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# SHOOTING INDUSTRY<sup>®</sup>

THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955

\$5 | AUGUST 2025

## IN WITH THE **NEW!**

*What Hunters Want*

## MUZZLELOADING

### *Market Rundown*

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## What We're All Fighting Against

**T**his blew my mind after reading Michelle Scheuermann's *Best Practices* column this month: We're all competing for the same thing — our customers' attention. The problem? Scheuermann explains, "This is your customer today: Someone who is unable to focus, exhausted from too many digital distractions and, likely, still multitasking."

Yes, we compete with businesses in our industry to "close the sale" with the customer. But, in a broader sense, we're competing with fishing, sports, video games, camping, endless scrolling on TikTok and so much more. This is why we need to evaluate ways we connect with customers and be *memorable* for the right reasons.

"A Scarce Commodity: The Attention Economy" (p. 24) is well worth your time this month.

### RANGE PROFITS

August is NSSF's National Shooting Sports Month, and it's not too late to get your store or range involved. In "Profits At The Range," Tim Barker interviews a panel of range operators who understand the nuances of capturing their customers' attention.

Ultimate Defense's Paul Bastean shares how his team uses social media to connect with customers and — to reiterate the point above — stand out enough to rise above the noise.

"We're happy to be able to put our training and other stuff out there, because people really are not going to Facebook to buy," he said. "It's about getting people in here for training, keeping them up on current events and putting some stupid stuff out there that makes them bookmark it for the future."

See p. 34 for more.

### MUZZLELOADING: HEATING UP?

"The sport of muzzleloading is being reborn," notes Gregg Ritz, owner of T/C Arms, in "The Muzzleloading Market Rundown" by Cassie Gasaway.



AUGUST 2025

Looking at the muzzleloading market, it's clear to see why. Today's models have advanced features enabling them to be easier used and cleaned, which is generating consumer interest and elevating sales across the U.S.

More analysis (and sales tips) can be found on p. 38.

### NEXT MONTH: SUPPRESSORS, USED GUNS & MORE

Coming up in the September issue, suppressors will once again take center stage. This market is firmly in the "hot" category, and Bryan Hendricks examines why "silence is golden" when it comes to selling suppressors.

And, it's not just one type of customer buying them today.

"It used to be only the tactical guys who were into machine guns that wanted suppressors," said Kristopher DiMauro, co-owner of Guerrilla Armament in Jacksonville, N.C. "It's everybody now. Yesterday, I sold a .22-caliber suppressor to a 48-year-old woman. I sold a SureFire RC2 to a Marine who turned 21 and wants to finish a clone build of a MK18 general issue rifle."

Other highlights of next month's issue include DIY sales, the used gun market, knives for carry and the hunt, revolver trends and more. **SI**

Thank you for reading this issue! Have a comment or suggestion on anything you see (or wish to see) in *Shooting Industry*? Let me know anytime.  
— Jade Moldae, SI Editor  
editor@shootingindustry.com

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## 7 MORE MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT FEMALE SHOOTERS

**Editor's Note:** Here at *Shooting Industry*, we're proud of our content's "staying power" — which is why we've revisited some classic stories to commemorate 70 years of serving the industry throughout this year. And, just because a story was published several years ago, it doesn't mean it's less valuable here in 2025.

We recently received the following note from competitive shooter Jessica Singer-Yahm, who came across Ashley McGee's *Arms & The Woman* column ("7 Common Misconceptions About Female Shooters") from the May 2022 issue. Here, Jessica elaborates on a further seven misconceptions she's observed in her sport-shooting experience.

Dear Editor,

As an American female shooter actively participating in IDPA and currently training in Switzerland, I read the article "7 Common Misconceptions About Female Shooters" with great interest. I also plan to start teaching all-female pistol courses, and I'd like to contribute a few more misconceptions based on my experience in sport shooting so far.

### 1. Women lack the speed and control needed for dynamic shooting.

This misconception couldn't be further from the truth. For example, I routinely perform faster and cleaner magazine changes than many of the male shooters I train with. Mastering control and speed comes down to dedication, refining fundamentals and a willingness to push oneself — not gender.

In fact, I know women who are safety officers and classified Sharp Shooters in IDPA who consistently demonstrate composure, focus and skill under pressure. As the article notes, women tend to be more coachable — a strength that pays dividends.

### 2. Women can't maintain or understand their firearms.

This stereotype still lingers in many circles. I've lost count of how many times I've been "mansplained" basic firearm maintenance, from oiling to disassembly — often by people who never asked if I needed help. In contrast, male shooters are typically only offered help if they request it. When men assume I can't field-strip my pistol or troubleshoot minor issues, I let my actions speak for themselves. Women are often perceived as less mechanically inclined, but this

Too often, women in shooting sports are viewed as exceptions or treated like they're out of place. In reality, we're showing up, putting in the work and earning our place on the line — just like anyone else.

has no basis in reality. Many of us are meticulous, knowledgeable and fully capable of maintaining our equipment to high standards.

### 3. Women are only into shooting because of their boyfriend/husband.

This stereotype undermines the independence and genuine interest many women have in shooting sports. Plenty of us discover firearms through personal interest, professional development or self-defense goals. Assuming we're just "tagging along" is dismissive and outdated. I'm the one who dragged my husband to shoot, he comes along for the ride — not the other way around.

### 4. Women are too emotional or nervous to handle pressure in competition.

In reality, emotional regulation is a strength for many women in high-pressure scenarios. Competitive shooting demands calm under pressure — many female shooters excel at this through discipline and mental resilience.

### 5. Women aren't physically strong enough to shoot well.

Shooting is about technique, not brute strength. With proper fundamentals, grip mechanics and training, women can shoot just as

HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?

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fast and accurately — if not more consistently — than men. Smaller stature, like my own, can even be an advantage in certain competitive divisions such as faster transitions, etc.

#### **6. Women don't belong on the range or in leadership roles.**

Some ranges or clubs still have a boys' club vibe, but this is changing. I am the second woman to join my dynamic shooting club, and one of the SOs is a woman. Women are not only participating but leading — as range officers, instructors and champions. Representation matters, and seeing women lead helps shift the culture for good. Based on personal experience, women make shooting more fun!

#### **7. Female shooters are rare.**

**We're not rare — we're rising.**

Women are the fastest-growing demographic in firearms ownership and training, especially in defensive shooting and competitive sports. The narrative just hasn't caught up to the numbers.

#### **ABOUT JOY OF THE SPORT**

My goal in Switzerland is to encourage more women to join competitive shooting, take up more space and just enjoy the sport. Hopefully it will help change the perception that regardless of gender, it is about the joy of the sport.

Too often, women in shooting sports are viewed as exceptions or treated like they're out of place. In reality, we are showing up, putting in the work and earning our place on the line — just like anyone else.

Thank you for helping shine a light on these misconceptions. I hope my input can continue that important conversation.

— **Jessica Singer-Yahm, Competitive Shooter**  
Switzerland

Thank you, Jessica, for sharing your experiences with us. Keep up the good work furthering our sport across the world! (For those interested, Ashley's original article can be found here: [shootingindustry.com/discover/7-common-misconceptions-about-female-shooters](https://shootingindustry.com/discover/7-common-misconceptions-about-female-shooters).) **SI**

— **Jade Moldae, SI Editor**

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## RUGER ACQUIRES ANDERSON MANUFACTURING: EVALUATING THE IMPACT

By Jade Moldae

In Ruger's most recent quarterly earnings report, April 30, 2025, Ruger President and CEO Todd Seyfert made a notable statement to challenge the up-and-down nature so often displayed in our industry: "Although the firearms industry may be cyclical, Ruger does not have to be."

Two months later, Ruger announced the purchase of Hebron, Ky.-based Anderson Manufacturing — which has given the most prolific firearms manufacturer in the U.S. additional resources to deliver Seyfert's objective.

This purchase, announced July 1, includes Anderson's manufacturing facility and machinery, as well as its experienced work force. Each is primed

to strengthen Ruger's production capabilities and expand its product offerings even further.

"This acquisition is an incredible opportunity to advance our long-term strategy and expand Ruger's capacity," Seyfert said. "We're excited to welcome members from the talented team at Anderson Manufacturing and leverage their knowledge and infrastructure to better serve our customers. This move reinforces Ruger's position as a leader in the industry, and reiterates my focus on continued growth, even as others scale back."

One of the immediate outcomes of the acquisition is Ruger's decision to discontinue the Anderson Manufacturing

brand, along with its line of budget-priced ARs, lower receivers and other firearms-related accessories.

Anderson Manufacturing thanked its customers for their support over nearly seven decades in a statement published on its website and social media. It read, in part:

"For nearly 70 years, Anderson Manufacturing proudly operated as a family-owned, Kentucky-based company built on excellence, integrity and a deep commitment to our values — especially the protection of Second Amendment rights.

"After careful consideration, we made the difficult decision to sell the company and close this chapter of our story. With the sale now complete, the Anderson brand has been discontinued and Anderson products will no longer be offered. As a result, warranty services on Anderson firearms, parts and accessories are no longer available."

### A LOOK BACK AT RECENT FIREARM PRODUCTION

Since *SI*'s exclusive "U.S. Firearms Industry Today" report published just last month, we thought it would be interesting to examine Anderson Manufacturing's recent firearms production figures — especially given its status as the most prolific misc. firearms producer since *SI* began tracking the category in 2017. Per ATF's Annual Firearms Manufacturing & Export Report (AFMER), examples

Continued on p. 13

## FEDERAL AMMUNITION AWARDED CONTRACTS FROM CANADIAN GOVERNMENT

Federal Ammunition was awarded contracts to supply several Canadian law enforcement organizations with handgun and rifle ammunition for training and duty purposes.

These agreements will supply the Department of Fisheries and Oceans

(DFO), Parks Canada (PC), Correctional Services Canada (CSC) and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) with up to 10 million rounds of 9mm training and duty handgun ammunition and .308 Win. rifle ammunition over a five-year timeframe.

"We, at Federal, provide the top-quality law enforcement and tactical products officers need to have full confidence in any situation, and that's why we offer several different training and duty loads," said Peter



Gillette, director of government and international sales. "This contract validates the high trust that international law enforcement agencies have in our highly reliable and innovative product, regarding dependability and terminal ballistics."

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**FENIX**

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## “DON’T LIE FOR THE OTHER GUY” AWARENESS CAMPAIGN HELD IN HOUSTON

The NSSF, together with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Department of Justice (DOJ), conducted a month-long “Don’t Lie for the Other Guy” public education campaign in Houston recently.

“Don’t Lie for the Other Guy,” now in its 25th year, drives home the message that anyone who makes an illegal firearm purchase commits a federal felony, and faces a penalty of up to 15 years in prison, with a fine of up to \$250,000.

Members of the firearms industry provide the program’s funding, complemented by federal funds allocated to ATF by Congress. The ATF chooses the locations for the program’s messaging campaigns.

“We are especially proud to launch this ‘Don’t Lie for the Other Guy’ public awareness campaign in Houston as part



NSSF Public Affairs Director Mark Oliva, third from right, delivers remarks during the launch of the latest “Don’t Lie” campaign in Houston.

of our cooperative relationship with ATF, DOJ and the entire law enforcement community, to assist them in their efforts to reduce criminal acquisition of firearms and to keep communities safe,” said NSSF President and CEO Joe Bartozzi.

The Houston-area “Don’t Lie” campaign totaled more than 45.8 million media impressions. As many as 45 high-impact billboards and posters throughout the Houston region carried the message: “Buy a gun for someone who can’t and buy yourself 15 years in jail. Don’t Lie for the Other Guy.”

The campaign also included more

than 400 radio spots on two of the top FM stations in the market, as well as 3.75 million targeted impressions across Facebook, Instagram and mobile displays.

The “Don’t Lie for the Other Guy” program also involves educating firearm retailers to better detect and prevent straw purchases by providing free public education retailer kits containing a training video and information for store owners and staff, as well as point-of-purchase displays.

[/ nssf.org](http://nssf.org)

[/ dontlie.org](http://dontlie.org)

## BUCK KNIVES MARKS TWO DECADES IN IDAHO

Buck Knives Inc. recently recognized the 20th anniversary of the company’s relocation from San Diego to Post Falls, Idaho, with a weekend of festivities at its Post Falls headquarters and factory.

After three years of detailed planning and navigating various logistical challenges, the company opened its 128,000-sq.-ft., state-of-the-art facility on May 21, 2005. The manufacturing operation produces more than 200 knife models. The facility also houses a museum and operates a flagship store. Buck Knives continues to offer free factory tours every Monday through Thursday.

Buck hosted several events in honor of this milestone, beginning with an all-employee lunch that included awarding a commemorative knife to each of the 60-plus employees who made the move 20 years ago. That employee number has grown to some 320 today.

The festivities also included a private event with business and civic leaders who



(From left) Lane Tobiasen, Buck Knives president; CJ Buck, CEO; and John Greeley, CFO, marked 20 years in Post Falls, Idaho, with a memorable ribbon-cutting ceremony.

helped make the relocation successful. The company even reenacted its ribbon cutting. The Buck factory store celebrated with the local community, raffling off prizes, selling commemorative knives and hosting local food and drink vendors.

“Idaho’s connection to commonsense rural values is a great fit for long-term business values,” said CJ Buck, CEO

of Buck Knives, also noting the many successes that have followed the new factory’s opening.

Buck Knives has been handcrafting quality knives and tools, using top-grade materials and state-of-the-art processes, since 1902. The company still stands behind its exclusive Forever Warranty.

[/ buckknives.com](http://buckknives.com)

Continued from p. 10

of misc. firearms include “pistol grip firearms, starter guns and firearm frames and receivers.”

Anderson Manufacturing was the chart topper six times from 2017–2023 (the most recent year available), producing 2,242,409 misc. firearms during that span. (No doubt, many of these components were part of its extensive OEM program.)

With 1,586,534, O.F. Mossberg/Maverick Arms was the next-closest producer of misc. firearms. Its 2022 total of 1,058,459 was the largest annual total produced by a single manufacturer observed during this time period. Rounding out the top four are Palmetto State Armory (1,468,379\*) and Aero

Precision (944,111\*).

(\*Palmetto’s firearms production figures were not reported in 2021 AFMER, while Aero Precision’s were not featured in 2019 AFMER).

Ruger’s misc. production during the same period totaled 41,558, with its 2023 total of 987 representing its lowest annual output across the years under examination.

When it comes to rifle production, of course, Ruger is a powerhouse. From 2017 to 2023, Ruger produced a category-leading 4,614,291 rifles — more than 2 million ahead of second-ranked Savage Arms (which did not report its production data in 2017 and 2020 AFMER), with 2,280,451. Producing 2,027,232 rifles, Henry Repeating Arms was the third-most prolific rifle maker during this span, while

Smith & Wesson ranked as the fourth-largest U.S. rifle producer with 1,916,600 rifles.

Anderson consistently ranked inside the top-50 of all U.S. rifle makers during the time period under evaluation, rising as high as 17th in 2023. From 2017–2023 it produced 109,457 rifles.

For Ruger, there is a clear upside to this acquisition of a prolific rifle and misc. firearms producer: It’s located in a gun-friendly state, has an experienced workforce in place and a facility designed to accommodate significant firearms production. It should go a long way toward strengthening Ruger’s position as a company seeking to grow its production capabilities and expand its product offerings to consumers.

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## HENRY PLEDGES SUPPORT TO L.E. CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Henry Repeating Arms recently pledged a series of cash and other contributions in support of the National Police Defense Foundation (NPDF) and the Border Patrol Foundation (BPF). The donations were part of the NPDF 30th anniversary awards dinner on May 7.

The annual dinner helps fund the foundation's mission and charitable programs. These include Operation Kids, which distributes free child fingerprint and DNA kits to parents, sponsors youth athletic events, posts rewards for information on missing child cases, issues annual scholarships to deserving students and arranges for lifesaving operations and medical treatment for critically ill children worldwide.

During the awards dinner, Henry's founder and CEO Anthony Imperato presented custom, engraved rifles to several distinguished honorees.

Among them was former ICE



Anthony Imperato stands with Rear Admiral Zeita Merchant, Commander of the U.S. Coast Guard Personnel Service Center, as she receives her custom Henry rifle in recognition of being named the NPDF Woman of the Year.

(Immigration and Customs Enforcement) director and current border czar Tom Homan, who was named the NPDF's 2025 Man of the Year. He respectfully declined to accept the firearm because of his position in President Trump's cabinet.

Homan instead asked that the rifle be auctioned online, along with other donated products, to raise funds for the BPF, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 2009 to honor the memory of fallen U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) agents. The rifle features engraved seals of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the USBP. Included with the rifle is a hand-built, American walnut tabletop display, which Homan signed.

After already pledging \$10,000 to

support the NPDF and its charitable work, Imperato was inspired by Homan's gesture to make a magnanimous gesture of his own.

"Now you've got my juices flowing. I'm going to add \$50,000 on top of whatever this rifle brings at auction," he announced.

The BPF also provides financial support to USBP agents, employees and their families for on- and off-duty deaths, injuries, illnesses and student scholarships. All proceeds from the auction, including prior cash and product donations, are expected to bring Henry's total contribution to the BPF to more than \$100,000.

[/ henryusa.com](https://henryusa.com)

## CMP PRESENTS \$350,000+ IN SCHOLARSHIPS

The Civilian Marksmanship Program's (CMP) Scholarship Committee presented 127 scholarships to outstanding junior marksmen and women for the 2025–2026 school year.

The CMP Scholarship Program awarded over \$350,000 in new and recurring scholarships to remarkable individuals from across the country — 80 one-time \$1,000 scholarships, 32 one-time \$3,000 scholarships and 11 one-time \$5,000 scholarships.

Students receiving \$5,000 one-time scholarships are Noah Meierotto (Two Rivers, Alaska), Alexa Bodrogi (Bridgewater, N.J.), Anna Block (Madison, Ind.), Nathan Carbaugh (Herndon, Va.), Abigail Montgomery (Gibsonburg, Ohio), Ashley Carr (Alliance, Neb.), Roy Bauer (Louisburg, Kan.), John Bruner (Blairsville, Pa.), Aidian Peters (Lakewood Ranch, Fla.), Olivia Harvey (Hendersonville, Tenn.) and

Owen Snook (Lansing, Mich.).

The CMP also granted four repeat \$5,000 scholarships, totaling \$20,000 over four years for each recipient. Each of the four recurring \$20,000 scholarships is named in honor of past CMP Board members Harry Sieben, Carolyn Hines, Jon Bengston and former Chair Judith Legerski.

Earning this year's four-year recurring scholarships were Harry Sieben Scholarship: Dominic DeBenedetto (Prairieville, La.); Carolyn Hines Scholarship: Katlyn Sullivan (Statesboro, Ga.); Jon Bengston Scholarship: Hannah Goin (Walla Walla, Wash.); and Judith Legerski Scholarship: Elisa Boozer (Oklahoma City, Okla.).

Outside of CMP's contributions, the Garand Collectors Association (GCA) generously donated \$20,000, while the family of Michael Randall donated another \$15,000 — all to be presented as additional scholarships to marksmanship athletes.

The three \$5,000 Michael T. Randall



Memorial Scholarship recipients were Austin Williams (Liberty, N.C.), Jack Ogoreuc (Grove City, Pa.) and Tyler Wee (Wake Forest, N.C.). Likewise, earning \$5,000 GCA Scholarships were Matthew Lin (Fairfax, Va.), Jessa Harwood (Kingston Springs, Tenn.), Emily Kiselicka (Medford, Wis.) and Eli Kopp (Alexandria, Va.).

The CMP was also proud to award scholarships to students in districts surrounding CMP's facilities in Anniston/Talladega, Ala., and Port Clinton (Camp Perry), Ohio. A total of 17 \$1,000 Community Scholarships were awarded, marking \$17,000 overall for CMP's support of neighboring areas.

[/ thecmp.org](https://thecmp.org)

## BOND ARMS CELEBRATES 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Bond Arms, manufacturer of modern, derringer-style pistols, is observing its 30th anniversary this year. Longtime tool and die maker Greg Bond founded the company in 1995 in Granbury, Texas.

Derringer-style pistol design essentially stayed the same between the 1860s and mid-1990s. Bond improved on the design by inventing a rebounding hammer and adding retractable firing pins and a trigger guard. He also introduced a cross-bolt safety.

Through perseverance and a commitment to innovation, the company carved out its place in the market, ultimately becoming the largest manufacturer of derringers in the

firearms industry.

Gordon Bond purchased the company from his brother Greg in 2007, and continues as Bond Arms' president today. The company has expanded its innovative derringer and other firearm model offerings.

Traditional Bond Arms derringers are modular and accommodate a wide range of centerfire calibers, from .22 LR to .45-70 Gov't. Most models feature a removable trigger guard, interchangeable barrels and interchangeable grips.

The company acquired the rights to the Boberg XR9-S bullpup semiautomatic pistol in 2016. It then redesigned and re-designated it as the 7+1, 9mm Bond Arms BullPup 9.

In 2019, Bond Arms introduced the Rough Series (RS) line of derringers — structurally identical to its classical



derringers, but not as highly polished, and made for a tougher environment. The RS line carries a much lower price point.

The aluminum-frame Stinger model, available in .22 LR, 9mm, .380 ACP and .38 Special, was introduced in 2020. Two years later came the Stinger RS with a stainless steel frame and weighing 16 oz. The single-bore Cyclops pistol, chambered in .45-70 Gov't, arrived in 2023.

To celebrate its anniversary, Bond Arms will be releasing the long-awaited LVRB, a redesigned, patent-pending, short-lever-action rifle later in 2025.

[/ bondarms.com](http://bondarms.com)



AMERICAN RANCH CAMO RIFLE  
in 300 Blackout



#36962  
300 Blackout • 10+1  
Scope Not Included



The Davidson's Exclusive Ruger American Ranch Camo in 300 Blackout is an all-around defender.

Ruger's custom camo catches the eye when it's not in the field. Weighing only 5.9 lbs, it's a light carry for maneuvering around the homestead. This 10+1 rifle is chambered in 300 Blackout with a threaded 16.12" barrel and a 1-piece three-lug bolt. Combined with a picatinny rail, power bedding and Marksman adjustable trigger, it's built for rugged conditions with solid accuracy in mind.

Quick and simple on its own. Quiet and efficient when suppressed.

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## HIGH SPEED GEAR PRODUCTS GROUP EXPLORES ACQUISITIONS

High Speed Gear (HSG) Products Group is looking to partner with tactical product companies to continue building its family of brands.

Since the company's founding in 1999, its mission has been to provide innovative gear that performs when it matters most to those who protect and serve.

With manufacturing operations based in North Carolina and a newly expanded, state-of-the-art operation in Georgia, HSG Products Group remains committed to quality craftsmanship, rapid innovation and adding American jobs.

"For 25 years, our gear has earned the confidence of Marines, soldiers, SWAT operators, patrol officers and competitive shooters. That trust isn't given lightly; it's earned through relentless attention to detail, proven performance in the

field and a commitment to building gear that professionals can count on every time, without compromise," said Allison Mitchum, HSG Product Groups VP of sales and marketing.

The company's first tactical gear acquisition was Comp-Tac Holsters in 2018. It was followed in 2023 by the acquisition of two additional innovative holster brands — BlackPoint Tactical and Crucial Concealment. Both companies' product designs were shaped by decades of U.S. special operations experience, and they give HSG tactical-grade and cost-effective concealment solutions.

According to Kip Guyon, HSG Group president, 2023 and 2024 "were focused on building our infrastructure, improving operations and reducing customer lead times, so we are ready to partner with other like-minded companies to continue our growth trajectory."

The company is actively seeking tactical-gear producers based in the U.S.



and around the world, specifically looking at nylon, injection-molded, Kydex-based and other advanced-materials brands. Product category interest is broad and includes pouches, belts, slings, plate carriers, holsters, gloves and tactical apparel, with a particular interest in medical-tactical and emergency-response gear.

"Size is not a critical factor; our focus is on quality and innovation. The more innovative the better," said Matt Gadams, HSG chief strategy officer.

Interested parties should reach out to HSG Products Group via email at [partnerships@hsgproductsgroup.com](mailto:partnerships@hsgproductsgroup.com).  
[/hsgproductsgroup.com](https://hsgproductsgroup.com)

## WTTA EXPANDS SAFE STORAGE IMPACT WITH NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Walk the Talk America (WTTA), a national nonprofit organization dedicated to bridging the gap between mental health and responsible firearm ownership, announced two major collaborations that advance the organization's commitment to responsible firearm ownership and suicide prevention. Cannon Security Products, through its leading brands Cannon Safe and GunVault, has stepped up as a key partner in WTTA's growing efforts.

WTTA's Kids to Kings project is a mental health youth outreach program focused on the causes and effects of Complex Trauma & PTSD. Cannon Safe has donated a large safe to store firearms when not in use.

In addition, GunVault has launched a

pilot project with WTTA and The Armory Project in Louisiana. The initiative equips three licensed firearm retailers (FFLs), Apocalypse Sports, Red River Range and The Rustic Renegade, with discounted codes for GunVault locking devices, which are being offered to individuals in need, particularly those who cannot otherwise afford a means to store their firearms and prevent unauthorized access.

Launched May 19, the pilot project reflects a proactive approach to suicide prevention and firearm safety, increasing the accessibility of quality in-home storage options. If successful, this program may expand to more dealers and additional states, supporting WTTA's long-term goal of increasing access to responsible storage devices nationwide.

"It's exciting to work with companies and organizations with the same passion for responsible gun ownership as WTTA. The false narrative that the gun industry doesn't provide solutions for negative outcomes of firearms is being shattered by

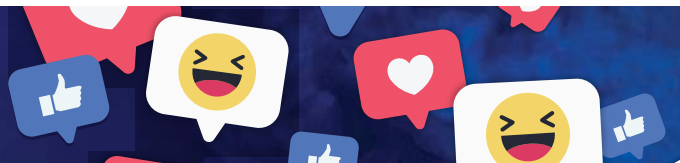


companies like Cannon. I'm proud to be affiliated with them," said Michael Sodini, founder of Walk the Talk America.

"We know one of the main reasons firearm owners give for not storing their firearms securely is the financial burden. We are excited to partner with Cannon Security and WTTA to make responsible, secure firearm storage more affordable and accessible to everyone," added Jennifer "Gala" True, PhD, who leads The Armory Project and is a community and population medicine professor at the LSU School of Medicine and an investigator with the VA's South Central Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC).

[/walkthetalkamerica.org](https://walkthetalkamerica.org)

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# NEW PARTNERSHIPS

## DISTRIBUTION

**Hydra Weaponry** announced a partnership with North Carolina-based distributor **Countrywide Sports** (CWS Guns). CWS Guns will offer the Hydra MARCK-15, Hydra-10 AR-10 system and BMP-23.

**Rinehart Targets** partnered with nationwide distributor **Meyer Distributing Inc.** The collaboration will allow Rinehart to better serve its growing dealer base, offering streamlined access to its full line of premium targets and accessories.

**MGE Wholesale Inc.** announced new distribution partnerships with **Shadow Systems** and **WE Knife Co. Ltd.** (which includes WE Knife, Civivi and Sencut brands). MGE will distribute Shadow Systems' firearms, including new California-compliant models, and WE Knife Co. Ltd.'s cutlery lines.

## SALES REPRESENTATION

**ZeroTech Optics USA** partnered with **Elite Outdoor Sports** to expand its reach across key regions in the U.S. Elite Outdoor Sports will represent ZeroTech

Optics USA in Southern California, AZ, NM, CO, MT, WY, MI, IN, Ohio, PA, NY, NH, MA, MD, DE, NJ, CT, RI and Utah.

**Thompson/Center Arms** (T/C Arms) initiated a new nationwide sales strategy by partnering with four elite sales representative agencies to support its dealer network: **Precision Sales & Marketing** (Western), **ProActive Sales & Marketing** (Southeast), **Ken Jefferies & Associates** (Northeast) and **BCE Marketing** (Midwest).

## PR/MARKETING

**Moultrie** selected **Murray Road** to expand its public relations and affiliate marketing efforts. Murray Road CEO and President Tim Brandt said, "Moultrie has shown us no intention of slowing down anytime soon. We are looking forward to working alongside Moultrie to take their products, and brand, to a new level."

**Mesa Tactical** named **Chevalier Advertising Inc.** as its official agency of record. Chevalier Advertising will lead efforts to sharpen Mesa Tactical's brand voice and amplify its presence across digital and traditional channels.

**Wazoo Gear** appointed **Source Outdoor Group** as its marketing and public relations firm.

**RLVNT** announced the addition of fishing/hunting/outdoors industry PR company **Traditions Media** to its marketing team. RLVNT CEO Norm Kester said, "Our growing staff had worked with the Traditions Media team with other brands and projects, and I was soon convinced they were the perfect fit for the ground game we wanted to win in this competitive marketplace."

**Silencio Coffee**, the veteran-founded coffee brand, selected **Laura Burgess Marketing** as its official agency of record. This partnership will focus on amplifying Silencio's presence within the military, tactical, 2A and patriot-driven lifestyle markets.

## INTERNATIONAL

**Hydra Weaponry** signed **Global Defense** as its international export partner to provide U.S. global military allies with Hydra's battle-ready modular rifle and pistol systems.

## CELERANT ACQUIRES SALEDOCK

Celerant Technology, provider of retail software solutions in the U.S. for over 25 years, announced its acquisition of Saledock, a U.K.-based retail software company. This strategic merger marks Celerant's official expansion into international markets, a goal in the making for several years.

"We've had team members in the U.K. for nearly four years preparing for this expansion. With Saledock's innovative technology and expanded local team, we can now fast-track our plans to bring Celerant's powerful retail solutions to the U.K. market, while enhancing our platform for retailers worldwide," said Ian Goldman, CEO of Celerant.

Saledock has provided advanced in-store and online retail solutions across the U.K. for more than five years. The company serves a broad range of retailers,

specializing in bike, equestrian and sporting goods businesses. From single-location shops to multi-store retailers with 20-plus locations, Saledock supports its clients with cloud-based point-of-sale (POS), inventory and e-commerce tools.

Celerant retailers in the U.S. and overseas are gaining an intuitive, redesigned interface. Additional enhancements include a standalone POS app (downloadable on Windows, Android and iOS) with offline mode for faster mobile sales.

Saledock retailers in the U.K. and Europe will see a new email marketing solution that is fully integrated with POS and eCommerce, enabling personalized, automated messaging. They will have access to advanced reporting and analytics, as well as unified payment processing across all sales channels through a single provider.

"These are just the short-term benefits our teams are already working on, with



even more longer-term innovations on the way. Together, we'll deliver an even stronger, more agile platform that meets the evolving needs of modern retailers," said Layla Gladwin, co-founder of Saledock.

Celerant is widely known for its technology that empowers retailers with functionality once only available to big-box chains. Saledock, in turn, is celebrated for its sleek and modern platform, fast onboarding and Azure-hosted infrastructure. Both companies offer omnichannel retail solutions. **SI**

[/ celerant.com](http://celerant.com)

[/ saledock.com](http://saledock.com)



### FN America Promotes VP

FN America announced the promotion of Dan Hines from director of marketing to VP, commercial products. In this role, Hines will drive FN's growth strategy through his leadership of the commercial and law enforcement sales, product development and marketing teams.

"I am confident Dan will continue to elevate our brand, strengthen customer relationships and lead our commercial and law enforcement teams to a new level of success," said Mark Cherpes, president and CEO of FN America.

Hines earned a B.S. in systems engineering from the United States Military Academy at West Point, a J.D. degree from Walter F. George School of Law and an MBA from Mercer University. He was an officer in the U.S. Army and served in the Iraq War.



J. POINT

### Davidson's Inc. Advances Sales Manager

In his new role as Davidson's Inc. sales manager, James Point is wholly responsible for the sales office, all of its account executives and several remote account executives.

"When I first hired James, I knew he would one day be on our management team", said Mike Massimo, Davidson's VP of sales. "He is going to help take our sales team to the next level."

Point joined Davidson's during the company's nationwide expansion of its sales force in 2019. He was instrumental in helping lead the formation of the Davidson's South Carolina sales office. Point achieved a BBA from Capella University.



### Savage Arms Announces Key Appointments

Savage Arms announced key promotions within the organization: Robert Gates is now serving as senior VP; Beth Shimanski was named VP of marketing; and Steve Colaluca has assumed the role of VP of operations – all firearms.

Gates oversees product development, sales and marketing for Savage Arms and the Bowtech Archery Group. He joined Savage in 2018 and was responsible for sales, marketing and product development. Prior to Savage, Gates held key roles at Smith & Wesson, GLOCK, Vista Outdoor and Surefire.

Shimanski has overseen Savage marketing efforts since 2017 and is now also responsible for Bowtech Archery Group. Before joining Savage, she spent over a decade at Polaris Industries in international and product marketing roles.

Colaluca joined Savage Arms in 2013 and has held multiple positions at the Westfield facility. This new role adds the Lakefield, Ontario rimfire factory to his responsibility, while retaining oversight of operations, product strategy execution and business performance across both facilities.

Chris Bezzina, CEO/president of Savage Arms and Bowtech Archery Group, said, "We are excited to see how their continued contributions will drive our companies forward and enhance our ability to serve our customers with new, innovative and top-performing products."



J. HODGDON

### Hodgdon Powder Co. Mourns Co-Founder

John Brewster "JB" Hodgdon, co-founder of Hodgdon Powder Company,

passed away on June 13, 2025.

With his brother, Bob, JB continued the legacy of Hodgdon Powder Company started by their father.

Hodgdon held many roles at the company: he packaged powder at the family dining room table, led international sales and served as the face of Hodgdon at industry trade shows. He served on the Hodgdon board in various roles, including board chair, and was named chairman emeritus in 2025.

Hodgdon was a devoted supporter of the NSSF, a lifetime benefactor member of the NRA, a life member of the Kansas State Rifle Association and a member of the Safari Club of America, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited and the National 4-H Shooting Sports. He was a dedicated supporter of youth involvement in the shooting sports through his work with Philmont Scout Ranch.

He was inducted into the NSSF Hall of Fame in 2020, and was a co-recipient with his brother, Bob, of the NRA's Golden Bullseye Pioneer Award in 2009. He also received the Shooting Industry Academy of Excellence Award in 2009.

Tom Shepherd, chairman of the board at Hodgdon, shared, "JB was a first-rate owner, an incredible professional and a valued friend and counselor to work for during my career. He will be deeply missed."



F. BROWNELL

### Brownells Announces Passing

Long-time family patriarch, Frank Brownell, who served as president, CEO and chairman of the board at Brownells, passed away on June 18, 2025.

A statement released by the company expressed, "For nearly six decades, Brownell's passion, vision and generosity shaped not only Brownells, but the entire firearms

community. Friends and customers alike remember him greeting 'long lines of friends' at SHOT Show and the NRA Annual Meetings, championing gunsmithing and driving industry innovation."

Son of Brownells' founder Bob and his wife, Lois, he became involved in both the family business and the American gun industry at an early age. Brownell earned an advertising degree from the University of Iowa before serving as a U.S. Navy reservist.

In 1965, he joined Brownells full-time, laying out *Big Book Catalog #18*, and helped publish the first *Gunsmith Kinks* book in 1969 under the name "F. Brownell and Son."

He became president in 1983, CEO in 2007 and chairman of the board in 2012, guiding Brownells for more than 40 years.



K. STREIFF

### Silencer Central Welcomes CRO

Kelly Streiff has joined Silencer Central as the company's new chief revenue officer.

"We are very excited to add someone of Kelly's caliber to the leadership team," said Brandon Maddox, Silencer Central founder and CEO. "She brings a wealth of knowledge and a history of success in the outdoor industry."

Streiff brings more than 15 years of leadership experience in sales and marketing. She served as VP of sales and marketing at PROOF Research, and held leadership roles at Leupold & Stevens and Cabela's.



L. DAVIS

### NSSF Welcomes HR VP

Lisa Davis has joined the NSSF as its VP, human resources. She succeeds Deb Kenney, who recently retired after 29 years with NSSF.

"[Davis] brings a strong skillset and a wealth of experience that will greatly benefit NSSF, its members and the industry we serve," said Joe

Bartozzi, NSSF president and CEO.

Davis brings more than 25 years of human resources leadership experience across multiple industries, including firearms, e-commerce, healthcare, manufacturing and global IT consulting. Most recently, she served as human resources director at Gwynedd Manufacturing (Geissele Automatics).



B. MCCOUBREY

### Wing & Barrel Ranch Adds Sporting Operations Manager

As the sporting operations manager for Wing & Barrel Ranch, Brenna McCoubrey oversees the development and

execution of all outdoor programming, including private instruction and field operations across the sporting clays course, archery range, pistol and rifle ranges, fly fishing and upland hunting.

McCoubrey joins the team after serving as PR manager for SureFire LLC, and developing marketing plans and brand strategy for White Birch Armory.



J. JESTER

### Iron Valley Supply Promotes Director

In his new role as director of sales strategy for Iron Valley Supply, Jeremy Jester will lead a portion of its team of account managers with a focus on implementing innovative sales strategies, strengthening strategic dealer

relationships and supporting the company's ongoing mission to deliver integrity, service and value across its customer base.

Jester has played a pivotal role at Iron Valley Supply (formerly Bangers) for more than two decades as both an account manager and buyer.

He earned a B.S. in merchandising, design and production management from Auburn University.



C. TYMESON

### Pass It On - Outdoor Mentors Welcomes Board Member

Chris Tymeson, chief deputy director of advocacy at Safar Club International recently joined the Pass It On - Outdoor Mentors' board of directors.

"His experience, both in the field and in the halls of policy, will be an incredible asset as we work to expand youth outdoor opportunities across the country," said Pass It On CEO Brittany French.

As SCI's deputy director of advocacy, he works on governmental relations matters involving federal and state laws and regulations related to hunting and conservation within the U.S. and abroad.

Tymeson served as chief legal counsel for the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and was also the vice chair of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies legal committee. Prior to that, Tymeson served in the U.S. Army. **SI**



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BY MASSAD AYOOB

## SHOW CUSTOMERS WHERE TO CARRY SPARE AMMO

**A**ccessories sell when their value and function are explained. This holds true for convenient, accessible spare ammo carry options.

As we discussed in this space last month, a defensive firearm without spare ammunition is a temporary defensive firearm. Legendary gun expert John Farnam established way back in the 1970s the *average* person can fire a double-action revolver at a rate of four shots per second and a semi-auto, with its shorter trigger pull and trigger return, at about five rounds per second. This can leave an embattled armed citizen with an empty handgun awfully quick.

World champions can shoot as much as twice as fast. Go to YouTube and look up the video of Jerry Miculek emptying an eight-shot Smith & Wesson revolver in one second flat. If you've found the whole video, you'll notice all eight shots are hits.

"Not to worry, I carry a spare box of ammo in my glove box" is a sub-optimal answer at best. The likelihood of getting to the box in the first place, opening it and getting the cartridges into the gun (or into the magazine and then into the gun) is probably somewhere between slim and none.

This point was made by the surviving agents in their debriefing after the legendary April 11, 1986, gunfight between the FBI and two committed armed robbers and cop-killers. Its title is "Firefight," which you can also find on YouTube. One of those heroic agents, Ron Risner, was asked how much ammo one should carry, and he replied, "All you can carry."

With home-defense long guns, it makes sense to have the ammo right there attached to the gun, all the more so for your customers who had to make the compromise with their spouse if a gun was to be kept in the house at all, it would be kept unloaded. As far back as WWII, American combatants issued the M1 carbine had access to a canvas pouch that went over the buttstock and held a couple of spare magazines.

With today's defensive carbines, various companies make clips capable of holding two magazines together, and the Redi-Mag ([redi-mag.com](http://redi-mag.com)) is particularly useful for the ubiquitous AR-15.

For shotguns (and for the lever-action carbines that seem to be enjoying some resurgent popularity as defensive firearms) there are the various butt cuffs for spare cartridges that attach to the stock. You probably already offer the

◀ If you can convey value and function, sales of accessories — like spare magazines and holster systems equipped to carry them — will follow. (Image: Tom McHale, *American Handgunner Concealed Carry 2022 Special Edition*)

Side-Saddle and similar devices that hold shotgun shells on the receivers of pump and autoloading shotguns. All good.

Most DGUs (armed citizen Defensive Gun Usage) involve handguns, however. Let's look at those.

### SEMI-AUTO PISTOLS

One of the autoloader's advantages is its fast reloads, with magazines compact enough to be discreetly and comfortably carried concealed. Those with flap covers are sub-optimal for defensive concealed carry. The digits of the support hand have to claw between the magazine and the leather or fabric of the flap to gain a proper grasp of the magazine: fumble-prone and achingly slow. Show the customer how much more quickly and surely they can withdraw the magazine from an open-top, friction-tight pouch whether it's made of leather or Kydex.

One reason so many concealed carriers don't have spare ammo on their person is they find it inconvenient. Sell such customers magazine pouches that clip on and off the belt without having to unbuckle anything. Early versions of these earned a poor reputation because their weak clips often came loose, causing the pouch to come out along with the magazine when the user was attempting a reload.

I recall interviewing a detective in Southern California who, years ago, had a shootout with a serial rapist. The officer had been wounded in his gun arm by a .380 slug from the criminal's gun, and when he went to reload his Colt .45 auto, the mag pouch came out with the magazine. He would forever after remember the frustration of having to clear the magazine from its leather carrier and get his weapon back into action. Fortunately, he did so and finished the fight. He recovered from his wound, and the rapist and would-be cop-killer died at the scene. The detective was thereafter much more selective in the purchase of his gun accessories.

### MAG POUCHES & SHOULDER HOLSTERS

Today, we have mag pouches of both leather and Kydex with much more secure belt clips. They are convenient

to put on and take off, and so long as they are mated with a belt of proper corresponding width, they will hold the magazines comfortably, securely and discreetly against the wearer's body.

Single or double pouch? With a thick double-stack magazine, a single mag pouch is more discreetly wearable. Slim single-stack magazines à la the 1911-type ride very comfortably and concealably with two of them mounted side by side. My favorites include the Blade-Tech brand for a pair of flat 1911 magazines and the single mag pouch for double-stack magazines from Precision Holster.

Does your customer wear a shoulder holster? When Richard Gallagher founded his original holster company in 1969, now famous as Galco, he pioneered the "shoulder system" in which the holstered handgun on one side was balanced by ammo pouches under the opposite arm. It has become one of the most widely copied designs in the holster industry. Magazines ride quite comfortably there, with reasonably quick accessibility.

**Sales tip:** Remind your customers a shoulder system with pistol and magazines ready to go — perhaps with a good flashlight clipped to the harness — gives them a full set of gear they can quickly shrug on like a jacket when the burglar alarm goes off.

Neil Rogers was an FBI agent when he created the SnagMag to hide a spare mag accessibly in a pocket. This handy device is now available through 1791 Gunleather.

## REVOLVERS

The double-action revolver is enjoying some renaissance in popularity today. One reason it has been so decisively eclipsed by the auto pistol is its lower cartridge capacity; the ability to quickly reload helps to make up for that. For bouncing around and vibrating in a vehicle's glove box, the venerable and ubiquitous HKS Speedloader is still unbeaten for ruggedness. The Safarilands, which release with just a push instead of a turn of a knob like the HKS or Five Star brands, are faster. The fastest are Safariland's Comp III or the Jetloader,

but they're bulkier. It's still manageable, though. When I carry a revolver as primary, I find a Comp III works just fine in the smartphone pocket of my cargo pants.

Since a speedloader is about the diameter of the cylinder of a whole additional revolver, concealment becomes a concern. The "split-six" type carrier has the cartridges straddling the belt, three inside and three out for a lower profile. Open on the sides with a flap at the front, it allows the user to grasp the loader with the middle finger and thumb through the open sides and pop the flap with the index finger.



**Selling spare ammo carriers is profitable to the gun dealer ... and can prove to be a lifesaver for a customer.**

A favorite of plainclothesmen when revolvers were standard was the flat, inconspicuous 2X2X2 cartridge pouch made by DeSantis and others. Instead of flopping down and dumping all its cartridges into the hand, this improved design tilted forward from the belt and

offered easy loading of two cartridges at a time. They are still available and still make sense.

A slide with cartridge loops can be reasonably fast, *if*, like the Bianchi version, the loops are at the very top of the slide. This design allows the tips of the index and middle fingers to push the cartridges up where the thumb has access, allowing two at a time loading. Carried at the front of the belt, they glaringly reveal the wearer is armed if the concealing garment is open, but a closed front garment such as a loose T-shirt or hoodie hides the loop slide very well. For legal open carry, of course, it won't be a concern. One of the best is the two-round Greg Ellifritz design from Dark Star Gear (the Immediate Action Carrier .38-357).

A perennial gun shop "impulse sale" item is the Speed Strip, pioneered by John Bianchi and still available along with the similar TUFF QuickStrips. Faster than drop pouches but not as fast as speedloaders, the strips are handy because they are very flat. They can fit in the watch pockets of typical jeans, and the business card pocket typically sewn into the right front pocket of suit coats and sport coats.

To close as we began, a gun without spare ammo is a temporary gun. Selling spare ammo carriers is profitable to the gun dealer ... and can prove to be a lifesaver for a customer. **SI**



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BY NANCY KEATON

## IT'S IN THE BAG: CONCEALED CARRY PURSES MEET HER NEEDS

Once treated as a forbidden subject, off-body concealed carry is becoming more mainstream as everyone realizes on-body is not always practical, or even desirable for women.

Now, instead of just telling women, “Never carry in a purse,” manufacturers and retailers understand they will carry in a purse if they need or want to. So, the best thing to do is offer a quality product that will provide safety and utility as well as comfort.

As carrying off-body becomes more popular, women are looking to smaller retailers, not just the big-box stores, to have the purses and bags they are searching for.

For retailers still considering stocking concealed carry purses, we spoke with three manufacturers to find out about the information and support they provide to their retail partners, followed by two retailers who shared their thoughts.

### THE MANUFACTURERS

#### Lady Conceal

Diana West, founder of Lady Conceal, gives us a rundown of the support they provide to retailers who carry their brand:

- Access to a Dropbox folder with

high-quality product images, model lifestyle shots and promotional videos

- Email notifications regarding low inventory and out-of-stock items
- Same-day support via phone or email for any questions or issues
- Free shipping promotions for wholesale orders
- Flexible ordering options:

Wholesale customers can either email their purchase orders for processing or they can place orders directly through the wholesale website

- For drop-shipping partners, orders can be placed through Lady Conceal's website, with the ability to upload custom packing slips and shipping labels

The most common question

West gets from retailers is what are Lady Conceal's wholesale prices and minimum order quantities.

“Most retailers want to know how much it costs to get started, what the margins are and the minimum they need to order to open an account. Our initial minimum order is \$300,” she informed.

MAP pricing (Minimum Advertised Price) is another common concern.

“At Lady Conceal, our MAP is 15% off MSRP. This helps protect retailers from being undercut, especially on Amazon,” she explained.

◀ The Rugged Rare Smith & Wesson Structured Handbag combines style and practicality with a built-in ambidextrous holster compartment for easy, discreet carry.

West shared her company offers keystone pricing, so retailers are getting the bags at 50% off MSRP.

“This enables retailers a strong markup and a good profit,” she noted.

Finally, for those dealers concerned about retention, West said each bag comes with a universal holster.

### Gun Tote'n Mamas

Claudia Chisholm, founder of Gun Tote'n Mamas (GTM) is a powerhouse in the business of concealed carry bags and purses. She said the most common way they find retailers is through trade shows, followed by direct outreach and recommendations.

As for the support GTM provides to retailers, Chisholm stated, “We are proud to have developed a solid, holistic back-end support system for our dealers, which I believe should be the standard in the industry.”



GTM Crossbody Organizer – Paisley

According to Chisholm, this support includes everything from providing best-selling product recommendations and ensuring orders are fulfilled correctly to having a Display Program and offering GTM manuals and other content.

“We are especially proud of our Find-A-Bag and PreLoved programs and workshops, which we coordinate in partnership with Donna Anthony of Point Blank Firearms. And we direct further education for instructors with Vicki Farnam of DTI for Women,” she said.

GTM is active in coordinating communication between retailers and their local A Girl & A Gun and Armed Women of America members to work together.

“Whether it's through hosting events or promoting sales through

our networks, we collectively reach millions. Retailers are always welcome to contact us — and they do! — with any questions, whether from their team or customer,” she said. “We take the time to provide thorough support and strive to make vendor relations as seamless as possible. We take the time needed. We go out of our way to eliminate the dread in vendor support.”

The most often asked question Chisholm gets from retailers is what sets GTM apart from all the other brands and bags in the market, aside from pricing.

“We are happy to share what other retailers say about our collective experience,” she remarked. “Existing stores commonly let us know how happy they are to have few-to-no issues with GTM service and products, particularly the high quality and the fact we stand behind them. They trust our commitment to excellence and appreciate they can rely on both the durability and safety of our products. They highly value our customer service, knowing they never have to worry about issues with our products or support. In short, we make retailing GTM so easy and stress-free!”

### **Rugged Rare**

Travis Ferguson, VP of sales and marketing for Rugged Rare in Knoxville, Tenn., shared they connect with retailers in a variety of ways at major trade shows, with SHOT Show being the biggest.

“We also connect at direct-to-consumer shows like the NRA Annual Meeting, the GOA show [Gun Owners Advocacy and Leadership Summit (GOALS), held in Knoxville] and then our distributor shows like the Chattanooga Shooting Supplies Dealer Show,” he explained.

Rugged Rare uses marketing and social media for their direct-to-consumer sales to create brand awareness. Ferguson shared direct emails have been most effective in communicating with dealers.

As for the support offered to retailers, Rugged Rare includes marketing materials and displays, as well as running specials and support for sales such as giveaways.

Ferguson added, “We’re fully committed to supporting our dealers. While we do have a direct-to-consumer website, we intentionally avoid offering promotions there to ensure we’re not competing with our retail partners. We prioritize protecting our brick-and-mortar stores. Similarly, our presence on Amazon is solely to uphold our MAP policy — it’s designed entirely with dealer protection in mind.”



**Retailers can support their customers and reach a broader audience by stocking a variety of concealed carry purses and bags.**

Ferguson responded quickly when asked what question he most commonly gets from retailers.

“It’s ‘What’s your best seller?’” he shared, laughing. “I typically try to answer that with a series of questions based on their demographic, their location and who’s shopping inside their store. It’s completely different for someone in Memphis than in Nashville or in Knoxville. Even though we’re in the same state, what sells very well for one store may not sell the same elsewhere. So, it truly varies where they are and how they’re presenting the product and what they’re trying to do.”

Through his tenure in the firearms industry, Ferguson is enthused by how the options available to women have continued to grow and evolve.

“I’ve been in the industry for a very long time. When it comes to concealed carry bags, I’ve had the luxury of working with several manufacturers over the years,” he said. “So, I’ve seen more concealed carry bags and probably know more about concealed carry bags than any man you’ll meet. It’s encouraging to see so many women getting involved in shooting and in the industry and now having options that they didn’t have five or 10 years ago. It

always puts a smile on my face.”

### **RETAILER INSIGHTS**

Pam Reis, owner of Pistols Plus in Osage Beach, Mo., found Gun Tote’n Mamas at SHOT Show and has been very happy with the product and the company.

When asked why she chose that brand to carry, Reis replied, “They’re very stylish, kind of reminding me of Coach purses. They’re very high quality and they have tons and tons of styles, colors and sizes, so they really work for just about anybody. Guns are very well hidden in the purses.”

Gun Tote’n Mamas’ personalized customer service also has great appeal to Reis.

“The company has very nice people; they’re pretty hands-on,” she said. “I usually talk to someone in person when I want to order more, and the products come pretty quickly.”

Shane Phillips, retail manager with Republic Gun Club in Waco, Texas, says his facility learned about Lady Conceal from an employee who was familiar with them at another retail store.

Phillips is very happy with the service they’ve received, noting, “They’re great. Anything I’ve ever asked for, they’ve gotten to me quickly. The owner is really responsive and her staff is spot on. If I email them to ask, ‘Hey, can we get on a call?’ they’ll typically call within a minute or two. If I have any questions they get right back to me.”

(The Lady Conceal purses have been so popular at Republic Gun Club, Phillips shared they were completely sold out the day of our interview.)

### **AN EASY DECISION**

As off-body carry increases in popularity, retailers can support their customers and reach a broader audience by stocking a variety of concealed carry purses and bags. A store display allows customers to see and feel the bags to better find the one that’s right for them.

Connecting with manufacturers is a simple process, and a comfortable partnership will make the decision to add concealed carry purses and bags to your store a profitable one. **SI**

BY MICHELLE SCHEUERMANN

# A SCARCE COMMODITY: THE ATTENTION ECONOMY

**Y**our customers are bombarded with messages hundreds of times a day, and they're tired of it. It used to be TV commercials and billboards, but with more people working from home, it frequently has to do with the phone that's constantly in our hands. Studies have shown the average cell phone user picks up his or her phone 58 times a day—roughly once every 15 minutes.<sup>1</sup>

The gravitational pull of the phone's newsfeed is strong, and our attention spans are weakening. A quick example is the lost art of reading books. An article in last fall's *The Atlantic* titled "The Elite College Students Who Can't Read Books" said college professors no longer assign full books to read—only chapters or segments—as students can't seem to find the focus to read a whole book.<sup>2</sup>

This lack of focus also extends to video. Over the years, Netflix has consistently shared that viewers decide whether to watch a show within five to seven seconds of first starting it. Therefore, Netflix instructed its producers to start the show in mid-action, such as an explosion or a terrifying fight. Netflix even went so far as to tell its writers to have their characters "tell what they are doing," just in case people have the show on in

the background while doing something else and can still follow along.<sup>3</sup>

This is your customer today: Someone who is unable to focus, exhausted from too many digital distractions and, likely, still multitasking.

Welcome to trying to sell a product or service to this individual—now known as the "Attention Economy."

## TIME IS MONEY: THE USER EXPERIENCE

The Attention Economy represents a fundamental shift from traditional sales-based marketing to competing for customer attention and engagement. For retailers, understanding these principles is crucial as human attention has become a scarce commodity that drives purchasing decisions.

You must grab their attention—and keep it—first, before you can sell to them.

We can produce more widgets and offer additional educational classes. Still, two things we are unable to generate more of are time and attention.

The Attention Economy, as defined by Wikipedia, refers to the "incentives of advertising-driven companies, particularly to maximize the time and attention their users devote to their products."

How are you incentivizing people to pay attention to you?

Software applications either explicitly or implicitly consider the Attention Economy in their user interface design because if it takes the user too long to locate something, they will likely find it through another application. Consider a customer visiting your website. If the site takes too long to load, they might leave to find the thing they were seeking elsewhere. This means having a "mobile first" responsive website is no longer a "want" but a "need." Examples include prioritizing vertical video and incorporating interactive features to keep users engaged.

With our "TikTok brains" (a term first coined by a *Wall Street Journal* author in early 2022), we flit from one task, window or social media platform to another without possibly realizing what we are doing.

The Attention Economy is so extensive and encompassing that Amazon even dedicated a guide to its advertisers.<sup>4</sup> Amazon offered three ways to navigate the Attention Economy: break through the clutter with content audiences love, be memorable (lift brand recall) and create lasting relationships.

Let's review in the context of the shooting industry:

## 1. BREAK THROUGH THE CLUTTER WITH CONTENT YOUR AUDIENCE LOVES

Three keys to developing a marketing strategy that keeps attention are to have a strong focus on storytelling, visually compelling designs and delivering quality over quantity. It is a must to know your ideal customer, as you need to know how content will resonate with them and then motivate them to share it.

If you can't find the time or energy to share three to five posts per week on social media, then focus on one or two posts weekly *and make them good*.

Instagram CEO Adam Mosseri has shared the biggest takeaways for posts showing up in your followers' feeds are shares, saves and making it a video. Mosseri explained "sends per reach" is a vital metric.<sup>5</sup> Sends or shares metrics indicate how many people shared a post after viewing it, emphasizing the importance of content that sparks conversations and connections among users.

Ask your customers what they

want by hosting a poll on Instagram Stories, scheduling an AMA (Ask Me Anything) every Friday as Mosseri does or starting a Broadcast Channel on Instagram for your most engaged followers. (Instagram offers tips for starting a channel in its Help Center.)

## 2. BE MEMORABLE

If a picture is worth 1,000 words, then it's easy to say humans process visuals faster than text. And the visual of choice social media platform CEOs are pushing? Video. From Mosseri to LinkedIn's CEO Ryan Roslansky, video keeps people on the platform longer.

Bloomberg reported in May 2025 that "LinkedIn will begin sharing advertising revenue with creators for the first time, as video content boosts the amount of time people spend on the site."<sup>6</sup>

Hesitant to do more video? Here are three tips:

- Start behind the scenes, not in front of the camera. While having a "face" to the brand is ideal, you can still focus on the team at work, creating the product, customer spotlights or even using animated graphics, which are now much easier to create with AI.

- Embrace the "imperfect" and start small. Authenticity trumps polish. Audiences prefer genuine, slightly rough content over overly produced videos that feel fake. And batch create! Record multiple short clips (30 seconds or less) in one session when you are feeling confident.

- Repurpose existing content and leverage your team. You likely already have video-worthy content. Consider turning blog posts into quick video summaries with text overlays and voiceovers (again, AI can help here). And consider transforming customer testimonials into quote graphics with background footage.

## 3. CREATE LASTING RELATIONSHIPS

Finally, let's look at creating relationships from a shopping experience — whether in-person or online.

What if the color or size they want is not available? They'll abandon the cart or leave the store. Are they not

getting free shipping and returns? Forget it. Do they have to take their credit card out of their wallet? They'll leave it for another day. Consumers want a frictionless experience. They'll remember a good brand experience, however.

You should respond to direct messages (DMs) and emails within 24 hours, just as you should train employees to be able to answer any in-store questions at the time of sale. Another approach is as simple as offering QR codes at checkout to immediately sign up for a class at the point of sale versus giving them a piece of paper with a website and a coupon code for them to use later.



**The most successful brands don't just grab attention — they create moments worth remembering.**

(There is no "later;" their attention is gone to something else.)

Consider placing QR codes on the sales shelf for products, just in case their color of choice or size isn't available — help them order right then and there from your store versus leaving and potentially buying from a competitor.

Chick-fil-A is known for its memorable customer experience. (Search "Chick-fi-A viral customer service" and you'll see why.) When approaching the counter in a store, employees are ready and waiting with a smile — not with their heads buried in their phones. Sometimes, being memorable is as simple as doing what's right by putting the customer first.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

There are practical applications for all three strategies above:

- Product Demonstrations: Use video content to showcase products, accessories and features.

- Educational Content: Create how-to guides, either static images, videos or animated.

- Community Building: Foster engagement through customer stories and experiences.

- Micro-Content: Develop short-form content for social media platforms.

- Personalization: Tailor content to specific shooting disciplines (hunting, sport shooting, tactical).

The most successful brands don't just grab attention — they create moments worth remembering.

## A "WORTHY" FOCUS

Think about your own experiences as a consumer. The purchases you remember aren't the ones with the flashiest ads but the ones where someone took the time to understand your needs, solved your problem or simply made you feel valued. Chick-fil-A employees in viral videos aren't following a complex marketing strategy — they're just genuinely excited to serve customers well.

As these strategies are being considered, remember behind every click, view and purchase is a real person navigating their own overwhelming digital world. When you help them find what they need quickly and treat them well in the process, you're not just winning the attention game — you're making their day a little better, and they're likely to return.

In the end, the Attention Economy isn't about tricks or hacks. It's about earning the privilege of someone's time by making it worthwhile and offering them something no one else can. And that's something worth focusing on, even in our distracted world. **SI**

### Footnotes:

1. [explodingtopics.com/blog/smartphone-usage-stats](https://explodingtopics.com/blog/smartphone-usage-stats)
2. [theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2024/11/the-elite-college-students-who-cant-read-books/679945](https://theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2024/11/the-elite-college-students-who-cant-read-books/679945)
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**“Retailers can improve the buying experience and increase revenues by keeping abreast of and promoting the latest trends in the shooting industry.”**

# *In With The New!*

## Enthusiasm For New Trends, Technologies Keeps The Registers Ringing

By Bryan Hendricks

**W**e've all met the gruff, grizzled gun counter employee who badmouths anything new.

That guy is costing you money.

Tapping into the unlimited reservoir of information on the internet, modern shooters have researched the new gun or the accessories they want to buy for weeks before they darken your door. They want the “expert” behind the counter to reinforce their bias and close the sale. If they encounter Donnie Downer, there's a good chance they'll go to another store staffed by people who will make them feel good about the substantial purchase they're about to make.

To this end, retailers can improve the buying experience and increase revenues by keeping abreast of and

promoting the latest trends in the shooting industry.

## EXPLAIN THE “WHY” FOR ENHANCEMENTS

Simmons Sporting Goods in Bastrop, La., is known for its staff of ardent young hunters. This demographic embraces anything new. They experiment with new gear. They hunt with it and they promote the good stuff enthusiastically, contends Hunter Simmons, chief operating officer. Donnie Downer doesn't have a place in this environment.

“A lot of old-school guys, they give you their opinion, but you don't want his opinion,” Simmons said. “Until you ask his opinion, his opinion doesn't matter. My guys are trained to be very knowledgeable about telling you what you need to know but also to be respectful of customers.”

Simmons Sporting Goods is in the heart of Northeast Louisiana's duck-hunting country. Applying aftermarket finishes to waterfowl guns is very popular, and Simmons accommodates hunters who want them.

“We do a process called ‘Duracoat,’” Simmons shared. “It's similar, but it's a different brand. We hydro-dip in-house. We built an area to do it. We have a hydro-dipping tank. We do push it quite a bit because everybody wants something different. It looks cool, but it really protects your gun better in the marshy conditions and wet areas duck hunters are always in.”

Hunters might want to

put a new finish on their guns, but sometimes they still need to be sold.

“My guys are trained well,” Simmons said. “We're all duck hunters and deer hunters. We understand it. We explain how it will protect their investment better. It's not a lot of extra money. We do have to tell the story, though. It's not just a different color, but it protects your gun better because it adheres to metal better than traditional hydro dip.”

You might not think of camouflage as being a fashion statement, but hunters are very trend-conscious. An astute retailer will have the latest patterns in stock when hunters start updating their wardrobes in late summer. This does not apply only to apparel. Firearms that wear an outdated camo pattern often have to be put on sale at deep discounts to move them.

“Hunters are pretty attuned to what's in style,” Simmons remarked. “They want what they want. They want something different than what their buddy has. We know a new pattern is coming out. All our manufacturers tell us, and we try to move through that inventory before new ones come out.”

## NEW CARTRIDGES GENERATING INTEREST

Simmons is equally enthusiastic about new rifle cartridges. Newer cartridges like the 6.8 Western and the 7mm Backcountry, and also the PRC family, generate a lot of interest and excitement

in the shooting and hunting community. Simmons believes it's important to give people what they want and make them feel good about it. Not every store sees it that way, and Simmons welcomes their refugees.

“I don't want to say anything bad about anybody,” he stated. “What I'll say is my guys are being trained up. There is a reason for the 7mm Backcountry. You get the same velocity as a seven mag out of shorter barrels.”

And this creates an opportunity to up-sell accessories, like suppressors.



**You might not think of camouflage as being a fashion statement, but hunters are very trend-conscious.**

“We sell a lot of suppressors because there's more guys hunting with that,” Simmons said. “You get 7-Mag. velocity with a shorter barrel and reduced noise. What's not to like?”

## RIDING THE “TREND CREST” WAVE

In the middle of rural Mississippi, just outside Corinth, is the massive structure of 2nd Amendment Outdoors, one

of the biggest gun shops in the region. Kevin Cribbley is the lead archery technician, but he also manages most of the organization's social media. It gives them a worldwide presence.

A big part of 2nd Amendment's success, according to Cribbley, is riding trend crests and being sufficiently well-informed to help customers make the best purchase for their needs.

“We generate interest with social media,” he confirmed. “We use Facebook. We can't post pictures of firearms or ammo, but we can talk about it and post logos.”

Also, 2nd Amendment maintains a presence on TikTok, Instagram and YouTube.

“We do a podcast here called ‘Caliber, Arrow, Spine and Tackle,’” Cribbley informed. “It's our spin on the podcast. We have posted four episodes so far. Some episodes have over 200 views already. Some of our TikTok videos have over 90,000 views.”

The great thing about having the podcast is the store can reach “anyone,” Cribbley added.

“We've had people travel all the way from Ohio, from the other side of Alabama and from Kentucky to come to our store,” he pointed out.

Cribbley said it is vital to keep current with new releases in guns, ammo, archery and optics because customers are so well-informed.

“We have a lot of customers who bring in articles — ‘This is coming



OnX Hunt provides hunters with unparalleled power for advanced scouting, planning and navigation with a variety of map features that can be downloaded for offline use.

out. This is something we're interested in," he relayed. "Our owners and managers try to get it themselves and check it out. You won't get a knee-jerk reaction from any of us in the store."

### WEIGHING THE RISK

Turkey hunters have a saying: "If a turkey does something twice, make him pay when he does it a third time." Hunter Simmons employs the same philosophy with new gear.

"If we hear about something once, we check into it," he noted. "If somebody asks twice, we get it."

Sometimes a new, much-hyped product is a clunker. Having first-hand experience with the bad and the good ultimately benefits the customer, Cribley maintains.

"It's a risk on some things," he said. "In archery, we were all hearing about the next greatest thing in bows. It had a flaw. It hit social media and just killed it. It had something wrong with the first bunch of limbs. Nobody wanted to touch it. We were sitting

on a whole bunch of these bows. The manufacturer did a great job. They came out with a forever warranty. If you have a broken limb, they will replace it and even transfer the warranty if you sell it or give it away."

There's also a risk in stocking all of the latest and greatest gear, Simmons said, adding that it takes a discerning mind to predict which new items will hit and miss. Knowing your customers reduces the risk.

"For us as a business, it's pretty difficult when everybody comes up with new stuff all the time," Simmons acknowledged. "The money in that. If I get 15 new things, and then 15 new things come out next week, I'll have to discount the others. It can take a big financial toll. It's difficult to keep inventory fresh."

Staying abreast of other trends will engender goodwill with customers, Cribley advises. onX Hunt, a popular mapping app, is a prime example. Young to middle-aged hunters consider onX to be essential equipment, but increasing numbers of senior citizens

use it, too. In the tech world, however, hunters dabble with a long roster of new releases.

"DeerCast is up and coming," Cribley said. "They've made a lot of improvements. I don't think it's going to be as big a hit as OnX, though. And Odyssey is coming out soon. It's kind of going to be like Instagram for hunting and the firearm community. I'm kind of leaning toward it."

### THE FIGHT TO STAY CURRENT

Simmons acknowledges the challenge of staying current in such a rapidly evolving information environment. Consumer appetites for new gear are insatiable, and a deft retailer can't afford to fall behind the curve.



**It's pretty difficult when everybody comes up with new stuff all the time. If I get 15 new things, and then 15 new things come out next week, I'll have to discount the others. It can take a big financial toll."**

**Hunter Simmons • COO**  
Simmons Sporting Goods  
Bastrop, La.

"The publications drove a lot of that, but now with the internet, YouTube and podcasts, information is a lot faster," he reasoned. "If somebody releases

something at SHOT Show, everybody knows about it in 15 minutes. The speed of information is astonishing. We put more value in somebody like yourself than YouTube, but we still have to keep up with what's going on there."

Keeping current also depends on maintaining close relationships with distributors, Simmons emphasized. The reps are the front-line soldiers, so to speak, and they can profoundly influence a retailer's inventory decisions.

"The relationships we've made are a large part of the reason we're successful," Simmons said. "Jason Vanderbrink from Federal, the guys at Vortex, they stay abreast of what's coming. Too many people sit back and wait until it's announced to the public. Going to SHOT Show and doing those things, meeting people, having conversations, making contacts — we'd be nothing without those relationships."

### IF HE KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS ... SELL IT!

Ultimately, astute firearms retailers recognize a large portion of their clientele is extremely knowledgeable. By tapping into their customers' knowledge, they keep their fingers on the pulse of the shooting industry.

"Things change so fast," Simmons concluded. "With the internet, a guy knows more than you about the particular item he's come to buy. The gun or scope they want to buy, they've been studying it for a while. If a customer knows what he wants, sell it to him." **SI**

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# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## FLASHLIGHTS AT POINT OF SALE

By Peter Suci

**H**ere in August, the hours of daylight are already becoming a little shorter — a reminder that in just a few short weeks, we'll have as many hours of darkness in much of the country as sunlight. Yet, throughout the year, there are times when casting some illumination is necessary.

It can be for the hunter who heads out in the pre-dawn hours to a favorite spot, or just when the power goes out and every sound in the house seems to be equally amplified and foreboding. Even as our modern smartphones offer a flashlight feature, the fact remains there are never

enough portable lights when you need them most!

This presents opportunities for gun shops, large and small.

"Flashlights are one of the most effective add-on sales opportunities for dealers looking to boost their bottom line while delivering real value to their customers," explained Brian Tripp, vice president of sales at 5.11 Tactical. "Whether it's for everyday carry, outdoor adventure or professional use, a high-quality flashlight is an essential tool that complements a variety of gear purchases."

### CONVERSATION STARTERS

Even though flashlights are an accessory almost everyone needs at some point, most customers will look right past them if they're not actively in need of one. There can be a wall full of options, and even flashlights on the counter,

“

**FLASHLIGHTS ARE ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE ADD-ON SALES OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEALERS LOOKING TO BOOST THEIR BOTTOM LINE WHILE DELIVERING REAL VALUE TO THEIR CUSTOMERS.”**

**Brian Tripp • Vice President**  
*5.11 Tactical*

yet they might as well be invisible most of the time.

"Lights don't sell themselves," Teri Clark, co-owner of BigShots Indoor Range in Lincoln, Neb., told *Shooting Industry*. "We offer a variety of light options from weapon lights, EDC, home use, travel and for those who want non-lethal defense. Rarely does a customer start out looking for a light. After a little conversation and learning their needs, we can fit the customer with the right product."

Clark added the conversation can turn to high-lumen lights, which can also be carried in a backpack, purse or pocket.

"Lights in the gun case are also a conversation starter for the looky-loo, not to mention an option for those who don't want a firearm or are restricted because of where they work and travel," she shared.

## OFFERING A TACTICAL ADVANTAGE

Where there has been increased attention on lights is in models that provide a tactical advantage in home-defense situations.

"Flashlights have become one of the fastest-growing categories in the shooting industry. Over the past decade, their popularity has surged — driven by training, real-world demand and shooter communities that understand the importance of visibility and tactical advantage," said Neal Conner, director of marketing at Hyatt Guns in Charlotte, N.C.

Connor contended the "flashlight debate"

has boiled down to one key "battlefield," namely, throw vs. flood.

"Throw is the flashlight's ability to project light over long distances," he explained, "It is perfect for identifying threats at range — ideal for rifles and open environments."

This contrasts with flood, which provides a wide beam able to saturate the immediate area with light.

"It is best for CQB (close-quarter battle) scenarios of drills under 50 meters — great for pistols and close-quarters defense," Connor continued.



Streamlight Waypoint 400

Retailers should be ready to provide some insight because many customers may have an idea of what they need when buying a home-defense firearm.

"Many brands of high-quality tactical lights on the market are able to provide the end user a tactical advantage when the need arises. Our philosophy when selling a light to a customer is to purchase a light with high enough lumens to both illuminate your target and disrupt the vision of your adversary," said Jim Clark, co-owner of BigShots Indoor Range.

“

## OUR PHILOSOPHY WHEN SELLING A LIGHT TO A CUSTOMER IS TO PURCHASE A LIGHT WITH HIGH ENOUGH LUMENS TO BOTH ILLUMINATE YOUR TARGET AND DISRUPT THE VISION OF YOUR ADVERSARY.”

Jim Clark • Co-Owner  
BigShots Indoor Range

Jim told *Shooting Industry* many consumers don't understand a basic principle — how many lumens a light should have to be effective.

"Many of the cheaper lights will have a wide beam and are not great unless you get into the 1,000-lumen range, while some of the better focused-beam lights provide an intense beam with only about 500 lumens," he noted.

"Our advice is to purchase the best light you can afford with at least 1,000 lumens; this should be sufficient for most people when used for home defense," Jim added. "In any case, whether you have a mounted light on

your firearm or you carry a handheld light for home and personal defense, in our opinion, it is truly a necessary piece of kit to have for daytime or nighttime defense."

Connor agreed with this assessment, adding in today's environment, a light isn't just an accessory.

"It's a necessity," he emphasized. "It gives the shooter visibility while simultaneously blinding and disorienting a potential threat."

## SELLING LIGHT

Flashlights are a product many consumers may opt to pick up another time, believing it is something more easily purchased online or at the local Home Depot when buying mulch. This is why retailers should be prepared to explain a quality flashlight is something no shooter should be without.



Streamlight ProTac

Rail Mount HP-X Pro

"Flashlights can be positioned as not only an accessory, but an essential tool. There are some lights that are like multi-tools, which can tackle numerous tasks. Then there are the specialty lights designed with a specific task in mind. The key is to identify a need and then determine which light(s) work best by meeting the customer's



**Top:** Terry and Jim Clark opened BigShots in 2012 and learned over the years lights “don’t sell themselves.” Terry shared her staff’s approach to expanding sales: “Rarely does a customer start out looking for a light. After a little conversation and learning their needs, we can fit the customer with the right product.”

**Bottom:** Neal Connor of Hyatt Guns contends the “flashlight debate” has shifted to focus on throw vs. flood.

needs and applications,” stated Allen Lance, Streamlight VP of sales.

Lance said the counter staff should be ready to put the spotlight on basic

requirements while asking the customer how it might be carried.

“The retailer can also make recommendations that can make the weapon

system work more efficiently, and deliver a better user experience for the consumer,” Lance continued. “A shooter with a weapon-mounted light experiences a more secure grip on his/her handgun than by drawing a separate handgun and light from concealed carry. As a result, the shooter is more likely to hit what he/she is aiming at. Using a mounted light on your EDC weapon can provide the most effective two-handed firing grip possible; it can also allow a free support hand to accomplish other actions fast.”

“

## RETAILERS SHOULD BE PREPARED TO EXPLAIN A QUALITY FLASHLIGHT IS SOMETHING NO SHOOTER SHOULD BE WITHOUT.

Sales staff should also be able to address the key selling point of the latest trends in flashlight technology, including USB-rechargeable offerings, lights with dual switches and those with high lumens capable of illuminating a dark alley, vehicle or outdoor path. Being able to address key

points can help “seal the deal,” added Lance.

### A PROVERBIAL SPOTLIGHT ON THE FLOOR

Though lights might be invisible when a customer walks into the shop, having some dedicated space on the sales floor is still recommended. First, as noted, it allows the sales staff the opportunity to direct customer attention to the offerings. As importantly, some customers will be drawn to it.



Streamlight Enduro Pro USB

“We have several feature lights on a dedicated shelf in the gun cases,” said Teri Clark. “Having the product out of the package they can demo, hold and see in our dark/lowlight classroom really makes a difference.”

Likewise, shops can maximize sales by positioning flashlights as a must-have accessory.

This can include “bundling them with firearms, survival kits or work gear and offering in-store demonstrations and educating customers on the advantages of reliable illumination in both emergency and daily scenarios,” suggested Tripp. “By framing flashlights as a critical part of a preparedness mindset, dealers not only increase revenue but also strengthen customer trust and satisfaction.” **SI**



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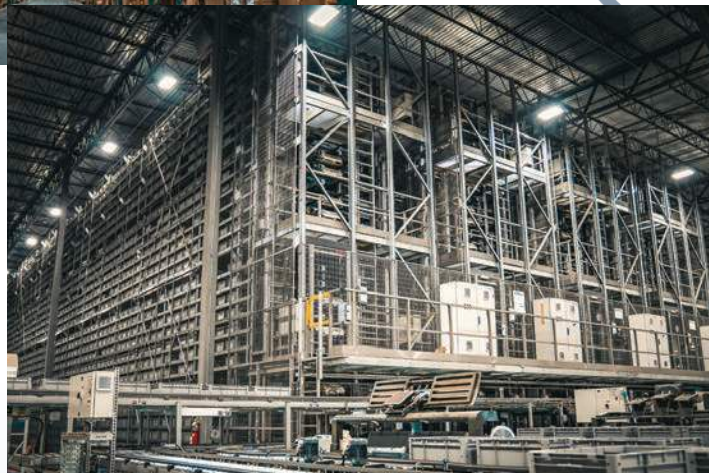
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# Profits At The Range

By Tim Barker

A bowling pin isn't necessarily the kind of thing that grabs the attention of customers strolling through a gun store. Unless, of course, the pin is riddled with bullet holes.

In this case, it tends to draw more than a few looks and questions from customers who wonder aloud: "Can I shoot a bowling pin in here?"

It's just the sort of reaction — and conversation starter — they're hoping for at Ultimate Defense Firing Range & Training Center in St. Peters, Mo. Every customer who walks through the front door knows they can shoot at the range. But they don't necessarily know about all of the different ways they can do it.

"Some people need a reason to shoot," remarked Paul Bastean, managing director of the suburban St. Louis shop. "We do everything we can to provide the reason for them, whether it's self-defense, entertainment, stress relief or whatever."

It's the great thing about having a range. With some imagination, you can turn it into much more than a place for customers to spend an hour honing skills or testing out a new gun. To be sure, stores with larger, more modernized, ranges have greater flexibility. For many shops, however, the range is the heart of the business.

## GET CREATIVE

At Ultimate Defense, creativity is what keeps customers coming back, and it allows the store to match changing needs. Customers' desire to work on self-defense skills is a constant draw, but Bastean has also seen a gradual shift toward shooting as a form of entertainment. They cater to this shift by offering fun options.

Those options come in different shapes and sizes. They have live demonstrations to show what happens when bullets strike ballistic gel. They've brought in doors and walls and shot them with different types of bullets to demonstrate penetration. They have a gun-of-the-month competition where customers shoot cartoon targets (a turkey at Thanksgiving, for example) for chances to win a gun drawing. And of course, there are various competitions, including the bowling pin shoot.

"Creating that intrigue and making people want to participate in your range is the key to success," Bastean said.

It also helps to be flexible, suggests Thom Beyer, director of operations at The Range in McKinney, Texas. Just because you have individual lanes, it doesn't mean you can't open things up with special events allowing customers to move further down range and shoot multiple targets — even on the move.

"It really excites people to go on the other side of the firing line and to be able to shoot in an attacking mode," Beyer shared. "They like to do move-and-shoots and train beyond just standing there."

The relatively new range is equipped with tablet-controlled targets, allowing customers to change courses of fire with the push of a button. They also installed police lights in the baffles — both as a training aid for law enforcement/

security and occasional fun for customers who can experience shooting in a distracting environment.

### **SIMULATORS BRING MIXED RESULTS**

Figuring out which of the newer range technologies — including simulators, virtual reality and smartphone-based apps — can be a challenge, however.

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**Creativity is what keeps customers coming back.**

The Range invested in a simulator that has had mixed results. As a pure training tool (it doesn't offer waves of zombies or other fun scenarios), it has limited appeal to regular customers. Back in Missouri, Ultimate Defense has looked into the technology but isn't convinced it can be monetized.

Bastean likened the simulators to video games that quickly lose their appeal for players.

"They play the game until the end, and then they're done. They don't

play with it anymore," he said.

The answer might be with systems that demand less in the way of upfront capital investment.

Marksman Indoor Range in Waterloo, Neb., is testing out a system by Target Eagle that combines special targets with an app installed on the shooter's smartphone. The system scores the target for the shooter, allowing the results to be uploaded and compared with those of other shooters.

"It will give you immediate feedback on how you're shooting and it will provide an opportunity to shoot in a league where everybody comes in at their leisure and shoots the same target or same course of fire," commented Jessica Ulrich, co-owner. "You could be competing against a buddy who lives out of town."

### **DRIVING TRAFFIC**

The range also serves as a powerful engine for keeping customer interest during those times of year when business slows down. For Marksman Indoor, this means a heavy dose of classes during the summer months when people are distracted by outdoor activities.

"We really fill up the calendar during the summer months," Ulrich said. "With the whole range being slower, we want the classroom to really thrive."

During June, for example, they offered classes on 17 days of the month, with an emphasis on handgun fundamentals

and concealed carry classes. Something to keep in mind, she points out, is they have had great success offering classes for women only. Along with having females on staff, these courses — which are among the first to sell out — have helped expand the store's customer base.

"This demographic is booming," Ulrich relayed. "If I look on my social media, almost 40% of our clients are women."

Interestingly, one of the positive developments for people who want to carry a concealed firearm hasn't been a great thing for training. With more than half of U.S. states having laws allowing constitutional or permit-less carry, the need for concealed carry courses — at least from a legal perspective — has dropped substantially in many areas.

When the change was made in Missouri, there was a noticeable impact on demand for training courses at Ultimate Defense, noted Bastean. And it wasn't just the beginner-type classes that dropped off. Often, the students in those courses would come out asking about the advanced classes offered by the range.

"It's very much a leader into our other training courses," he noted. "When we see a reduction in the amount of people coming into the entry course, we see a wave that goes through all of our training."

### **MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES**

Range memberships



Marksman Indoor Range offers several bowling pin and pinhead shoots each month, with Ulrich reporting they sell out briskly.

can also help boost traffic during slow times. At The Range in Texas, they have a variety of memberships, covering individuals, families, first responders and professional trainers. They also offer a deal aimed specifically at drawing in customers during off-peak hours.

The store's silver membership is available for people over the age of 65, offering access to the range Tuesday through Friday.

"This fills the emptiness during the day," Beyer said. "It's been kind of neat. We've built up a group of guys who come in and shoot together. They'll shoot for 20 minutes and then drink coffee and have social time for two hours."

More than that, though, memberships convey a sense of belonging to

customers. This comes out in a variety of ways, including having range priority over nonmembers, discounts and free gun cleanings.

"They just enjoy being able to set down their card, get their target, go in and shoot and then walk out the door," he explained.

At Marksman Indoor in Nebraska, Ulrich touts memberships as a way to gain a commitment from customers, who are far more likely to return to the store and range if they've paid the annual fee.

"They've invested the money. Ideally, they'll be here weekly training and getting in front of us," she maintained. "In turn, it builds sales for us every time they walk in the door. It could be a box of ammo, targets and an opportunity to tell them about courses

and events."

It's also difficult to overstate the pure monetary boost provided by memberships. At Missouri's Ultimate Defense, membership offerings include both annual and monthly options. Currently, the monthly option is proving to be the easier sell. It's certainly noticed each month when those payments come in.

"It's kind of the foundation on which everything else is built," Bastean stated. "Having that massive drop of cash on the seventh of every month — it's just a party."

#### GETTING THE WORD OUT

If potential customers don't know about you or your range, it doesn't really matter if you have one. Figuring out the most effective way to reach people can be one of the most significant challenges, particularly if you are operating on a small-business budget.

Ultimate Defense has had good luck with local billboards along area highways, while radio has been a disaster. The Range, in Texas, has driven traffic with ads in a small circular delivered to all of the homes in the area and its own outdoor signage. And Marksman Indoor, with a limited marketing budget, relies more on word of mouth and social media.

Social media, of course, has been a frustrating puzzle for gun stores. But there have been signs this year of a softening of some of the rigid, and often difficult to interpret, restrictions on Facebook.

Ultimate Defense has

noticed a drop in the frequency of violations generated by antigun complaints that would often follow the store's Facebook posts. They haven't tried mentioning gun prices on the platform, but regular marketing and informational posts have fared much better lately.

“

**It's the great thing about having a range. With some imagination, you can turn it into much more than a place for customers to spend an hour honing skills or testing out a new gun.**

"We're happy to be able to put our training and other stuff out there because people really are not going to Facebook to buy," Bastean said. "It's about getting people in here for training, keeping them up on current events and putting some stupid stuff out there that makes them bookmark it for the future." **SI**



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**W**hen you combine a sleek barrel, black powder and a steel ball with the flick of a flame, you get a deadly weapon

historically used in war and to hunt. The muzzleloader has come a long way in design and effectiveness since Marin le Bourgeoys developed the first flintlock in 1610. Today's muzzleloaders have advanced features, making them easier to use and clean, which is generating interest and boosting sales nationwide.

We spoke to Gregg Ritz, president and CEO of Thomson/Center Arms, and Seth Legere, divisional manager for shooting sports, fishing and archery at the

Kittery Trading Post (KTP) in Kittery, Maine, to learn about the current muzzleloading market and how to increase sales by understanding muzzleloading options and customer demographics.

#### **TOP BRANDS, PRODUCTS & INNOVATIONS**

"The sport of muzzleloading is getting reborn," Ritz said. "Because of new technologies and advancements driven by gun companies but supported by optics, bullet, powder and accessory companies, the industry has multiple manufacturers rallying behind a segment in a sport, which ultimately helps sell more product."

In other words, muzzleloaders are a revolutionized weapon with advanced accessories — and people are noticing.

# The Muzzleloading Market Rundown

By Cassie Gasaway



Both Ritz and Legere credit new technologies for growing interest and future sales in the muzzleloading market. Top innovations include:

- The FireStick, a waterproof, self-contained and pre-measured powder charge that makes muzzleloaders easier and safer to load and unload.
- New powders like Blackhorn 209 by Hodgdon Powder, a propellant with a nitrocellulose base that burns much cleaner than traditional black powders.
- More aerodynamic bullets like the Hornady Bore Driver ELD-X, which allow for longer bullet flight trajectories and more consistent group sizes at longer ranges.
- Better optics, including scopes by Leupold, Vortex or Swarovski Optik, with custom dial settings tailored to a user's ballistic performance for improved accuracy.

Ritz said shooting beyond 100 yards before the 2000s was unheard of. Now, the combination of these new components gives muzzleloading hunters a platform to shoot at extended ranges with better accuracy, meaning they can legitimately harvest an animal at 500 yards with the right setup and dedicated practice.

"[The technology] is bringing new people into the fold to experience the changes," he said.

Legere agrees. "Many of these innovations make muzzleloading a lot less confusing for customers," he said. "The market is much different than five years ago. The guns are better quality, they have better safety features built in and they're so much easier to load and clean."

Like many other outdoor recreational activities, muzzleloader use increased during the pandemic. Legere said sales have stayed consistent over the past few years and he expects

similar trends in future years.

To keep the momentum and capitalize on the release of these new technologies, retailers and manufacturers must educate and inform new and existing customers on muzzleloading capabilities while boosting their sales strategies to generate more sales.

#### APPEALING TO CUSTOMERS

Fortunately, the new technologies are bringing much-needed attention to muzzleloaders. Established customers are buzzing about what's new. Meanwhile, there's increased interest among newcomers, who were previously intimidated by the muzzleloader's complexity or turned off by its limited capabilities.

**"[Muzzleloading has] the technical aspect, challenge and sportsmanship of archery on a firearm platform. It's a great crossover sport with lots of potential."**

**Gregg Ritz • President**  
*T/C Arms*

In general, people use muzzleloaders because:

1. They like the challenge, uniqueness or historical element of single-shot guns.
2. They like to experiment or tinker with muzzleloader setups to create a personalized load that suits their needs.
3. Special muzzleloader seasons give them more hunting opportunities.

4. Compared to other weapons, fewer people use muzzleloaders, so there's less competition and often bigger, more abundant game animals available during muzzleloader-only seasons.

While anyone can use a muzzleloader, the audience with the most buying potential is anyone under 45 years old, but more specifically those in the 18 to 30 range. Ritz further pinpoints young bowhunters, who love a good challenge, as top candidates.

Muzzleloader sales boomed in the 1990s and slowed in the early 2000s when crossbows became popular. As such, the younger generation likely hasn't been introduced to muzzleloaders, and with more user-friendly models and features, now's the time to make that introduction.

Retailers should explain the muzzleloading benefits outlined above and recommend a model that meets the customer's goals and budget. Starting someone with a low to mid-range price option gives them room to grow. Retailers must provide education and support and be available for questions and assistance as customers begin their muzzleloading journey.

To further appeal to the younger generation, KTP continually donates to shooting clubs or organizations with youth programs. Their sponsorship and involvement with like-minded groups help bring awareness and familiarity to their shop, creating a segue for new customers.

Additionally, shops must not neglect established customers, who likely range from 45 to 65 years old and are either loyal to traditional muzzleloaders or love to buy new gear, tinker with different loads and personalize their setup. Either way, nurturing relationships with existing users may lead to future sales, especially if they involve their kids and grandkids.



Since reacquiring T/C Arms in 2024, Gregg Ritz has spent extensive time at the range fine-tuning upcoming product offerings. The ENCORE PROHunter returned to the market earlier this year, poised to propel the muzzleloading segment forward.

## Muzzleloading Sales Strategies

Use the tips below to appeal to all users and boost sales at your shop.

- **Make Muzzleloaders An Option:** Muzzleloaders are the recurve bows of the firearm industry. They're often overshadowed by their advanced counterparts, but when used correctly, they're just as deadly and fun to use. Ensure customers know they're an option. Stock them, market them and show them to newcomers, reminding them of modern, user-friendly models. Often, a lack of interest is related to a lack of awareness or understanding.
- **Educate And Diversify Your Sales Team:** Don't send your employees to the sales floor ill-equipped. It's imperative they receive proper muzzleloader education and shooting experience so they can confidently instruct and direct customers. Your sales are contingent upon their ability to sell. Also, diversify your sales team to make them more approachable. Legere shared the gun floor staff at KTP has men and women — ranging in age from their early 20s to nearing retirement — to help customers connect and feel comfortable while shopping.
- **Don't Neglect Accessories:** T/C Arms President Gregg Ritz said retailers must carry loading and cleaning supplies in addition to projectiles and powers to support a well-rounded system. "The gun is a big sale, but the accessories are consumables, and they have

good margins," he stated. "Make sure you're authentic in the accessory space or you're leaving money on the table."

While the FireStick technology eliminates the need for some accessories, like powder measuring devices, Seth Legere, divisional manager at Kittery Trading Post, said there will always be purists. He encourages retailers to stock accordingly.

"While traditional black powder is harder to get with more stringent carrying requirements, there will always be a desire and we must be able to cater to those customers," he emphasized.

- **Merchandising Matters:** Where and how you display your products affects buying behaviors. Put muzzleloaders center stage at the gun counter and use endcaps to highlight muzzleloading accessories so they get proper attention. Using signs or stickers that read "best seller," "customer favorite" or "ideal for (model)" helps customers buy with confidence. Bundling products in packages for specific models enables customers to easily buy what they need.
- **Host Classes:** Many people believe muzzleloaders are difficult to use, hard to clean and complicated to operate. Retailers must recognize and remove those participation barriers to make owning and shooting a muzzleloader more inviting. Hold a muzzleloading class to teach basic operations or have a field day to give customers a chance to shoot different models. Classes give customers face to face instruction with hands-on muzzleloading experience. Remember to have proper insurance, safety measures and paperwork in place.

## THE FUTURE OF MUZZLELOADING

Legere said the top selling muzzleloading brands at KTP are Traditions, CVA and Woodman Arms, a local brand. He also said there's a pent-up demand for Thomson/Center Arms products since the brand regained independence in April 2024 and is reinvigorating the muzzleloading market.

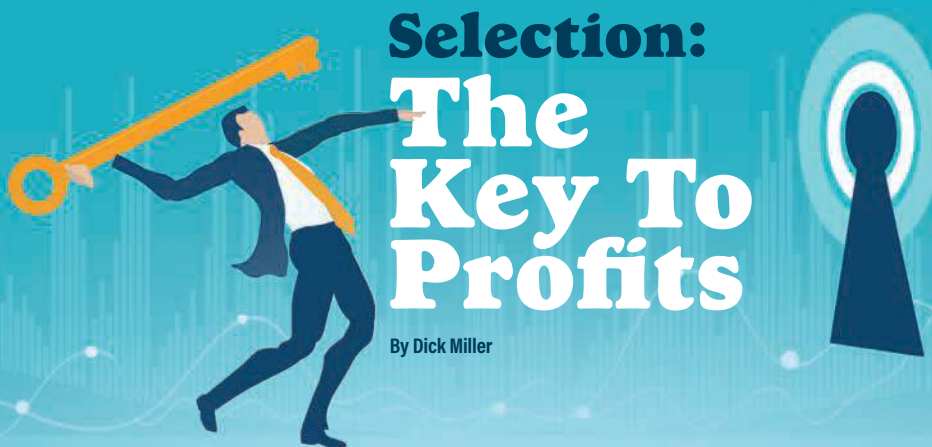
**"The market is much different than five years ago. The guns are better quality, they have better safety features built in and they're so much easier to load and clean."**

**Seth Legere • Divisional Manager**  
Kittery Trading Post  
Kittery, Maine

Ritz said T/C Arms is innovating many products and will release a FireStick model, Triumph, in the near future. He believes 50% of all muzzleloading firearms sales will have firestick ignition and hopes to acquaint people of all ages with this traditional style of hunting.

To succeed in the muzzleloading market, firearms dealers must focus on new customers and the things that make muzzleloaders special.

"Muzzleloading will never be a 1,000-yard sport or a multi-shot sport," Ritz said. "They'll always have limitations but it's what makes them a unique hybrid sport. They have the technical aspect, challenge and sportsmanship of archery on a firearm platform. It's a great crossover sport with lots of potential." **SI**



# Selection: The Key To Profits

By Dick Miller

**IS** there one formula most likely to guarantee success in the shooting goods business?

After 40 years of observing the gun game from the viewpoint of retailer, wholesaler and manufacturer, I have concluded there is one surefire method that is superior to all the others. That method or formula can be stated very simply: Create an impression in the minds of consumers if they want or need a shooting item, you have it or can get it.

I have observed the operations of many thousands of sporting goods retailers over that 40-year period, and find while there are many differences in the character of their stores, the one thing they have in common is selection.

When economic conditions are booming, and shortages are not uncommon, shops with limited selection do very well, even thrive in many cases. But when the going gets rough, it's the shop with selection that surges to the top.

## CONTRASTING FORTUNES

Just last week, I visited two shops in the same city about 1975 performance. Shop A ruefully admitted an almost 50% drop in sales. Shop B produced evidence to support a *gain* of almost that amount.

Theoretically, the two shops draw from the same market area. Both are adequately financed. Both have competent sales people. Both use the same sources of supply. The difference?

If there is a gun on the market, domestic or imported, shop B probably has one in stock, or knows where they might put their hands on one.

If a consumer is looking for ammo for his pet rifle, shop B has it, if it was ever made here or abroad. The other shop has

the common fodder, like .30-06, .308, .270, .30-30 and .243, but not much beyond that.

If a consumer in that city needs a black powder accessory, a target gadget or just about anything in the reloading field, the one shop very likely has it in stock. The other shop carries some reloading, some black powder items and has some knowledge of target equipment plus a source of supply.

But, one shop dropped 50% in one year, and the other gained almost as much.

Price was not a factor. Neither shop is a price-cutter. Both use promotions in which case items are bought right to promote. Neither is in the business to give goods away. It takes no ability at all to give goods away.

## ONE ABSOLUTE

There are a lot of variables in this business, but there is also one absolute — you must make a profit to stay in business. When I see a store embark on a program of price-cutting as a method of doing business, I always wonder what is going through the minds of the owners. It seems to me there is a fairly consistent timetable for the strictly price-cutting operation. The first year is big, some problems start to show up the second year and these firms rarely survive the third year.

You will notice I said “strictly price-cutting operation.” I make this distinction because I know and you know some firms are very competitive price-wise, and are still called price cutters.

When you look closer, you'll find these firms have excellent selections and their price cutting is usually confined to a rather narrow range of items. On another tack, the selection method gaining success in the gun business is a far more effective method in a soft market.

Much of a boom market is supported by occasional hunters and shooters who get the fever and buy a gun or two. The long-time gun operation probably does 75% of its business with regular customers, the so-called “gun nut.” These customers come back again and again over the years, through good times and bad. Show them a new, different or better item, and they have to have it.

## BETTER TO BE WRONG WITH ONE ...

There are far fewer financial pitfalls in becoming or being a selection-oriented shop. When selection is your forte, in most cases you need only have one of an item in stock. If that item fails to sell, you have only one to move.

When you buy in volume for price, you can end the year or season with horrendous carryover, which creates all kinds of problems. And, sad to relate, it is not easy to move goods at the wrong time of the year, no matter how low you price it.

There is another advantage to the selection method of operation. Since selection implies a wide range, there need not be large quantities of any one item in stock.

Thus, you can avoid getting caught with a large amount of something which changes in sales appeal because of price, features, competition or the vagaries of consumer demand.

As I implied earlier, it is better to be wrong when you have one of an item, rather than 50 or 100. **\$I**

**Editor's Note:** This story is a lightly edited reprint of Dick Miller's popular *Firearms Retailing* column, originally published in the April 1976 issue of *The Shooting Industry*. Nearly 50 years later, would Miller's take be as effective in today's market? We invite you to read and share your thoughts with us. [editor@shootingindustry.com](mailto:editor@shootingindustry.com).

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By Jenna Buckley



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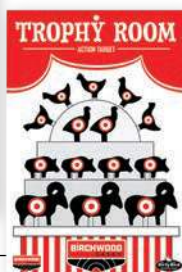
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[keltecweapons.com](http://keltecweapons.com)

KelTec's **CALIFORNIA COMPLIANT P15** ships with a 10-round magazine to meet the state's capacity restrictions. The striker-fired, polymer-framed pistol weighs 16.56 oz., unloaded. It features a tritium and fiber optic front sight paired with a fully adjustable, two-dot tritium rear sight for reliable targeting in a range of lighting conditions. The pistol's compact design measures 6.6" in overall length and 5" in height, with a slide width of 0.875". The 5-lb. trigger pull delivers a smooth and dependable shooting experience.

## BIRCHWOOD CASEY

(877) 269-8490  
[birchwoodcasey.com](http://birchwoodcasey.com)

The **GUNSLINGER SILHOUETTE DIRTY BIRD** and **GUNSLINGER SKYLINE DIRTY BIRD** targets from Birchwood Casey measure 12"x18" and allow users to easily spot their shots with the intense splatter offering superior downrange contrast. The targets are ideal for all types of pistol-action shooting thanks to its heavy tagboard construction. Both target styles are sold in packs of six.



## RETAY USA

(800) 977-5749  
[retayusa.com](http://retayusa.com)

Engineered around an aerospace-grade 7075 aluminum alloy internal frame and slide, housed in a polymer lower chassis, the DA/SA **RXP22** pistol in .22 LR from RETAY ARMS combines strength and ergonomics in a lightweight, durable package. The slide, drilled and tapped for RMR and RMSC optics, includes aggressive front and rear serrations for easy manipulation. It includes a universal mounting plate for additional optic options. A precision-drilled, chrome-finished steel barrel (4") ensures accuracy and is available in threaded or standard configurations. It arrives with a 13-round magazine and a 10-round magazine. The RXP22 is available in a variety of Cerakote finishes, including OD Green, FDE, Sniper Grey and matte black, as well as two-tone variants.



## THYRM

[thyrn.com](http://thyrn.com)

The **SWITCHBACK 3.0 DEEP CARRY** from Thyrn enhances the functionality and grip of a tactical flashlight, providing users with improved light retention and allowing their hands to remain free for other critical tasks. Designed for discreet carry, its steel wire clip provides a low visual profile and a premium feel. Users can select from two clip heights, allowing for a customized ride height in the pocket and enhanced access to the tailcap switch. Its slim ring enables users to engage the SwitchBack ring even when positioned below the pocket opening.



## REMINGTON AMMUNITION

(800) 243-9700  
remington.com

**STANDARD V** from Remington is available in .22 LR — ideal for high-volume shooters seeking an economical rimfire cartridge. The 38-grain load reaches a velocity of 1,080 fps and is sold in 550-round boxes.



## SAFARILAND

(800) 347-1200  
safariland.com

Designed for comfort, reliability and subtle customization, the **GRAVITY** holster from Safariland delivers a lightweight, low-profile design without compromising security or function. It is built from rugged SafariLaminate with a tough Cordura exterior, and the passive trigger guard detent paired with adjustable tension ensures secure firearm retention during dynamic movement. Key features include an adjustable cant, fully enclosed trigger guard, tension adjustment, front sight clearance (0.406"), compatibility with all Safariland three-hole pattern mounts, fits belt widths up to 1.75" and is IDPA and USPSA approved.

## BARNES BULLETS

(800) 574-9200  
barnesbullets.com

Barnes Bullets' **HARVEST COLLECTION** ammunition line is designed and engineered specifically for whitetail and thin-skinned game hunting. Powered by Sierra Bullets' Tipped GameKing and backed by Barnes Bullets' loading standards, this collaboration marks the first of its kind between the two brands. With optimized performance out to 400 yards and loaded with temperature-stable propellant, the Harvest Collection is the superior choice for the deer hunter and others hunting thin-skinned game. It is available in .223 Rem., .243 Win., 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5 PRC, .270 Win., 7mm Rem. Mag., .308 Win., .30-06 Springfield, .300 Win. Mag.



## APEX AMMUNITION

(662) 441-2739  
apexammunition.com

APEX Ammunition's **PREDATOR** line of Tungsten Super Shot (TSS) shotshells are meticulously handloaded to deliver exceptional downrange energy with maximum lethality. Predator loads are offered in 12-GA 3.5" and 3" shells in shot sizes 2, 4 and BB; and 2.75" 20-GA loads in shot sizes 2 and 4. The ultra-dense, larger-size pellets deliver a devastating payload with tight patterns and superior penetration.



## PROOF RESEARCH

(406) 756-9290  
proofresearch.com

The **TUNDRA Ti X** long-range hunting rifle from PROOF Research is engineered around the new right-hand Ti X titanium action from Defiance Machine. The rifle boasts a high-strength, ultra-lightweight receiver; PROOF's patented carbon fiber-wrapped; a match-grade barrel; and a Monte-Carlo style carbon fiber Tundra stock. It features an adjustable TriggerTech Special Trigger, BDL-style magazine and extreme-accuracy bedding, ensuring tight tolerances and consistent shot placement. Every rifle is guaranteed to deliver sub 1/2 MOA accuracy. The Tundra Ti X is available in 6.5 CM, 6.5 PRC, 7MM PRC, 7 BC, .308 Win., .300 WM, .300 WSM and .300 PRC. Finish options include Black Granite, Green Granite (pictured), TFDE, Black Jungle Camo and Green Jungle Camo.



## LASER AMMO USA

(516) 858-1262  
laserammo.com

**RECOIL ENABLED H&K USP TRAINING PISTOLS** in compact and full-size .45 models from Laser Ammo USA are officially licensed Heckler & Koch USP from Umarex. The pistols are outfitted with Laser Ammo's REAL (Recoil Enabled Airsoft Laser) Conversion Barrel and feature a PST (piston) cap in Red or Infrared laser. The compact model is ideal for concealed carry training and small-handed shooters. An ambidextrous magazine release, extended trigger guard, white three-dot combat sights, functional slide lock, magazine release and takedown features deliver a comprehensive training experience. The full-size .45 model is designed to accurately replicate the weight and feel of the pistol that inspires it. It is designed for holster draw practice, trigger control, reload drills and tactical movement. It includes a functional slide, safety, magazine release and takedown lever, all built on a durable polymer frame with a metallic alloy slide.

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## NEW PRODUCTS



### DICKINSON ARMS

(805) 978-8565  
[dickinsonarms.com](http://dickinsonarms.com)

Dickinson Arms' **SIDELITE** side-by-side shotguns boast figured walnut stocks, selectable triggers and quality construction throughout. The 12- and 20-GA models are available with either extractors or ejectors in the receiver, while the 28 GA and .410 models both have extractors. The 12-GA Sidelite comes with 28" barrels, and the 20, 28 and .410 models come with 26" barrels.



### MESA TACTICAL

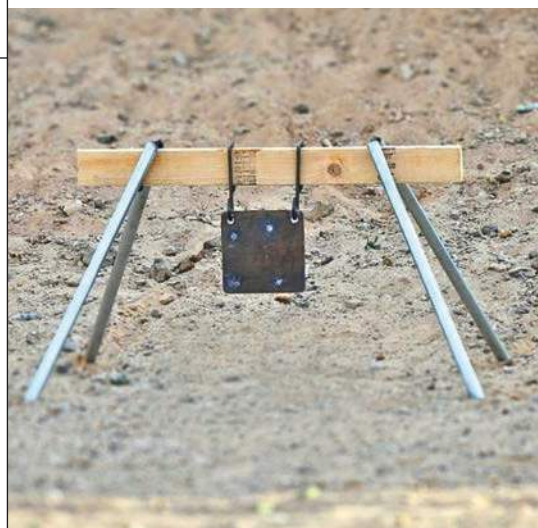
(775) 333-9800  
[mesatactical.com](http://mesatactical.com)

Mesa Tactical launches **PRO PACKAGES**, packaged upgrade kits for the Remington 870, Tac-13/V3, Tac-14, Mossberg 930/940, Beretta 1301 and Benelli Supernova, as well as the M2/M4 platforms. The kits include a LEO Gen II telescoping stock adapter with integrated pistol grip and adjustable length of pull, a hydraulic recoil buffer system for significantly reduced felt recoil and faster follow-up shots, SureShell aluminum shell carriers in various capacities, built from aircraft-grade materials, QD sling mounts, mil-spec receiver extension tubes, and all required mounting hardware.

### RE-NINE SAFETY

(480) 620-0873  
[re-ninesafety.com](http://re-ninesafety.com)

Re-Nine Safety introduces the **STEEL TARGET KIT**, an all-in-one solution designed to deliver instant feedback and elevate training for new gun owners, target shooters and seasoned marksmen. The Steel Target Kit includes a 3/8" x 8" square AR500 gong, an A-frame stand (30" legs, 30" crossbar, 1" EMT conduit legs and a 2x4 crossbar). The range-ready design packs conveniently into one box for quick setup and portability.



Governors on July 7, which includes an extensive vetting process and interviews by existing members of the board. So, he's very keen on defending the Second Amendment and seeing businesses of all kinds in our industry flourish — especially dealers.

## HOW MUCH OF AN INCREASE?

In the short-term, Maddox predicts the suppressor market will face some uncertainty because patient consumers will save \$200 if they can hold off on their suppressor purchase until after this year.

“The only negative I've seen [with OBBA signed into law] is the large gap until the tax stamp is removed,” he observed. “Consumers are going to be less likely to buy. I wish the people who crafted it would have made it instant or even a delay of 30 days — that would have been best for the consumers and dealers.”



**It's a bit of a murky NFA landscape, but there is potential for it to be a real profit center for dealers ready to capitalize on what will be a significant rush in buying at the start of the 2026 New Business Year.**

Due to the nature of his business, Maddox has numerous contacts at the ATF's NFA branch, and they told him they're equipped to handle what will be a significant jump in suppressor-buying volume at the start of next year.

“It's hard to say what the volume across the market will be. I know for us, when we have run ‘Tax Stamps are On Us’ sales our volume typically jumps 300%. So, the market could see that much of an increase, at least initially,” he said.

In preparation for the possibility of HPA passing, Maddox shared BANISH

elevated the scale of its production — so they're well equipped for a demand surge when it likely happens next year. Additionally, BANISH has established a dealer network, which it didn't have until prior to this year.

“We're anticipating this fall there will be additional interest from dealers who are preparing to get ready once the tax stamp is removed in January,” he said. “From a BANISH perspective, we're in a good spot because we have inventory ready and dealers weren't able to carry it until the beginning of this year — so it's something new for customers.”

## MARKET DRIVERS

When asked why suppressors have enjoyed such a market “boom,” Maddox shared it's a collection of factors.

“The quick turnaround from submitting paperwork to being approved is one significant reason, but inflation also played a role. \$200 today isn't nearly as expensive as \$200 in the 1930s,” he said. (Just for my own education, I researched \$200 in 1934 is equivalent in purchasing power to \$4797.99 today — so yes, a big difference!)

Maddox also highlighted education through personal experiences (a hunter who tells his hunting buddy he'll never hunt without a suppressor again is a powerful testimony) and repeat buyers (those who will buy a rimfire suppressor, .30-cal. and 9mm to run the gamut on their firearms) have driven the market forward.

Innovation is important to drive any segment. To this end, BANISH just released the first shotgun suppressor made for hunters — the BANISH 12. Its lightweight (constructed entirely of titanium) and comes standard with Improved Cylinder, Modified and Full chokes. Maddox noted it received a great reception from dealers at the Sports South Dealer Show held June 16–18.

## ATTRACTING BUYERS

As suppressor manufacturers, wholesalers and SOT FFL dealers prepare for the coming rush once

the tax stamp is removed, Maddox shared some tangible tips for dealers to enhance their market share in this profitable category.

“I will tell you, your staff's confidence in doing the paperwork is a direct correlation to how many suppressors you will sell. What hurts a lot of dealers is saying things like, ‘Well, sometimes I do the paperwork’ or ‘I don't know if we're doing it right.’ Even if you're nervous about it, you can't let the customer hear it. Because if you do, they're not going to have confidence in you doing the paperwork,” he advised.

Maddox recommended taking advantage of resources like NSSF webinars to learn more about selling suppressors and other NFA items, and to have a dedicated member of your team study it and really understand it.

“We had customers come up to us at the recent Sports South Dealer Show who told us if it weren't for Silencer Central last summer, they weren't sure if they'd still be open. With the margins and interest, they were able to stay afloat,” Maddox relayed.

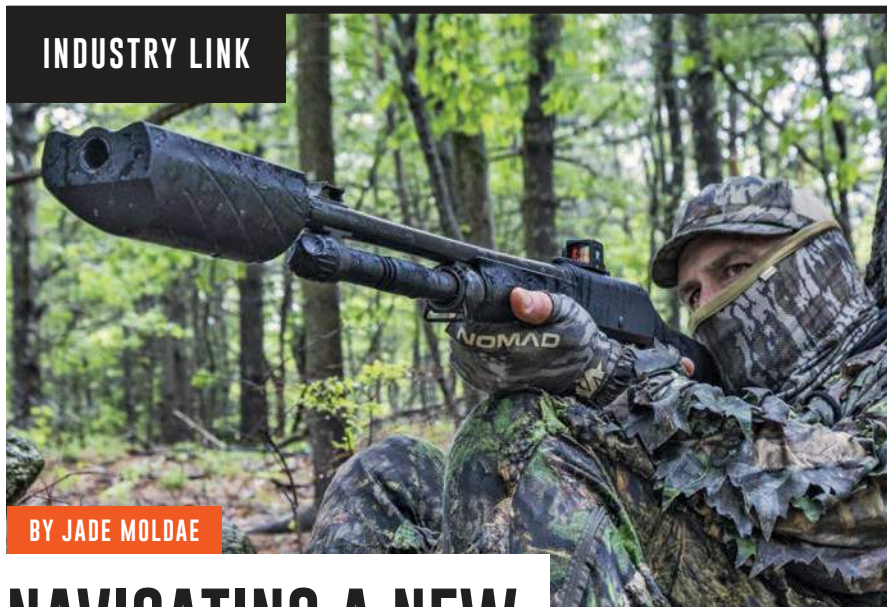
He continued, “Dealers just need to be engaged in the discussion and ask new customers, ‘Have you considered a suppressor?’ Use the excuse it's the fastest-growing accessory in the industry and you think they'd want to know more about it.”

Maddox shared who to target for becoming a first-time suppressor owner.

“Suppressors aren't cheap. The first market to go after is your professionals or empty nesters who have more disposable income,” he stated. “High-volume buyers — those who enjoy shooting and buy lots of ammunition — are also going to be on board with having a suppressor.”

It's a bit of a murky NFA landscape, but there is potential for it to be a real profit center for dealers ready to capitalize on what will be a significant rush in buying at the start of the 2026 New Business Year.

As always, we want to hear from you: What are your expectations for suppressors/SBRs/SBSs through the rest of 2025 and the start of 2026? Let us know: [editor@shootingindustry.com](mailto:editor@shootingindustry.com). **SI**



BY JADE MOLDAE

## NAVIGATING A NEW NFA LANDSCAPE

While there was significant momentum for the Hearing Protection Act (H.R.404/S.364) to be passed as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBB)—which would have removed suppressors from the purview of the National Firearms Act (NFA)—it wasn't meant to be. However, firearms owners and prospective suppressor/SBR/SBS buyers can take solace in the fact that the \$200 tax stamp fee on suppressors, short-barrel rifles (SBR) and short-barrel shotguns (SBS) will be no more starting Jan. 1, 2026.

To organizations like the American Suppressor Association (ASA), it's a step in the right direction, but leaves room for more work to be done.

"While we fought hard on behalf of millions of Americans for full removal of suppressors and other items from the NFA tax scheme, this outcome is a critical step in our plan to dismantle the NFA once and for all. We will not stop fighting until that goal is achieved," said Knox Williams, ASA president and executive director, in a statement disseminated when the bill was sent to President Trump's desk on July 3.

Williams shared his organization — along with the NRA, Firearms Policy Coalition and Second Amendment Foundation — is actively exploring "every available option" to challenge the constitutionality of the NFA in federal court.

### MAKE NOISE NOW OR IN JANUARY?

Without question, the segment making the most noise (pun intended) through the first half of 2025 has been suppressors — especially when compared to the overall contracted market.

As such, suppressors will be an "interesting" segment to observe because consumers are now faced with two options: 1) They can decide to buy now (and perhaps take advantage of a promotion covering the cost of the tax stamp) while supply is steady, or 2) They can wait to fill out their Form 4 after Jan. 1, 2026, save \$200 but likely be part of an avalanche of Form 4s coming in for processing.

Will ATF be able to handle such volume? Some consumers may not want to find out and buy now. Others may roll the dice and wait.

To get a better idea of what to expect for the rest of this year (and beyond), we sat down with Brandon Maddox of Silencer Central and BANISH Suppressors, who offered his insights and predictions of the changing suppressor landscape.

### INFIGHTING DOESN'T HELP

Before delving into the interview, I want to address the "elephant in the room." In mid-May, some industry influencers labeled Silencer Central a "traitor" for what they perceived to

◀ Introduced just last month, the BANISH 12 shotgun suppressor is built with waterfowl, upland game and turkey hunters in mind. (Image: BANISH Suppressors)

be Silencer Central's efforts behind the scenes to halt the passage of the Hearing Protection Act (HPA) — which, if passed, would have negatively impacted Silencer Central's business model in 42 states where suppressors are legal — and were, therefore, anti-gun.

Such is our industry's desire to turn on each other at times: Silencer Central faced visceral anger from the public and was even mocked by other companies — but it was short-lived.

"It was one day, really, we had a lot of feedback from people calling in. With the people who called in, we only received one call from a customer. It was a lot of feedback from people who maybe didn't know we existed before," Maddox said. "There were a lot of comments online, but it seemed like most people didn't really research it a whole lot. They heard one thing and went running looking for someone to blame."

“

**Without question, the segment making the most noise (pun intended) through the first half of 2025 has been suppressors.**

Maddox confirmed his company, indeed, supports the Second Amendment and was in favor of the Hearing Protection Act (HPA). Like any successful business, Maddox shared Silencer Central was ready to "pivot" if HPA became law. BANISH Suppressors, a brand created and sold by Silencer Central, would stand to benefit immensely if HPA passed (which makes the criticism even more outlandish).

A final word on Maddox's commitment to our industry: He was appointed to the NSSF Board of

Continued on p. 45

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