

Keep Boaters Boating Survey Results VRZ Consulting Summer/Fall 2021

Ownership Support Results

Are the front line service and parts advisors trained and skilled at:	YES	Meh	NO
• Educating customers without making them feel stupid?	70%	30%	0
• Staying in touch proactively with their customers?	33%	52%	15%
• Selling things that would make their boating experience better?	40%	40%	20%
• Documenting properly so we have useful notes in history?	55%	45%	0
• Scheduling winter work to ease our seasonality?	60%	30%	10%

How could we improve the quality and quantity of sales leads generated from service?

• Are we rewarding and recognizing it?	25%	25%	50%
• Are we getting useful info from service on how the customers use the boat and suggestions on what boats might be good options for their next boat?	15%	70%	15%

Most common responses are at the top of the lists....

How does your dealership currently schedule the first maintenance?

- We wait for them to call us – not knowing their usage
- Tell the customer to call when they have 20-30 hours on engines
- Service calls them to schedule after delivery
- Service advisor schedules and lets them know they are their point person for the client
- Sales schedules it
- Sales goes over break-in and 1st service and tells customer to call at 20 hours
- The service manager is introduced by sales and he talks about 1st service importance
- Customer signs a sheet at the time of delivery to keep them on our radar
- Delivery coordinator will advise a timeframe and introduce to their advisor who often schedules it and sets reminders.

What could you do to better ensure they come to you for their first service appointment?

- Set a follow up reminder after X amount of time
- We should have something that triggers if we haven't seen/heard from them in a couple months after delivery but we don't
- Educate them at delivery about how important the first appointment is
- We tell them it's required by the manufacturer
- Communicate how important it is and what we are going to do
- Introduce them to service when they are buying and have delivery captain tell them
- Don't wait for them to call us – track who we haven't scheduled and follow up
- Have a Client Delight Specialist make that first appointment instead of the SA
- Make a video on why our shop is the best and what we do to protect their investment
- We include 1st service in price of the purchase
- We sell maintenance packages – really helps
- Sell them on storage and they'll service with you for life

How could we improve the customers first service, so they have a positive experience and want to come back to us for all their service needs?

- Be thorough and educate them on why things are needed to maintain the boat/motor
- We spend as much time as they need to review the product and operations
- Ask what they love or don't about the boat so far – usually leads to good discussion
- Communicate better what we did, why it matters
- Ask them about their boating experience and offer to get them back with the delivery captain if they need more education feeling comfortable with their boat
- Better communication and get them used to texting – use pictures/video when something isn't right to help us diagnose and get you back on the water for less money and time
- Use their name. Timely follow through and look for warranty problems.
- Don't rush – spend more time getting to know them and answering their questions
- Talk to them at their boat (walk around) at intake. Let them know with all the new bells and whistles it's common for people to have questions – ask if they do.
- Ask how they've been enjoying their new boat – where they've taken it, etc.. Give advice
- Faster turnaround and better communication
- Get them in and out quick and give it back clean

How do we educate our customers so they understand their boat's needs like: maintenance, fuel, cleaning, winterizing, trailering, storage, scheduling service, etc..? What could help?

- Sales is supposed to do this at delivery
- Delivery captain goes over service manual and maintenance needs
- We send emails with good info and videos on 'how to'
- Our website has fall/spring work and useful info – we show them that as a resource
- Easier to read and understand maintenance schedules
- Sales and service do this together with the customer – it has been a big help
- Right now it's just verbal but we're working on making a form to give them
- Video the delivery and give them a copy

What else could we be doing to cater to how our customers use their boat?

- Check in with them regularly – communicate
- Events on the water - so we see how they are using it
- We used to do accessory events and new owner clinics
- Sales and Parts do this together with the customer
- Make suggestions – give them advice and tips – show them
- Expand understanding of their needs/desires throughout the staff
- Additional on the water training a month or two after they have owned it.

How could we better help them customize and accessorize for maximum enjoyment and convenience?

- We need to spend more time getting to know them
- Talk to them conversationally and ask better questions
- Offer a 10% discount if they purchase within a month of boat sale
- Create some packages for maintenance and accessories based on the types of boats we sell
- Service advisors need training on upselling

Purchasing Support Feedback

What hurts salespeople get customers in the *right* boat?

Not listening to their wants/needs.

Not asking the right questions.

Selling the wrong boat/pushing boat or features that you like.

Lack of inventory leads them to choose a boat that's available but not really right for them.

Lack of integrity with salesperson wanting to make a sale no matter what.

Selling what they have in stock VS ordering it – fear of losing the sale or customer doesn't want to wait.

Finding out what they are using it for – fishing, cruising, etc..

Lack of time for constructive deliveries and enough communication in our busy season hurts.

Just wanting to sell a boat VS a lifechanging experience – understand what the customer expects.

More product knowledge and experience.

Communicating with the entire family.

New boaters renting various boats has helped them understand what they want to buy.

Are the sales team members trained and skilled at..

	YES	Meh	NO
• Asking good questions?	90	10	0
• Listening and taking notes?	75	25	0
• Including all of the family members wants and needs?	70	30	0
• Educating customers and being transparent about boat ownership?	30	60	10

What do new boaters need to know about boat ownership?

Costs associated with new boat ownership: proper maintenance, needed equipment onboard, etc.

Operation, cost, time, safety, logistics, docking, cleaning, winterizing, fuel/stabilizer/filters, etc..

Storage, service and process for getting boat into service.

Seasonality and what they need to do to be proactive spring make ready, winterization, off season work.

Proper trailering.

It's not cheap. It's not cut and dry. It's not like a car.

Boats have problems. Patience is important. Focus on memories over things working 100% of the time.

Where do we start? So much more than we're giving them.

The importance of doing regular maintenance.

What is covered in warranty, service contract and pre-paid maintenance plans.

The boating package A to Z.

When to look at moving up or down into another boat.

How could we improve the boat delivery process, so customers are safe and feel confident taking their boat out with their family?

Dedicate time to explain features/benefits.

Spend time on water with customers behind the helm.

More time on the water – not being rushed.

More time. Delivery captain might need to take them on multiple sea trials and that is money well spent.

We should try to sell new boaters blocks of time with a captain – no way you can absorb it all in one trip.

Change our orientation to more real use situations.

Don't just tell – show every detail. Have them do it.

Repetition – offer other post-delivery orientations.

We break our deliveries into two days. Day one we don't leave the dock. Day two we practice on the water and docking. It's been a big help.

We don't allow them to bring anyone else with them (kids, friends, etc..) so they can focus.

We try to schedule for weekdays so it's less crowded and distracting.

Videos. More YouTube. More sharable links from vendors.

Better follow up after the on-water delivery.

Make a list of things to know.

Captains time for not just new but pre-enjoyed inventory.

Chapmans Experience was awesome. Chapman school would keep new customers boating.

Is there anything else we could offer or direct new boaters to as they acclimate to their new boat or to boat ownership?

Videos on how to use specific options.

New boater videos on basics. Videos on local cool places to take their boat/things to do.

Captain who did delivery could follow up after they've taken the boat out.

Refresher training classes. Chapman School, Coast Guard Classes, etc..

I think we should offer to teach their wife/kids to drive/dock after they've taken delivery.

School/clinics that cover specific areas like electronics, docking, trailering, care and maintenance, etc.

Follow up from service advisor.

What are we doing to introduce new customers to the other departments and team members who will support their ownership experience?

Information folder at delivery with a note from service, business cards and soft introduction at delivery.

We introduce at delivery and they get a letter from the other team members after.

Not enough.

Not enough at my dealership. I'm thinking of having a chart with people's faces and departments – a 'who to call' sheet.

Very little – good point! This is causing issues that could be easily fixed.

We need to improve communication between departments.

How could we improve the dealership tour and department introductions?

Consistency.

Having a 'plan B' in case key people are not available. Maybe a way to let them know they missed a new customer so they can reach out.

Have a way to ensure the other team members are available when the tour is given.

Encourage staff to greet everyone with a smile even if just walking by.

What can our sales pros do to get quality leads from service, storage, or marina customers?

Schedule time to meet with service and sales together.

Work the list!

Train employees at the service desk to ask the right questions and alert sales.

See who isn't using their boat much.

Incentivize leads.

I like the idea of putting "boat approved for trade" or a trade offer on service invoices.

"Trade Value" on every service RO.