

BOAT DEALER PROFITS:



How the **"SPLASH"**
system Can Help You
Sell More Boats,
Make More Money
and Have More Fun!

MATT SELLHORST



What others in the industry have to say about Matt Sellhorst and Boat Dealer Profits:

Will Massey of Custom Marine:

“Being involved in Matt’s program is unusual in that we are actually getting a product. We are not just getting valuable information and ideas but actual tools we can take home and start using in our dealership right away and that’s very unique.”

Dan Allen of Valley Marine:

“Matt’s program required an investment; it wasn’t an expense, it is something that will pay out over the next several years. We had a massive spaghetti strainer with big holes in it, and Matt’s system is far superior to anything I’ve seen anywhere else.”

Lynette and Matt of Santomenna of Race City Marine:

“Matt’s program is what I like to call a ‘dealership in a box.’ You open it up and there’s everything you need to implement the system in an effective way.”

Jeff Hall of Hall Marine (now Marine Max):

“If you'd like to sell more boats, sell those boats at higher prices, get more brokerage listings and haven't been able to do it in this new economy, you may want to talk with Matt. He’s a sharp guy. He has integrity. And, he just may be the right guy to

help you. Give him a call and find out for yourself if his strategies and systems are right for you and your boat business.”

Rick Neal of Hall Marine (now Marine Max):

“If you are in need of improving your online presence and overall marketing success, I'd certainly give Matt a call. Not only does he understand sales and marketing, he has demonstrated tremendous success in the industry.”

Ken Toby of Marine Sales:

“We have been so impressed with Matt and his methods that we brought his program to our 20 Group as our best idea and told them that they should join. And, now that we have completed the initial program, we are looking to hire him to come on site for some more intensive training.”

Meline Clement of Lakeshore Sports:

“We were referred from another dealer in our 20 Group, and he told us you were going to give us some really unique strategies, which you did. But, what really helped us get such a great start was the accountability – that you had us call in every week to make sure we were actually doing it.”

Liz Walz, VP of Education for MRAA:

“At MRAA, we work hard to find experts with insight, tools and strategies that can really make a difference for the marine businesses. The appeal of working with Matt Sellhorst is that his advice is based on what was successful for him as a

salesperson for a leading marine dealership. It's practical. It's proven. And it's designed to be effective in any size business."

Jonathan Sweet, Top 100 Dealer at Boating Industry:

"Matt has spoken for us at our annual Marine Dealer Conference & Expo and written multiple articles for the website. He always provides great information to help dealers improve their marketing."

Mark Yearn of Norman Spencer Insurance:

"I can highly recommend Matt and his abilities – I have seen Matt's presentations a number of times, and have verified his results with a number of clients. His experience, techniques and philosophies have valuable applications to the marine dealers he is working with. He is a valuable asset to anyone who engages his services."

To see even more about Matt Sellhorst and watch complete videos from many of those listed above, visit; www.BoatDealerProfits.com.

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By Matt Sellhorst,
Founder and CEO of Boat Dealer Profits
Creator of the SPLASH System™

Boat Dealer Profits

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my entire family who has always supported me. As I recall, my parents, brother, sister and I were all just as taken by boating back in 1979 when we got our first boat. It was the fun we had together on the water as a family that made boating memories and turned a hobby into a career.

My wife, Sarah, who has always supported my wild notion to change industries, start my own business with a baby on the way, and who loves me no matter how bumpy the journey is together.

My girls, Avery and Emery, who began a love for boating before their first birthday and who changed my life before their first breath!



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Foreword

SPLASH might sound more like the name of a Disney movie than a system to sell more boats, but do not be fooled by the fun name. The SPLASH system, and its creator, Matt Sellhorst, will prove to be the two best things to happen to your boat dealership in a long time.

I first met Matt at one of my 3 day seminars, Dream Business Academy, and the fact that he was in the boat business was instantly appealing to me as my wife and I are boaters – in fact we are living aboard our boat full time. But I digress.

When Matt and I began talking about the current state of the boating industry, I noticed something different about Matt, something actually kind of rare for a consultant in an industry that has seen more than its share of challenges. Matt was not only positive and upbeat, he struck me as absolutely enthusiastic about the opportunities available to boat dealers who want to sell more boats, make more money and have more fun.

While I always admire a positive attitude, I dug a little deeper to ask why he was so confident that his SPLASH system can help so many boat dealers, and his answer blew me away! Matt said, because everyone that has gone through my SPLASH training earns at least \$50K more in gross profit ... in one selling season. That caught my attention, and I hope it catches yours.

Matt's claim caught me somewhat off guard as it is very rare for a consultant to make such a bold claim. Funny

thing is, I told Matt he should be careful making such claims – there are laws against hype and bold claims that over promise results. Matt was undeterred to which I suggested that if he was so sure about these results, he should offer a money back guarantee. Matt agreed, and that started our working together.

Yes, in full disclosure, Matt is a member of my Dream Business Coaching Program. But that has no bearing on me writing this foreword. Truthfully, I get asked to write many forewords and due to my busy schedule, I have to turn down most requests.

Why should you read this book and try to hire Matt Sellhorst to help your dealership sell more boats? Because honestly, you'd be crazy not to. You see, Matt took my advice and in addition to writing this book to share his story, he also began offering, in writing, his \$50K in Additional Profits Guarantee.

That's right – you have absolutely nothing to lose.

I've been in business a long time and have coached hundreds of entrepreneurs and small business owners. I am, perhaps like you, a bottom line guy. So, here's the bottom line on Matt Sellhorst.

Matt is not only extremely skilled at helping boat dealers sell more boats, he is a man of high integrity and he will work his tail off making sure you sell more boats, make more money and have more fun. Because after all, his \$50K in Additional Profits Guarantee is on the line!

Jim Palmer

The Dream Business Coach

www.GetJimPalmer.com

Preface

I'm probably a lot like you. I ultimately got into the boat business because of my life-long passion for boating (and my family's). Who wouldn't want to work every day in the industry that is the foundation of the hobby they love? As they say, *"Do what you love and you'll never work a day in your life."*

I'm also as fully aware as you are that the industry has changed, due in large part to the internet and everyone's access to every bit of information at their fingertips around the clock.

The internet provides customers' ability to research and review every single consumer product or service available, and that includes boats. There are many industries that have been turned upside down because of that sort of access to information. Customers are educating themselves long before they step into a store or showroom to speak with a salesperson or open their wallet.

However, simply because they have access to information, that information may or *may not* be accurate! And to complicate it further, the customer may not be willing to set aside any preconceived notions they develop based on inaccurate information. Researching accurate information takes some time and effort, and not every consumer is willing to do what it takes.

Adding to the information (accurate or not) hurdle, you also no doubt know that the ability to close a sale truly depends on building a relationship. But how

can you build a relationship with a prospect who you've never met and will possibly never meet because, based on their internet searching, they land with your competitor? How can you demonstrate that you truly are the expert and can and will answer their questions and address their concerns without too much effort on their part?

All of this has combined to turn what had been a fun industry and career into one of ongoing challenges to the point that you might be thinking you want to pull your hair out and go back to 1996. If you're thinking, "*There has to be an easier way,*" you are not alone.

It's that very thinking that led me to sit down and write this book because I understand your frustration and have developed, what I truly believe, is the system that will be the solution – the system that will make your dealership more successful, more profitable, and more fun again!

Chapter One:

Boat Sales Have Changed. Have You?

Remember the good old days? If so, then you'll agree with me when I say, "*Oh my, how our customers in boat sales have changed!*"

Do you remember back decades ago when you were the expert and prospects walked through your front door *early* in their buying process? As the dealer, you controlled the information, and they needed your expertise. Well, they still do, but we'll get to the need for your expertise shortly.

In the "old days," customers *had* to come to you for pricing. They *had* to come to you for information on both new and used boats. They *had* to come to you for your expertise.

If you've been in the business for any length of time, perhaps you remember listing a boat in the *Boat Trader* and would purposely omit the horsepower, so the prospect had to call you to get the information.

You had a location on the water or just off the interstate or highway, and drive-by traffic would just stop in to check out the boats you had for sale.

You could place an ad in a magazine, do a radio spot or even TV ads, and you'd have a flood of traffic walking through your front door on Saturday afternoon.

And there weren't the hundreds of options available that potential buyers have today. In the "old days," you had the option to pick the length, the horsepower, and maybe the color. There was one layout and that was it.

You were the expert, you were in control, and you could hold margin because you provided a tremendous value in the boat-buying process. As a matter of fact, you still do.

Oh, how the customers have changed.

I remember buying our family's second boat in 1989. My dad went to the dealership where they had six boats in the parking lot. He picked out the boat, negotiated price, and wrote the check.

There was no sea trial, no demo ride. Heck, it was a sporting goods store that had picked a line of boats to sell. When the paperwork was complete, we hooked up and we drove away. There was no training, no on-water delivery, no orientation, no hoopla... just a, "*Here're your keys; enjoy your boat.*"

That boat had so many issues, and the sporting goods store (aka, the dealer) didn't even have a service department, so there wasn't much they were willing or able to do to fix it.

Nowadays, the speed of change has made it difficult for some dealers to sell more boats and, as importantly, to maintain a solid margin and reasonable bottom line.

The customer is now in control or at least they feel like they are. Consider that any customer can research and obtain any bit of information about any boat they want from the convenience of their computer, their smartphone, or their tablet any time of day or night, so they do not comprehend or even perceive the true value that a top-notch dealer provides.

The speed with which buying habits, price research, and technology can be gained has changed in every industry. This acceleration has made it difficult for some to sell more boats, experience profitability, or even stay in business.

Many don't even see the value of walking into a dealership until they've already spent hours and hours researching, watching videos, reading forums of other boaters. I've even seen some online forums asking, *"How much is a fair amount for a boat dealer to make?"*

Here is an actual question posted on "The Hull Truth":

Profit Margin, New Boats & Motors
Looking to buy a new boat. What are typical profit margins on the whole package and/or individual components such as the motor, hull, & trailer?
I think this is a fair question, as dealers are so flexible on their negotiating and seem very willing

to barter. I am willing to give the dealer his/her due (say 5% or so), but hate the feeling of not knowing bottom lines, as compared (somewhat) to the auto industry.

Thanks, any information will help.

Joe

This is the reality when selling to many of today's boat buyers. Five percent margin: How long would you be able to stay in business at those margins? And, that's what a typically consumer today is thinking.

Did you know that 85 percent of a buyer's research is done online?

They often come into your dealership only when they're ready to make a buying decision. They don't actually walk through your front door until *they* are ready to take that step in the process. They could be ready to buy a boat in the next week, and you don't even know they exist until they walk through that door (unless you were able to generate a lead from your website... more about that later).

Think about your walk-in traffic. How much has it declined over the last 10 years, the last 20 years?

Granted, the business is going up and down with a cyclical nature as it always has, but how much has your walk-in traffic changed relative to the number of boats you sell?

Combined with a decrease in walk-in traffic that enables you to at least start the process of building a relationship, your margins are also driven into the ground

– driven into the ground by the online competition and the pricing game that some in the industry have decided to play.

Not to mention the attitude of many of the buyer's out there who don't think the dealer is entitled to any margin at all when they sell a boat.

Think about that question in the online forum above. That's the belief of many of your buyers when they begin the negotiation process. I'm sure you've noticed the change in buyer's behavior and attitudes from just 10 to 20 years ago.

It's All Different!

Because the mindset of the consumer has changed due to the internet and the wealth of information they can uncover online, the "old days" are certainly gone and all of that has changed to conspire to steal your rightful profits based on the value that you deliver. And you do deliver value, but it's not obvious to the buyer... yet.

And don't even get me started about technology changing and the speed with which it is doing so. The technology these days changes faster than you can keep up, whether it's a new social media app, whether it's a new dealer management system or your CRM system, or whether it's technology on the boats themselves. Heck, your technicians need a laptop just to do a basic diagnostic and repair these days.

The technology is changing at a whirlwind pace and you're expected to keep up with it. Not only are you expected to keep up with it, you must keep up with it in

order to maintain your competitiveness as a dealership owner.

There's another side to the technology sword: If you aren't committed to providing excellent service, you just can't stay in the game. Online reviews, social media comments, and other venues on which anyone can spout off about anything, certainly means it won't take long for a bad client experience to catch up with you.... like the one my family had on our second boat.

Yeah, maybe a bad review won't shut your dealership down, but it will certainly have a dramatic impact on your sales volume and your margins.

Technology is a double-edged sword. It can make certain aspects of doing business easier; however, you have to continually educate yourself in order to keep up.

Whew. It seems like a lot of doom and gloom so far, and perhaps you're thinking there has to be a better way or at least an easier way. Before you decide to give in and give up, I assure you there is good news because what you'll learn from this book can revolutionize the way you sell boats. It can boost your and your employee's income, boost your profitability and bottom line, and provide a more stable dealership year after year. It can make the business fun again... like the "old days."

The solution is in a new approach that can truly change everything for you and help you take back the

profits that you deserve. I created my proprietary SPLASH System™ to help honest and ethical boat dealers just like you sell more boats, make more money, and have more fun.

But before I delve into the nuts and bolts of the system, let me tell you who I am and why you should listen to me.

Why Me?

I've been a boater since the age of five, when my family bought our first boat. It was a 16-foot Larson tri-hull with an '85 Mercury on the back. I can still clearly remember the smell, see the puff of blue-ish smoke, and hear the whine of that engine. Yep, from that point, the Sellhorst family was a boating family. And I personally was in love with the boating lifestyle.

Fast forward several decades and several boats later: A lake house at the Lake of the Ozarks in Missouri and boating adventures from coast to coast. And now the privilege to help honest and ethical boat dealers build more profitable dealerships. But there were many struggles between that very first boat and the work I'm fortunate to be doing today.

Professionally, I had owned a mortgage company for a number of years. And after the mortgage meltdown in 2008-'09, the decision was difficult but apparent: With many potential clients but zero banks willing to lend to anyone other than an absolute A++ borrower, it was time to shutter the mortgage company. (Maybe you experienced similar issues trying to get boat buyers

approved back then?) Man, did I struggle with letting our employees go, closing up shop. I felt I was letting them all down. To be brutally honest, wow, that was one of the toughest things I've ever had to go through.

If you happened to be in a “similar boat” and fought through the hard times of 2008, 2009, and 2010 with the glut of inventory and tightening of lending and discretionary spending on hold for many, I commend you for fighting with all you had to pull through.

After the difficult and painful decision to close the mortgage company, I was faced with, “*So, what would be my next move?*”

With the mortgage industry changing drastically, I decided, “*You know what? I wanna do something I have a true passion for.*” And as I thought about what that would be, the answer time after time led me back to the boating industry.

When I made the decision, I researched all the dealerships in the area and decided on the one dealership that would be the best place for me to learn the boating industry. Sure, I was a boating enthusiast and had been for practically my whole life, but I had to expand my knowledge in order to *sell* boats. The dealership I selected was a Top 100 dealer, one of the most respected Sea Ray dealers in the nation. Over a six-month period, during the 2009 downturn when there was a glut of inventory, boat sales were at some of the lowest levels they'd seen in a long time, and dealerships were cutting way back. Not the best time to launch this career. I

finally convinced one of the owners, Jeff Hall, to take a chance on me.

After my first year, my general manager referred to me as a “no-boat-selling son of a gun.” One, because I had never sold a tangible product before, and two, frankly, my numbers did not reflect that hiring me was a wise decision.

Fast forward a couple years: I soon became a top producer at the sixth location dealership. A top producer who was able to not only perform on the volume side but was also one of the highest margin salespeople in the organization as well, which to me is where the real success is for dealerships to have a really strong financial foundation.

Let's face it: Even in the best economy, selling boats at strong margins can be challenging!

In order to go from a “no-boat-selling son of a gun” to a top producer in short order, I had to develop systems and tools to succeed.

Not being a natural born salesperson, these tools and these systems allowed me to out produce salespeople with 10 and 20 years more experience and much broader client bases from which to pull. These systems, it turns out, can be used by anybody willing to follow them because they weren't developed based on my own

personality or based on the skill set as a fast-talking salesperson... the natural born salesperson.

The system really turned out to be a very transferrable one that any dealer could use. With my successful turn-around going from that “no-boat-selling son of a gun” to a top producer, there were some dealers who were very interested in finding out how I was doing what I was doing. It started with some recognition in the industry journals and a few dealers actually hiring me to share my methods while I was still selling boats... including the dealership I was selling for.

That history led me to where I am today and where you are at the moment in these pages. Now I’m committed to helping honest and ethical boat dealers sell more boats, make more money, and have more fun with my SPLASH System™.

Maybe you’ve heard me speak from the stage at the Marine Dealer Conference & Expo, Marine Retail University, dealer meetings, or other industry events. Perhaps you’ve even read my sales and marketing column in *Boating Industry* magazine or seen me in *Soundings Trade Only*. I was even fortunate to be recognized in the “Movers and Shakers” edition of *Boating Industry* and awarded the Best Idea at Marine Dealers Conference & Expo (MDCE) in 2012.

Additionally, as a coach, I’ve helped dozens and dozens of dealers boost their profits and continue to improve their sales and marketing systems and tools over time, so they can sell more boats, make more money, and

have more fun. You'll discover a few of their stories as you continue through this book.

Now that I've set the stage, it's definitely time to "SPLASH" in!

"Splash" Right In

- Gone are the days when customers *had* to come to you for pricing and information about any boat!
- A decrease in walk-in traffic also limits your opportunity to begin building a relationship with a prospect.
- Technology has changed and the speed with which it continues to do so makes it almost impossible to keep up.
- I developed a great system to go from a "no-boat-selling son of a gun" to a top producer.

Chapter Two:

The Proprietary SPLASH System™ Can Change Everything.

Not only *can* the SPLASH System change everything, it *will* change everything. Wow. I bet you've never read a statement with such a bold guarantee.

Am I piquing your interest? Does it sound too good to be true? I hope you're not making that decision based on the usual knee-jerk reaction to the adage, *"If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is."* The operative word is "usually," so I don't want you to have that reaction because if you're thinking that, it would be a terrible mistake not to keep reading. *(I'll share with you later in the book exactly how I'm able to guarantee results... but don't jump ahead just yet.)*

I've covered the "gloom and doom" in the previous chapter, delineating all of the challenges that you know you already face. However, imagine this: a steady flow of leads that your competition doesn't even know exists.

And it gets even better. They will be prospects who see you as the trusted expert in your market area, in your demographic (almost like the old days but even better).

Easier-to-work-with prospects; prospects who want to listen to you and who decide listening to you is the right decision.

Prospects who are willing to pay higher prices because they know the value is there and that you are the one who offers it and will deliver it.

More repeat and referral business that comes flowing in because of the customer experience that you've orchestrated to ensure those results.

A higher lifetime value of the clients who do buy from you, which means they are using your F&I products, using your service department, taking advantage of your parts and accessory department, using your storage facility, eating at your restaurant, using your... well, you get the idea – any other profit center that you have in your dealership.

Why?

The answer is easy: Because they know you are the expert. They know you are the right choice to be their boat dealership.

You are the one who they prefer to turn to for ***all*** of their boating needs.

When you establish yourself as the expert and have the opportunity to begin building a relationship, leads will quickly become prospects, and then clients!

Besides a steady flow of leads and prospects who you know about before your competitors do and who are exactly the type of clients you want (easy to work with and profitable), you can also have a more stable dealership year after year.

“Yes, we’re gonna have cycles in the boat business.” It would be foolish of me to state otherwise and even more foolish for you to believe that an economic downturn like the one of almost a decade ago will never happen again. In all likelihood, it will. That’s simply reality. The economy ebbs and flows. However, wouldn’t you like to have a more predictable system in place so that year after year, it will generate leads, convert more of those leads into higher margin sales, and generate more profit? Oh, and allow you to have more fun along the way, too?

That’s what I wanted as a salesperson and that’s how I developed the system that helped turn me from that “no-boat-selling son of a gun” into a very successful one.

Allow me to introduce you to the system that – while it won’t bring back “the old days” – will replicate the results you previously experienced... before the economic challenges and technologic advancements changed the game.

The SPLASH System™

- Steady flow of quality prospects

- Predictable profits
- Loyal clients
- Abundant repeat and referral business
- Systematic results
- Higher margins in ALL departments

So what does a SPLASH dealership look like, you ask? Well let's take a look at the next chapter to find out.

“Splash” Right In

- I'm making a bold prediction and offering an ironclad guarantee. However, don't dismiss it as too good to be true.
- You ***can*** have a steady flow of leads that your competition doesn't know about.
- Not only will you get leads and prospects, they'll be exactly the type of people you want to convert to customers – easy to work with, willing to listen, and understand that you are the expert.
- Plus, they'll be customers who take advantage of everything you have to offer and continue to spend money with you.
- I can't guarantee that there won't be cycles in the boat-buying industry, but you can implement the SPLASH System for more predictable results.

Chapter Three:

What Does a SPLASH Dealer Look Like?

Now that you understand about my background and how I developed this system and became the expert, it's time to jump in, so let's get started with the SPLASH System. Let's look at what a SPLASH dealer will look after implementing the system.

Attribute #1: A steady flow of quality leads, leads that your competition doesn't even know exist, leads that come directly to you.

From the moment they walk through your dealership's front door, whether that be your virtual online "door" (via your website, social media, or any other online presence that may come in the future) or through your actual front door, you are positioned as a boating expert. Plus, you are able to capture their contact information as well (even those who are researching online).

You are positioned as a resource that they absolutely must listen to. More importantly, by the very nature of the way you attract them into your dealership, you are building a basis of trust, and you're on your way to building "the know and the like" factor as well. If you aren't aware of it, consumers more readily buy from those they know, like, and trust!

Attribute #2: Buyers in the showroom with set appointments are positioned to be less price sensitive.

Can you imagine having a steady flow of qualified prospects every day of the week? Not just Saturday (and Sunday, if you're open), walking into your dealership with set appointments with your top salespeople? Prospects who are less price sensitive ready to meet with your salespeople who truly have a system in place to convert those leads into sales?

SPLASH is a system in which everything is choreographed from the time the customer first finds you until they leave the boating lifestyle, hopefully years, even decades later. It's a system choreographed to maximize value and choreographed to have those appointments positioned to *want to buy from you and to understand that buying from you is the right decision.*

Attribute #3: Having a sales team that uses a specified and replicable system and the right tools to deliver a higher margin boat sale.

Just like the technician with the right tool for the job has a higher efficiency rate, is more profitable and delivers a better end result to your clients, the same is true with your sales team.

Consider your current sales process. Does your sales team use any system or any framework to walk the customer through the sales process every single time with repeatable positive results?

Or do they do whatever feels right at the time with no major milestones that they aim to hit with a

specific script or word tracks to use at the key moments during the sales process to ensure increasing the odds of delivering high margin boat sales?

Don't worry, it's not difficult. Any salesperson can use this because we're not scripting the entire sale. It strictly is a framework to hit the key points and use a handful of key phrases at specific moments in the sales process to increase the likelihood of higher margin boat sales.

Attribute #4: Clients who love you and your dealership and are fun to work with and take your recommendations.

Imagine a prospect you're working with to whom you make a recommendation on horse power, a recommendation on electronics, on safety equipment, on financing, and even insurance. You make a recommendation, and they follow it because they see you as the expert; they see your staff as the experts; and if you make the recommendation, it's not a sales pitch.

'You're making the recommendations because they are the right thing for the prospect, and they know you, they like you, and they trust you at this point. They make the decision to say "YES" because you've orchestrated the process to increase the chances of that being the outcome. You've choreographed the customer's experience to elicit an incredibly high-value relationship.

Attribute #5: Boat owners who use all your services and product lines: your service department,

your parts department, your storage, your restaurant, your fuel dock, your ship store, your pro shop....

Because of the choreographed process through which you take your prospects – one that is configured to develop this type of result – you’re no longer subject to the price pressure of the online vendors or the price pressure of other dealerships.

This system has even worked during a boat show with a “fresh up” whom the dealer has never previously spoken with prior to that prospect walking into the boat show and saying, “*I want that one. How much?*” and making the decision because of the “sales tool” he saw on the dealer’s website that caused him to want to do business with that dealer and on their terms, even in the competitive environment of a boat show.

Dealers using the system don’t experience the same price pressure they did prior to the SPLASH System because their prospects will move through the sales funnel for all products and services in a way that makes those sales easier and with higher margins. Not only is it higher margin, the sale is one that is positioned to use all of your programs (that make sense for your prospect), all of your products, all of your services, and boost that lifetime value of a customer. All of which are so important to skyrocketing the profitability of your boat business.

Attribute #6: Clients who use their boats very frequently and introduce others to the boating lifestyle and, more importantly, to you.

Think about it this way: The more your clients use their boats, the more they bring their friends and family on the water with them, introducing them to the boating lifestyle and converting them to join the boating lifestyle, so you don't have to do the heavy lifting when it comes to convincing these new prospects about the fun, relaxation, and adventure that comes with being on the water. Your existing clients are doing some of the selling for you.

When these new prospects show signs of being ready to become a boat owner or moving up, changing boating lifestyles, your existing customers introduce them to you in a fashion that is comfortable for everybody. It's a solid referral, and when it comes to closing sales and building the know, like, and trust factor. Don't you just love getting referrals?

In a way, your existing customer looks like the hero for making the introduction to such an amazing dealership – a dealership from which there's no question their friends and family should buy their boat.

Imagine the value of that referral at that point. The referred prospects love the boating lifestyle; they've been boating on a product that you delivered to a prospect who's now a customer. A "client," I call them, who is using your product, your services, and has an

amazing relationship with you. And they're making referrals.

We know that prospects who come to us by way of referral are very powerful. They are also easier to work with, so much more profitable, and so much more fun. The SPLASH System gives you a choreographed way for more of these types of referrals to enter your sales funnel.

Very simply, referrals rock!

Attribute #7: Clients who buy multiple boats over a long period of time.

We just covered the concept of your clients using their boats more frequently, and we all know in this industry, the more you use your boat, the more likely you are to upgrade systems and electronics and gear, but most importantly to also upgrade your boat and change your boating lifestyle.

The more clients use their boats, the more money they will spend with you over the long haul, the longer they'll stay in boating which in turn increases the period of time they will likely give money to you year after year increasing their lifetime value, not to mention the referrals they provide to you.

Attribute #8: More boat sales, higher profit margins, and more fun in your boat dealership.

These will all happen when you take the time to create a system – a proven system – and install it in your boat business. You want a system that's designed to develop more prospects and designed to develop more set appointments with your sales staff. A system that's designed to pre-position your buyers to be less price sensitive and one that's designed to position you as the expert – an expert who makes recommendations that the client accepts and makes the investment that you recommend because it's a wise investment.

It's the right thing to do. As boat people, we know what products and services are available that can make your client's boating lifestyle more enjoyable. It encompasses all of the things of which your client is unaware. They're not in the industry to the degree that we are, and you can make recommendations to make it more profitable for your business and more fun for your clients.

When it's more fun for your clients, they're easier to work with, they're more open to your suggestions, and they say yes more often and give you money more often.

It is more fun for everybody involved, and isn't that truly what you want from your boat business?

There were a number of businesses that you (and likely your family) could have gotten into, but you got into the boat business. Maybe it was your father, grandfather, or other family member (maybe even an in-law), but at some point you chose the boat business for the same reason I'm in the business: because of a love

for boating and all the fun boating has provided. You got into the boat business because there was a passion for boating and likely that passion has been passed down from generation to generation to generation.

And that's why I've created the SPLASH System to help you sell more boats, make more money, and have more fun. So, how do you get there?

Well, now that you understand the underlying attributes, keep reading. It's within your reach if you really want it.

Let me get started with the foundational elements of the SPLASH System to selling more boats, making more money and having more fun in your boat business in the next chapter.

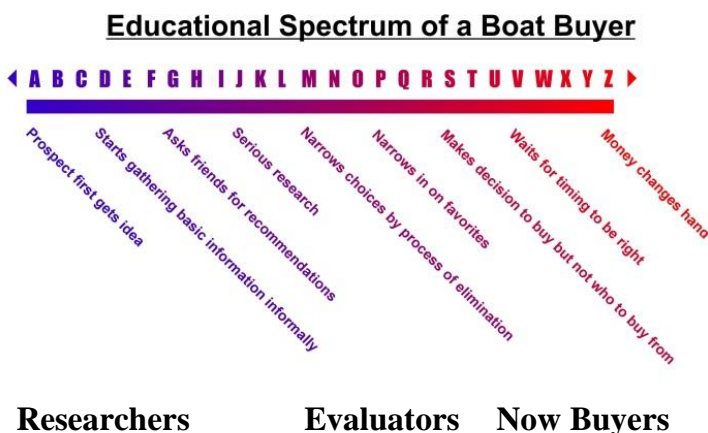
“Splash” Right In

- Steady flow of qualified leads.
- Less price-sensitive prospects in your showroom.
- Sales team using a replicable system.
- Clients who love you, your dealership and are fun to work with.
- Boat owners using all of your products and services.
- Clients who use their boats more frequently and introduce others to boating.
- Clients who buy multiple boats over a long period of time.
- More sales, higher profits, more fun!

Chapter Four:

How to Get More Boat Buyers to Say “YES”

If you’ve heard me speak at the Marine Dealer Conference & Expo, at other industry events or if you’ve been to one of my boot camps, you know I almost always start out with the Educational Spectrum of the boat buyer.



I’ll get into the details of this in just a moment, but we’ve already talked about how consumer buying habits have changed – and changed immensely. You cannot just wait for them to walk into your dealership anymore or to attend a boat show and to be ready to buy.

As we’ve covered, buying habits have changed mainly because of the internet and because of the

technology and the information that's readily available at their fingertips according to their own personal timetable.

As I've mentioned and you know, there's no need for them to walk into your dealership early in the process because you don't control that information any longer.

Today, information is out there for all of your prospects to find and consume as they're sitting in their La-Z-Boy at 10:00 at night, considering whether to enter the boating lifestyle or considering upgrading their boat to their next perfect boat. I call this the "Research" phase of the Educational Spectrum of a Boat Buyer.

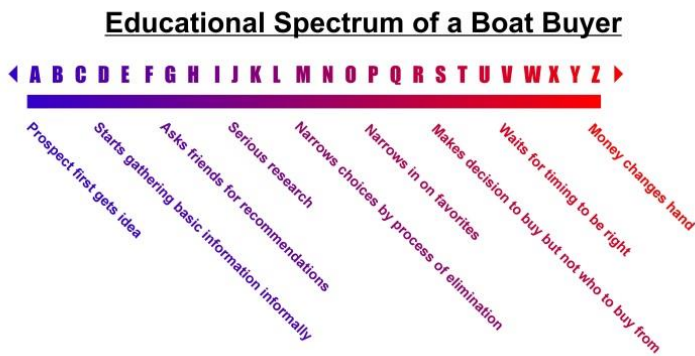
Some of your best clients are always online dreaming about their next boat... even just a few days after buying their most recent boat. I know that's true because my brother, Steve, is certainly one of them.

What if you could magically turn those researchers (I call them invisible prospects) – the ones perusing the internet at all hours of the day and night – into clients at an incredibly profitable rate? If you had a system in place to discover who those invisible leads were before anybody else (aka your competition) knew they existed, would that give you an advantage?

Well, this is where Educational Marketing can be your secret weapon (I refer to it as a vending machine marketing system in a *Boating Industry* article.) It uses the reality of the Educational Spectrum of a Boat Buyer to discover all of those online researchers who are unknown to your competition and turns them into

prospects that you can move down the Educational Spectrum of a Boat Buyer until they become Now Buyers. But, I'm getting ahead of myself.

The key to Educational Marketing or your Boat Sales Vending Machine is to offer value upfront to find these prospects, to uncover these invisible prospects before anybody else knows they are out there. Before anybody knows they're about ready to enter the market and that they may be walking through a showroom door within the next 60 days, six months, or a year.



Now, once you've turned those unknown online researchers into visible leads with your Educational Marketing Strategy, how do you convert them into a prospect or better yet, a set appointment to talk with your highly effective sales people? At this point, they move into the "Evaluator" stage of the Boat Buyer process. Diving deeper into their evaluation, maybe attending a boat show, walking into your dealership, or talking to

their boating friends. The key point is that even at this stage, they may not be ready to buy yet.

Consider this:

Research has shown that out of a bundle of 100 leads, about 50 of them will buy and about 50 of them will never buy.

Of the 50 prospects who will buy, only 15 percent will buy within the first 90 days. Those 15 people would be in the “Now Buyer” phase of the Educational Spectrum.

The other 85 percent? Well, they’ll buy *after* the first 90 days, likely in the “Research” or “Evaluator” stage. This is according to the Inquiry Handling Service who conducted this research across hundreds of industries.

What implications do these research findings have on your boat business? Well, it’s exactly why the Educational Spectrum of the boat buyer is so important. The leads you generate from any source may be great leads, but they may be ready to buy in two days, two weeks, two months, even two years out or longer in some cases.

For this reason, a SPLASH dealer must implement a secret weapon. It’s called a 24/7 selling machine and with the right approach can dramatically increase your dealerships success. (Stay tuned for more on this as well.)

Remember, about 85 percent (a very, very large majority) of your sales will come *after* the first 90 days

that a prospect enters your sales process and that your salesperson first realizes they're in the market for a boat.

Let me ask you:

- What do your salespeople do with a new lead?
- What does their follow-up process look like?
- How often and how consistent are they about following up with your prospects?
- Do you have a system in place in which you know every prospect is going to see a minimum level of communication from you and your sales team even if they are unresponsive at first?

Remember the statistics: Only 50 percent buy and of those 50 percent, 85 percent do not buy within the first 90 days!

Or is your process like many, many dealerships I've been in where you talk to the salespeople and they say, *"If they don't buy in the first four weeks, they're never gonna buy. If they don't buy in the first 30 days, they're never gonna buy. If they don't buy in the first 90 days, they're never gonna buy."*

Whether you know it or not, it's likely your salesperson has a date in their head about the timeframe

in which a prospect will buy or are a waste of their time to follow up with. I can assert this based on the countless number of people who I've talked to in my sales training, in my boot camps, in my programs. Your salespeople have a time at which they either forget about a lead, they lose the lead, or they don't have the time (in their opinion) to follow up with those prospects, and they're more than ready to move on to the next newer lead.

A Long Sales Cycle

Let me tell you a quick story of a client of mine.

David and Rose (I won't give their last name) came into my sales funnel, into my sales process, my SPLASH System as a lead. (I didn't actually call it SPLASH at that time as it was in its infancy. And it's been refined, tweaked, and improved over the last several years.) Regardless, I was able to convert them from an invisible lead to a visible lead in my sales funnel with an Educational Marketing technique. Eventually, I was able to meet them face-to-face as a result of another SPLASH System component, my 24/7 selling machine. As I recall, they attended an event.

In that face-to-face meeting, they shared with me that they were ready to get involved in the boating lifestyle and that they had a big family with lots of kids and lots of grandkids. They didn't like the idea of a pontoon; they wanted a "boat."

They wanted a fiberglass stern drive – that was what they pictured themselves in on the water. A 30-foot deck boat was the perfect fit for their budget, which they

shared with me, and for the style of boating that they wanted to do and for the people and the friends and family who were going to be on the water with them. Everything was coming together, and they showed all the signs of being a “Now Buyer.”

I consistently followed up with them, was on the phone talking to them, and emailing them. I used all of the communication strategies that I knew, and I knew that they were ready to buy a boat... until one day when they attended another event and they finally shared with me, *“Matt, we can’t buy this boat until our inheritance comes in.”*

A family member had passed away and left the five children a large commercial piece of property – a piece of real estate that was not at all a liquid asset. They had to wait for that transaction to get through probate and close escrow until they would receive their inheritance.

After having David and Rose in my 24/7 selling machine for over two years, they finally made the decision to buy a 30-foot deck boat from me. A \$120,000 sale at 22 percent margin with a custom-ordered boat.

Now, I tell you that story not only because of the long sales cycle but also because there were a number of times at which I could have dropped the price before I knew the inheritance was the thing that was holding them back from buying. I could have gone to the one and only tool that most salespeople have – cutting price.

Instead of having a number of value-building tools and communication tools as sales tools in their tool boxes, they fall back on the one tool they have that they believe can move a sale forward, and that's dropping the price. They're giving away *your* money in the form of lost margin because they don't have any other strategies or tools in place that they are confident will work. (This is one area in which the SPLASH System can make a world of difference.) And, they're so easy, any salesperson can use them... and they will... because their paychecks will skyrocket as well!

Your salespeople need to have a number of tools in their selling toolboxes. A carpenter can't build a house with only a hammer. Similarly, your sales staff shouldn't rely solely on price reduction to close the sale.

Although price reduction can be effective, it is a tool that my SPLASH dealers prefer to use only in a small number of situations.

The sale with David and Rose was one of the easiest sales that I made once I discovered that key piece with a questioning strategy, with a closing strategy that allows you to do a trial close before going to the price discount tool in your tool box. Price discount should

always be a last resort and then only employed in very specific circumstances.

David and Rose were easy to work with during the ordering process. They were easy to work with during the delivery process. When there were delays in their build and the final delivery of their boat, they were easy to work with because of all of the pre-planning, pre-positioning, and tools I used to move them down the Educational Spectrum over that two-year period of time, and you can do the exact same thing for your prospects and sales team.

Now, I could give you dozens of my stories and my clients' stories of similar boat sales that have progressed in a similar way, but reading those is not why you bought this book. However, I'll share another one that will help you truly see the benefit.

One dealership owner, Lynette Santomenna of Race City Marine, a Nautique, Supreme and Centurion dealer shared with me when I was on site for a sales training event that my program was like "*a dealership in a box.*" It had everything you needed to implement on the sales and marketing front to deliver more pre-positioned, predisposed, less price-sensitive boat buyers to their sales team.

She's very excited, and the reason she's so excited is because it did deliver more leads, better follow up, clear and concise messages throughout, and efficient communication that delivers more buyers to say "yes."

As a matter of fact, I recently spoke to her about doing some additional work together, and she was excited to share that they were up a tremendous amount over the previous year! They run an excellent dealership, so I can't take all the credit. However, their commitment to implement and follow the system sure has had a major impact on their success.

Much of that success lies in the fact that the SPLASH System automates follow up and creates consistent communication. Remember the statistics I shared: 85 percent are buying 90 days or more after the initial contact. Maintaining a connection with them is not only critical, it is the time during which, through your communications with them, that you can build and solidify the “know, like, and trust” factor as well as setting yourself apart as the expert, so that when they are finally ready to buy – whether that's on day 91 or two years later as was the case with David and Rose – you, and only you, will be the one they turn to.

So, what types of tools are we talking about in the SPLASH System?

- Educational marketing
- 24/7 selling machines
- Shock and awe package
- Proven squeeze pages
- Profit-producing relationship newsletters your clients will love
- Appointment-producing boat previews

- Canned and cloned value propositions
- Easy video marketing protocol
- Proven social media ads & posts
- Powerful & persuasive email templates
- Value-building social proof
- Simple website tweaks
- A magic email to convert old leads
- A sales framework anyone can use
- Friendly trial closing questions
- A margin-building price presentation
- Orchestrated referral program
- And many more tiny tweaks any honest and ethical dealer can implement to achieve incredible results

Check out the graphic on the next page to see the entire SPLASH System™ in action:

HOW THE "SPLASH" SYSTEM CAN HELP YOU SELL MORE BOATS. MAKE MORE MONEY AND HAVE MORE FUN!

Add More Doors Into Your Dealership
(Lead Gen Drives Visible Prospects)

SPLASH LEAD GENERATION

Windows Into Your Dealership
(Branding to Invisible Prospects)



Walk-ins

Inventory Leads

Listing Sites

Phone Calls from Ads

Boat Shows

Referrals

Social Media (Engagement)

Manufacturer Leads

Video with CTA

Social media Ads

Referral Strategy

Website

Educational Marketing



Branding Ads

Most Social Media Posts

Signage

Trucks

Stickers on boat/Trailers

Local Listings Online

Most Print Ads

Videos (No Call to Action - CTA)

Most Digital Ads

24/7 SELLING MACHINE

(Build Value and Compel Prospects to Engage with Boat Expert)



ENGAGE PROSPECT

(Drive Engagement Towards Face to Face Appointment)



Dealership

Phone

E-mail

Web Form

SPLASH SALES FRAMEWORK

(Close More Higher Margin Sales)

Greeting

Interview

\$1000 Presentation

Proper price Presentation

Trial Close

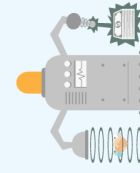
Areas of concern

Ask For Sale

Offer All F&I



RELATIONSHIP SELLING MACHINE



Service

Parts/ACC

Other Revenue

Referral

Maximize LTV

Repeat



Compelling Offers

Super Signature

EZ Videos

Shoot & Ave Package

Reengraving

Remarketing

Direct Mail

Postcards

Value Building Communication



Relationship E-zine

Boat Preview E-zine

Personalized 365 Auto Responder

Impactful Email Templates

Social Proof Handwritten Notes



Sales Person Phone Calls

Sale Person Manual Emails

Sale focused e-newsletters

Events

\$100 MESSAGING

EFFICIENT SYSTEMS

PROVEN STRATEGY

CANNING AND CLONING

COACHING & TRAINING

You will be selling more boats, making more money, and having more fun with the SPLASH System installed in your boat business.

“Splash” Right In

- Through Educational Marketing, you can deliver value up front to prospects, so you will be top of mind when they’re ready to buy.
- Consider the statistics about leads: only 50 percent of them will buy. Of that 50 percent, the vast majority (85 percent) will not buy for 90 days or longer.
- How do your salespeople handle leads? Are they sticking with them for 90 days or more, or dismissing them sooner, personally convinced that they will never buy?
- Price reduction is too often one of the very few tools your salespeople have in their selling tool box. Every time they use that tool, it costs you money.
- The SPLASH System is a “dealership in a box.”

Chapter Five:

Boat Dealer Mistakes

So many dealers I talk to in my initial strategy session, which is an hour-long coaching session that I conduct with many dealers to determine if the SPLASH System is suited for them, ask if they are a client who fits the criteria to go through my programs.

During these sessions, I often discover that there are no lead generation systems in place; they just take whatever comes through the door. Their advertising is very brand-driven with some social media thrown in, maybe some ads on *Boat Trader*, a website with their listings, or perhaps some combination thereof, but there's no clear, concise, and powerful way to turn those thousands of online researchers into visible leads for their sales team. I assure you, there are thousands of online researchers who are potentially your leads as well.

Once they do get a lead who walks into the dealership, walks into a boat show, or walks in through their online dealership virtual front door (your website, social media, or any other online presence you have), oftentimes I discover they have no follow-up system. In turn, they have no way to keep track of the 85 percent of the leads who will not be ready to buy for 90 or more days! There's no 24/7 selling machine that does much of the sifting, sorting, and positioning to deliver more pre-

positioned appointments for their sales team. A system that runs regardless of the salesperson's manual follow-up process.

Mistake: Limited or No Follow Up

One of the exercises we do early in the process of the SPLASH System is to walk through the client's current follow-up and sales processes. As you will learn later in this book, you may want to do the same thing to see exactly what your current prospects experience once they are a lead for your salespeople. I've even created a simple scorecard to walk you through this step.

Oftentimes, I find that the salespeople will make three or four phone calls, will send a handful of "on the fly" emails, and then if there's no response, that lead goes into what turns out to be the Dead Sea, never to hear anything from that dealer again. If they're lucky, maybe they'll receive a newsletter periodically.

But for all intents and purposes, the only way that prospect comes back to the dealership is if the prospect makes the decision to walk back in on their own terms. Essentially, walking in as a blank slate with no positioning and no positive notion about your business, products, or expertise... maybe even a negative one because they did not receive any communication after their first interaction.

Mistake: Poor Messaging

Another mistake that I often see is dealers failing to have a differentiating message. They're saying things

like, *“We have the best boats. We have the best service. We’ve been family owned since 1932. We are the boating experts in XYZ area.”*

Why is that a problem?

Go to their competition’s website, which is another exercise we do early in the SPLASH process, to get the current competitive landscape, and we invariably discover that their website and their marketing material says virtually the exact same thing as the competition down the street. To make matters worse, the competition in many situations don’t deliver nearly the professional or exceptional service that my clients do!

Mistake: Lack of Investment

Another mistake is not investing some time upfront to develop a system.

As I work with dealers year after year, dealer after dealer, it is amazing to discover that after 50 years in business, there’s no true system to take a prospect who walks into the dealership or comes in through your online dealership front door and lead them down that Educational Spectrum to the “Now Buyer” phase and to becoming a high margin boat sale.

There’s no system in place, no repeatable, replicable system to deliver high margin boat sales.

The “system,” if you can call it that, is based on what the salesperson feels is right, what the salesperson thinks is the right way to handle it, the right things to say, the right timetable to communicate, and the right

messages to communicate based on their gut reaction to the circumstances and their own experience.

As a top-producing boat salesperson myself, I believe part of that to be true, but I also know as the creator of the SPLASH System that there is a framework, a system that can be put in place to ensure that every single prospect who comes into your dealership community receives a baseline level of a sales message and communication which alone could advance them 80 percent of the way to the sale.

The other 20 percent of the process to close the sale absolutely needs to have that personal touch from the salesperson, the personal messages, the personal timeline of communication and follow up.

But without that backstop, the one I call a 24/7 selling machine (which you'll learn about later), how many leads fall through the cracks?

How many people don't get involved in boating?

How many people buy from your competition?

How many people buy an RV instead?

Or spend their money to take a Disney vacation?

Go on a cruise?

How many people don't buy a boat from you because the salesperson gave up too early or got busy during the busy selling season and let a lead fall through the cracks?

Mistake: Lack of Consistency

Another mistake: no consistent and universal value statement.

In my previous book, *Marine Marketing Strategies*, I call ‘em Unique Selling Points, and these unique selling points are so important to develop early and to develop for your salespeople to have as tools in their toolboxes to pull out with their boat buyers... rather than always reverting to price reduction.

These unique selling points are the foundation of selling more boats, making more money, and having more fun.

When you have a consistent message that you deliver repeatedly, that message sinks in with your prospect and helps you position them for a high margin boat sale.

Yes, I understand that you’re busy, and it’s hard, and it takes a lot of work upfront, but the beautiful thing about the SPLASH System is that I give you an outline. It is practically done for you except for that last 20 percent which is customized to your exact dealership, to your message, to your core values, and to your prospects.

You’re busy delivering boats. You’re busy running your dealership. You’re busy putting out fires that come up through the off-season or during the busy selling season or that come up as a business owner.

Listen, you know boats; you likely don’t have time to be a sales and marketing expert (especially with the way technology and online media are changing these days), but you do know your product, you do know your local boating area, and you do know your clients, and you also know how to sell a boat, nose to nose, toes to

toes with a real live prospect. With your knowledge and experience, you have so much selling wisdom in your head, it's just a matter of pulling it altogether the right way. It's simply a matter of getting focused and having a framework to develop it all into a highly profitable system.

As a matter of fact, when we spoke during one of our coaching calls while implementing his system, Ken Toby of Marine Sales said, *"We've talked about these things for a long time, we've even done a few here and there over the years, but it wasn't until we went through your system that it all came together."* Now, they are excited to implement the same system for the dealers in their acquisition strategy as well as additional work that we are doing together. And, I'd be remiss if I didn't thank Ken and his team for the referrals they've sent my way and how they promoted me to their 20 Group.

The SPLASH System is designed to help you avoid each and every one of these mistakes. I learned the hard way as that "no-boat-selling son of a gun," and now I can and want to help you stop making these mistakes or avoid them altogether in the first place!

"Splash" Right In

- One of the first things I uncover when working with a dealer is that there is no lead generation system in place.

- If there happens to be a lead generation system, there is often limited or no follow up.
- There is also usually very poor messaging that sounds like every other boat dealer in the area. I often wonder who's copying from whom? And none of it's any good anyway.
- Many dealers fail to invest time creating a system that works to capture and follow up on leads. (The good news is that you don't have to re-invent the wheel with the SPLASH System.)
- Focus on your unique selling point and be consistent in delivering that message.

Chapter Six:

Today, You Need More than Just a Good Salesperson

As I speak with and coach boat dealers all around the country, I find one thing to be consistently true: Most salespeople don't have a system in place for follow up, a strategy in place to communicate and to ensure no leads fall through the cracks. They don't have what they need to ensure each and every lead receives an impactful and persuasive sales pitch about why the prospect should do business with that dealer.

It's been proven over and over in industry after industry – and certainly is true in the boating industry – that consistent and persistent follow up is one of the keys to increasing sales.

It definitely takes more than just a few sporadic phone calls and emails to generate a high margin boat sale these days. And with only a few sporadic phone calls and emails, you'll be lucky to generate a sale of any kind, let alone one with profit attached to it!

Having a consistent communication tool in place to build a relationship with the prospect from the time they first get the idea, *“Hey, honey, maybe we should buy a boat,”* as they go through that Educational Spectrum of a Boat Buyer to the time they make the decision to become a “Now Buyer” and money actually changes hands is critical to your success. The more

consistent, the more powerful your message, the more likely that it will ultimately lead to high margin boat sales.

Having the tools in place to create that consistent communication can be a game changer. Like I said, you need more than just a good salesperson.

Salespeople Aren't Automated

Having and using the right tools makes it much more efficient for your salespeople, so they don't have to do all the work 100 percent manually, which I see over and over in dealerships. There are plenty of dealerships (and perhaps yours is one of them) in which they have a contact management system that salespeople use *from time to time*, and maybe they do a good job of entering and logging all their prospects. But there's no automated system in place to take a lot of the heavy lifting of that communication off of your salespeople to provide a baseline level of salesmanship, a baseline level of persuasion to every single prospect that comes through your door and enters your sales funnel.

Listen, I understand. We're all short on time in this boat business. We have six months, in many cases, to make a majority of our sales and profit. Some of my Canadian dealers have only a three- or four-month window in which to do the majority of their business due to their climate and longer cold weather season. Yes, we're all incredibly short on time in our busy selling season, and it requires that you have efficient systems and practical tools that are critical to work during those

periods from April to Memorial Day to the 4th of July and even through Labor Day. Those systems are critical to get the maximum value and the maximum result from any sales system. Plus systems that help you drive additional revenue in the off-season.

But understand... it's not the technology of the system that's the most important. It's how you use it! That's the key to success. One of the things my SPLASH dealers like about my coaching and advice is that I don't sell any CRMs, DMS, or technology of any kind. I know you don't want to go through the upheaval of installing a new system with both the cost factor and learning curve attached. That's another one of the benefits of the SPLASH System. This entire system can be implemented with your current technology or with a simple contact management system that's less than \$50 per month.

Additional Sales Staff

Another way to increase your sales is to let your happy past clients sell for you. I call it "social proof" in my book, *Marine Marketing Strategies*. Testimonials from current clients act like additions to your sales staff.

It's a tool that is at your disposal without hiring, training, and paying another salesperson. My social proof strategy actually won the Best Ideas Award at the Marine Dealer Conference & Expo in 2012. At that time, dealers voted it as being the most valuable idea presented on a panel group with some very experienced dealers and dealership owners.

It was a very simple idea... a mentor of mine calls it an “elegant idea.” It’s a very simple and powerful system that has a major impact.

This particular elegant idea is best described with a quick story from a client of mine. I mentioned Ken Toby of Marine Sales earlier. After moving through the five-week program, his three location dealerships were seeing results and having a great experience.

During that time, it was his turn to host their Cobalt 20 Group meeting, and Ken was nice enough to help me promote.

After that event, one of his fellow 20 Group members joined my program and said, *“The only reason I joined is because of the experience Ken and his team have had with you.”* It wasn’t my incredible money-back guarantee, my unique selling point, my persuasive sales pitch. They joined the program because Ken vouched for me and became like a sales person for me and my system.

I’m sure you have had a client vouch for you in a similar way; that’s social proof. And when you tap into the powerful tool of social proof and consistently utilize the SPLASH System to accumulate it, your happy past clients will be like a whole team of sales people in your market promoting your business.

*You don’t have to add to your sales staff when you can
put social proof to work for you.*

Be memorable. Boat buyers are confused and looking for the answer to the question, “*Why should I work with you versus any other option out there?*”

The fact that your buyers are confused and that even your best boat buyer, even your most experienced boater, does not buy a boat every year.

Most of them buy a boat every three years, five years, seven years... or longer. Some of them will only buy one boat in a lifetime. It can be a very daunting, a very confusing, a very stressful time, and it's our job in the boating industry to make it more fun, to make it less stressful, and to make it easier for your prospects.

Canned and Cloned

For a salesperson to efficiently lead every prospect through what is often a long sales cycle every time can be extremely difficult. I've discovered from feedback in my boot camps and from comments from my dealers that the concept of canning and cloning is another elegant idea.

The idea of canning and cloning is one I learned from a mentor of mine, Joe Polish who has one of the most popular marketing podcasts on iTunes, “I Love Marketing.” The reason it's so powerful is in the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation.

Joe teaches to always look for ways to automate or systematize any aspect of your business that is repeated over and over and over. An example would be to create a template to send to your clients three days before closing and delivery date to explain the process,

what exactly is needed, and what you expect of them at that time.

For many SPLASH dealers, that includes: wiring instructions, reminder of boat insurance (and a reminder for where to get the policy – more profit), notification that cash over \$10,000 must be disclosed, limit on credit card, the HIN, and other important information to ensure the delivery date goes smoothly.

That email template is based on the can and clone philosophy. It makes your salesperson more efficient, reduces fires or miscommunications at delivery, and creates a better experience for your clients. Oh and, when done right, will lead to more revenue for your dealership.

In the SPLASH System, we utilize this concept in many ways during the lead generation phase, the 24/7 selling machine, social proof, sales process, sales tools, video, and on and on and one. One of the things my dealers love is that once it's all created, it can be used for years and years... generating more sales at higher margins because you eliminate many of the little mistakes that can cost a sale, cut into your margins, cause your client to be less than ecstatic, and give you and your sales team more time to do the high-value things that must be done, especially in the busy selling season.

This concept alone when considered throughout your dealership can save you a tremendous amount of time, frustration, and headaches, making your boat business much more fun.

As a matter of fact, when done via the SPLASH System, it's nearly impossible to not sell more boats, make more money, and have more fun.

“Splash” Right In

- A few follow-up phone calls and sporadic emails will not lead to high margin boat sales.
- Even the best salesperson is human; therefore, they are not automated and they're tough to program for consistent and persistent follow up.
- We're all short on time, and it's critical that your system be running perfectly during the typically short window of peak selling.
- Using testimonials from happy customers, when done correctly, can act like additional sales staff that you don't have to train or pay.
- Coupled with a long sales cycle and typically short selling season, few if any buyers purchase a boat every year. Some only buy once in their lifetime.

Chapter Seven:

Too Overwhelming

Hey, listen: I understand it can be very overwhelming.

From boat show season to Memorial Day, you're running at WOT (wide open throttle) just trying to keep up with the beginning of the season. The service department is slammed, your salespeople are delivering boats, and you're ordering boats for the second part of the selling season. (For my Australian and South American dealers, flip to your appropriate months.)

As you get through the Fourth of July and Labor Day, you're contending to run at breakneck speed.

Then as you get past Labor Day into the fall, you're swimming in winterizations and annual services.

And finally as you hit the holidays, you're trying to get a quick breather, so you can gear up and start preparing for next boat show season. Oh yeah, and still trying to sell a few ordered boats and left over models as the new inventory starts rolling in.

It's too overwhelming, and your time, I understand, is very, very limited.

You're wearing 17 different hats, keeping up with accounting, with inventory, with ordering from your manufacturers, keeping your ship store in shape, making sure the service department is running like a well-oiled machine. And not to mention, managing the sales

department and making sure that every boat sale goes as smoothly as possible and every delivery is an excellent one.

When I've been running my boot camps, dealers tell me all the time, *"Hey, listen, we've always wanted to do something like this. We knew we had a weakness, we had an opportunity, we had an area where money was just flowing out of the business, but we just didn't know where to start. We didn't know how to begin, and it was such an overwhelming and daunting task that it just never happened."*

Sound familiar? Sound like your business?

The systems make so much sense. They're no-brainers. However, being too busy during the season and having nobody to guide you through the process, there are very few dealers (outside of the ones I've helped, of course) who have put little, if any thought, into a lead generation system, lead conversion and appointment setting systems, margin-building strategies, and lifetime value-building systems that deliver predictable, repeatable results year after year regardless of the salespeople you have on staff.

Overwhelming Options

You have so many options as well. Technology changes so fast. It could be the latest and greatest social media tool that who knows whether it's even going to work or not!

And how many times have you said, “*We need to redesign our website; I just don’t think its performing as well as it could be.*”

You have the dealer management systems, new CRM systems coming to market continually. Everybody’s touting the latest and greatest app, whiz-bang technology, and silver bullet. But who’s to know which one will actually work?

Then there are the multiple media options from which you can choose for advertising. You’ve got *Dominion/Boat Trader*; you’ve got all the new boat listing sites that are coming out. You’ve got SMS texts, you’ve got mobile websites, responsive websites, you’ve got pay-per-click advertising. Not to mention all the social media options.

You have all of these different media that you can utilize, but who’s to know which one is best and which one’s going to deliver to you the greatest results?

Oh, and by the way, you still have all your local print media, your local boat show events, and all the other local opportunities of people trying to sell you radio, television, print advertising, newspaper advertising, and sponsor any other event that may be even somewhat boating related, including charity events, and oftentimes golf tournaments.

And who knows what really works?

Your marketing and advertising channels and platforms are practically unlimited; however, you truly have to know what works, or you will be simply flushing your hard-earned money away!

You know, without any systems in place to track the results every year, you're starting over asking, "*Where should we spend our money this year?*" with no definite answers.

One dealer I worked with in the upper Midwest was spending 10 percent of sales on marketing, \$80,000 on radio specifically, over six different channels. When I asked him which channel worked the best, his response was, "*I'm not sure.*" When I asked him how productive that 10 percent marketing expenditure was, it was four full percentage points over what his 20 Group leader encouraged him to hit.

He had no idea what was working and what was not. So year after year, he kept plowing \$80,000 into radio spots for a two-salesperson dealership (himself and another salesperson) only to start again the next year to simply wonder, "*Is that money well spent or is that money wasted?*"

As we worked together in the program, I gave him some simple strategies to test, so he could easily determine which advertisements and which media platforms were working and which ones were not. Also,

these strategies could be used to find out that none of them are working and that money should be reallocated to more productive media. Could you imagine, \$80,000 being spent every year and having no idea whether that was a wise investment or not? In my mind, if you have no idea about the effectiveness of your advertising, I'll contend that it is wasted money!

Even if our work together determines that 50 percent of that advertising spend is not productive, our work together will save him \$40,000. Sometimes, it's not selling more boats that makes more money, it's cutting non-productive marketing that goes directly to your bottom line.

I hate to paint a grim picture and maybe you're now very concerned about your own marketing efforts, but things can easily be different, and you can be more assured that you are investing in marketing more wisely than you may be currently doing. But I will have to tell you: It'll take some commitment and definitely some work. With the right guide and the right framework, the foundation can be built in 90 days.

One of my dealers, Dan Allen of Valley Marine who offers Lund, Crestliner, Lowe, Duckworth, Weldcraft and MasterCraft said, *"This is the most complete system I've seen in the industry."* And his father started their dealership over 60 years ago.

That's why my business is booming – so many dealers are in the same boat. They run an amazing dealership but just need somebody to help guide them,

help them avoid the pitfalls and land mines that can occur to develop a true system, a repeatable, replicable system that you can plug virtually anybody into and deliver outstanding results.

The system should also provide the benefit of understanding what money is wisely spent and what money should be reallocated as well as testing other methods of advertising and other methods of creating profitable sales.

Eliminating Bias

Another benefit that my dealers tell me they get from the SPLASH System is that they realized they can completely trust me because I'm not selling them some technology, a marketing platform, or another silver bullet like others.

You'll hear a lot of industry experts touting that you have to do this, you have to do that, and oh, then you come to find out that's the only service they provide.

Isn't that interesting? Who's to know? The radio person says radio's the best way to go.

The television ad sales rep says television's the answer and you must be on TV.

The *Boat Trader* rep is telling you that you have to be on *Boat Trader*; otherwise, you're missing the boat. Everybody else in the industry is on it.

The technology reps are telling you that you have to have a new app. Oh, by the way, they create apps. Of course they are going to suggest that it's the silver bullet and answer to all your problems.

When you only have one thing to sell, you'll work to position it as the best solution... whether or not that's actually true.

One dealer I know dropped \$5,000 on a new app because the app rep was at the dealer meeting saying, *"It's a mobile world and you have to have an app."* They soon discovered that customizations were extra and they only achieved a handful of downloads. Today that app is collecting dust like the old parts in your rigging shop. Imagine, \$5,000 wasted and off to the next sales rep and shiny object.

Or it's a case of you have to have this dealer management system or that CRM system, and that's the only thing they offer. You can't take their advice, because you know it's biased.

But time after time, my dealers tell me, *"I appreciate the fact that you're offering us the framework, the system, the really strategic view, and you're agnostic about which tools are actually used."*

I do make recommendations, but you can use any tool, including the one you already have and that your salespeople already know and use. I've never asked a dealer to change their technology and use something that I sell because it's about the strategy... it's about the

system. It's not about the specific technology that's used to install it.

“Splash” Right In

- I know your schedule, like that of every boat dealer, is crazy and can be almost every month of the year, but I assure you, it's worth some of your time to put your future efforts on autopilot, so you can get off the treadmill of craziness and get better results than you do now.
- Not only are all of the options you have for advertising and marketing overwhelming, it is difficult (and can be expensive!) to determine which ones really work, so you know how to better invest your money.
- Be very careful of those who promote a product as being your solution when that is the only thing they sell.
- The SPLASH System can be used with your current technology – the one you already have install and know.

Chapter Eight:

More than Just Boat Sales: A More Profitable Dealership

The first boat sale is only the first step, and I'm sure you will see how the SPLASH System can help you make more of them... not only *more* of them but more of them at greater margins. Margin is a critical component of the success of your dealership and the ease with which you do business. You could have 1,000 sales and if they barely have a margin, you will be working harder than you need to and not having any fun at all in your business. Low margin sales lead to a lot of stress!

With a systematic, repeatable approach that you can use year after year, regardless of the people involved or how your sales staff may change, you can make more boat sales. Plus a SPLASH dealer also implements simple systems to increase other profit centers as well, whether it be F&I revenue at the start of the sale, additional warranties, service, storage, and the list goes on.

Could you imagine:

- Having a system in place that sold a certain percentage of warranties every single time, every single year?
- Having a system in place to deliver profitable service work to your service

department even in the off-season and especially in the slow times?

- Trying to drive more business to your pro shop, your parts and accessory group, when the service department is slammed and you just can't handle one more winterization or one more annual service in the spring, getting people ready for the boat season?
- Driving people... more people to your fuel, your storage, your restaurant sales?

For any business line that you have, you can design the SPLASH System to not only deliver more boat sales but also deliver more of the perfect people to all of your other revenue streams inside your business, whatever they may be.

And my favorite: you will also drive more repeat and referral business.

A large component of profitability is gaining and expanding the exact client base that you want and one that is the right match for your dealership.

To me, there isn't anything much more fun than delivering a second, third, and fourth boat to the same family, watching the kids grow up, watching their boating lifestyle transform as they get older and get more

involved in boating, and watching it become part of their overall life... seeing them convert friends and family into boaters and sending referral business your way in the process.

It's very satisfying to know in your heart that you've done such an amazing job that they trust you enough to refer a friend, a family member, a co-worker, maybe somebody that they just met out on the water, saying, *"Listen, you absolutely have to go talk to these guys."*

Once that referral walks through your door, you can have a system in place to drive that referral in such a way that they enter your sales system funnel, understand that you are the expert, build the "know, like, and trust" factor, listen to your recommendations, and they continue to want to do business with you. It really is incredible.

And all of that leads to a well-rounded, a more profitable, a more stable, a more predictable boat business for you, for your employees, and likely for your family if you have family involved in the business.

As one of my dealers, Will Massey at Custom Marine who offers Sportsman, Hurricane, Sweetwater, Carolina Skiff, Alumacraft, Skeeter, Pathfinder and Alweld (who has not only been through my boot camp but also brought me on as a sales trainer and consultant to advise his team after the implementation said, *"Working with Matt revolutionized about 70 percent of the way we sell boats... And, I can tell you margins are*

up. Margins are up which makes our business more secure for me and everyone who works here.”

Plus, it's really has a snowball effect year after year because consistent and persistent communication is another highly persuasive tool. With the SPLASH System, you'll be more consistent than you've ever dreamed possible, in a very simple and easy way, even during those busy times in the heart of the selling season because of the built-in automation.

Because you're more persistent and you're more consistent with your message, it continually snowballs because every year you have the SPLASH System implemented and at work in your dealership is another year that you're molding and creating the perfect boat business and the perfect group of clientele, driving in more of the exact clients that you want, attracting more of the exact business that you want, and tweaking and improving it.

Once that snowball effect gets rolling, it will give you a dealership that everybody else in your manufacturer network, in your Twenty Group, will envy... especially your competition!

“Splash” Right In

- You goal cannot simply be more sales. For any business to succeed, the sales must be profitable.
- When you have a system in place that is replicable and automated, you will gain

the consistency you need regardless of the people involved or how your sales staff may change.

- Once implemented, you can use the SPLASH System to increase revenue from your other profit centers as well.
- A large component of profitability is gaining and expanding the exact client base that you want and that is the right match for your dealership.
- The SPLASH System creates a snowball effect that continually improves your business.

Chapter Nine:

Your SPLASH Dealership

Up to this point, you may be thinking that this is all too good to be true. An automated system that enables you to stop worrying about the follow-up procedures of your salespeople and leads falling through the cracks? Easily getting more referral and repeat business of *exactly* the clientele with whom you want to work – the buyers who make the business fun? A way to track the effectiveness of your marketing efforts to make them completely worth your investment and time? Generating not only more sales but more sales with higher margins?

**“Matt’s \$50,000
in Additional Profits
GUARANTEE”**

I’m so convinced that my **“SPLASH”** System™ will work amazingly well and help you sell more boats. I’m making the biggest, boldest guarantee in the industry! Any qualified dealer who completes our proprietary 5-week training program and implements the strategies taught, if they do not add an additional \$50K in gross profits over the next 12 months, I will refund 100% of their program fee.

**MATT’S \$50,000
IN
ADDITIONAL PROFITS
GUARANTEE**

As I mentioned earlier, I am fully aware of things that “*seem to good to be true*” just like you are. That’s

why I mentioned my unheard of \$50,000 guarantee way back in Chapter 2. You don't have to look back. Here it is again:

Yeah, \$50,000 of profit, can you imagine?

Matt's \$50,000 in Additional Profit Guarantee:

I'm so convinced that my SPLASH System™ will work amazingly well and help you sell more boats, I'm making the biggest, boldest guarantee in the industry! Any qualified dealer who completes our proprietary 5-week training program and implements the strategies taught, if they do not add an additional \$50K in gross profits over the next 12 months, I will refund 100% of their program fee.

I'll tell you more about the calculation that supports that shortly.

You may wonder, "*Matt, how on earth can you do this? How can you have a 100 percent guarantee that you'll generate those types of results?*"

Well, it's really quite simple.

I've been doing this long enough, and it all started back when I was that "no-boat-selling son of a gun." I've tweaked it over time. I've improved it, and I've developed such a strong system that I know if I find a dealer who I'm willing to accept into the program, I'll put my money on the line to guarantee the results... because, really, that's the way it should be. You should be so confident in your system, in whatever your product

or service is, that you're willing to guarantee it in some way or fashion that alleviates the risk for your customer and puts it all squarely on your shoulders. That's just good business.

So, let's look how your business would look after you go through the SPLASH System.

But first, let me ask you a question.

Do you really want a SPLASH dealership? You first have to decide that the current business climate is not for you. You have to decide that the changes in technology that have added challenges to the way sales are handled and the reduction in your margin as a result are not for you. You have to decide that you want to run a business that is fun and highly profitable again.

Adding Up the Numbers

To help you decide if a SPLASH dealership is for you, let's see what kind of impact it could have on your business.

Let's take a look at a dealer who sells, let's say, 50 boats a year. Here's how they could get an additional \$50,000 per year, not revenue mind you, but actual gross profit, and it's really quite simple.

If you sell 50 boats and you could increase those boats by just \$500 in price, that's \$25,000 that virtually goes straight to the bottom line because you've already paid the rigging fee, delivery, etc., so you are just adding in an extra \$25,000. And adding that \$500 only requires a few simple tweaks.

Once you have that additional margin in the bank, all you need to add is an additional five sales with a \$5,000 gross margin on each. Very likely, your average boat sale is \$25,000, and with the SPLASH System, you can likely hit a 20 percent margin (or better), so it only takes an additional five sales to add that additional \$25,000 of gross margin bringing you to exactly what I'm guaranteeing.

Plus at this point, I have not even mentioned adding additional products and services, whether it's increasing usage of your service department, increasing your F&I revenue, or increasing revenue from any other profit center you operate.

Imagine selling an extended warranty to a mere 20 percent of those buyers at a \$1,000 mark up a piece? That's another \$10,000 virtually all to your bottom line. Service, parts and accessories, pro shop... whatever other services you may offer all start contributing, and that's on top of the \$50,000 that is relatively easy to achieve.

Now, let me ask you something else: What would you do with an additional \$50,000? How would that change your dealership?

Could you invest in additional staff, so you could actually take some time off? Imagine that. In the heart of the season, having the confidence to take a few additional days off knowing that you have a system in place and that you have the additional capacity to ensure that your dealership runs like a well-oiled machine.

Don't you deserve a few days off other than the ones you may take off when activity is slow?

You can invest in your dealership or in equipment, whether it's expanding the dealership to achieve additional growth or upgrading some of your equipment. Buying that new truck, the new forklift for the marina, the new tools and technology that you need in your service department, upgrading the signage and displays – all of that is going to add to that snowball effect I talked about earlier.

Send the kids to college. A lot of times, the family-owned dealerships that I work with have kids who are about ready to finish up high school and go on to college or are already in college. Having that additional \$50,000 sure would make tuition payments easier.

What would you do with an extra \$50,000... per year?

Invest in a rainy day fund? Tuck that money away and invest it for your retirement or for a rainy day as the industry goes through its cycles when sales are down and activity is slow?

There's no guarantee that an economic decline like '08 won't hit us again. You can't control the economy, but you will still have the system in place to deliver a predictable result which gives you a lot of confidence.

And it's not just an additional \$50,000 this year... this is a system that will generate results for years to

come. So, how long do you plan to stay in business? 10 years, 20 years or longer?

Well, over the next 20 years, assuming no additional improvements (which most SPLASH dealers continue working with me in some manor to improve their results). But let's just say 20 more years. That comes to \$1,000,000 in additional gross margin to your boat business.

That's money that could easily and really should be yours that you're missing every single day you don't have this type of system installed in your dealership.

Investment vs. Expense

So, what would you do with an additional \$50,000 or more in your boat business?

I suspect your mind could be racing to answer that based on the few examples I've suggested; however, in order to generate that guaranteed gross profit by becoming a SPLASH dealership, it will take some changes.

Are you willing to make some changes?

Are you willing to invest in the future for your family, for yourself, for your staff? And listen, when I say "invest," I truly use that word on purpose. Because investing in your business is exactly what you should be doing.

Expenses? Expenses are no good. Of course, there are certain ones that you have to have, but when I look at *investing* in your business, it's all about making a return... not simply paying expenses.

It's like you when you ACV a trade. When you ACV a trade, you ACV at a level from which you can get a certain level of return on the investment made in the trade.

Whatever it is for your guiding principle, whether it's to have an 18 percent margin, a 20 percent margin, or a 25 percent margin that ACV allows you, it's an investment in your business. Those are exactly the types of decisions that I'll ask you to make as you're developing your SPLASH System.

There's a big difference between an expense and an investment. An expense is the cost of doing business. An investment provides a return. The SPLASH System is an investment!

That's another reason I've added the guarantee to the system: I really want you to understand that I'm not asking you to spend money. I'm asking you to invest in yourself and in your dealership's future.

Implementation Time

Now, I know you are probably thinking, "*Hey, Matt, that sounds great. You've got other dealers who are successful. You clearly know what you're talking about, this being your second book or I've heard you speak.*"

But at the same time, you may wonder, “*Will I actually have time to implement this?*”

One of the benefits of the SPLASH System is that it is a framework I’ve installed at dozens of dealerships in various ways throughout the last several years. It started as a simple salesperson. I started the basis of the SPLASH System years ago. It wasn’t called that at the time. I was still learning the industry and creating my own SPLASH System that was predictable and replicable for me – that “no-boat-selling son of a gun.”

So with that experience over the years, all of the templates, all of the hard work, all of the strategies are done. Eighty percent of the work is already done for you. There’s only the 20 percent of customizing it for you, for your dealership, your clientele, and your boat business to ensure that you get the ultimate results.

And with that framework, it really makes implementing it much faster. As a matter of fact, most dealers are able to complete the implementation in a 90-day period while they continue to run their dealerships, sometimes implementing while running their dealerships in the heart of the selling season.

Taking a Foundational Approach

“Hey, Matt, this sounds like another silver bullet. This sounds like another one of those whiz-bang technologies that I see at MDCE or hear talked about that you have to be involved in. And then two years later, they’re out of business, and you never see or hear from them again.”

Well, I certainly can understand that sort of push back. I've been the unfortunate victim of silver bullets along those lines myself, but here's what I can tell you: I've been doing this for many years, and you've heard many of the stories of dealers that I've already worked with and who are using the system successfully and boosting their own bottom lines.

That's exactly the reason I've created the guarantee... so you really are taking no risk. As long as you're accepted into the program and you're willing to put in the work, I'm willing to take 100 percent of the risk.

However, this is not a silver bullet. This is not something that you invest in, and then you sit back in the lazy boy, have a beer, and watch the cash just roll in. (But that would be fantastic wouldn't it?!?) You and I are going to do a lot of work together. To me, it's some of the most fun work that you'll do in your boat business because as you're doing it, you'll realize that the work you're doing today will still be in place five years from now, will still be delivering amazing results to you, your staff, and your dealership for five, 10, even 20 years down the line.

Because it's a framework. It's a foundational system that you'll be implementing, and the maintenance and the improvement of the system are easy over time as the technology changes, as the boating industry changes, as your consumers change.

That foundational system is in place just like the foundation of your dealership. It's the same as any sort of building foundation. Laying the foundation is the part that takes some of the most manual labor and the largest investment. But once that foundation is in place, guess what? You know your building is strong and secure... it will last for decades. It's the same with the SPLASH System.

No matter what you're building – a house or a better system with which to run your dealership, you need a solid foundation.

Getting Your Sales Team on Board

One of your big concerns: *"My sales team won't implement this."*

If that's your next reaction, let's have a frank talk here. Your sales team is not the owner of the dealership. Maybe they're family (or like family), but they are not the owner of the dealership.

If you are committed to building a better dealership, to building a better life for yourself and your family, and your staff, I challenge you to challenge your sales staff. Challenge your staff to improve and to be dedicated to doing it a better way... because there is a better way! Push back from staff is another reason why

we'll have a conversation before you join this or any of my other programs. I want to ensure that you and your dealership are positioned to get maximum results and to guarantee, yes, guarantee that I can deliver the results that I promise.

If you determine that your sales staff is unwilling to change, well, you really have a couple of choices:

- One: Maybe it's time to look for additional... or different sales staff.
- Two: Maybe it's time for you to ask them, no, demand of them to step up to grow the boat business.
- Three: Maybe you're completely satisfied with everything that's going on in your boat business and the SPLASH System simply isn't a good fit.

However, I really find it hard to believe that you've read this far into the book and are completely satisfied with the current state of your business or are still unwilling to take on the challenge head first to make the changes needed to sell more boats, make more money, and have more fun.

If you're still reading at this stage of the book, I really have the sense – deep in my gut – that you feel your boat dealership is destined for greater things. Not that it's struggling by any means, but that you and your boat dealership are truly destined for greater things.

Been There, Done That

You've tried things like this before, and they just flat out didn't work.

Maybe you got an idea from a book you read and tried to implement it at your dealership.

Maybe there was a seminar that you attended or training that you went to, and you had some amazing ideas as a result, and six months later, there was no sign of them left in your dealership. Now it's back to the "same old, same old."

You know you've tried systems like this before, and they just didn't work.

Well, I'm here to tell you that this system is different.

I wonder if anything else that you tried had a guarantee even remotely close to the one I'm offering... to the one I'm so ultimately confident in that I'm able to offer 100 percent money-back guarantee to those dealers I feel the system is suited for but who fail to generate the results.

As for the things you may have tried in the past, did you have the support you needed to implement it? Oftentimes, I found just reading a book and getting an idea doesn't give you the accountability that you need to ensure that everything is implemented, that you stay on track, and that your staff stays on track.

If you've failed in the past, I'm betting that one of the primary reasons was either a lack of support or a lack of accountability. You need both.

One of my most favorite things to do with my dealers is to work with them after the first 90 days and then years after they've completed implementing their system in their dealerships.

Whether it be on-site training or whether it be the ongoing coaching program I offer, I find that accountability and staying immersed in the culture of the SPLASH System, having that little extra support, that little extra accountability, may be the kick in the butt that you need to keep you on track.

Maybe SPLASH dealers increase their success with just the reminder that as you get busy running your boat dealership (whether it be managing inventory, balancing the books, managing your staff, dealing with your customers who always have something that requires attention from you), there's support and accountability to keep you going.

Of course there are customers who always want to talk to you and nobody else, or the long-time client who wants to come in and talk boats and then takes up 45 minutes of your time with the story of his latest adventure.

When these things happen, sometimes it can take that little extra focus and a reminder of how important it is to implement and to maintain the focus on those key things that really do matter and that will make a huge difference in your business.

That's one of the things my dealers tell me has helped them keep the SPLASH System going for the long haul – the reminders and accountability to stay on track and stay focused on the critical elements.

One of my favorite parts of working with dealers who decide the SPLASH System is for them is to maintain the relationship, not just for the initial 90 days of the implementation but for the long haul and year after year talking and working with my dealers, coaching them and holding them accountable, and seeing the growth and improvement of their dealerships and their teams.

Too Much Work

“Hey, Matt, this sounds like way too much work. There's no way I can get all this work done.”

If that's your thinking, let me tell you: this implementation is a 90-day process during which you'll stay on target. Plus, I'm going to be there with you the whole time to ensure that you're hitting milestones, that you're staying focused, and that you're getting things done.

Yes, it may require you to work an extra hour or two, to come in an extra hour earlier, stay an extra hour later to get it done. It may require you to shut the door and perhaps delegate some of the tasks to other people in

your dealership, so you can focus on this. It may require you to turn off your email, turn off your telephone, and sit down and really buckle down and get to work.

Consider this situation: One of my dealers started the SPLASH System the week after their boat show hit in Texas. And it was amazing to see the results that Lakeshore Sports generated.

Within the first three weeks, they had their first delivery – not a deposit, not an ordered boat – but their first actual delivery from the system they were still in the midst of implementing. The results were that fast.

I'll share that Melanie at Lakeshore Sports who offers Cobalt, Premier, and Evinrude was a doer. Melanie did not mess around. She got right to work. She did not make excuses. She did not find reasons why the system couldn't work for her. She did not let her staff opt out of doing things. She held them accountable. She got the system implemented. She got to work right away, and she committed to following the system, and she got those results.

Your results absolutely will vary. I'm not guaranteeing that you'll have a boat sale within the first three weeks of the program, but I am guaranteeing the \$50,000 result within the 12 months.

That's another reason why I have an interview process before you're allowed to join the SPLASH System, because, hey, I'm putting my money on the line.

I want to ensure that you're committed. I want to ensure that you're dedicated to doing the work, to getting

the results and that, frankly, I'm not wasting my time with somebody who isn't more committed to their boat business than I am.

The accountability is going to be there. The framework is going to be there. The predictability of your business, if you do the work, will be there. I love to see the results, but you do have to be a doer. You do have to be committed, and you do have to carve out some time to get things implemented.

That may mean joining the system in one of my fall and winter sessions (if they are not sold out). But you have to make the commitment to get the work done, and you have to commit to me before joining the system that you will do exactly what's needed.

What's Next?

So, what's next for you and your dealership?

Are you willing to make the commitment?

Are you dedicated to your boat business, to yourself, to your family, to your employees to do the work, to make the investment, to gain that predictability and stability...year after year after year that your competition doesn't have?

Are you committed to start building your snowball, small at first, but continuing to build that snowball until it's a giant, massive, unstoppable force?

So, if you're interested in taking the next steps to learn if or how I can help you, there are a couple of things that you can do.

My fall and winter programs are the busiest and fill up the fastest, but I do have programs starting throughout the year.

You can attend a webinar to learn more about how you can get started.

You can take advantage of a one-on-one strategy session during which we'll discuss your dealership. We talk about if or how this program could help you. We talk about all of the ways in your business that you feel there are opportunities and I'll share some opportunities that I see that you've possibly missed because you're too close to it.

You've been involved in your business for too long so a new perspective can be very helpful, and there may be some very low hanging fruit that we can take advantage of right away with the system and then install the full system over that initial 90-day period.

You can attend a live event from time to time. I host live events in the Charlotte area where I live and throughout the country. Those are very limited, and you should be on my email list, my Boat Dealer Profit blog, or my Boat Dealer Profit TV to learn more about when those are happening. (See the Resource section for all the details.)

You can decide immediately, *"Hey, you know what? I need to participate in a program and get started."*

If that's the case, let's talk on the phone and make sure the SPLASH System is right for you... make sure

that I can guarantee the results, and let's get you moving, or you can choose to do it on your own.

I've been writing for the boating industry for a long time. You may have seen me speak. I'm always doing webinars, videos, and blogs, and sharing information. If you feel that you don't need the accountability, I invite you to do it on your own. But if you find that you get stuck, if you find that you fall off, and you're not staying dedicated, you may need that personal attention that I can offer. If that's the case, set up a one-on-one strategy session, and I would love to talk about how we can improve your boat business and add at least \$50,000 of gross margin to your dealership.

So there you have it in about 100 quick pages. I've enjoyed our time together; however, now it's time for you to decide that you want to sell more boats, be more profitable, and have more fun in your business. If that's the vision you have for your dealership, yourself, your family, and your staff, and if you're committed to focusing on the SPLASH System implementation and building the foundation you need to carry a successful dealership well into the future, it's time for you to take the next step. Whether it's "splashing right in" to discuss implementing the system or learning more at a webinar or live event, the ball is in your court. I hope you decide to join the successful team of dealers that I've created!

“Splash” Right In

- My ability to make the guarantee that I do is based on clear-cut math.
- I’ve helped other dealers implement the SPLASH System and generate the numbers and profitability that I’ve described.
- There are expenses that are part of every business in every industry. The system is an investment, not an expense, and there’s a very big difference.
- Yes, there will need to be time and effort spent up front during implementation; however, you are building a foundation that will serve you well in the years to come.
- Yes, you may have to challenge your sales staff to get on board, but that is the only way you will be able to create the dealership that you truly want – one that’s profitable and fun again.
- If you’ve tried something you think is similar in the past and failed, I’m nearly certain it was because of a lack of support and, more importantly, a lack of accountability.
- Will it take some work? Absolutely. But can you point to anything worthwhile that

you've ever achieved without putting in some effort? I doubt it.

- Now it's time for you to “splash in” and take the next step that will put you on the path to a better and more profitable business!

About the Author

Matt Sellhorst started in the boat business in August 2009. He went from a “no-boat-selling son of a gun,” which his manager called him the first year, to a top producer in a very short period of time.

He did this *not* by being a natural born salesperson but by creating systems – systems he’s sharing with dealers around the world – and he’s now committed to helping dealers sell more boats, make more money, and have more fun.

More importantly, Matt is the father of two amazing girls, Avery and Emery, and husband to his wife, Sarah, who he’s been with since 2007.

Some of Matt’s favorite boating spots are his family’s lake place at the Lake of the Ozarks in Missouri, where they’ve been boating since 1979. With their tri-toon and a 32-foot bowrider, he enjoys various types of boating in the area as well as boating in the Carolinas and anywhere else he can find water to explore.

Matt is committed to helping you sell more boats, make more money, and have more fun by building a SPLASH boat dealership and implementing the SPLASH System. Through his various methods, he’s helped countless dealers around the world and cannot wait to help you.

Some of his favorite things to do outside of work are coaching his daughters’ teams, watching their dance recitals, and being surrounded by more pink than he could’ve ever imagined.

Matt's boating lifestyle is one that started at the age of five when his family bought their first boat, a 16-foot Larson tri-hull with an '85 Mercury outboard. It sat on a single-axle Dilly trailer, and from that point forward, Matt and his family were boaters and have been ever since. It's likely in his blood... like it is for many of the clients he's worked with as a top-producing boat salesperson and now working with dealers, brokers, and manufacturers around the globe to sell more boats, make more money and have more fun!

About the Boat Dealer Profits

Matt Sellhorst launched Boat Dealer Profits when he realized that the systems and tools he had developed to go from a “no-boat-selling son of a gun” to a top producer could be replicated in other dealerships around the country.

As he acquired his first couple of clients, the system evolved and improved and was tweaked until the SPLASH System was born. The SPLASH System, designed to help you sell more boats, make more money, and have more fun, has been incredibly popular and oftentimes selling out his sessions.

In addition to the SPLASH System, Boat Dealer Profits offers coaching and consulting to dealers, brokers, and manufacturers for a more one-on-one relationship.

For those who have been through the SPLASH System, Matt additionally offers on-site sales training, coaching, and consulting with those specific dealers who have completed the SPLASH System.

He’s also available for dealer meeting keynotes and boot camps for those manufacturers that really want to support their dealer network and ensure that each dealer, or at least the committed ones, have a system in place to sell more boats, make more money, and have more fun.

Matt is also available for other industry talks, having spoken at MDCE, Marine Retail University, and Sale America Conference in Rhode Island. On a limited basis, he is available to speak at other conferences around the world.

Boat Dealer Profits offers a unique SPLASH dealer coaching community program. This is continual coaching

that's offered to those who have been through the SPLASH System for dealerships to ensure that they stay committed, stay focused, and stay up to date on the newest innovations of technology and newest innovations of methods. It is also an environment in which like-minded and non-competitive dealers can share success stories, ideas, and best practices in a "Mastermind"-type environment. And as the SPLASH System continues to improve and evolve, as the technology and the world around it evolves, this community allows those dealers to maintain and grow their snowballs even faster, continually gaining momentum.

And soon, Boat Dealer Profits will be releasing done-for-you programs, done-for-you monthly newsletters, done-for-you social media management, done-for-you digital advertising, done-for-you expert positioning material and collaterals, point of sale material as well as other offerings that dealers determine are helpful and continually ask for all following the SPLASH Principles and framework.

Is the SPLASH System for You?

Before you go, if you are still not convinced that the SPLASH System could benefit you and your dealership, let's consider your current situation.

Complete the **SPLASH System Profit Booster Scorecard** below to see how you rate in the key profit-producing areas. Or complete it online to receive your customized analysis and recommendations via email.

On the next page, enter your score from the corresponding questions that follow. Rate your dealership from 1-9 based on how your dealership is currently performing in that profit-producing area. First select the statement that best fits your dealership reality. Then choose a corresponding number based on precisely how true that statement is for your dealership.

SPLASH System Profit Booster Scorecard	
Generating High-Value Leads	
Educate and Position Leads	
Create Quality Opportunities for Your Sales Team	
Sales Team Negotiations/Handling Price	
Deliver an Exceptional Experience	
Maximizing Lifetime Value	
Optimizing Referrals	
Selling More Boats, Make More Money & Have More Fun	
YOUR SCORE:	

Generating High-Value Leads

(Select 1-9 based on what fits your dealership reality best)

We have no predictable way to generate quality new leads outside of those who take it upon themselves to walk into our dealership, boat shows, and online listings.	1
	2
	3
We focus our budget solely on brand building which generates a good flow of quality leads, but we never know which methods are working and which are not.	4
	5
	6
We are always able to generate a predictable flow of quality leads throughout the season, driven from a variety of lead sources both online and offline, including repeat and referral business at a known cost per sale.	7
	8
	9
YOUR SCORE:	

Educate and Position Leads

(Select 1-9 based on what fits your dealership reality best)

We rely on manual effort from our sales team to convert a lead to a sale with no regular or systematic communication strategy and no tools to move the sales process forward (down the Educational Spectrum), so many leads fall through the cracks if they are not ready to buy now.	1
	2
	3
We rely mainly on our sales team's effort to convert leads to appointments to sales and do a monthly communication piece and provide some tools to help build value to take some focus off price allowing us to hold better margins.	4
	5
	6
During our follow-up process and sales presentation, we utilize systems and tools specifically designed to prove tremendous value and differentiate our dealership and products from the competition, so our prospect is certain that buying from us is the absolute right choice leading to better positioned prospects when it's time to handle the final sales price.	7
	8
	9
YOUR SCORE:	

Create Quality Opportunities for Your Sales Team

(Select 1-9 based on what fits your dealership reality best)

We typically wait for the prospect to take the initiative to come into the dealership when they are ready to make a buying decision.	1
	2
	3
Our sales team consistently “checks in” with prospects to see if they are ready to buy and typically have a date and time appointment with prospects to make the sale.	4
	5
	6
Once we generate a lead, we systematically follow up, developing a relationship, building value in our products, service and expertise moving the prospect down the Educational Spectrum of a Boat Buyer, giving us the best possible chance of selling a boat without discounting from our target price.	7
	8
	9
YOUR SCORE:	

Sales Team Negotiations/Handling Price

(Select 1-9 based on what fits your dealership reality best)

Our sales team thinks all of their prospects are price buyers and the main (if not only) tool in their sales toolbox is to discount price, so they don't lose the sale.	1
	2
	3
Our sales team is able to present price in a proper manner, have reasonable negotiations skills, and are able to keep discounting to a minimum on especially on current inventory.	4
	5
	6
Each sales person consistently builds value in the sales process, including having a proven price presentation strategy and a price negotiation strategy to allow them to hold margin on current inventory and move aged inventory at acceptable margins.	7
	8
	9
YOUR SCORE:	

Deliver an Exceptional Experience <i>(Select 1-9 based on what fits your dealership reality best)</i>	
Your delivery process is sporadic and many clients have a poor experience, so you dread hearing from past clients because it is usually a customer service issue. You believe service is unimportant and too big an expense for your dealership to focus on it at all.	1
	2
	3
You deliver adequate service, about the same as most your competition and that is good enough for you and your dealership.	4
	5
	6
You, your sales staff, and entire dealership provide a research, evaluation, buying, and ownership experience that are superior to your competition and are always looking for ways to deliver a better experience to your clients in a profitable manner.	7
	8
	9
YOUR SCORE:	

Maximize Lifetime Value

(Select 1-9 based on what fits your dealership reality best)

Once the sale is made, you and your team are on to the next prospect and seldom proactively offer any additional products or services (including asking for testimonials)	1
	2
	3
After delivery, you may check in with your clients from time to time with email blasts about your service department or make a phone call, but there is no consistent system in place to promote and ask your clients to utilize all the additional services you offer.	4
	5
	6
You have a communication strategy in place to optimize additional revenue streams and usage of additional profit centers like: F&I, extended warranty, service, parts & accessories, pro shop, ship store, storage and others.	7
	8
	9
YOUR SCORE:	

Optimize Referrals

(Select 1-9 based on what fits your dealership reality best)

You seldom get referrals, and when you do, it's a happy accident.	1
	2
	3
You stay in touch with your past clients and sometimes ask for referrals, but you don't track the results.	4
	5
	6
You proactively implement proven strategies each month to create quality referrals like clockwork.	7
	8
	9
YOUR SCORE:	

Sell More Boats, Make More Money & Have More Fun

(Select 1-9 based on what fits your dealership reality best)

You always struggle to sell your inventory; consistently have an issue with aged product losing its value. Your margins are thin, making it hard to enjoy your boat business... but you know it could be better.	1
	2
	3
You are able to turn your inventory at a reasonable rate, are able to sell at decent margins, and most of the time, you do not hate your business... but know there is enormous opportunity in your market that you just haven't tapped into yet.	4
	5
	6
You are consistently the market share leader in your categories and are able to consistently hold high margins based on your budget or goals, have excellent turns, love your business and don't see any way to add additional profits.	7
	8
	9
YOUR SCORE:	

Resources:

If you've enjoyed *Boat Dealer Profits, How the SPLASH System Can Help You Sell More Boats, Make More Money and Have More Fun* and would like to learn more about Matt and the Boat Dealer Profit systems available, continue the conversation at:

- The **Boat Dealer Profits Blog** packed full of tips, tricks, tactics and insights for your boat business that you can find at www.BoatDealerProfits.com.
- Matt's weekly television show, “**Boat Dealer Profits TV**” that you can view the weekly episodes at www.BoatDealerProfits.com/TV.
- The **Boat Dealer Profits podcast**: You can find this on iTunes, on Stitcher, or you can link to it at www.BoatDealerProfits.com/Podcast. Or, just look for the “Podcast” button on the home page.
- And finally, the **Boat Dealer Profits e-zine**: This is an email newsletter in which you can discover tips, tricks, and tactics on a consistent basis from Matt and his Boat Dealer Profits team. You can sign up for it at www.BoatDealerProfits.com. Plus you will discover other free reports, additional information, as well as his most recent webinars, trainings, and programs.

5 Easy Ways to Get Started with The SPLASH System

Whenever you're ready, here are **five simple** ways to get started selling more boats, making more money and having more fun with the SPLASH System:

1. **Reserve your spot** to join an upcoming SPLASH System Program. Due to the one-on-one coaching aspect, space is limited in each session. Visit www.BoatDealerProfits.com/Apply to see upcoming availability.

2. Discover opportunities to boost your sales and profit in your boat business with the **"Boat Dealer Profit's Booster Scorecard."** Visit www.BoatDealerProfits.com/Scorecard

3. **Apply to join Matt for a 3-day, one-on-one SPLASH System Boot Camp** to transform your dealership into a more profitable and predictable SPLASH Dealership! This is a high-level commitment and only for select dealers who are looking for an even more personalized and one-on-one implementation of the SPLASH System. This 3 day boot camp is only for serious dealers willing to make a significant investment. To apply, visit www.BoatDealerProfits.com/BootCampApply

4. Claim your seat for an upcoming webinar: **"How to Sell More Boats, Make More Money & Have More Fun with the SPLASH System"** or other webinars as released throughout the year at www.BoatDealerProfits.com/Webinars

5. Take advantage of a complimentary **One Hour One-on-One Strategy Session** with the Author and Creator of the SPLASH System™ Matt Sellhorst to mastermind about any sales and marketing problem you have in your boat business.
www.boatdealerprofits.com/one-on-one-strategy-session

How Can You Get a SPLASH System™ in your boat dealership without having to create it yourself?

It's simple, email Sarah@BoatDealerProfits.com to discover how Boat Dealer Profits can help you install a **Done-For-You SPLASH System** in your boat dealership to save you time each day, each month and each year and finally turning your marketing expense into a marketing investment!

Or call Sarah, (803) 526-7400 x700