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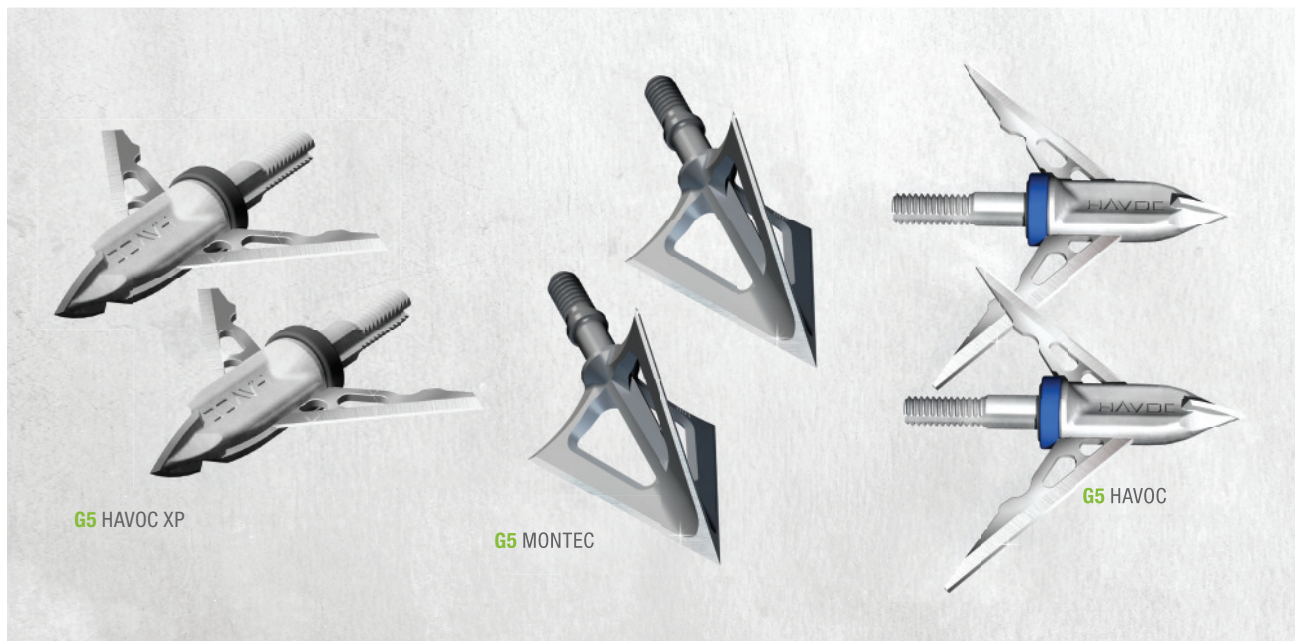
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PRODUCT PROFILES

G5 OUTDOORS

Montec is a longstanding fixed-blade bestseller, while Havoc is a hot-topic expandable.

WWW.G5OUTDOORS.COM



G5 Outdoors came from its third-generation, family-owned parent company, Grace Engineering, which started in Memphis, Michigan, in 1967.

"Grace Engineering developed a reputation by taking on difficult projects other companies were unable to complete and producing high-quality results," Tim Checkeroski, G5's marketing coordinator, said. "The processes used to do this were carried over into G5 Outdoors, and the company entered the archery industry with single-piece broadheads that were easy to re-sharpen many times over. The techniques used to make and test these broadheads separate them from other broadheads. Plus, G5 broadheads are 100 percent spin-tested for straightness to guarantee field-point accuracy."

Today, the Montec – a fixed-blade broadhead and one of G5's first broadheads – is still a top seller even after 16 years on the market. That longstanding popularity is based on the head's single-piece design and simplicity, but also on its precision accuracy and deadly performance.

"We receive many comments and reviews every year about the Montec," Checkeroski shared. "Our customers continually report how happy they are with its performance, its many uses and many reuses. It's a very accurate fixed-blade broadhead because each one is inspected under a microscope to determine straightness. This is the only way to achieve reliable field-point accuracy."

Of course, G5 Outdoors also offers expandable broadheads.

"The Havoc, a G5 expandable broadhead, has been living up to its name and more," Checkeroski continued. "It's easily the market's sharpest expandable broadhead today, thanks to its .030-inch Lutz blades. The Havoc was G5's response to a demand from the archery-industry consumer base who wanted a large-cutting, two-blade expandable able to withstand the harshest conditions. Additionally, the Havoc XP was created so more people can hunt with expandable broadheads. It's specifically designed for bowhunters who shoot low-kinetic-energy bow setups – usually bows with short draw lengths and low draw weights – ensuring maximum penetration with a devastating 1½-inch cutting diameter. The Havoc also features a wicked, cut-on-contact design and a reliable Dual Trap Blade-Retention System. Except for the Montec CS, every broadhead in G5 Outdoors' lineup is made of 100 percent stainless steel, and this makes them incredibly stronger than competing aluminum broadheads."

Checkeroski assured the company won't relax on its successes. "G5 Outdoors' motto is, 'You're only as good as you can measure,' and we constantly seek new and improved ways to do this because we're our own biggest competitor," he affirmed. "G5 will make sure it's the technology leader in a constant search to improve designs, concepts and manufacturing processes. Consumers can expect some great new designs coming that are stronger and sharper than anything available now."

PRODUCT PROFILES

IHUNT

New iHunt Moose app features more than 50 sounds.

WWW.IHUNTCALLS.COM



The iHunt app was launched in 2013 as a calls-only app. "Altus Brands acquired iHunt in 2014 with a hardware strategy to provide hunters, birdwatchers and outdoorsmen one of the largest selections of animal calls available, and link it to a Bluetooth speaker optimized to work with the iHunt app," Altus Brands' Charles Ricci said. "The app remains the best-selling hunting smartphone app, featuring high-quality animal and hunting calls with no audio noise."

A thoughtful design and presentation of feature options make the iHunt app incredibly easy to navigate and use. "A hunter can quickly change calls and create combos from dozens of different sounds with 47 different species of animals to choose from," Ricci said. "In addition to the library of over 650 different calls, the iHunt app features hunt logs, solunar times, weather and more. With an over 4.0 reviewer rating out of 5, iHunt has been the best-selling hunting app for more than four years now."

In 2015, Altus Brands launched the iHunt Ultimate Game Call, where consumers buy the speaker and get the app free, then sync the new Extreme Dimensions iHunt wireless Bluetooth speaker to a smartphone. "This Extreme Dimensions iHunt speaker, when paired with the iHunt app, turns your smartphone into a complete game-call system," Ricci shared.

The Bluetooth speaker can be paired with any Android or iOS device. "It works up to 100 yards away and doesn't require a cellular signal," Ricci added. "After pairing the speaker with your device, simply download the free app and its library of animal calls. Then you can control the sounds as well as the volume from the phone. Four C batteries – not included – power the wireless speaker."

Altus Brands sees continued growth in the speaker offerings, and in 2016 the company launched the compact iHunt XSB app and game call, available in late June. It also just launched its newest app, iHunt Moose.

"The new iHunt Moose app delivers more than 50 of your favorite moose calls and sounds," Ricci said. "You can pair this app with either the iHunt speaker or the new Extreme Dimensions XSB speaker. The combination gives iHunt Moose app users more than 50 high-performance moose calls all from their smartphone."

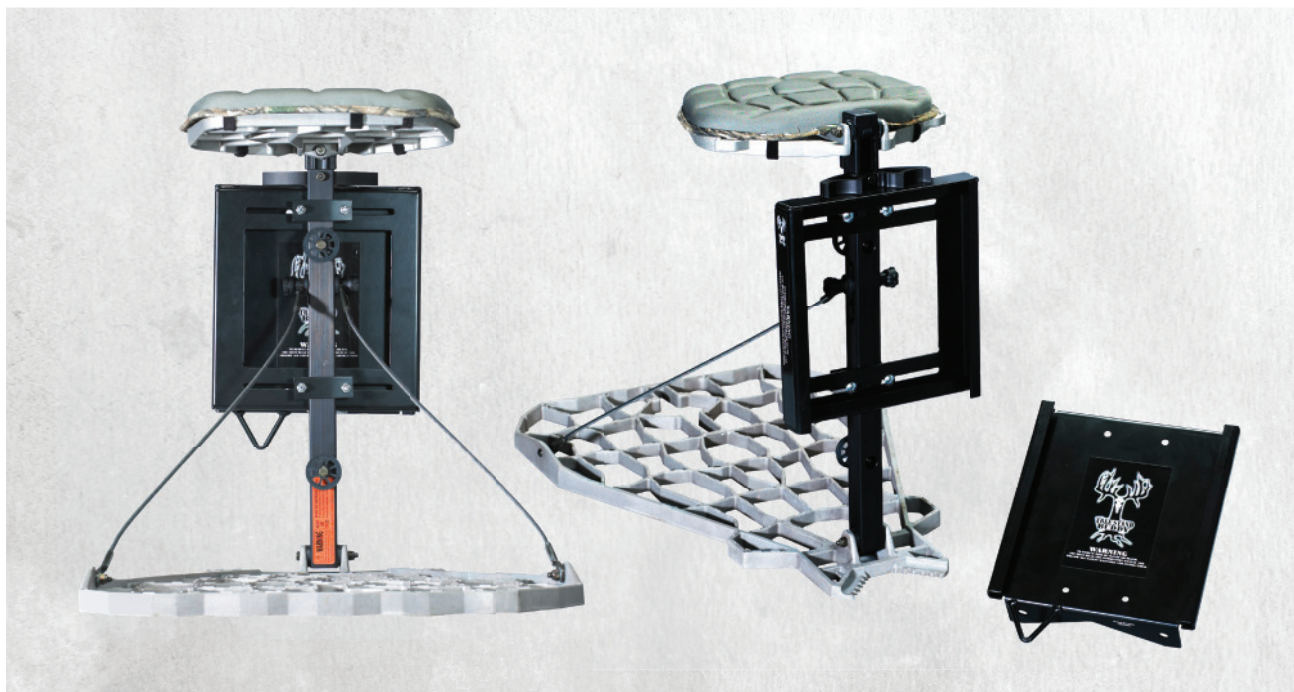
According to Ricci, Altus will continue to develop and find additional animal sounds to make iHunt the most comprehensive listing of calls available, as well as launch additional speaker options for consumers. "Today's consumers want choices, and when a hunter, outdoorsman or birdwatcher can have access to almost 700 different calls with one device – the phone or iPad they already own – it makes it very easy to use and a compelling offer," he said.

PRODUCT PROFILES

TREE STAND BUDDY

Tree Stand Buddy sets to simplify treestand hunting.

WWW.TREESTANDBUDDY.COM



The Tree Stand Buddy was designed to provide a much safer treestand-installation process. The hoisting feature allows you to climb your tree without having to simultaneously carry your treestand to the desired height. Users enjoy a much safer hunting experience since the bracket system increases safety and stability – no more wobbling.

The National Bowhunter Education Foundation (NBEF) saw the Tree Stand Buddy at the 2010 ATA Trade Show and liked it so much that it's looking to incorporate the product into its training seminars and safety videos included with each treestand purchase.

Tree Stand Buddy was recently tested by Scientific Testing Laboratories, the same company that performs all TMA testing and treestand ratings. Tree Stand Buddy's bracket system withstood 935 pounds of weight force without any movement to the brackets before the treestand that it was attached to failed.

Thus, the benefits of the Tree Stand Buddy are endless. Tree Stand Buddy saves time and money, and it provides safety, comfort and affordability. The company's goal is to bring the general public one of the best new products in years so that hunting can be a safer, more enjoyable experience for all.

To summarize the product, Tree Stand Buddy is an innovative and universal mounting accessory for hang-on stands. It consists of a

bracket and receiver system that's compatible with virtually all single- or double-post hang-on treestands. The bracket attaches to the stand, while the receiver attaches to the tree with two TSB Ultimate Ratchet straps that come with the starter kit.

Not only does the Tree Stand Buddy make treestand hunting safer and simpler, but it also allows you to use one treestand with multiple receivers preplaced at various locations. This is one of your greatest assets when playing the wind. When you're finished hunting, taking the stand down is easier and quieter than imaginable. And, when you return for another hunt, you can rest assured your stand will be positioned exactly how it was during a previous hunt once attached to the bracket.

Tree Stand Buddy offers three purchase options through its online store. The TSB Starter Kit includes a bracket, receiver, ratchet straps and hardware needed to accommodate a single- or double-post hang-on stand. The package costs \$129. Once you have a starter kit and want to add receivers so you can expand your hunting locations, the TSB Receiver Two-Pack can be purchased at a regular price of \$110. Finally, the TSB Ultimate Ratchet Strap System, which includes two straps, sells for a regular price of \$29.95.

Tree Stand Buddy is committed to making treestand hunting safer and simpler. Use its products, and you'll agree.

PRODUCT PROFILES

MOULTRIE

Reliable camera models meet cutting-edge technology.

WWW.MOULTRIEFEEDERS.COM



According to most serious whitetailers, game cameras are the single most important tool in their arsenal, and Moultrie has been providing reliable, durable and affordable game cameras from the beginning.

The first Moultrie cameras, like those from other game camera manufacturers, were film. You loaded a 24- or 36-shot film roll into your favorite Moultrie, strapped it up in the woods, let it sit for a few weeks, returned to retrieve the spent roll and then took the roll to be processed. My, how times have changed. Moultrie was a pioneer when things went digital, producing models that met with success early on. Today, the manufacturer continues down the digital road with top-tier digital wonders like the M-888i Mini Game Camera and M-999i Mini Game Camera. But as of late a new wind has been swirling at Moultrie, and it's a wind a lot of game camera lovers have been waiting for.

The all-new Moultrie Mobile, according to VP of Pradco Hunting Division Bart Stephens, will allow hunters and game managers to control their trail cameras and also view, analyze and share their photos over the internet.

"The Moultrie Field Modem will be priced at \$200," Stephens said. "The most exciting thing about the Field Modem is that it is compatible with a wide variety of Moultrie trail camera models, including many models sold in 2015. A lot goes into these systems. It is more than a standalone camera. It is a combination of systems

working together: the trail camera, the modem, the cloud-based system that stores images and the user interface which allows the user to manage their photos and cameras.

"The Field Modem is the same size as a trail camera and straps to the tree next to your camera with a steel-braided heavy-duty USB cable. Eight AA batteries will power the modem for a full season, and the modem is compatible with many of Moultrie's camera accessories, including our solar panels, battery box and mounting accessories.

"The set-up process will be simple and fast. Each modem will have a Moultrie Mobile data plan. Plans start at \$9.99 per month, and we anticipate the vast majority of users will be satisfied with plans in the \$9.99 to \$19.99 price range."

According to Stephens, Moultrie became the best-selling brand of trail cameras by listening to game management professionals and relentlessly improving their products, and that's something this stalwart manufacturer has no plans of changing.

"We have been working on this system for three years," Stephens added. "Our goal is to completely delight our customers when they start using our new system. We already have a long list of enhancements that we are working on. Remote systems are clearly the future of trail cameras. The technology will advance, the coverage will get better and the prices will come down. Moultrie plans to lead this charge."

FEATURES

22 NEW VENUE FOR 2016 BOWHUNTING ROUNDTABLE

A review of the 9th annual Bowhunting Roundtable

26 THE ADVANTAGES OF WORKING WITH A DISTRIBUTOR

Don't go it alone. Partner with a distributor to make your shop a retail powerhouse.

By Michaellean Pike



32 BACKCOUNTRY ESSENTIALS

Outfit your customers with western must-haves so their road-trip dreams become campfire realities.

By Samuel Stevenson

40 SAVING THE FAMILY BUSINESS: HOW TO BALANCE PEOPLE AND PROFITS

Too few family businesses survive into the second and third generation of ownership. Here's a look at how to prime your family business for survival.

By Phillip M. Perry

COLUMNS

4 BOTTOM LINE

Are You Ready For Retirement?

By Michaellean Pike

14 ATA NEWS BRIEF

ATA Launches Deer Protection Program

By ATA Staff



44 UNENGAGED: THE HIGH COST OF UNMOTIVATED EMPLOYEES (AND HOW TO FIX IT)

Nearly seven in 10 employees in the U.S. are unengaged, costing businesses billions. Here's a look at how the happiness of the people on your payroll can impact your bottom line.

By Michaellean Pike

48 DISTRIBUTOR DIRECTORY

A good distributor allows you to keep your shelves stocked without tying up cash in excess inventory. Our comprehensive distributor directory will help you find the full-line archery distributor nearest you.

52 SALES REP DIRECTORY

Looking for a new archery rep group? Find the right people for the job with our complete listing of rep groups nationwide.

DEPARTMENTS

8 TRADE NEWS

Vapor Trail rebrands, NASP growing in New York and more.

56 BEHIND THE COUNTER

Are You Satisfied With Your Store Location? By Darron McDougal

BONUS WEB FEATURES

SEE THEM IN THE
JULY/AUGUST 2016
DIGITAL ISSUE AND AT
WWW.ARCHERYBUSINESS.COM
(LEARN MORE ON PAGE 6.)

iHUNT CALLS

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MOULTRIE

In a wireless world, Moultrie doesn't disappoint.

TREESTAND BUDDY

No more climbing a tree carrying your stand.

G5 OUTDOORS

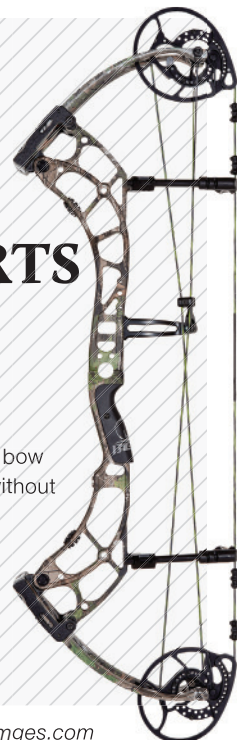
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BOW REPORTS

By Rick Combs

18 BEAR ESCAPE

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Are You Ready For Retirement?

Retirement. That period of your life when you can finally do whatever you want, where you're not beholden to supervisors, customers, employees or schedules. Some people plan on traveling the world, others getting to take up all the hobbies their work life left them little time for. Some are looking forward to spending time with grandchildren. Some people don't plan on retiring at all, instead insisting they'll just work until they die.

We hear a great deal about retirement these days. How much we need to save to have a decent enough nest egg that we won't outlive our money, what the optimum age to take social security is, what kind of a burden health care costs in retirement can be. Financial experts have plenty to say about the state of the average American's retirement savings.

It's one thing to retire as an employee. It's quite another to retire as the owner of a small business, especially if that small business involves family. Many companies in our industry are small family businesses – it's one of the things that makes this industry such a great place to work. But that also means those business owners have the added burden of trying to transition from one generation of leadership to the next. And if you don't have a plan in place, that transition can get messy.

I've seen this myself. One business owner I knew (not in the archery industry) had three children, only one of whom was actually involved in the business. When the business owner died suddenly, his two other children wanted nothing to do with running the business – but they sure did want the money from their shares, despite the fact that the business was going through a lean time and the involved child was barely taking a salary for himself.

I've also seen businesses where the founding generation retired, leaving the next generation in charge. But instead of embracing retirement, the original owner set up camp in an empty office where he proceeded to "help out." The owner's son, who had taken the



reins from his father, had a hard time fully establishing himself as the president of the company. Out of habit, employees still headed for his father's office to ask for direction or get input on a difficult situation. Although father and son were very close, the situation strained their relationship.

Financial advisors can throw around numbers when it comes to retirement, but for a family business, numbers aren't the only thing involved. That's why a huge percentage of family businesses don't make it past the second or third generation.

But if you establish a plan, your family business can beat the odds. In this issue, you'll find an article dealing with this very topic. The article outlines the issues involved with handing a company down to a new generation, and it includes a quiz that can help you determine how prepared your family business is for a transition.

So when you consider your retirement, make sure you look at more than just the numbers in your portfolio. Think about your situation and develop a solid plan to ensure that your customers can continue to enjoy your business for years to come.

▲ Many businesses in our industry are small family businesses, which require special consideration when leaders want to retire.

Editor-In-Chief

Michael Pike

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THIS MONTH ON **GRANDVIEWOUTDOORS.COM**

ONLINE FEATURES



Archery Business' Jace Bauserman gives Diamond's all-new Edge SB-1 a thorough test drive. Does this budget-friendly bow live up to its hype? Visit us online to find out.

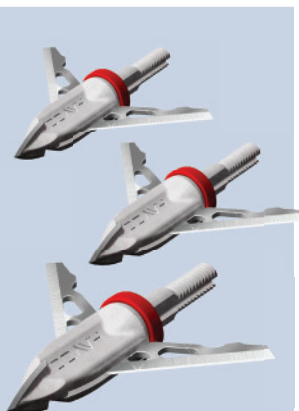


Nocks typically don't make the "highlight reel" when it comes to bowhunting gear. They should! Are you going the extra mile to educate your customers about the importance of nock care? Here's four quick nock-conscious tips you can provide your customers. Jace Bauserman

BONUS FEATURES

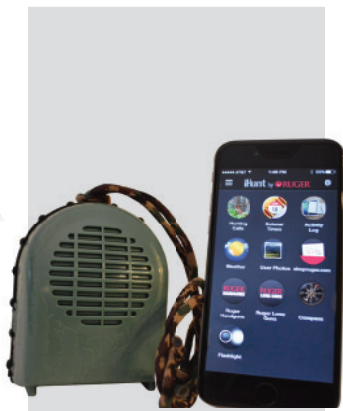
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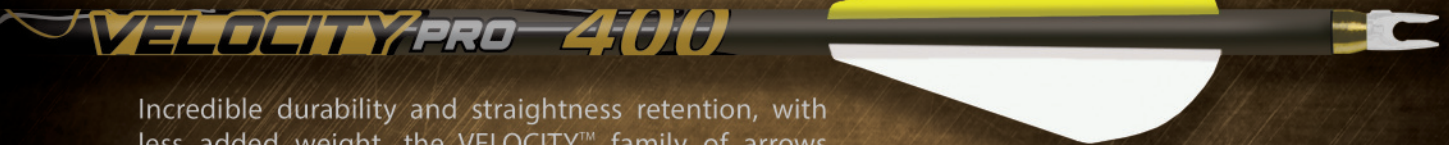
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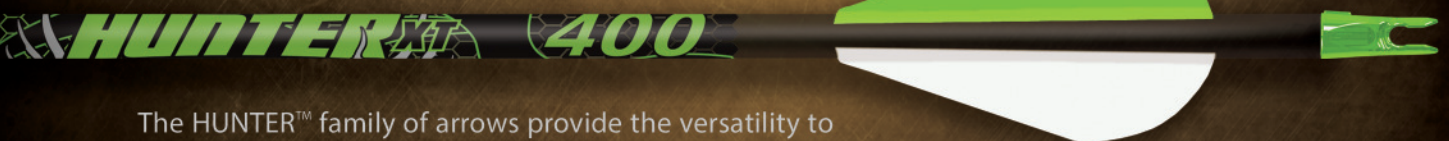
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VAPOR TRAIL REBRANDS FOR AN EDGIER LOOK

VAPOR TRAIL ARCHERY HAS RECENTLY been rebranded with a hipper, edgier logo. The new logo now appears on the company's website, packaging, and all advertising and public relations materials.

"Our primary goal was to update our logo without compromising the large red 'V' in our brand name, which people have always associated with Vapor Trail," said Rick Brule, website and design manager. "We really feel that the new logo maintains the red color always used in the Vapor Trail logo, but with the splashy red 'V' more prominent, it gives our logo a fresher, more modern flair – and that makes it cool and trendy."

The Vapor Trail website has also been redesigned to reflect the new logo. With a new background, updates to existing pages, more emphasis on the Limb Driver Pro-V as

well as the strings and cables, and a whole new line of logo wear and gear, the website now has a broader appeal than it did before.

"When we developed the Limb Driver Pro-V, which is our premier product, we wanted to create a new look for the packaging, which is really how the new branding idea was conceived," said Steve Fondie, Vapor Trail president. "The new packaging was widely accepted by our customers, and the dealers liked the look, so we ran with it and decided to carry the new look for our entire product

line as well as all of our marketing efforts.

"Over the next six months or so, we hope to have everything switched over to the rebranded logo."

For more information, please visit www.vaportrailarchery.com.



EASTMAN OUTDOORS, INC. RETAINS MOUNTAIN STATES SPORTS MARKETING

EASTMAN OUTDOORS, INC., PARENT company of Carbon Express crossbows, arrows and archery products and Eastman Outdoors gourmet outdoor cooking products, announces an expanded partnership with Mountain States Sports Marketing to make all products under the Eastman Outdoors umbrella more accessible to Western sportsmen.

Eastman Outdoors President Lou Riley made the announcement from the company's corporate offices in Flushing, Michigan.

"Our company has significantly expanded its sales force and account support team by adding the 10-member group at Mountain States Sports Marketing in the 13 Western United States," said Riley. "We're excited about partnering with them."

Established in 1984, Mountain States Sports Marketing is a manufacturer's representative group, focused exclusively on selling for and servicing the shooting sports, sporting goods and outdoor trades.

"Eastman Outdoors is an ideal fit for our agency due to the market presence of its various brands and customer-centric approach," said Mountain States' President Brad Ruddell.

For more information, please visit www.mountainstatesportsmarketing.com.



NASP GROWING IN NEW YORK STATE

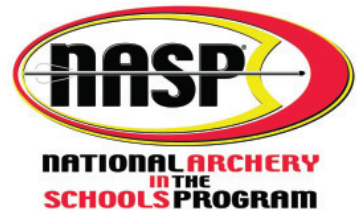
SCHOOL DISTRICTS FROM ACROSS New York State are invited to enroll in the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) sponsored by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

NASP is designed to engage students in experiential learning and improve participation in outdoor-type activities among

students of all athletic abilities. The DEC is involved in the program to introduce young people to archery and other shooting sports, a common way to become interested in hunting and the outdoors.

"The National Archery in the Schools Program started in New York in 2008 and has grown rapidly since then," Acting Commissioner Basil Seggos said. "This cooperative effort between conservation agencies, school districts and private organizations is a great way to bring the sport of archery to thousands of students across the state. Archery requires precision and practice and allows students of all athletic abilities to compete equally for top honors."

For more information, visit www.naspschools.org.





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VISTA OUTDOORS SUPPORTS NATIONAL DEER ALLIANCE

THE NATIONAL DEER ALLIANCE (NDA) is proud to announce a significant contribution from Vista Outdoor of \$35,000 to support the future of deer and deer hunting. NDA was created in 2014 to serve as the guardian for wild deer conservation and our hunting heritage.

"Vista Outdoors' generous contribution to NDA will help us continue to move forward on key initiatives, such as deer disease and hunter access, that we recently outlined in our strategic plan," said Nick Pinizzotto, CEO of National Deer Alliance.

According to Ryan Bronson, Vista's



director of conservation, the NDA is emerging at a critical time.

"Deer are the most important game species for our hunting customers from

coast to coast, but there has never been one unified organization focused on these keystone species," Bronson said. "We need a strong alliance to defend our public lands, battle the diseases that are a constant threat to wild deer and improve the standing of hunter-conservationists in society."

Vista Outdoor has long supported other conservation organizations through its brands Federal Premium Ammunition, Primos, Savage Arms and Bushnell.

For more information, visit www.nationaldeeralliance.com.

AROUND THE INDUSTRY

OUTTECH CONTINUES TO EXPAND ITS team to reach new markets for its manufacturing partners. Joining the Outtech team in the newly created adventure sales specialist position is Brittany Kostelic. Kostelic previously worked as a regional sales manager for a hunting accessory company. In addition, Brad Swiontek joins Outtech as the regional manager for the Outtech hunting division. He most recently worked as a regional sales manager for a sales group in the shooting sports industry and has experience behind the counter at a large outdoor retailer. For more information, visit www.outtech-online.com.

TIM QUINNAN HAS BEEN HIRED as the director of product development for Arcus Hunting LLC. He will oversee all aspects of product creation, compliance and review for growing Arcus portfolio of brands. Previously, Quinnan spent five years with BPI as the vice president of sales and marketing and twenty years with the Allen Company, where he maintained a product portfolio of over one thousand items. Rodney Silvey has joined Arcus as the sales manager for the growing portfolio of Arcus brands.

His responsibilities will include several key accounts, as well as managing the dealer base. Silvey worked for Outtech Inc managing sales with key distributors for the archery division and spent 26 years with Hoyt Archery as a sales representative. During his time with Hoyt, he won many awards as the top sales performer, including the prestigious President's Circle Award. For more information, visit www.arcushunting.com.

PSE REGIONAL SALE MANAGER JIM LANDRUM is retiring. A Vietnam veteran and former football coach, Landrum spent 30 years working with the PSE sales team; before that he promoted the brand in the Southeast for 15 years.

"After 45 years of being involved with PSE and the sport of archery, I'm going to miss the industry, my customers and most of all the friendships I've built over the years," stated Landrum. "I've never owned a bow that wasn't a PSE, and working for them will always be the experience of a lifetime."

While PSE management wishes Landrum the best, they also know he's going to be difficult to replace.

"Having an employee as dedicated, loyal and just plain good at his job as Jim Landrum is a rare thing," said Pete Shepley, founder of PSE. "Jim is not only an employee, but also a close friend and a member of our family. We are very proud of all the work he's done here at PSE, and he will be greatly missed."

These sentiments were echoed by PSE President Jon Shepley and Vice President of Sales and Marketing Blake Shelby, who both referred to Landrum as "irreplaceable."

Luckily for PSE, the company is confident it has the best man for the job in David Alligood, a bowhunter and PSE shooter. Landrum has mentored Alligood as part of the PSE pro staff for several years and describes Alligood as "energetic, self-motivated and great with customers."

"I could not ask for a better mentor and friend than Jim Landrum," said Alligood. "I'll have some big shoes to fill and relationships to build, but I'm looking forward to it. Working for PSE has always been a dream of mine, and my family and I are so blessed to see that dream fulfilled."

For more information, visit www.pse-archery.com.

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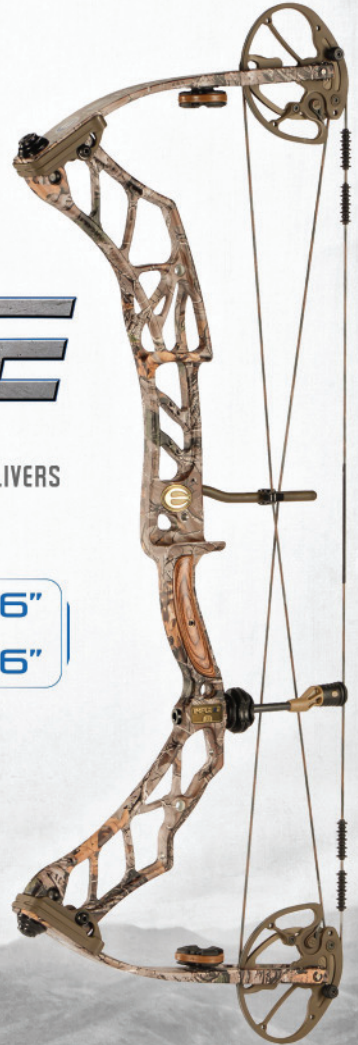
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EASTON SALT LAKE ARCHERY CENTER NAMED "BEST OF SALT LAKE CITY"

FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A row, the Easton Salt Lake Archery Center was awarded the "Best of 2016 in Salt Lake City" in the archery ranges category, earning the facility a spot in the Business Hall of Fame for Salt Lake City.

The Easton Salt Lake Archery Center hosts site tours, birthday parties, scout groups, youth groups, members, and the general public in its indoor and outdoor ranges. The center also supports a wide variety of activities that help to grow the sport of archery, including team-building activities for many organizations, private lessons, a winter league and weekend practices for JOAD. In addition, the center hosted the Beehive – Wasatch Bowhunters youth league, a spring fling shoot, try archery, and basic 2 and basic 3 classes, and the center expects



to see an increase in the intermediate class coming from basic 2 and basic 3 shooters. In March, the center was the site of 2016 JOAD and Indoor Nationals.

The Easton Salt Lake Archery

Center's calendar is filling up, and the center looks forward to playing archery tag and using its archery hover ball game and archery skeet machine.

For more information, visit www.esdf.org.

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ATA Launches Deer Protection Program

By ATA Staff

Chronic wasting disease in deer isn't just a bowhunting problem. When too many deer die, it affects entire ecosystems, impacting everything from plants to predator populations. Currently present in 23 states and Canada, CWD is a problem that has frustrated wildlife experts, bowhunters, and foodies who love getting their meat from deer, elk and moose.

CWD, a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy that's a cousin of mad cow disease, is – experts think – transmitted by infectious proteins called prions. While there is a lack of science to support it, some suggest that deer scents – made with deer urine – could be a source of CWD transmission if not carefully managed.

Enter the Archery Trade Association (ATA), which not only conducts the archery and bowhunting industry's largest trade show, but also helps its industry to conduct business in a way that grows archery and bowhunting.

The ATA's new Deer Protection Program seeks to ensure that ATA-member scent manufacturers and product suppliers do everything possible to prevent the spread of chronic wasting disease in wild deer, elk and moose in the United States.

With help and advice from the nation's top CWD experts and state wildlife agencies, the ATA spent the past two years working with its Scent Manufacturers and Urine Providers committee to self-impose protective restrictions on their products and the deer/elk facilities that provide urine for those products. The restrictions are designed to ensure urine-based scent products don't contain the infectious



ATA



↑ Scent manufacturers enrolled in the ATA Deer Protection Program can display the ATA's "Seal of Participation" label on scent products that originate from facilities participating in the program.

prions that cause CWD. The restrictions meet or exceed rules already imposed by state and federal disease-management agencies like the USDA's APHIS Herd Certification Program.

Scent manufacturers enrolled in the ATA program can display the ATA's "Seal of Participation" label on scent products that originate from facilities participating in the program. "The seal demonstrates that the supplier and manufacturer are doing all they can to prevent CWD from harming our nation's wild cervid populations," said Mitch King, the ATA's director of government relations.

Another goal of the ATA Deer Protection Program is to increase CWD awareness among hunters. "A sad reality is that agencies dealing with CWD have struggled to engage widespread interest and concern among the nation's hunters," King said. "This program's success will depend on hunters recognizing the ATA Seal of Partic-

ipation when buying scent products. That's why this program also includes marketing and outreach efforts about CWD to help hunters understand how their buying decisions and actions afield can help control CWD's spread. We will encourage hunters to only buy and use scents carrying the ATA seal."

The original list of participating scent manufacturers and urine-providing facilities includes 16 manufacturers, representing about 95 percent of the deer/elk scent-based products used by hunters. The number of scent manufacturers and urine providers is already growing, King said. Although the industry's largest manufacturers and urine suppliers were on board from the start, smaller operations are enrolling as they learn of the program and hear how it operates.

"We expect participation will keep growing," King said. "Our hope is that the entire scent-manufacturing industry (including



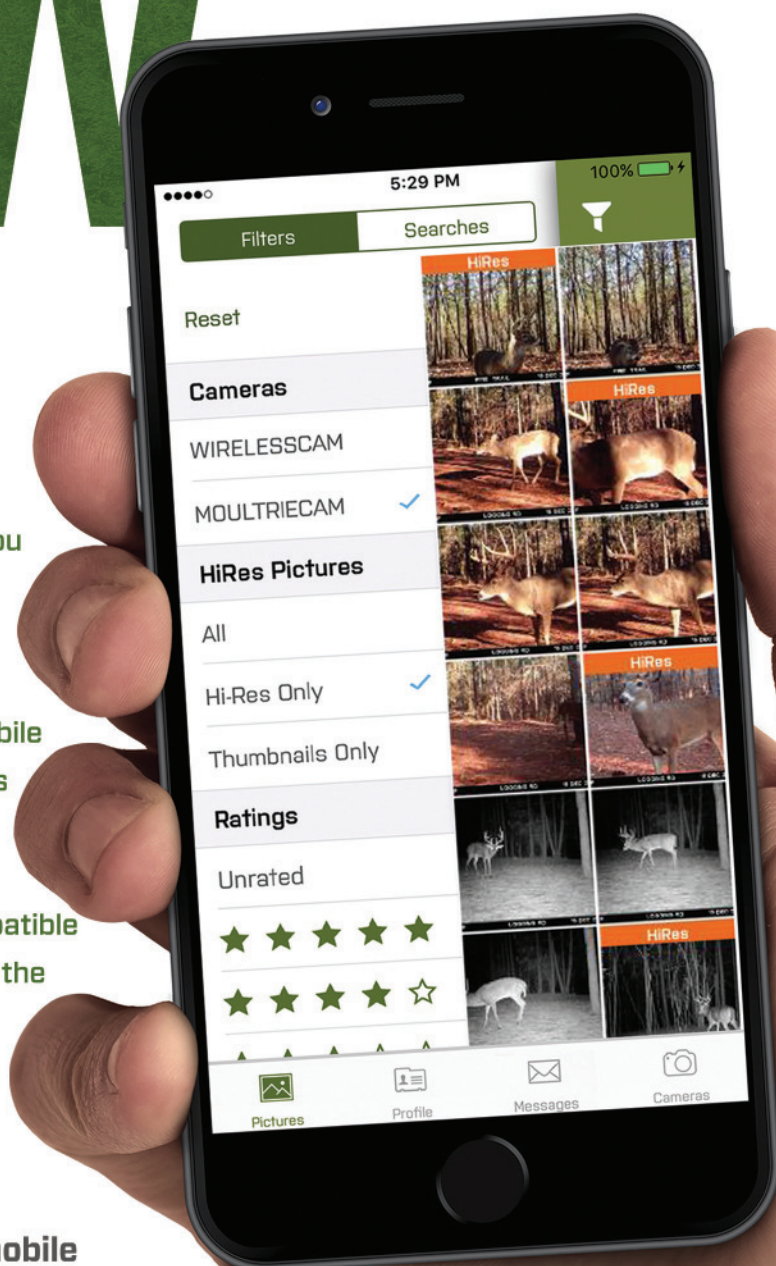
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urine providers) will recognize the program's importance in maintaining healthy wild herds of elk and deer for future hunters."

The ATA Deer Protection Program will be monitored by the ATA and an oversight advisory group that includes state wildlife agencies and, where available, state veterinary services.

"Everyone involved in this program knows how devastating CWD can be, and we want to ensure we do everything possible to prevent its spread," King said. "This is the first program of its kind

where an industry, with help from wildlife agencies and CWD experts, has united to say, 'Let's do something about this problem.' Rather than complain, these companies and agencies are taking the first step in a long-term joint effort to control CWD."

To learn more about the ATA Deer Protection Program, visit www.archerytrade.org/deerprotection or contact Mitch King, ATA director of government relations, at mitchking@archerytrade.org or (303) 585-0377.

Speaker Ryan Visits Headhunter Bow Strings

If not for the dark SUVs outside, and four Secret Service agents and a police chief hovering nearby, you'd have thought the guy petting the black Lab while sharing deer stories was just another visitor to Headhunter Bow Strings in Milton, Wisconsin.

But that dog lover was U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wisconsin, the nine-term representative of his state's 1st Congressional District. Ryan, 46, was elected the 54th speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives in late October 2015, becoming the youngest man to hold that post since 1869.

Speaker Ryan visited the offices and manufacturing facilities of Headhunter Bow Strings in early February. He was there at the invitation of its three owners – brothers Jeff, Brad and Brian Adee – whose business is based in Ryan's congressional district. The Adee and Ryan clans went to the same high school in nearby Janesville back in the 1980s.

Jeff Adee, the company's president, also represents Headhunter Bow Strings on the Archery Trade Association's 18-member Board of Directors. Speaker Ryan is a longtime ATA friend and ally, and has worked with its CEO/president, Jay McAninch, since they met in the nation's capital after Ryan's election to Congress in 1999. Ryan was then chairman of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, and McAninch worked for the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation until taking the ATA's reins in August 2000.

Speaker Ryan – a serious hunter and longtime archer – received the invitation to tour Headhunter Bow Strings' operations when talking last fall with the Adees while home visiting constituents. The speaker's



Patrick Durkin

↑ U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan, center, visited Headhunter Bow Strings in February to meet with owners/brothers Brad, left, and Jeff Adee, who is an ATA Board member. The company is based in Congressman Ryan's home district in southern Wisconsin.

office staff called the Adees in January to arrange a 30-minute tour, and to discuss their concerns about taxes and health-care regulations.

After arriving and going through introductions, Ryan noticed one of the Adees' black Labs, Emma, peering out from an adjoining office. He eagerly petted the dog, asked whether she hunts and shared his interest in hunting dogs.

The talk then turned to bowhunting. Speaker Ryan has long bowhunted on friends' farms near his home in Janesville, but he didn't arrow a deer last fall. "I had a tough season," he said. "There was about a 160-class buck on the farm I was hunting. I saw him twice and kind of knew his patterns, but I never got him closer than 65 yards. Then I went out for does after the Christmas break but couldn't get one of those, either."

Since he was first elected to Congress more than 16 years ago, Ryan has had to squeeze his hunts into an overflowing schedule. That challenge intensified when he became House speaker. Complicat-

ing things further is his Secret Service contingent.

"I can't share all the details about how it has changed my hunts, but I've had to explain that human scent is a big issue with bowhunting," Ryan said. "Let's just say we've had to come to a certain understanding (with the Secret Service agents) about my hunting. They all have carbon suits now. I've also hunted with (a friend) who swears by his Ozonics unit, so that's something I've been hearing about."

After touring the company's string-making facilities, Ryan sat down with the Adee brothers for a 10-minute business briefing to conclude the visit. Ryan said he fears the country's current health-care laws make it difficult for companies like Headhunter Bow Strings to keep growing, and asked the Adees if he can share their story when he returned to Washington.

"I hear stories like this all the time, but it means more to people when I can put a face on companies that are actually dealing with the problems I'm talking about," Ryan said. ➤



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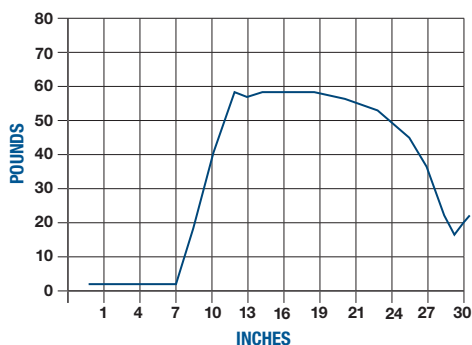
BY RICK COMBS

It's been a few years since bowhunting writers — including this one — cheerfully announced that Bear was back. The fact is, Bear has been among the key players in the industry for some time. Bear hasn't maintained that status by developing radically new designs, but in the highly competitive arena of bow manufacturers, the designers at Bear haven't done it by resting on their laurels, either.

Bear's 2016 flagship bow is the Escape, and as with most successful new bows, it offers a blend of recently introduced but proven design features and brand new technology. Among the new features is the H15 Hybrid Cam, which launches arrows at a top speed of 350 fps IBO, making it the fastest bow in Bear's current lineup. Bear boasts that the H15 cam makes for a smooth draw cycle despite the bow's high speed. New the cams may be, but they retain Bear's popular modular draw-length system, making the draw length easily adjustable over a 4-to-5-inch range without the need for a press or even new modules. That design may sacrifice a very small amount of efficiency, but it offers

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SPEED: 350 FPS

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welcome versatility to a shooter who may at some point wish to pass the bow along to a family member, or who finds his optimum draw length differs from one bow to another, or changes in accordance with different release aids or improvements in shooting form. In a similar vein, the 15-pound adjustment range, as opposed to the more typical 10-pound range, also adds versatility to the Escape.

Another new-for-2016 feature is the

7075 aluminum riser, with a subtly different geometry that offers a slight weight reduction relative to its greater strength. At 32 inches axle to axle the Escape is the shortest bow in the 2016 lineup with the exception of those models marketed to women or youngsters.

Among the more familiar features are the dampeners integrated into the riser (though a similar dampener on the tang of each limb pocket appears

to be new this year and unique to the Escape and the BR33). The limb pockets, though similar in design to those of previous models, are noticeably more streamlined. And though at a glance the black rubber grip looks the same, with the iconic white Bear logo, in fact it is slightly different. Arguably more ergonomic, it's a little thicker at the bottom and angled forward a little more sharply, both features tending to make it more repeatable. Back from



Speed	335 fps
Draw Weight	125 lb
Weight	9 lb
ATA	18"
ATA @ Draw	15.1"
Power Stroke	14"
Length	34.5"
K.E.	99.3 ft-lb

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Objective Tests

DRAW LENGTH 30 INCHES / PEAK HOLD 70 POUNDS / WEIGHT @ FULL DRAW 15 POUNDS

ARROW WEIGHT	SPEED @ LAUNCH	SPEED @ 20 YARDS	K.E. @ LAUNCH	K.E. @ 20 YARDS	SOUND LEVEL
AT 70-POUND DRAW WEIGHT					
385 GRAINS	315 FPS	305 FPS	84.5 FT. LBS.	79.5 FT. LBS.	N/A
500 GRAINS	280 FPS	270 FPS	87 FT. LBS.	81 FT. LBS.	N/A

AT 60-POUND DRAW WEIGHT

385 GRAINS	293 FPS	283 FPS	73.5 FT. LBS.	68.5 FT. LBS.	59.2 DBA
500 GRAINS	262 FPS	253 FPS	76 FT. LBS.	71 FT. LBS.	47.7 DBA

last year are the adjustable dual string stops and the Hinge Guard cable guard system.

Fit and finish were flawless on the test bow and passed the scratch test. The white logo is translucently thin on the black limbs, and the orange model name overlaps the logo in a way that could be taken for a mistake if it weren't consistent on every bow. Overall it is still a good-looking bow, and I especially like the Sand riser/Black limbs combination of the test bow.

SHOOTING THE BOW

Adjusting the draw length is as simple as removing three small hex screws from each module, sliding it into the proper position and retightening, which was done to test at 30 inches. All accessories went on easily with no overly tight or sticky threads and no difficulty accessing adjustments. Center-shot is arrived on Bear bows by placing a second arrow against the riser, beside the arrow on the rest. When the arrow on the rest is parallel to the one held against the riser, center-shot is achieved. It's a simple, handy visual cue that works very well.

The limb bolts proved especially tight on the bow tested, and starting them required the use of a vice. Hopefully that was a one-off; in any case, once started they turned smoothly and without undue difficulty over the course of several adjustments. I like the full one-quarter-inch hex bolts, which make stripping less

likely, as well as the previously mentioned fact that this bow adjusts over a 15-pound range instead of the typical 10-pound range.

The difference in the new grip is noticeable but subtle; the new grip is

no less comfortable than the grip it replaced, and I suspect most shooters who notice the difference will find it an improvement.

The draw cycle is smooth, as indicated by the draw-force curve. It builds up to peak relatively fast, slopes down gradually, then drops rather abruptly into the valley, making for a slight (though not harsh) bump into the back wall. The valley is not deep, but so long as the shooter draws properly through the shot, it's not grabby. (I have mixed feelings about so-called "grabby" cams. If you pick up a new bow and find that the cams are grabbing, you're getting very good feedback that you have apparently not been holding firmly against the back wall and drawing through the shot as proper shooting form would dictate.)

Chronographs don't lie, but some bows simply feel faster than others. This bow feels fast. At the release, it pops forward pleasantly into a loose grip, but with little if any vibration. It's plenty quiet, too, especially for its speed. For me, a speed of 350 fps or more is the point at which I begin to ask what I'm sacrificing to get that speed. In the case of the Bear Escape, I'd say very little. For many bowhunters who've looked at Bear bows and liked what they've seen but wanted something a little more high-performance, the new Escape just might tip the scales in Bear's favor.



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New Venue For 2016 Bowhunting Roundtable



▲ 1988 Olympic Gold Medalist Jay Barrs provided excellent shooting lessons and took time to pose for a picture with *Archery Business* Associate Editor Jace Bauserman.



▲ ScentLok's Nick Andrews was excited to show off the manufacturer's new-for-2016 Enforcer – a portable and rechargeable personal ozone generator. The Enforcer is ideal for totes, clothing, tents and vehicles.



▲ NAP's Chris Hunter gives the rundown on the manufacturer's newest broadhead marvel – the DoubleCross – a four-blade expandable designed to fly field-point-true and leave devastating exit wounds.



▲ Easton's Gary Cornum was on hand and had plenty to say about the success of the manufacturer's FMJ 6 MM, an economical hard-hitting addition to the uber-popular FMJ line.



▲ The new Badlands Approach Pattern was a Roundtable success, leaving those who visited the booth with plenty to talk about. The Approach Pattern boasts Adaptive Coloration Technology, which allows the pattern to show-case different color schemes in different lighting conditions.

BY JACE BAUSERMAN

Media Direct Creative is a forward-thinking sort of company. Always has been. Always will be. The Media Direct team stands fully behind the 32 brands under their PR umbrella, and gives their all to help those brands shine brightly in a highly competitive market. They don't fight change. Rather, they embrace it, using it to further fuel the fire of the brands they represent.

One of those changes was stepping outside the comfort zone of Pasa Park – a Pike-Adams Sportsmen's Alliance that

has been the hosting ground for the annual Media Direct Bowhunting Roundtable for as long as I can remember – and moving the 2016 venue to the Easton Archery Center in Salt Lake City, Utah.

It was overwhelming. In fact, Grand View Outdoors' VP Derrick Nawrocki reminded me while I was penning this piece that I let out a little "gas" when we walked into the front doors of this impressive facility. How could I not? For an archery fanatic, it was love at first sight – a \$12 million training facility with over 60,000 square feet dedicated solely to archery. Wow!

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Michael Woodall
BONE COLLECTOR





▲ Grand View Outdoors VP Derrick Nawrocki gives the TenPoint, Wicked Ridge and Horton lines some serious attention. Nawrocki noted that his favorite accessory was the TenPoint SteadyEddy Crossbow Monopod.



▲ Prodigy Camo's Ben Harvey was thrilled with the progress of the manufacturer's Vertigo Hybrid – a camo that actually changes color right before your eyes when exposed to extreme temperatures.

Earning the 2016 Best of Salt Lake City Award, the Center boasts a more-than-impressive indoor archery range with 92 shooting lanes to 18 meters or 30 shooting lanes out to 70 meters. In addition, this temple of archery offers classrooms allocated for coach training and seminars, a sports medicine room, gym, locker room with showers, full kitchen and an observation deck

where one can look out on the impressive outdoor range. Oh, and there's an awesome 3-D course as well. What better place to house a bunch of archery industry manufacturers and archery media nuts for a few days?

In true Media Direct fashion, the first evening was kept pretty light with lots of fun to be had. We were split up into teams, given directions and rules

on the game of Archery Tag, and turned loose on the indoor range. What a blast. I could have played for hours.

The following morning, we were broken up into groups and given time with a number of manufacturers. For me, few things are as beneficial to learning about a particular manufacturer's new products as getting 20

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▲ Wildlife Research Center's Paul Marion was kept busy showing off the manufacturer's fine new line of scents and scent-elimination products.



▲ Bowfishing is hot, and TruGlo/Apex Gear is on the case. Pliny Gale was excited to show off the manufacturer's new arrows and Spring-Shot Bow-fishing Rest.

minutes of uninterrupted face time. Be sure to check out the photos for more details.

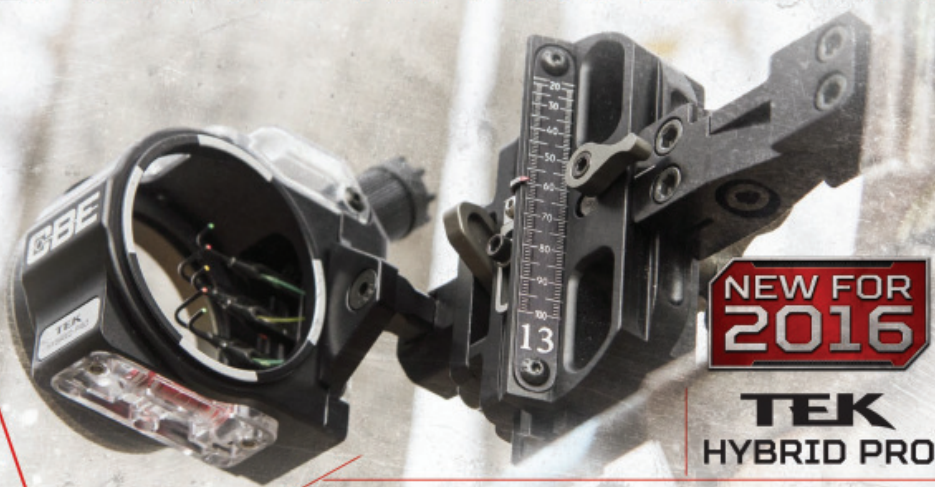
Later in the afternoon, after visiting with a total of 12 different manufacturers, we were once again divided into groups. One group toured the Easton Archery and Hoyt Archery facilities while the other received hands-on recurve training from 1988

Olympic Gold Medalist in the Men's Individual 90 Meter Jay Barrs. Barrs shocked Seoul, South Korea, and the world when he defeated South Korea's Park Sung-Soo. (Archery, by the way, is the national sport of South Korea.) Barrs went on to lead the American men to a Silver Team Medal. This was a much-welcomed treat. Barrs is a humble champion and is still very

passionate about the sport.

The event concluded with an excellent dinner and an outside recurve tournament, which was won by Toby Shaw of Byers Media representing Grand View Outdoors. I think it's safe to say 2016's Roundtable was a huge success, and my favorite to date. The Grand View Outdoors team is very much looking forward to 2017. 🐱

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The Advantages of Working With a Distributor

Don't go it alone. Partner with a distributor to make your shop a retail powerhouse.



BY MICHAEELEAN PIKE

I was speaking with one of our past Dealers of the Year recently about the current archery market. “I love this industry and I love what I do,” he said. “But you know what? I wouldn’t want to be a new guy just getting into archery retail today.”

These days, the owners of independent retail shops have their work cut out for them in terms of surviving in a rapidly changing retail environment. In addition to increased competition from multi-store retailers and internet heavyweights, archery retailers in particular are facing lackluster growth in bowhunter numbers. That combination can make it hard for the independent store who has to go it alone.

Fortunately, retailers don’t have to go it alone. Independent pro shops who work with distributors have a partner invested in their success. And the help those distributor partners offer can be invaluable in thriving despite today’s retail challenges.

REDUCE INVENTORY RISK

When your customers look at your shelves, they see products. But you know that what’s really sitting on your shelves is money – money that can be tied up for months if the products you chose don’t sell quickly. And when that money sits on your shelves for extended periods of time, it can’t be used to buy other, better-selling products.

“We can reduce retailers’ risk by allowing them to utilize our inventory instead of them assuming the risk by carrying this much inventory in their stores,” said Dave Parker, director of sales and strategy for Kinsey’s. “There are so many new items that come out each year, and not all of them are going to sell. But your distributor typically puts most if not all of those new products in their lineup.

“With a distributor, a retailer doesn’t have to buy all that direct on a program. They can buy small quantities and find out what sells for them. Ultimately, it requires them to use

less capital.”

Luckily, today’s distributors have impressive catalogs full of the kinds of products your customers want.

“When you work with a distributor, they become your one-stop shop,” said Business Development Sales Executive Danielle Krieg of Zanders. A longtime distributor in the firearms industry, Zanders recently brought its expertise and capabilities to the archery industry. “At Zanders, you can buy all of the product you need for your store, whether that is clothing, ammo, archery equipment, handguns, long guns, whatever the case may be.”

Having that kind of selection at your fingertips means you have access to all the products you want with none of the risk.

GAIN VALUABLE INSIGHT

Getting the right products onto your shelves is important. Not only will hot products sell faster, but having the products people want in your shop means fewer people will walk out empty-handed because you didn’t carry the product they wanted.

“We have a lot of information available,” Parker said. “Many retailers ask us, ‘All the new products have been out for a few months, now what’s selling?’ We can provide them with top-ten lists in every category.



“And because of our position of servicing so many vendors and so many retailers, we have great visibility over what’s working and what isn’t. I really encourage retailers to ask. We can help them in a number of ways, like figuring out what the best sellers are. That information can really reduce a retailer’s risk. Because our sample size is so large, what we see is pretty much the truth. It’s pretty hard to get a fluke. If we see these five broadheads as the best sellers, chances are those are the top five sellers because it’s spread across demand from several thousand retailers. And all anybody has to do is ask and get that information.”

This information is particularly valuable as more brick-and-mortar retailers get involved in e-commerce. You may have a pretty good idea of what products local archers and bowhunters are interested in purchasing, but if you’re

▲ With tens of thousands of SKUs, distributors stock the products you want, allowing you to make smart, strategic purchasing decisions.

looking to sell products online, you need to take a larger view of consumer preferences. Your distributor partner can provide you with solid information about what products are actually selling – and that can give you a huge advantage over the competition.

SAVE ON SHIPPING

Shipping costs really add up. This is a major reason why Amazon Prime is so successful with consumers – one flat fee gets consumers free two-day shipping on all their orders for a year.



Working with a distributor can save you big money when it comes to shipping costs.

“If retailers place orders with manufacturers directly, they might have, say, 10 shipments. If they buy all that direct, they can be paying freight 10 times. If they combine all that into a distribution order, most distributors have a flat rate. Kinsey’s, for example, has a flat rate of \$3.50 if the retailer meets the minimum of \$350. It might cost \$10 a shipment for those 10 shipments direct from manufacturers. That would be \$100 for 10 orders. When they combine that in one order from a distributor, it’s going to cost \$3.50. That’s a savings of \$96.50 just in freight.

“That kind of cost savings goes a long way to improving a retailer’s bottom line. It also means a retailer has

to pay just one invoice instead of 10, so it creates accounting efficiencies as well.”

Money isn’t the only thing retailers who work with distributors save on shipping. Many save on shipping time as well. With their massive inventories, convenient locations around the country and automated capabilities, your distributor partner can often get product out to you quickly and efficiently. This allows you to be more nimble and better able to respond to customer demand.

UTILIZE EXPERT CAPABILITIES

In another article in this issue on unengaged employees, one management expert advises companies to play to their employees’ strengths. That same principle holds true for working with your vendors. And when you use a distributor, you’re letting someone else do what they’re best at.

“Our expertise is in warehousing,” said Stefanie Zanders, general manager of Zanders. “We know how to warehouse, we know how to ship and our sales staff is made up of avid hunters who know the product. They know what they’re selling. They’re trained in it. We have good customer service and fast shipping. And we’ve also got a website that we’re working on constantly to have the best functionality out there.”

Zanders recently undertook a



DISTRIBUTOR SHOWS

Each year, a number of distributors hold retailer shows that offer incredible deals, great pricing and the chance to check out the latest products in person. These shows also offer a chance to network with other industry members, and they have some fun stuff – drawings, entertainment and often a free dinner – thrown in as well.

But these companies realize that not all of their customers have the time or money to travel to these events, and now there are options for retailers who can’t or would prefer not to travel.

Pape’s moved its Dealer Show online several years ago, and it’s been a big hit with Pape’s customers. Held in early July, the Pape’s Dealer Show lets retailers save money and place orders at an opportune time – when they’ve already figured out what products will be big sellers and know what they want to stock.

Kinsey’s experimented with an e-Show in conjunction with its Retailer Show in 2015, with a full rollout in 2016. Participants in the e-Show may have missed out on a performance by Montgomery Gentry, but they did take advantage of many Kinsey’s Show deals. According to Parker, the response was overwhelmingly positive.

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major expansion and now boasts a 150,000-square-foot warehouse facility. An emphasis on automation means that the distributor can process and ship orders quickly and accurately.

Lancaster Archery Supply takes great pride in its Archery TechXPerts. These Technical Experts are available to help you with most basic and technical questions. Do they know what they're talking about? Well, the Lancaster Archery TechXPerts boast over 350 years of combined archery experience, making the team a phenomenal resource for retailers looking for answers. Lancaster Archery TechXPerts can be reached by phone or email.



ORDER MORE EASILY

When you order directly from manufacturers, you have to place a number of different orders, worrying about minimum orders and shipping costs, to fully stock your store. Working with a distributor allows you to streamline the ordering process.

In fact, distributors have made ordering what you need exceptionally easy. Take Pape's, for example. Pape's offers a customer website that lets you place orders 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Most orders ship either the day you place the order or the next business day. Once your order is placed, you can check the status any time online, and Pape's provides you with tracking information so you know when to expect your shipment.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

As we said earlier, when you work with a distributor, you have a partner that is invested in your success. Kinsey's has gone to great lengths to help its customers be more successful.

"We developed and launched our Kinsey's University three years ago," said Parker. "We offer a series of educational opportunities to invest in the



retailers out there and make them more successful.

"This year, we did several seminars. We've done two bow technician certification courses. That's a two-day course that teaches attendees all about bow mechanics and bow tuning and all those kinds of things. We also did a session based on the ATA's Retail Growth Initiative, which helped attendees get Level I Coaching certification. We also put them through the program so they could learn how to utilize their ranges and monetize their ranges into becoming prominent revenue streams.

"We just met yesterday and started planning the 2017 schedule. We're going to expand it again. We're going to offer more technician classes, more business-oriented classes with various business modules. We want to help those retailers who want to learn, to

▲ Let the experts do what they do best – warehousing and shipping – so you can focus on what you do best: servicing your customers.



give them that opportunity.

"That's a big thing for us. We're trying to create platforms where all the retailers have to do is come and we'll give them all the answers."

Here, Parker laughed. "Okay, most of the answers," he clarified. "I don't know anybody who knows all of the answers."

That may be true. But when you take advantage of everything a distributor has to offer you and your retail shop, you'll come closer to knowing all of the answers. And that can only mean good things for your bottom line. 

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BACKCOUNTRY ESSENTIALS

Outfit your customers with western must-haves so their road-trip dreams become campfire realities.

BY SAMUEL STEVENSON

The age of at-your-fingertips information is here. It has brought us some negatives as far as society is concerned, but also some serious positives. For the bow-and-arrow crowd, one major plus is the ability to research hunting destinations, divine tag-drawing odds and essentially plan out a trip – all from the comfort of a favorite recliner.

Even if your customers are whitetail fanatics who live for Midwestern and eastern bucks, there will be sprinkled among that demographic the travelers. They are the hunters who need the best equipment possible to make their out-of-state adventures more enjoyable.

Following are 24 of these must-haves. They are all guaranteed to enhance any over-the-road bowhunting adventure, particularly those that involve plenty of steering-wheel time while staring in the direction of the setting sun.



FLEXTONE BULL RUSH GLUNKER

Elk are notorious for becoming call-shy in areas where OTC tags are offered, which is especially true if you're carrying a bugle or trying to chirp like a lusty cow. One option that the wild wapati haven't been exposed to enough to grow leery of yet is glunking. A bull hears this call and he won't tolerate it, which is why **Flexitone (800-847-8269; www.flextonegamecalls.com)** released the Bull Rush Glunker (\$18). This simple-to-use call is ideal for duping herd bulls into believing that a youngster is eyeing up one of his girlfriends.



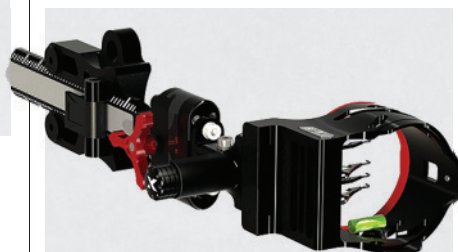
CANYON COOLERS QUEST SOFT COOLER

Of course you could use the Quest Soft Cooler (\$100-\$150) from **Canyon Coolers (866-558-3267; www.canyoncoolers.com)** to keep food and beverages cold, but where it might prove an unseen value is hauling water to remote, ambush-friendly hunting spots that draw in elk, antelope and mule deer. With its roll-top waterproof and leak-proof seal and adjustable backpack straps, the Quest is ideal for carrying in a little hydration to thirsty critters. It also wouldn't be a bad option for carrying in bear bait to places where ATVs either can't go or aren't allowed.



BADLANDS APPROACH CAMOUFLAGE

Phase Shift Technology may sound like science fiction, but fortunately for bowhunters it is very real. This groundbreaking technology can be found in the new Approach camouflage patterns from **Badlands (800-847-8269; www.badlandspacks.com)**. To blend seamlessly into heavily wooded forests or sagebrush flats (and all other western-critter environs), Approach actually changes colors and tones to better match current surroundings. This game-changing camouflage can be found on a bevy of Badlands products, including apparel and backpacks.



ARCHER XTREME RAK 4000

Even the most Spartan DIY trips can become a serious investment, all for a single shot opportunity. To ensure arrows fly true, the RAK 4000 (\$240) from **Archer Xtreme (406-924-6113; www.archerxtreme.com)** is a sight worthy of hanging on the side of anyone's bow. It is second- and third-axis adjustable, utilizes the EDGE Gear Drive for quick adjustments in the field and is fitted with four .019-inch pins.



CODE BLUE D/CODE FIELD WIPES

Showers aren't usually an option on Western hunts, but that doesn't mean they aren't needed at some point. In that case, the next best thing is to wipe down with a D/CODE Field Wipe (\$8) from **Code Blue (844-282-0455; www.codebluescents.com)**. These scent-eliminating wipes come in packs of 20, are completely unscented, and are perfect for carrying in your pack and giving yourself a quick wipe-down when you start to get hippie-ripe three or four days into a week-long backcountry adventure.



BROWNING OUTDOORS HELL'S CANYON

Browning Outdoor Apparel (800-333-3288; www.browning.com) released a killer lineup of Western gear this year that includes the Hell's Canyon Speed Shrike Jacket (\$230). This jacket is designed with Body Mapping technology and PrimaLoft insulation to offer an excellent weight-to-warmth ratio. It's also water- and wind-resistant, and it's available in A-TACS AU camouflage to keep you hidden from sharp-eyed prairie and mountain dwellers. Choose from sizes ranging as small as, well, small all the way to the NFL linebacker appropriate 3XL.



MYSTERY RANCH CABINET BACKPACK

Mystery Ranch (406-585-1428; www.mysteryranch.com) produces some of the best backpacks on the market, and the new Cabinet Backpack (\$450) is a standout. It weighs only 5.7 pounds, offers 2,685 cubic inches of storage and is designed around the Guide Light Frame. This is the ultimate day pack for all Western hunts with its dedicated pockets, hydration-system compatibility and Load Sling system that allows for gear and meat packing.



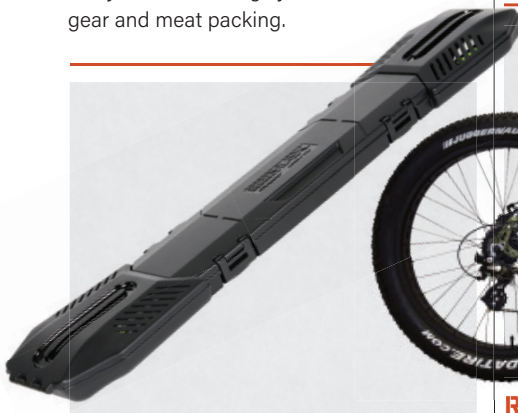
MILLENNIUM TREESTAND M7 MICROLITE

Elk will visit a waterhole all day long, which means during those midday hours when the bugles just aren't ringing off the mountainside, it might be a good idea to take an elevated perch over the drinking fountain. Since carrying a heavy stand up a mountain isn't an option, consider the 8 ½-pound M7 Microlite (\$200) from **Millennium Treestands (601-932-5832; www.millennium-stands.com)**. This ultra-light stand straps easily to a day pack, features a platform that measures 20 ½ by 26 inches and is outfitted with the ComfortMAX seat.



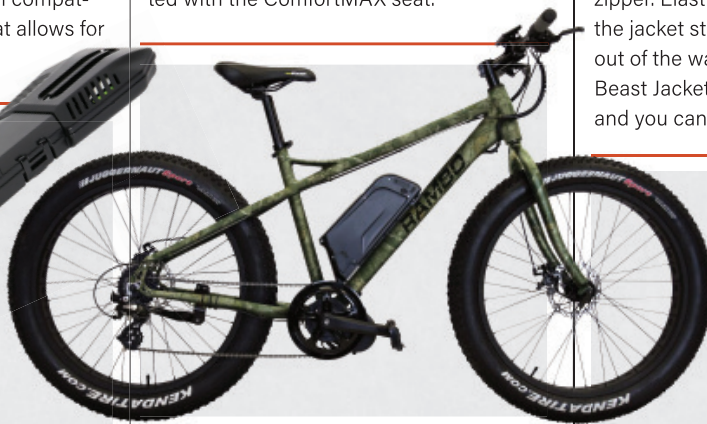
SCENTBLOCKER BEAST JACKET

The problem with most ghillie suits is that they are heavy, bulky and designed for gun hunters. Thankfully, the great minds behind **ScentBlocker (800-397-1927; www.scentblocker.com)** decided enough was enough, and designed a suit for the bow-and-arrow crowd. The Beast Jacket (\$180) features a unique hood design that completely breaks up the human form and is fitted with an easy-to-access full front zipper. Elastic sleeve cuffs and waist ensure the jacket stays tight to your body and well out of the way of your draw cycle. Pair the Beast Jacket with the Beast Pant (\$130), and you can take the hunt to the game.



PLANO ARROW MAX CASE

Many horseback and fly-in hunters have learned the hard way that arrows need to be protected in transport, making the new Arrow Max Case (\$22) from **Plano (800-226-9868; www.planomolding.com)** an excellent choice for the job. This heavy-duty case holds six arrows (up to 32 ¾ inches in length), offers extra internal storage for small accessories like nocks and inserts, and is designed with integral slots for latching straps to ensure ease in travel.



RAMBO BIKES R750C CAMO BIKE

For certain hunts where pressure is heavy and it's necessary to get well away from the crowds, the **Rambo Bikes (952-283-0777; www.rambobikes.com)** R750C Camo Bike (\$2,995) is the perfect secret weapon. It is outfitted with a high-torque, mid-crank motor but also can be operated the old-fashioned way. It offers a 19-mile range (without pedaling) on a fully charged battery. With a max speed of 20 mph, this handy backcountry bike can get you into elk, and better yet, help you get your elk back out to the trailhead.



MOULTRIE A-20i MINI GAME CAMERA

Elk wallows, bear baits, antelope watering holes and anywhere else a camera can do the heavy lifting for you demand a quality product. Enter the **Moultrie (800-653-3334; www.moultriefeeders.com)** A-20i Mini Game Camera (\$100) with its INVISIBLE flash, 12-megapixel image resolution and one-second trigger speed. Choose multi- or single-shot mode options and capture up to 16,000 images off of a single set of AA batteries (also capable of capturing 480px video clips).

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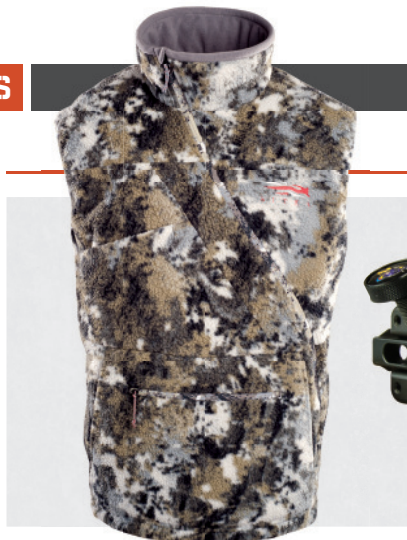
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BACKCOUNTRY ESSENTIALS



SIBERIAN COOLERS SIDEKICK

The focus on coolers for Western hunts tends to involve products large enough to house halved elk with ease. For many hunts, like antelope or mule deer affairs, these are overkill. Enter the Sidekick (\$190) from **Siberian Coolers** (844-782-COLD; www.siberiancoolers.com), with its carrying handle, sub-11-pound weight, 22-quart storage and non-skid rubber feet. The Sidekick utilizes a PE foam injected layer and is created with a roto-molding process to ensure your beverages stay cold and your backstraps stay grill-ready.



SITKA GEAR FANATIC VEST

It's almost a crime against oneself to climb a mountain with bow in hand and not at least have one piece of **Sitka Gear** (877-SITKA-GR; www.sitkagear.com) clothing on or stuffed into a pack. This year, a great choice for all types of backcountry hunts is the Fanatic Vest (\$229). It's wind-proof, filled with Primaloft Silver Insulation for body-heat retention and is designed with strategic pockets. The Fanatic Vest, is also an excellent treestand hunting option.



SPOT HOGG FAST EDDIE XL

The new Fast Eddie XL (\$230-\$270) from **Spot Hogg** (888-302-7768; www.spot-hogg.com) is ideal for serious bowhunts with its second- and third-axis micro-adjustability, coarse horizontal and vertical adjustments, large easy-to-use yardage knob and bomb-proof 6061 aluminum construction. Opt for the Double Pin scope to ensure that you can really reach out and touch any critters that would look good wearing your hard-won nonresident tag.



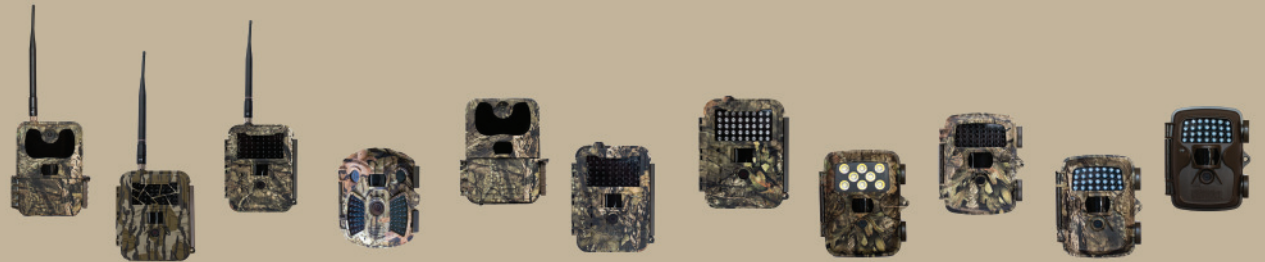
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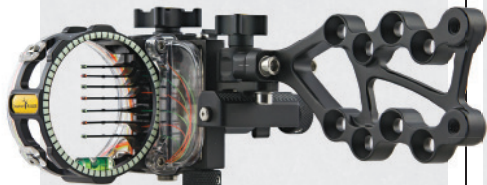

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TROPHY RIDGE REACT PRO 7

How nice would it be to set up a sight that made it mathematically impossible to be inaccurate? Well, now you can with **Trophy Ridge's** (800-694-9494; www.trophy-ridge.com) latest, the React Pro 7 (\$260). Simply sight in the 20-yard pin and then sight in your 30-yard pin, and the React Technology sets the rest of your pin gaps. This sight also offers second- and third-axis leveling, ultra-bright fiber optics, stainless-steel hardware and tool-less adjustment. Few sights are easier to set up and start shooting at spot-and-stalk antelope ranges than the React Pro 7.



TENZING TZ 3000

A Western hunt without a good backpack is no hunt at all, and this year it would be a safe bet to urge your customers to seriously consider the TZ 3000 (\$310) from **Tenzing** (800-226-9868; www.tenzingoutdoors.com). With 3,100 cubic inches of storage and an overall weight of just 6.8 pounds, this pack is perfect for serious day trips or three-day bivy hunts. Nine specialized pockets and a huge main compartment ensure ease-in-hauling everything from power bars to whole elk quarters.



UNDER ARMOUR STORM BARRIER JACKET

Customers looking for a water-repellent, breathable, scent-containing and truly warm jacket would do well to check out **Under Armour's** (www.underarmour.com) Storm Barrier Jacket (\$170). To keep sounds to a minimum, the Storm Barrier Jacket is constructed from fabric that prevents rustling noises, while its secured hand and chest pockets keep essential gear at the ready. Overall weight is only 6.2 ounces, meaning the warmth-to-weight ratio of this jacket makes it a no-brainer.



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BACKCOUNTRY ESSENTIALS



VAPOR TRAIL LIMBDRIVER PRO-V

If you're going to hike up 2,000 vertical feet every day, you might as well be able to hit what you're aiming at once you've closed the distance. This crucial part of the process is always more easily accomplished with a quality rest like the LimbDriver Pro-V (\$130-\$140) from Vapor Trail (763-862-8870; www.vaportrailarchery.com).

This limb-driven rest sets up easily, offers adjustable spring tension and features a free-floating launcher arm. Choose the arrow-containment option if you're a full-containment kind of bowhunter.



WILDCAM INNOVATIONS VISION 8 LIGHTSOUT TRUBARK

Trail cameras have migrated their way from the whitetail woods of the East and Midwest to farther west hunting locales where food plots don't exist and land is discussed in square miles, not small acreages. An excellent choice for anyone looking to scout 24/7 is the new Vision 8 Lightsout Trubark (\$130) from Wildgame Innovations (800-847-8269; www.wildgameinnovations.com) with its 65-foot illumination/detection range, wide 16:9 aspect ratio image option and .5-second trigger speed. Choose either video or photo mode (eight megapixels) with this lockable camera.



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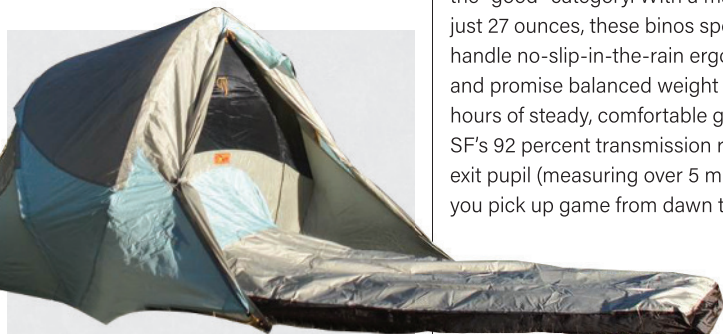


YETI HOPPER 20

Few companies have taken over the outdoor industry as quickly as **YETI (512-394-9384; www.yeticoolers.com)** has. This is because these coolers function incredibly well. Take the Hopper 20 (\$300) with its Dryhide Shell, Hydrolok Zipper and Coldcell Insulation. This handy soft-sided cooler is loaded with insulation to ensure your need-to-stay cold necessities do, in fact, stay cold. Whether you're toting elk tenderloins or end-of-the-day refreshments, rest assured the Hopper 20 (now available in Tan) will suit your needs just fine and won't suddenly spring a leak thanks to its puncture-resistant and leak-proof construction.

5 OWLS SOLO SHELTER

Featuring a cutting-edge design, premium materials and expert craftsmanship, **5 Owls (855-425-6957; www.5owls.net)** Solo Shelter (\$250) is the perfect shelter for the pack-in bowhunter. The shelter features two doors, plenty of space for your gear, room to sit up, and the canopy rotates down and out of the way on those nights when you want to gaze at the stars. The Solo Shelter tips the scales at just four pounds, eight ounces.



STEALTH CAM GXW-WIRELESS CAMERA

As cell service improves, wireless game cameras are becoming more and more popular with western bowhunters, especially those who make a pre-season scouting mission. Hang a **Stealth Cam (877-269-8490; www.stealthcam.com)** GXW-Wireless camera on an elk wallow and know when and how often bulls are visiting. The GXW-Wireless sports Triad 12-megapixel resolution but can be toggled between 8-, 4- and 2-MP resolutions as well. In addition, the wireless unit sends images and 1080P high-definition video to your iOS and Android devices.



ZEISS VICTORY SF 8X42 BINOS

Out West you need good glass, and **Zeiss' (800-441-3005; www.zeiss.com/sports-optics)** Victory SF 8x42 binos fall well above the "good" category. With a mass weight of just 27 ounces, these binos sport an easy-to-handle no-slip-in-the-rain ergonomic grip, and promise balanced weight distribution for hours of steady, comfortable glassing. The SF's 92 percent transmission rate and large exit pupil (measuring over 5 mm) will help you pick up game from dawn to dusk. ➤

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Saving the Family Business: How to Balance People and Profits

Too few family businesses survive into the second and third generations of ownership. Current owners should take steps to strengthen their family dynamics and to ensure that emotions do not scuttle the enterprise when it comes time to hand over the reins of control.

BY PHILLIP M. PERRY

In the best of worlds a family business would thrive for many generations, providing inspiration and revenue for decades to come. Reality, alas, is usually more somber. “Only 30 percent of family businesses survive into a second generation, and only 17 percent into a third,” says Kathyann Kessler Overbeke, principal of GPS: Generation Planning Strategies, Beachwood, Ohio (www.generationplanningstrategies.com).

Why? Too often the emotions of family members conflict with the demands of the bottom line. “Family businesses are made up of two complex, overlapping systems,” says Overbeke. “One is family and the other is business. The overriding factor that determines success or failure of a family business is management of that space where the family and the business systems overlap.”

WORLDS IN COLLISION

Failure to manage family-business conflicts can lead to disaster. Consider, for example, the damage that results when siblings compete for the position of company president. Aware of the emotional time bombs linked to any decision on succession, the parents often opt to ignore the issue.

While the senior generation typically hope the problem resolves itself on its own, things often spiral downward. “The children are left wondering and confused,” says Ira Bryck, president of the Family Business Center of Pioneer Valley (www.fambizpv.com). Not only do they start taking on unsuitable jobs in the hope of “learning their way the top,” they also continually sabotage one another in power struggles that damage the bottom line.

Similar conflicts abound: A favored son expects to be handed the reins of control; an objective assessment points to a daughter as the most promising heir. One sibling favors an expansion beyond current territory; another sides with parents anxious to preserve wealth for retirement. A daughter’s spouse expects dividends from an inherited ownership stake; management realizes the funds would better be invested in capital equipment.



Such conflicts are typically left to simmer on the back burner because of the common fear that a business-like negotiation will damage family relationships. “In a family business, inadequate communication is problem one, two and three – all the way to infinity,” says Paul Karofsky, Founder of Transition Consulting Group, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. (www.fambizconsulting.com). “Too often family members fail to talk with one another to understand differing perspectives, desires and concerns.”

When conversations do take place, they are coded in words that cover up personal issues, or are interpreted in unintended ways. “Most failures of understanding in a family business do not arise from bad faith or self-absorption,” says Aron Pervin, managing director of Toronto-based Pervin Family Business Advisors (www.pervinfamilybusiness.com). “They are typically due to defense reactions that cloud people’s understanding. Often what is said is not what is heard because the message hurts.”

Letting conflicts fester puts the business in danger. “Emotions quickly end up driving critical business decisions,” says Pervin. “The enterprise becomes riddled with

controlling and enabling behaviors, craziness about who's best and who's smarter, and maladaptive communications systems. People typically end up with perceptions of injustice, and that leads to a passive-aggressive culture that undermines everything."

SHARE YOUR VISION

Family businesses can avoid all of the above by establishing a common business vision, says Overbeke. "There needs to be a shared understanding of the purpose of the business, beyond just making money. People who possess a shared vision will be willing to make the necessary tradeoffs."

Overbeke offers one example of a shared vision: We want the business to support the family for several generations. Those who accept that overriding goal must then ask what everyone needs to give up to achieve it. That may well include the ability to take money out of the treasury, for example, when the business cannot afford it. Or giving up an ambition to succeed the presidency when another sibling is better qualified. Or taking steps to secure the senior generation's retirement while funding the growth of the enterprise.

Reaching a common shared vision begins with personal self-assessments. "Each family member should be asked to develop a personal vision," says

Overbeke. "What do they want from the family business and what does the business mean to them?" Once individuals understand themselves they can come together as a group and figure out where they have a shared vision of purpose and future for the family business. Then they have a framework for making decisions.



ENTER STAKEHOLDERS

The comments above have concentrated on family members and their psychology. The fact is, though, that no family business exists untethered to third parties. "Consideration has to be given to not just family members but all stakeholders," says Karofsky. "That means in-laws, bankers, suppliers, customers and the cadre of non-

family employees who are impacted by any business decision."

For all of these stakeholders, decisions touching on the professional advancement of the younger generation can have profound effects. "If the suppliers to the business aren't enamored with the new management, they may pull their distribution franchises," says Karofsky. "Suppliers want sustainability. It is vital to them."

Customers will also have a stake in the new management. "So much of business is still done on the basis of relationships," says Karofsky. "If the members of the second generation are seen as arrogant, entitled brats, customers will go elsewhere."

Bankers, for their part, will be looking for attractive partners. "The relationship with Dad may well have made possible a vital business note or line of credit," says Karofsky. "If the banker is not enamored of the succeeding generation the loan might be pulled, and that might be the end of the business."

These comments suggest that the family business exists as part of a fabric that includes third parties beyond the bloodline. Those parties need to be brought into the decision-making about the future of the business. And they need to accept the validity of the new people assigned to ownership and management positions.

FIND ROLES FOR MOM AND DAD

Say "family business succession" and people think of Mom and Dad retiring to the golf course while their sons and daughters take the reins. What seems like an idyllic life for the senior generation, though, can be challenging emotionally for the individuals and financially for the business.

"For people who have spent their lives in a family business, that enterprise has typically been their passion and their identity," says Paul Karofsky, founder of Transition Consulting Group, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. (www.fambizconsulting.com). "If suddenly Mom and Dad are doing nothing, that can be devastating to their self-esteem."

It's best to rethink the very concept of succession, says Kathryn Kessler Overbeke, principal of GPS: Generation Planning Strategies, Beachwood, Ohio (www.generationplanningstrategies.com). "The word 'succession' implies that someone is going out and someone else is coming in," says Overbeke. "That makes

the senior generation feel obsolete and can even take away their identity if it is closely aligned with the business."

The fact is that members of the senior generation can still contribute to the business, and they should if they want to, says Overbeke, who suggests replacing the idea of succession with that of generational integration. "You are really integrating two sets of knowledge," she says. "The older generation has tacit and explicit knowledge (how the business operates) and the younger generation has explicit knowledge (what is happening outside the business). The latter includes matters such as new developments in technology and the buying habits of younger people."

A successful transition plan includes an enhanced role for the older generation, says Karofsky. "Maybe that role involves focusing on special projects, or starting up a new venture, or activity in the world of philanthropy. At the same time, everyone has to realize you cannot fit two rear ends into one seat, so there needs to be an ability to let go."

TRANSITION, NOT SUCCESSION

What if the next generation lacks the personal and technical skills required to take the family business reins?

In such cases it may be wiser to hire non-family individuals for top management positions, while the second generation retains ownership. “The wisest arrangement may be to keep the business in the family and have outsiders run it,” says Pervin.

While taking on non-family management may be emotionally challenging for the family, it is one more example of the benefits to be gained from skillful management of

“It’s also important that the personality of the non-family leader be compatible with the culture of the family.”

the interface between the enterprise’s family and business systems.

Even here, adds Pervin, the family members must have ownership skills. “That means people who can make decisions, who understand planning, strategy, finance, organization and risk management.”

In brief, Pervin suggests suspending the view of the business as a family enterprise and looking at the assets through an owner’s lens. “People want to transfer the business to the next generation for many reasons, and not necessarily the right ones,” he says. “I believe in continuity planning, a process of figuring out the next best thing to do with the business assets.”

FILLING THE GAP

It may well be unclear if the second generation is capable of taking on the reins of management or if they might be able to do the job with some additional education. In such cases, non-family individuals can be brought in for a length of time. “Interim managers can work if there’s a good match

between them and those they are mentoring,” says Bryck. A non-family person might well run the business for 10 or 15 years while mentoring the younger people.

One caution: “It’s also important that the personality of the non-family leader be compatible with the culture of the family,” says Karofsky. It’s best to proceed slowly, introducing the proposed manager to all of the affected parties. Does the prospective manager understand, and buy into, the vision shared by the family members?

A second caution: “It’s also critical that the non-family leader understand the politics of a family business to avoid having people play against one another,” says Karofsky. “You can’t have one sibling cozing up to the interim president, for example, in the process creating conflict with others.”

START EARLY

Of all the forces that threaten the future of the family enterprise, procrastination is perhaps the most insidious. The job of transition is complex and filled with many tasks and emotions.

“The company needs to devote adequate time to position the next generation,” says Bryck. “That process includes getting family members to grow from operational jobs to leadership positions, assuming they are capable.”

Time must also be sufficient to recruit where necessary, to assess candidates, to create professional development plans and to help the senior generation move to roles of significance. “The transition needs to be an exceedingly cautious, well-played-out scenario,” says Karofsky. “The chances of surviving are greatly enhanced when planning is done sufficiently in advance.”

Given sufficient time and dedication, you can ensure your family enterprise stays afloat when it’s passed to a new generation. Above all, the communication gaps and unstated emotional conflicts need to be resolved in a way that recognizes the fraught interface of family and business systems.

IS YOUR FAMILY BUSINESS PREPARED FOR TRANSITION?

When the time comes for a new generation to take control of your family business, will the process go smoothly? Give yourself 10 points for every “yes” answer.

1. Have you established a structured plan to transition your business to a new generation of ownership?
2. Has each family member communicated a personal vision of their role in a business transition?
3. Have all family members bought into a shared business vision?
4. Are all members of the junior generation involved in some way with the business?
5. Has each member of the junior generation begun a program of education to meet the needs of his or her desired role in the transitioned business?
6. Has a role been established for the senior generation in the business transition?
7. Have you considered the use of non-family interim managers?
8. Have you established a system to provide career satisfaction for valued non-family employees who might be shut out of advancement into management positions?
9. Have you shared your transition plans with interested third parties such as customers, vendors and bankers?
10. Have you a solid understanding of the financial requirements (including any requisite funding for buy-outs and taxation) for a successful transition to new ownership?

Total your scores, then rate your transition readiness on the following scale: 90-100: Congratulations! You are well on your way to a smooth ownership transition. 70-80: You have addressed your needs for a successful transition and need to do some final paving on the road ahead. Less than 70: Time to preserve the future of your enterprise by taking proactive steps toward a smooth transition to a new generation.



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Unengaged: The High Cost Of Unmotivated Employees (And How To Fix It)

Nearly seven in 10 employees in the U.S. are unengaged, costing businesses billions of dollars a year. Here's a look at how the happiness of the people on your payroll can impact your bottom line.



BY MICHAEELEAN PIKE

Back in 2007, I read an article about how, as Millennials were entering the workforce, a number of businesses were faced with finding ways to reward employees for their achievements. That generation, after all, had grown up with participation trophies and grade inflation, and as employees, they expected recognition at a level previous generations simply hadn't needed. One company had gone so far as to hire an employee whose sole responsibility was to celebrate her fellow employees, tossing handfuls of confetti at and delivering balloons to individuals who'd had a good day.

As a Gen Xer with parents who frequently stressed that if work was fun you wouldn't get paid to do it, this seemed unnecessary to me. And when the recession shifted the balance of power in the employee-employer relationship

back in the employer's favor, it seemed like confetti and balloons would be forever a thing of the past.

But "employee engagement" is now a hot topic, with businesses investing big money in ensuring their employees are happier and more motivated. No one is breaking out the confetti at the moment, but companies have good reason to be concerned with how engaged their employees are. Gallup has been tracking employee engagement for years, and while the percentage of employees who are engaged has been increasing, it's still surprisingly low: In 2015, Gallup reported that just 32 percent of American workers were engaged.

What does it mean for an employee to be "engaged"? Like all buzzwords, this word seems to be tossed around an awful lot without a lot of specifics attached to it. But, in general, an engaged employee is enthusiastic about his or her work and is actively contributing to

▲ When employees are engaged in their work, a business can be as much as 202 percent more profitable than comparable businesses with unengaged employees.

the workplace. It's from your engaged employees that you're likely to get new ideas and improved processes; your unengaged employees are just doing what you ask them to do and collecting a paycheck.

The costs of unengaged employees are staggering. An earlier Gallup report estimated that a lack of engagement costs U.S. businesses between \$450 and \$550 billion in lost productivity each year. Unengaged employees are more likely to call in sick, get into workplace accidents and make mistakes at work. They're also more likely to quit their jobs, resulting in costly turnover. Engaged employees, meanwhile, perform 20 percent better than disengaged employees, according to an article on Entrepreneur.com. That same article indicated that companies with a high level of employee engagement perform 202 percent better than other companies, thanks in large part to the fact that engaged employees have higher productivity, higher sales

and higher creativity. It's no wonder that companies are desperate to find the secret to improving their employee engagement.

WHAT ABOUT MONEY?

To me, the answer to employee engagement seemed simple: just pay people more and they'll care about their jobs.

Of course, there is a link between salary and engagement, and if you're

not paying your employees fair market value, you can expect less-motivated employees and higher turnover. But engagement isn't just about salary.

"It's more complicated than that," explained Joshua Miller. A West Point graduate and former U.S. Army Captain, Miller has held management positions with a number of large businesses and is especially experienced in improving company culture. "Sure, paying too little is a great way to demotivate any employee. But just giving everyone a raise isn't going to magically turn a company around."

THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

The importance of good leadership to the bottom line was driven home to me years ago when I was a teenager working at McDonald's. One of my managers, Vince, was exceptional at motivating employees. We worked harder and enjoyed our shifts more when Vince was working than when some of the other managers were

a good leader is. That McDonald's, like the surrounding stores, was corporate-owned, which meant that Vince was working with pay scales comparable to the other stores. He was hiring employees from the same general area. His employees were doing the same job as employees at other stores, and they were serving the same general clientele. And yet his employees looked happier, worked faster and performed better, all because they had a better leader.

**“People work harder for good leaders,...
More importantly,
a poor leader
can actually turn
good employees into
bad ones.”**

Miller agrees with this assessment. "People work harder for good leaders," he said. "More importantly, a poor leader can actually turn good employees into bad ones."

Unfortunately, many businesses tend to promote people to management because they've demonstrated proficiency at their jobs rather than looking specifically for employees who have strong leadership skills. This often results in middle managers who lack important leadership skills, increasing the risk of having unengaged employees.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to better motivate your employees – and these steps won't cost you an arm and a leg.

"Motivating employees starts with building relationships," Miller explained. "If I have an employee that I feel is underperforming or not accomplishing everything I think he can accomplish, the first thing I do is sit down and talk to him. Not about his



there. Several years later, some friends and I stopped at a different McDonald's. The dining room was clean, the employees were friendly and efficient, and our orders were ready quickly – a big difference from some of the other McDonald's stores nearby. I wasn't surprised to see that the store manager for this particular location was Vince.

I realize that your company is a far cry from McDonald's, but this perfectly illustrates how important

job. I ask him about his family and the things he likes to do after work.”

Getting to know your employees on a personal level also helps you learn what motivates your employees. If you have an employee with young children, you may find he or she values having the flexibility (within reason) to attend school or sports functions. Other employees may not care as much about having a flexible work schedule but might care a great deal about having their hard work acknowledged. Other employees may be motivated from having an employer that matches donations to charities the employee supports or that supports fundraisers for causes about which the employees are passionate.

It takes time to build this type of relationship, and some managers don't appreciate the value of talking to their employees. But employees are motivated by different things. A one-size-fits-all approach won't be as effective as getting to know them individually.



◀ Engaged employees have higher sales, higher productivity and higher creativity. It's from those employees that you get ideas for improving your business.

PLAY TO THEIR STRENGTHS

“Once I've spoken with an employee a number of times and feel like we've developed a solid relationship, I'll go to him with a project,” Miller said. “This project generally falls under the list of tasks I want the employee to be doing that he isn't yet doing. But most importantly, it will be a project that plays to his strengths.”

Many managers feel it's important to have well-rounded employees, meaning employees who are capable of doing many different tasks. Miller doesn't believe each individual employee needs to be able to do a variety of tasks. Instead, he stresses the importance of a well-rounded team, with employees who excel in their own areas.



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"Asking employees to do things that play to their weaknesses is just asking for failure," Miller said. "Your employee is going to resent having to do something he's not good at. It's going to take him longer to do it than someone who's good at that particular task, and in the meantime, he's not working on what he is good at. Ultimately, the employee will become less engaged, you're not utilizing your resources wisely and you're setting yourself up for failure as a leader."

As Miller is building relationships with his employees, he's learning about their strengths and weaknesses.

"If I have an older employee who has little to no computer experience, asking him to develop Excel spreadsheets or take over my social media presence would not end well," Miller said. "And yet many companies will ask this of their employees simply because someone feels that employee has the time or is in a certain department."

"When I approach an employee

about a project or task I need to have handled, I explain that I need that particular employee because of his or her skills or qualifications. And because of the relationship that we've built, the employee wants to help out. It ends up being a win-win situation – I get the employee to do a task I've wanted him to do, and he gets to do a task that plays to his strengths and showcases what he can do.

"But it all stems from building that relationship in the first place."

MAINTAINING THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

It's easy to assume that employee engagement isn't as much of a problem in our industry. After all, most of us love archery and bowhunting, and our jobs often allow us to pursue our passion to an enviable degree. Managers in small businesses also have an easier time building relationships with their employees simply because they work more closely together, so much of

what makes employees happier comes naturally to small businesses.

But that doesn't mean you can stop thinking about employee engagement. For a small business, employee turnover can be especially costly – and exhausting – as there are fewer people to pick up the slack when an employee leaves. And your employees may be disappointed to find that some of the busiest times in many archery businesses correspond to the times when they'd most like to be in the field.

You can't change when your busy season hits, but it's important to be aware of your employees' work-life balance. If you have a good employee putting in long hours or racking up vacation days because he or she never takes any, you may want to stress the importance of taking time away from the business. Sure, it's on your employee to use his or her vacation time, but you don't want a good employee to burn out or feel resentful that his or her long hours are going unnoticed. ➤

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In the past, our parking lot was a little constricted, but

we now have adequate parking, because a gentleman next door has room to spare when we need it. If I could change anything about it, I'd have more parking directly in front of my shop, but we do pretty well with what we have. We have a gravel parking lot, which poses occasional complications for folks in wheelchairs – my son is in a wheelchair, and we've been able to figure it out. I would pave the parking lot, but

that would cause issues with water runoff. That's something I can't control.

I have a lot of customers who live in uptown apartments, and they don't have a backyard where they can shoot. Those folks can come shoot at my indoor range. There's also a rail-trail that stops two blocks away. But the bulk of our customers come in from the interstate. Overall, it's a great location, and I've never had any desire to move.

JOSIAH RICHARDS
ROSS OUTDOORS
PHOENIX, AZ

We're actually located in an industrial area, and that has posed some real challenges for us. However, we've been able to work around them through advertising, social media and word of mouth.

We have a big sign on our storefront. You can't see it from the freeway, but we're only about one mile off the freeway. Our store is very accessible. People can jump off the freeway and zip right in here easily. Our parking lot is also proportionate for our customer-traffic flow. We have about 30 parking spaces.

We've been here 10 years. Our location has been quite challenging, but we step up to the plate and offer our customers reasons to come and find us. We de-

liver great customer service, plus we offer great products at competitive prices. And when people come to our store once, finding it again and again is no problem at all.

GARY HINTZ
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I moved our store about a year ago. We're on the same street, but two buildings down. We're on one of Stevens Point's busiest streets. A projected 60,000-plus vehicles travel the street daily. We're actually right next to Subway, too, so people walk right by my store to get to Subway. There's lots of foot traffic.

If we were on the very busiest street, I feel our store would be lost in the sea of businesses. The

combination of traffic and visibility has set us up to succeed. Plus, mobs of people drive past our store when they're off work, and they can conveniently swing in to chat or pick up something. Most people won't drive off the beaten path. They want convenience.

We also put brilliant signs out by the road so people see them each time they travel our street. Plus, there are traffic lights right out front, so most people eventually stop right by our store while they wait for a green light. And our storefront is quite large, too, which helps. At night when we run our shooting classes, we have our lights on, so people can see us shooting from the road. Overall, we have great road-way presence.

It's really easy to get in and out of our parking lot. We have access right off

the main street and from a side road. We have about 62 spots, and it's plenty big enough when we have big fundraisers and other events.

Our store is actually in a strip mall. Normally, that would be a disadvantage, because stores tend to blend together, but since we have the biggest building in here with a big storefront, we really stand out. Plus, we have excellent signage. We're really easy to find, and our customers agree. Of course, some customers called in after we moved to find out where we went, but we get very few calls anymore. Pretty much everyone has figured out we only moved down the street.

We recently built a new website, too, and that really helps customers find us easily. We have a locator on there with a pin showing exactly where we are. 



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