

MEREDITH CAROLINA CASE STUDY:

Spreading Awareness: How Meredith Carolina Helped MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville Relay their Message Through TV Advertising

THE PROBLEM:

The global COVID-19 pandemic, especially its impact on the United States, has touched every industry. Fluctuating markets, unpredictable job outlook, and an election year have caused uncertainty in nearly every facet of life.

An increase in consumer demand and a temporary manufacturing shutdown meant an early sales season and inventory shortages for MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville, a premier full-service boating brand in South Carolina. The company is known for providing unparalleled personal customer service and representing quality brands, including Sea Ray, Bennington, Scout, Yamaha Jet Boats, MasterCraft, and NauticStar.

MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville has deep relationships with its manufacturers. Everyone in the industry is experiencing high demand and lean inventory, and it's necessary to work through those challenges to offer the high standards customers have come to expect. From the beginning, they committed to working with OEMs to help them deliver the products needed to satisfy customer demand.



"I think most businesses faced a lot of uncertainties when the pandemic hit. Inventory was lower, but our team is trained to sell ordered boats, and MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville has the added benefit of selection across various market."

- Scott Holmes, MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville
General Manager

Specific Business Objectives & Goals:

Due to industry-wide shortages and their unique position to sell boats across markets, MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville had several critical business objectives and goals while marketing throughout the pandemic.

Whereas a typical dealer might take six weeks to intake an ordered boat, MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville can execute the same process within a third of that window by transferring units from other locations. Potential boaters also have the option to custom order a boat and wait to have it built.

To the surprise of the MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville team, many customers have been fine with the delay. As a result, MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville had a clear goal of maintaining the course: providing the world's best pleasure boating experience for both customers and team members. Boating is an activity that supports social distancing guidelines and an escape from the stressors of life, allowing families to reconnect on the water. The MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville team wanted to market those activities and encourage families to take advantage of those opportunities.



THE PROCESS:

MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville has always focused on preparing for the long-term needs of the company and its customers. Most of the team, for example, already has experience working remotely. The company also invests heavily in technology to enhance the boat shopping and ownership experience. MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville pioneered the "online boat show" experience and has hosted seven virtual events since 2018. Standard practices for the company include:

- *Online chat*
- *Interactive webinars*
- *Options to place a boat on hold*
- *The mobile Boating App*

MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville's goal has always been to change the way customers experience boating. The company also chose to invest in marketing to stay in front of customers, offering a new view on social distancing with everyone on the water.

Transparent messaging about safety, options to take virtual walkthroughs, and maintaining social distancing guidelines all gave customers ease in the boat buying process.

"We decided to start with commercials and will hopefully build from there," says Holmes. "The team at Meredith Carolina was very easy to work with and made the entire experience easy for us."

THE RESULTS:

The MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville team considers the boating community family, including manufacturers and partners like FOX Carolina. Since MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville has been working on enhanced digital capabilities for years, the team can use its technology and advertising partners to help push out messages. The hope has been to keep people employed and customers entertained throughout this challenging period.

By working closely with Meredith Carolina, MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville has achieved their goal of spreading the word about everything the boating industry has to offer.

"My best friend is a GM of some of the local Harley Davidson shops, and he solely uses Meredith Carolina for all of their marketing - from website to advertising and digital. So they came highly recommended to me," says Holmes.

MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville plans to continue enhancing customers' online experience, especially as it notes the success of their current marketing measures. Plans include virtual boat walkthroughs, which will allow customers to tour new boats from anywhere using FaceTime, Zoom, or other video conferencing programs. Customers can complete the entire boat shopping experience without stepping foot into a dealership.

By using digital resources to securely document the transaction and obtain signatures, coordinate spot deliveries, and set up virtual boat orientations, a new owner can take delivery and be on the water in no time. The team is even looking at bringing events and boating classes to a virtual format.

Meredith Carolina has delivered on the MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville team's expectations, helping them achieve their goals during an unprecedented time. Television commercials helped to raise brand awareness and brand trust by giving consumers an idea of what to expect from MarineMax Hall Marine Greenville as their employees and customers adjust to a new normal.



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