

HUNTING

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November/December 2022 | Camo & Apparel



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Found on page 4

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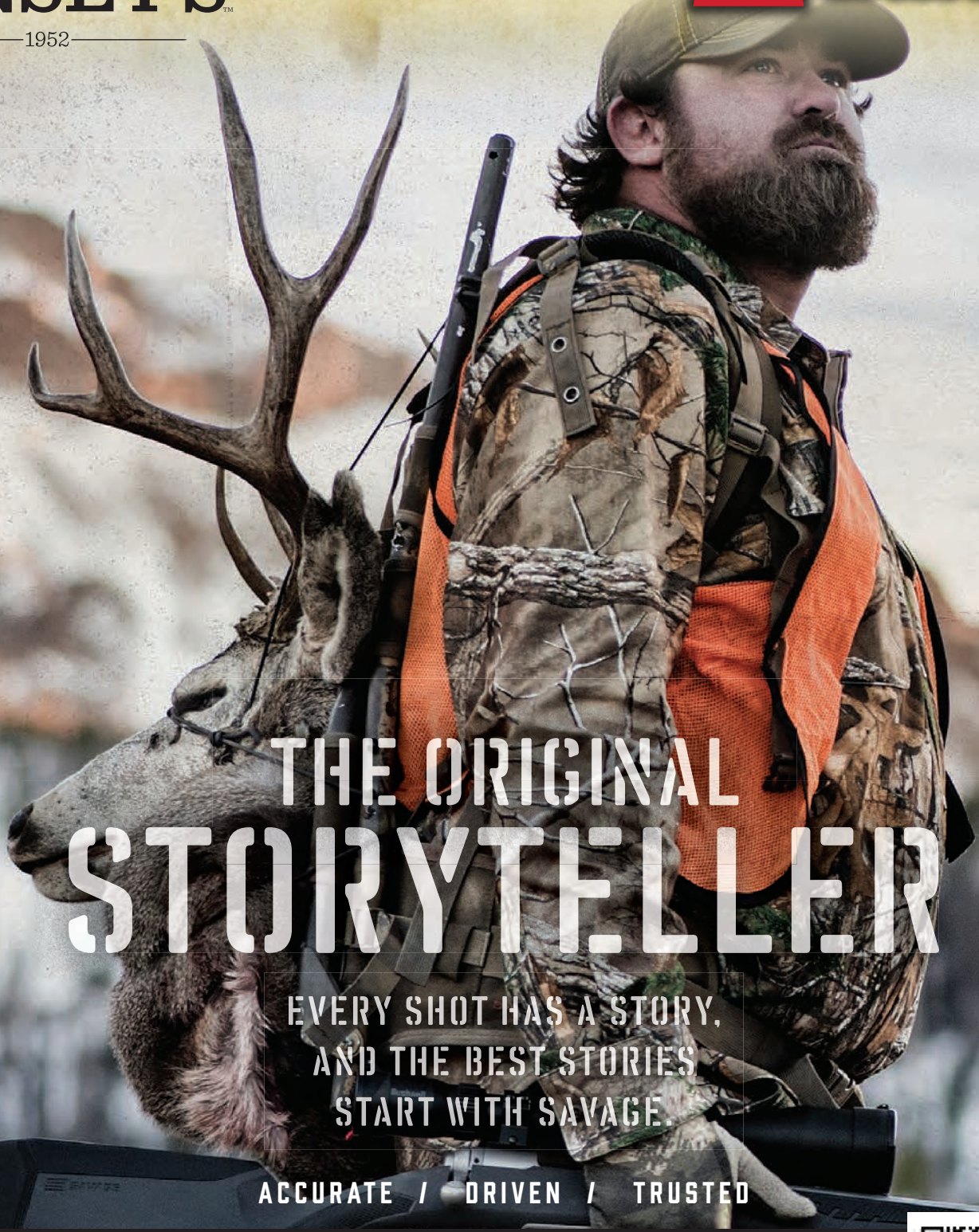
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In the last couple years, research and development has been a standstill. Trying to catch up with the demand of what we currently have to offer and the lack of supplies for all calibers, we knew we had to return to developing new Tumble Upon Impact® TUI® cartridges. We get constant questions, comments and request on many calibers that customers want to see offered in the TUI® line. The new caliber wish list that is longer than a kids Christmas list has made research and development a main priority.

Multiple new calibers or new grain weights for existing calibers have been in development at the same time. There are always a few different calibers being tested at the same time. With present day circumstances, it has been a battle to have a set schedule for new rounds. Finding components in this industry has been tight, it has pushed us to branch out to new companies and components, while keeping the same match grade quality ammunition that we take pride in.

Trying to get any caliber of ammo in stock for stores was a huge issue. Any caliber we could manufacture was going out the door as fast as we were making it. We couldn't supply our own storefront with our ammo due to putting our dealers first. Slowly, more of the common calibers in different brands have been coming back around. We have been able to take more time into producing existing calibers new to TUI® and expand our branding in the time of need.

We are building our brand daily and have many calibers in the works. Every day has been an opportunity to offer our customers the best product on the line. From 260 Remington to 32 ACP, there is a wide range of calibers we are testing and that will be making their release as TUI® ammo. We continue to rise above the challenges we face and shine on new opportunities. Stay safe, stay free and God Bless.



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David McCartney Joins Big Rock Sports as President

Ed Small, CEO of Big Rock Sports, LLC and parent company Peak Global Holdings, announced today that David McCartney has been named president of Big Rock Sports. McCartney will assume responsibility for the day-to-day management of the outdoor sporting goods distribution company. He will join the executive team at Big Rock's home office in Graham, North Carolina, where he will report to Ed Small.

With three decades of distribution experience, David McCartney brings a comprehensive knowledge of warehouse operations, pricing, supply chain, and inventory management to Big Rock Sports. His background spans both retail operations and wholesale distribution with a focus on serving thousands of small, independent retailers across the U.S. and Canada.

McCartney spent nearly 30 years

with General Parts, Inc. (now Advance Auto Parts), where he served as president of their Carquest Division. In that role, McCartney managed the company's complete supply chain, which included 32 distribution centers in the U.S., three in Canada, and two in China.

"We are thrilled to have David join the Big Rock Sports team," Ed Small stated. "His extensive knowledge of distribution and his experience serv-

ing small, family-owned businesses will be a tremendous asset that will help us continue providing best-in-class product assortments and service to our family of retailers."

An avid outdoorsman, McCartney grew up hunting and fishing in West Virginia. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Management from North Carolina State University. McCartney will continue to reside with his family in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Easton Marks 100 Years of America-Made Arrows

The year 2022 marks the 100th anniversary of archery equipment manufacturer Easton, which was founded in 1922 in California. Easton's inception began with a young Doug Easton crafting his own wooden longbows and arrows in a garage. By the time he was 17, his craftsmanship was renowned in target archery, and his arrows were regarded as the finest in the country. In 1929, Doug moved to Los Angeles, opening Easton's Archery Shop, where he would hit the sport full force with a host of wood-arrow innovations including the first screw-in point system. A real pivoting point came in 1949 with the production of the world's first aluminum arrow, the 24SRT-X. The 24SRT-X shafts were far superior to wood in accuracy. Tournament scores skyrocketed and archery would never be the same.

The small family shop moved and grew. Over the next decade, Doug and team created the venerable XX75, the best-selling arrow shaft of all time.

Jim Easton came to work for his dad in 1960, and his engineering mind expanded the company to new altitudes with ski pole shafts, aluminum baseball bats, the use of carbon in hockey sticks, and new frame technology for road and mountain bikes.

Doug Easton was laid to rest in December 1972, but his legacy lived on with his son, Jim, and his grandson, Greg Easton, who would help pioneer virtually every major advancement in arrow technology to this day. Under Jim and Greg's leadership, the introduction and evolution of carbon, and aluminum-carbon (A/C & FMJ) hybrids would be the next innovations to dominate bow hunting and sweep Olympic podiums.

The powerful draw of the sport, and the relentless push to innovate are the hallmarks of the company and archery success is what keeps Easton looking downrange, since 1922 and to the next 100 years.

Safari Club International Foundation Commits \$75k For Outdoors Tomorrow Foundation's Wildlife Conservation Education

Outdoors Tomorrow Foundation, a leading provider of outdoor skill, safety and conservation curriculum to schools nationwide, will receive \$75,000 from Safari Club International Foundation to support OTF's Wildlife Conservation Unit in its Outdoor Adventures program in middle and high schools nationwide.

As part of its mission to protect the freedom to hunt and promote wildlife conservation worldwide, SCI Foundation has committed \$25,000 in support per year for each of the coming three years.

"Safari Club International Foundation plays a vital role in protecting the future of hunting and wildlife through conservation and

education," said Outdoors Tomorrow Foundation Chairman Kyle Shidler. "At OTF, we're educating the next generation of men and women who love the outdoors and want to see it protected. SCIF's forward-looking generosity will significantly help us educate students across the country as to the importance of wildlife conservation."

Based in Tucson, Arizona, SCIF is a leader in conducting and supporting scientific and technical studies for sustainable use wildlife conservation. They also are leaders in education on the essential role of hunting in science-based management of wildlife and habitat.

OTF's Outdoor Adventures pro-

gram is a fun, interactive course where students are taught lifelong skills using an integrated, 34-unit curriculum comprised of math, science, writing and critical thinking skills. The 290 detailed lesson plans cover angler education, archery, hunter education, boater education, orienteering, survival skills, camping, outdoor cooking, challenge courses, backpacking, mountain bike camping, paddle sports, rock climbing, shooting sports, CPR/first aid and fauna, flora and wilderness medicine. OA teachers can pick units specific to their region and local ecosystems.

Founded in 1981 in Dallas, the Outdoors Tomorrow Foundation is a

public nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. For many schools, grant money offsets the cost of the program, plus OTF offers matching funds for equipment as new schools join. The resulting classes can be taught as a P.E. course, local elective or with agricultural science and wildlife management. The Outdoor Adventures education program is offered in 980 schools in 46 states nationwide with more than 90,000 students participating each year and more than 415,000 program graduates since its inception. Each OA student spends 180 hours learning outdoor education per year. The program has totaled 16 million classroom hours of outdoor education to date. **HR**



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Editor in Chief / Hilary Dyer
Product Editor / Gordy Krahn
Digital Editor / Tim Dobbins

CREATIVE

Art Director / Mark Kingsbury

ADMINISTRATION

Circulation / Holly Gensler
holly.gensler@colepublishing.com

ADVERTISING

President/Publisher GVO / Derrick Nawrocki
derrick.nawrocki@grandviewoutdoors.com

Regional Sales Manager / Mike Kizzire
mike.kizzire@grandviewoutdoors.com

Regional Sales Manager / Patrick Boyle
patrick.boyle@grandviewoutdoors.com

Account Executive / Brad Bisnette
brad.bisnette@colepublishing.com

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10 Ways to Build a Better Workplace

Making time on the job more pleasant for employees will reduce turnover and generally improve your life and theirs.

BY JUDY KNEISZEL

All over the country, the labor market is tight. Help wanted signs seem to be popping up everywhere, and younger workers are not afraid to job-hop if it means better working conditions or greater rewards. As an employer, that means you have to up your game in order to keep the good employees you do have. Here are 10 ways to improve your company's culture. Any one of these suggestions could be the difference between keeping a good employee and having to post that sign again.

1. SHOW SOME APPRECIATION

Paying fair wages is a must if you're going to attract and keep good employees. Beyond that, show appreciation for a job well done with

a sincere thank you, a pat on the back, a box of doughnuts or a free lunch. Consider bigger rewards when deserved, like monetary bonuses or extra time off. Employees who feel valued are more likely to work hard and be committed to the company.

2. PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Showing appreciation is important when things go right, but employees also want to hear from you when things go wrong or when things are going just OK. Providing thoughtful, constructive feedback will help an employee grow and do better in the future, and it will be appreciated if you go about it the right way. If you have to be critical, be tactful and have the conversation in private to help the employee

save face. Look at it as a teaching opportunity, not a critique. Be generous with both positive feedback and positive reinforcement on a daily basis and also in a more formal annual performance review.

3. DON'T MICROMANAGE

Show appreciation, offer feedback and then back off! Let people do their jobs. Sometimes this means letting people make, and learn from, mistakes. Micromanaging can hurt morale and decrease the productivity of both the manager and the employee being managed. Learn to delegate tasks, and trust employees to complete them. You'll be surprised at what people can accomplish if you give them a little room.



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4. GET TO KNOW YOUR EMPLOYEES

If you refer to one of your employees as “the tall one with the tattoo” and another as “the bald guy,” you’ve got your work cut out for you. Know every employee’s name. Talk to them, and get to know something about their interests, whether it’s the team they cheer for, a hobby they pursue after hours, or where their kids go to school. It’s a lot easier for an employee to quit if they think of the boss as a mean, faceless stranger. On the other hand, if you recently bonded over the pain of your team’s heart-breaking overtime loss, they might not want to kick you while you’re down.

5. GIVE CLEAR DIRECTION

No one likes feeling uncertain or directionless, especially on the job. If an employee doesn’t understand what they are supposed to be doing, they can’t do a good job, and this leads to frustration, which may lead to them walking off the job.

Good communication is the key to a successful workforce. Explain expectations to employees. Have clear job descriptions, safety procedures, a chain of command and company policies. Provide more than adequate training.

6. PROVIDE INSPIRATION; SET GOALS

Whether you offer a group reward for a certain number of accident-free days, award an employee-of-the-month plaque, sponsor sales contests with prizes, or organize some other incentive program, these types of tactics can be fun and effective. If you want to see results, set goals for people and reward them when those goals are met.

7. BE FLEXIBLE

Work-life balance is crucial to a happy workforce. Be generous with time off and understanding about scheduling whenever possible. A mom or dad might be happy to stay late one day if it means they are able to cut out early and catch their

daughter’s softball game the next day. Actively encourage employees to take vacations, too. Well-rested employees are happy employees.

8. DON’T PLAY FAVORITES

Maybe your crew includes family members or friends. Maybe there are just some employees who you get along with better because you have similar outside interests. That’s fine, but when it comes time for raises, promotions, and job assignments, you’ve got to treat everyone fairly. Any hint of favoritism can lead to long-lasting resentment or defection.

9. DON’T HOG THE CREDIT

Recognize employees for their achievements. If a particular employee went above and beyond for a customer, give credit where credit is due. It could make better customer service contagious rather than spreading the “why bother?” attitude that comes with the frustration of seeing the boss take credit for an employee’s hard work.

10. HANDLE DISPUTES PROPERLY

Nothing hurts morale like a disagreement between co-workers, especially in a small company where employees can’t easily be reassigned to a different partner or team. An employee who has a beef with management can also spread negativity through a company like the plague. Nip it in the bud. Listen to all sides, try to get the facts, and settle things fairly. If necessary, bring in a neutral party for mediation to resolve the issue.

If your company could improve in any or all of these areas, take steps to implement changes this winter when business is a little slower. Concentrate on making your company a great place to work, and it will help you sail through the upcoming busy season with a full crew. Preventing workers from leaving for greener pastures will reduce the time, effort, and money needed to find last-minute replacements. **HR**



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Handloading Presses

Handloading is gaining popularity as ammo supplies continue to be unpredictable. These three presses will appeal to buyers looking to get into the game.

BY MARK CHESNUT

While most hunters and shooters likely are aware that if you have the proper equipment you can save money by making your own handloaded cartridges, most don't realize the many other advantages handloading provides — especially to avid shooters who go through a lot of rounds.

While the economic factor is, indeed, important, handloading also allows those who put in some time and effort to make even more accurate ammunition than they can purchase from large ammo companies, as well as to tailor loads for velocity, recoil and other factors. And when ammo shortages come along, handloaders who have stocked up on plenty of components are still able to shoot as much as they want, while many of their friends who rely on retail ammo supplies have their shooting activities drastically curtailed.

To be sure, handloading — also called reloading — is a very broad topic. With the correct equipment, handloaders can load shotshells tailored to their specific uses. At the same time, rifle and pistol shooters can use a

simple single-stage press to load cartridges one at a time, a turret press to load cartridges one at a time in a more rapid manner, or a progressive press to load them much more rapidly and in greater numbers.

Of course, there are many components required to handload a round of ammo. You must have a case (brass for centerfire rifle and pistol ammo, plastic with a brass base for shotshells) along with a primer for detonation, gun powder for a propellant, a way to measure powder, and a projectile (shot for shotguns, bullets for rifles and pistols).

One quick note on safety: Handloading can be extremely dangerous if the person doing the loading doesn't follow specific instructions and pay strict attention to every step of the process. Tell your customers to always use recipes from well-known reloading manuals and never vary from the specifications listed in the manual.

For the purpose of this column, we'll focus on simple single-stage and turret presses that can be used for handloading a wide range of different rifle and pistol cartridges.



RCBS SUMMIT

RCBS was founded way back in 1943 in Oroville, California, and has been providing avid handloaders with the equipment they need ever since. The company, now part of Vista Outdoor, makes and markets handloading gear of the highest quality, including their presses.

The Summit Single-Stage features a 2-inch offset ram and die holder that are precision fit for the best ammunition concentricity and accuracy potential. The offset ram is not exposed to de-capping debris, allowing smooth and precise operation, as well as less maintenance downtime.

The press has an open design that is completely ambidextrous, allowing the user to customize his or her bench setup for optimum workflow and comfort. The shell holder is stationary on the base, making visual confirmation of the powder charge easy, thereby helping to avoid charging mistakes.

The Summit is easy to set up and use, even for beginning handloaders. The press's steel and cast iron construction provides the tough rigidity needed to produce consistent handloads, thereby maximizing accuracy.

This press will work with standard 7/8"-14 threaded dies, and 1-inch die bodies with adaptors, which are sold separately, and has enough leverage to handle any difficult sizing task. The innovative design mounts the entire press to the top of the bench and actually lowers the die down to the case.

For those wanting to save a little space, the Summit Single-Stage press is also available with a short handle. The shorter 8.125-inch length provides the user with a higher degree of "feel" while performing operations that can benefit from more tactile feel such as bullet seating and case crimping.



LYMAN BRASS SMITH ALL-AMERICAN 8 TURRET PRESS

Lyman's Brass Smith All-American 8 Turret Press is packed with features that make reloading more efficient without having to handle cases constantly.

The extra-large 8 station turret is machined out of heavy-duty cast iron, and the easily removed turret bolt makes swapping turrets simple. It will hold two complete four-die sets or up to four two-die sets. Below the turret is a rigid cast iron frame, housing a 1-inch-diameter ram and compound linkage.

The frame is large enough to work with even the longest rifle cartridges. Work the press handle and you'll feel the tight, precision fit and smooth operation. The Brass Smith 8-Station Turret Press comes with a straight line primer feed that's reliable and simple to use. Simply push the priming arm forward at the bottom of the ram travel to position it beneath the shell holder. For added safety, the primer feed comes with a heavy steel shield surrounding the primer tubes. The comfortable ball handle can be positioned for either right- or left-hand use. The press is designed for use with any standard 7/8"x14 thread dies and accepts standard shell holders.

The Brass Smith All-American 8 Turret Press comes with a durable powder-coat finish and a total weight of 23 pounds, and it's made in the USA at Lyman Products in Middletown, Connecticut.

REDDING T-7 TURRET

Redding has been manufacturing and marketing top-quality handloading equipment for more than 75 years. And the T-7 turret press has been one of the hottest selling presses in Redding's lineup for quite some time, and for a number of reasons.

"Users like the overall strength of the T-7 and its accuracy, as seen by the very solid detents when the turret is rotated," said Robin Sharpless, executive vice president of Redding Reloading Equipment. "Amazingly, many benchrest records have been set using the T-7 over the years. The ability to leave dies 'set up' in the turret head leads to better repeatability. And with the Turret Stacker, multiple Turrets can remain set up for future use."

When Redding set out to design the T-7, the goal was to create the ultimate turret press. To accomplish that, their engineering team started with their time-proven cast iron construction and turret support that are among the best in the industry.

The T-7 has a seven-station turret head that is easily turned to set the next die in place. With additional turret heads, which are sold separately, the user can switch between calibers without readjusting depth. Also, the cast iron construction and stout compound linkage allow for reloading magnum cartridges with ease.

The press is easily mounted to the user's loading bench via a four-hole system. It also features a spent primer collection system, a 3.81-inch stroke of the 1-inch diameter ram, and a lower right-hand handle location, and it accepts standard 7/8"-14 threaded dies.

For those customers looking to jump into handloading with both feet, Redding also offers all the dies and other equipment a hunter who is new to handloading might need. **HR**



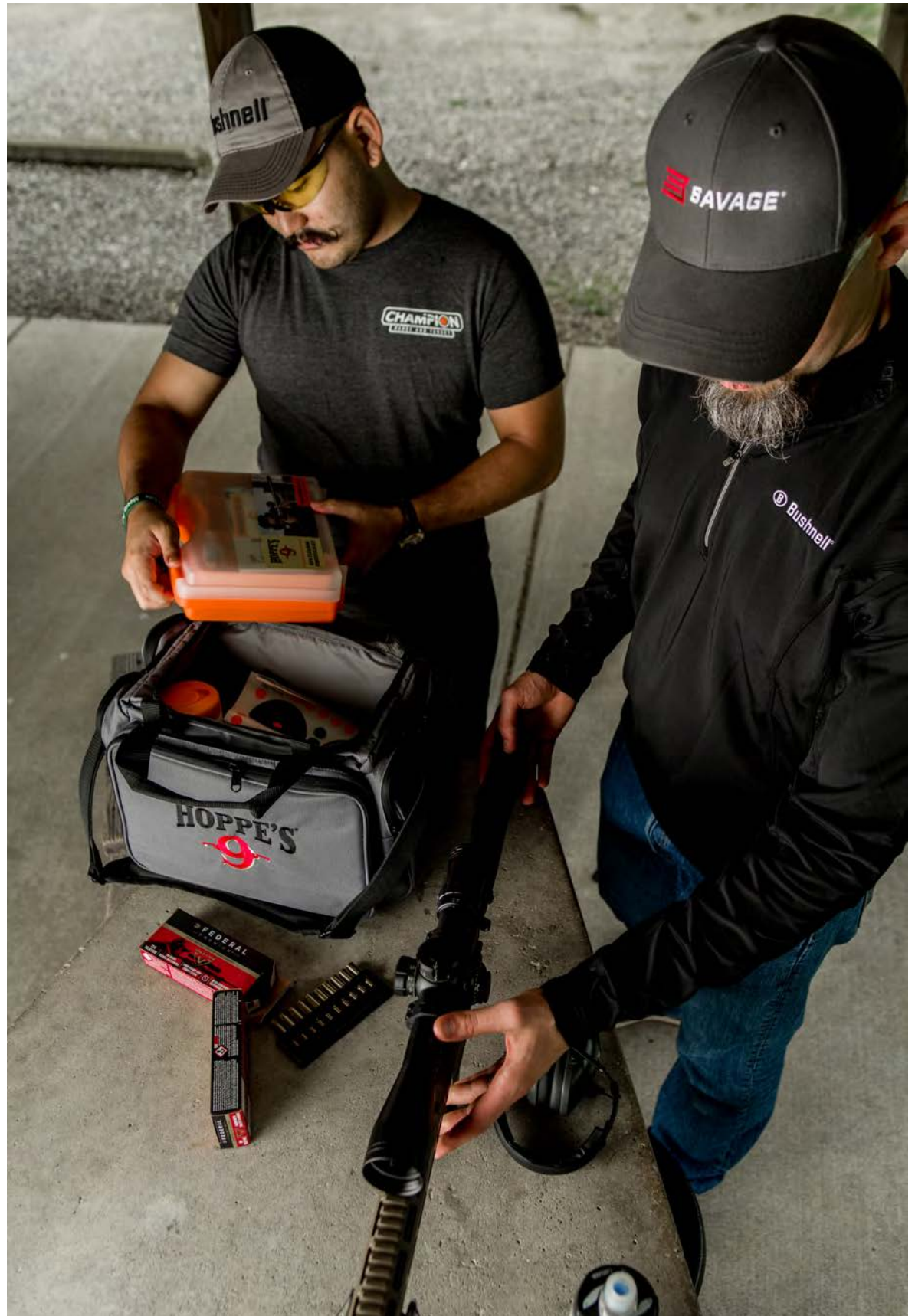
Squeaky Clean: 17 Ways to Trigger More Sales

Gun cleaning and maintenance items can be a steady source of sales if you're stocking the right supplies.

BY KEVIN REESE

Firearms, whether many for a collection or one for defense, are investments. And regardless of why your customers pull triggers, they need to know their firearms are prepared to perform and do so at levels at or above their expectations. Of course, such cause-and-effect relationships often are the results of firearm care: in a nutshell, proper cleaning and maintenance. This is where you come in!

You are the trusted behind-the-counter professional your customers depend on for in-stock items and advice. Providing both services well builds relationships with customers, brings them back into your store and increases new traffic based upon reviews and recommendations. Check out these cleaning and maintenance products sure to trigger more squeaky-clean sales.





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Real Avid's Universal Master Cleaning Station comes with everything your customers need to clean their favorite firearms, including a full-size, padded, oil- and solvent-resistant, 43x16-inch mat. Tools include handgun, rifle and shotgun bore brushes and jags for multiple popular calibers between .22 and 12-gauge; two slotted bore patch tips; brass cleaning rod sections with a T-handle; Accu-grip picks and brushes. The kit also includes 50 cleaning patches and a magnetic tray—everything your shooting enthusiasts need for quick or comprehensive scrub-downs.

www.realavid.com

FIREFIELD .223 AND .308 CLEANING KIT

Among industry brands, Firefield has built a reputation for affordable, ultra-reliable optics and AR accessories, including the .223 and .308 Cleaning Kit. Designed for compact carry and on-the-go cleaning and maintenance, the kit includes bore brushes, chamber brushes and bore mops for .223/5.56- and .308-caliber firearms as well as brass cleaning rod sections, a flexible 33-inch bore cleaning cable, small and large brushes, slotted patch tip, lubrication applicator bottle and a mix of 50 round and squared cleaning patches.

www.firefield.com

OTIS UNIVERSAL SHOTGUN CLEANING KIT

The Otis Universal Shotgun Cleaning Kit delivers big field cleaning and maintenance in a compact package. Specifically designed for .410-, .20-, 12- and 10-gauge shotguns, the kit includes a 40-inch aircraft-grade Memory-Flex bore cleaning cable with detachable T-handle, barrel obstruction remover, bore brushes, Shooter's Choice FP-10 Lubricant Elite CLP, slotted tip and cleaning patches. Like the Firefield Kit, Otis' Shotgun Cleaning Kit components are stored in a convenient, compact, soft case.

www.OtisTec.com

REAL AVID ACCU-GRIP PICKS AND BRUSHES

Proper cleaning is more than just punching a bore. Cleaning other components is equally important, perhaps more so. Proper cleaning and maintenance requires digging into cracks and crevices to remove carbon, clear debris and to lubricate key areas. From toothbrushes and cotton swabs to pipe cleaners, I have used them all. Real Avid's Accu-Grip Picks and Brushes Kit is a perfect substitute for all of them. The kit includes standard and narrow, phosphor bronze and nylon brushes; an angled phosphor bronze brush head to clean hard-to-reach areas and a variety of picks to get into the tight spots.

TIPTON CARBON FIBER CLEANING ROD

Picking out the right tool for the job is important. Not all cleaning rods are the same. Some are coated and often are designed for specific bore diameters and barrel lengths. For most shooters, a perfect choice is a Tipton Carbon Fiber Cleaning Rod. Carbon fiber is softer than the metal in the barrel, and this prevents the potential for damaging the barrel. Tipton Carbon Fiber Cleaning Rods feature a free-floating handle, full shank and are available in handgun, rifle and shotgun lengths.

www.TiptonClean.com





TIPTON UNIVERSAL BORE GUIDE



OTIS RIPCORD ONE-PASS BORE CLEANER



HOPPE'S CLEANING PATCHES



RADCOLUBE CLP



TIPTON ULTRA JAG AND BRUSH SET



TIPTON FELT CLEANING PELLETS



TIPTON UNIVERSAL BORE GUIDE

Protecting firearm components is as important as cleaning them, and it's certainly an important part of maintenance. The Tipton Universal Bore Guide is designed to prevent collisions between the cleaning rod and tools and the chamber and throat of the bore. The Tipton Universal Bore Guide features an anodized aluminum tube, integrated solvent port, free-floating action collar for improved fit, and a rod designed to sit down in the bolt-catch slot, locking the bore guide in place.

OTIS RIPCORD ONE-PASS BORE CLEANER

Otis' Ripcord revolutionized firearm cleaning. Great for comprehensive cleanings and perfect for on-the-fly work, the Ripcord is a flexible bore cleaner designed to be pulled through the bore, breech first, even while the barrel is hot (rated up to 700 degrees). The Ripcord features a helix-shaped rubber core and rigid, braided Nomex exterior purposed in catching and extracting debris. For convenience, Ripcords can be wrapped and stowed in small storage bags or containers. For multiple firearms, Otis' Ripcord Multi-Caliber 10-Pack is a great, affordable cleaning solution.

TIPTON ULTRA JAG AND BRUSH SET

For customers with firearms chambered in multiple calibers, the Tipton Ultra Jag and Brush Set is a perfect all-inclusive set. The Ultra Jag and Brush Set combines tools for .17 to 45 caliber and presents them in an organized, labeled manner. All jags and brushes are compatible with 8-32 threading; however, the .17-caliber bore brush features 5-40 threads.

RADCOLUBE CLP

Short for cleaning, lubricant and protectant, Radcolube CLP does precisely as the name implies. Military tested and used, Radcolube CLP has proven effective in cleaning and lubricating; however, while most assume protection is short term, Radcolube also is a great long-term protectant. In the interest of testing in harsh environments, Radcolube also tests its solvent through 650 rounds to ensure rock-solid CLP reliability in extreme conditions. www.RadcolInd.com

HOPPE'S CLEANING PATCHES

Cleaning patches are a must-have for firearm cleaning, and Hoppe's Cleaning Patches are, arguably, the most popular, most recognizable brand in the industry; of course, the brand's reputation for quality gun cleaning supplies makes these patches an easy stocking choice for retailers. Hoppe's Cleaning Patches are cut for specific calibers and are available in synthetic or cotton. www.Hoppes.com

TIPTON FELT CLEANING PELLETS

Tipton Felt Cleaning Pellets are a great substitute for traditional cleaning patches. These dense felt pellets, designed for specific cartridges, fit and fill a barrel's lands and grooves more consistently than traditional patches and have become a favorite tool for precision shooters, especially when used with J-B Compound or Kroil Oil. Of course, using pellets requires a special jag. Every bag of Tipton Felt Cleaning Pellets includes a brass pellet jag.



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HOPPE'S NO. 9 BORE CLEANER



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SHOOTER'S CHOICE COPPER REMOVER



FROGLUBE CLP



HORNADY HOT TUB SONIC CLEANER

HORNADY HOT TUB SONIC CLEANER

Used properly, the Hornady Hot Tub Sonic Cleaner can make firearm cleaning nearly effortless. Simply load the cleaner with dirty components, add the water-solution mix, set the time and temperature, and then wait. Once a cleaning cycle is complete, components generally only require a quick wipe-down. Ultrasonic cleaners provide the most comprehensive cleaning process available, reaching and cleaning areas nearly impossible to access. The Hornady Hot Tub Sonic Cleaner features a roomy inner tank, small parts basket, hanging cords and five temperature settings, from 100 to 140 degrees. www.Hornady.com

SHOOTER'S CHOICE ULTRASONIC CLEANING SOLUTION

A good ultrasonic cleaner needs a great solvent, and Shooter's Choice Ultrasonic Cleaning Solution is a great option. Shooter's Choice is a non-toxic, non-flammable and non-hazardous cleaning solution designed to effectively remove fouling, oil, grease and other debris from delicate firearm components as well as cartridge cases (great for reloading), and is non-corrosive to aluminum and other metals. www.Shooters-Choice.com

FROGLUBE CLP

Retired Navy Seal Larry Lesky knew what he liked, knew what he wanted and knew nothing like it existed in our marketplace. This was the nucleus of FrogLube. Today, FrogLube is one of the most popular CLP solutions among serious shooters, but for a different reason — health and safety. FrogLube CLP is non-hazardous and non-toxic. According to Lesky, FrogLube CLP is safe for us and our furry friends, ensuring your customers' peace of mind comes from more than simply cleaning, lubricating and protecting their firearms. www.FrogLube.com

KROIL PENETRATING OIL

Used by professional gunsmiths and serious shooters, Kroil Penetrating Oil is an industry leader in removing rust, powder, copper and other debris while also lubricating components and displacing moisture. Of course, it's also great for removing and cleaning rusted or seized nuts, bolts and screws. www.Kroil.com

HOPPE'S NO. 9 BORE CLEANER

A shooter and gunsmith favorite for nearly 120 years, Hoppe's No. 9 Cleaner is known for deep cleaning and removal of carbon, powder and other debris. Of course, one could argue it has the best gun cleaner scent on the market, too. It takes me back to days of old watching my father clean his rifles and is sure to illicit the same nostalgia and cleaning performance for your customers. It's tough to imagine a gun shop not carrying Hoppe's No. 9 — food for your retailing thoughts.

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Copper and other gilded metals can be tough to remove. That said, for accuracy's sake, it's worth the extra effort but often requires a specialized solvent like Shooter's Choice Copper Remover. Shooter's Choice is an extra-strength solvent specifically purposed for removal of copper and other metal deposits. It cleans quickly, is easy to use and is sure to become a must-have for customers dedicated to the kind of deep cleaning valuable firearms require.





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ICOTec Looks Forward

ICOTec has been making predator calls for nearly 20 years and is looking forward to continued growth in the predator-hunting market.



BY HUNTING RETAILER STAFF

With coyote populations spinning out of control nearly nationwide, predator hunting is growing by leaps and bounds. The equipment available to hard-core predator hunters is more sophisticated and high-tech than ever, and ICOTec products are no exception. To help you keep your finger on the pulse of the predator-hunting industry, *Hunting Retailer* sat down with Chuck Ames, general manager at ICOTec, and asked him about where he sees the future of

predator hunting going and how ICOTec fits into it.

HR: Can you talk about the company's history and its place in the industry today?

CA: ICOTec LLC was formed as a brand from a long-time contract manufacturer for the predator-hunting industry. ICO Products, the parent company of ICOTec, has been manufacturing calls and decoys for the predator market for nearly 20 years. ICOTec was formed in 2012

and launched as our own brand with our own identity and separate goals for our products than those we had manufactured for in the past.

Today, ICOTec is leading the way into the future with exciting technology that allows our customers to play sounds directly to our callers from their phone via our new smartphone app. The app also allows hunters to save the sounds to an SD card or directly to one of their new Plus Series callers that will be released in late 2022 through mid-2023. When



↑ Chuck Ames





the sounds are downloaded to the caller, they can be accessed via our 300-yard non-line-of-sight remote control. Our sounds will also be able to be played on other callers or speakers with Bluetooth capabilities.

HR: What specific product or model have you seen the most growth in recently?

CA: We have seen a very large interest in the Outlaw and Night Stalker models due to their incredible clarity and industry-leading volume capability. The main reason that so many veteran predator hunt-

ers use these two particular models is that they have the ability to play two sounds simultaneously. The sounds can be played, paused, restarted or replaced with a different sound while they are paused. Our favorites 1 and favorites 2 banks make accessing your most popular go-to sounds super quick and easy.

HR: As interest in predator hunting continues to grow across the country, how has that impacted your growth strategy?

CA: While other companies may choose to shy away from beginners,

ICOtec is very interested in working with new predator hunters.

Nobody was born great at anything. Unless someone takes an interest in teaching and encouraging a new predator hunter, they will become bored or disinterested due to poor performance and lack of results. Our products and prostaff are here to make the learning much more fun, and the results much more frequent. If a new hunter picks up an ICOtec caller and calls in a coyote on one of their first adventures, they often share that with us and many times will come back for more prod-

↑ Electronic predator calls have seen explosive growth as predator populations continue to expand.

ucts as their interest and successes grow.

HR: Is there developing technology that might change the way shooters buy or use digital game calls in the future?

CA: Yes, we have noticed a big swing from home computers to smartphones for most all online transactions and social media applications. This is the main reason that we have developed the Animal Audio app along with a parallel website for customers to access sounds and create playlists that they can use to compose entire coyote stands and hit one button to activate. The app will allow customers to purchase sounds from the world's leading creators of animal attraction audio files. There is also a convenient store to purchase accessories for predator hunting.

HR: Have the recent supply chain problems translated into supply issues in your corner of the industry as well?

CA: ICOtec has never had a supply chain issue. There was a mad rush of sales in 2020 that made it hard to keep enough products in stock, but there was no lack of access to critical chips for us, as we hold a stock of inventory for just such an incidence. It is a just-in-case instead of the popular just-in-time manufacturing method taught around the globe.



HR: Do you have any predictions on what we can expect out of the hunting industry in general in the next year? The next five years?

CA: We hope to see a growth in the predator-hunting industry as we have seen a major uptick in the number of predator sightings in areas where there were never many predators. If hunters continue their family tradition of hunting and fishing, we are confident that the predator hunting segment will do well due to the excitement and the benefit that it offers to society by helping to keep our ecosystems in balance.

HR: Where does ICOtec see potential for growth? How about non-growth? Is there part of the industry that's shrinking?

CA: There are most over saturations of products and services in most industries from time to time, which can lead to shrinkage of a brand's projected volume. We do our best to update and refresh our

product offering every few years and add accessories in between. This helps us offset any model that might be slow selling for a season or two. We know there was a nice boom in nighttime predator hunting, as more states change their rules to allowing thermal and night-vision for predator hunting. This major increase in the number of hunters getting into the night-hunting game is the main reason we introduced the Hellion, Sabre and Night Stalker callers a few years ago. These three models are midnight black and look pretty awesome alongside the black ARs in all the social media photos.

HR: What can we expect out of ICOtec in the last months of 2022? What products have you most excited for the future?

.....
 → ICOtec continues to innovate in the field of game calling.



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CA: We have an entire new lineup of products that will be released beginning in November 2022. As our inventory is depleted of current models, we will begin replacing them with the new Plus Series callers. We are launching nine new callers in the next six to nine months. We also have a new AA rechargeable battery kit and a new hand call set available

now, with a few more accessories actively in development.

HR: How does ICOTec support its dealers?

CA: ICOTec turns our orders around within 24 hours when humanly possible, depending on the logistics requirements. We invest in print media, social media, Google

"If you are interested in becoming an ICOTec dealer, we are offering a new dealer introductory starter kit that is an additional 6% off our already low prices."

ads, contest sponsorships, rapid credit memo response and more. We offer up to 5-year warranties on our products, we have our own tech support staff as well as conducting product repairs in-house.

HR: Do you have any advice for retailers about selling electronic calls and decoys and ICOTec products specifically?

CA: If you are interested in becoming an ICOTec dealer, we are offering a new dealer introductory starter kit that is an additional 6% off our already low prices. You can expect fast sell-through rates, low-cost inventory, great margins and ecstatic customers. Contact us at sales@icotec.com and request a New Dealer Starter Kit Flyer.

HR: What's your personal favorite ICOTec product, and why?

CA: I would say my favorite is the industry's top-selling GC300. It is the call model that got ICOTec started and is the top-selling model year after year. The GC300 has generated more Amazon reviews than all our competitors combined, and it still maintains a 4.5 out of 5 stars. Amazon is the go-to reference guide consumers choose when making a purchasing consideration. Very soon we will eclipse 150,000 total GC300 models sold in our 10 years in business as ICOTec. **HR**



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Business Self-Assessments

You can use an accurate business assessment to help you make smart business decisions.

BY MICHAEL D. FAW

While there are many unknowns and unexpected situations that can arise when you own, or are running, any business, there are ways to be better prepared for the unknown — and to move into position to better take advantage of opportunities that arise. A basic assessment tool taught in most accredited business college courses focuses on identifying your business' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (the classic SWOT assessment). This is a useful

guidance tool for you that should be reviewed and updated frequently, and in the long run, it helps you look back while carefully planning ahead. Time spent identifying those four key business areas can help you make successful business decisions and strategies.

MAKE AN ASSESSMENT

The first key step in gathering information is understanding how the information will be used by you and in your business. This understand-

ing guides you in asking the right questions and discovering the right data and numbers. A great way to begin the accumulation of details is to make a detailed list, including recent accomplishments, while also noting any missed goals and possible ongoing business struggles that you understand. You can also begin basic collecting of information by simply asking your employees, family and trusted friends what they perceive about you and your business. Ask pointed questions and

expect honest answers. Include solid numbers when possible during this preliminary collection period, and remember that past tax forms, bank statements and loan forms could be good sources for details.

As you make assessments, use positive wording in the details when possible and avoid negative words and phrases such as failed, disaster, mistake, etc. Include any employee or customer feedback statements in your assessments, work to explain your top accomplishments in very





↑ Knowledgeable employees who work without a lot of guidance can be a huge strength.

.....
 specific details, and fully explain any additional steps you took in the past year(s) to reach any goals you created, whether or not you wrote the goals down.

All of this insight will provide some details you may not have realized. Be honest with yourself and leave no stones unturned in your search for details.

RECOGNIZE YOUR STRENGTHS

All businesses serving hunters bring a set of strengths to the market or these shops don't last long. Among some strengths any business may recognize are having a great location, making a growing business profit and growing customer base, and having highly personable and knowledgeable employees who work while needing little guidance. Walk the floor and pass through the aisles and note if you stock more sought-after hunting gear than your nearest competitor, and possibly at better

prices. These details are also found in positive comments by customers and shoppers who come through your front door. Making a log book that you jot in regularly can help you collect this valuable information. Just leaving a customer comment to memory will not work when you have a viable business and many details to pay attention to on a daily and weekly basis. The passing of time can also blur details or dates when something happened, so keep notes.

As you do the business self-assessment, step back and seek the big picture of your business, your employees, your skills and other details. Look for specific details and write down what you see. If your business has been growing its annual income, has hired more employees to better serve customers, has a marketing plan that draws more customers through the door, or has expanded to a new location or bigger building, understand the basic "why" details and record these as strengths. If you offer customers the region's best selection of big-game hunting rifles, the largest selection of much-sought

that provide high profit margins, these are strengths. Being in a prime location and having low overhead are also strengths. If you offer hunter safety courses, hunting seminars or annual mega sales with manufacturer reps and products on hand, that's another super strength.

Having talented employees or working with a business advisor or advisory group that helps you find new market shares are all strengths.

You should also draw a circle around your region with your business in the center and then look at trends. Feel free to visit your competitors, look at their websites and sales circulars, and look at your state's game department annual numbers regarding licenses sales and



↑ Take time to look at competitors' websites and sales circulars for external threats as well as opportunities.

.....
 treestands or trail cameras, or you stock the widest selection of waterfowl- or turkey-hunting shotguns, you have strengths.

If you have attended the SHOT Show and gotten ahead of your competitors by being the first retailer to stock a new model rifle, new cartridges, improved product lines or trendy merchandise that results in growing profits, your insight is a strength. If customers know your name and call you about advice on hunting strategies or products, and you have many items on your shelves

hunting activity reports. If you are utilizing this information and increasing your presence in the region, all are strengths.

NOT-SO-PLEASANT WEAKNESSES

As you make that search for strengths, also note any perceived weaknesses and work to better understand these. Recognizing and overcoming weaknesses can be seen as a strength, but some things will be challenging to overcome.

As an example, if you need employees who better understand the hunting gear you sell, calling on vendors to help with merchandising or employee training and coaching



can sometimes turn a weakness into a strength. If a key employee has quit in the past year, or worse yet, left and now works for your closest competitor, this is definitely a weakness and may even be a threat if she or he is pulling your customers away. Work to understand the whys.

If your location is difficult to find or the main entrance confuses customers because it is actually in the back of the building, recognize the problems (weaknesses) and consider new signs to guide customers from the nearby street and your parking lot over to the front door. This can really help with new customers and family-member shoppers. If your location comes up as a constant negative and customers complain you are too far to drive to, consider changing locations. You may have done all you can and are maxed out in growth

"If your location comes up as a constant negative and customers complain you are too far to drive to, consider changing locations."

at this location, so look at options to overcome this weakness. Along with this situation are often a lack of funding or resources along with growing debt. If you lack know-how to find solutions, look at the Small Business Administration or possibly a local business college, or successful friends, to help you better understand challenges and solutions to solve these.

One other source for learning about perceived weaknesses are customer complaints. These unsolicited comments could lead you in writing your list of weaknesses. Failures to communicate with and engage customers or employees, and failures to change your business operating



model if necessary, can all be weaknesses. Not being active on social media channels and having an out-of-date website can all be weaknesses because more and more customers shop from home. Delivery trucks are full of Amazon packages — just ask the driver for UPS and FedEx who come to your store. Don't be missing the new markets.

Remember to always attempt to find a way to turn a weakness into a strength! It's a smart business tactic.

ZERO IN ON OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities come your way in many forms and with many options. Keeping your head up and your ears open can help you hear when opportunity knocks.

If you needed more room and recently completed an expansion (even if it's moving a wall and trading warehouse space for sales floor space), or more dramatic action like finding and moving to a new location, you are recognizing opportunity. If you have an opportunity to carry a new product line that all of your regional competitors do not, look at the costs and potential profits.

Opportunity can also come from the mouths of customers. If you have heard any customers say a com-

↑ Soliciting feedback from customers can reveal strengths and weaknesses you didn't even know you had.

petitor is closing, try to validate the information and look at the details. Could you buy that competitor's inventory or location and realize an opportunity?

Many hunting retailers have also noted opportunities in online sales and marketing and promotions. Nearly every household in the U.S. is now online, and many customers shop via their phones. If those customers can find you in their search, you have taken advantage of an opportunity.

As you were searching for strengths, if you noted customers are often seeking advice from you about riflescope installations or gun repair, look at the possible opportunity to include a gunsmith service or rent floor space to a local gunsmith. Opportunities abound — you just need to note them and act accordingly.

DARK-CLOUD THREATS

You're sipping coffee one morning and in your local newspaper you read that a Big Box is coming to your neighborhood. Wow, could be a threat. If you also read or have heard there's a new noise or nuisance

ordinance being considered by a local government, this situation could also cause a huge problem with an outdoor range. Many retailers in the hunting and firearms arena have been threatened out of existence with a new housing development coming to their neighborhood. If there is noise, there will be noise complaints, and this equals threats.

Regulations, competitors, changing trends in hunting seasons or lack of hunting opportunities, or changes in firearms ownership can all be seen as threats if these cause the market you serve to shrink. Sometimes natural disasters and retirement or relocation of your best customer base and their employer closing or moving can be a threat to your bottom line in business. Always be scanning, looking and listening for situations that might grow into a serious threat.

THE FINAL RESULTS

Proofread your SWOT document if it will be used by external sources, and have trusted advisors (spouse, close friend, top employee, etc.) give you feedback. Set your SWOT document aside for a week or two and then re-read, because time changes perspectives and information. All of the information on the pages should help you make better business decisions. **HR**



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How to Ensure a Smooth Transition for the Sale of Your Business

Details of an exit plan for your company should be worked out when you open the doors — or even earlier

BY ERIK GUNN

The road map for selling a small business can be tricky to follow, and reaching your next destination — whether it's a new business venture or a fulfilling retirement — can either be a smooth or bumpy ride. The choice is yours, but one expert in small-business transitions says planning early can save headaches and heartaches for everyone involved.

Attorney Roy Jay Montney of the law firm Montney Isles in Traverse City, Michigan, works with men and women ready to move on after decades of building up their businesses. Here's some of his advice.

PLANNING AHEAD

If you have family members actively engaged and ready to take over your business, that's probably the ideal situation. But countless business owners aren't so conveniently positioned — and even those who are can ensure a trouble-free succession with some careful steps.

When's the best time to think about how your business will end? When you start it. When it comes to selling, transferring, or closing a business, Montney says, "probably the biggest mistake most people make is not thinking about it until that point."

Plan for the day you close your doors — or hand someone else

the keys — starting the first day you open them, if not sooner. And whether your business partners are outsiders or family members, you need to recognize that sooner or later, a change is inevitable.

Change could come for many reasons, some that none of us might anticipate. We might plan for the eventual sale someday, but we could just as easily wind up with an unexpected event. A co-owner or spouse could face sudden disability, incapacity or death. A lawsuit, a major theft or embezzlement by someone on the inside could threaten the income or reputation of the business.

The simplest way to include all potential scenarios may be simply to ask yourself what you would want to happen if somebody leaves, whatever the cause, Montney says. "You need to plan how are you going to deal with it."

The first step? "Simple communication. Figure out how you want that transition to occur. Then talk about it."

BUSINESS STRUCTURE

That conversation can help you decide more thoughtfully how to structure a new business. For instance, a sole proprietorship can make the transfer of a business and its assets a lot more complicated, Montney says, while structures such as a limited



liability company, or LLC, trade the more complicated process of starting the business for a smoother transition when the time comes.

Two or more partners should decide upfront how the value of everyone's stake will be determined. "It's a lot easier to agree in the beginning on a structure than it is when there's a disagreement," Montney says.

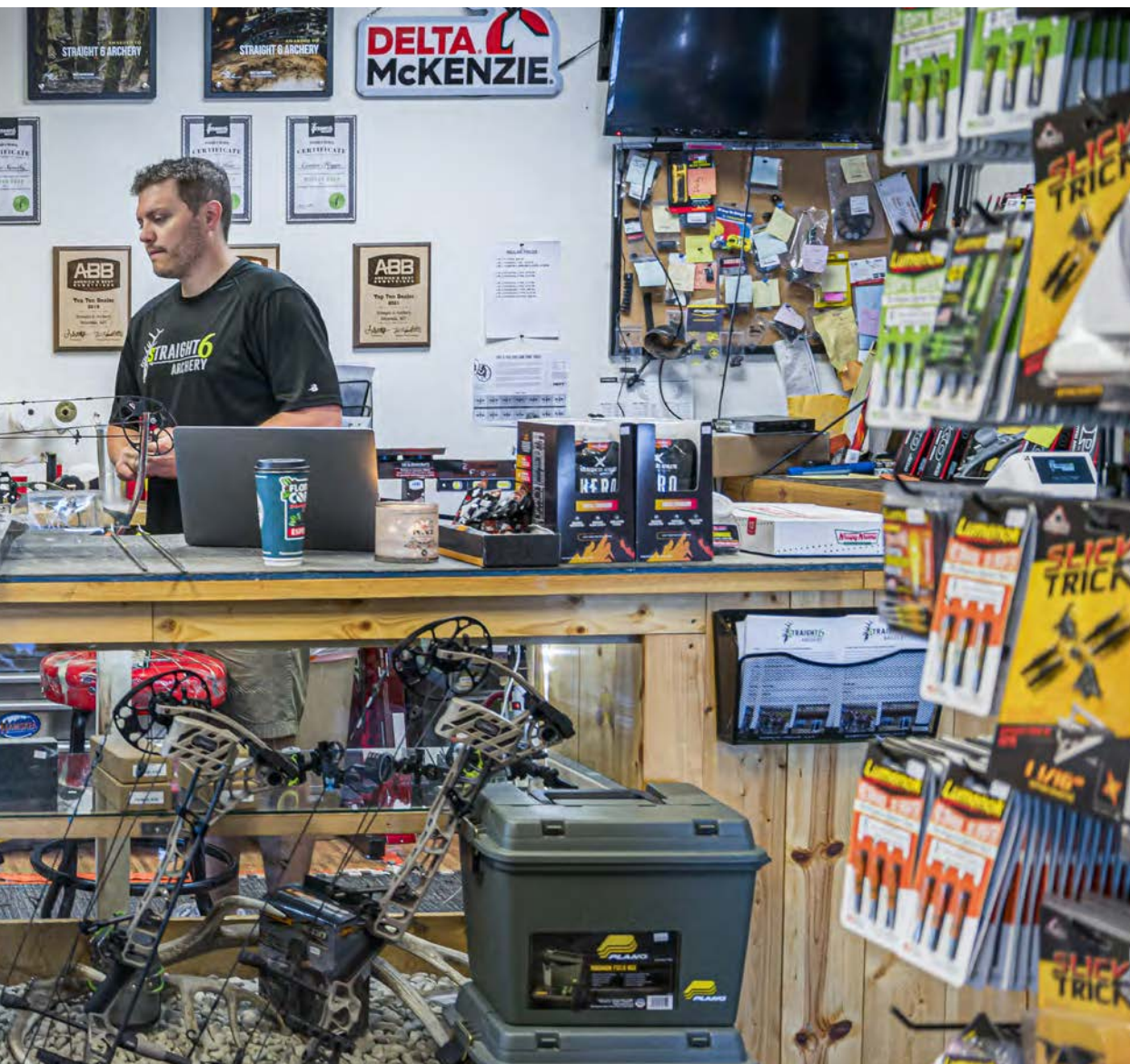
And disagreements do arise, even among business founders who were once close friends or blood relatives. When people get older, their goals, desires, or even outlook on life could change, propelling them into new ventures sooner than anyone antici-

pated.

Formal contracts enable properly structured businesses to establish contingencies for such change. That doesn't mean you're locked in if circumstances justify changes — you can change contracts later by mutual agreement.

So revisit them frequently to make sure provisions still work for all. A wide range of events can happen over the life of the business: expansion to multiple locations; bringing on new key people, whether family members or outside hires, who might be potential successors; or acquisition of another business.





“All of those are points of time in a business cycle that you want to look at and say, ‘Hey, does everything still say what we want it to say in the event of these occurrences?’” Montney says.

BE PREPARED

With the proper groundwork — and the good fortune of no unexpected potholes — you’ll eventually reach the time to make a transition to the next operators of the business, whether family members, key employees or an outside buyer.

“Then you can get a good price and it happens without incident,”

Montney says.

Of course, the best advice is always to be prepared. But let’s face it — plenty of us may come up short in the planning department. Montney says that’s the most common mistake he comes across. Suddenly, fate makes it clear it’s time to move on and we haven’t prepared. Partners fall out, someone dies unexpectedly, or some other disruption hits, and there’s no clearly defined path forward for the business. Then what?

“I tell most people the key is to understand what you’re looking for — what you want,” Montney says. “And be realistic. Is what you want

reasonable based on your current situation?”

It’s far too common for feuding partners to lock horns and declare, in essence, “My business is worth a million dollars if you buy from me, but it’s only worth \$500,000 if I’m buying from you,” Montney says. “Until you get past that unrealistic expectation, you’re not going to get a resolution.”

And worse, you’ll hurt your long-run return.

“Take the emotion out of it. The emotion will probably cost you money.”

PROFESSIONAL HELP

The surest way to a resolution is to hire expert lawyers and tax advisers who can help everyone reach a workable agreement, Montney says. But you also need the attorney’s advice even if there is no dispute and everyone agrees on all the terms.

First, you want to make sure the deal is the best one possible under state, local, and federal tax rules and that it doesn’t leave any legitimate money on the table for any participants. Second, outside advisers will help you cover all the bases of a business transfer, such as making sure the new owner has all the licenses needed to start operating immediately or that the departing owner isn’t still on the hook for a personal guarantee made on assets such as leased business equipment.

A lawyer experienced in this area will also help you avoid ambiguity about who is really responsible when the business changes hands.

“You want to make sure there’s some kind of finality to that transition,” Montney says.

Finally, it’s important that the business succession plan and every participant’s personal estate plan don’t clash. Suppose a partner dies or is disabled and his estate plan passes on a share of the business to the spouse or children. If the remaining partner doesn’t want that, “then we need to address that,” Montney says, before it happens. “You have to ask, ‘Have you thought about how is this transition going to occur? What is your intent?’”

With proper planning, complexities like those can be addressed in advance through a variety of mechanisms, such as special trusts, life insurance and the like.

So plan early if you can for the end of your business life, take a deep breath and put aside emotions if that end comes unexpectedly. And whatever your circumstances, don’t try to go it alone. Get the expertise you need. That may be the best way to ensure that when the end comes, it helps you toward a bright new beginning. **HR**





FEET FIRST

The right boots, socks and insoles can make or break your customer's hunt.

BY ACE LUCIANIO

Your feet are two rather small points of contact between your body, what is sometimes a large amount of equipment, and the ground. They move up, down, backwards, forwards, side-to-side, and around or over obstacles, and they are often

the main mode of transport to, from, and during your excursion.

In other words, they are really important.

Whether it's due to cold toes, wet feet, blisters, fungal infections, or a lack of comfort, there is one thing that tends to bring a swift end to any

hunt – problems with your feet.

It's very difficult to hunt or participate in any of the traditional field sports without using your feet. Even inside a canoe or kayak, the point where your feet contact the hull create the stable platform that allows you to propel the boat forward.



When I was a wee lad, my hunting boots were a pair of double-layer Northland “insulated” rubber boots. Wearing them was a case study in miserable times afield. Because rubber does not breathe, any activity caused my feet to sweat and the boots to become clammy. In below-freezing weather, there was often ice inside my boots. On one particularly cold hunt in Montana when I was 12 years old, we had to remove my boots and build a small fire next to the duck blind just to warm my feet and dry my socks.

As time went on, more and better footwear became available for youth. My children got nothing but the best winter boots, as their childhood was spent in Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of Michigan. It was probably some of the best money I spent, because quality boots last, and we passed boots down across four different kids, then gave them to relatives for their children to use.

While quality, comfortable and waterproof footwear have definitely allowed hunters to do more than ever in ever-greater comfort, they are not the only important part of the equation.

How your customers care for their feet can play an equally important part.



WHICH BOOTS??

With the plethora of quality manufacturers, huge advancements in waterproof/breathable technologies, and ever better and more knowledgeable design teams, much of today’s footwear can be utilized out of the

box due to their marriage of quality and comfortable materials that make even some new boots feel like slipping on a pair of old tennis shoes.

Matching the footwear to the type of hunting or outdoor recreation activity your customer will be participating in can make or break a hunt.

For example, while a pair of -100°F winter pack boots or 1,600-gram insulated neoprene rubber boots might be perfect for sitting in a treestand and walking short distances in below freezing weather, they would be highly uncomfortable hiking eight to 10 miles per day on a sheep or elk hunt in the mountains. Conversely, a pair of supportive, lightly insulated all-leather mountain boots would feel right at home crossing a loose shale field with a heavy pack on, but they would likely not be a wise choice for a late-December duck hunt.

RUBBER: Starting with the simplest types of boots, the single-piece rubber boot has been a staple of the outdoor world for years. Fortunately, these boots have evolved tremendously to include ultra-wicking

↑ There are many different kinds of boots out there. Make sure you choose the right pair for your customer’s intended use.

liners that move moisture away from the foot and out the top of the boot. Combined with some of today’s most modern rubbers and polymers, the fit of the average hunting boot has improved dramatically over the last 50 years. Today, buyers can order these boots in many different specialties, from lightweight uninsulated boots, some that even include laces for a better fit, all the way to 2,000 grams and greater levels of additional insulation for keeping feet toasty on stand. The best use for these types of boots is for short walks to somewhere the hunter will be sitting in place for a long time. Lacrosse boots have been a gold standard for hunters for many years, but newer companies such as Muck, Bogs, Irish Setter and Rocky have joined the club.

PAC BOOTS: An upgrade to a traditional rubber boot, these boots typically (though not always) are





comprised of a rubber bottom that is attached to a leather upper, with a wool or synthetic insulated “pack” liner that is removable from the boot. Ultra cold-weather activities and even some activities requiring a moderate amount of walking or hiking are where this boot shines. The ability to remove the liners from the boots make drying them and the boot itself easy and fast. Still-hunting Northwoods whitetails or walking snow-covered ridges in search of elk are great places for this boot. Likely the most well-known brand in this category is Sorrell. Lacrosse, Baffin And Kamik are some others. More specialized boots that give better support for hiking come from brands like and Hoffman.

HIKING BOOTS: As the name suggests, this boot was originally designed for hiking and backpacking. They come in many shapes and sizes, from low, to mid to high upper options for varying levels of ankle support. They are typically uninsulated, and buyers will have a choice between waterproof/breathable and non-waterproof. These are

"Matching the footwear to the type of hunting or outdoor recreation activity your customer will be participating in can make or break a hunt."

great boots for early-season hunts with light packs that require a lot of walking, desert hunts, and anywhere you'll be hunting in warm conditions. Use care when helping a customer select the right amount of ankle support and match it to conditions if you want to avoid injuries. Typically, the steeper and rockier the country, the taller boot and the more support they'll want. Kenetrek has a great new hybrid boot in this

category called the Corrie 3.2 that has an excellent blend of hiking and hunting features. Almost every major boot company makes some form of hiking boot, in addition to some more “mainstream” (i.e. non-hunting) brands like Columbia, Keen and, yes, even Nike.

INSULATED HUNTING BOOTS:

These are the Swiss Army knife of the boot world. Usually ranging in insulation levels from 200 to 2,000 grams, this is the boot your customer should choose if they can only pick one pair. They typically have moderate to strong levels of support, and the varying levels of insulation can tailor them to many hunting situations. They are typically comfortable to hike long distances in, most come with some sort of waterproof/breathable membrane such as Gore-Tex, and most are a blend of leather and nylon to allow excess moisture out from those long hikes. Choose a brand here that works for your assortment (there are many) and is popular enough to be known or obscure enough that you will have a corner on the market in your area.

MOUNTAIN BOOTS: These are the all-terrain vehicle of the outdoor world. Mountain boots are designed to be rugged, often with rubber armoring around the bottom area of the boot instead of just the toes and heels, stiff insoles, and stiffer, highly supportive uppers that completely stabilize the foot even under loads.

I have a pair of Kenetrek Mountain Extreme boots that fit me better than any other boot I've tried, but other brands like Scarpa, Crispi, Lowa and Meindl are worth looking into.



↑ Insoles are a great addition to your stock if you already sell footwear.

BETWEEN THE FOOT AND THE BOOT

Insoles: Despite massive advancements in boot comfort, one of the areas that can be easily improved upon are the removable insoles. The human foot contains 26 bones, 30 joints and more than 100 muscles, tendons and ligaments, all of which work together to provide support, balance and mobility. Unfortunately, boots are designed to fit the “average” person. They do not take into



account things like high arches, low arches, pronation or supination during gait, different foot shapes, widths, higher low insteps, etc.

Due to a misaligned hip, I walk with my feet pointed out, which causes over-pronation of my foot, with the outside of my heel striking the ground first and my foot rolling obliquely rather than straight. For years, I spent thousands of dollars on visits to specialty podiatrists who crafted custom orthotics to be placed in my shoes. That meant that many hunting boots of the day did not fit me properly. Today, there are numerous providers that address problems like these with specialty insoles made to line up the foot properly, provide arch support, heel support, and even comfort and cushioning beyond the generic insole that comes with your boot. One of these companies is Form insoles. Form offers several different types of foot support devices, all of which are semi custom form-able to the wearer's foot. Form insoles can be ordered online, or as an addition to the selection of footwear and footwear products in your store by purchasing wholesale in bulk directly from the company at www.forminsoles.com.

Socks: Whenever somebody walks



↑ Socks are an easy upsell — and they are vital for proper foot care.



↑ Encourage customers not to cheap out on their boots. An ill-fitting pair can absolutely ruin a hunt.

into your store and buys a new pair of boots, you should always ask important questions and attempt to also sell them at least one pair of high-quality socks. A good sock can make or break a hunt.

The good news is, with today's advanced materials, technologies and designs, there are many choices to allow your customers to choose the type of sock that's best for them.

For light hiking, a single wool or synthetic blend sock that is well-fitting with adequate cushioning will typically do. For long hikes, traverses deep into the wilderness, and hiking long distances over uneven terrain, you should sell your customer at least two pairs of socks. One of these should be a thin liner made of merino wool or polypropylene, the other a wool or synthetic blend sock as described above. The old saying "cotton kills" doesn't specifically apply to boots, but wet socks, cold feet and foot injury can place your customer in varying



stages of discomfort all the way to significant danger. Skip the cotton except for wearing back at camp.

Darn Tough, Rivers West, Smartwool, Kenetrek (yes, the boot company), Bombas, Carhartt, and many others all have high quality socks for hunting, hiking and everyday wear. Once you convince your customer to try a pair of high-quality socks, they likely won't go back.

PROPER FOOT CARE

Just how important is foot care?

The term "trench foot" first appeared in the winter of 1914 during WWI. It was characterized by lower foot swelling, numbness and pain.

It was quickly recognized as a serious problem by military medical authorities, but not necessarily their leaders. There was some debate over whether it was caused by frostbite or some other condition, but it was quickly accepted as a specific disease. The major reasons proposed were exposure, diet and infection. The opinion emerged that it was caused by circulatory changes in the foot caused by cold, wet and pressure. Predisposing factors included poor dietary balance and nutrients and fatigue. Trench foot became a serious problem for the Allies, leading to 75,000 injuries in the British and over 2,000 in the American forces.





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→ The author has learned the hard way that an injury, blister, or fungal infection can be mostly avoided by having the right equipment and foot care.

That's right — almost 80,000 soldiers were laid up as “wounded” because of improper foot care and inadequate boots for the weather. Some simple steps can ensure your customers don't join them.

Encourage customers to keep their feet dry and use clean socks or, at the minimum, socks that are allowed to air out for a day between wearing them in the field. Make sure their boots fit well and are well broken-in before the hunt. Address issues like hot spots, chafing, blisters or even pinching of a boot at the earliest possible time. Customers should wear the right boots for the conditions they will be hunting in. Finally, they should always carry a foot first-aid kit that is easily accessible in their



pack to help with issues along the way.

My foot first-aid kit includes tweezers for removing splinters, wraps and elastic bandages to immobilize the ankle in the case of a fall or sprain, an aircast or splint, instant cold packs to reduce swelling, moleskin or blister pads and scissors to cut them, antifungal ointment to treat athlete's foot, and a nail clippers to trim a toenail that might be rubbing against the boot or another toe. Finally, I added an item to my “camp” foot care arsenal that became an absolute life saver on a recent hunt — a large bag of eucalyptus Epsom salts. My hunting partner and I both had foot issues on that hunt. I twisted my ankle, ironically, by having the wrong boots on and being too lazy to take them off. He had two blisters. Soaking our feet in a hot Epsom salt bath in the evening had them back to new inside of two days. Plus, it felt absolutely decadent. **HR**

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	BRAND	MODEL
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Modern Sporting Rifle		
AR Pistol		
Shotgun		
Muzzleloader		
Handgun		
Airgun		
Crossbow		
AMMUNITION		
Shotshells		
Centerfire		
Rimfire		
Hunting Pellet		
RELOADING		
Bullets		
Components		
Powder		
AFTERMARKET TRIGGER		
AFTERMARKET BARREL		
GUN SIGHT		
Riflescope		
Red Dot/Reflex Sight		
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Laser Sight		
HUNTING LIGHTS		
Gun-Mounted Light		
Hand-Held Light		

	BRAND	MODEL
BINOCULAR		
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SUPPRESSOR		
SHOTGUN CHOKE TUBE		
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All About That BASE LAYER

Cold-weather comfort is more dependent on the base layer than any other piece of clothing.

BY MARK CHESNUT

Fifty years ago, when outdoorsmen and women prepared to go hunting or winter fishing or participate in any other cold-weather outdoor activity, the first thing they did was put on a pair of insulated underwear, also called long johns, as their first layer. Some chose separate shirts and pants, while others preferred one-piece units. Those undergarments were the warmest thing we had available, and if it was going to get really frigid, we wouldn't think of leaving home without them.

What we didn't know at the time was that while they were the best we had, they were far from ideal. Most were made of cotton, which lends lots of warmth but also holds moisture quite well. So, if we were a little overdressed on the drive to our hunting spot and started sweating, that dampness would remain with us until our body heat finally dried it out. Consequently, comfort was far from guaranteed. Today we know that "cotton kills."





Photos: John Hafner



Some stalwart hunters swore by their wool long johns, but many of those people also swore at those same undergarments. Wool clothing back then was notoriously itchy, often leaving the wearer uncomfortable and scratching a lot — movement not conducive to having a big buck come within gun or bow range.

Thankfully, what we didn't know then, we know now. When participating in cold-weather outdoor activities, the base layer your customer chooses just might be the most important decision of all for staying warm, dry and comfortable, regardless of what Mother Nature has in store. In nearly every outdoor activity you undertake in fall, winter and spring, a good base layer can keep you more comfortable, allowing you to have more fun enjoying the great outdoors. Base layers have come a long way in the last half century, and the products available nowadays keep outdoorsmen and women warmer, drier and more comfortable than ever before.

"The wicking ability of base layers ranges widely depending on the fabric. Synthetic garments made of a high percentage of polyester mixed with spandex and/or nylon wick the best."

However, the wide variety of base layer styles, materials and temperature ratings available can be confusing to both retailers and customers if they don't understand the terminology and the general idea behind layering. Let's take a look at what makes modern base layers so good and what kinds of things you should consider when choosing base layers for your retail outlet.



MATERIALS

Many of the most popular base layers today are made of synthetic materials rather than natural materials like cotton or wool. That's because many synthetic materials, like polyester, have all the traits an outdoor enthusiast is looking for to stay warm in cold conditions.

Most synthetics are warmer than old-fashioned cotton garments. But they also have another thing going for them that makes them even warmer: They have moisture-wicking properties that help keep wearers dry, which in the outdoors nearly always means staying warmer.

"Wicking" is a fancy word for saying the base layer garment draws sweat away from the wearer's body and pushes it outward, keeping his or her skin dry. Since the surface area of wicking materials is much greater than that of some natural fabrics like cotton, it is easier for moisture to evaporate from them, leaving you warmer and drier.

The wicking ability of base layers ranges widely depending on the fabric. Synthetic garments made of a

↑ Clothing systems made to layer depend on the base layer to make the entire system work up to its potential.

high percentage of polyester mixed with spandex and/or nylon wick the best. At the other end of the spectrum is cotton, which has zero wicking ability. If you sweat when wearing cotton as a base layer, or garments made of a higher percentage of cotton, you likely won't be dry and comfortable.

Base layers made of synthetic materials are also tougher and more durable than those made from cotton or other natural fibers. And for hunters worried about masking their scent from deer and other game animals, some base layers made of synthetic materials even add a finish that diminishes odor by slowing the build-up of bacteria on the garments.

Among popular natural materials used in making base layers, merino wool is probably the most common. Merino wool is a natural fiber grown by merino sheep. It's thinner and softer than regular wool, making it



UNDER ARMOUR ISO-CHILL BASELINE LONG SLEEVE

SCENTLOK BETREK MERINO BASE PANTS

Photos: John Hafner



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easy to wear next to the skin.

Unlike the old-fashioned wool garments that some might remember from the past, those made of merino wool have lots of upsides without all the negative aspects. Garments made from it are very soft and don't cause itchiness or discomfort like wool base garments from decades past. Also, while it likely won't keep the wearer as dry as polyester would, it does have some wicking qualities — far more than, say, cotton.

Another natural material used in making base layers is silk, and a good silk undergarment just might be the most comfortable thing you can wear next to your skin when enjoying outdoor endeavors. While not best for hardcore outdoorsmen who will be doing activities involving lots of sweating, cooling, then sweating again, it does at least wick moisture better than cotton.

Of course, there are still cotton-based garments — most with a blend of polyester or other synthetic fabric — marketed as base layers. Their main benefit is usually in the price, as they are typically less expensive than all-synthetic garments. For cotton-blend base layers, remember that the lower the percentage of cotton and higher the percentage of polyester or other synthetic, the better the garment will perform.

WEIGHT

Base layers are marketed for different activities and conditions based on weight — lightweight, midweight and heavyweight. For lightweight base layers, which are obviously designed for times when temperatures won't be so cold or the wearer will be doing lots of strenuous activity, thinner is better. They might not provide a good deal of insulation, but if it's just cool outside, many people will be wearing them more for their wicking ability than their thermal capacity.

Base layers labeled as "midweight" can be used either as a next-to-the-skin first layer or as a second layer in colder weather. They wick well and provide thermal protection in moderately cold conditions.



Base layer garments labeled "heavyweight" are made for extremely cold conditions and are typically much thicker than other base layer garments. Since they are usually worn as a second or third layer, their wicking ability isn't as important as the ability to help keep you warm when most other hunters have gone inside to sit by the warm fire.

When discussing base layers, the word "layers" is key. An active outdoorsman or woman doesn't simply have to choose a base layer at the beginning of the day and plan on wearing just that layer the rest of the day. If it's going to be moderately cold, two lightweight layers often serve the wearer better than one midweight layer. That's because as the day wears on and temperatures heat up, he or she can shed one of the layers, ensuring just the right amount of insulation throughout the day.

↑ Base layers come in different weights, and selling a customer a garment that's too light or too heavy can leave them shivering or drenched in sweat.

The same holds true for heavyweight base layers. If it's going to be bitter cold all day, a good, heavyweight base layer might be just the ticket. But if the day is going to start out frigid and then warm up to only moderately cold, two midweight layers might serve the wearer better since he or she can shed one or both if needed to stay warm and dry.

FIT

While fit might not sound important to many of your customers, it is actually critical to their comfort since it affects a garment's ability to insulate and wick. Thus, a properly fitting base layer is going to keep your

customer much more comfortable and better able to remain outdoors enjoying whatever his or her chosen activity might be.

Base layers are far from being one-size-fits-all garments. If a hunter's base layer is oversized and saggy, it's not going to provide him or her with all the benefits a good-fitting base layer will. That's also true for undersized base layer garments, which can cut into their arms and legs at the cuff, restrict overall movement and overall be very uncomfortable.

For a base layer — either upper or lower — to wick properly, it needs to lay against the skin in order to pick up moisture. Consequently, the fit needs to be relatively snug. I say "relatively" because being too snug often leads to discomfort, and comfort isn't a factor that most outdoors enthusiasts want to sacrifice if they don't have to.

One exception to wearing a base layer snug against the skin is when a hunter chooses a base layer as his or her only upper garment for a cool-weather hunt. In that case, a looser lightweight base layer top might be more comfortable than a form-fitting one.

RETAILER RECOMMENDATIONS

In the end, most retailers of hunting equipment and other outdoor gear should carry a good selection of base layers since they are an integral piece of the puzzle for dressing adequately for cold-weather outdoor activities. While most selections should be made of polyester or other synthetic fibers, it's not a bad idea to carry a few tops and bottoms in merino wool and even silk. Both have their fans, and there are some hunters who just hate synthetic undergarments.

It's also wise to carry a good range of sizes in lightweight, midweight and heavyweight base layer garments, both tops and bottoms, as it's not uncommon for hunters and other outdoorsmen and women to wear one weight garment on top and another weight on bottom for the same outing. If you have them on hand, you'll likely see base layers become a good seller year round. **HR**

Photos: John Hafner



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Fuel the Social Media Fire

Your social media efforts now will reap future benefits.

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 it was one year no one will soon forget. On its heels, 2021 and 2022 have brought a continued pandemic that no one expected to last this long, a ramp-up in political divides, and more social issues.

All these things have resulted in most retail FFLs seeing a surge in sales. In fact, many retail FFLs are still 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, that 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 relationships 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 then, 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 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

"Always ask fans to do something at the end of your video or your article. Your goal is to gain as much interaction as possible."

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, and video might not be your strong suit. If you're not comfortable on camera, you can use software like EasyVSL which 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.

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 on social media. HR

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HUNTING RETAILER

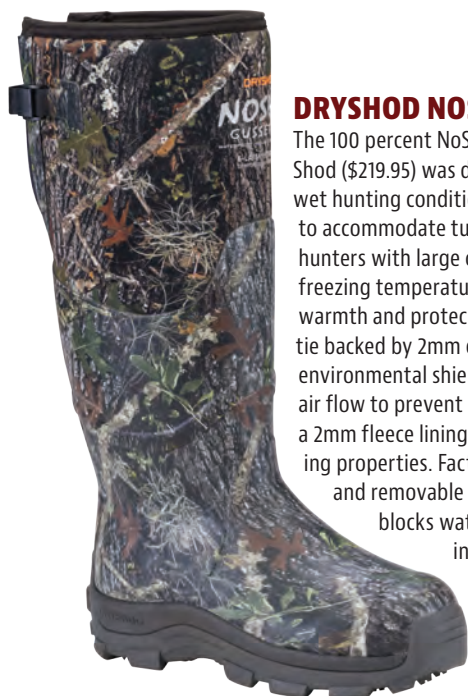
GEAR ROUNDUP

HUNTING BOOTS

Help your patrons put their best foot forward with boots that are tailor-made for specific hunting tasks.

BY GORDY KRAHN

Happy feet are productive feet, and keeping them warm and dry should be every hunter's No. 1 priority. And that means investing in quality boots that stand up to the rigors of the hunt — in any kind of weather in any variety of terrain. The best boots you can own are those you rarely think about — those that quietly go about the business by keeping your feet dry, blister-free and toasty warm. High-quality boots provide the impetus to keep you going — one step at a time — when the going gets tough, whether it's a sub-zero all-day sit in a ground blind or treestand or a long backcountry trek to the horizon and back. But don't consider one boot (even a good one) the end-all answer to all hunting situations — there is a wide variety of makes and models out there for very good reason. Each boot must match the task at hand, which is why most hunters typically own several pairs. If you're in the boot business, it's important to have a wide array of models on hand for all types of hunting scenarios, and that you and your staff have the knowledge to help your customers make the right choices — to help them navigate the various models and price points to find those that fit their specific needs. Here are eight models that will get you hiking down the trail to increased profits.



DRYSHOD NOSHO GUSSET XT

The 100 percent NoSho Gusset XT insulated boot from Dry-Shod (\$219.95) was developed to withstand extreme cold and wet hunting conditions — built with an adjustable gusset to accommodate tucked-in heavy clothing or to better fit hunters with large calves. The NoSho Gusset XT tackles freezing temperatures with six layers of insulating warmth and protection, with a 5.5mm Densoprene bootie backed by 2mm extreme density foam for maximum environmental shielding. A 2mm air mesh layer promotes air flow to prevent heat-robbing moisture buildup, while a 2mm fleece lining enhances the boot's natural insulating properties. Factor in the EVA cold-blocking midsole and removable molded EVA sock liner for a boot that blocks water and retains heat for all-day hunting comfort. www.dryshodusa.com



BAFFIN HUDSON

Hudson has been the trusted boot of choice for many hunters, trappers and fishermen who rely on their warmth and waterproofing when navigating the outdoors (\$260). They are "Northern rated" for diverse environments with wet and icy conditions, featuring a Fixed-Fit multilayer inner boot insulation system, B-Tek waterproofing with increased breathability and an anti-microbial next-to-foot lining that keeps odors at bay. This rugged 11.25-inch boot has a leather upper with nylon inserts and a temperature rating of 60 to 5 degrees F. Weight per pair is 7.07 pounds, and they are available in brown and Mossy Oak and Realtree camo in sizes 7-14. www.baffin.com



IRISH SETTER TERRAIN

From vast plains to unforgiving backcountry, hunters can count on Irish Setter Terrain boots (Starting at \$164.99) to get them there comfortably, featuring a proprietary sole platform with aggressive, multi-directional lugs that contour to rocks and uneven surfaces to provide extra traction and stability. Lightweight, high rebound EVA in the EnerG midsole provides underfoot cushioning and comfort with each step, and a PU foam footbed adds another layer of all-day comfort. Polyurethane impregnated leather and fabric panels create a durable upper featuring UltraDry waterproofing for long-lasting protection, and ScentBan scent control eliminates odors within the boot. Terrain boots are available in a non-insulated model and those with 400, 800 or 1,200 grams of insulation in various camo options. www.irishsetterboots.com



LALO RAPID ASSAULT BOOT

The LALO Rapid Assault boot (\$185-\$195) is designed for easy entry and exit — a comfortable, lightweight, all-purpose boot for all-day wear. It is suitable for moving over any terrain where weight matters and speed and flexibility are needed. The rocker shape of the Rapid Assault sole promotes mid-foot strike and forward momentum. The dual-density EVA in the midsole provides cushion while standing and propulsion when on the go. The boot features a two-way passive drainage system designed to move moisture away from the foot, a carbonized bamboo antimicrobial lining, ample toe box space, slip-resistant outsole traction pods and much more. It is available in black, coyote brown and Multicam camo with 6- and 9-inch cuffs. www.lalo.com



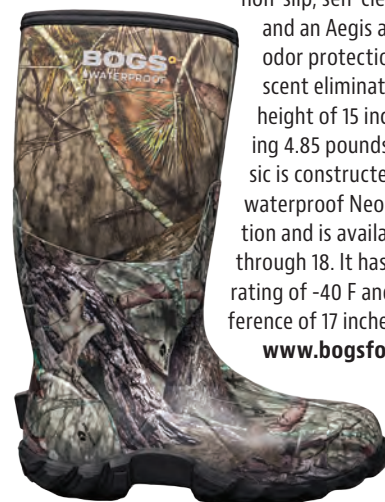
UA HOVR DAWN WATERPROOF 2.0

Under Armour took its lightest, most durable materials and added energy-returning HOVR cushioning from its best running shoes to make the new Dawn Waterproof 2.0 boot (\$190; \$210/with 400 grams of insulation). Throw in the protection of a breathable, 100 percent waterproof membrane and this boot is unstoppable. It features a lightweight and breathable synthetic and textile upper with welded overlay for added protection and durability and an external heel counter for added stability. A molded, anti-microbial Ortholite sock liner prevents the growth of odor-causing microbes, and UA HOVR technology provides a "zero gravity feel" to maintain energy return that helps eliminate impact. The boot has a high-traction rubber lug outsole for enhanced grip on a variety of surfaces. www.underarmour.com

ORIGINAL BOGS CLASSIC

Designed to keep users warm, dry and comfortable, the Bogs Classic high boot (\$140) is 100 percent waterproof and built to last, featuring a durable hand-lasted rubber and four-way stretch inner bootie. Dressed in a classic Mossy Oak camo patterned overlay, this boot features a non-slip, self-cleaning outsole and an Aegis antimicrobial odor protection insole with scent elimination. With a height of 15 inches and weighing 4.85 pounds, the Bogs Classic is constructed with 7mm waterproof Neo-Tech insulation and is available in sizes 7 through 18. It has a temperature rating of -40 F and a calf circumference of 17 inches.

www.bogsfootwear.com



THOROGOOD INFINITY FD

The Infinity FD rubber boot from Thorogood (Price varies by model) is a fusion of simplicity and complexity. Underneath and inside of this classic rubber boot silhouette is cutting-edge technology that bolsters performance and enhances comfort in the most challenging conditions. The Infinity FD Flex-drive anti-fatigue energy return system absorbs shock while propelling the user forward. Inside the 100 percent waterproof rubber body of the boot is an innovative liner that allows for lightweight Solarcore cold-crushing insulation, a commercial application of NASA space suit insulation that in recent testing retained 50 percent more heat than an identical boot with traditional insulation, according to Thorogood. The seamless body of the Infinity FD is constructed from scent-free rubber. www.thorogoodusa.com



ZAMBERLAN 3032 ULL GTX

The Zamberlan 3032 ULL GTX RR BOA late-season hunting boot (\$595) is a warm, protective boot designed for hunting big game in harsh terrain and frigid climates in the most treacherous of conditions. Gore-Tex comfort membranes and additional layers of Primaloft insulation provide excellent warmth and comfort, while the Vibram Star Trek II outsoles afford exceptional grip on snowy, icy terrain. For long days in the field, the ULL's softer midsole enables a smooth comfortable stride complemented by Zamberlan's famous fit. Hunters can easily customize different fit zones with the boot's double BOA closure system, individually adjusting the top of the boot and the instep area to their liking for a better, more personalized fit. www.zamberlanusa.com



BY GORDY KRAHN

HUNTING RETAILER NEW PRODUCTS



ROCK RIVER ARMS ALL-TERRAIN HUNTER RIFLE

Chambered in .223 WYLDE to accommodate both 5.56mm and .223 Rem. hunting ammunition, the Rock River Arms All-Terrain Hunter (ATH) AR-platform rifle's precision 18-inch heavy match stainless-steel barrel is cryogenically treated for maximum stability and accuracy. The barrel mates to a forged A4 upper receiver and is shrouded by a 13-inch extended lightweight free-float handguard. Its co-witnessed, full-length rail system offers plenty of room for high-magnification optics and thermal gear while the M-Lok compatible handguard ensures ample mounting positions for bipods, slings and lights. Noteworthy is the inclusion of RRA's two-stage Ultra Match Varmint trigger, with its light take-up, crisp break and 3.5- to 4-pound pull weight. Additional features include RRA's Operator muzzle brake, plastic hard case and one 20-round steel magazine. MSRP: \$1,425 www.rockriverarms.com



WEATHERBY .338 WBY RPM CARTRIDGE

Using the 6.5 WBY RPM (Rebated Precision Magnum) launched in 2019 as a parent case, Weatherby has now launched the new .338 WBY RPM, its 16th cartridge in 77 years of business. Like the 6.5 WBY RPM, the .338 Weatherby RPM has been purpose built for the Weatherby Mark V six-lug action. The Rebated Precision Magnum family is unique compared to Weatherby's traditional cartridges because it features a non-belted, non-venturi shoulder case with a rebated rim. Out of the gate Weatherby will be shipping four offerings in .338 WBY RPM — Weatherby Select Plus/185-grain Barnes TTSX; Weatherby Select/225-grain Hornady Interlock; Weatherby Select Plus/225 grain Nosler Accubond; Weatherby Select Plus/225-grain Barnes TTSX. MSRP: \$79-\$109 www.weatherby.com

ZEISS LRP S3 FIRST FOCAL PLANE RIFLESCOPE

The Zeiss all-new first focal plane rifle scope — the LRP S3 — is designed for long-range precision shooting and hunting and includes total elevation travel, advanced optics, daytime visible illuminated reticle, ballistic stop and an external locking windage turret. It is available in two models: the LRP S3 4-25x50mm and 6-36x56mm. Both are available in either milliradian (MRAD) or minute-of-angle (MOA) configurations. Exceptional optical performance is assured via the use of extra-low dispersion (ED) lens elements and Zeiss' proprietary T* multi-layer lens coating for optimum color fidelity, image brightness and edge-to-edge sharpness within the entire field of view. Protective LotuTec lens coating for anti-fogging and to repel dust, dirt or fingerprints complete the advanced optical design of the Zeiss LRP S3. MSRP: \$2,199.99/4-25x50mm; \$2,499.99/6-36x56mm www.zeiss.com



OL' MAN ASSASSIN HANG-ON TREESTAND

Lightweight, compact and durable, the Ol' Man Assassin hang-on treestand features the Millennium-style ComfortMax seat, designed with a footrest for prolonged sitting comfort — easily and quietly folded up to allow extra room on the platform for standing or making tricky angle shots. The Assassin folds flat for easy packing and features integrated, adjustable backpack straps. With powder-coated, rugged steel construction, it is built to last, while weighing a manageable 19 pounds. Designed to work on the most difficult-shaped trees, the Speed Rail consists of three independent sections of ladder. There's no metal-to-metal contact, so hunters can quietly move into their hunting location without alerting game. Like every Ol' Man stand, the Assassin hang-on includes a five-point, full-body safety harness. MSRP: \$94.49 www.millennium-outdoors.com

HORNADY SECURITY AMMO CABINET

Assembled in the USA, Hornady Security's all-metal Ammo Cabinet organizes and safeguards ammo and other valuables. It uses a barrel-key lock for enhanced security and is optimized to accommodate plastic ammo cans (three included) or similar aftermarket products. The cabinet features three adjustable shelves, each with a 100-pound load capacity rating, totaling three 12- x 18-inch surfaces in the 40-inch-tall container. Also included are shelf/floor mats to protect the contents. Square-Lok walls allow critical airflow for temperature and humidity control and an included battery-operated motion light illuminates cabinet contents when the door opens. And no storage system is complete without proper labeling, so the Ammo Cabinet includes 10 magnetic rewritable shelf labels for organizing items and finding ammo. MSRP: \$629 www.hornadysecurity.com





GHILLIE MONSTER QUICK ALL CAMERA MOUNT

The Quick All Camera Mount from Ghillie Monster allows hunters to mount their mobile devices and cameras almost anywhere. It will securely mount cameras, camcorders, GoPros, phones and display lights with ease for hands-free operation. Users can position these devices using the Quick All Camera Mount to their riflescope, gun barrel, treestand, shooting houses and more. The Ghillie Monster Fluid Head system operates as smooth as silk and will allow users to move their camera to any position to capture all the thrills of the hunt. MSRP: \$99.99 www.ghilliemonsteroutdoors.com



CHRISTENSEN ARMS MESA FFT HUNTING RIFLE

Christensen Arms' new Mesa hunting rifle with Flashed Forged technology (FFT) is now available in W.L. Gore Optifade camo. This bolt-action rifle weighs just 5.5 pounds and is a great solution for hunting in challenging terrain and for long treks into the wilderness. It features an ultralight contour 416R stainless-steel barrel with a Cerakote finish, "seamless" removable radial muzzle brake, 1/2 x 28 threaded muzzle for adding an optional suppressor, Christensen Arms precision machined receiver and carbon-fiber FFT stock. The Mesa FFT is available in left- and right-handed configurations and comes in these popular hunting calibers: 6.5 PRC, .300 PRC, .300 Win. Mag. and .28 Nosler. It is backed by the Christensen Arms sub-MOA guarantee. MSRP: Starting at \$1,699.99 www.christensenarms.com



IRISH SETTER VAPRTREK HUNTING BOOT

The Irish Setter VapTrek waterproof hunting boot with 1,200 grams of insulation comes dressed in Mossy Oak Break-Up Country camouflage, made with full-grain leather and abrasion resistant materials to ensure durability. Its PrimaLoft insulation keeps feet warm, while an UltraDry waterproof membrane keeps them dry. The company's exclusive ScentBan odor control technology kills bacteria and eliminates odor. The VapTrek's Memory Foam insole provides under-foot comfort, and Armatex XT technology adds durability and abrasion resistance in high wear areas of the heel and toe while leather reinforcement is strategically placed to protect flex points. A lightweight, nylon shank adds arch support and EnerG technology within the dual density midsole delivers extra comfort in the heel and forefoot impact zones. MSRP: \$219.99 www.irishsetterboots.com



SWAGGER SEA 12 BIPOD

Hunters know that when a shot opportunity presents itself, they must adapt quickly to make the shot, or it could be too late. But finding the ideal level ground to get into a shooting position isn't always possible with traditional bipods. With the Swagger Bipods SEA 12, hunters can get into proper positions quickly, easily and comfortably in the most extreme angles. It features the same flex technology as Swagger's other bipods and over-molded springs, which gives hunters or shooters the ability to adapt when shooting downhill, on slopes and sideways, from the most challenging angles. The SEA 12 weighs only 13.6 ounces and extends from 9 to 12 inches. Retail: \$199.99 www.swaggerbipods.com

MOULTRIE MOBILE EDGE CELLULAR TRAIL CAMERA

Moultrie Mobile recently announced the release of its latest cellular trail camera, the Edge. Designed with innovative features that enhance performance, it is easy to set up and includes built-in memory, flexible power options and all-new Auto Connect technology. With the Edge, users no longer need to choose a carrier-specific camera to match cellular coverage options for each camera location. Utilizing Auto Connect, the Edge scans for and automatically connects to the strongest network available from several major U.S. cellular carriers with a single SIM card. A new custom antenna also improves connectivity and easily folds away for storage. The user-friendly interface further simplifies the operation with an on/off switch and a single button press to capture a test image. MSRP: \$99.99 www.moultriemobile.com



MILLENNIUM TREESTANDS M150 MONSTER HANG-ON STAND

The Millennium M150 Monster hang-on stand safely and securely supports 300 pounds, and it is easily adjustable to compensate for slight variations in tree straightness. It features an adjustable ComfortMAX seat, with a full backrest and side supports. Gun and crossbow hunters can add an optional M101 shooting rail and bowhunters will like the easy move to a standing position while quietly raising the seat to a folded position. This aluminum hang-on weighs just 19.5 pounds and easily folds for backpacking. The package includes a full body harness and SafeLink system and a 35-foot rope with a prusik knot and carabiner for controlled, safe ascent and descent. MSRP: \$318.99 www.millennium-outdoors.com



Airguns and Your Store

Hunting with air guns is more popular than ever. Are you taking advantage?

BY BOB ROBB

Looking for something that will create a new profit center while helping grow the sport? Have you considered modern airguns? No, not Ralphie's Red Ryder BB gun of "A Christmas Story" fame, but modern, high-powered airguns that have virtually zero recoil and are quiet to shoot, accurate, and powerful enough to take small game and predators, as well as deer and other big-game animals.

The popularity of airgun shooting and hunting is growing slowly but steadily, for many reasons. Chuck Sykes, Director of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries at Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, is a hardcore outdoorsman who loves to hunt with modern airguns. He was the catalyst that made hunting big game with airguns in his state legal. "I brought airgun hunting to Alabama for several reasons," Sykes said. "It gives seasoned hunters another tool to enjoy afield, but it's also a natural fit for hunters in semi-urban and urban areas for the lack of sound at the shot. The negligible recoil also helps novice hunters and shooters avoid flinching. And today's airguns are plenty powerful enough to cleanly take down whitetails and even wild hogs.

"The popularity of airgun hunting is growing slowly in the U.S.," Sykes continued. "It's relatively new, and I don't think it will ever be what archery or traditional firearms hunting is, but it is a great way to provide more opportunity."

According to the Airgun Sporting Association, big-game hunting with airguns is legal in 24 states — most in the Southeast — and airguns are legal for small-game hunting in every state except Hawaii and Mis-

issippi. Predator hunters can use airguns in 40 of 50 states. You can even hunt upland birds in 31 states. It's becoming so popular with predator hunters that our sister publication, *Predator Xtreme* magazine, features a regular airgun hunting column penned by noted airgun hunting authority Jim Chapman, who has taken big game around the world with airguns.

For the uninitiated, there are different types of airguns suitable for serious hunting. At the 2022 SHOT Show, it was evident that airgun manufacturers are hopping on the technological bandwagon, featuring many refinements to existing product lines as well as new designs and technologies. Most of the new airguns on display were of the PCP (pre-charged pneumatic) design — the most popular with serious airgun big-game hunters — though improvements to spring-piston and multi-pump rifles were also showcased. Top manufacturers include AEA, AirArms, AirForce, Air Venturi, Benjamin, Brocock, Crosman, Daystate, FX, Gamo, Hatsan, JTS, and Umarex.

In addition to the rifles themselves, there are opportunities to sell accessories. PCP rifles require charging equipment, which can be a pricey accessory but can offer solid profit margin. For all rifle types there are scopes and mounts, cleaning and maintenance kits, bipods and vertical fore grips,

slings, disposable CO2 cartridges, magazines, clips, loaders, targets and traps, cases, and of course, the ammunition itself. Most air rifles suitable as big-game guns are set up to shoot cast lead bullets instead of the traditional Diabolo-style airgun pellet. That's because cast lead bullets are heavier and have better ballistics and terminal performance compared to Diabolo pellets. There are even some unique accessories like the Combro CB625 Chronograph, a mini airgun chronograph that attaches to the barrel and gives accurate muzzle velocity readings. And how about a suppressor? Yes, they make suppressors for air rifles. The list goes on and on.

You'll find that serious airgun hunters demand serious rifles, and these rifles are not the relatively inexpensive CO2 replicas, Red Ryder or multi-pump air rifles many of us grew up with. The truth is, a modern high-powered air rifle is more complex from a mechanical perspective than a standard firearm, is made to exacting tolerances, and is built with high-quality materials — and pricing reflects all of that. There are three basic price categories: budget (\$500 and under), midrange (\$500-\$1000), and high-priced (\$1000 and above.)

Today there are budget-priced rifles from several manufacturers that give new shooters a reasonable entry point into the sport to see if it is something they want to stay with

while providing enough power and accuracy to be a viable hunting tool. These rifles also offer customizable platforms. And as you go up the ladder in price, you of course go up the ladder in quality, creating rifles for that elite class of hunter who only wants the very best.

Kind of like regular firearms, no?

For big-game hunting, big-bore airguns are the ticket. An example of a quality big-bore hunting air rifle is the AirForce Texan, a PCP rifle in either .457 or .50 caliber, which generates 750 and 850 ft./lbs. of energy (fpe), respectively. The .457 is a great choice for all-around big game hunting, while the .50 has proven itself even on large African game like kudu, eland and Cape buffalo. Predator hunters and pest controllers are well served with .17, .22, and .257 calibers, depending on conditions, while those looking for calibers that will work well as a combination predator/deer rifle can look to .308 and .357 calibers.

The above is a very, very basic overview of airguns and airgun hunting. I encourage all who want to learn more to visit the *Predator Xtreme* website, predatorxtreme.com, type Jim Chapman into the search box, and read his columns on the topic. The man truly knows his stuff.

Does this interest you? Drop me a note at editor@grandviewoutdoors.com. I'd love to hear your thoughts. **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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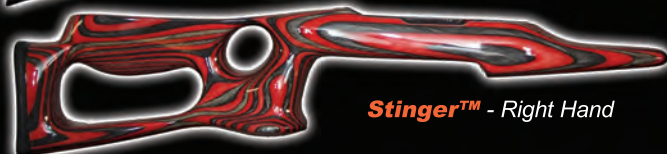
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