

EOHC Bulletⁱⁿ

"Our Sights Are On Safety"

June 2001



The Future of the Eastern Ontario Handgun Club

I just finished shooting a shotgun competition at the Grenville Fish & Game Club outside of Prescott and I was amazed at what that club has accomplished recently. They have done an incredible job of improving their facilities, increasing activity levels in various disciplines, growing their membership and keeping costs down. When I look at the EOHC in comparison, we could be doing much more than we are to improve the club.

Six years ago we arranged a five year lease and undertook range upgrades which saw the raising of our berms and the construction of the covered firing lines on Ranges 2 & 3. In order to meet the new Federal range standards (A.K.A. "Range Closure Guidelines") we are currently raising the berms even higher. Once you get beyond raising the floor of Range 1 and extending/heightening the berm between Ranges 2 & 3, the other 'improvements' have little or nothing to do with making the facilities better for the members. What can we do to give you, the members, more value for your money?

Would you be interested in some form of rifle shooting, perhaps rimfire metallic silhouette or benchrest competition? How about black powder rifle? Would you like a place to sight-in a centre-fire hunting rifle? Does cowboy action shooting look interesting? How about some form of shotgunning facilities, Sporting Clays anyone? Or should we stick narrowly to our handgun roots?

We have an excellent working relationship with Ray Charbonneau, our landlord, and his son Dan. In the 1970s Ray built the rifle range and the first pistol range. Ray has agreed to another five year extension on our lease. The excavator that was parked at the Club all winter is Ray's and is currently being made available to use for free! Ray is quite open to some use being made of that original rifle range. While the township is also receptive, we would have to make significant changes to that range and wisely choose the activities for which the range would be redesigned. There is also the area immediately to the left of Range 1, which we cleared in anticipation of adding a fourth range, and which we can still develop.

There are a couple of obstacles to moving forward with any of these ideas. They all take money and more importantly, people working together. We don't presently have a lot of money, but we do have close to 200 members, almost all of whom have not been used to help improve the club.

We have always prided ourselves on being a low bureaucracy club; however I'm starting to suspect we have gone too far in that direction. Having nothing more than an annual general meeting doesn't give the executive a chance to hear from the membership, nor rally support for new initiatives. The only opportunity most members have to interact with each other is if they shoot IPSC competitions, and those are a small minority. We need to have more ways for members to interact with each other. Coming out plinking on your own is a great pastime, that we always want to promote; however if that's all we do, we are not going to make the most of the EOHC or maximize the pleasure you could be getting from this hobby.

See the back page for information on how to help make more of the EOHC!

Dave Bartlett
Range Operator

RANGE UPGRADES UNDERWAY!

If you have been out to the club recently or visited the website, you know that there is lots of construction going on.

So far the floor of Range 1 has been raised to eliminate the springtime flooding that has always been a problem. We have cut the trees that were in the way of raising berms and most of the trees that were covering our sand supply. About 50 dump truck loads of sand have been added to the berms on Ranges 1 & 2. We will need to clear more land in order to get at the sand we need to finish the construction.

There will be workparties at the Club Sunday, June 10 & 17. Come on out and play lumberjack!

Membership and Permit Renewals

If you haven't renewed, it's so far past time to submit your Authorization to Transport and membership renewals it's not even funny. Online instructions and forms are at: <http://www.cyberus.ca/~kdesolla/permit.htm>. If you plan on keeping handguns that were registered with target shooting as your purpose for ownership, you'll need to maintain membership in a club.

An individual renewal is \$100 plus \$35 for the Canadian Shooting Sports Association (formerly the Ontario Handgun Association). Please send one check payable to the EOHC for \$100 and a separate check payable to the CSSA for \$35 will cover your. A family membership is \$110 for the EOHC plus \$60 for the CSSA.

Bullseye Shooting Team

We recently finished our third year of participation in the Ottawa Valley Pistol League! Thanks to team Captain Scott Munro (Bullseye@eohc.ca) for organizing the team members prior to each match. We never defaulted a single match and even came within a single point of winning a match (and may do better next year if Brian fires all of his shots)! If you are interested in participating this coming Fall, it is easy and cheap to participate, plus there are no mosquitoes, just contact Scott for more info. Check out our website at <http://www.EOHC.ca> or the very slick Ottawa Valley Pistol League website at: <http://www.ottawavalley.com/ovpl/ovplhome.htm>

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Inspirational Reading

Instead of having lots of political content (which is usually not uplifting) this issue is full of advice on how to make gun clubs better. I hope that reading through these articles will inspire you to get actively involved with the EOHC and help shape its future. All of these articles have been copied (without permission, sorry) from the National Association of Shooting Ranges website at <http://www.rangeinfo.org>. There is a ton of super information at that site - check it out!

Community Relations

(Reprinted from the Gun Club Advisor, Fall 1993)

by Jack Robertson

In view of all the negative publicity guns are getting both in the press and on TV, gun club owners and managers should be more conscious of their position in the community. Generally speaking, most gun clubs were located in isolated areas when originally established and through no fault of their own, they now have neighbors close by. This creates a potential problem that most gun clubs either have faced or will be facing in the near future. A little common sense can have a direct impact on how well your club will cope with this potential problem.

Recently, I received a call from an individual whose farm bordered an existing shooting facility. He explained that the last thing he wanted to do was to see the range closed down. Both he and his wife, who was a competitive rifle shooter, were definitely not anti-gun. What he really wanted was some consideration from the club officers and their members in addressing a problem he was experiencing with the range. The land owner was concerned for the safety of his family and personal property due to stray projectiles leaving the range. (He had already lost livestock and had experienced personal property damage.)

The officers of this particular club would not give him the satisfaction of correcting or even talking about, what is potentially a very dangerous situation, thus, making matters even worse. The club it turns out, is not in violation of any local ordinances and therefore local authorities can not help this person with his problem.

The point of this story is to show that some simple communication and consideration between the club officers and their neighbors could probably resolve most, if not all, of the problems that existed. If not addressed, these problems can and probably will lead to a nasty dispute. These disputes can create hardships on all parties and usually there is no winner. Often solutions may lead to some sacrifices on the club's part; the loss of part of a range or the reduction of shooting hours. However, this is better than the alternative - a complete closing of the range.

Clubs must build a better community spirit and image. This can be achieved by getting club members involved in community projects as a group. A couple of suggestions might be to "adopt a highway" clean up program or a blood drive, but the important thing is it should be done as a group so that your range gets recognition for the group's effort. We must let our community and neighbors know we are responsible and caring people who have chosen to spend their leisure time engaged in the shooting sports. We need our ranges to pursue this activity and a positive image will help us to this end.

Gun Clubs Are A Business

by Frank Landry, Secretary
Easthampton Fish & Game

(Reprinted from Gun Club Advisor, 1995, Vol 5. No. 3)

How's it going? Are you so busy processing membership applications that you're pulling your hair out? Can't handle the sheer volume of shooters at the line? I know. It's hard keeping up with the success. Are all of you feeling this way? If not, listen up.

You have a business to run. You MUST look at it that way. Now that you are running your Shooting Club/Business, let's look at how to run a business. Any business.

Rule #1

Let everyone know you are there. Shooting clubs tend to try to bury their head in the sand. Try not to get anyone upset with them. Guess what? You have the right to be there. Again, LET EVERYONE KNOW YOU ARE THERE. Any business should take ten percent of their gross for advertising.

That means that if your club takes in \$ 10,000 a year in funds, \$ 1000 should be spent promoting your club.

Rule #2

Break your stereotypes. Actively recruit women and young people into your club. Stop this good ole boy mentality now. It is important that we develop and encourage new shooters. The greatest potential for that is in the area of women and young adult shooters (high school and college age folks).

Rule #3

Offer as much to your members as you possibly can. A happy member/customer will tell others. As an example, our club offers Trap, Skeet, Sporting Clays, Rifle and Pistol ranges, 28 station archery course, pistol safety courses, turkey shoots, full kitchen with pavilion. Sound big? We have 40 acres of land. Laid out so that all ranges can be used without interference with each other. By having so

much diversity, we can attract new members no matter where their shooting interests lie. Interestingly, because of this diversity, we get a lot of crossover by our members into the other disciplines.

Rule #4

Give something back to your community. This year we held trap shoots for Muscular Dystrophy. We raised about \$2000. By doing this, we get to demonstrate that we are responsible, caring members of our community. It goes a long way to dispel the myth, that we as shooters and gun owners are unsafe and

irresponsible. It demonstrates that we provide a community service that is recognized for the good it does. Along with this comes a lot of free positive exposure through newspaper, radio and yes, even television. Think about it, where else can you get that kind of exposure for your club and the shooting sports in general without incurring any cost to your club?

For those of you that are already doing these things, congratulations! I'm sure you have experienced a boom in your membership and as a result, have had a major increase in club activities. For those of you who are not ... think about it.

Newsletters & Electronic Distribution List

Believe it or not, there has been a fair amount of news coming from the club since the last paper newsletter! Since last

Christmas the website (<http://www.EOHC.ca>) has been continually updated and expanded. Also those who have already given us their email addresses have been kept up to date on upcoming events through our Internet mailing list. Send an email to NEWS@EOHC.ca with the text "subscribe EOHCNEWS" in the subject field and you will be added to this list. If you decide you don't like the list, it's easy to unsubscribe. If you don't have Internet access but do have a fax available for receiving Club news, give us a call with your fax number and we'll add you to this distribution list.

As we said last newsletter, the EOHC Executive is trying to keep communications to our members flowing and informative. We are also trying to keep printing and postage costs down to the lowest possible levels. We certainly understand that not all of our members have a connection to the Internet and may not have access to e-mail, however these are the most cost effective means of communication. Even if you don't have an email address, do you have a spouse or friend who could pass print e-mails for you?

We will continue to provide the newsletter through the mail for those members that require hard copy, however when other time sensitive information is being sent out, we may not be able to provide this mailing service. If you have received this issue through the mail, please contact NEWS@EOHC.ca and provide us with your e-mail address, if you would like future issues sent electronically.

Eastern Ontario Shooters Forum

Dave Bartlett established an Internet "eGroup" for shooters and gun owners in Eastern Ontario and West Quebec. The idea behind this 'virtual' network is that anyone who has relevant items to communicate can make use of the eGroup and share them with an appropriate audience. So far about 60 people have subscribed. Check out the EasternOntarioShooters homepage and sign up for this free service. The more people who use this service the more valuable it will become! Check it out at: <http://www.egroups.com/group/EasternOntarioShooters>

KICKING OFF YOUR MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

(This article is reprinted from the Gun Club Advisor, First Quarter, 1995, Volume 5, No.1)

When major corporations introduce a new product or service, they almost always plan a special event as part of the announcement. Your membership campaign is no different. You should schedule some sort of special activity at your club to kick off your campaign.

Selecting the right special event can attract media attention as well as potential new members to the club. The right event can also be a lot of fun for your current membership--and might even be designed to provide a community service. Here are a few ideas to consider. You may want to modify or combine these ideas--or come up with some original ideas of your own.

MEMBER/GUEST SHOOT

The member/guest event has been used by a good many clubs as a means of introducing their club to potential new members. The basic idea is that each member in order to partake in the days activities must bring a non-member as his or her partner. The beauty of this event is that your members will bring as their guests people that already have an interest in the type of activity your club has to offer. It also allows other club members to meet and become acquainted with the guests both in the field and on a social level.

OPEN HOUSE

There is probably no simpler, more effective way to attract prospective members to your club than to host an open house. Your open house might feature free or low-cost shooting, beginner instruction in the disciplines your club features or any other activity that is particularly suited to your area.

SIGHTING-IN/PATTERNING DAY

A special Sighting-in or Patterning Day where non-members are invited to sight-in rifles or pattern shotguns is an especially good way to get the casual hunter to come to your facility. This is also providing a community service in that, your club is providing a safe and controlled area whereby these people can perform their sight-in functions, rather than just going off into a field some where that may not be entirely safe. Once these visitors get a firsthand look at the facilities your club has to offer, they may be interested in joining.

TOWN "BEST SHOT" CHAMPIONSHIP

This is an event that can attract a tremendous amount of interest in the community. The idea involves a combination of rifle, handgun and shotgun type of events to challenge and select the best all around shot in town. Events similar to those developed for the SPORTSMAN'S TEAM CHALLENGE can be tailored for individual shooters. Side events such as muzzle loading, 3-D archery or other events may be added to further the interest of the participants. Separate competitions for women and juniors could further increase interest. This type of event has excellent potential to attract media attention but will require more

planning and organization than some of the other ideas presented thus far.

PLINKING PICNIC

If your club has suitable grounds, a "Plinking Picnic" might be a relaxing and enjoyable way to kick off your membership campaign. The public or a select list of invitees - could be invited to bring their airguns, rimfire rifles and a picnic lunch to the club for a supervised day of family fun on your plinking range. This could be a great way for your club to show the family commitment that the shooting sports have to offer to all the age groups within the family unit.

SAFETY CLINIC

There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people in your town who own firearms but do not use them regularly - or may not use them at all. A "Firearms Safety Clinic" would be an excellent way to obtain favorable publicity for your club, while making many people aware of the safety instructions available at your club. The public could be invited to bring their firearms for free safety checks by a qualified gunsmith. Safety instructors could be on hand to provide basic instruction in safe firearms handling. Safety literature could be distributed as part of this type of program. Again, from this type of a program you can develop a list of potential members from which to draw on in the future.

Care should be taken in planning these kickoff events so that they do not overshadow their original purpose. Keep in mind that the purpose for these events is to attract non-members and press attention to your club. Be sure membership forms are available for those that may wish to join on the spot.

Try to plan your event so that you'll end up with a guest list of everyone who attended. After the event, you will want to send a brief letter to all participants thanking them for coming, inviting them to join your club, and/or asking for their impressions of your event. You might also ask their impressions of the club to guide you in future membership efforts.

Don't be disappointed if you do not reach your membership goal at the kick off event. This is only the beginning.

GOAL ACHIEVED

Congratulations! You and your committee have reached the membership goals set earlier. Now it is imperative that the new members are made to feel welcome and made to feel as if they belong. This can be accomplished by appointing them to one of the various working committees that the club has standing. Aside from keeping their interest, the club also gets the advantage of new energy and fresh ideas on the various aspects of club functions. It is also important to make sure that any promises made during the recruiting period have been fulfilled to the new members. If they see that things were promised and not fulfilled, they will quickly lose interest and your efforts will

have been in vain.

Finally, don't make the mistake of abandoning all membership promotion just because your goal has been reached. Due to no fault of the clubs, you will always have a turn-over of membership and therefore, you have to be prepared to start recruiting all over again.

C'mon Down: Recruitin' for Shootin' - Strategies for Building a Strong Customer Base

By Bill Christy, President
Christy Enterprises, Inc.

(Reprinted from the Third National Shooting Range
Symposium, 1996.)

I'm going to talk with you today about recruiting new shooters. The topic I was originally asked to speak on was "Attracting Novice Male Shooters." Since males are not the majority gender, and we all say we want more people involved in shooting, I want to do a little more than talk about recruiting male customers, I also want to talk about increasing the female customer base.

Recruiting shooters through marketing

Now here is a \$64,000 question: How do you recruit shooters? As far as I'm concerned, to recruit and retain, we need a marketing approach. So I'm going to talk to you from a marketing perspective. Marketing is the thing that we do to get people to exchange money for goods, services or product.

So anything that we do from advertising to promoting to training, is marketing. That's how we should be involved with marketing in the shooting industry. There are some marketing questions that I'd like for us to answer.

The first one is that when you start any kind of marketing effort, you've got to know where you're starting from. You can't get there from here if you really don't know where you're coming from. So the first thing we want to do is look at where we are in terms of numbers.

Show me the money: hunting and recreational shooting

National Shooting Sports Foundation provided these participation figures for recreational shooting and hunting. At the end of 1993, 11.75 million people were shooting handguns in this country, 8.5 million males and 3.25 million females. There were 9.4 million male and about 2.3 million female rifle shooters. In shotgun shooting; there were 7 million males and 1.5 million females participating. Their numbers show that we've got 19 million hunters in this country. Sixteen million to 17 million of those are male, and 2.5 million are female. I don't have a breakdown on archery except to say that the total number is 4 million participants.

Noting that we have 8.5 million recreational shotgun shooters

in this country, let's look at the figures provided by the clay target shooting associations:

- National Sporting Clays Association has 11,673 current members in sporting clays with 6,454 active as of June 20, 1996.

- National Skeet Shooting Association reports 15,265 current members with about 6,000 of them active.

- Trap shooting has the largest participation with 73,000 participants, 34,000 active, as reported by the Amateur Trap Shooting Association.

Now what does this information tell you? It tells you simply this: 100,000 people are involved in competitive shotgun shooting, and there are 8.5 million shotgun shooters in the country. What does that tell us, folks? It tells us that competitive shooting doesn't drive the money.

It's nice to have competitive shooting, but where is the money? The money is in hunting and recreational shooting. Those are the things we've got to start thinking about. From where are we going to recruit these folks? It's not necessarily at the clay target range. It's a great place to introduce shooters, but that isn't where you're going to recruit them. There you are essentially preaching to the choir. Someone once asked the bank robber Willie Sutton, "Willie, why did you rob banks?" Willie answered, "Because that's where the money is." That's what we've got to do, we've got to start thinking about where the money is.

The entertainment business

Now that we know what our numbers are, let's look at the following questions. What business are we really in, and what stage of the business life cycle is shooting in? Okay, you tell me. I'll give you an analogy. Think about the railroads. From 1860s to the 1950s, what was the predominant industry that ran the country? The railroads, right? Our country developed along the railroads. Out West they built towns because of railroads. But then in the late 1940s, trucking took over because railroads continued to think they were in the railroad business when, in fact, they were in the transportation business.

What industry is shooting and hunting in? Are we in the shooting industry? Anybody want to offer a thought?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Entertainment!

BILL CHRISTY:

Absolutely right! We're in the entertainment industry, aren't we? We're in the business of entertainment, and folks, you've got to remember that. We're entertainers. We're competing for the disposable income and the discretionary time of potential customers who are seeking entertainment and recreation. The only way we can do that is by appealing to people's

entertainment needs.

Not only are we in the entertainment business, we're in the mature stage of the business life cycle of our business. The cycle starts with an introduction to a product or business. The cycle moves into the growth stage, and this is where competitors come in. This is where new products are developed because people want the product. So it's starting to grow.

As business grows, it starts to level off and becomes a mature business. After that, it goes into decline. If you look at the numbers, we've kept pretty steady. We have had a steady hunter license sale base for the last 30 years. We're only down about 2 percent of that growth. We have had some spikes in growth in areas such as sporting clays. When sporting clays hit in the 1980s, everybody jumped on the bandwagon. Hey, this is great!

We started a subcycle with the introduction of sporting clays and had big growth numbers. But so many of the new ranges that were built during this helter-skelter growth period bought into sporting clays without putting together business and marketing plans. They didn't look at equipment costs and amortization of costs. They didn't learn to put their programs together to appeal to what the customer wanted. The belief was: If we build it they will come.

Customers came for a while but then what happened? What happened to a lot of those ranges was pfffft. They went bust; they went belly-up. They had no plans and didn't see how their business had to change with the business life cycle. To be successful as range owners and operators, we must constantly keep our approach fresh.

Strengths of the shooting industry

All right, we know what business we're in. We know where we are in the business life cycle. Okay, then what are the strengths of our business? What do we have that we can sell, push or market so that people are knocking the door down to come to see us? Well, let's see what some of these strengths are. This list isn't complete, but let's review them quickly.

The first thing is, our business is safe. Folks, has anybody got a better safety record than shooting? More people are hurt at rock concerts than are hurt shooting.

Also, we're cost competitive. Oh, Christy, you're crazy as everything! I mean, anybody who shoots has to have a lot of money! But think about it. Christine Thomas [Professor of Resource Management, College of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point] told me that her daughter was into ice skating. One pair of skates costs \$600. Little girl's and little boy's feet grow about two sizes a year, right? That's \$600 bucks a year. For six hundred bucks, you can buy a shotgun that is capable of winning every tournament in this country, and you will still be using it 20 years from

now. We're cost competitive; we've got to tell people that. We've got to get out and beat the doors and the drums.

Shooting offers active participation. If you look around nowadays, what do you see? Everything is going towards couch potatoes, isn't it? We've got a tremendous entertainment industry that is spectator driven. These folks are viewers instead of participants. They're less inclined to get their hands dirty and feel this stuff. Let me tell you something else. Research indicates that people who are actively and successfully involved in an activity have an elevated self concept. Their self-esteem level rises, and that is transferable to other parts of life-to their personal life, vocational endeavors and family. A popular phrase circulating this symposium is about the BASS Club. Well, it sounds like a fish club to me, but it's not. A gold medal archer made up BASS, which means Being A Spectator Stinks. And it does, doesn't it? Being a spectator stinks. It's no good; we want to be doing stuff.

Shooting provides us with the opportunity to become involved in a lifetime sport for recreation and/or competition. Folks, we've got to keep selling this. How many high school athletes who play high school women's field hockey or high school football get scholarship offers to go to college? One percent. What happens to the other 99 percent? When they are graduated from high school, the vast majority of them leave their athletics at the schoolhouse door. They won't have to leave shooting. It is a sport that can be pursued for a lifetime. We've got champions from 16 to 60 years of age and older.

Another strength is that shooting is gender neutral. I challenge you to show me one other sport that is truly gender neutral. I coach a college clay target team. The National College Athletic Association says that two sports are gender neutral: archery and fencing. Well, right away I think you folks would agree that archery definitely is not gender neutral. In the Olympics, archery competition is conducted for both genders. Women most likely are shooting lighter bows with a lighter pull. What happens to the trajectory and the wind? You're slowing down the projectile, so the parabolic arc or trajectory is higher. The wind is going to affect the arrow. Archery ain't gender neutral.

Several folks I know who fence tell me that generally men have a longer reach than women and that it is a definite advantage. Others will say that Olympic sailing is gender neutral. Unless they've got female Amazons cranking those wheels, it's not neutral. I challenge anybody to tell me anything is more gender neutral in sports than shooting. We need to market that. It's not being marketed like it should be.

Shooting also is inclusive of physically challenged individuals. I ran a research project in Charlottesville, Virginia, at the Children's Rehabilitation Center of the University of Virginia Medical School where kids who have been traumatically injured come from all over the country to be rehabilitated.

Therapeutic recreation is a major element of their treatment plan.

We worked with this beautiful little girl, a quadriplegic, who was depressed and withdrawn because of her accident. No recreational activity seemed to reach her until we introduced her to shooting. We taped a pipe cleaner on an air gun barrel for the front sight and taped another pipe cleaner bent in a circle as an aperture rear sight. A hospital feeding tray was cranked up as a rest with a pillow placed across it, and the gun laid on the pillow. A tongue depressor was taped to her finger, so she could put her finger on the trigger. Balloons were hung on the backstop about five feet downrange. A student assistant helped move the gun to align the sights and shadowed pulling the trigger. And guess what? The first shot burst a balloon and several shots later all the balloons were popped. Well, this girl who previously had been so withdrawn, began to bubble and talk a mile a minute. That weekend I got a call from her parents. This is what really made us feel good.

Mother said, "Hey, gang, my kid's talking to me, and the reason she is because she can now do something that all these able-bodied kids can do." What we did for that little girl was to give her an opportunity to feel a sense of self worth. Along with the students assisting with the project we took a group of able-bodied kids and allowed them to shoot with the patients. This physically challenged kid, a traumatically injured quadriplegic, could now do what her able-bodied cohorts could.

Shooting provides a wonderful way to help physically challenged people. You go to the Grand America competition, and you see the chair shooters. Some of those people out there can whip anybody I've ever seen. I mean, they can shoot!

Shooting also allows for year-round participation. In so many sports, you have to hang it up at the end of the season. Not so with the shooting sports. At Virginia Tech, my shooting team is out there all during winter. When it's snowing, we just shovel off the field and shoot. What does that do? It's great practice for focusing one's mind on the task at hand. When inclement weather comes during a competition shoot, while the other team is thinking about the weather, our kids have learned to deal with it and are concentrating solely on the target.

Shooting sports provides a family-oriented activity. Everybody can shoot together. It creates a level playing field where everybody can play together and do well. I work with junior shooters. As part of the program we require that they bring their parents.

Initially there was a lot of grumbling, "I don't want to sit out there on that trap or skeet field and watch my kid shoot." However, as the parents watched for a session or two, they all decided to take me up on my offer to try their hand at the clay targets. Before you knew it, Dad was shooting, and then Mom was shooting. All of a sudden, the whole family was shooting.

Instead of recruiting one person, we recruited three or four people.

So as you can see, the shooting sports have a great many strengths. It is upon these very strengths that we need to base our marketing strategies.

Women shooters

Now, let's talk about a market segment that I believe is so vital to our business that without it our prospects are morbid. That is of course women, the majority gender in our country. As far as I'm concerned, women physiologically are the better suited to shoot. They've got a lower heart rate, a lower center of gravity and a wider pelvic girdle. All of which makes them more stable. The other thing that women have over men: They listen more attentively and thus learn more quickly.

Try to teach most men to shoot and they're going to say, "Give me the gun and get out of the way, coach. I've been doing this all my life." With a woman, if you tell her something, she listens and does exactly what you suggest. She may ask questions, but she will give it a go. She begins to break targets while the guy is still shooting air.

There's a lot to be said for getting women involved in the shooting sports-not the least of which is increasing revenue. We need them as regular customers.

Potential customers

Where should we target our marketing efforts? Who are the targets of your marketing effort? We must begin to look at market trends population demographics. Let's look at some interesting predictions:

By 2005, 63 percent of women in this country will work full time. The birth rate is declining for middle to upper class households which will give us more DINKs. Does anyone know what a DINK is? It means double income, no kids. If we look at DINKs, they're going to have lots of disposable income. We need to get into their pocketbooks. We need to get them involved in the shooting sports.

In 2016, the majority of people in this country are going to be made up of people who now are members of minority groups. How many people do you see at shooting events, shooting ranges and conferences that are members of a minority? Well, let me tell you this-you'd better wake up and smell the gunpowder because this is where it's going to be. If we don't start looking to the future-to 2016 right now-we just might be done for by then. If we don't get them now, by the time 2016 rolls around some other industry or business will have gotten them and developed them as mature customers. Right now is the time we had better start thinking about how we can capture this market. That is a very telling statistic.

Here's another telling statistic: look around at each of us in this

room, and what do you see? You see people who are in the older market group. The traditional market that we market to-ages 35 to 54-has disposable income, but they're aging. By 2016, your old standby market group is going to be 60 to 70 years old. It's something to think about.

We've got to go to a different market. We can't continue to preach to the choir; we've got to move outside. In 1900, one out of 11 people lived in a city; by 1996, less than one out of 11 lived in a rural area. What does that tell us, population-wise? It tells us that we've got to go to the dense areas of population. We've got to start there to reach the majority of minority people who live in those population areas.

Shooting's competition

There are two questions which must be answered in order for us to market effectively to new market segments. First, who or what is our competition for potential customers' entertainment dollars? The answer is simple and right out in front of us. Such things as television, movies, professional sports, amateur sports, music, concerts, computers and video games are our greatest competition. Not surprisingly, that is where the money is going right now. That's what we have to compete against.

The advertising industry looks at a group called "adventurous mid-youth." These are people who have money and give more loyalty to their avocation-to their leisure-than they do to their vocation. They are moving more towards self centeredness. If we want to get into their pockets, we're going to devise a way to capture their interest and loyalty.

Here are the five leading areas-in reverse order-where they're spending money:

- Starting at the bottom, vitamins, health foods and fitness. Pretty evident, isn't it? Turn on the TV and you'll see infomercials about "ab-ercizers," step machines, treadmills, weight machines and who knows what else.

- Travel. Not necessarily expensive vacations like flying over the big pond, but perhaps spending the weekend away going to a resort for skiing, sailing, riding or golf. Well, how about shooting? Why not shooting?

- Jewelry, office supplies and, of course, computers. Fact is this group is spending a bunch of bucks on computers. What does this tell us? Hey, this is a new generation, gang. We've got to get into their game. There is a new generation of people who know how to use computers. They're computer literate, and I know that our age group probably is not as computer literate as we'd like to be. We need to develop games, programs or activities that are accessible by the computer on the Internet or some other on-line service. We need good Websites.

- Number one on the list: entertainment. Guess what, gang? That's us! We're in entertainment and we know that these

"adventurous mid-youth" are predisposed to spend their money in an entertainment area. All we've got to do is get them in the door. They're predisposed to buy, so we need to get them to buy from us instead of somebody else.

Methods of competition

How does our competition out-compete us?

The first way is called the reverse-pyramid concept. I want you to think about this idea for a minute. Whenever marketers go after business, they want to get the most broad-based support possible. Our competition uses this reverse-pyramid concept focusing on the elite athlete, the glamorous movie star, the top of the heap, so to speak, to be their spokesperson. A prime example is NASCAR, the National Association for Stock Car Racing.

I grew up in North Carolina, the home of stock car racing in this country. Even though I grew up surrounded by stock car racing-I admit not being interested in the subject-I had barely heard of such people as Curtis Turner, Fireball Roberts and Junior Johnson. Today you can't turn on the radio or TV or open a newspaper without hearing or seeing some mention of Jeff Gordon, the young racing sensation.

NASCAR has purposefully picked racers who are personable, charismatic, attractive, articulate. These folks have a business sense, and they're smart. NASCAR has taken these people to be their marquee idols and have let them drive the industry. At the recent National Shooting Sports Summit sponsored by National Shooting Sports Foundation, the keynote speaker was from Turner Sports. He said that stock car racing is growing so rapidly that the network bought a race in Japan. Turner Sports will be running its own race in Japan because that's where the money is. Because of these charismatic racing celebrities, stock car racing and its drivers are known all around the world.

That's what we've got to do. We've got to find personalities who can drive our industry for us in the same way Michael Jordan and Cal Ripken Jr. drive their industries. Remember Mary Lou Retton, the gold medal gymnast? Do you remember how spunky she was? Do you recall that after she won the gold medal in 1984, it seemed as if every little girl in America wanted to be a gymnast? We've got to find some people like that and play to our strength.

Building brand equity is a second method we can use to market our business. Brand equity is based on deposits and withdrawals. Deposits are positive, and withdrawals are negative. Let me give you a quick example of what I am talking about. Take automobiles. Chevrolet wins a race; they make a big deposit. Chevrolet sends out an automobile with a defective hood latch and subsequently has to recall them. That's a withdrawal. Bad news.

Let's say your club or shooting range puts on a charity classic

shoot. The event raises money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. People in the community see this and think, "Oh, that's great. This range is really doing something great for the community. Those shooting people must be all right." That's a hefty deposit.

Then Joe Dokes leaves your event, and he's drunk as a skunk. He runs into a telephone pole or, heaven forbid, he runs into somebody else and kills them. What happens? Withdrawal! All the great brand equity you just banked went right out the window.

Market researchers tell us that for every positive experience an individual has with a product or service, he or she will tell three to four other people. On the other hand, when that experience is a negative one, that same individual will tell 10 to 12 people. In other words, one withdrawal wipes out four deposits. Please remember just how bad the bad stuff is to our business. We've got to build brand equity for the shooting sports and we do that by carefully focusing on doing the right things right.

A third method for enhancing our competitive strength is through employing what is called Total Customer Enthusiasm or T.C.E. Saturn, the car manufacturer, is the best example I know. When you go into a Saturn showroom, the sales staff greet you, give you a cup of coffee and ask if you would like a donut. They leave you alone to look at the cars. There's no sales pressure at all and no dickering. Their attitude is, "Hey, this is a great automobile. When you buy this car you become a member of the Saturn family. We take care of family."

When you take your car to be serviced, they give you all kinds of perks, and they really do treat you like family. When you're family, are you going to buy a Ford? Nah, you're going to buy another Saturn because you're a member of the family. You're in that group.

That's exactly what we've got to do. We've got to make people feel comfortable in our shooting group. How many times have you been to a club or shooting range and watched a new person hesitantly walk in glancing around as if they were on foreign soil? What happens? Do folks go up to them and make them feel welcome? Unfortunately, many times the new person may get a cursory "hello" as folks just walk on by. It happens all the time.

We need to adopt the Saturn model of T.C.E. We must shake their hands, bring them in, show them the facilities and make them feel like they are part of the shooting family. People are motivated by being part of a group. Research tells us peer acceptance is the most powerful motivator. Making people feel as though there are an important member of the shooting family is absolutely crucial to the ultimate survivability of the shooting sports.

To sum up, these are three highly successful marketing strategies that our competitors are using to garner market

share: the reverse-pyramid concept, building brand equity and total customer enthusiasm. We know they work, so let's take a page from their playbook and use them for the benefit of the shooting sports industry.

Recruiting customers

We've been talking quite a bit about marketing strategies. Now let's look at some specific methods we can use to recruit new folks to our clubs and ranges.

The most powerful method that I know of is to call somebody up and simply invite them to go shooting with you. A shooting range or club can start a Take-A-Friend-Shooting Day. Every month new customers will be introduced to your club or range. Here's the key: have a clinic for them-

a free clinic, if necessary-to teach them how to shoot so they have some success.

Even when people are given a chance to shoot for free, if they don't hit any targets what do you think they are they going to do? That's right! They're going to dislike shooting and go find something else to try. It is so important for us to make sure that folks have a pleasant, positive first experience. Lessons and targets adapted to a novice's ability will go a long way toward ensuring that you have a return customer. Also don't forget to build in some incentives for the people who bring friends. They are your best recruiters.

It is natural for people to have a fear of the unknown. For many people shooting could just as well be considered a black art. I know from being a coach and a neophyte shooter long ago: All winners were beginners. There's not a man or woman in this room who wasn't scared the first time he or she shot. So we've got to figure out ways to reduce that anxiety level.

We mentioned computers previously and the propensity that our target market of "adventurous mid-youth" had for them. Computers just might be the means we are looking for to recruit new customers by putting them into an environment which is both comfortable and familiar. Three interactive shooting systems vendors with their video simulators are at this symposium. These systems represent the state of the art in computer simulation designed for shooting. I have seen these used in a number of different situations and have yet to hear anyone say he or she didn't enjoy it.

I'm certain there is a market for a CD ROM video game that would be informative as well fun to introduce folks to the different shooting disciplines and games. Since our potential customers spend so much time and money on their computers, let's get into their sphere and recruit them into ours. Other ways we can recruit customers include:

We should develop VCR videos that explain trap, skeet, silhouettes, field archery, muzzle loading, smallbore rifle, etc.

We should produce promotional programs for travel and elderhostel resorts. You say, "These folks are getting old; why promote to them?" Yes, but elderhostel people also have money. This is a great place to set up air guns. The Homestead in Virginia is a big resort hotel. They've got a wonderful golf complex there; it's Sam Sneed's home course. They've also got a wonderful sporting place for shooting. The resort gets people to golf and shoot in a tournament. Can you see how our efforts must go outside the paradigms of shooting to get into business, travel and entertainment?

For example, here's an opportunity for range owners in Kent County, Maryland. Kent County has a cluster of five sporting clays ranges within a 45-minute drive of each other. Why not market it as a resort destination? Sell it as a package where folks would pay one price for lodging, food and shooting at each of the five courses.

Finally, have a Louise Mandrell-type [country singer and shooter] to appeal to the men, and Jeff Gordon-type [race car driver] to appeal to the women.

As we discussed earlier, it has been documented that people gravitate toward marketing efforts that have charismatic and appealing personalities associated with them.

For example, take the phenomenon of NASCAR. It's documented that women do not go to the races just to watch cars go around that track. They go to see the personalities. Ten years ago, female TV viewership of NASCAR was less than 1 percent. Do you know what it is today? 38 percent! Those women who watch NASCAR are mostly focusing on the television interviews. They're looking at those men-nice, handsome, personable, articulate and successful. The same thing is true with men. We viewed a news clip this morning of a newspaper reporter with very little shooting experience who went to cover the Sportsmen's Team Challenge. He interviewed several of the very top men shooters, but do you know where he went for his training? Do you think he went to the top guys he had already interviewed? No siree, Bob, he went to the ladies. They certainly were all qualified. Heck, these ladies were better shooters than many of the men shooters. They were all pretty, charming and personable. Gender attraction does have a subtle but very real influence on customers.

Summary

The main idea I want to leave with you is that you can enhance your customer base through the use of marketing strategies. We have discussed several today. There are many others. Whatever methods you choose is up to you. The important thing is that you begin. Today! Thank you for your kind attention.

Get Involved! Contact Us!

Hopefully, reading all of these articles has filled your head with ideas for what you would like to see done with the club. If you would like to get actively involved, please contact Greg Oliver or Dave Bartlett or send an email to volunteer@eohc.ca outlining what you would like to do and what skills or resources you can bring.

EOHC Workparties June 10 & 17

We don't have enough trees cleared to access all of the sand we are going to need to finish Range 3. We need two more days of tree cutting and limbing. Given the scale of the work to be done, we are going to have two workparties. We'll be starting a workparty each Sunday morning at 9:00 and working all day on both June 10th & June 17th. If you're available for a few hours, please come out and lend a hand. If you can only come out in the afternoon, that's ok as some people usually have to leave at midday.

In addition to people wielding chainsaws, we'll need strong backs and axes to help move and limb the trees as they are cut. There will also be seed to spread on the berms that are finished for those of you with a green thumb. The mosquitos are waiting so be sure to bring bug spray.

Thanks to everyone who came out and helped with the last 3 workparties! Keep up the great work!

22 Mini Rifle Postal Match

We recently ran a British postal match which is basically IPSC style shooting with .22LR rifles. The people who came out had a great time. The Brits had all of their cartridge firing handguns confiscated several years ago, but continue to have fun shooting with rifles. This event is a great way to introduce people to IPSC style shooting and the most fun you can have with a rifle. We'll be doing these every few months. Check out the match creator's website for more information: <http://www.bigfoot.com/~hpc.gun>

Special bonus for PDF Newsletter Readers

June 22 we'll be running this Mini Rifle postal match again. That's a Friday afternoon and we'll start at 4:00 and go to 8:00. Come on out and see what is all about. For just \$5.00 you get to give your 22LR rifle a 48 round workout. You don't have to be IPSC trained to compete. Anyone who knows how to shoot a rifle is welcome so please bring friends and family members.