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3 Top-Notch
BROADHEADS

Pulsar Rules the Thermal World: Burning Down the Competition

PULSAR

The New Pulsar Thermion XG50 Thermal
Riflescope: Another Industry First!

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SECURE YOUR STORE

Thwart Would-Be Thieves

PUBLIC RELATIONS

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This month's cover brought to you by:



Pulsar XG50 Thermion Rifle Scope: Advanced Industry-First Thermal Imaging

Unprecedented in the consumer thermal industry and exclusively available in the U.S., the new Pulsar Thermion XG50 3-24x42 Thermal Rifle Scope combines BAE 640x480 microbolometer sensor-resolution strength and 12-micron pixel-pitch to deliver exceptionally crisp, high-contrasting imaging, even at higher zoom power and in less than desirable weather conditions, and a heat-signature detection range of 2,400 yards. A true industry first, the feature-rich Thermion XG50's high-resolution 1024x768 AMOLED display, industry-leading BAE sensor, integrated video recording with audio, full imaging color palette, robust array of color and style reticle options, picture-in-picture and ultra-long detection range put this premium thermal imaging optic in a class of its own.

The Thermion XG50's 1024x768 AMOLED display gives users stunning clarity and both step- and continuous-zoom to ensure long-distance detection and identification of varmints, hogs and big-game is easier than ever. While onboard stadiametric rangefinding technology provides distance data for improved accuracy, the Thermion XG50's picture-in-picture feature dramatically enhances precise shot placement in zero-light environments, even at longer distances. Of course, three viewing modes – rock, forest and identification – and Pulsar's proprietary Image Boost Technology further improve the full field of view, wildlife observation, identification and accuracy while further enhancing the fine-detail imaging you want for confident shooting in any environment, any time of day.

Powered by a rechargeable internal battery as well as an APS 2 (included) or APS 3 battery pack and built for your extreme hunting and shooting lifestyle, the IPX7 waterproof-rated Thermion XG50 also boasts a sealed aircraft-grade aluminum housing, precision-ground germanium glass, detachable rubber eyepiece, polycarbonate objective lens cover, pixel repair technology and the stout recoil rating – up to .375 H&H – you have come to expect from Pulsar's array of premium thermal and night-vision optics. For power, the Thermion utilizes rechargeable lithium ion technology in an internal battery as well as an external, removable battery under the top turret cap.

While the Thermion XG50 is packed with features and built to handle off-the-grid adventures in rain, sleet or snow, and from downright freezing to blistering hot temperatures, it also features the user-friendly operator controls users have come to appreciate from Pulsar. The Thermion's turret-style rotating wheel and menu button, as well as four ergonomically placed buttons, are all that are needed to manage system menu options and on-the-fly adjustments like brightness, contrast, step-zoom and more. The XG50 also includes manual display and distance focuses. The XG50 is priced as low as \$6,000.

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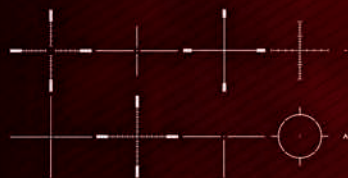
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First-Time Gun Buyers Grow to Nearly 5 Million in 2020

NSSF, the trade association for the firearm industry, updated retail survey-based estimates and concluded that nearly 5 million Americans purchased a firearm for the very first time in 2020 (as of July). NSSF surveyed firearm retailers, which reported that 40% of sales were conducted to purchasers who have never previously owned a firearm.

NSSF tracks the background checks associated with the sale of a firearm based on the FBI's National Instant Background Check System (NICS). NSSF-adjusted NICS checks for January through July 2020 is a record 12.1 million, which is up 71.7% from the

7.1 million NSSF-adjusted NICS January through July 2019. This equates to nearly 5 million first-time gun owners in the first seven months of 2020.

NSSF surveys revealed that 58% of firearm purchases were among African American men and women, the largest increase of any demographic group. Women comprised 40% of first-time gun purchasers. Retailers noted that they are seeing a 95% increase in firearm sales and a 139% increase in ammunition sales over the same period in 2019.

Each month since March, NSSF-adjusted NICS background checks have set a record as the strongest ever recorded for that month.

Colquitt New VP of Sales for Benelli USA

Lee Colquitt is the new Vice President of Sales for Benelli USA.

Colquitt will lead Benelli USA by setting the strategic direction for all sales and channel initiatives within the U.S. market for Benelli, Franchi, Stoeger and Uberti brands.

"We are excited to have Lee join the Benelli USA team," said Benelli USA General Manager Tom DeBolt. "He brings a strong track record of sales leadership and industry knowledge, and we look forward to having his support to move our strategic priorities forward."

Colquitt joins Benelli USA with more than 20 years of combined experience in sales, product development, marketing and merchandising. Previous experience includes development and execution of successful sales strategies for leading firearms, archery and hunting accessories companies. He spent 10 years in the firearms industry, serving in various sales management roles overseeing chain stores, distribution and premium firearms as well as collaborating with channel to develop marketing and merchandising strategies.

Savage Arms Launches Virtual Training Tools

In light of the exceptional circumstances facing traditional sales and distribution channels, Savage Arms has developed the 2020 Fall Sales Training video series to help educate retailers and customers.

The content highlights Savage's technological advancements and will serve as an introduction to new products.

"We were hoping we'd be back to business as usual by now," said Rob Gates, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Savage. "While we won't be able to see many of our customers face-to-face, we can still keep everyone informed on what's happening here at Savage – and that starts with our 2020 Fall Sales Training videos."

The 2020 Fall Sales Training curriculum will cover a range of subjects. Introductory topics will help new customers build a comprehensive overview of the brand and its innovations. The breadth of the catalog will be broken out into segments dedicated to Savage's centerfire rifles, rimfires and shotguns. In addition to announcing new products, these videos will help facilitate person-to-person training sessions and can be passed along to dealer and retailer store staff.

To access the training videos, please contact your local Savage sales representative.

McPherson Named CFO at Smith & Wesson

Deana L. McPherson has been named Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, Treasurer and Assistant Secretary for Smith & Wesson Brands, Inc.

The previously announced transition follows the retirement of Jeffrey D. Buchanan and the completion of the spin-off of the company's outdoor products and accessories business.

"Since joining Smith & Wesson in 2007, Deana has made significant contributions to our company, first in her role as Corporate Controller, and later in key leadership roles that expanded the scope and complexity of her responsibilities," Mark Smith, President and CEO. "Her experience, strong leadership skills, and extensive knowledge of

Smith & Wesson's financial operations make her a tremendous fit for the role of Chief Financial Officer, and her long history with our company will provide a seamless transition."

McPherson joined Smith & Wesson in June 2007 as Corporate Controller, was later promoted to Vice President of Finance and Corporate Controller, and became Chief Accounting Officer in 2017. Her extensive finance and treasury experience with the company includes responsibility for financial reporting and oversight of the company's audit, tax, and banking matters. McPherson has played a key role in Smith & Wesson's longstanding relationship with its lenders, and her work has been instrumental in managing the company's syndicated bank credit facility.

McPherson is a Certified Public Accountant, a Chartered Global Management Accountant, and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Massachusetts Institute of Public Accountants. She earned her BBA in Accounting at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. With more than 25 years as a financial professional, she began her career as a Senior Auditor with Deloitte & Touche LLP.

With the completion of the spin-off of Smith & Wesson's outdoor products and accessories business, Buchanan retires after 15 years of service to the company, including six years as a member of the Board of Directors prior to becoming CFO.



NSSF and USA Join Forces to Mentor New Hunters and Shooters

The Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA) and National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) recently announced a mentor reward program to encourage union members to mentor 1,000 newcomers in hunting, target shooting or firearms safety in 2020.

Through its Hunting Heritage Trust, NSSF awarded the USA a \$20,000 grant to implement the recruitment campaign, backed by NSSF's +ONE Movement messaging, that motivates labor union members to share their knowledge and passion for these activities with someone new this year.

The agreement builds on the success of past partnerships between the two organizations. The 2020 mentoring program is modeled after the successful USA-NSSF Mentoring Rewarded Partnership of 2018, which introduced 1,500 youth and adults to the joys of hunting and shooting.

This year, the USA teamed up with Remington, Thorogood, Carhartt and Buck Knives to provide participating mentors the opportunity to win additional prizes. By posting their mentorship photos

on the USA's Facebook page, mentors encourage others to recruit new hunters and shooters while getting entered for chances to win a \$100 Carhartt

gift card, Thorogood boots, a Remington 870 shotgun and Buck Open Season Skinner for themselves and their mentees.

S3DA Modified Instructor Training Course Now Available Online

Scholastic 3-D Archery currently provides three levels of coach certifications: Basic Instructor, Advanced Instructor and Advanced Instructor Trainer. To become a coach in the S3DA organization, any interested party must attend and complete the Basic Instructor Training Class.

The S3DA Modified Instructor Training Course was specifically designed to bridge the gap and allow anyone with a USA Archery Level 2 or above certification to become an S3DA Basic Instructor without physically attending a Basic Instructor Training class. This modified course costs \$25 and provides coverage on: Chapter 1 (Intro to S3DA), Chapter 3 (Set-up 3-D Range) and Chapter 11 (Pope & Young Clear Path Bowhunting Initiative) of the Basic Instructor Course Manual. It is 100% accessible from the comfort of your own home. **HR**

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10 Phrases to Avoid When Dealing With Customers

Being careful about how you communicate with customers can make those interactions go a lot more smoothly.

BY PETER KENTER

We've all been there — a customer isn't happy about something, they're demanding you make it right, and things are getting heated. You've already had a long day, and you'd make things right for this customer if he would just relax and let you do your job, but he's mad and demanding answers. Before you can stop yourself, you blurt out something dumb that only makes things worse.

Busy associates may wish they could take back something they said in the heat of the moment or because it seemed like a great comeback at the time. Of course, training ourselves to remain calm in any situation is the best defense against foot-in-mouth disease. However, Jeff Mowatt, a Calgary, Alberta-based customer service strategist, author and speaker, notes that simply eliminating 10 phrases from our vocabulary could solve 90% of communication problems with customers.

"No matter how good the service you deliver, you'll still

have problems caused by external factors," says Mowatt. "We can't control those things, but we can control what we say to customers when they happen."

Here are Mowatt's top 10 phrases to avoid, from the least offensive to the grenade launchers:

10. "Do you want to hear the good news first or the bad news?"

Don't even bother asking this question.

"When you have both good news and bad news to deliver, always begin with the good news," says Mowatt. "That way the customer begins the conversation with the best perspective. If they go into catastrophe mode with bad news, good news likely won't bring them back out of it."

9. "Bear with us?"

You definitely mean this in a good way — you're trying to solve the problem and you just need a second to work



something out, or you're struggling with factors the customer doesn't know about. But customers see this as an order, not a request.

"It also implies that the problem they have with your service is something they should tolerate," says Mowatt. "Instead, say something like, 'We appreciate your patience.'"

8. "We can't ..."

"Customers don't want to hear what you can't do," says Mowatt. "Tell them what you can do, instead."

7. "We can't help until/unless ..."

This might be true, but it puts the onus on the customer or makes them think you're passing the buck. "Substitute something positive," says Mowatt. "For example, 'We'll get this figured out as soon as possible.'"

6. "Yes, but ..."

"Using the word 'but' completely negates whatever you've just said," says Mowatt. "It's like starting an argument with your customer. Change the phrase to 'Yes, and ...'"

5. "Looks like the manufacturer/another associate messed up."

Don't blame other employees, departments or suppliers for the problem.

"Take one for the team and take ownership of the problem on their behalf," says Mowatt. "Tell them that you're taking responsibility for the problem and will pursue it until it's resolved to their satisfaction."

4. "Why didn't ..."

Asking a customer why someone in your company didn't do something just invites them to point the finger back at you.

"If you're investigating a problem from the customer's perspective, just ask questions that begin with who, what, where, when and how," says Mowatt. "It's your job to get to the bottom of the 'why.'"

3. "Our policy is ..."

Why have you established policies to deal with foul-ups in the first place? Are they that common?

"Customers don't want to hear your standard procedures for dealing with your own errors," says Mowatt. "Instead, explain how you're responding to the situation and why you're responding that way."

2. "What do you want us to do?"

This question is just begging for outlandish requests and unreasonable demands. Unless you want to hear some blunt and inventive answers, don't ask. Instead try: "What will work best for you?" or "We want to do the right thing. What do you think would be fair?"

If you word it correctly, this is your chance to provide superb service that the customer will tell their friends about. "Fix the problem and add a small bonus to help compensate a customer for the hassle to convert an upset customer into an advocate," says Mowatt.

"If you word it correctly, this is your chance to provide superb service that the customer will tell their friends about."



← No customer cares to hear what your store policy is. They just want to know how you're going to help solve their problem.

1. "You [substitute colorful phrase of your choice]!"

Don't respond in kind if the customer resorts to profanity or name-calling.

"Take the heat, not the abuse," says Mowatt. "Try: 'I want to help you, but I can't when you're using that language. So, let's resolve this without it.'"

If abusive language continues, explain that the conversation is going to end and invite the customer to continue it later — without the foul language.

"Immediately brief any supervisor, so they'll know who they may be dealing with later," says Mowatt. **HR**



Broadheads

With a well-placed shot on big game, a bowhunter should experience easy-to-follow blood trails when using one of these three topnotch broadheads.



BY DAVE MAAS

Of all the equipment brought into the field by a bowhunter each day, the most important item is the broadhead. It must maintain structural integrity as it smashes into hide, fat, muscle, bone and ultimately the vitals of a buck, bull or bruin. If a broadhead isn't sharp enough, then less vital tissue is cut, meaning a sparse blood trail. If a broadhead isn't tough enough, it could break apart when it impacts bone, resulting in minimal penetration.

Regardless of whether a bowhunter prefers a fixed-blade broadhead or mechanical, making an informed decision about brand and model is critical to success in the field. The three highlighted below — one fixed-blade and two mechanicals — are dependable broadheads from companies with a reputation for quality.

FIXED-BLADE BROADHEADS SALES TIP

No two compounds or crossbows are the same when it comes to shooting broadheads, especially fixed-blade designs, due to the increased surface area of the blades. From a distance of 20 yards, one fixed-blade broadhead that impacts a target in the same place as field points from a dialed-in bow might strike 6 inches low (or high, or right or left) from another person's well-tuned bow.

To sell more fixed-blade broadheads in your store, offer a decent selection of demo heads so customers can test-fire several designs before buying. When a customer finds a broadhead brand/model/size that flies just like field points, he or she will leave your store with one or more packs of new broadheads, as well as the confidence to make lethal shots on game.



QAD EXODUS STANDARD

QAD might be better known as an arrow rest company, but it has earned a great reputation for its tough-as-nails broadheads, too. Designed and manufactured in the United States, the QAD Exodus Standard has a 1¼-inch cutting diameter. This is not a misprint: The stainless-steel replaceable blades are .040-inches thick, which is why YouTube is filled with videos of archers torture-testing QAD Exodus broadheads into everything from ¾-inch plywood to 55-gallon steel drums.

The broadhead has a machined cut-on-contact tip, and the surgically-sharp blades sweep back over the arrow shaft, creating a super short and compact head, while still maintaining a steep angle for deep penetration and a longer cutting surface for maximum tissue damage. According to QAD, this innovative design allows for “unmatched field point flight while maintaining extreme penetration and a wide cutting diameter.”

QAD Exodus Standard broadheads are available in 85, 100 and 125 grains, in two blade options, Full or Swept. The latter has larger blade cutouts to eliminate wind drift. QAD Exodus broadheads are also offered in a 100-grain Deep Six version designed specifically for Deep Six inserts by Easton. Deep Six is the standard thread used in micro-diameter carbon arrows (4mm and 5mm).

MSRP for all Exodus broadhead models and designs discussed here is the same: \$39.99 per three pack. www.qadinc.com



SWHACKER LEVI MORGAN SIGNATURE SERIES #269

No other archer has dominated the tournament scene like Levi Morgan. His incredible streak of 12 Male Open Pro Shooter of the Year titles finally ended in 2019. Morgan is also a diehard bowhunter who understands what's required of his archery gear to harvest big game all over the world.

Engineered by Sw Hacker to the demanding specifications of Morgan, the new 125-grain Levi Morgan Signature Series #269 mechanical broadhead features a unique arced blade design that reduces blade resistance after entry, retaining greater arrow momentum and delivering increased pass-through performance. In practice, the blades on the #269 slice twice: The winged blades first cut through a layer of hide and fat, then the arched blades deploy (jackknife) internally for maximum damage to vital organs. Due to the #269's design, the blades must open on impact every time.

According to Sw Hacker, the broadhead's reinforced ribbed ferrule, which is built from anodized aircraft aluminum, delivers up to 20% greater strength and rigidity. The stainless-steel blades are .032 inches thick. The #269 also includes Sw Hacker's popular Blade-Lock Technology, allowing the expandable blades to be locked in the closed position so hunters can practice with the exact broadhead they will be using in the field.

The #269 is 1 inch wide in flight and opens to 2½ inches on impact. Because the #269 has such a small profile in the closed position, it is generally regarded as one of the most accurate mechanical broadheads on the market today.

MSRP for a three pack of Sw Hacker Levi Morgan Signature Series #269 broadheads is \$44.95. www.swhacker.com

Sw Hacker FYI: Also new for 2020, the #269 supports Sw Hacker's Hunt Ready Plugs system, which is an alternative method to the current shrink bands, to keep blades closed during hunting applications. Hunt Ready Plugs can be used with Sw Hacker broadhead models #200, #261 and #269. MSRP for a 12-pack of Hunt Ready Plugs is \$3.95.

RAGE HYPODERMIC NC

For many years, the knock by some bowhunters on Rage rear-deploying Slip Cam mechanicals was the need for a plastic shock collar to keep the blades closed in the quiver and on the string before shooting. The engineers for Rage heard the constructive criticism, and the result is the new Rage Hypodermic NC (No Collar).

This 100-grain, two-blade broadhead has .035-inch-thick, swept-back, stainless-steel skeletonized blades with a narrow, stainless-steel machined ferrule. Blade retention is reliable due to fingerlike tabs that anchor the blades in place while closed. Upon impact, the force of a target or game animal's hide on the blade “shoulders” forces the Slip Cam blades downward. In other words, there's no way for these blades to fail to open on impact with an animal.

With a cutting width of 2 inches and a needlelike tip (hence the model name), the Rage Hypodermic NC has received great reviews from bowhunters who say it results in heavy and short blood trails. These hunters also say this broadhead impacts a target in nearly the same spot as their field points.

MSRP for a three pack of Rage Hypodermic NC broadheads is \$54.99. www.feradyne.com **HR**



A Case for Every Occasion

Never should a patron walk out of your shop with a new gun or bow in hand without having first had a serious conversation about how to keep that purchase safe from the rigors of the road.



BY GORDY KRAHN

It doesn't matter if you're traveling by plane, train or automobile — if you're packing a compound bow, crossbow or rifle, priority No.1 should be ensuring it reaches hunting camp in one piece and is still sighted-in properly — and that means protecting it with a high-quality case. I can't tell you how many times I've arrived at my hunting destination to find that my gun or bow's zero had shifted — usually just a little, but sometimes a whole lot. And don't even get me started about those airport gorillas who seem to take great pleasure in inflicting baggage abuse. The bottom line is this: Laying down a little extra cash to protect the considerable investment of a new bow or gun is money well spent.

If I'm driving to a hunting location, I just throw everything I might possibly need in the FJ Cruiser and off I go. Since my gun or bow will be tucked away safely inside the vehicle, I typically use a well-padded soft case because it will take up less room than a hard case. But if I'm flying the not-so-friendly skies — or if I know my equipment will likely take a beating during the hunt — a hard case will get the nod.

Both soft and hard cases have their merits — and their applications. Soft cases are typically less expensive and more portable than hard cases and are handier to use on location if local regulations require that guns or bows must be cased while in the vehicle. Hard cases are more protective and secure and typically have extra room for hauling accessories. Hunters can pack optics, cameras, knives, lights and even extra clothing in their hard case. When hunting in a wet environment, such as in the pursuit of waterfowl, it's important that the case is waterproof. Some even have rust-inhibiting treatment on the interior to keep guns from corroding between thorough cleanings.

Each time a customer buys a new gun or bow, it's up to you and your staff to convince him/her to protect that investment by adding a high-quality case to the purchase — one that will keep it safe and working flawlessly for years and hunts to come. Here are a handful of top-shelf examples that will do just that.





★ **BEST FEATURE:** Sherpa lining

DULUTH PACK PISTOL RUG WITH SHERPA LINING

Known for its craftsman-quality canvas and leather bags and packs, Duluth Pack has been around a long time — since 1882. That's older than penicillin, the modern automobile, powered air flight and sliced bread. And its Pistol Rug with Sherpa Lining is just another example of its fine workmanship — durability combined with classic looks. Handcrafted to protect hunting pistols from bumps and bruises, each case is built with reinforced leather ends and lined with premium-padded extra-thick Sherpa that wicks away damaging moisture.

Made with burly 15-ounce canvas and premium leather, the Pistol Rug will stand up to the rigors of the road. And unlike traditional gun cases with sharp metal zippers, Duluth Pack uses high-quality outdoor-specific zippers that are much less likely to scratch the finish on valuable firearms. With four sizes to choose from, these cases easily accommodate a wide range of hunting handguns — from 9.5 to 14.5 inches in length.

MSRP: \$100; CONTACT: www.duluthpack.com



★ **BEST FEATURE:** It floats!

FLAMBEAU OUTDOORS 52-INCH FLOATING SHOTGUN CASE

Soggy wet conditions or a rough ride in the back of a truck or UTV can stop a shotgun dead cold in its tracks. And that's why waterfowl hunters must do everything they can to keep their guns high and dry while protecting them from nasty bumps in the road. Flambeau Outdoors, a company that has been supplying hunters with a vast assortment of waterfowling products for decades, has come up with a solution. Its 52-inch floating shotgun case with an integrated Zerust anti-corrosion liner protects shotguns from rust, while the padded exterior

guards against damage during transit. And hunters will have the peace of mind that comes from knowing they won't need scuba gear to find their shotgun should things go awry.

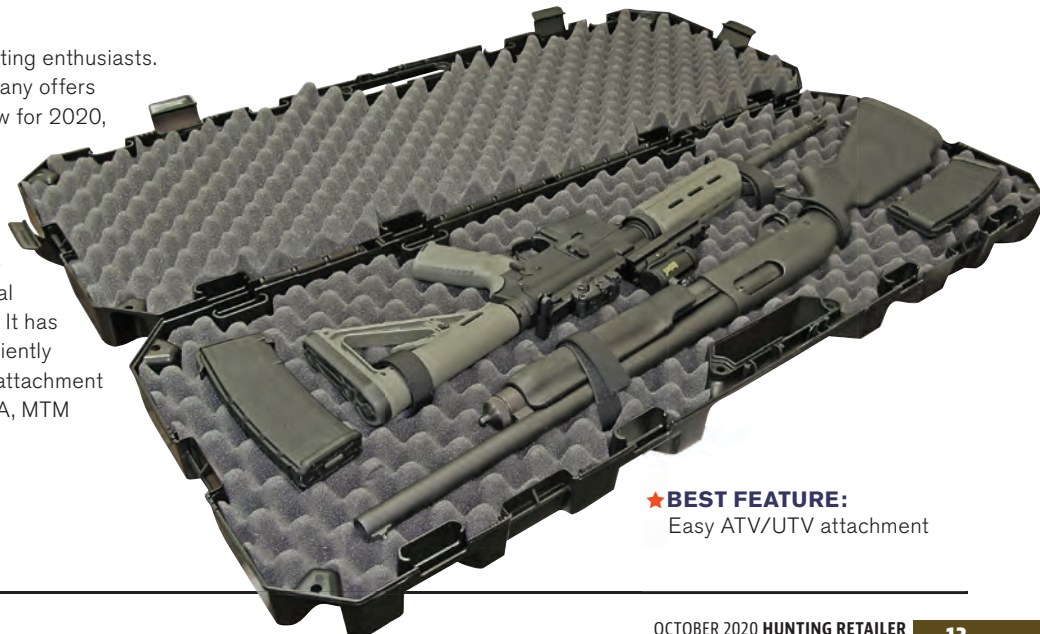
The Flambeau Floating Shotgun Case fits one shotgun and is made from durable water-resistant 600D polyester-coated material. It features an exterior accessory pocket, reinforced carry handles and adjustable shoulder strap and comes in Mossy Oak Shadow Grass Blades camo.

MSRP: \$47.69; CONTACT: www.flambeauoutdoors.com

MTM CASE-GARD TACTICAL RIFLE CASE

Since 1968, MTM has designed and produced products for shooting enthusiasts. From ammo boxes to gun rests to clay target throwers, the company offers a huge variety of essential hunting and shooting sports gear. New for 2020, its made-in-America Tactical gun case is constructed to protect rifles during transport and storage for those who prefer to hunt with AR-platform rifles. The MTM Tactical case features plastic molded construction and accommodates most rifles up to 42 inches in length. The case closes tightly with MTM's proven snap latch design, and the firearm is held securely in place with internal tiedown straps between two layers of high-quality foam padding. It has padlock points for increased security, and tiedown points conveniently positioned on the outside of the case allow for easy and secure attachment to ATV/UTV cargo boxes for on-the-go hunters. Made in the USA, MTM Tactical rifle cases are stackable for convenient storage.

MSRP: \$72.95; CONTACT: www.mtmcase-gard.com



★ **BEST FEATURE:**
Easy ATV/UTV attachment





★ **BEST FEATURE:** Lightweight

PELICAN AIR 1745 BOW CASE

Expertly designed to be crush-proof, dust-proof and watertight, the rugged and durable AIR 1745 bow case by Pelican Products securely transports bows, arrows and other equipment in a lightweight case in a wide variety of bowhunting configurations. Founded in 1976, the name Pelican is synonymous with the high-performance protective cases hunters rely on to protect their gear.

The AIR 1745's super-light proprietary HPX polymer construction makes this case up to 40 percent lighter than other Pelican Products lines, and security has never been tighter, with six press-and-pull latches and two TSA-approved locking latches. The case includes two foam arrow holders, two small foam bumpers, two large foam bumpers, two arrow tube straps, two small accessory pouches, six bungee cords, one padded divider and integrated stainless-steel bearing wheels for easy transit. The AIR 1745's interior components provide modular storage, allowing for a wide range of unique configurations for a wide range of bows and accessories.

MSRP: \$399.95; CONTACT: www.pelican.com

PLANO AW2 RIFLE CASE WITH RUSTRICTOR

The AW2 is the first rifle case in the Plano line to feature its proprietary weather-beater Rustriector technology, and it's one more reason why so many outdoorsmen and women consider its products the go-to solution for storing, transporting and protecting their valuable hunting gear.

Hunters want the peace of mind that comes from knowing their equipment is well-protected, no matter if they're traveling to their local deer camp or on an adventure halfway around the globe. The AW2 is impenetrable from the outside, with dual-stage lockable latches and a Dri-Loc seal that creates a watertight, dustproof shield. Inside, not only does a release valve equalize pressure through temperature or altitude changes, but there's also the added benefit of Rustriector to prevent rust and corrosion. Available in 36-inch, 42-inch and 52-inch wheeled models, the AW2 features rust-preventive Vapor Corrosion Inhibitor (VCI) infused into its resin and foam, pre-perforated pluck foam for easy customization, rugged, industrial-strength construction and a comfortable over-molded carry handle.



★ **BEST FEATURE:** Rustriector technology

MSRP: \$119.99/36-inch; \$149.99/42-inch; \$199.99/52-inch; CONTACT: www.planomolding.com

SKB ISERIES CROSSBOW CASES

The SKB Cases Sports Division — a globally recognized industry leader in the design and manufacture of molded polymer gun and bow cases — has added three cases to its iSeries lineup to accommodate Ten-Point/Nitro X, XRT and RDX; Ravin/R26 and R29; and Mission/Sub-1, Sub-1 XR and Sub-1 Lite crossbows.

Each military-grade case is watertight and dustproof and comes standard with SKB's unconditional lifetime warranty and \$1,500 content coverage. They feature built-in wheels and a tow handle for convenient transport and weigh in at under 50 pounds when loaded with a crossbow and accessories. All SKB iSeries cases are molded from ultra-high-strength polypropylene copolymer resin and feature a water- and dust-tight submersible design that is resistant to corrosion and impact damage. Other standard features include a molded-in hinge, patented "trigger release," TSA-retrofitable latches, comfortable snap-down rubber over-molded cushion grip handles, automatic ambient pressure equalization valve and are resistant to UV, solvents, corrosion and fungus.

MSRP: \$354.99; CONTACT: www.skbcases.com/sports

★ **BEST FEATURE:** Custom fit





★ **BEST FEATURE:** Inhibit-x rust preventative lining



BLACKHEART GEAR VITAL AND CARDIAC GUN CASES

BlackHeart Gear, a leading manufacturer of premium gun cases that blends hand-made craftsmanship with modern materials, has added two models to its extensive lineup – the Vital and Cardiac. These high-quality cases allow hunters and recreational shooting enthusiasts to safely and easily protect, transport and store their favorite firearms.

Vital cases are lined with Inhibit-x, a silicon lining that helps repel moisture and, coupled with no-scratch zipper guards, helps to ensure that firearms are thoroughly protected from the elements. Models include a 14-inch double pistol rug, 48-inch

scoped rifle case, 54-inch shotgun case and a case combo that includes the 48-inch scoped rifle case and 14-inch double pistol rug. The Vital's exterior sleeve and pockets allow for convenient storage of the pistol rug, magazines, ammo boxes and any additional shooting accessories. The Cardiac line of gun cases includes a 48-inch scoped rifle case and 54-inch shotgun case with a protective tricot lining for safe storage. A zippered exterior pocket provides easy-access storage for shooting accessories.

MSRP: \$24.99-\$89.99/Vital; \$36.99-\$39.99/Cardiac;
CONTACT: www.blackheartgear.com

7 Rounds of Protection

Equipped with a magazine containing seven pepper powder projectiles, the SABRE Pepper Spray Launcher Home Defense Kit can be used to ward off multiple threats putting an even greater distance between homeowners and intruders. With a form factor designed for speed, accuracy, distance, and increased incapacitation, the Launcher takes home defense to the next level!

Make It Safe, Every Day

For questions or additional information, please contact ajohnson@sabred.com

SABRE



Building on Heritage

Fiocchi leverages more than 140 years of ammunition excellence to expand its role in the U.S. market.



BY ALEX HEADLEY

Hunting Retailer recently had the opportunity to chat with Jared Smith, general manager for Fiocchi USA, about the history of the company and its future in the U.S. market.

The company is refreshing itself after 140 years of heritage and investing itself heavily in expansion. Fiocchi believes lead-free ammo is a major factor in future markets, and it's taking steps to ensure that trend maintains performance at a reasonable price. While some think of Fiocchi as a shotgun ammo company, they actually have more in-production centerfire and metallic cartridges than shotgun shells. The brand has invested heavily in technology and research in its century of business and is poised to be a tech leader for years to come.

HR: How has the business changed over its long history?

JS: The business evolved from blackpowder production into supplying cartridges for both World Wars. Fiocchi expanded its operations into

the U.S., UK, New Zealand and Argentina over the last 30 years as their influence and reputation expanded. Fiocchi has led the world in lead-free primer technology and manufactures one of the only NATO-approved lead-free primers. In 2017, after 140 years and five generations of Fiocchi heritage, the company brought in a new ownership team that invested in expansion and focused on the U.S. market. This new team has brought clarity and focus to the North American market as the company's products and marketing evolve along with its focus on the U.S. consumer.

HR: Fiocchi is rooted in Italy with manufacturing facilities in other countries, including in Ozark, Missouri. What percentage of ammunition sold in the U.S. is made here?

JS: All our shotshells and all of our centerfire rifle ammunition that we service to the U.S. market are made in Ozark. Fiocchi's facility in Italy has a state-of-the-art 9mm production facility, and we sell and distribute



all our 9mm ball ammunition and various other classic calibers from Italy. If you need 5.75 Velodog or 7.5 Swiss Ordnance, then Fiocchi is your choice.

HR: Fiocchi is most often thought of as a shotgun shell company, but you're much more than that. Tell us about some of your newer products.



JS: While that may be the case, Fiocchi produces a complete line of shotgun shells as well as centerfire cartridges. We have more production in centerfire and metallic cartridges than we do in shotgun shells.

We are in the process of launching a new line of lead-free rifle and pistol — solid copper and reduced-ricochet copper — projectiles for the self-defense and law enforcement community using Fiocchi's Zero Pollution primers. We are very excited about the Blue Guardian line of products that offers our consumers the highest-performance lead-free family of cartridges on the market.

HR: What's driving product development and the new push into the centerfire ammunition market?

JS: Fiocchi has supplied the NATO alliance in Europe and, most specifically, the U.S. Market with centerfire cartridges for over 20 years now. What we have not done is communicate the benefits of our cartridges to the consumer, nor have we effectively communicated our strengths and heritage of manufacturing the majority of our centerfire line here in the U.S.

HR: What lessons learned in the premium shotshell market are you applying to the centerfire market?

“What differentiates Fiocchi is the technological innovation we bring with lead-free primers, 140 years of history, and the size and responsiveness as a company...”

JS: We learned that you have to tell the story, not just produce ammo. Effectively communicating the benefits and educating the consumer is not something we have done well on the centerfire side. We are getting better.

HR: What differentiates Fiocchi from the competition?

JS: The U.S. ammunition manufacturing base produces excellent products as a standard. What differentiates Fiocchi is the technological innovation we bring with lead-free primers, 140 years of history, and the size and responsiveness as a company that makes us nimble to provide excellent service to our client. We react quickly to the needs of our customers and we make decisions quickly to expedite our response to our customers.



HR: Where do you see the ammo market heading?

JS: Lead-free, and it will go premium as the cost of hunting and shooting grow in proportion to our wallets. Our goal is to help keep the cost down and drive quality and performance at a price the average

consumer can afford, while utilizing technology to provide the best product for the evolving market.

HR: How does Fiocchi support its dealers?



access to quick support and communication about our offerings and services. We are doing this through a new online portal for our dealers and representatives.

HR: Are you doing anything special to help dealers push the new product lines?

JS: In the past four months, we have launched a new website focused on customer/consumer benefits, evolved the brand and message of Fiocchi, built a dealer portal and trained our sales staff and our reps on new products to effectively communicate the



JS: As we grow, our goal is to effectively support the industry, supporting the dealer with as broad an offering as needed to service the different regionalities of our business. We do this through the full support of our distribution partners and local gun clubs/ranges. The dealer needs

strengths of the brand and the products. We will continue to find new ways to improve and deliver this to our dealers.

To learn more about Fiocchi products and how to become a dealer, visit www.fiocchiusa.com or call (417) 725-4118. **HR**





PR Isn't Just for Big Companies

Navigating local and social media can set your shop apart.

BY TRENT MARSH

When most people think about PR, or public relations, they envision board rooms with executives and high-paid consultants huddled around focus group notes and pie charts. Endless hours of grueling parsing of every syllable being transcribed. Agonizing over every possible perception of the words being hashed out, and a legal team that would outnumber your child's little league squad, lawyering it all again until the perfect, antiseptic drivel we've all heard before is churned out and delivered to pundits and spokespeople.

Frankly, it's a process of which we've become weary.

The reality is that this is a very small portion of what PR looks like, but that doesn't stop a lot of shops, and even smaller companies, from thinking that PR isn't something they can handle. I've been in and around this industry for about a decade now. I've worked with and for global

brands and local ones in and out of this industry, and the only thing stopping most companies from being awesome at PR is their own fear of tackling it.

The plain truth is that nothing can have a more immediate, visible impact on your brand awareness with potential customers than a cohesive plan and strategy for navigating public and press relations. Right now, you probably already have the building blocks in place to outma-

neuver your competition — you just aren't deploying them properly. Let's we dig into how to make a PR plan that works for any size of business.

Dovetail Your PR and Advertising Partners

Finding a balance between putting all your eggs in one basket and being spread too thin can be difficult, but the best business relationships usually work because they work on multiple levels. Your PR and advertising

↑ Media coverage brings customers into the store. How do you get that coverage? Just ask for it and provide content the media outlets can use.



“The only thing stopping most companies from being awesome at PR is their own fear of tackling it.”

relationships should be this way, too. The most valuable advertising partners you can have can also offer you editorial coverage.

Before you think you don't have anything worthy of editorial coverage, let me tell you, you're wrong. Are you planning any sales this year? Do you work with any charities? Ever host a kid's day? Have a range where you host shoots? Planning to add on? Teach hunter's safety or concealed carry classes?

Every single one of these things is worthy of some form of press release, distribution and coverage.

A significant portion of your annual advertising spend needs to be with partners who are willing and able to get you coverage on those things, without nickel and diming you to death in the process. Make that coverage part of your negotiation. Work it into the contract. The biggest thing is holding them to their end of the bargain — you've wasted your time if you negotiate it and then don't follow through providing the content or the information.

That's where this becomes a two-way street. In 2020, media never stops. They constantly have to fill the hoppers with content to fill pages, websites or airtime. Anything you can do to generate content saves them time, energy and money. The more turn-key your information is, the more



valuable it is to them and the more likely it is to see the light of day. It takes work — that's why it's called “earned media.”

You end up adding a multiplier effect to your advertising dollars when you strategize it properly. Buying brand visibility is relatively easy — commercial space is sold on everything from radio waves to tv screens, newspapers, billboards and paper diner placemats. But all of those things are interruptions. They work. They get your brand visibility, and visibility is important — but it's only one piece of the pie.

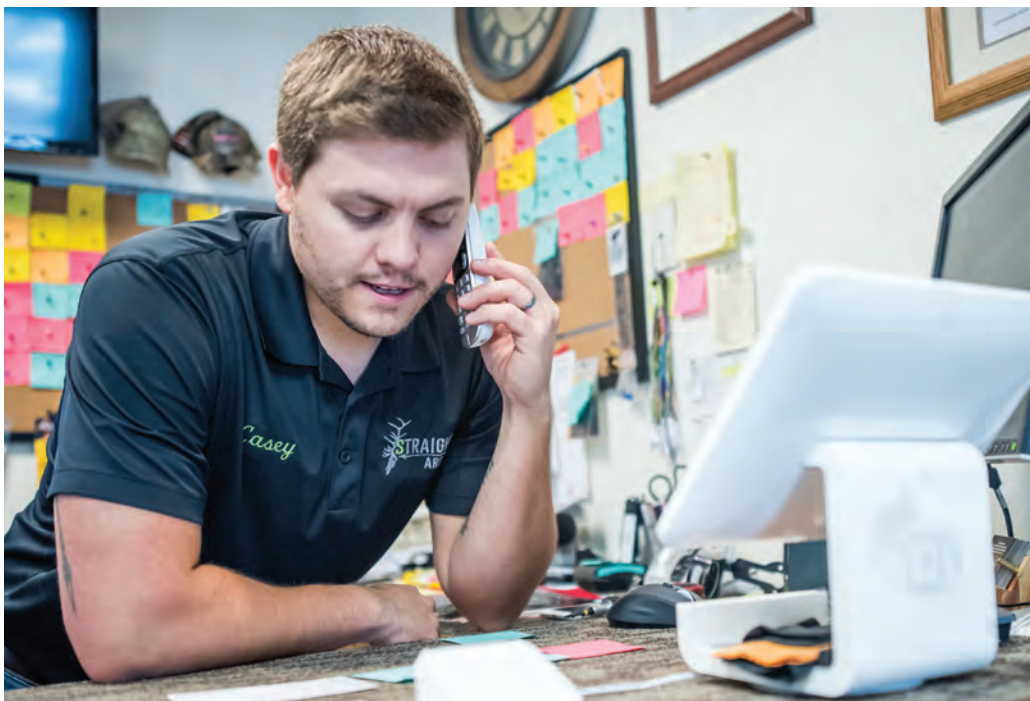
Where you really start to reap the rewards of those media placements is when your brand breaks through the regularly scheduled interruptions and makes it into the broadcasts, articles or interviews. Find those media partners who can deliver that, and you are well over halfway to doing it better than everyone else.

Develop a PR Mindset

At some point, all the right planning will still fail if you aren't in the right mindset to generate information to fill the PR stream. The list of newsworthy things listed previously was just the tip of the iceberg. Remember, you are the expert. You have product and industry knowledge to share. You have events and sales and assets that you can talk about. All of these things are worthy of distribution to local press and media, including social.

Someone in the business needs to be responsible for generating and distributing news. Does your shop hold monthly meetings for the employees where you talk about what's coming up in the next 30 days? A lot of that information may well be info that the general public and media would find interesting. Share it. Sales, classes, events,

↓ Get on the phone to your local media advertising partners and let them know about upcoming events or changes to the store.



shoots, all of it. Get the news out there.

The best thing you can do to help facilitate this is sketch out a promotional and activity calendar for the year and use that as your map for generating PR. Seeing the whole year laid out on one big calendar can help identify weak points in the year and areas where maybe you are too stacked up. You don't want a busy season and a slow season. You want to use PR and events to bolster those slow times and flatten your business curve.

Every shop around is going to run a sale right before hunting season. Have you ever tried an event around Father's Day? Look at your calendar. Find those areas where you can build an event and PR the daylights out of it. You might be surprised just how much interest you can garner and how much your media partners may be willing to get on board for a well-timed, well-planned, well-executed event.

Even if going out and doing a big event isn't something you want to undertake, having that calendar of your normal activities can help guide those discussions with your media and advertising partners to show them where you need that editorial support and coverage. The last thing you want to try to do is get last-minute coverage for a weekend event on a Thursday afternoon. Plan ahead, think ahead, and make their life easier.

Use Social

I hope you are already using social media to interact with your customers, but social is important when it comes to public relations because you can control the reach. Even if you get editorial support from local news sources or industry platforms, you can't control that footprint.

Maybe you're hosting a shoot with a big prize package that could draw shooters from further away. Maybe you're looking to expand the number of people you have in your concealed carry classes. Whatever the goal, social media lets you be the one who determines either by budget or area who and where your message is seen.

On its face, you should see the value in that. Every platform is a little different, but all are easy enough to work that you shouldn't have a problem. At the end of the day, they don't want the process of taking money from you to be difficult. Just dive in and take a look. The internet is full of how-to videos that can show you exactly what you need to do.

If you've gotten frustrated by your social media in general, see if putting a little money behind your page's posts livens things up a little bit. Like it or not, social media is becoming a pay-to-play landscape. Sure, you can get





↑ Like it or not, influencer marketing is a force to be reckoned with these days – provided it's done right. Who are the local and regional influencers you can partner with for some publicity?

.....

some visibility doing things for free, but those pages that are spending money are going to get the balance tipped in their favor. Put social on your side by following all the best practices and by incorporating some spending into the platforms as well to help you reach new audiences and stand out from the crowd.

Consider Influencer Marketing

We aren't going to spend a lot of time on this, as it could be its own article, and there is no shortage of those articles available, but influencer marketing can be part of a PR strategy as well. Aligning yourself with influencers, even on the local level, can help drive awareness and help shape the public's view of your shop or brand.

In a lot of ways, the outdoor and shooting sports industry is actually ahead of the curve on this one, which can't often be said. Pro staffs have been a staple in the industry for decades, and that's all a pro staff is — influencer marketing. You may already have a band of influencers you just aren't using their full capacity or talking about in the right way.

Make sure that if you have pro staff members already,

you're tracking when and how they share your information. Are they active on social media? Are they frequent speakers at hunt clubs or with sporting groups? Do they have a following of their own in the industry that is valuable? Make sure these folks are sharing your message and getting it out there.

The caveat is that influencers can work against you as well, so don't choose them lightly. The last thing you want is scandal because someone affiliated with your shop is charged with a game or firearms violation because they were playing fast and loose with the laws.

Be Deliberate

Public relations isn't hard — it just isn't something you can do effectively off the cuff. It takes planning and the dedication to stick to and follow through with that plan. The real investment is time. Developing the plan may actually help you save money by isolating parts of your advertising plan that don't align with your overall PR plan. If you can identify your strategy and deliver the assets, a solid PR plan puts your shop on the path to higher brand recognition than you ever thought you could achieve. **HR**





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Check us out at

WWW.HUNTINGRETAILER.COM



NINE WAYS RETAILERS CAN CATER TO DAY AND NIGHTTIME HOG HUNTERS.

BY KEVIN REESE



ne has to wonder if the godfather of our hog problem and famed Spanish explorer from our elementary school textbooks, Hernando de Soto, realized he had a piggy problem before he left the New World for an eternal one. The fact that he brought 13 pigs to what we recognize today as Tampa, Florida, in 1539 and died in May 1542 with more than 700 live hogs on record should have stood as a warning. Unfortunately, at a time when surviving was a serious concern, any semblance of a warning was pushed aside to make room for more hogs brought over by explorers and colonists like Cortes and Sir Walter Raleigh, founder and leader of Jamestown Colony, settled in 1607.

In the centuries since, continued importation of hogs and unchecked population growth has led to our current-day problem. In my home state of Texas, the feral hog population has swelled to an estimate of 3 million or more. Worse, as the state with the highest number of feral hogs running rampant, we

pay a hefty toll – over \$50 million in agricultural damage and over \$400 million in overall damage every year. Not only do hogs wreak havoc on agriculture, but they also compete with indigenous wildlife for habitat – and win.

With the ability to breed up to twice per year, litter sizes averaging six to eight with a 1:1 boar-to-sow ratio and, once large enough, no natural predators, hogs have left us with a serious problem. Experts suggest we need to kill nearly 70% of the total hog population every year just to keep numbers where they are – not to reduce numbers, but just to break even. Of course, we are not alone here in Texas. Hogs have been reported in at least 39 states and four Canadian provinces. Hunting them has never been more important than right now, and you can help your customers leverage their odds of success by offering effective hog-hunting products. Check out this great list of product categories sure to appeal to the hog hunters in your neck of the retailer woods.





← Hog populations have reached epidemic proportions, prompting some states to remove nearly all restrictions on hunting. If night hunting is legal in your state, consider multi-colored headlamps and even some night-vision or thermal technology.

Trail Cameras

One of the most valuable scouting tools available to hunters, trail cameras are our eyes (and sometimes our ears) when we're not tromping around our favorite hunting spots. Most of today's cameras produce high-resolution, full-color images during the daytime and

black-and white-images, via infrared illumination, from dusk until dawn. Most current trail camera options also include 24-hour video capabilities, and some even include audio. Thanks to both day and night capabilities as well as time and date stamps, weather conditions, moon phases and other information, hunters can determine stand and blind placements and better forecast the activities of feral hogs and other wildlife.

More recently, trail camera technologies, like that of SpyPoint's flagship offering, the Link-S, have pushed the high-tech envelope of HD wildlife imaging with a feature-rich combination of stealth IR illumination to

eliminate any chance of detection, cellular connectivity for remote monitoring and an integrated solar panel.

Attractants

Again, like food plots where broadcaster feeders may not be legal, attractants like Texas Hog Bait can be quite effective. Where legal, attractants are often poured onto tree stumps or into PVC pipe pieces referred to as "pig pipes" and either partially buried or chained to a tree or wood post. Some attractants can also be used in broadcast feeders. It's important to let customers know if attractants you choose



to carry are safe for feeders — some types gum up the gears and broadcasting element or cause corn or feed to clump, inhibiting material flow from the barrel to a feeder's spinner plate. If you operate your business in a state that permits feeders, carry a hog attractant compatible with such systems so your hunters know they have dispersal options.

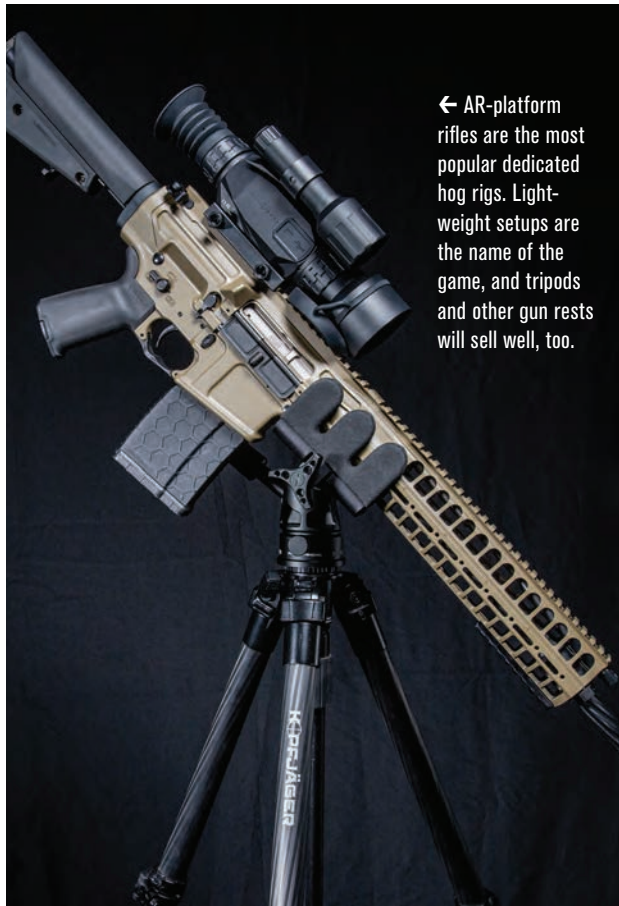
Firearms

While I am an avid bowhunter, when dealing with pesky, four-hooved crop thieves, I most often hunt with semi-automatic AR-15 and AR-10 modern sporting rifles topped with a Pulsar Trail XP30 Thermal Riflescope (more on optics later). There is no rhyme or reason related to which rifle I take hunting. I have a handful of favorites chambered in different calibers — most often AR-15s in 6.5 Grendel and 6.8 SPC II or AR-10s in .308 Win. or 6.5 Creedmoor. Since I may encounter multiple sounders of feral pigs in an expansive field and engage in multiple stalks, I generally use 20- or 30-round magazines.

As an outdoor writer, sometimes I do carry heavier rigs, but my preference is lighter rifle



systems with sub-20-inch barrels (18-inch is a sweet spot for me, while others like 14.5- to 16-inch varieties). I try to keep my bare AR-15 rifle weight below 8 pounds and my AR-10 weight below 9 pounds. I also like to use a lightweight tripod-mounted gun rest. For customers with a penchant for bolt-action and lever-action rifles, I would keep your firearm suggestions pegged down to more traditional, lightweight systems; however, picatinny optic and accessory rails can be helpful. I cannot say enough good things about Marlin Dark Series rifles and Mossberg's 464 SPX.



← AR-platform rifles are the most popular dedicated hog rigs. Lightweight setups are the name of the game, and tripods and other gun rests will sell well, too.

Tripod-Mounted Gun Rests

Shooting sticks and monopods like BOG Pod can be helpful, especially if hunters have trouble getting into a comfortable sitting or kneeling position or if the terrain is too overgrown for prone shooting. I generally do not advise shooting from an unsupported off-hand (standing) position. That said, tripod-mounted gun rests like the Kopfjäger Reaper Grip have changed the hog-hunting game, including spot-and-stalk. Tripod-mounted gun rests like the Reaper Grip system allow for fluid pan and tilt adjustments throughout a shooting event and keep the shooter rock-solid, even when fatigued or shooting under duress after a physically demanding stalk and while dealing with adrenaline. I would suggest using a carbon-fiber tripod. My entire tripod-mounted gun rest weighs just 5 pounds or so.

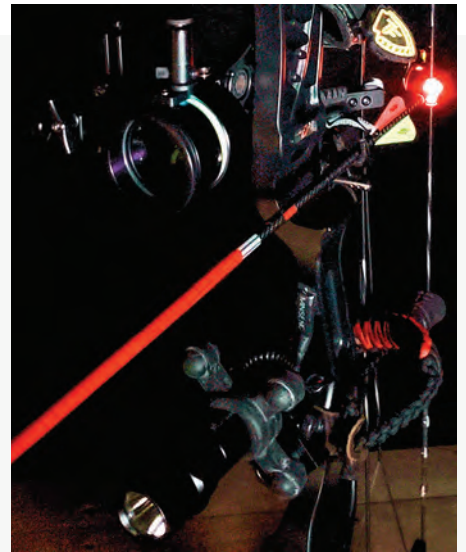
While thermal and night vision are cool, these technologies also are far from free. The good news here, however, is that these optics also have never been more affordable.”

Daytime Optics

More people are hog hunting with AR-platform modern sporting rifles than ever before; however, traditional bolt-action and lever-action rifles and crossbows are still favorites among hog hunters. Regardless of which firearm or crossbow your customers use, more often than not, the majority of their shots are likely to be close- to mid-range, from 25 to 200 yards and most often within 100 yards, especially in wooded areas.



For these reasons, true 1X-magnification reflex or red-dot sights like Sightmark's new Volta, as well as tactical-style 1-6X, 1-8X and 1-10X riflescopes are quite popular. More traditional hunting scopes with robust magnification adjustability, especially on the low end (a base magnification of 2X-3X), with top end magnification powers of 7X, 9X or even 12X are common. Recently, hog



Nighttime Bowhunting

Nighttime bowhunting has become incredibly popular, but it requires the right setup for optimized target acquisition in the dark. With the vast majority of my personal bowhunting experience occurring from dusk until dawn, here are my suggestions for your customers.

Employ a laser illuminator or high-intensity color LED light that installs in a bow's stabilizer hole. If possible, use an illuminator with a remote pressure switch mounted on the face of the bow's riser. Firefield offers a great laser illuminator, while Wicked Hunting Lights offers a solid LED lighting system. Ensure the bow sight features a sight-light designed to only illuminate pins. My current sight of choice is an HHA Tetra Max single-pin sight with a rheostat sight light and 2X lens. Equally important is a larger peep sight. If a peep sight is too small, the target may be washed out. I suggest a peep size of at least 3/16-inch. My current favorite peep sight is a 1/4-inch, hooded Specialty Archery Peep Sight with an inserted 3/16-inch no. 6 verifier lens.

Finally, use illuminated arrow nocks. My personal favorite nighttimenock is Nock Out, by Clean Shot. For solid blood trails and quick kills, I have always recommended fixed-blade broadheads; however, I have become quite a fan of New Era's Zeus hybrid, two-blade broadheads. For mechanical broadheads, I've learned to trust Xecutioner Broadheads' Xpandable, NAP's Killzone and most recently, Rage's Hypodermic NC. In addition to my bow setup, I also carry a thermal monocular for quick nighttime recovery.





↑ Thermal optics pick up on heat signatures and do not rely on ambient light. They also function in the daytime as well as after dark. They're not cheap, but prices are coming down.

hunters also have turned to digital optics with full-color imaging in the daytime and digital night-vision imaging after sunset. Digital riflescope solutions are great for 24-hour hunting applications without the need to change firearms or optics.

Thermal and Night-Vision Optics

Where legal, thermal and night-vision optics have taken the hog hunting world by storm. An important distinction between the two is simply that thermal imaging is not



night vision. Sure, both optic types allow imaging in the dark; however, thermal works equally well during daylight hours since the technology is based solely on temperature variances. It's also worth mentioning that while night vision works by pulling in existing light particles (including from infrared illumination cast from the device) and converting them into exponentially more light particles to create an image, thermal imaging does not. Thermal employs an array of sensors that detect infrared radiation (heat) and processes the varying temperatures' information into the display on the screen.

While thermal and night vision are cool, these technologies also are far from free. The good news here, however, is that these optics also have never been more affordable. Night vision used to cost as much as \$10,000 but can now be had for as little as \$500. Thermal used to cost as much as \$30,000, and now devices with respectable longer-range imaging quality can be had for as little as about \$1,900. Perhaps even more impressive is the affordability for top-of-the-line thermals. Rather than tens of thousands of dollars for lesser, nearly featureless 384x288-sensor resolution just a handful of years ago, today a flagship 640x480-sensor resolution device like a Pulsar Trail 2 XP50 LRF can be had for a fraction of that cost. Even better, today's digital night vision devices deliver nighttime detection ranges comparable to Gen 2 and Gen 3 night vision, from 150 yards to 600 yards, while thermal images detect adult-size heat signatures as far away as 1,000 to over 2,000 yards away.





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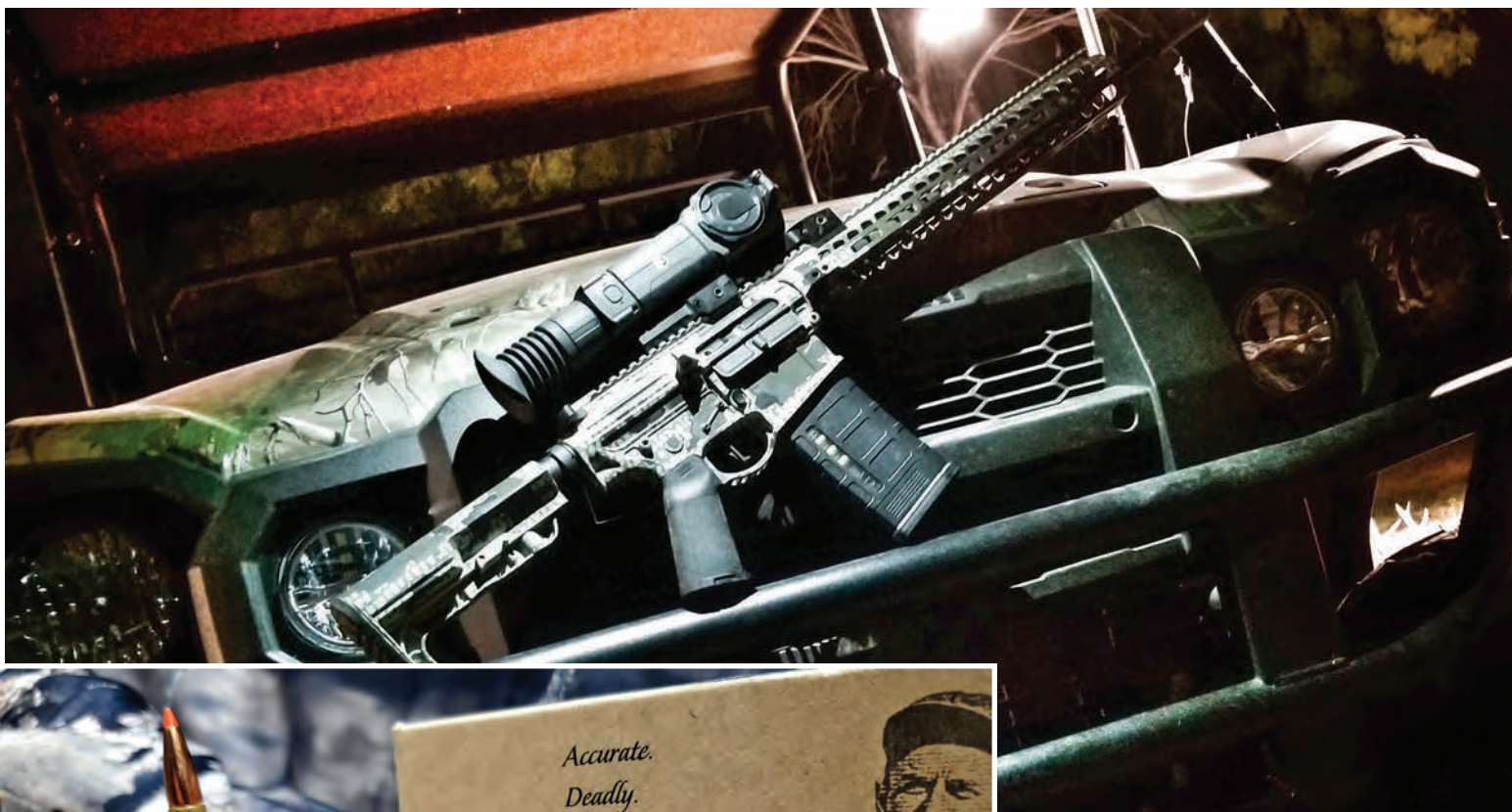


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Mounted Illumination

Mounted illuminators are quite a boon for hard-core hog hunters. While quite a bit less expensive than already affordable night-vision and thermal optics, these mounted light systems can illuminate your customers' fields of view hundreds of yards out, often without spooking animals. As an avid rifle hunter and bowhunter, years before diving into thermal and night-vision optics, I had killed countless feral hogs with these types of high-intensity colored LED illuminators, as well as laser illuminators. My best takeaway was simply to avoid bright white light, but I have always had great success with red and green illumination.

A great example of quality mounted illumination can be found with Wicked Hunting Lights, a seven-time winner of *Predator Xtreme's* Read-

er's Choice Award (*Predator Xtreme* is a sister publication of *Hunting Retailer*). Color LED lights like Wicked's lineup are not weakened by filters, making them more than capable of illuminating for ethical nighttime shots up to 300 to 400 yards away. Wicked Lights also offers color LED illuminators for nighttime bowhunting (more on that in a bit), as well as IR illuminators designed to extend night-vision rifle scope detection ranges.

Ammunition

Sure, hog hunters have stacked truckloads of feral hogs with .223 and 5.56 ammunition for years. While I would recommend continuing to offer those calibers to diehard AR hunters running those cartridges, I also suggest carrying other

popular hog-hunting cartridges. Today's most popular AR-10 cartridges are .308 Winchester and 6.5 Creedmoor. Innovators like Phoenix Weaponry also produce insanely hard-hitting ammo like rimless .45-70.

Popular AR-15 cartridges, beyond .223 and 5.56, include 6.5 Grendel, 6.8 SPC II, 7.62x39, .300 AAC (Blackout), Wilson Combat's .300 HAM'R, .350 Winchester, .450 Bushmaster, .458 SOCOM and .50 Beowulf. Hunters have also seen great hog-hunting performance from .22 Nosler and .28 Nosler, and I expect solid hog-hunting performance from Hornady's 6mm ARC.

For bolt-action and lever-action rifles, popular deer-hunting cartridges seem to reign supreme, but with special emphasis on .30-caliber solutions like .30-30 Win., .30-06 Springfield, .308 Win., .300 Win. Mag. and .300 WSM; however, other cartridges like .243 Win., 6.5 Creedmoor and .270 Win. also are not going away anytime soon. For feral hogs, target ammo and ballistic tip cartridges are not ideal. Feral hogs are tough, with thick skin, and often, especially with respect to large boars, they are quite a bit thicker around the front shoulders — their thick cartilage shields and bones can be tough to get through. Sure, hunters want expansion, but we also need penetration. Bonded and soft-tipped bullets with controlled expansion are excellent choices. **HR**



How a Culture of Nice in Your Company Can Have a Negative Impact

An inability to constructively confront colleagues about various issues can derail organizations.



BY KEN WYSOCKY

Developing a workplace with a “culture of nice” sounds like a worthy goal for any organization. After all, who wants jerks for employees? But a workplace that fosters such a culture also needs to ensure the “nice” factor doesn’t mask a hidden problem: Employees who act nice in order to avoid confronting colleagues with things they find offensive or that hamper their productivity. Instead, they just maintain their autopilot smiles and pretend everything is copacetic instead of confronting the issues head-on in a healthy, constructive manner.

By doing so, however, they improve the odds of increased stress and poor mental health as issues fester. And organizations run the risk of higher turnover and decreased productivity as team relationships slowly unravel.

In short, a culture of niceness for the wrong reasons can actually derail organizational success, says Stacey Engle, president of Fierce Inc., a training company that teaches people how to have effective conversations that boost bottom lines.

If this kind of behavior and workplace culture is all too familiar, you’re not alone. A recent Fierce survey of 1,000 employees in the U.S. shows that 63 percent of respondents don’t share ideas, opinions or concerns for fear of being perceived as combative or uncooperative. Furthermore, eight out of 10 employees think it’s important for colleagues to think they’re nice, the study reveals.

Natural Tendency

Most people want to be liked. It’s human nature. From childhood on, we’re encouraged by parents and others to not say anything if we don’t have something nice to say. And more often than not, employees see what happens to colleagues who speak their minds and then suffer from adverse consequences, Engle says.

“Most people aren’t encouraged to effectively address issues head-on,” she says. “We tend to avoid difficult conversations or conversations that we frame in our own minds as difficult. But as more and more organizations emphasize transparency and accountability, it forces people to face issues directly. So they need to be skilled at this.”

Those who lack the skills run the risk of upending their careers. How? Inability to meet deadlines or goals because you don’t know how to have a healthy confrontation with a colleague whose poor work ethic is bogging things down, for example. And in doing so, you’re only making yourself a victim of the situation instead of proactively trying to change it, Engle says.

In addition, organizations miss out on potential innovations and



collaborations when people are afraid to voice opinions. Or they end up wasting substantial amounts of money on projects that have little chance of success, just because saner minds didn't feel comfortable voicing concerns.

Moreover, we tend to overexaggerate in our own minds the possible negative effects of voicing concerns. The truth in many instances is that colleagues will feel relieved when you clear the air by healthily raising concerns about various things, Engle says.

"As humans, we like to tell stories," she says. "So we're always telling stories in our head of what might happen (if we raise a concern), and we usually envision the worst outcome, which is a shame, because almost all the time having these conversations enriches relationships."

Let's Talk About It

How do we go about raising concerns in a healthy and nonthreatening way? First of all, it's all about context: It's important to frame the conversation as a joint exploration of a particular issue and how it affects things.

"Think of it as really not confronting a person, but confronting an issue," Engle says.

It's important to name the point of friction specifically — explain exactly what is bothering you and why it's an issue for you. Brevity and simplicity are critical.



"People often avoid these conversations for a long time, so by the time they do have them, they do what we call a 'dump truck' — rattle off 16 examples of the behavior in question," she says. "That's very overwhelming."

It's important to create a 60-second opening statement that clearly outlines the issue at hand, offers a brief example or two, and explains the negative effects.

"More often than not, employees see what happens to colleagues who speak their minds and then suffer from adverse consequences."



"The whole premise is that you only have 60 seconds before someone experiences a 'flight-or-fight' response," Engle says. "Again, you need to view this as examining an issue side by side with the other person. And you need to be very intentional with the conversation."

Practice, Practice, Practice

Like anything else, practice makes perfect. Also consider that reading the statement to yourself can be drastically different than actually saying it out

loud. So it may help to read it aloud to a trusted friend or partner, Engle says.

Should you approach a difficult conversation any differently with a manager than with a colleague? Not really, Engle says, noting that the concept and strategy remain the same, although the stakes certainly are higher when confronting a supervisor. In either case, it helps to schedule a specific time for such conversations; you want to be sure you're fully prepared, plus it's not fair to catch someone completely off guard with a

spur-of-the-moment conversation, she says.

There's always the possibility that the person you're talking with will get defensive. They may refute everything you say or blame it on something or someone else.

"But you have to be able to hold the space and say, 'This is what I experience,'" Engle says. "You may have to continually redirect the conversation. If the person gets overwhelmed or emotional, it's

completely fine to either give him or her a moment or stop and schedule a follow-up meeting."

Training Is Critical

Many times companies need formal training programs to teach employees how to face issues constructively. Organizations also need to consider if they truly want an environment where people can dissent and express their opinions in a healthy way versus just pay lip service to those concepts, Engle says.

But if no training is available, employees can teach themselves; it just takes preparation and practice. And if they're still fearful of the consequences of candor, they should focus on this: Any real change in outcomes — both personally and professionally — requires healthy conversations. And you enhance your chances of affecting that change if you do it the right way at the right time.

"People make assumptions that things can't ever change," Engle says. "But unless someone tries, people — and companies — miss out on eliminating potentially damaging issues. In addition, lots of people leave jobs simply because they think something will never change. If you don't do anything, it's likely everything stays the same. And if what's happening right now isn't what you need to get where you want to go, you need to move the needle yourself."

The irony is that when asked, most employees want colleagues to share any issues and concerns and work toward solutions.

"Almost always, the answer is yes," Engle says. "Yet we still avoid confrontations. We all need to keep in mind that we connect more deeply with people who level with us. And when that happens, it's even easier to talk about real issues and challenges." **HR**



DEER HUNTERS: LOTS OF THEM MEANS LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES

Your largest customer base, more than likely, is made up of the local deer hunters. Sure, they buy rifles and ammo and knives — but what else can you sell them?

BY MATT CRAWFORD

Whitetails. Mule deer. Blacktails. Each autumn, it's estimated that more than 8 million Americans hunt those three species of deer in the United States. And each year, the vast majority of those hunters eagerly spend their hard-earned money on new gear and gadgets to bring along on their deer-hunting adventures.

Deer hunters represent the largest hunting clientele for any hunting retailer, by far. A report issued by the National Shooting Sports Foundation in 2018 found that of the \$27.1 billion spent annually by American hunters, an estimated \$15.7 billion was spent by deer hunters. That report showed deer hunters collectively spending more than \$766 million on rifles and nearly \$600 million on ammunition each year.

For retailers who cater to hunters, the fact that deer hunting is the most popular pursuit should come as no surprise. Walk into any hunting shop and you'll see guns, optics, ammo, footwear, scents and clothing well stocked and prominently displayed. Most counter associates are well-versed on the benefits of shooting a .270 and know how to correctly size a blaze orange vest for youth hunters. But there are a number of value-added accessories with healthy margins that retailers should consider adding to their offerings that deer hunters gobble up by the tens of thousands.

In the old days, hunting retailers might sell hand warmers and a selection of knives to cater to the deer-hunting crowd. As hunters have grown more demanding and sophisticated, many of the specialty products they want to bring along when they venture afield can best be purchased online. But it doesn't have to be that way. A wide variety of products take up minimal in-store space and offer good profit margins that retailers should consider carrying for the deer hunters who walk through their doors. Here are a few examples.





“Of the \$27.1 billion spent annually by American hunters [in 2018], an estimated \$15.7 billion was spent by deer hunters.”

Socks

For decades, hunters spent good money on their hunting boots but didn't pay much attention to their feet beyond that. They slid their feet into big, heavy, one-size-fits-all wool socks that bunched up or, worse yet, into cheap cotton socks better suited for the gym or leisurely strolls around town. In most places, deer hunters suffered through cold feet, particularly those who endured a few frozen hours huddled in ground blinds or tree stands.

Thankfully, socks have come a long way. Hunting-specific socks made with wool and blended with technical fabrics dominate the market today. Hunting socks made for specific hunting styles are available — whether that's stand-hunting on a cold Midwestern prairie, tracking through deep New England snow or moving fast and light through public lands in the Southeast.

Besides taking up minimal space and in addition to the usual keystone markup, socks offer retailers a chance to appeal to deer hunters throughout the year. A hunter who comes to appreciate good socks in November will likely be back for a pair during spring turkey season or for use in an early fall archery season.

Premium socks from manufacturers like Darn Tough, Smartwool and Farm to Feet typically have a retail price between \$20 and \$25. But that \$25 can go a long way. Darn Tough, for example, offers terrific support to its retailers with an unconditional guarantee for life, meaning if a hole or rip develops, Darn Tough will replace them for free at the point of sale. That gives customers yet another reason to return to the outdoor shop where the socks were purchased.

High-end socks, which are available in myriad sizes, also provide for great upsell potential for a hunter who just spent \$200 on a pair of boots.

Headlamps

Light and lamp technology sure has changed in recent years, with LED lighting units getting brighter, smaller and less expensive. The days of having to use massive lanterns to find your way out of the woods at night or track wounded ani-





“Smart retailers should simply steal from the big-box playbook.”

mals after sunset are long gone.

Outdoor equipment companies like Black Diamond or Petzl, both of which have proven track records of servicing specialty retailers, offer a wide assortment of affordable lighting options made to meet the demand of hard use.

Profit margins on headlamps are usually pretty solid — about 40% through most manufacturers. One of the good things about headlamps is their lack of seasonality, meaning there’s no need to mark them down at the end of the selling season.

Repair Kits

We’re not talking big money here, but consider carrying some adhesives, sealants, tapes and patches for hunters to use on packs and clothing.

Gear Aid, for instance, is a go-to brand for outdoor repair kits. While the sale of repair kits likely won’t keep the electricity bill paid, it gives hunters another reason to come into your store.



Food Products

Ever stand in the check-out line at a Dick’s Sporting Goods? Dick’s smartly makes customers wander past a display case of candy bars, gums and beef jerky to get to the counter. Smart retailers should simply steal from the big-box playbook, especially with beef jerky.

Hunters love jerky. It’s lightweight and packable, meaning they can throw it in their hunting backpack for a long day afield or just a few hours in the stand. It’s also relatively inexpensive, but





important for retailers is that a beef jerky display case takes up very little room.

Perhaps just as important: Beef jerky sales are on the way up. According to *Beef* magazine (a trade publication), meat as a convenient snack will drive sales in the upcoming year. The global meat snacks market was valued at \$7 billion in 2019, according to the magazine, with an anticipated growth of 7 to 8% in the next five years.

Jerky brands recognize the importance of the hook-and-bullet crowd. Bridgeford, for example, is a major sponsor of anglers on both the FLW and Bassmaster Tour.

While some of the bigger-named jerky brands may require high minimum orders and may not distribute to smaller one-off accounts, consider this: Just about every state has a homegrown jerky maker who's more than willing to work with the local sporting goods store to get products in front of consumers. If the bigger brands won't

work with your store — although many do — try the local jerky maker up the road.

First-Aid Kits

Back in the 1970s, participants in hunter education courses often had to make a small first-aid kit as part of the curriculum. Twelve-year-old boys would delight in filling up a Band-Aid box with items like surgical tape, a few cotton balls and maybe a small tin of salve. Luckily, the first-aid kit is another value-added product that has benefited from technological advances in recent years, and outdoor enthusiasts who appreciate a prepared mindset have come to embrace the idea of simply buying pre-made kits.

First-aid kit manufacturers have taken notice of hunters, hikers and other outdoor enthusiasts. Adventure Medical Kits, for instance, has an entire "Sportsman Series" designed to treat hunters in the field who suffer cuts, breaks, sprains and

other common injuries.

And, like beef jerky, there's plenty of growth potential there. A market study on first-aid kits indicate an annual growth rate in sales of about 5% over the next five years, going from \$280 million in US sales in 2019 to a projected \$370 million in 2024. Additionally, in light of the COVID pandemic, more Americans have embraced the preparedness lifestyle, as evidenced by the boom in 2020 of self-defense items and firearms.

First-aid kits are typically priced on size, with MSRPs ranging from \$25 to more than \$100.

Deer hunters are an eclectic bunch. Some are content to hunt in a box stand wearing a pair of jeans for a couple hours after work; others will spend the fall months on the road hunting high mountain tops, camping on their own and buying licenses in multiple states. Retailers who provide a mix of products to this diverse and large group of consumers should see growth in the store's sales. **HR**



5 Steps to Secure Your Business

Firearms compliance and security expert Bill Napier is a consultant with the National Shooting Sports Foundation and takes us under the hood of Operation Secure Store.

BY BILL MILLER

Most days — especially these days — you’re probably too busy to even take notice, but as the owner of an independent hunting/shooting sports retail store, you wear many hats. Quite possibly, you wear all the hats on the rack when it comes to managing your store. You are the general manager, the HR manager, the PR manager and the advertising manager. And oh, by the way, you’re also responsible for safety, security and risk management for your building, business, inventory and your people.

With all those responsibilities, time to eat, sleep, and stay acquainted with your family are rare commodities. Getting a handle on the most important and effective ways to secure your business may seem like a pipe dream. But there is hope and ultimately a feeling of confidence when your risk management plan is in place and running like clockwork.

Bill Napier is a firearms compliance and security expert with decades of experience in loss prevention with major retailers and other businesses. Today he operates his own consulting firm, and his experience gives him a deep understanding of the struggles of smaller retailers when it comes to securing their operations. He said that doing the right things is much easier if you have the wherewithal to hire an expert or pay someone else to do it for you, but with smaller operations, that’s seldom the case.

However, that doesn’t mean planning for and dealing with security issues is any less important for the smaller retailer. In many ways, it’s actually more important for you. The good news is that Napier offers five important loss prevention steps you can take that may take some time for you or your team but don’t have to cost you anything. In fact, they will save you big time should loss ultimately occur.

1 Review Your Risk Management Plan

“The first tip,” Napier said, “is we recommend every FFL at least annually review their risk management plan. In that plan will be things like, ‘What do we do in the event of a burglary?’ ‘What do we do in the event of a power outage?’ ‘What is the procedure for shelter-in-place, like we are seeing now in many places?’”

With the COVID-19 pandemic and the NSSF’s efforts to ensure firearms and ammunition retailers are considered essential businesses, the list of what-ifs has grown substantially. Napier continued, “What happens if we are prevented from going back to our businesses? What did you do before you left? How did you secure the building? What’s the program to take care of your team to stay in touch? Situational communication ... all of these things are important.”



2 Check Physical Security Systems

The annual review should also include checks of the physical security equipment. Confirm the recommended (and depending on the jurisdiction, required) equipment like gates, locks, safes, burglar alarms, closed-circuit TV and external barriers are all working properly and have been maintained as they should be. Napier says, “It’s much better to discover something that isn’t working in a review than it is after an event. It’s best to check all of those physical deterrents on at least a monthly schedule.

“So, you go in, put your system in test, call the alarm company and say, ‘Hey, I want to test my equipment, make sure everything is recording properly.’ With your video equipment, make sure that it’s recording properly at the right speeds, that your storage is good. Where are you storing? How are you storing? How long are you storing? Those types of things.”



3 Train Your Team

The next vital step takes a lesson from law enforcement and the military — train, train, train, then train some more. Make sure that your entire team is trained to your standards. Napier said, “I was always told that with rote memory, it takes 10,000 repetitions to ingrain into your brain so that you automatically do a task rather than having to think about it and then do it. So, the same things apply here. Repetition, train, train, train.

“In my business, here are my standards. When you’re a new hire, I’m going to train you. As you work at the business, we’re going to train together and we’re going to test our programs. We’re going to test our equipment. We’re going to test everything together so that we’re constantly learning, constantly in step with each other instead of scrambling to figure it out after an incident. If we train to it, it’s going to be second nature versus — you know, hoping it just works out.”



4 Partner With Law Enforcement

Law enforcement branches, from the local police department and sheriff’s office to the state police to the FBI and ATF, offer educational and business training services. Taking advantage of these resources will help you and your team prevent and train for incidents. They will also make the introductions and partnerships you’ll need should there ever be a loss.

Napier said, “Get to know these folks before something happens instead of after it happens or during an event. You want to be able to pick up the phone if you need advice or if you need help or if you need to see what’s going on in the neighborhood. Meet your local police officers and the local ATF folks. They can provide information to you as readily as you can provide information to them. You want to know them before anything happens so that you’re partnering, you’re talking, you’re exchanging information.”

5 Explore Operation Secure Store

The National Shooting Sports Foundation created a cooperative partnership with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to deliver Opera-

tion Secure Store (OSS). It’s a comprehensive initiative to provide FFL holders with education on solutions and services that enhance operational security and aid in identifying potential risks, protecting interests, and limiting disruption of operations should a breach occur.

Not only is OSS important to you as a retailer, but the resources to which it gives access are beneficial to public safety and to the outside communities impacted by these crimes. Taking an active role in prevention of theft and the resulting guns in the hands of criminals is an excellent public relations boon for your store and the industry as a whole. It shows we’re concerned and proactive in prevention.

Napier, and a number of other consultants, were deeply involved in the development of Operation Secure Store. He said, “We’re very proud of this, and it’s no cost. There are great tools here. Even though this is a high-power initiative, there’s no charge for many of the tools at operationsecurestore.org.

“At the core of OSS, there is a self-risk assessment. It’s nine steps that you go through and look at your business from front to back, look at your computer security, look at your parking lot security, look at your risk management practices. You can go in there and see, ‘Yeah, I’m good here. Wait a minute. I’ve got a hole in the game plan here; I need to fix this.’

“And it doesn’t take a lot of time. You can delegate it to other team members that you’re building to help you complete. But then once you’re done, if you say, ‘Oh, heck. I need some help with a particular area,’ there are free resources in OSS.”

Napier cited an example of a broken storefront window.

“What happens if we are prevented from going back to our businesses? What did you do before you left? How did you secure the building? What’s the program to take care of your team to stay in touch?” — Bill Napier

The kind of questions asked in the OSS self-assessment reveal what you need to know before you need to know it. He said, “You ought to know that Jim and Mary down the street own the local glass shop, and they can be on site and get me boarded up until the windows are ordered and arrive — that kind of thing,” he said.

The driver behind development of the Operation Secure Store initiatives was the increasing amount of losses



↑ The NSSF’s Operation Secure Store resources are mostly available at no cost. Visit operationsecurestore.org and take the self-risk assessment.



experienced by FFLs. According to ATF data, nationwide FFL losses to burglaries and larcenies jumped by 60% from 2014 to 2017. That was a just cause for concern.

The response of the ATF was two-pronged. Napier said, “Today, the way the ATF responds to firearms burglaries is unparalleled. They respond if it’s one gun or a hundred guns, and they put all their resources into the task. These guys are

The second prong is *OperationSecureStore.org*. Napier said, “We rolled it out a couple of different ways. The NSSF is reaching out to as many FFLs as possible starting with 40,000 kits sent last year.

“It went out in regional meetings where the ATF invites FFLs from their geographic region. So, there will be an office in a major city, and they will reach out to 100, 150, 200, however many the room will accommodate and say, ‘Hey,

Napier and the rest of the NSSF team conducted 24 such sessions in 2018 and increased to 28 in 2019. They were scheduled for 30 in 2020, before the COVID-19 lockdowns began.

The bottom line is a good one so far. From 2017 to 2019 there was a 40% decrease in FFL losses to burglary and larceny (shoplifting). The one-two-punch of optimized enforcement and education of dealers seems to be working.

Small, Normal Things Make a Big Difference

In many ways, exactly the same things that you do to attract customers will also deter the bad guys. Napier concluded, “Bad guys start forming their opinions as they are driving around casing the joint. They’re looking for opportunities to exploit or leverage a weakness.”

Napier explained, “We call it rings of influence. From the start – the street is a ring. Are all the lights working? Is the signage fresh and crisp? Coming into your parking lot is a ring. Is it clean? Are there no holes in it? Are things clearly marked? Coming inside your building is a ring. Are the rest rooms cleaned? Are the trashcans emptied? Is there a clear path to fire exits? All



© Bill Conway

really good at what they do, and the bad guys are starting to figure that out. It’s like, ‘Man we better not mess with the gun store because the ATF will be coming for us.’

“Of course, it’s a collaboration among local law enforcement, the sheriff’s office, state patrols and so on, but the bad guys get locked up.”

NSSF also matches ATF reward offers up to \$5,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those guilty of firearm retailer thefts and burglaries. This is a prime example of industry and law enforcement working together to prevent crime and hold those who commit crimes responsible.

↑ Those long racks of guns on display are a tempting target. It goes without saying that you should lock them up during non-business hours. Gun thefts come with a long set of problems and hassles.

why don’t you come spend a few hours with us. We’re going to talk about compliance, we’re going to talk about some of the law changes if there are any. Then oh by the way, the NSSF guys and gals are going to talk to you about how to reduce your risk and talk as a businessperson, how you can reduce your risk and do it without spending a lot of money.”



those things tell your customers it’s a good place to be. They tell your employees it’s a good place to be. They tell the bad guys it’s not a good place to be. When they see you’re paying attention, they are going to go somewhere else.”

Attention to the small steps will lead to big victories. By preventing the bad guys from coming in the first place, you’ll maintain your margins and profit by keeping insurance rates from increasing. You’ll avoid missing sales because of the business being shut down for investigations and because inventory was stolen. **HR**

“Today, the way the ATF responds to firearms burglaries is unparalleled. They respond if it’s one gun or a hundred guns, and they put all their resources into the task.”



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BY GORDY KRAHN



APEX GEAR SPLIT•GRIP FOLDING BOW STAND

The Apex Gear Split•Grip folding bow stand holds split-limb bows safe and secure at the range or in the field, providing easy access while keeping expensive bows handy and out of the mud. Its folding design allows shooters to carry the stand in a bow case or backpack when not in use. The Split•Grip works with thick or thin limbs and will fit most split-limb bow models — soft rubber-lined jaws providing a strong hold and protecting bow limbs. Its ultra-tough construction will withstand heavy use season after season. MSRP: \$23.99.

www.apex-gear.com



BEAR & SON CUTLERY SINGLE-BLADE PEN KNIFE

The Bear & Son Cutlery 3.5-inch one-blade pen-pocket knife is lightweight, easy to open and fits comfortably in front or back pockets. An improved version of the two-blade Model 79 pen knife from the 1980s and '90s, this single-blade knife features a 2.25-inch drop-point blade made of high carbon stainless steel for its proven ability to resist rust, sharpen easily and retain a keen edge. This classic design with a modern appearance offers both new and experienced knife owners a quality, built-in-America pocketknife at an affordable price. Available with a white smooth bone or cocobolo handle.

MSRP: \$33.99 to \$39.24. www.bearandsoncutlery.com



KLYMIT LUXE CAMPING PILLOW

For outback hunters who want a little creature comfort when setting up camp in the great outdoors Klymit's Luxe camping pillow's hybrid-fill design combines the cushioning of air with the lofty support of polyester fill. It cradles the head for supportive, stable sleeping and the soft outer material delivers all-night comfort. The generously sized air bladder is wrapped in a quilted, soft-touch fabric sleeve for next-to-skin luxury. And the best part: Just remove the quilted cover and toss it in the washer/dryer to clean. And while it's almost as big as that pillow at home, it weighs only 6.2 ounces and packs surprisingly small — just 3x7 inches. MSRP: \$39.95.

www.klymit.com



CCI CLEAN-22 PINK AMMO

It's a win-win situation — keep that favorite rimfire rifle running cleaner and help fight breast cancer with CCI's new Clean-22 Pink ammo. A portion of the proceeds from every box sold goes directly to finding a cure. Like other Clean-22 loads, its exclusive polymer bullet coating greatly reduces copper and lead fouling in the barrel without leaving a residue. It also cuts lead buildup in suppressors by 60 to 80 percent and comes in a 400-round bulk bottle that's perfect for long days at the range. With dependable CCI primers and consistent propellant, Clean-22 Pink provides flawless cycling through semi-automatics and all other .22 LR firearms. MSRP: \$29.95/400-count bulk bottle. www.cci-ammunition.com



BUTLER CREEK FEATHERLIGHT SLING

Why not upgrade that old shotgun or rifle sling with a new Butler Creek Featherlight sling — made of lightweight foam for breathability and all-day comfort? Cut-out slots reduce trapped heat and grip the shoulder, and a large thumb loop attached to the bottom of the sling further helps to keep it from slipping off the shoulder while navigating rough terrain. The Butler Creek Featherlight sling adjusts from 22 to over 36 inches, is 3 inches wide and has two built-in cartridge holders that provide immediate access to ammo. MSRP: \$24.95 to \$34.95.

www.butlercreek.com





CHAMPION TARGET WHEEL

Looking for a great target shooting experience? Then you've come to the right place. Designed to provide hours of shooting fun, the Champion Target Wheel holds nine VisiChalk targets and rotates when shot. Fun for shooters of all ages, the Target Wheel is a challenging, interactive way to hone shooting skills while enjoying the explosive reaction of VisiChalk targets. So, load up the spokes of the Target Wheel, find a comfortable rest and let the games begin. The Champion Target Wheel includes 18 VisiChalk targets and three extra holders. MSRP: \$29.45. www.championtarget.com



HOPPE'S DELUXE GUN CLEANING KIT

Hoppe's Deluxe gun cleaning kit packs versatility and convenience in an attractive, heavy-duty presentation box featuring a dark stain finish and strong finger joints. And the kit is packed with some of Hoppe's best: No. 9 gun bore cleaner, lubricating oil and patches, three-piece brass rod with four slotted ends and five phosphor bronze brushes to fit .22- and .30-caliber rifles, .38-caliber pistols and 20- and 12-gauge shotguns. It also comes with a silicone cleaning cloth and Hoppe's "Guide to Gun Care" booklet. MSRP: \$49.95. www.hoppes.com

BUSHNELL PRO 400 LUMEN RECHARGEABLE HEADLAMP

Hunters are always in need of a good light — one that won't let them down when day turns to night and there is still a task at hand. The Bushnell Pro 400 lumen multi-color headlamp has an integrated USB charging cord that connects to an included rechargeable lithium battery so the user can charge on the go. It's equipped with five white light modes: high spot, low spot, high flood, low flood and a red mode to protect the user's night vision, with up to 34 hours of run time on low flood. MSRP: \$34.99. www.bushnell.com



SMARTWOOL MEN'S PHD HUNTING MEDIUM CREW SOCKS

When it comes to keeping feet warm, dry and comfortable, wool is king, and Smartwool's medium cushioned PhD Hunt Medium Crew socks sit on the comfort throne — with their Virtually Seamless toe, soft and breathable itch-free, stink-free Merino blend and Indestructawool technology for added durability. This 8.5-inch sock has body-mapped mesh zones for optimum moisture management and maximum breathability, an Achilles strap for extra protection and warmth and extra stretch in the leg to accommodate a wide range of boot heights. Made in the USA from 66% Merino wool, 32% nylon and 2% Elastane. MSRP: \$26.95. www.smartwool.com



CRKT CHEHALEM FOLDING KNIFE

For an inspired designer, even discarded tools from the neighbor's garage can spark a big idea. For example, antique hammer heads influence the handle design of the Chehalem everyday carry folding knife from CRKT. But while its stainless steel hammered like handle might be fit to become an heirloom, the knife's sleek 2.77-inch satin-finish clip-point blade perfectly balances the antique look and is highly versatile with a deep belly and fine point for detailed cutting. The Chehalem's handle also has a prominent thumb hole that defines the satin-finished blade which, once opened, locks securely in place. MSRP: \$44.99. www.crkt.com





MOULTRIE QUICK CAMERA BAG

The Moultrie Quick camera bag can transport up to three trail cameras or modems in its padded enclosure. Adjustable dividers to keep everything in its proper place and three zippered external accessory pouches provide extra storage space for tools, cords, batteries and accessories. Mesh interior pockets are ideal for storing smaller items and the user can organize up to 20 SD cards in the zippered top access panel. A padded carry strap with a clip on one end distributes weight and has an outward facing MOLLE system for added carrying capacity. MSRP: \$39.99. www.moultriefeeders.com



ROCKY MOUNTAIN HUNTING CALLS CARTRIDGE PREDATOR CALLS

The Cartridge Call series of mouth-blown predator calls from Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls are compact and handy so hunters can carry them anywhere. Made from solid aluminum stock to the dimensions of .223 Rem., .22-250 Rem. and .243 Win. cartridges, each call is machined to high tolerances on CNC lathes and then anodized in two colors to match the color of a brass and copper finish. A metal “voice” is inserted into the aluminum body, so the user blows on the bullet end to create the realistic sounds of animals in distress. Each call includes a metal ring to connect to a key ring or lanyard. MSRP: \$9.95/Each; \$27.95/Three-pack.

www.rockymountainhuntingcalls.com



THERMACELL PATIO SHIELD METAL MOSQUITO REPELLER

The ThermoCell Patio Shield metal mosquito repeller effectively drives back mosquitoes by creating a 15-foot zone of protection from these nasty biting pests — great for use at home or the hunting camp. Easy-to-use, its sleek brushed metal design will elevate any patio or deck decor while keeping away pesky mosquitoes from biting and bothering guests. No spray and no mess, the Patio Shield is scent-free and DEET-free. It is compact and fuel-powered with no open flame or annoying smoke. Each package contains one Patio Shield repeller, three repellent mats and one fuel cartridge. MSRP: \$34.99.

www.thermacell.com



MTM CASE-GARD IN-SAFE HANDGUN STORAGE CASES

Designed to optimize storage in the most popular size gun safes, the MTM In-Safe Handgun Storage Case features a protective base composed of soft, closed-cell foam pad, an attractive slimline shape and two snap latches. Users can maximize storage space by stacking the cases. These storage cases are also ideal for storing jewelry, coins, watches, birth certificates, passports, etc.

Sold as a three-pack unit, the In-Safe Handgun Storage Case is available in two sizes: 9-inch for standard 1911 and smaller handguns and 12-inch for larger handguns. MSRP: \$16.95/9-inch three-pack; \$18.95/12-inch three pack). www.mtmcase-gard.com



SABRE REALTREE EDGE COMPACT PEPPER SPRAY WITH CLIP

Sabre’s maximum strength pepper spray formula is backed by the company’s in-house high-performance liquid chromatography laboratory, which guarantees maximum stopping power, eliminating the 30% failure rate experienced with some other pepper spray brands. It has a four-year shelf life from the date of manufacture and an impressive 10-foot range. One spray can contains 35 bursts in a powerful stream that reduces wind blowback and the clip option ensures that users can keep the spray handy while on the go — its locking top safety preventing accidental discharge. Dressed in Realtree Edge camo for the outdoor enthusiast, Sabre pepper spray includes a free training video. MSRP: \$9.99/.75 ounces.

www.sabrered.com





PRIMOS STRETCH FIT CAMO GLOVES

Total concealment while hunting means wearing camo from head to toe — including those reflective hands that seem to be constantly moving about — even when the weather is steamy warm. Primos' lightweight stretch-fit gloves with sure-grip palms are cool and breathable and come with an extended cuff for total concealment, which makes them an excellent choice for early season bowhunting and turkey hunting. Primos stretch fit gloves come in Realtree Edge and Mossy Oak Original Bottomland camo patterns and one size fits most. MSRP: \$19.99. www.primos.com



SEAL 1 GUN CLEANING KIT

National Tactical Officers Association member tested and recommended, Seal 1's All Rifle and Pistol gun cleaning kit includes the supplies to thoroughly clean rifles and pistols from calibers .22 to .45 as well as .410 and 28-gauge shotguns. Each kit contains 25 .22-.270, .270-.35, .38-.45, .410 and 28-gauge pre-saturated cleaning patches and 10 cleaning patches for those same bores, along with a 1-ounce jar of Seal 1 CLP Plus Paste, a 2-ounce bottle of Seal 1 CLP Plus liquid, two each cotton swabs, four each 6x6-inch pre-saturated clothes/wipes, one each 12x12-inch microfiber cloth and one each nylon tactical brush. MSRP: \$36.99. www.seal1.net



FEDERAL SOLID CORE AMMO

Stop dangerous game such as wild hogs and bears in their tracks with Federal Premium Solid Core ammunition. This all-new line of handgun loads with its tough, flat-nose lead bullet, holds together while blowing through bone, providing high weight retention and deep penetration. Its Syntech polymer jacket technology eliminates lead fouling and reduces friction without costly features such as wax rings and gas checks and reduces the friction and leading that plague hard cast bullets. Federal Premium Solid Core ammunition is available in the most popular handgun hunting calibers. MSRP: \$28.99 to \$39.99. www.federalpremium.com

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Fuel the Fire: Why Your Social Media Efforts Now Will Reap Future Benefits

Guns are practically selling themselves right now — but that doesn't mean you should stop marketing on social media.

NSSF
The Firearm Industry
Trade Association

BY KARRIE CHRISTEN

The year 2020 will go down in history. For the firearm industry, it was already destined to be a big year with so much at stake in the November elections. Add in a global pandemic, food and toilet paper shortages, riots and community unrest, and this is one year no one will soon forget.

All these issues have resulted in most retail FFLs seeing a surge in sales. In fact, many retail FFLs are finding it difficult to keep enough stock on their shelves. Some are even saying it's almost as if you don't

even need to do anything to attract business these days — but even if that's true right here, right now, it won't hold true forever.

As busy as it may be for your store or range now, and as many new customers as you're seeing despite minimal advertising or outreach on your part, now is the time to double down on smart marketing, no matter how well your business is doing or what your business model looks like. You may never get an opportunity like this again, so it's important to create the fuel that's going to keep your business running hot for years.

The professional advice I give my FFLs is to create social media content your tribe will eat up, and then get that content in front of as many of your ideal customers as possible. That does not mean simply putting up an ad to sell something. Content is step No. 1 in building any solid marketing strategy. That content is what builds relation-



ships with your viewers, and once you've done that, then you can effectively sell to them because they trust you and will likely have faith in your product as well.

Who's in Your Tribe?

First, you need to know who your tribe is and the type of content they already can't get enough of. Here are questions to ask yourself — or, better yet, the people you serve.

What Are Your People Into?

- What are the general topics they can't seem to get tired of?
- How deep can you break down popular topics?
- Where do they spend their free time on social media?
- What do they watch on YouTube?
- What private groups do they belong to?
- What public figures do they follow?
- Where do they spend money right before they spend money with you? Or after you?
- How else do they spend money?

People love information and they love to be entertained. People also enjoy connecting with others who think the same way they do, so these are the people we love to work with as business owners because it makes work joyful. When it comes to creating meaningful social media content, what we're really doing is working to attract people to us so that we have an avenue to building a relationship with them.

You want, of course, for those relationships to affect your bottom line. That means that creating content without a plan to create revenue is where businesses fail.

One of the easiest ways to do this with social media posts is to always ask them to do something at the end of your video or your article. Your goal is to gain as much interaction as possible because this helps tell the various social media channels to push your content to more people. Here are some actions you can ask your followers to take:

- "Like our Facebook page to see more videos like this one."
- "Join our private group where we share the top tips on scopes/ammunition/treestands/etc."
- "Come in, say hello, and get our free 2nd Amendment decal."

You can also ask your regular viewers a question that relates to the video "Did you try product XYZ and get a different result?" "Do you take the time to break in a new rifle like the one we just showed you?" "What do you do with your old

"You need to know who your tribe is and the type of content they already can't get enough of."



hunting garments when you decide to upgrade with the parka from ABC we just highlighted?" Tagging someone who should watch your video is also helpful, and calls to action such as "Download our guide to help you install an M-Lok quad rail" further engage your audience.

I emphasized video use here because marketing and human behavior trends have shown that video is the best content there is when it comes to social media engagement. However, everyone has content styles they're comfortable with, and video might not be your strong suit. If you're not comfortable on camera, you can use software like EasyVSL that lets you take written content and create a video with a voiceover for only \$97.

These are just a few of the things you can do to step up your marketing game — especially if you've neglected it lately. Get creative, feed your tribe the content they love and be consistent

with your social media interactions. Sales may be booming right now but doing this kind of marketing work to build long-term relationships with people who love what you love is what creates profits now and for years to come. **HR**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karrie Christen is a social media marketing expert specializing in helping FFLs get the business they want by learning how to leverage the power and affordability of social media marketing. She is the owner of The Client Attraction Formula and a co-founder of FFL Consultants. She is also the author of the upcoming book *Stop Shooting Your Marketing in The Foot: A Guide for Retail & Range FFLs*. Follow her at [facebook.com/karrielovesmarketing](https://www.facebook.com/karrielovesmarketing).



HUNTING RETAILER NEW PRODUCTS

BY GORDY KRAHN



FOXPRO GUNFIRE KIT

For predator hunters who like to work the graveyard shift, the Foxpro Gunfire Kit is a great tool for turning night into day. This all-in-one gun-mounted light kit features the Gunfire light, batteries, battery charger, wired quick access gun stock remote, scope/light mounting bracket, pistol grip light holder and extension shrouds – all contained in an included EVA foam soft shell case with a handle so hunters can keep everything safe and handy when navigating the night. The all-metal Gunfire is extremely lightweight, built to handle the toughest in-field conditions, and users can quickly switch between its three different colored LEDs by rotating the color selector switch without having to take their eyes off the target. MSRP: \$249.95. www.gofoxpro.com

SCENT CRUSHER COVERT CLOSET

Scent Crusher's new Covert Closet is an effective scent control solution that eliminates odor-causing bacteria from hunting garments and gear using the company's battery-operated Halo o-zone generator either in the bag compartment or on the unit's garment rack. Made from techno-lite fabric, it utilizes heavy-duty reversed zippers and a weather-resistant base to maintain a complete seal and has an insulated exterior pocket for keeping snacks cool, an ozone-free exterior pocket, heavy-duty roller wheels with reinforced pull straps and a rigid rack support system for speedy setup. The Covert Closet can be used as a rolling bag when on the go and an enclosed closet when stationary. Its rack folds back into the bag for easy storage. MSRP: \$349.99. www.scentcrusher.com



CARBON EXPRESS MAXIMA TRIAD HUNTING ARROW

The new-for-2020 Maxima Triad utilizes Carbon Express' Tri-Spine technology in an extra-small .166-inch diameter hunting shaft designed for performance-driven bowhunters. The Maxima Triad is constructed using Carbon Express' Redzone technology, where the front and rear sections of the arrow are comprised of a stiffer carbon material, while the center is one-third weaker for improved recovery out of the bow – with less than one-third the oscillation of single-spine arrows. The arrow's extra small diameter means thicker walls for more durability, decreased wind drift and exceptional penetration. Premium components include a BullDog nock collar, LaunchPad precision nock and an exclusive 97-grain, two-part in-outsert system that guards the front of the shaft to create exceptional FOC (front of center) balance. MSRP: \$279/12-pack of bare shafts. www.feradyne.com

PROLIX XTRA-T DRY LUBE

PrOlix, a pioneer of "all-in-one" gun care cleaner/lubricants, is shipping its products with a new look – along with some changes to its lineup. In addition to the new look, its most popular-size PrOlix Cleaner/Lubricant in the 16-ounce bottle with an adjustable nozzle and trigger-spray cap will be offered in an easier-to-handle 1.25 fluid ounce bottle. PrOlix Xtra-T Dry Lube takes the place of grease and will provide a dry, high-tech compatible addition to cleaning solvent products. It is a highly refined natural product with inert additives and is thicker than most cleaning solvents. Xtra-T removes carbon, copper, lead, shotgun plastic residues and blackpowder, and will not damage wood, freeze or flash off. MSRP: \$7.99/1.25 fluid ounces. www.prolixlubricant.com



EASTON 9MM CROSSBOW ARROW

The new 9mm crossbow arrow from Easton Archery is manufactured using USA-built carbon that generates maximum performance from today's advanced crossbows for a high level of accuracy and consistency. Easton's exclusive Acu-Carbon is a continuous-fed, single-die manufacturing process developed and produced at its Utah factory. The Acu-Carbon mechanized method delivers shaft-to-shaft uniformity and is the key to more uniform, tighter groups. Lightweight Acu-Carbon blends speed and accuracy into the ideal mix for today's crossbow hunter. Shaft weight is 8.9 GPI and high FOC 61-grain 9mm crossbow inserts are included. MSRP: \$99/dozen fletched. www.eastonarchery.com





EAA CHURCHILL 220 SEMIAUTO FIELD SHOTGUN

European American Armory Corporation, importers of select quality and affordable handguns, rifles and shotguns, has added to its growing Churchill line of EAA designed and Akkar produced shotguns. The 20-gauge Churchill 220 Field semiauto's polymer forend and stock and lightweight aircraft aluminum receiver combine to provide years of dependable use in the field and on the range, and its excellent balance assures a controlled swing for smooth follow-through shots. The Churchill 220 Field shotgun comes with three screw-in chokes and is available with a 26- or 28-inch vented-rib barrel with a bead front sight. It is also available in a Youth model with a 24-inch barrel and stock inserts. MSRP: \$414. www.eaacorp.com



BENCHMADE STEEP COUNTRY HUNTING KNIFE

Designed to hit the sweet spot when it comes to hunter preference, the newly redesigned Steep Country from Benchmade is a versatile fixed-blade hunting knife made to perform throughout any season on any big game species. High-visibility textured Santoprene handles make it easy to keep track of the knife when things start to get Western and provide ample grip in slippery conditions. Designed with precision in mind, the updated blade thickness and jimping location provide effortless and safe knife work when field dressing big game. Overall length is 7.76 inches and blade length is 3.54 inches. MSRP: \$130. www.benchmade.com



KENT CARTRIDGE FASTEEL 2.0 LINE EXTENSION

Kent Cartridge has upgraded its Fasteel 2.0 Precision Plated Steel line of non-toxic waterfowl loads with three new 12-gauge offerings – 3.5-inch 1.375 ounce 1,550 fps No.1s and No. 3s and 2.75-inch 1.25-ounce 1,300 fps No. 3s. The foundation of Fasteel 2.0 begins with a high-performance base-wad to optimize functioning in today's most popular semiauto firearms, allowing for fast follow-up shots and ensuring reliability and consistency. The loads use zinc-plated shot and nickel-plated heads to provide added corrosion protection, and improvements in powder technologies have allowed for increased speeds on select loads, while maintaining pattern uniformity and managing recoil. Custom blended, low-flash powders provide consistent, clean-burning performance and maintain SAAMI standards for pressure and velocity. MSRP: \$17.95-\$26.95/box of 25. www.kentcartridge.com

MUZZY SHANK EXPANDABLE BROADHEAD

Muzzy Broadheads, the maker of effective and affordable fixed-blade and hybrid broadheads, has introduced the company's first expandable – the 1.75-inch diameter Shank two-blade broadhead. Constructed around the fortitude of an aluminum ferrule, this deep-penetrating expandable produces devastating wounds without significant energy loss thanks to an agile and easy deploying over-the-top blade system. When combined, the head's acute blade angle and classic Muzzy trocar tip smash through bone and slice flesh for superior performance and massive blood loss. Its tapered ferrule and concealed blade system combine to produce a low-profile inflight diameter of just .75 inches to yield field point like accuracy. MSRP: \$39.99/five-pack. www.feradyne.com



HATSAN HYDRA QE AIR RIFLE

Hatsan's Hydra QE air rifle features the company's Versi-Cal technology (VCT) interchangeable caliber system – .177, .22 and .25 – that allows shooters to exchange barrels using a single thumb screw. The VCT system couples a caliber-specific receiver and barrel into a single interchangeable module that allows a scope to remain mounted and zeroed with each caliber used. The Hydra QE utilizes Hatsan's S/Roto-Index system – a caliber specific self-indexing rotary

magazine made from a lightweight-yet-durable synthetic polymer, and each module features a QuietEnergy shrouded barrel that reduces report by up to 50 percent. A fourth module is available for use with crossbow arrows. Other features include a laser engraved Turkish walnut stock, Monte Carlo cheek rest and adjustable rubber butt pad. MSRP: \$399.99. www.hatsanairgunsusa.com



WINCHESTER .22 LR WILDCAT SUPER SPEED AMMO

Winchester's new Wildcat Super Speed .22 Long Rifle ammunition utilizes the versatile copper-plated Dynapoint hollow-point bullet, pushing it at a velocity of 1,300 fps, which provides more energy on target and optimizes cycling in semiautomatic firearms. Winchester Wildcat ammunition is manufactured to high standards with reliable priming and uniform powder charges and bullet dimensions to yield consistent accuracy from one box to the next. Copper-plated bullets, clean-burning powder and primers contribute to maintaining clean firearm actions for reliable function. Wildcat Super Speed rimfire ammunition is an excellent choice for plinking, target practice and hunting varmints and small game. MSRP: \$8/box of 100. www.winchester.com



Liability in the New Age

Society is more litigious than ever. How do you keep customers and workers safe while limiting your store's liability?

BY BOB ROBB

In the backs of their minds, all small business owners are constantly thinking about liability — or should be. You never know when a gremlin is going to jump out from behind a wall, and BAM! A customer tries to remove merchandise from high up on a shelf and drops it on their own head, a vendor slips on a wet floor, an employee cuts themselves opening packaging, whatever, and before you know it, they're talking lawyers and lawsuits.

Did you know that, according to the National Safety Council (www.nsc.org), in America a worker is injured on the job every seven seconds? The top three causes are overextension (lifting or lowering, repetitive motions), 33.54%; contacts with objects and equipment, 26%; and slips, trips and falls, 25.8%. Taking it a step further, according to the National Retail Foundation (www.nrffoundation.org), the most common reported customer injuries are, slips and falls from liquids in aisles; faulty staircases; broken or poorly maintained escalators and elevators; merchandise falling from shelves; insufficient lighting in parking lots; revolving door breakdowns; and cuts from showcases and jagged shelves.

Legally, when a retail store opens its storefront to the public, customers — legally referred to as invitees — are invited into the retail space by an implied invitation. Invitees can also include contractors, salespeople, repairmen, truckers delivering merchandise, wholesalers, and anyone else who has entered the storefront to conduct business. Premises liability law protects invitees by requiring property owners to exercise a reasonable duty of care to maintain a safe retail environment for all invitees.

In a premises liability case involving retail store negligence, the plaintiff must prove that the retail store had failed to exercise reasonable care. Reasonable care for a retail store means the store has done everything in its power to prevent foreseeable injury or harm. If a customer is harmed, it is often because of retail store negligence. Usually, retail stores will have safety policies in place to prevent harm to the public. When the store does not follow or violates their own safety policies, that violation is the equivalent of being negligent. When a store is found negligent, they are liable for their customer's damages.

In today's world, this premise of negligence has been stretched to include protections for both employees and customers from contracting COVID-19. In late May, Jay Porter, with the law firm of Bradley, Arant, Boulton & Cummings, LLP, spoke to the question of the "changing face of liability in the age of COVID-19" during the National Shooting Sports Foundation's (www.nssf.org) online seminar for members to talk about liability. During that seminar, Porter reinforced the belief of many that, even before any liability issues have been raised, corporate law firms have already begun assembling both potential offenses and defenses regarding COVID-19 claims against businesses. He also stressed that retailers must understand and follow any and all government regulations, whether you agree with them or think they're crazy. This includes, but is not limited to, social distancing, limiting the number of customers allowed inside the store at any one time, regular disinfecting of the workplace, having hand sanitizer available for customers and employees, and encouraging or requiring employees and customers to wear masks. Those that fail to follow accepted guidelines instantly become potential targets for a lawsuit.

In a May 1, 2020 article in *The National Law Review* (www.natlawreview.com) entitled "Best Practices for Limiting Liability When You Re-open," it is recommended business follow all applicable guidelines from not just state and federal governments, but also OSHA, the CDC, and even the World Health Organization. In this regard it's better to do too much than not enough. They also recommend implementing one-way aisles, reviewing shipping and receiving operations to make them as contact-free and safe as possible; closing breakrooms and other common areas; requiring PPE appropriate to the workplace; and offering more shifts with fewer workers or other staffing changes to limit interpersonal contact.

Of course, a customer or employee that claims they contracted COVID-19 from your shop has to prove that claim. Because the risk is high, as are the possible effects of contracting the virus, only by rigorously following all the required guidelines can you hope to protect yourself in the event someone sues you.

Lest you think someone suing you claiming they caught COVID-19 while doing business with you — or for tripping over their own two feet walking into your store, or pulling a heavy box down on their own heads even though a sign right next to it says "Do not touch merchandise on this shelf, ask for assistance first," would be impossible to prove, check out this link: www.legalzoom.com/articles/top-ten-frivolous-lawsuits — and have your memory refreshed about past frivolous lawsuits where plaintiffs were awarded huge cash sums, or at the very least cost the defendants untold time and money in legal fees spent defending themselves despite their own obvious stupidity. The famous 1992 suit where Ohioan Stella Liebeck spilled hot McDonald's coffee on herself, sued, and was awarded \$160,000 in compensatory damages and \$2.7 million in punitive damages, is just one such example.

There's no doubt we live in a litigious society like none we've ever seen before. And that Proverbs 21:31 philosophy — do your best, prepare for the worst, trust God to bring victory — is one that all small business owners should take to heart. At the same time, we should heed the words of Benjamin Franklin, who, in his 1757 edition of *Poor Richard's Almanac*, said, "God helps them that help themselves."

How are you adapting to the "new normal?" What steps are you taking to limit potential liability issues in your store? Drop me a note at editor@grandviewoutdoors.com, I'd love to hear about it and share it with our readers. **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.



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