch Receiver allows the Featherweight Switch to easily be moved from tree to tree. Simply attached the Switch Receiver at the desired height to a tree measuring between 8 and 20 inches in diameter and insert the metal tongue on the Featherweight Switch into the receiver. Hunters can buy multiple Switch Receivers to have pre-installed on trees in different locations or use them as an anti-theft measure by taking the stand and leaving the Switch Receiver in the tree for the next hunt.



10 FAMILY TRADITION | HD/HO Lock-On Stand

The HD/HO Lock-On Stand from Family Tradition Treestands is built with galvanized tubular steel for strength that's powder coated for added rust resistance. The nylon webbed flip-up seat measures 20 inches wide by 13.25 inches deep, while a large footrest is welded to the standing platform for extra comfort on long sits. The HD/HO Lock-On Stand features two 1,900-pound working load rubber sleeved chains that support the standing platform and comes with a T-handle screw to hold the stand in place with a notch on the brace while attaching the 3,300-pound breaking strength camo ratchet straps. The HD/HO Lock-On Stand weighs 19 pounds and can accommodate hunters up to 300 pounds.

12 PRIMOS | Double Bull Deluxe GO Blind

The Double Bull Deluxe GO blind from Primos comes with a new and improved system for packing and carrying, the easy pack and go carry system. This carry system wraps around the blind once it's folded up, with a mesh pocket at the bottom and three adjustable buckles to keep everything together. The Deluxe GO features a zipper-less double wide door for silent entry and exit. Additional features include a 180-degree full front view window with Silent Slide window closure, Truth Camo specifically designed to hide ground blinds in any terrain and the patented Double Bull hub system. The Deluxe GO measures 77 inches hub to hub, 70 inches tall and has a floor space of 60 inches by 60 inches.

13 STACKED OUTDOORS | Ladder Sticks

Lightweight and packable, Ladder Sticks from Stacked Outdoors are made from a custom plastic polymer designed specifically to hold weight without flexing. The solid one-piece design has no moving parts, welds or weak points. Ladder Sticks nest perfectly together and weigh only 9.4 pounds for a full stack of four. With long tree straps and high-grip foot pads, the Ladder Sticks can accommodate big trees and big winter boots. Treated with a UV-inhibitor to have no shine in the field, the Ladder Sticks are dull and will not give away a hunter's location through glare or shine. Each step is 21 inches long with 17.25 inches between steps.





14 REDNECK OUTDOORS |

Big Country 6x7 Platinum Blind

The Big Country 6x7 Platinum Blind from Redneck Outdoors is the king of all Redneck blinds, with 46-inch tall vertical windows and large oversized horizontal windows and roomy interior. With an interior measuring 84 inches by 70 inches wide and 80 inches tall, there is plenty of room for three or four adults. The Big Country 6x7 is made from long-lasting fiberglass with a durable gel-coat finish and features a 2-inch roof overhang to help keep rain off the windows. The spray foam covered ceiling, acoustical covered upper and lower walls and a high-density foam floor covered with high quality marine carpet provide sound control and insulation. Large tinted, tempered automotive-glass windows with whisper-quiet hinges provide a clear view of the surroundings. The blind also features automotive window and door gaskets to keep scent in, a green LED light to provide visibility inside the blind and a locking door handle.



15 AMERISTEP |

Caretaker Kick Out Blind

The Caretaker Kick Out blind from Ameristep has a unique natural shape on the top and sides with dual bottom kick outs and Realtree Edge camouflage to blend into any surroundings. The kick outs also provide more floor space for additional gear. The Caretaker Kick Out features a tension-relief zipper design for easier setup and take down, shoot-through mesh windows with single-hook design for silent opening and closing and heavy-duty fabric shell that holds up to the elements and helps conceal odors. The Caretaker Kick Out has a 65-inch by 55-inch footprint, 69-inch shooting width, 66-inch ceiling and weighs 15 pounds.



16 SUMMIT |

Viper 4P Ground Blind

The Summit Viper 4P Ground Blind has room for four hunters, with a 74-inch ceiling and 82-inch shooting width. The windows of the Viper 4P features TruView panels which perfectly match the blind's camouflage, but allow for an unobstructed, near 360-degree view from inside. The panels silently adjust up and down the integrated tracks of the Split Silent Slide system, while the Hush Silent Hatch hinged doorway system enables stealthy entry/exit without using a zipper. The Viper features the Snap Wrap carry system, a durable nylon sheet that securely holds the folded blind during transport and doubles as an in-blind gear organizer during the hunt. The Viper 4P weighs 20 pounds and has a footprint of 66 inches by 66 inches.



17 MILLENNIUM TREE STANDS |

L366 Revolution Ladder Stand

The Millennium L366 Revolution Ladder Stand features a 360-degree seat swivel design that allows hunters a complete view of their surroundings. The ladder sections bolt together with knobs which adds strength and keeps things quiet and lifts the stand 18 feet off the ground. The L366 Revolution features steel construction with a powder coat finish for strength and durability, a padded shooting rail and camouflage skirt with gear pockets. The seat of the L366 Revolution lifts up for added room while standing. The L366 Revolution is compatible with all Revolution accessories made by Millennium.



18 MUDDY |

Odyssey XTL Ladder Stand

The 20-foot Odyssey XTL ladder stand from Muddy offers heavy-duty construction and comes equipped with 1-inch-thick padded armrests and a 1-inch-thick padded adjustable shooting rail that can be flipped back for an open shooting lane. Additional features include the new lumbar support style Flex-Tek zero gravity seat and the Tree-Lok system that allows users to secure the stand to the tree from the ground before climbing the ladder. The Odyssey XTL also includes orange nylon washers, spacers and caps for silence, a drink holder and two additional accessory hooks to stay organized. The Odyssey XTL weighs 75 pounds and measure 20 feet tall at the shooting rail.

19 SCENTBLASTER |

Starter Plus Kit

The ScentBlaster Starter Plus Kit includes one ScentBlaster unit, a six-pack of ScentBlaster Wick and an additional Scent Container which allows the user to quickly swap from one scent to another. The ScentBlaster Wicks absorb scent from the two-ounce reservoir and stay wet for three days or more depending on weather conditions. Hunters can easily fill, change and store different scents in the removable and interchangeable Scent Containers. A small, silent fan produces constant air flow over the wick for improved scent distribution on windless days. ScentBlaster can be used with any brand of cover or attractant scent.



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EDUCATE CUSTOMERS ON HIGH-TECH TOOLS

Technology is changing the way we hunt. You can use this to your advantage to sell your customers the latest and greatest, but they might need to be introduced to some of the newer technologies.

BY MICHAEL D. FAW

It's a fact that many consumers today welcome, understand and readily use technology — and it's no different among hunters and outdoors enthusiasts. Thanks to the increased acceptance and use of computers, smart phones, voice-activated home assistants and other digital-age products, hunters everywhere have been exposed to weather apps, Facebook, Instagram, video messaging, YouTube, mapping programs, ballistic calculators, FitBits, GPS, mapping software, rangefinders built inside of spotting scopes and riflescopes and a large number of other high-tech tools for hunting.

Today's hunters often have more information at their fingertips than did early NASA astronauts.

Are you introducing your customers to technology and closing the deal?

Making the Pitch

Selling rifles and hunting clothing is a different task than selling high-tech gear. With products like clothing, the consumer can handle the product and imagine what they would look like while wearing that garment. Not much interaction here.

For high-tech gear like a GPS, two-way radios, action cams, or cutting-edge rangefinder riflescopes and spotting scopes, you and your sales team will need to solve a problem for the customer or otherwise make their life easier instead of simply tossing out tech terms that could be over their



WHERE ART THOU?

Global positioning systems (GPS) were once only offered in bulky brick-size hand-held units, but now your location details are available in smartphones, tablets and even some smart watches and fitness wearables. Handheld GPS units still rule with most outdoors users and hunters and are frequently used for navigating, tracking trips, tagging photo locations, and powering hundreds of map-driven apps. Today, handheld GPS units are available in a variety of sizes, designs and functionalities. The better ones for hunters have maps installed – or they can be downloaded to the unit using an app like onX Hunt (www.onxmaps.com). The great news is some maps and units show property lines with the precision a surveyor would envy.



The Garmin GPSMAP 64s has a crisp color screen for map viewing, finds satellites quickly and provides precise data for boundary details. It provides 8GB of internal data storage, and MSRP is around \$200. This company offers nearly a dozen GPS units at various price points and with many features. Most are easy to learn and use. Yes, you can get a unit to track your dog while in the field and hunting. www.garmin.com

DeLorme inReachSE+ GPS will transmit messages in an emergency and has an easy-to-follow screen guide. It also has an emergency SOS button. The user must purchase a monthly plan. MSRP is around \$400. www.garmin.com



Garmin EPIX is a wrist-watch style GPS with 1.5-inch wide screen that provides color maps, altitude info, and 8BG so you can upload maps. Connect IQ feature permits loading apps and other choices. Can provide maps through a satellite subscription. MSRP \$550.

Whistle 3 Pet GPS permits tracking of pet movement and locate assistance. You can set up a perimeter in your yard with a monthly plan and required phone app. It has nationwide pet tracking if the phone plan is purchased and can operate up to seven days on one charge. The hunting implications are obvious. MSRP \$100; www.whistle.com.





“Place the tech in their hands and be down to earth in your comments, and then work to help the customer learn about the product’s benefits.”

head. Place the gear in their hands and be down to earth in your comments, and then work to help the customer learn about the product’s benefits. While discussing is often done at a beginner’s level, the hands-on product experience and seeing the results in action are the steps that can make the customer move to the acceptance and buyer stages. You and your employees should be able to navigate the screens and icons, push buttons and activate key features, and then guide the customer through the many features of the item.

For example, don’t just discuss how to open a map or reach a send mode, but show your customer the many features, how they work and the benefits they provide. Place the product in the customer’s hands and let them experience the items. Be prepared, however, for the customer who knows more about the product than you. Use the customer’s information and insight as a learning experience when that happens — and thank them.

Listen to the Customer

Customers reveal important information — if you listen. Let them talk, then simply ask questions and

learn what level the customer is at with technology. Some customers can operate high-tech gear with ease or have read or heard about the gear and the basic features, but others will need a full presentation and deep-dive show-and-tell session. Showing videos on a laptop, or showing the quick-tip operation sheets that many manufacturers include in the packaging, can help customers see the benefits. Let them see and imagine it on their hunting property, much like a car salesman describes how the customer would look and feel behind the wheel of a car.

To better serve customers, you and your sales staff can create effective ways to communicate. One route is to ask the rep who sold the item to your business to give demos to you and your employees, or go to the manufacturer’s website for a tutorial, or search YouTube and other sources to learn how an item operates and what it does. If necessary, create a cheat sheet of the features and how to operate the gear so your employees can consult the info and be prepared for demos to customers. If an interested customer sees you struggling to explain or operate an item, they’ll begin to

↓ Nearly every hunter these days carries a rangefinder. Are you stocking a good selection?



move away from the buying mode or decrease their interest level.

One proven top tactic to educate and motivate customers is to hold in-store seminars. Loop-to-loop videos or instructional CDs on the product can also help educate customers if an item is very cutting-edge. Most manufacturers of new technology also invest in DVDs or YouTube shows that demonstrate the item and cover the benefits and features. Find those and use them to train staff and to educate customers. Asking the right questions can help you determine whether the customer needs education or is knowledgeable and only needs to be handed the unit.

Expect lots of questions and be prepared to provide answers. Shoppers seek technology, so if you help the customer, and then that customer tells friends about the tech gear you have available, those customers then want it, and your store can soon be seen as a source and local expert. Word of mouth and knowledge are powerful sales tools. Remember that tech users have and regularly use computers, tablets and smartphones, and those are great channels to reach those customers with your messaging about products and services. Post new tech gear arrivals in your store on Facebook and Instagram, and you might realize what other stores have discovered — customers could come through the front door within 10 minutes. Use pictures and videos to help spread the word. Today's shoppers are visually oriented.

You can also increase sales by putting tech gear on display. A kiosk with GPS units, action cameras, rangefinders, radios and other gear serves customers, but also conveys the message that your store is forward-thinking, embraces technology and is here to serve.

Customers look for sensory experiences when shopping for tech gear. You could set up a way-point trail around your store and parking lot that can be followed with a hand-held GPS, or have items hidden around a site that can be viewed through a riflescope or rangefinder, and then have the customer guess the distance before it is revealed via a rangefinder in the riflescope or spotting scope. Again, make the experience interactive and not static.

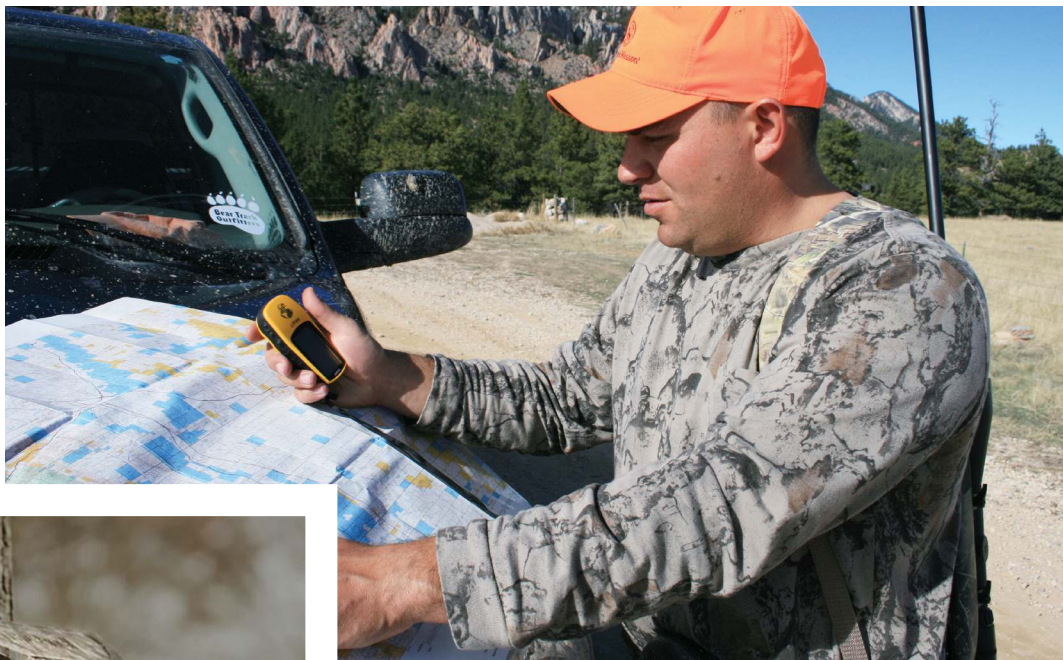
Smart retailers also offer batteries, carrying





→ Many hunters combine tech gear with maps when hunting in new areas. Sell both!

↓ Bushnell Impulse Camera



→ CuddeLink Cell-Power House IR Flash

cases and protective covers, cleaning kits for optics, and displays such as a weather station with outside gauges in operation. There are profits in accessories for tech gear much like firearms accessories.

Promote the Point

Technology is entering more and more categories. The one thing much of this gear has in common is a need for power. Whether the devices use batteries, can be plugged in to recharge, or both, you need to be prepared. Have demo units charged and ready for customer interaction. Remember to stock and sell power cords, charging devices and batteries. Even keeping external battery packs on display is not a bad idea. For the more expensive items, remember to secure those, especially the smaller ones, to the display with lock and cable to secure against theft.

High-tech gear has become so popular and sought out — like those expensive Apple phones that cause long lines when they are being released at midnight — that it's as if consumers can't get enough or want to be among the first to own. Embrace the hype, use it to your selling strategy advantage, and then help customers shop.

“Customers reveal important information — if you listen.”



Stores can create displays of high-tech gear together in one location to attract more shopper attention. Just be certain to include touch points. These products are designed for activation and reaction, beyond just holding a box or seeing a picture.

Top Tech Gear to Tout

Many of the useful items hunters have used in the past are still around, but have incorporated numerous high-tech upgrades. These include:

1 Motorola T605 H20: This two-way handheld-radio will range up to 35 miles, operates about 24 hours on a charge, and has a built-in flashlight plus NOAA weather alert mode. Kit includes two radios, carrying case, chargers and more. MSRP is \$150;

www.motorolasolutions.com

2 Bushnell Impulse Trail Camera: This camera features ultra-fast dual processors that work simultaneously to take 1 picture per second, plus it can provide weather and wind data at the site. This camera has a GPS anti-theft alert that lets you know if it is being moved, and it delivers live camera views to your phone via AT&T or Verizon cellular options. Other features are a leveling arm, Bluetooth connectivity and it has 32MB storage. It will accept solar panel charging applications. It's cloaked in Mossy Oak Bottomland camo, and MSRP is \$355;

www.bushnell.com

3 GoPro Hero 7 Black: This small camera permits livestreaming from the site, has stabilization built in, and offers Time Warp video so you can upload video faster. If you sell these, include the mounts for a firearm or onto a cap and the waterproof boxes. MSRP is \$400;

www.gopro.com

4 Bushnell Nitro Rangefinder: The Nitro uses 6X magnification and can range distances up to 1 mile away, plus it offers a bow or rifle mode. Info provided includes bullet drop and hold-over details from 100 to 800 yards. It has an easy-to-see LCD display, and the unit can be easily moved through modes — brush, scan and bull's-eye. The exterior glass with EXO Barrier coating is water-, fog-, dust- and debris-resistant. This unit is compact and lightweight. MSRP is \$350;

www.bushnell.com

5 Swarovski's dS Smart digital riflescope: This top-of-the-line scope pinpoints the correct aiming point, reports distance to target and provides ballis-



↑ Let them record the action with this GoPro Hero 7 in black.



↑ Swarovski's new dS Smart Digital riflescope



↑ Ozonics HR-230 scent elimination system

tic data in a heads-up display inside the rifle-scope. The info appears as an illuminated red horizontal line inside the view. Scope requires networking with a phone to custom upload ballistic data for your rifle. MSRP is \$5,000;

www.swarovskioptik.com

6 Moultrie's Mobile Trail Camera: This camera can send images from the field or forest to your phone via links through an affordable phone plan — starts at \$10 a month. The camera can record and send video, and users must have a computer with an online account or Moultrie Mobile App installed on a phone or tablet to receive the images. MSRP is \$180;

www.moultriefeeders.com

7 Caldwell Wind Wizard II: This is a handheld device for determining exact wind speeds that are then also used to calculate the trajectory of a bullet or arrow. The Wind Wizard can be used along with a ballistic calculator to increase your accuracy, plus it provides windchill info.

MSRP is \$35;

www.bti.com

8 CuddeLink Cell: This technology permits checking up to 16 trail cameras using only one cellular plan starting at \$15 per month. This game camera can relay images from camera to camera allowing you to cover 1,000s of acres and reach places that typical cell cameras can't. More details at

www.cuddeback.com

9 Ozonics HR-230: This scent elimination system boasts a redesigned keypad with simplified icons for an improved user experience. DriWash mode "PULSE" technology makes this unit compatible with Ozonics' DriWash Bag. The HR-230 provides silent on/off operation at the touch of a but-

ton and is designed for blind hunting or treestand hunting. A battery indicator shows current battery life left. MSRP is \$400;

www.ozonicsshooting.com

10 Kestrel 5700 Elite Meter with LINK: Ballistic info is built in to this unit, and a unique heads up display (HUD) can provide weather information and is easy to use. Enter firearm info via Bluetooth (LINK) and phone app or computer. It will work in mils for long range or MOA data for hunting applications. MSRP is \$600;

www.kestrelballistics.com

HR



PRO STAFF - Michael D. Faw's written works and images have appeared in most magazines about hunting during the past three decades. In the fall he and his Weimaraner hunt upland birds in numerous states.





HUNTING RETAILER

NEW PRODUCTS



NEXGEN OUTFITTERS WHITETAIL CADDY PACK

The Whitetail Caddy Pack from NexGen Outfitters features 18 total pockets, seven exterior and 11 interior, in addition to a spacious main compartment for a total capacity of 1,950 cubic inches. The Whitetail Caddy Pack is constructed of durable, quiet tricot polyester backed by a water-resistant polyurethane laminate with double-stitched and bound seams. A contoured, ventilated back panel promotes air circulation between your back and the pack. The adjustable waist belt and sternum straps can be stowed away when not needed. The Whitetail Caddy Pack weighs 3 pounds, 15 ounces and is available in Realtree EDGE and Realtree Timber. MSRP: \$99.99. www.nexgenof.com



ALPS OUTDOORZ RENEGADE X COMPRESSION STUFF SACKS

The Alps OutdoorZ Renegade X compression stuff sacks are waterproof and provide a lightweight, small-footprint solution for dry gear storage. Available in four sizes, the Renegade X compression stuff sacks are made of 70D ripstop nylon with a durable waterproof coating and waterproof taped seams. The Renegade X features a roll top with snap buckle enclosure similar to conventional dry bags, plus cinch straps for maximum compression. A special Air Control waterproof breathable bottom fabric allows air to be pushed out while not allowing water in. MSRP: \$29.99 - \$44.99. www.alpsoutdoorz.com



WILDCAMPE INNOVATIONS PEANUT RAGE

Peanut Rage from Wildgame Innovations is a mixture of pulverized peanuts and roasted soybeans that provides up to 20 percent protein to enhance antler growth. The 4-pound bags provide enough protein for multiple deer to benefit from. Effective year-round, Peanut Rage utilizes Airborne Technology to create a long-range scent trail to attract deer to the site. Peanut Rage can be used on the ground and in feeders. MSRP: \$12.99. www.wildgameinnovations.com

TRUGLO STORM G2 BOW SIGHT

The Storm G2 bow sights from Truglo include a new aluminum mounting bracket that ensures maximum durability in all hunting conditions while maintaining the compact geometry of the original design. The Storm G2 is available in a three-pin model for a simplified sight picture and a five-pin model for stretching shooting distance. Both models utilize 0.019-inch-diameter fiber-optic pins and feature a 2-inch-diameter aperture with glow-in-the-dark shooter's ring. The five-pin Storm G2 includes the new Tru-Lite Pro rotary LED sight light, while the three-pin model is compatible with the Tru-Lite Pro, though it is sold separately. Both models are adjustable for left- or right-handed shooters. MSRP: \$28.99 - \$34.99. www.truglo.com



CARBON EXPRESS MAXIMA XRZ ARROW

The Maxima XRZ series arrows from Carbon Express are constructed with Carbon Express's exclusive BackBone technology to offer 360-degree spine consistency. The center section, the Red Zone, utilizes Tri-Spine technology to engineer the arrow to be stiffer, reducing the exaggerated effect of heavy broadhead-tipped arrows. The Maxima XRZ arrows are sorted and matched by weight with +/- 1 grain tolerance, feature launchpad precision nocks, and are available in 150, 250 and 350 spines. MSRP: \$109.99 - \$209.99.

www.feradyne.com



MUZZY ONE BROADHEAD

The Muzzy ONE is a one-piece broadhead milled from a single block of premium stainless steel with a hybrid chisel/cut-on-contact tip and vented blades for consistent penetration and flight. The ONE is a 100-grain broadhead with .046-inch thick blades and a 1.125-inch cutting diameter. Easy to care for, the Muzzy ONE can be sharpened on a flat stone and is available in packs of three as well as a crossbow model. MSRP: \$44.99.

www.feradyne.com



MTM CASE-GARD SHOTSHELL BOX CADDY

The Shotshell Box Caddy from MTM Case-Gard holds four included MTM shell stackers or four 12-gauge 2 3/4-inch cardboard shell boxes. The Shotshell Box Caddy has a high impact design that keeps shells out of the dirt, mud and other elements and comes standard with a straight bar handle for easy full-load carry that offers two 12-gauge shell holders. The Shotshell Box Caddy has enough extra room for holding smartphones or box lids. MSRP: \$14.28. www.mtmcase-gard.com



ELITE VALOR

The Elite Valor features a forged and machined aluminum riser with an upper riser cage for additional rigidity in the riser. The Valor is Elite's answer to archers looking for a sub-\$1,000 bow. The Valor measures 28.75 inches axle to axle with a forgiving 6 13/16-inch brace height and adjustable draw length from 25 to 29.5 inches. With an estimated IBO speed of 329 fps, the Valor is available in peak weights of 50, 60 and 70 pounds, with adjustable let-off from 75 to 90 percent. The Valor comes in Elite's Ninja Black or Realtree Edge camouflage. MSRP: \$749.99. www.elitearchery.com

HHA SPORTS

PRO SERIES TARGET ARCHERY SCOPE

The HHA Sports Pro Series Target Archery Scope has an aluminum housing that accepts a lens system that provides the option for magnification and/or amber colorization for maximum visibility under difficult lighting situations. The Pro Series single-pin scope has a 10/32-inch rod and is available in 1.375-inch- and 1.625-inch-diameter housings. The Pro Series is available with three pin sizes, .010, .019 and .029, with a fully-protected fiber optic system. Each Pro Series Target Archery Scope is available in right- and left-hand versions, with most models compatible with the HHA Blue Burst light with mechanical rheostat. MSRP: \$64.99 - \$114.99. www.hhasports.com



WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER SCENT KILLER GOLD PERSONAL CARE KIT

Wildlife Research Center bundled their odor-fighting formulas into a single package with the Scent Killer Gold Personal Care Kit. The Scent Killer Gold kit includes 12 fluid ounces each of Clothing Spray and Body Wash and Shampoo, 8 fluid ounces of Conditioner, 2.5 ounces of Antiperspirant and Deodorant and 24-count Field Wipes. The Scent Killer Gold Personal Care Kit is perfect for deodorizing and cleaning up, before and after the hunt. MSRP: \$37.99. www.wildlife.com



MOSSBERG 450 BUSHMASTER PATRIOT

The new Patriot Predator and Patriot bolt-action rifles chambered in 450 Bushmaster from Mossberg expand hunting opportunities in areas where straight-walled cartridges are now allowed in previously restricted zones. The Patriot Predator features a free-floating 16.25-inch threaded barrel, FDE synthetic stock and top-mounted Picatinny rail. The Patriot Walnut and Patriot Synthetic sport a 20-inch free-floating threaded barrel, raised cheek piece on the walnut or synthetic stock, and textured stippling on the grip and forend. All three models feature a Lightning Bolt Action user-adjustable trigger with a 2- to 7-pound range of adjustment. MSRP: \$410 - \$542. www.mossberg.com



BARNETT HYPERFLITE CROSSBOW ARROW

HyperFlite small diameter arrows from Barnett are designed specifically for use with the company's Hyper series crossbows. The HyperFlite arrows have a 0.204-inch diameter and straightness of 0.001 inches. The small-diameter HyperFlite arrows are less affected by wind and penetrate game animals better. HyperFlite arrows are 22 inches long and come fletched with 2-inch Blazer vanes in packs of three. HyperFlite arrows are compatible with standard field points and broadheads. MSRP: \$54.99. barnettcrossbows.com

BIG&J LEGIT ATTRACTANT

Legit from Big&J is a mineral product formulated to draw deer in and help aid antler growth at the same time. Legit contains key trace minerals, including a high calcium and phosphorus content that makes up for the deficiency of those minerals in nature to promote antler growth. The supplement also contains an intense apple aroma and flavor. Big&J employs its Smart Nugget manufacturing process to create a product that ensures more consistent mineral content in each nugget of Legit. MSRP: \$12.99 - \$29.99. www.bigandj.com



**BUSHNELL PRIME 1300 RANGEFINDER**

The Prime 1300 from Bushnell allows ranging of reflective targets out to 1,300 yards with 6X magnification and a 24mm objective lens. This rangefinder features Bushnell's exclusive Angle Range Compensation (ARC) with bow and rifle modes as well as scan, bullseye and brush targeting modes. The Prime 1300 is built with an all-glass optical system that also features an enhanced LCD display. The lenses are protected by Bushnell's exclusive EXO Barrier lens coating. MSRP: \$169.99. www.bushnell.com

**BIG FRIG****DENALI PRO 70-QUART COOLER**

The Denali Pro 70-quart cooler from Big Frig has rugged, oversized wheels to make it easy to move across a variety of terrains. The Denali Pro 70 can hold up to 60 pounds of ice and keep ice for more than nine days with a freezer-grade gasket and rubber t-latches. The cooler has a fishing ruler incorporated into the lid and comes with a cutting board that doubles as a compartment separator as well as a basket. Non-slip feet keep the cooler in place, and stainless-steel lock plate bottle openers ensure you're always able to open your beverages. A vacuum release valve button makes it easy to open. Big Frig's Custom Shop can customize any Big Frig cooler with printed graphics to match any customer's lifestyle. MSRP: \$374.99. www.bigfrig.com

**SWAGGER STALKER LITE**

Weighing only 10 ounces, the Swagger Stalker Lite is a rapid-deploy shooting rest with an effective working height of 21 to 36 inches. The Stalker Lite utilizes Flex Ready technology that allows shooters to find a comfortable resting position from any stance on any terrain. No touch adjustments help shooters easily adjust their position and track multiple or moving targets. The Stalker Lite can also be used as an effective rear rest in combination with a bipod for an even steadier shot. MSRP: \$69.99. www.swaggerbipods.com

**RUGER WRANGLER .22 LR SINGLE-ACTION REVOLVER**

Building on the legacy of the Single-Six, Ruger has released the Wrangler single-action revolver chambered in .22 LR. The Wrangler is being offered initially in three Cerakote models, black, silver and bronze, with checkered black grip panels that can be swapped for Single-Six panels. The Wrangler also fits Single-Six holsters that accommodate 4 5/8-inch barrels. The Wrangler features blade front and integral notch rear sights, transfer bar mechanism and loading gate interlock, cold hammer-forged barrel and six-round cylinder. MSRP: \$249. www.ruger.com

HAWKE OPTICS**COMPACT AIRMAX 30 SF RIFlescopes**

The second focal plane Compact Airmax 30 SF riflescopes from Hawke Optics are built of a shortened 30mm main mono-tube with a wide-angle view for maximum vision and shortened eye relief. These scopes have side focus control with infinite parallax adjustment and a three-inch wheel for making focus adjustments with minimal movement. The Airmax 30 SF scopes feature 1/10 MRAD capped, resettable turrets, AMX IR reticles with red illumination and 16-layer fully-multicoated lenses. Three models are available, including the 3-12x40mm, 4-16x44mm and 6-24x50mm. MSRP: \$359 - \$399. www.hawkeoptics.com

**GEAR KEEPER DELUXE INSTRUMENT TETHER**

The updated Deluxe Instrument Tether from Gear Keeper now features a thicker, 3-inch Spectra lanyard that is even more durable than previous models, ideal for valuable and high-end equipment. The Deluxe Instrument Tether is designed for use with gear up to 9 ounces and ideal for small cameras, dog training transmitters and light meters. It supports multiple mounting options including a D-ring or belt loop. The retractor is constructed of stainless steel components and built to operate in extreme environments. MSRP: \$24.99. www.gearkeeper.com

**KESTREL 5700 BALLISTICS WEATHER METER WITH HORNADY 4DOF**

Kestrel Ballistics has partnered with Hornady to launch the Kestrel 5700 Ballistics Weather Meter with Hornady 4DOF, a reliable onsite environmental measurement tool with precise Hornady 4DOF trajectory solutions. The Hornady 4DOF ballistic engine provides trajectory solutions based on projectile Drag Coefficient along with the exact physical modeling of the projectile and its mass and aerodynamic properties. This unit can run for hundreds of hours on a single AA lithium battery and features large buttons and a bright, clear backlit display for easy operation in the field. The Kestrel 5700 Ballistics Weather Meter with Hornady 4DOF is IP-67 waterproof rated and MIL-STD-810 drop-tested. MSRP: \$499. www.hornadykestrel.com



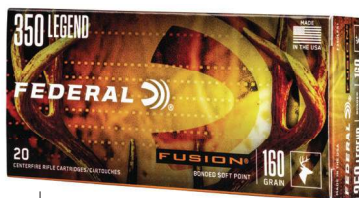


EOTECH VUDU 1-8x24 SFP RIFlescope

The Vudu 1-8x24mm second focal plane riflescope from EOTech is roughly the same length and weight of the 1-6x24mm, but with added magnification. It has true 1x magnification at the lowest setting and a daylight-visible .5-MOA center dot in the BDC reticle for precise aiming in any light conditions. Additional features include push-button illumination, removable throw lever, one-piece eyepiece, one-piece aircraft-grade aluminum 30mm tube and ultra-clear XC HD glass. The Vudu 1-8x24mm also features EZ-Click tactical-style turrets with large, easy to adjust knobs. MSRP: \$1,399. www.vuduoptycs.com

RINEHART WOODLAND SERIES JIMMY BIG TINE TARGET

The Jimmy Big Tine target, part of the Woodland Series from Rinehart, measures 48 inches tall and 40 inches long and features Rinehart's locking antler system that allows the user to easily swap out the factory antlers with antlers of their own. The FX Woodland Foam construction and Signature Series replaceable foam core stop shots from bows and crossbows yet allows for easy arrow removal. The Jimmy Big Tine is resistant to UV rays and harsh weather, providing year-round practice in the backyard or in the field. MSRP: \$219.99. www.rinehart3d.com



FEDERAL 350 LEGEND AMMUNITION

Federal has harnessed the power of 350 Legend in three new loads, Fusion, Power-Shok and Non-Typical. Because 350 Legend is a straight-walled cartridge, it's legal in many areas where bottleneck centerfire rifle cartridges are prohibited. Federal 350 Legend Power-Shok and Non-Typical cartridges feature a 180-grain soft point bullet, while the Fusion 350 Legend line has a 160-grain bonded soft point bullet. MSRP: \$26.95 - \$32.95. federalpremium.com



KENT FASTEEL 2.0 PRECISION PLATED STEEL

Fasteel 2.0 Precision Plated Steel shotshells from Kent use zinc-plated shot and nickel-plated heads to provide added corrosion protection from the elements. The foundation of Fasteel 2.0 is a high-performance base wad that optimizes functionality in modern gas and inertia semi-auto shotguns. Custom blended low-flash powders maximize velocities and manage felt recoil while delivering consistent and reliable performance in any weather conditions. Fasteel 2.0 is available in a variety of shot sizes in 12- and 20-gauge offerings. MSRP: Varies by model. www.kentcartridge.com



HOLLAND'S GAME-GETTER 2.5-15x50 SFP RIFlescope

The Game-Getter 2.5-15x50 SFP Rifle scope from Holland's Shooters Supply features a Fit-To-Hit reticle for instant ranging and firing solutions based on the known target size. The Fit-To-Hit reticle works by measuring the animal from the brisket to the top of the back and indicating which holdover to use based on the known size of the animal. For targets less than 250 yards away, the center dot of the reticle can be used. The Game-Getter has large, easy-to-read numbers on the turrets with left/right indicators on the windage turret to eliminate directional confusion in the heat of the moment. It also features adjustable parallax with a large removable wheel. www.hollandguns.com



GAMO SWARM FUSION 10X GEN2

The Gamo Swarm Fusion 10X Gen2 comes in .177 or .22 and features the 10X Gen2 Quick-Shot System comprised of an easy to load 10-pellet horizontal magazine that allows shooters to shoot 10 shots as fast as they can break the barrel. The Swarm Fusion 10X Gen2 has a thumbhole stock with a prominent pistol grip that provides a solid grip for increased accuracy. Additional features include a Custom Action Trigger, Whisper Fusion sound dampening, SWA recoil pad and open adjustable iron back sight with fiber optic front blade. The Swarm Fusion 10X Gen2 comes with a 3-9x40mm scope and 5-year warranty. MSRP: \$269.99. www.gamoussa.com



Helping New Employees Succeed

Properly equipping your employees for success benefits your business.

BY BOB ROBB

A very long time ago I was hired as a consultant by W.L. Gore and Associates, makers of Gore-Tex, among other products, to help both their manufacturing and retail partners design and sell what was then cutting-edge outdoor clothing in the hunting market. Part of that gig was traveling to retailers, large and small, around the country, teaching sales associates how Gore-Tex and Windstopper actually work and how to sell this new, expensive technology. Along the way I met some really talented sales people and managers. Here are some of the key things they taught me about helping new employees succeed in today's environment.

1 Teaching fundamental retail sales skills, not subjective concepts, is key. Rather than spit worn-out clichés like “The customer is always right,” provide training that gives employees confidence and knowledge. This will translate into confident staff members who feel secure as they interact with customers. Three basic training goals are: a) getting staff knowledgeable enough about the product(s) to comfortably talk about them; b) getting staff comfortable when speaking with strangers; c) understanding the importance of body language.

2 Foundational product knowledge is crucial. Nothing will kill an immediate sale and the customer's opinion of your business faster than sales staff that know little about what you're selling. When that happens, most customers won't tell management about it — they will sim-

ply leave and never return, and then tell their friends. They might even head to the parking lot and immediately start shopping your competitors on their phones. With Gore-Tex, for example, we taught staff the features and benefits of these high-tech products and why paying more for them was a bargain in the long run. We knew that the customer came to the store for this knowledge and for gold-plated customer service. A knowledgeable staff builds rapport with the customer; this rapport helps make the sale, and, hopefully, a repeat customer.

3 Teach communication skills. It doesn't matter if the sales person invented the product — if they can't communicate its features and benefits in a practical manner, they'll never sell it. Millennials, don't take this personally, but in the old days, in school we learned how to speak clearly and concisely without using slang, how to use the proper tone of voice, how to keep eye contact without appearing intimidating, and how to speak without interrupting. Many younger entry-level sales people don't have these skills, and it is up to management to teach them and reinforce their importance. Teaching the importance of listening is also critical. Only by closely listening to what the customer is saying will you know exactly what they're looking for and how to meet those needs — and possibly upselling.

4 Recognize the importance of non-verbal communication. Remember, first impressions matter. Often, it's not what the sales staff says that matters

most, rather, what they don't say and how they act makes all the difference. A part of the training process must address such basic issues as clothing and how to dress professionally, as well as personal appearance expectations. Even if you have uniform shirts, for example, employees need to know the shirt must be clean and pressed, not wrinkly and dirty. Seems basic, doesn't it? By spelling out what clothing is appropriate, potential conflicts are nipped in the bud. Be clear about your store policy on visible tattoos and body piercings. Also, body posture is important. What makes a better first impression: an employee with a smile who greets a customer as they enter the store, or an employee with a scowl who doesn't make eye contact and is busy playing on their phone? Be sure to set policy from the get-go and be prepared to explain why.

5 At work, be professional. As a culture, our interactions with others have become increasingly casual. From how we dress to how we talk to one another, as a society we just don't act as formally as we used to. In sales, it pays to be professional. That means leaving the casual style of dress and speech for after work when you're hanging with your buds, not when you're trying to seal the deal. This is especially important when younger sales staff are interacting with Baby Boomers, to whom respectful interaction is very important. Professional also means being on time. Just last year I went to a big-box hunting retailer whose website said they opened at 9 a.m. There were 10 vehicles in the parking lot waiting for the doors to open, and when they hadn't by 9:15, every one of those customers drove away. I now only shop there when I absolutely have to.

The bottom line? It is a mistake to assume that new hires, most eager to succeed, already know how to dress, act, and sell your product line. It's up to you to teach them. In today's ultra-competitive marketplace, it is the professional sales staff that will keep customers coming through your doors.

How do you train your sales staff? Do you find it difficult to find new hires willing to adapt to your culture? Please drop me a line at editor@grandviewoutdoors.com — I'd love to share your thoughts with others just like you. **HR**



PRO STAFF — Bob Robb has been a full-time outdoor writer since 1978. He's a former staff editor for *Peterson's Hunting* magazine, as well as the former editor of *Western Outdoor News*, *Peterson's Bowhunting*, *Inside Archery*, *Whitetail Journal*, *Predator Xtreme* and *Waterfowl & Retriever* magazines. He's hunted on five continents with both rifles and archery equipment and lived in Alaska for 15 years, where for a time he held an assistant hunting guide's license.

#LETSGOSHOOTING



NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS MONTH. BUILDING NEW, LOYAL CUSTOMERS ONE SHOT AT A TIME.

August is National Shooting Sports Month, and we're calling on shooting ranges, retailers and industry leaders like you to host events nationwide. Coordinate your planned events with ours and we'll add a promotional package to help boost participation. It's a win-win for you and for the future of the sports we love.

SHOOTINGSPORTSMONTH.ORG



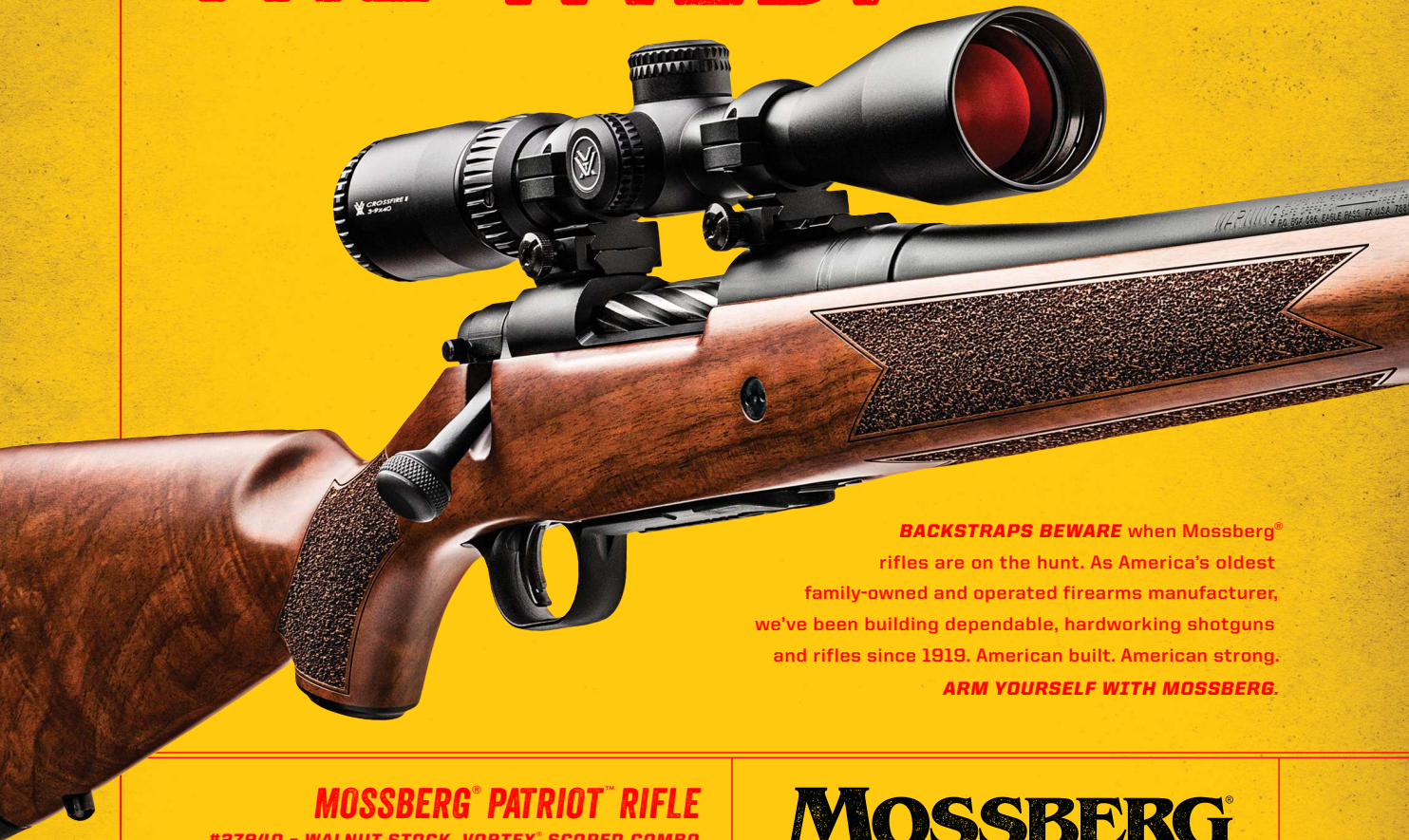
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