

Used Boat Marketing Playbook

Preview Edition — Photography, listings, and channel strategy to sell used inventory faster

This is a preview of the MRAA member resource “Used Boat Marketing Playbook.” It introduces the core frameworks and gives you enough to start turning used inventory into retail gross faster today. The complete playbook — including the full 30-shot photography standard, the 90-second video formula, the listing and condition-disclosure templates, the nine-channel strategy, and the 14-day lead follow-up cadence — is available exclusively to MRAA member dealers.



Why Used Boat Marketing Is Different

Selling a used boat is not the same as selling a new boat. A used boat is one of a kind, so most buyers wonder, “What is wrong with it?” Three things make used marketing different: trust comes first, speed matters, and photos do more work than words.

The 72-Hour Rule

Every used boat should be photographed, listed, and posted on at least three channels within 72 hours of arriving at the dealership. Stores that do this often earn 15–25% more gross per used boat. Build your staffing, tools, and process around it.

Photography Standards

Good photos are one of the best marketing investments a dealership can make. They can increase leads, shorten days to sale, and improve gross profit.

Equipment

Use a DSLR or mirrorless camera with a 24–70mm lens, or a newer high-end smartphone set to its best photo quality. A polarizing filter outside helps reduce glare from water and gelcoat.

Use the same clean, uncluttered spot every time — a consistent setup speeds up the whole process.

Setting & Lighting

Best light is 1–2 hours after sunrise or before sunset; avoid harsh midday sun. Keep the background clean, shoot the main exterior from a 3/4 angle, then straight-on bow and stern — and clean the boat before every shoot.

The 30-Shot Standard

Take the same 30 photos for every used boat, grouped by exterior hero, exterior detail, cockpit, cabin, mechanical, trailer, and lifestyle. Following the same process matters more than the exact list.

The complete member playbook includes:

- » The full 30-shot standard, broken out by category with notes
- » The 90-second walkaround video formula, second by second
- » The photography checklist for staff: before, during, and after the shoot



The Listing Framework

A strong listing answers the buyer's doubts before they ask. Use a consistent headline, an honest and structured description, and always show the price:

- » Headline formula: Year + Make + Model + Standout Differentiator (for example, “2021 Bennington 23 RSB Tritoon — Low Hours, Mercury 250”)
- » Description structure: five paragraphs — hook, boat overview, equipment and features, condition and history, and call to action
- » Always show the price; “call for price” can reduce leads by 30–50%
- » Review pricing every 30 days, with stronger decisions at 60 and 90 days
- » Use SEO keywords: city and state, common model search terms, the boat type, and a lifestyle word or two

The complete member playbook includes:

- » The condition-disclosure table: what to avoid, what to write
- » The full specs section, in the order buyers expect
- » Headline and description examples you can adapt to your inventory



Channel Strategy (Overview)

No single channel sells every used boat. Use four to six channels together, and track how each one performs:

- » Your dealer website is the foundation — most other channels should send shoppers there
- » The three national marketplaces: Boat Trader, YachtWorld, and Boats.com
- » Free local channels: Facebook Marketplace, Craigslist, Google Business Profile, and email to your house list

The complete member playbook includes:

- » The full nine-channel comparison: cost, reach, conversion, best use
- » Marketplace tactics: featured placement, refresh cadence, response time
- » How to use Facebook Marketplace and the house-list email effectively
- » Which channels fit which price bands and boat types



Lead Capture & Follow-Up for Used

Used-boat leads are often closer to buying, more focused on price, and quicker to stop replying than new-boat leads. A few rules keep them alive:

- » The 30-minute rule: reply to every used lead within 30 minutes during business hours
- » Use more than one channel on the first reply — phone and text or email
- » Follow up 7 times over 14 days before you mark a lead cold
- » Track results by channel and by salesperson, not by gut feel

The complete member playbook includes:

- » The full 14-day, 7-touch follow-up cadence, day by day
- » The used-lead metrics: cost per lead, days to sale, gross per unit
- » How to group buyers by interest and keep leads from going cold



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