**Websites Making a Big Difference**

**In Dealership Sales**

***By Jennifer Christ, Yamaha University Registrar***

Recently, I had the opportunity of Google searching hundreds of Yamaha dealer web sites and, in my research; I discovered some very interesting things. The most intriguing was that some dealerships do not even have a web site. Hard to believe I know and even harder to understand in a soft market where not having a web site can be a huge disadvantage. There are many reasons why all dealerships should have a website; here are just a few:

1. Web sites are a great equalizer. Whether you are a small family run store or a large marina, everyone gets the same amount of screen space.

2. A web site provides low cost advertising in comparison to other methods including print ads, radio/ television spots, or direct mail.

3. With an Internet site, you can create a customer database which can make following up with your customers easy. Also, it allows you to create a record of emails which you can use to notify customers of new products or promotions.

4. A web site can provide you with immediate feedback. You can have surveys and polls linked directly to your site.

5. Finally, a web site is visible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to anyone who is searching for the product or service you provide.

     Some dealers have really jumped on the Internet bandwagon and are doing some incredible things with their sites. A few of the most unique are:

1. Customer corners which link to photos of customers, testimonials and surveys.

2. Marine Connection has a page that translates into Spanish and they publicize that they have a bilingual sales rep. What a great way to advertise to another market! ( [www.marineconnection.com](http://www.marineconnection.com/) )

3. Reo Marine advertises specifically to women. They have a link that introduces Reo's female sales reps and assures women Reo creates an atmosphere which makes purchasing a boat comfortable and hassle-free. (www.reomarine.com)

4. Dealers are also using the internet to advertise special events. Good examples include the Reeves Marine Tournament Trail and the Pages Creek Customer Appreciate Oyster Roast. ([www.reevesmarine.com/](http://www.reevesmarine.com/) [www.pagecreek.com](http://www.pagecreek.com/))

5. Some dealers are using their sites to showcase awards they have received. For example, Shipps Marine announces that they were voted best dealer in Texas for the fifth year in a row! ([www.shippsmarine.com](http://www.shippsmarine.com/))

   Kudos to the many dealers who are leveraging the power of the Internet. For those of you who have not taken the jump, why wait any longer? In this generation where we have come to expect convenience, speed, and information at our fingertips, a website can be nothing but helpful. The internet is quickly becoming the preferred method to research information. Your web site can provide a place for customers to browse without feeling pressure. Many times it is the first thing people will see. What is the first impression you are giving? An endless amount of information is just a click away, are you on the receiving end?