

# Riding the 'Amazon Effect'

*Rollick helps clear the communication lanes between manufacturers, dealers and consumers to make the sales process more transparent.*

*By Darian Armer*

**M**ost industry insiders will say the RV industry lags behind the auto industry in many aspects, such as supply chain communication and the purchase process.

Rollick CEO Bernie Brenner and his team are taking what they've learned from the auto industry and applying it to

the RV, marine and powersports industries to create a more seamless experience from manufacturer to dealer to customer, closing the gap between the auto market and the smaller niche markets.

"From a 10,000-foot-level, the big problem is the disconnect between what happens at the national level and local

level, as far as marketing," says Brenner. "You have manufacturers spending money on marketing and dealers spending money, but not necessarily in sync."

## Addressing the Disconnect

Brenner says Austin, Texas-based Rollick accomplishes the goal of synchro-



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Amber Friedman (left), an "ambassador of fun" at Texas-based multi-store Explore USA RV Supercenter, says the fact that all of Rollick's tools are mobile-friendly has really helped her communicate with her customers. Friedman adds that the ability to send a price certificate attached to the name of the organization the customer already belongs to or works for and trust is just another way Rollick's programs have increased her leads and closings. Friedman says that within the past month, more than half the people she sold RVs to were leads from Rollick.



nizing marketing and lead generation efforts through three layers. The first layer involves solving that big problem through its program connecting manufacturers and dealers in what Brenner says is the right way, under the right context.

"Our marketing automation platform allows the client to nurture the customer on their site," he says. "On our platform, if someone expressed interest in Winnebago or Keystone, the next step would be to maintain that relationship and create good communication with the dealers. They're not always following up right away, or as quickly as a customer would like. With this platform, the manufacturer can help bring them in."

The second layer works to build a better connection between the dealer and the customer. The platform helps the dealer communicate price in the context of trust built between dealer and customer, according to Brenner.

"We base this communication on how a modern consumer wants to be communicated to. There's truly an 'Amazon effect' on how consumers shop today," he says. That communication starts by training customers to understand that the RV industry is different from others.

"You can't buy direct from the manufacturer. You have a manufacturer who can't sell anything," Brenner notes. At the

**Chris Yeloushan (left), director of national sales for Rollick, recently made a site visit to ExploreUSA RV Supercenter spend time with the staff, including Amber Friedman.**

same time, he says, "You have a dealer network selling multiple lines, and a consumer trying to figure out, 'why don't I have the ability to buy direct?'"

"If they give their information to a manufacturer they expect to be communicated to quickly and the way they want. If they send a message asking about price or availability, they expect information back."



**Rollick CEO Bernie Brenner and his team are taking what they've learned from the auto industry and applying it to the RV, marine and powersports industries to create a more seamless experience from manufacturer to dealer to customer, closing the gap between the auto market and the smaller niche markets.**

### Transparency is Key

Brenner says the big thing consumers want to know – especially in RV industry – is: “Can I afford it? If I submit my information to you and want a price, can I even afford it? ... That is the information I need to make an actionable decision. If withheld, I’m hesitant to make that decision.”

“Millennials don’t do anything that’s not transparent. If you want to connect with them and not push them away, then providing information is what they want,” he adds. “Not just product discovery. Price discovery is equally important. We help facilitate that, which helps bring the consumer farther along in the process, rewarding the dealer for communicating.”

Brenner says a common misconception is that something has to be the lowest price in order for customers to buy it. Brenner says data shows it’s not the lowest price, but how a customer is treated, that matters most to them.

“Experience trumps price if the price is reasonable,” he says.

Yet another factor in closing the sale is the dealer response time.

“The faster the response time, the higher probability they’re going to get the sale. Whoever responds faster has a higher chance of getting the sale,” Brenner says. “We see data in our system all the time. The ones who respond very quickly have a higher close rate than those waiting two to three days.”

Amber Friedman, an “ambassador of fun” at Texas-based multi-store Explore USA RV Supercenter, says the fact that all of Rollick’s tools are mobile-friendly has really helped her communicate with her customers.

“I can send the pricing from my phone in less than five minutes. Customers are looking online at multiple websites at once and sending multiple requests. Typically, the person who makes contact first gets the business,” she says.

Friedman adds that the ability to send a price certificate attached to the name of the organization the customer already belongs to or works for and trust is just another way Rollick’s programs have increased her leads and closings. Friedman says that within the past month, more than half the people she sold RVs to were leads from Rollick.

### Affinity Groups Power Sales

The third layer is Rollick’s power through relationships with affinity groups.

“This is (an area) where a dealer is more likely to leverage power,” Brenner says, noting that Rollick works with more than 2,000 employers, including big names like Progressive Insurance and State Farm, which combined represent more than 25 million employees.

“We understand employee benefits and pricing and connect them with manufacturers and dealers we work with,”

Brenner says. “Dealers provide a greater level of service to those consumers we’re bringing in with more trust and a higher close rate. We tell a State Farm member or employee of Haliburton to work with a dealer in our network and we’ll give you something special. We can create more sales opportunities for manufacturers and dealers.”

“Equally important, this leads to a higher degree of customer satisfaction and, therefore, loyalty,” he adds. “It’s about the sale and keeping customers happy. It’s what we focus on for OEMs and dealers.”

Having already brought this kind of expertise to the auto industry, expanding service to the RV industry represented a natural step, according to Brenner.

“Auto has grown more than these subsets (RV, marine, powersports), in terms of marketing and growing sales. We worked with a lot of member groups and many said, ‘Can you do that for boats? Powersports? RVs?’ and the answer was always ‘No.’

“These manufacturers and dealers need help and eventually will get where automotive is,” Brenner says. “We’ve been a part of the auto story, now we can bring the right tools and communication skills to these industries. We know what we’re doing. We’ve done it in auto. We have affinity relationships we can bring to the industry.”

## A Perfect Marriage'

A little luck has played its part in Rollick's success as well, specifically the opportunity in late 2018 to acquire the AVALA Marketing Group, which served OEMs in the RV, marine and powersports industries.

"They're experts from a digital strategy agency and tech platform itself," Brenner notes. "When we found the OEM can't sell anything and the dealer franchise system is selling competing products to the consumer base we found AVALA specifically addresses that problem. When we found that we were working from the dealer up to the OEM and now we work from the OEM down to the dealers."

Combining the services offered by the two companies created continuity and connection, according to Brenner.

"We hadn't intended to buy them," he says of AVALA. "We were focusing on getting dealers. We started with powersports

and asked, 'Can this work? Can we convert consumers at a higher rate so they are more inclined to buy from our member dealers?' and the answer was yes."

Discovering AVALA worked specifically on the OEM side allowed Rollick to put all the technology together and connect OEMs and dealers correctly through technology.

"It made sense. It was a perfect marriage," Brenner says. "There is literally no overlap on employees. We have 80 employees now, 40 from each side. AVALA is very complementary to everything we do."

## How It Works

With Rollick's platform, a customer visiting an OEM website submits a query, which is then routed to a dealer, or dealers, based on what a manufacturer wants. The dealer can then use the Rollick site to create a price certificate, breaking down the price and sending it out.

Rollick does the legwork to qualify a lead and find out which association or company the customer is affiliated with. The dealer can then open the link and the worksheet is there to determine the price.

The worksheet breaks down the price, dock fees, anything offered by the dealership, including other programs or offerings, such as a percentage off accessories with purchase, allowing the dealer to communicate how they are different.

Brenner says the dealer can then immediately send the worksheet to the consumer.

"Here's the MSRP, etc. It's provided in a more digestible way," he says. "The dealer can send it electronically and then follow up with a phone call. We work with manufacturers and route the leads to dealers, or dealers get them directly through us. It's a much better system and the process is simple. It can be done in 15 seconds."

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**Amber Friedman**

Ambassador of Fun / Explore USA RV Supercenter

"I have found it so easy to deliver pricing using Rollick's pricing tools. When a new customer is sent to me, I send quotes directly from my mobile phone and have dramatically increased my contact rate."



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Rollick also tracks consumer behaviors online through their system so they can provide the information their dealers need to communicate the right information to the customer. For example, the (customer) can let the dealer know how long ago a lead was submitted, what products were looked at, how often they should be contacted.

Brenner says that, while previous efforts by OEMs and dealers to contact and follow up with customers were well-meaning, his team offers a better way.

"After the information is submitted, neither OEM or dealer really follow up in a nurturing way," he says of those previous efforts. "They are not looking at the behavior of the customer. It's not personalized. It might be an automated email list.

"They were trying their own things, and they might have been successful," Brenner says. "But talking to manufacturers, they have a hard time routing leads even today.

"We had a manufacturer who recently started with us and they're already getting calls from dealers saying, 'Wow, What's different?' Even if they're using another horizontal sales program, there's nothing vertical between the OEMs and dealers."

AVALA has been a Keystone partner for a number of years. Christy Spencer, director of marketing for Keystone, says AVALA's recent acquisition by Rollick provides some really interesting insights from the automotive industry, which she says is beneficial for the RV manufacturer.

Rollick also measures post-sale satisfaction.

"Post-sale is just as important as pre-sale," Brenner says. "Measuring customer experience is so critical to whether that customer will return to that same dealer and same manufacturer. We bring in data to understand how to nurture that customer and it all adds up to factor into what we do. It comes down to behavior-based communication and understanding the nuances of these industries. That's what we do."


### Nixing Negotiations

Most dealership employees are familiar with the art of the negotiation. A customer comes in and finds out the price, then pursues every avenue to get that price lower.

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**This sample price quote shows the kind of information Rollick can provide to a potential buyer within a few minutes of being contacted. CEO Bernie Brenner says this kind of actionable information makes it more likely that Rollick is able to deliver a serious prospect to dealers.**

Rollick is helping put an end to the negotiation in a way that leaves manufacturers, dealers, their employees and customers feeling happy and excited about their purchase, from the price they pay to the overall experience.

Rob Celeste, business development manager for Meyers RV Supercenter in New York, says the multi-store dealership has been using the program since May and has found people are less likely to negotiate when they feel they've won.

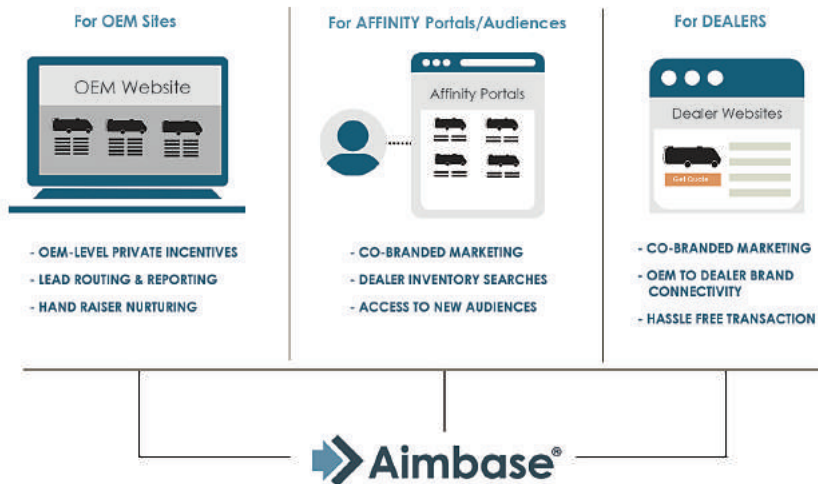
"With Rollick, it's a discount across the board for specific groups – it's not arbitrary," he says. "You can click on the information and get a price certificate. Our profits go up because people aren't

trying to wheel and deal when they know they are already getting a good price. It solidifies a program and a discount that brings us closer to the car industry."

Brenner says that, with Rollick's program, dealers can identify consumers as an employee of a specific employer and who have an affinity to a certain brand, and then offer set special pricing.

"This is the price; everyone in your group gets this price," he says of how the program works. "Consumers are inclined to think, 'I don't want to pay more than my neighbor. I want to feel good about my purchase.' Psychologically, if all the other employees get that same price, then I feel good about that. It all comes down

## Integrate our Solutions at Multiple Points in the Customer Journey



This chart shows the benefits Rollick is able to offer dealers. Regardless of the starting point for a customer, Rollick is able to direct them from an OEM website, an Affinity group portal or the dealer's website to the right place to get that consumer a quick and accurate estimate on the cost of owning an RV.

to sales and satisfaction, and if you can raise those two everybody wins."

Celeste says his company is now getting leads from all over the nation, something which is new for the dealership group.

"People are loyal to their companies and use their Intranet sites. An RV is a big purchase and people may look inside their company before going out. People emailing us from out of state looking for quotes has grown every month," Celeste says.

He adds that the return on investment for the program is so robust, the dealership only has to sell one trailer a month to pay for the program.

"The interesting thing to me when I worked for Camping World was one of the quotes I remember (company President Marcus Lemonis) saying about how we're never going to catch up to the car world because the car business is so integrated, Celeste says. "Now we are."

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