



COMMITTEE ON EXCELLENCE

FINAL REPORTS OF THE TASK FORCES
STUDYING CONSUMER SATISFACTION





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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Replacement Parts Availability Task Force	7
Customer Warranty Task Force	21
Industry Communication and Support Task Force	29
Industry-Wide Training Task Force	33
Product Quality Task Force	37





Dear Industry Member:

Nearly 10 years ago, the Committee on Excellence launched a landmark study measuring the consumer satisfaction levels of RV owners with their product as well as their experiences at RV dealerships and campgrounds. Over the course of four studies, the findings consistently indicated that the great majority of RV owners are very satisfied with their overall RVing experience, however, it also must be noted that results remained relatively flat since the inception of the research.

In an effort to determine how best to improve the level of satisfaction among RV owners, the Committee on Excellence formed five task forces to focus on issues identified in the consumer satisfaction research within five specific areas: Customer Warranty; Industry Communication and Support; Industry-Wide Training; Product Quality; and Replacement Parts Availability. Each group was asked to develop new solutions to common, and in some cases, long-standing problems.

We commend the efforts of all the dedicated volunteers who served on these task forces and extend our sincere gratitude to them for the time and effort they invested in examining the complex issues affecting customer satisfaction within the RV industry and developing potential solutions. We especially want to also recognize and thank the chairs of each task force: Ellen Kietzmann—Customer Warranty; Stan Sunshine—Industry Communication and Support; Bruce Cooper—Industry-Wide Training; John Thompson—Product Quality; and Debbie Brunoforte—Replacement Parts Availability.

The following reports identify the root causes of problems within each task force's specific area of responsibility and provide potential solutions to these problems. We believe these reports are a very powerful tool that industry members can utilize to improve customer satisfaction at their respective companies and organizations. The reports are a tremendous benchmark for measuring your individual operations and procedures as well as a very informative guide detailing how best to improve your customers' experiences.

We urge you to utilize this report and hope that it adds to the success of your business.

Marty Shea, *Committee on Excellence Co-Chair*
Jim Sheldon, *Committee on Excellence Co-Chair*
Richard Coon, *RVIA President*
Mike Molino, *RVDA President*
Linda Profaizer, *ARVC President & CEO*
Karl Etshied, *Executive Director, RVAA*



**REPLACEMENT PARTS AVAILABILITY
TASK FORCE**



The Replacement Parts Availability Task Force focused on improving the consumer experience by examining the issue of parts availability within the RV industry. The group identified several root causes for the difficulties involved with delivering RV replacement parts from their source to RV dealerships in a timely and efficient manner. These root causes include a lack of parts numbering; a lack of parts manuals and/or parts lists; inconsistent inventory stocking programs within the delivery channel; few 24-hour delivery options; limited factory technical assistance; few parts obsolescence programs; inconsistent return policies for dealers; no bar coding standards, and no parts ordering standards for dealers. Over the course of two years, the Task Force thoroughly studied these areas and developed potential solutions.

Members:

Debbie Brunoforte – *Task Force Chairman, Little Dealer, Little Prices*

Chris Braun, *Teton Homes*

Dale Britton, *Lazydays RV SuperCenter, Inc.*

Rick Deisler, *Keystone RV Co.*

Ron Dempster, *BRD Supply, Inc.*

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CRITICAL ISSUE – Parts Numbering

The Replacement Parts Availability Task Force recommends that OEM manufacturers and component parts suppliers have a process to identify all component parts and maintain an internal “Bill of Materials” or similar database. Such a database would include proprietary information to be maintained by the OEM and used in developing a parts manual.

Potential Solutions

Basic: All parts are assigned a unique part number from the original parts manufacturer, which may also include the OEM part number.

- The OEM makes a determination to provide and set up a specific part number.
- The OEM determines if the part number generated by the parts manufacturer should be tied to an internal OEM part number.
- The OEM determines how internally built parts and any parts that do not carry a parts manufacturer number would be numbered.

Better: If a part number has been assigned by both the original part manufacturer and the OEM, the parts database should reflect both numbers.

- The OEM utilizes the Basic recommendations.
- The OEM develops a database that can cross reference numbers between the original parts manufacturer number and any OEM internal parts number.
- The OEM implements a standard naming and numbering convention that allows for recognition between part numbers and for future updates to the database.

Best: In addition to the Basic and Better recommendations, it is also advised that the parts be physically numbered when possible. Parts should also be available through an electronic web-based format that includes schematics and diagrams supported by a “Bill of Materials” or permanent documentation.

- The OEM utilizes the Basic and Better recommendations.
- The OEM develops a parts numbering system that allows for the physical numbering of parts. This could be done at the parts manufacturer level or the OEM level.
- The OEM determines if the physical part carries the parts number of the OEM, the parts manufacturer, or both.
- The OEM develops a database to catalog all parts and any related parts numbers. The database would require functionality to allow constant updating and the ability to store the parts numbers and tie the specific parts numbers to related schematics, diagrams, and photos.

CRITICAL ISSUE – Parts Manual/Parts List

It is recommended that OEM manufacturers and component parts suppliers maintain a process to identify and catalog all component parts. To support the product, it is recommended that the OEM maintain an internal “Bill of Materials” or a similar database that is understood to be proprietary information to be maintained by the OEM and used by the OEM to provide a parts manual.

Potential Solutions

Basic: A parts manual in a paper catalog format would be available to dealers for ordering parts for a specific make and model.

- The OEM determines the format that achieves the Basic requirements and provides the customer with a useable format that also matches the resources the OEM is willing to assign to the project.
- The OEM assesses current operating systems to determine if it can accommodate a parts numbering program and catalog.
- The OEM determines if the part number used will be based on the vendor number, a unique OEM number, or a combination of both.
- The OEM determines if the part number will be specific to the VIN, model, or vendor number, or a combination of all.
- The OEM determines what form the part description will take and if any standard naming convention would be used.
- Once a systematic assessment is made of the above recommendations, the OEM would proceed to meeting the Basic requirements by gathering parts identification data, moving that information to the selected format, and communicating to the customer base.

Better: This level includes Basic elements plus an illustrated or enlarged view of components based on make and model in an electronic format (CD/DVD or web-based).

- The OEM follows the Basic recommendations.
- The OEM selects appropriate software and allocates the resources needed to achieve a web-based or CD-based parts catalog format.
- The OEM solicits from the parts manufacturers the parts information to allow the link between the main components and subcomponents of the part, when applicable.
- The OEM implements a standard process for updating and adding parts to the database and catalog as the parts manufacturers and the OEM make changes.

Best: This level includes the Basic and Better elements with the ability to order and track parts online. All parts are identified by a unique number in an electronic online format. These documents should include illustrations or enlarged views (when applicable) of components based on make and model. OEMs will cross reference the OEM part number with the vendor part number whenever possible. If an item is only available from the supplier to the OEM as an assembly, then the number, cost, and availability of that item to the dealer would be listed as the full component assembly, not the un-numbered and separately unavailable subcomponents of that assembly.

- The OEM follows the Basic and Better recommendations.
- The OEM creates an advanced website portal to allow web-based parts orders through a web-based catalog. The ability to order parts online will require the OEM to consider a number of features such as: order types; shipping options; reporting status for the dealer; order feedback capabilities; special orders issues; order credits and quotes. It is also suggested that a progression of order types include a draft order, confirmed order, packing slip, and invoice.
- The OEM develops a process to collect and catalog enlarged views of parts through a web-based online portal. These enlarged views should be based on model and make and tied to a specific OEM part number.

- The OEM includes in the catalog process the ability to add photos by specific part, by model and make, and linked to a specific part number.
- The OEM partners with shipping vendors to provide online shipment tracking through an assigned tracking number for each shipment so customers can go online for immediate access to the shipping information and progress of the shipment.

CRITICAL ISSUE – Designated Inventory Stocking Programs Within the Channel

While there is consensus that distributors and suppliers generally maintain adequate inventory levels, it is recommended that both dealers and OEMs develop processes to maintain optimal parts inventory levels. With the diverse nature of various dealer parts departments as well as the fact that most dealers obtain parts from multiple supply sources, dealer stocking levels should be determined primarily by the dealer’s historical parts usage. OEMs should also provide support and historical information to dealers as a secondary resource to allow the dealer to make optimal parts inventory decisions.

Potential Solutions

A. Dealers Should Work with OEMs to Set Stocking Levels for Frequently Used Parts

OEM Recommendations:

- Provide dealers with a minimum suggested stock parts list (by part number and quantity).
- Provide dealers with a listing of high-use, high-cost parts that dealers may choose not to stock.
- Provide dealers with estimated arrival times for parts deliveries.
- Make high-use parts readily available for ordering with part numbers and cost information readily accessible by dealers in a parts manual.
- Provide dealers with dealer-specific historical parts ordering information on a quarterly report that includes part numbers, cost and quantity ordered for a period of three months.
- Provide dealers with historical parts ordering information for the 30 highest demand parts shipped on a quarterly basis. This would include all shipments (not dealership-specific) plus part numbers and the quantity of parts available only through the OEM.

Dealer Recommendations:

- Track their own historical data, and do not rely solely on OEM or aftermarket suppliers.
- Set a regular parts inventory review schedule to facilitate re-ordering low stock and returning overstocked items.
- Place orders with OEMs in an agreed-upon manner (i.e. telephone, fax, electronic).
- Promptly return defective parts in accordance with the written guidelines established by the OEM.
- Handle warranty replacements and service in accordance with written guidelines established by the OEM.

B. OEM and Dealer Recommendations to Stock Frequently Used Parts

- Dealers evaluate and consult with OEM to set appropriate minimum and maximum stocking levels.

- Maintain an inventory tracking system that monitors inventory turns and parts usage to facilitate optimal stocking decisions.
- Establish a stock of generic parts and supplies frequently used in repairs and service (i.e. pipe fittings, sealants, etc.).
- Establish a system to identify the sources of generic parts and supplies, and to address organized numbering, tracking and cost factors.
- Identify and stock appropriate levels of frequently used RV appliance and equipment repair and service parts.
- Maintain a list of frequently used parts ordered from OEM supplier vendors, identified by vendor with appropriate ordering procedures.
- Set a regular inventory review schedule to facilitate re-ordering generic parts and supplies as well as parts ordered from OEM supplier vendors.
- Control physical access to all parts and supplies to insure accurate inventories and proper billing on repair orders as well as to reduce loss due to shrinkage.

C. Dealers Should Work With Aftermarket Suppliers to Stock Items for Retail Sale

- Dealers should establish a retail area, if adequate display and storage space is available, for the marketing to RV consumers of add-on and convenience products and accessories.
- Dealers should consult and work with aftermarket suppliers to establish appropriate product selection and quantities.
- Dealers should set a regular inventory review schedule to facilitate re-ordering aftermarket items for retail.

CRITICAL ISSUE – Fast Delivery (24 Hour) Process

As the RV industry is primarily focused on providing products for enjoyment, ensuring that repair parts are available to correct problems is essential. It is recommended that OEMs, suppliers, distributors and dealers develop a robust and repeatable delivery process that is documented, trainable and measurable to allow for faster and more accurate parts deliveries. Also, effective communications during repair events is critical, especially in emergency situations.

Potential Solutions

A. Service Parts Organization

- OEMs and component parts suppliers have dedicated staff to handle parts orders received from dealers, including both routine stocking orders and emergency orders. This dedicated group may increase in size during “peak season,” which may vary by manufacturer and geographic location.
- It is recommended that the parts organization be segmented into two categories—customer service and fulfillment—with both groups working together to meet customer needs.

B. Service Parts Order Types

- Orders should be separated into two primary categories: Stock Orders and Emergency (or Unit Down) Orders.
- Stock Orders are to provide sufficient parts support for new product introductions or to

replenish inventory. Stock orders are placed by dealers regularly (once or twice per month) and fulfilled by OEMs shipping component parts in two weeks or less.

- Emergency or Unit Down Orders are placed on an as needed basis. Because of the critical nature of these orders, parts typically need to be shipped via premium overnight freight on the same day the order is received or within 24 hours (if received after the OEM or component parts supplier's designated cutoff time).

C. Communication of Order Fulfillment

- It is recommended that for Stock Orders, a designated order entry day and shipment day be provided (i.e. stock orders placed on Tuesday ship on the following Tuesday).
- For Emergency or Unit Down Orders, communication is critical, especially if the part(s) is not available. OEMs, suppliers and dealers need to keep the customer informed of the delivery date. Effective communication will make customers feel confident that everything possible is being done to resolve their problem.

D. Parts Shipments Covered Under Warranty

- Dealers, OEMs and component parts suppliers should agree on the fastest and most reasonable shipment method for warranty repair parts.

E. Emergency After Hours Shipping

- Dealers should consult with OEMs and component parts suppliers about the availability and cost of fulfilling orders after business hours.

CRITICAL ISSUE – Factory Technical Help

One of the factors contributing to issues surrounding replacement parts availability is the lack of technical help at the OEM and component parts supplier level.

Potential Solutions

A. Standardized Workflow and Templates

- Create standardized workflow and templates that cover three basic situations: when the dealer knows the part number; when the problem is known but the needed part number unknown; and when technical assistance is required to diagnose the problem and determine the correct parts needed for the repair.
- Dealer should gather basic information before contacting OEM or component parts supplier, including: Coach number; VIN number; model; year; motorized or towable; a brief description of problem; part description; color (i.e. wood or hardware color); curb side or road side; where the part is used; dimensions; and the quantity needed.
- Process should begin with generating a work order and/or parts card or ticket complete with the above information. Technician should call or e-mail the OEM or component parts supplier to provide the information and e-mail a digital photo if necessary.
- Create a “tickler” file or other process to keep the customer informed while awaiting response from the OEM or components parts supplier.
- OEM or component parts supplier should determine whether the problem can be diagnosed on the spot or if more research is needed. If the problem is diagnosed on the spot,

the part number should be identified and the order process fulfilled. If the problem requires additional research, the OEM or component parts supplier should contact the dealer after the research is completed and a part number should be provided at that time.

B. Training

- Train OEM parts personnel to decide when dealers should be directed to component parts suppliers for information on repair parts.
- Create documentation showing when units were built to assist OEM, component parts suppliers and dealership personnel.
- Parts personnel should be properly trained. Dealership parts personnel should be RVDA certified Parts Specialists or Parts Managers.

C. Compensation

- Dealers should provide compensation packages that reduce turnover and reward technicians who achieve certification.

D. Create Interest in RV Technical Careers

- Expand apprenticeship and outreach programs.

E. Education

- Educate the dealer community about potential profits achievable through a successful service operation staffed by certified employees.

F. Web-based and Electronic Tools

- Use electronic parts ordering and authorization systems when available.
- OEMs and component parts suppliers should have a technical section on their web sites where password protected entry allows access to repair manuals, enlarged views, parts lists, installation instructions, frequently asked questions and troubleshooting guides.
- OEMs and component parts suppliers need to link their most frequently asked parts questions with their most common troubleshooting problems.
- Establish a web-based portal allowing all parts personnel to post a question and get an answer, instead of waiting on hold on the phone for an answer.

CRITICAL ISSUE – Obsolescence of Replacement Parts

It is recommended that a process be established providing for parts to be made available for a period of at least seven years from the date of manufacture, with notification of obsolete parts and their replacement parts incorporated into a parts manual.

When an OEM or component parts supplier determines a part is obsolete, the company will identify a suitable replacement part. The original part and/or replacement part should be available for a period of at least seven years from the initial RV retail sale date. All related parts manuals and price lists will be updated to reflect changes.

CRITICAL ISSUE – Factory Parts Return Policies for Dealers

There is limited and inconsistent communication about parts return policies between dealers, component parts suppliers and OEMs.

Potential Solutions

It is recommended that processes be adopted by OEMs and component parts suppliers to streamline parts returns. Such a process should include:

- Submission of Returns Request – includes completion of the OEM’s Parts Return Form by the dealer and Return Authorization by the OEM, as well as pre-screening of parts to mitigate return of ineligible parts and speed administrative process.
- Disposition of Parts – Parts on the return request should be sorted as follows:
 - Restock at OEM/Saleable – parts will be re-stocked at OEM
 - Excess to OEM – non-saleable parts that are excess to OEM
 - Field Scrap – parts to be scrapped in field
 - Rejects – parts not allowed to be returned under the return policy
- Communication of “Pick Lists” to Dealer – OEM sorts submitted parts numbers and responds with instructions for picking and shipping with a time goal of 10 days.
- Dealer Picking and Packing – approved parts must be picked and packed as directed by the OEM. Each shipment should be properly labeled with each skid having a packing slip. Packing slip should contain parts numbers, descriptions, and quantities of parts being returned.
- Dealer Shipping – returns should be sent to the OEM’s designated return site.
- Credit Process – although processing time may vary by OEM, target baseline for credit “turnaround” time should be 45 days or less.
- Reimbursement Rates – dealers should be reimbursed for returned parts at the percentage of the part’s DN price at the time of return.
- Process and Timing for Issuing Credit on Returns – to better track return shipments, OEM should be informed of the date when the return leaves the dealer facility. OEM may also require dealer to provide copies of packing lists and the number of skids/boxes sent.
- General Processing Cycle Time – OEM should process returned material within 45 days from receipt of return shipment.
- Part Quality Requirements – all returned parts must be in saleable condition.

CRITICAL ISSUE – Bar Coding Standards

It is recommended that OEMs create a bill of materials and bar code for each RV. The bar code would relate to the entire RV’s bill of materials. OEMs and component parts suppliers are encouraged to bar code the most practical parts first (i.e. the highest failure parts and parts used most often for service repairs). Parts that cannot be bar coded due to size, shape, cosmetic considerations, should be set aside as exceptions.

CRITICAL ISSUE – Parts Ordering Standards at Dealerships

It is recommended that dealerships implement a parts ordering process to improve customer service. The process should include:

- A. Customer Calls for Service Appointment
 - Dealer obtains customer information on a standard form (i.e. customer's name, address, telephone number, vehicle type, VIN number and a brief description of the service or repair needed).
 - Dealer determines if service will be under warranty, extended service contract, or on a customer-pay basis. Dealer explains to customer the ordering process for non-stocked parts.
- B. Customer Arrives At Dealership (Check-In Process)
 - Dealer reviews complaint with customer; determines whether it's a warranty issue and checks for manufacturer recalls.
 - Dealer advises customer of the possibility of delays based on parts that may need to be ordered from OEMs and/or backlog of existing repair jobs.
 - Dealer provides customer with written notice stating that if the unit is useable, but the customer chooses to store the unit with the dealer until the service is completed, that the customer acknowledges storage was their decision, and does not imply that the unit is inoperable or out of service. The dealer should also obtain the customer's signature on a copy of this notice (*see sample notice in Appendix*).
- C. Pre-Diagnosis Inspection of a Customer's Vehicle
 - Dealer conducts a pre-diagnosis of the customer's vehicle at check-in.
 - Service writer (preferably certified) conducts preliminary diagnosis to determine what parts are needed for service and if parts are in stock.
 - Dealer orders parts needed within three working days from the OEM or component parts supplier.
 - Dealer schedules service, calls customer regarding approximate time frame for service, and notes on repair order the time and date of call.
 - Dealer provides a written notice via mail informing the customer if their vehicle is useable in its present condition and requests they pick it up and return it to the dealership on the date for scheduled service (*see sample letters for warranty and non-warranty service in Appendix*).
- D. Customer Vehicle Goes to Repair Bay for Full Diagnosis
 - Technician (preferably certified or master certified) reviews the complaint; confirms parts orders from pre-diagnosis; and identifies any other stock parts and supplies needed for service.
 - Technician diagnoses complaint and records findings in writing on the repair order, including any complaints that could not be reproduced.
 - Technician checks with the parts department to determine if parts and supplies needed for service are in stock.

E. Warranty Determination Is Made

- Dealer works with the appropriate OEM or components parts supplier and follows procedures to determine whether a particular repair or service item is covered under warranty.
- Dealer calls the customer to provide notice of warranty decision and makes a written note on the repair order of the time and date of the call.

F. Parts Needed for Service are Requisitioned

- Technician orders in stock parts and supplies needed for service from parts department.
- Technician completes a Special Order Request (SOR) for any needed part not in stock.
- Technician checks on status of any parts ordered during pre-diagnosis.

G. Parts to be Ordered are Sourced by Vendor

- Dealers SOR buyer contacts the appropriate vendors to place orders using correct procedures and parts numbers supplied by OEMs or component parts suppliers.

H. Parts Order is Placed

- Dealers SOR buyer obtains confirmation from vendors of orders placed and the estimated time of arrival (ETA).
- Dealer should call the customer to provide notice of ETAs and make written note on the repair order of the time and date of the call.

I. Parts Order is Filed for Follow-Up by Service Advisor

- Dealer should file submitted orders by customer name and note ETAs on calendar. Calendar should be monitored and OEM/component parts supplier called if ETA is overdue.
- Dealer should call customer to update ETAs if earlier time commitments have changed and make written note on repair order noting time and date of call.

J. Parts Order is Received

- Dealer checks in received parts against parts order and logs in all received parts by the customer's name and date received.
- Service writer and technician are notified that parts were received.

K. Parts Order is Billed, Delivered to Service Bay, and Installed

- If the customer is at the dealership, the dealer should charge the part to the repair order.
- If the customer has left the dealership, the dealer should call customer to give notice that parts have arrived, confirm the service appointment, and make a written note on the repair order of the time and date of the call.
- Dealer should process returns to the vendor of any ordered parts held for more than 30 days after giving notice, if the customer fails to schedule or keep appointment.
- Parts are delivered to the service bay and the technician completes service.

APPENDIX

The following sample notice and letters are designed to provide guidance to dealers for items identified in the Potential Solutions and Critical Issues in the Replacement Parts Availability section. Dealers may use these letters or create their own based on the information they contain. Dealers may wish to consult with their legal counsel regarding these letters.

NOTICE ON UNIT STORAGE

Date

Dear [Customer],

Thank you for the opportunity to service your RV.

During this process your RV will be inspected and evaluated by our [Certified] Technicians to determine its service needs. This inspection may determine that your RV is useable in its present condition while awaiting completion of the requested service. However, because parts may need to be ordered from outside vendors, there may be a delay until your RV service appointment takes place.

If your RV is useable, there is no need for you to miss out on enjoying it as much as possible until the scheduled appointment date. We will notify you as soon as possible by telephone and/or a follow up letter whether your RV is useable and should remain in your possession until the appointment date. If, after you receive this notice, you choose to leave your RV with us, you acknowledge that this choice constitutes a voluntary request on your part and does not imply that your RV is inoperable or out of service.

Please sign and date on the line below to indicate that you acknowledge and understand this notice, and keep a copy for your records.

Name

Signature

Date

Letter Informing Customer That Their Unit is Useable in Present Condition Until the Scheduled APPOINTMENT FOR WARRANTY SERVICE

Date

Dear [Customer],

This letter is in regards to your RV, which is at our facility for service under warranty. I appreciate the faith you have placed in us to perform warranty repairs on your RV.

Our technicians have conducted an evaluation of your RV service needs and determined that your RV is usable in its present condition while awaiting warranty service. This service is scheduled to be performed on [date]. An important benefit of owning a RV is the flexibility to take spontaneous trips. Because your RV is useable and the warranty item at issue does not render your unit “out of service,” there is no need for you to miss out on enjoying it as much as possible until the scheduled appointment date.

Please pick up your RV as soon as possible, from Monday through Saturday from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm. Please return the RV on [date] for the scheduled warranty service.

We appreciate your business and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Happy Camping, [Service Manager]

Letter Informing Customer Their Unit is Useable In Its Present Condition Until the Scheduled APPOINTMENT FOR NON-WARRANTY SERVICE

Date

Dear [Customer],

This letter is in regards to your RV, which is at our facility for service. I appreciate the faith you have placed in us to repair your RV.

Our technicians have conducted an evaluation of your RV service needs and determined that your RV is usable in its present condition while awaiting service. This service is scheduled to be performed on [date]. An important benefit of owning a RV is the flexibility to take spontaneous trips. Because your RV is useable, there is no need for you to miss out on enjoying it as much as possible until its scheduled appointment date.

Please pick up your RV as soon as possible, from Monday through Saturday from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm. Please return the RV on [date] for the needed service.

We appreciate your business and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Happy Camping, [Service Manager]



**CUSTOMER WARRANTY
TASK FORCE**



The Customer Warranty Task Force focused on improving efficiencies within the warranty process to create an improved experience for our mutual RV customers. The group met several times throughout 2006 and 2007 to identify procedures for making the warranty process more efficient in order to create a win/win situation for RV industry stakeholders and consumers. As benchmarks for measuring the RV industry's performance in the area of warranty service, the task force selected motorcycle manufacturer Harley-Davidson and machine tool manufacturer Haas Automation, Inc., companies known for their superior warranty repair programs.

Members:

Ellen Kietzmann – *Task Force Chairman, Blue Ox*
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Chris Christy, *Workhorse Custom Chassis*
Doug Deter, *Forest River*
Gary Doudna, *Buffalo Lake Camping Resort*
Ernie Friesen, *All Seasons RV*
Bob Grady, *Lazydays RV SuperCenter, Inc.*
Kelly Green, *Dutchmen Manufacturing, Inc.*
David Hoover, *Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp.*
Jim Johnson, *Gulf Stream Coach*
Mike Keller, *Keller RV & Marine*
Larry Lebryk, *Atwood Mobile Products*
Ron Little, *RV's Northwest, Inc.*
Jerry McCarthy, *Coachmen Repair Shop*
Tim O'Brien, *Circle K RV's, Inc.*
Troy Padgett, *All Valley RV Center*
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CRITICAL ISSUES

The Customer Warranty Task Force identified five critical issues within the warranty process: Consumer Access to Information; Electronic Communication; Training; Reasonable Repair Times, and Availability of Parts. The task force suggests potential solutions within each area for manufacturers (OEMs), component parts suppliers, and RV dealers.

Potential Solutions: Consumer Access to Information

OEM Recommendations:

- OEM has a consumer website that includes a service support section with a user-friendly Authorized Service Center locator tool to refer customers to the closest qualified dealer plus the following features:
 - Product Warranty Terms & Conditions (including breakouts by supplier/component/accessory)
 - Maintenance Schedule and Requirements
 - Troubleshooting Tips
 - Access to Service Literature (manuals, towing guides, etc.)
 - Ability for Consumers to Communicate with the OEM
- OEM audits website regularly to validate information is current and accurate.
- OEM provides consumer information DVD with each product that covers chassis, operation of appliances, major systems and accessories.
- OEM's retail website has the ability to link to dealer sites.
- OEM allows dealer access to the site to update information posted in dealer profile.

Component Parts Suppliers Recommendations:

- Supplier has a consumer website including a service support section with a user-friendly Authorized Service Center locator; a tool to refer customer to nearest qualified dealer, and the following features:
 - Product Warranty Terms & Conditions
 - Maintenance Schedule and Requirements
 - Troubleshooting Tips
 - Access to Service Literature (operation manuals)
 - Ability for Consumers to Communicate with the Supplier
- Supplier audits website regularly to validate the information as current and accurate.
- Supplier provides consumer information with each product that covers operation, maintenance and technical information.
- Supplier's retail website has the ability to link to Authorized Repair Center sites.
- Supplier allows dealer/repair center access to the website to update information posted in the profile.

Dealer Recommendations:

- Dealer reviews critical product information (warranty coverage, component registrations, dealership service policies & procedures) with each customer and conducts a thorough product walk-through at time of delivery.

- Dealer maintains a consumer website that includes a service and parts support section and contains critical information for customers, including:
 - Dealer Location (with mapping link)
 - Hours of Operation
 - Contact Information (names and numbers)
 - Service Capabilities (products, components, accessories, chassis)
 - Transient Customer Policy
 - Scheduling Policies
 - Technician Certifications
 - Parts and Accessories Availability
- Dealer provides website profile information to OEMs/suppliers to support their respective dealer locators.

Potential Solutions: Electronic Communication

OEM Recommendations:

- OEM provides dealers an electronic (B2B) web-based communication system with a platform that addresses warranty claims, repair history, repair authorizations, service bulletins, recall bulletins, a parts look up (catalog) specific to serial number, parts ordering, and a parts locator.
- OEM provides feedback on all denied, adjusted and paid claims electronically within 24 hours of processing.
- OEM electronic communication system integrates with dealer business systems.

Supplier Recommendations:

- Supplier provides dealers an electronic (B2B) web-based communication system with a platform that addresses warranty claims, repair history, repair authorizations, service bulletins, recall bulletins, a parts look up (catalog) specific to serial number, parts ordering, and a parts locator.
- Supplier provides feedback on all denied, adjusted and paid claims electronically within 24 hours of processing.
- Supplier electronic communication system integrates with dealer and manufacturer business systems.

Dealer Recommendations:

- Dealer operates an internal business system that includes modules for service and parts.
- Dealer submits repair authorizations electronically and tracks status.
- Dealer submits warranty claims electronically within 30 days of repair completion.
- Dealer submits warranty claim appeals electronically within 15 days of return.
- Dealer utilizes an electronic scheduling and loading program.
- Dealer submits warranty registrations electronically within five days of retail sale.

Potential Solutions: Training

OEM Recommendations:

- OEM provides technician, new product, pre-delivery and walk-through training

throughout the year.

- OEM provides training for dealership personnel on operation of their B2B system.
- OEM provides supplemental technical and product training electronically.
- OEM provides educational tools (i.e. Policy and Procedures Manual) for service support staff (i.e. service writer, manager, warranty administrator, parts personnel).
- OEM provides dealer support through Field Service Representative.

Supplier Recommendations:

- Supplier provides repair technician training and certification throughout the year for both dealers and OEMs.
- Supplier works with OEMs' online installation procedures and audits compliance.
- Supplier provides product training for OEM and dealership personnel.
- Supplier provides supplemental technical and product training electronically.
- Supplier provides educational tools (i.e. Policy and Procedures Manual) for service support staff (i.e. service writer, manager, warranty administrator, parts personnel).
- Supplier provides training for dealership personnel on operation of their B2B system.

Dealer Recommendations:

- Dealer requires training and certification (when available) for the following key positions: service writer; technicians; warranty administrator; service management; parts specialist, and parts management.
- Dealer provides incentive for timely and successful completion of required training courses.
- Dealer provides means of recognition for employees completing required training.
- Dealer benchmarks against other dealers (i.e. 20 Groups).

Potential Solutions: Reasonable Repair Times

OEM Recommendations:

- OEM provides a turnaround time of 60 minutes for repair authorization.
- OEM provides technical repair support via phone and internet within 60 minutes.
- OEM provides self-authorization for qualified dealers.
- OEM allows use of "off-the-shelf" parts for repairs without penalty.
- OEM provides a systems schematic and troubleshooting information.
- OEM provides appeal process and/or technical support for disputed repair times.
- OEM provides a comprehensive flat rate manual in both print and electronic formats (including diagnostic, re-test and straight time).
- OEM provides unit repair history & Recall/Service Bulletins.
- OEM provides a legible data sheet with each unit that includes make, model, name and serial number of all appliances and major components.
- OEM works jointly with dealer in establishing accurate flat rate times.
- OEM conducts 30-day and 12-month CSI surveys to track and measure customer service repair satisfaction.

Supplier Recommendations:

- Supplier provides a turnaround time of 60 minutes for repair authorization.
- Supplier provides technical repair support via phone and internet within 60 minutes.

- Supplier provides self-authorization for qualified dealers.
- Supplier allows use of “off-the-shelf” parts for repairs without penalty.
- Supplier provides a systems schematic and troubleshooting information.
- Supplier provides appeal process and/or technical support for disputed repair times.
- Supplier provides a comprehensive flat rate manual in both print and electronic formats (including diagnostic, re-test and straight time).
- Supplier provides unit repair history & Recall/Service Bulletins.
- Supplier works jointly with dealer in establishing accurate flat rate times.

Dealer Recommendations:

- Dealer employs trained and certified service department employees.
- Dealer is an authorized repair center for major appliance and system components.
- Dealer has and maintains manufacturer and supplier essential service tools and equipment.
- Dealer has and maintains manufacturer and supplier recommended lists for stocking service parts.
- Dealer utilizes shop scheduling and loading best practices.
- Dealer submits authorizations electronically prior to start of repairs that require authorization.
- Dealer completes a thorough write-up of the customer’s issues, provides ongoing repair status updates and notification of repair completion, and provides an explanation of the repairs completed with R.O. copies.
- Dealer conducts post-repair CSI survey to measure and track customer satisfaction with repairs.
- Dealer provides feedback to OEM/supplier relative to labor rate allowances.

Potential Solutions: Availability of Parts

OEM Recommendations:

- OEM allows use of “off-the-shelf” and/or non-OEM parts for timely repair completion, without penalty.
- OEM provides a unit specific bill-of-materials.
- OEM provides methods to quickly and easily identify needed repair parts for ordering, provides a parts locator, and utilizes uniform naming and numbering for parts.
- OEM provides a parts order receipt confirmation to dealer within 24 hours of order submission.
- OEM provides an inventory protection program (RGA program and obsolescence program).
- OEM provides a recommended stocking inventory (Top 20 parts) by model.
- OEM has immediate availability of Top 100 repair parts sold.

Supplier Recommendations:

- Supplier allows use of “off-the-shelf” and/or non-supplier parts for timely repair completion, without penalty.
- Supplier provides dealers with a method to quickly and easily identify needed repair parts for ordering, provides a parts locator, and utilizes uniform naming and numbering for parts.

- Supplier provides a parts order receipt confirmation to dealer within 24 hours of order submission.
- Supplier provides an inventory protection program (RGA program and obsolescence program) to dealers and OEMs.
- Supplier provides dealers with a recommended stocking inventory (Top 20 parts) by model.
- Supplier has immediate availability of Top 100 repair parts sold.

Dealer Recommendations:

- Dealer places daily electronic parts orders that contain all the required information for timely and accurate processing.
- Dealer keeps and maintains OEM and supplier minimum recommended stocking inventory.
- Dealer maintains a current parts inventory and participates in OEM and supplier inventory obsolescence/protection programs.
- Dealer's stock parts inventory is organized for easy part identification and retrieval.



**INDUSTRY COMMUNICATIONS AND SUPPORT
TASK FORCE**



The Industry Communications and Support Task Force focused on improving communication channels among dealers, OEMs, suppliers, RV parks and consumers. The group examined the use of voluntary technology standards between industry training partners to realize seamless interoperability in computer-to-computer transactions. The Task Force studied several industries facing market issues similar to those found in the RV industry that utilize such voluntary technology standards and determined that substantial efficiencies, cost savings and increases in customer satisfaction could be realized by implementing such standards.

Members:

Stan Sunshine – *Task Force Chairman, Stag-Parkway, Inc.*

Grant Farrer, *IDS – Integrated Dealers Systems*

Kris Fettig, *Goodyear*

Dave Hoelzer, *Lloyd's I-10 RV Center, Inc.*

Rick Horsey, *Parkview RV Center*

Bob Livingston, *Affinity Group/TL Enterprises*

Mike Moore, *Systems 2000/Galaxy*

Dan Morris, *All Seasons RV & Marine*

Ken Neal, *Tiffin Motor Homes*

Kathy Palmeri, *ARVC/Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park*

Chad Reece, *Winnebago Industries*

Dan Saltzgeber, *Reichart's Camping Center*

Larry Schaffer, *Rivers Bus & RV Sales*

Mitch Shatzen, *GE Capital Solutions*

Ron Shepherd, *Camperland of Oklahoma*

Joey Shields, *Pan Pacific RV Centers, Inc.*

Dave Sollars, *Onan Corp./Cummins, Inc.*

B.J. Thompson, *B.J. Thompson Associates, Inc.*

Bill Walmsley, *Workhorse Custom Chassis*

Staff:

Bill Baker, *RVIA*

Skip Daum, *CalRVDA*

Tim DeWitt, *MARVAC*

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Gary LaBella, *RVIA*

Critical Issue – Improving Flow of Information between Industry Segments

The task force was formed to evaluate issues related to consumer satisfaction and to recommend actions that would increase those levels. We were given information from the various surveys that indicated the following:

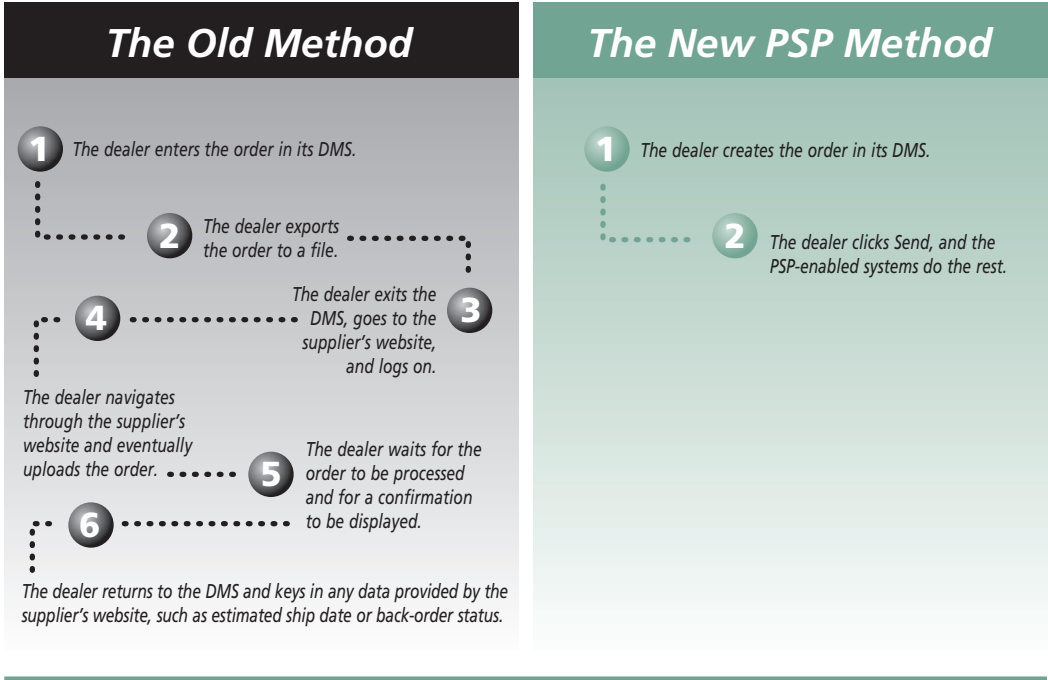
1. Little information is available to dealers
2. Lack of a computerized highway to pass information back and forth
3. Inefficiencies in the transaction processes
4. Lack of consistency in the methods used, particularly in warranty administration
5. Lack of factory technical backup for field problems

Our problem solving method was to assemble a task force that included all segments of the industry: dealers; manufacturers; suppliers, and IT providers. We focused on the most pressing issues, which we concluded were the methods of communication and what information needed to be shared. Additionally, we sought other industries with similar issues to determine if there were models already established from which we could learn or emulate.

Our industry research initially found the automotive model which is called STAR (Standards for Technology in Automotive Retail). It represents most of the major auto manufacturers, NADA, and most of the major auto industry IT providers. Their model produces standards that the adopters use in program implementation. This means they use an agreed-upon format in which they send transactions back and forth directly from computer to computer. There is little technical support available to the members other than technical advisory panels.

Among the other industries we studied, the most interesting model we found was in the motorcycle market, where the Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC) not only publishes the transaction standards, but also provides technical support to adopting members. Additionally, they created a subsidiary called TranStand that is designed to assist other industries that are interested in utilizing their work within their own markets. The reason for the separate entity is to preserve the 501(c)(3) status of MIC. They call their standards the Partners Standard Protocol (PSP).

Here is a simple model of how it works:



There are substantial benefits to the adoption of the standards, including improved customer service throughout the supply chain at reduced costs as implementation of IT services could be on a near universal basis, as well as increased efficiency and dramatically reduced errors within the chain.

We engaged consulting firm Alvarez & Marsal to assist us in evaluating the various cost models and technical aspects of this effort. Initially, it appears to produce clearly positive returns on the investment and provides not only an increase in deliverable levels of satisfaction on the issues directly related to this task force, but also enables other task force issues, specifically parts delivery and warranty, to realize increased levels of efficiency as well.

**INDUSTRY-WIDE TRAINING
TASK FORCE**



The Industry-Wide Training Task Force focused on the availability of training within the RV industry and level of participation in training programs. In the course of its work, the Task Force determined that while there were ample training programs available within the RV industry, the availability of these programs was not well-known or well-publicized. There are many training opportunities available, but participation seemed to be the major problem. The Task Force identified the “dirty dozen” reasons why people don’t embrace training. It was concluded that so much was being done in training at the national and state associations, and by manufacturers, suppliers, and other vendors, that there was more of a need to coordinate and share information than to create more training. To address this issue, the Task Force created a one-stop resource for industry training opportunities: www.rvtrainingcalendar.com.

Members:

Bruce Cooper – *Task Force Chairman, Village RV*
Mel Adams, *RVP/Suburban, Airxcel*
Michael Bourne, *La Mesa RV Center*
Don Bray, *Norhampton Community College*
Steve Casement, *Steve Casey’s Recreational Sales*
G. Allen Cohoe, *Okanagan University College*
Gregory Dewalt, *Dewalt’s RV*
Max Gibbs, *Sandy Pines/ARVC*
Jay Hesse, *Blue Ox*
Phil Lord, *Monaco Coach Corp.*
Gaylord Maxwell, *Life on Wheels*
Greg Moos, *Onan Corp./Cummins*
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CRITICAL ISSUE – Industry Training Participation

To address the issue of improving participation in RV industry training programs, the Industry-Wide Training Task Force created a single calendar that shows the schedule and description of all industry training and facilitates registration.



RVTrainingCalendar.org

Now, RV industry employees and their supervisors have a one-stop resource to find training. Some of the features of the new training calendar include:

- A comprehensive list of industry training for various positions within the RV industry such as: service technician; service management; parts and accessories; dealer/general manager; sales; customer service; finance & insurance, and more.
- Offerings from national, state, and local associations, professional trainers, manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, and other training providers.
- The ability for trainers and organizations to enter new events on the website, so that the website always has the latest information.
- The ability to search for events by topic or dealership position, and specifics on each event including date, price, location, and how to register.

How it Works:

- Training providers can enter training events by clicking on “Add/Manage Events” at the top left-hand corner of the website and then “Sign up to enter your events.”
- This allows trainers to create a username (e-mail address) and password, and to fill out the submission form electronically. Once the submission form is completed, the administrator approves the content before it appears on the RV Training Calendar.

Next Steps for the RV Industry Training Calendar:

RVIA, RVDA and other industry training and educational groups will:

- Continue to market rvtrainingcalendar.org to the industry, urging manufacturers, suppliers, and other industry stakeholders to post their training offerings on the calendar.
- Continue to educate users on how to use the website, enter events, etc.
- Continue to gather feedback from users and improve the website.



PRODUCT QUALITY
TASK FORCE



The Product Quality Task Force focused on how to improve product quality and, thereby, customer satisfaction. In the spring of 2007, the Task Force surveyed RV manufacturers and dealers to identify the 10 most serious product quality problems. The list was narrowed down to the three most serious: rain intrusion leaks; internal plumbing system leaks, and 12-volt electrical system issues. A methodology for precisely identifying the source of roof and internal plumbing system leaks was then developed for use by manufacturers and dealers on a voluntary basis.

Members:

John Thompson – *Task Force Chairman, John Thompson Associates*

Randy Biles, *Pikes Peak Traveland, Inc.*

Barry G. Chiron, *All Seasons RV*

Ron Fenech, *Keystone RV, Inc.*

William Fenech, *Damon Motor Coach*

Craig Floyd, *Technology Research Corp. (TRC)*

Phil Geise, *Jayco, Inc.*

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CRITICAL ISSUE – Improving manufacturers’ and dealers’ recordkeeping systems to better track recurring problems and reduce warranty costs.

The Product Quality Task Force is launching a voluntary problem identification program for dealers and manufacturers. The first phase focuses on roof water intrusion and water distribution problems, both of which are high on consumer lists of complaints.

Each participating dealer and manufacturer will be asked to mark a simple generic diagram with the exact location of pertinent troubles. For instance, for a water leak at the right rear end seam, the technician will mark an “X” at that location. There will also be room for narrative comments.

As data is accumulated and reported, three things will happen:

- Participants will be urged to establish record keeping systems that let them see exactly where most of their problems are occurring.
- RVIA’s Standards Department will design educational resources to help appropriate personnel resolve these recurring problems in the planning and assembly process.
- Easily applied ways of measuring success at the source will be developed.

Ultimately, this body of knowledge could be framed into proprietary or industry standards, as the appropriate industry boards see fit. At the very least, the ability to remedy the root causes of expensive warranty problems will be a boon to participants, including the all-important end user of our products.

PRODUCT QUALITY PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED IN PHASE ONE:

Specific items that will be addressed in this first phase are:

Roof Leaks

- Front end seam
- Rear end seam
- Side seam
- Plumbing vents
- Other vents
- Refrigerator vents
- Satellite
- Antenna
- Roof Air Conditioners
- Roof racks

Water Distribution Leaks

- Hose to fitting attachments
- Fixture connections
- Fittings breaking/cracking
- Hose, tube, pipe damage/cracking/splitting
- City water connection
- Low point drains
- Over bending tubing putting pressure on fittings

- Creating stress at connections – excessive length of risers
- Power cord to water system separation

THE NEXT PHASE

In the next phase, a similar approach will be followed to identify sidewall leaks and 12-volt electrical system issues. The Product Quality Task Force is confident that this approach will be very useful in resolving some major sources of customer dissatisfaction with RV quality.

COMMITTEE ON EXCELLENCE
FINAL REPORTS OF THE TASK FORCES
STUDYING CONSUMER SATISFACTION



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