

**A SLIGHT TWIST:
DEEPENING TOUCH-POINT MARKETING FOR THE MARINE & WATER GOODS INDUSTRY****INDUSTRY VISION – VALUE AND VALUES-DRIVEN¹**

There are global opportunities to grow during the recession, by taking advantage of vertical and horizontal integration, and capacity opportunities, during the global shakeout.

The industry has a number of large and mid-sized players, plus a scattering of smaller companies with niche positions that serve segments with different needs. Some companies build submersion suits for allied navies; others, inflatables; or life vests and personal rescue equipment. Still others build life vests for sit-on-top fishing. Common to all is our need to create deep value and multi-layered purchase opportunities. But, only a small number of firms have the capacity to reach across segments, niches, and different regional and national markets to prepare for post-recession expansion. This note speaks to those companies.

At the foundation tier, Quality Management (QM) is a key challenge. QM must pervade the industry at all levels through companies that share best practices across units and with regulators. Here, traditional authority faces a crisis of legitimacy that crosses all segments, because customers increasingly do not accept that authority has their best interests at heart. Our industry must address this. Professional customers demand the best because safety and public security depend on it. Knowledgeable recreational users demand good quality, but depend on regulator assurances. There is a transparency/opacity gap here that will be advantageous to companies with depth and capacity.

Coupled to this, messaging is increasingly important. The crisis of legitimacy is paradoxically an opportunity to get closer to home: going beyond Top-of-Mind to Centre-of-Heart. To get there, we need to go beyond the yearly buying cycle or our narrow focus on the next season or quarter.

This highlights the third theme: becoming competitively authentic, by thinking of the deeper needs of society, clients and customers at market messaging influence points.

SELLING THE MULTI-GENERATIONAL BUY

There are unique global opportunities here for market players. For example, look at how we break out our industry: by function (military professional, civilian professional, instructor, outfitter, user), then price-point. On the Professional Side, we might influence standards' gatekeepers who might influence the buy. Many recreational companies focus on adults, with children as an afterthought; and focus on expert, visible users to influence novice and intermediate buyers.

But take a step back: why focus on adults, and gatekeepers, and visible experts alone? What about a deeper, longer view? At Array Marketing, I designed shelf-talkers for cosmetics' companies such as Proctor & Gamble. Mature cosmetics brands offer valuable learning opportunities because they compete at the gut, *starting* at Top-of-Mind to gently tug at Centre-of-Heart dreams and desires. By focusing on multi-generational buying—what I term the “Three Generation Buying Cycle”—could we develop “Influence Inflection Points” (IIP), aiming to be Centre-of-Heart *at those points?*

¹ © David Huer 2013. This analysis does not reflect any internal discussions or plans of any employer. It is entirely of my own making. Background related to industry: 15 years of Class III-V whitewater kayaking & swiftwater rescue. Amateur kayak slalom (3 years) & safety boater and throw bagger (7 years). 3 years of caving and the basics of underground rigging. 1 year of AB/BC Cave Rescue. Flatwater canoeing, sea kayaking & boat manufacturing. Whitewater slalom – Award-winning Industrial Design thesis.

“Touch Point” opportunity patterns: As an experienced whitewater paddler, I have noticed patterns similar to the cosmetics industry, patterns that translate to inflatable and paddling markets.

CHART - THREE GENERATION BUYING CYCLE

Analyzing and identifying multi-generational IIP's in the marine industry

Review the attached chart showing a review of the paddlesports' generational buying cycle, and posing questions to guide multi-generational sales and marketing strategies.

Recreational canoeing and kayaking:

Newlyweds and young parents transition from carefree ways to family responsibilities. Anecdotally, this population often disappears from “the scene” during early parenting years, and might come back, but we do not really know when, or how, are at what price points.

Are they occupiers of a key IIP? Are they in a strategic position to influence new generations with trust-driven values?

Now consider professional inflatable and evacuation system users:

Look for IIPs during their career: do they occupy key IIPs? Are they in a strategic position to influence new generations?

When can we strategically feather-touch a touch-point? What alerts or events can we monitor to deepen our authentic reach-out? What constancy, what reassuring reminders? What can we do, to genuinely and repeatedly demonstrate “we will be there”?

Our industry can go to that gut level with messages that are very much deeper than now.

We know water, and water is life. We know exploring. We know adventure, and this makes for those Ah-ha! moments that we all live for. We know perseverance, and professional teamwork, and our customers' quiet journeys lived every day.

Our industry speaks to the fundamental values of what it is to be human in the best possible way. What can we do now, to reach out to the generation after next, by touching the generation today?

**That is the challenge and opportunity of today
for every leading marine and inland rescue gear brand.**

MARINE & RIVER RECREATIONAL CONSUMER

This Generation

Parent(s)				Newlyweds	Newly Responsible	Experienced Parents	Transitional Parents	Empty Nesters	Preparing Legacies	Retirees
Consumer	Novice	Intermed	Expert	Transition to Pre-Parenting				Mature (Activities with Less Adrenaline)	Low Intensity Paddling	
Ex: River Fishing Inflatables & Canoes	Class I-II	Class III-IV	Class III-V+	Class III-V, and dropping				Class III-IV	Class I-III	Class I-II
Source of Funds	Self	Self	Self	Self				Self	Self	Gifting

New Generation

Children	No children	Babies & Young Children	Child to Late Teen	Finding their own way	Free at Last!					
Consumer		The "Family Transitionals"	Parents	Late teens	Early 20s	Novice	Intermed	Expert (Recreational & Instructor)		
Source of Funds		Mom & Dad	Mom & Dad	Mom & Dad	Self	Self	Self	Self		

Buying Decision		Focused Spending	Teaching Moments	Purchases (with help)	Purchase, Self & with help	Rental	Buying & Buying Up	Full Purchase of Best Gear
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PROFESSIONAL CONSUMER

Professional Training Level	Trainee	Novice	Intermed	Expert including Participation in Standards Setting	Transition to Retirement
Ex: Offshore Coast Guard duties					
Source of Funds	Gov	Gov	Gov	Gov	Gov

New Generation

Professional Training Level					
Source of Funds	Self	Self	Self		

Buying Decision	Responsibilities (a) Evidence-based and Standards-driven Purchase Specifications (b) Approved Supplier Lists + Advance Notice & Surprise Inspections
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DOMINANT THEME



PURCHASE & USE



PROOFED IN EXTREME CONDITIONS



PURCHASE & RECOMMEND



DEEP TRUST : HEARTS & MINDS



KEY MINDSHARE OPPORTUNITY:
IS THIS AN EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE INFLECTION POINT?