



CAN YOU KEEP A SECRET?

by Brady Kay, BWI President

In our line of work, being able to sit on some juicy news that is protected by an embargoed date is the key to our survival. If you go against the Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) for temporary click bait fame – in an attempt to scoop other marine journalists – you run the risk of being cut off from future announcements. But just how important is it to respect an embargoed release? Simply put, it's everything.

If someone is going to leak to the public a protected secret my money is on a dealer, just say'n. However, as journalists we need to hold ourselves to a higher standard when we're trusted with time-sensitive information.

I'm often amazed at how some people after signing multiple NDAs sneak a quick photo or video with plans to share it the first chance they get.

So why do manufacturers use embargos on new releases rather than just announce it?

"We embargo information to allow media members enough time to create their stories before we release it to the public," explains Brad Massey, Yamaha Marine manager communication and video production. "It also allows us to accommodate

release timing in other markets around the world."

Lee Gordon, vice president Brunswick Global communications and public relations, prefers to provide media with a sneak peek at a product before it's launched, but also realizes the challenges of using an embargo. "The longer the embargo, the more heartburn I have because I'm worried every day the news will leak out," says Gordon who has had just a handful of occasions where the agreement has been violated. "More times than not, it's not the reporter who violates the agreement. It's someone on the digital side. Once the story leaves the reporters hands that is usually where the problem comes in. I have had some reporters just post a story and then 'apologize' after the fact. Those reporters haven't been invited back to our events because we can't trust them, which is unfortunate."

Gordon is a former anchor/journalist so he understands the need to be first, but at the same time he's looking for mutual respect for that embargo. "From past experience, I know the most valuable asset I had in the media was the relationships," said Gordon. "If you maintain them and respect them, you are given access and as a member of the media the greatest gift is access. If a member of the media is trustworthy,

they will get scoops and inside information before the rest of the world."

Simply put, respect embargos and more future opportunities will come your way. Or in other words, learn to keep a secret.

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MAKE FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT: THE POWER OF THE LEAD

To twist a famous old phrase by Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, I may not be able to define what makes a good lead, “but I know it when I see it.” And when I see a particularly good one, it leaves a lasting impression.

Longtime friend and fellow boating writer, Alan Jones, kicked off a boat review with an opening sentence I still vividly remember two decades later. I won’t mention the specific boat brand he was reviewing, but it went like this: “What’s the difference between Boat X and a European tourist? One of the two is more likely to tip.”



Granted, this was back in the day when writers were free to be more critical (honest?) penning boat tests, but even then, I found such well-worded candor refreshing. It exemplified what a strong lead should be: pithy, punchy and providing a strong indication of what was to follow. More importantly, as the reader, I HAD to keep going to see what came next.

That is, after all, the job of any strong lead, to draw the reader into the story. As a long-time BWI writing contest judge, I can state unequivocally that the opening paragraph of an article must jump off the page and grab my attention to have a chance.

Should a good lead be short, or build to a crescendo? Humorous or somber? The answer is yes. Each writer needs to find his or her own string of words to captures the essence of the article, and craft them into a bang-up beginning. About the best advice I can offer is to keep working at it until you're happy.

An article’s headline is equally important in capturing the reader. After all, it’s the very first thing the audience will see. Again, I’ll return to a BWI Awards Ceremony of decades past, when perennial award-winner Lenny Rudow took a top trophy for an overview of marine sanitation devices entitled “The Scoop on Poop.” In his comments, the quoted judge specifically highlighted the headline as a key reason for the award. Again, put in the effort and don’t assume it’s the editor’s job to find a title for your article.

Author’s note: Some of you are probably thinking, is the proper terminology lead, or lede? The word lede dates back to the days of manual typesetting, when copy editors used it to avoid confusion with the typesetting term lead (like the metal), a thin line used to separate adjacent articles. Some editors still use this variation.

Ron Balanti is the owner of Strike Zone Communications and 1st Vice President on the BWI Board.

IBEX SETS DATES FOR IN-PERSON SHOW

IBEX 2021 will be held at the Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, FL USA. The show dates are September 28 – 30, 2021, with the Monday Pre-Show Sessions taking place September 27, 2021.

Celebrating 30 years, the International BoatBuilders' Exhibition & Conference (IBEX), North America's largest technical trade event for marine industry professionals, will be an in-person event, which will offer attendees access to 700+ exhibits in the halls, outdoor display space, and on the IBEX Docks.



JUST THE FACTS, MA'AM

The National Marine Manufacturers Association's virtual State of the Boating Industry address provided high level stats on the recreational marine industry. NMMA President, Frank Hugelmeyer, noted that the industry grew 12 percent during the last year, with more than 300,000 new boats sold and 100,000 first-time buyers accounting for a 13-year high in sales. The marine sector accounted for \$778 billion in gross economic output and supported 5.2 million jobs. The hugely popular boating/fishing segment contributes \$170 billion to the outdoor-recreation economy.

NEW BOAT ENGINE CUTOFF SWITCH LAW GOES INTO EFFECT APRIL 1

There are new engine cutoff device wear requirements for recreational boat operators as part of the January 1, 2021, passage of National Defense Authorization Act that included a U.S. Coast Guard Reauthorization. These devices, commonly referred to as engine cutoff switches (ECOS), are designed to prevent a boat-strike injury if an operator is accidentally ejected overboard while underway.

Effective April 1, 2021, the new law requires a vessel operator to use either a helm or outboard lanyard or wireless ECOS on certain vessels less than 26 feet when traveling on plane or above displacement speed. These vessels include (1) boats that have a functioning engine cutoff device installed at the helm or on an outboard engine or have wireless ECOS, or (2) boats manufactured beginning January 2020. The Coast Guard increased the number of boats required to have ECOS installed after this date in an effort to reduce boating accidents and fatalities.



MEMBER NEWS

FREEDOM BOAT CLUB ACQUIRED CHICAGO BASED OPERATION & TERRITORY

Freedom Boat Club, a division of Brunswick Corporation, has entered into agreements to acquire its Chicago franchise and six New York area locations. This marks the second and third acquisitions made by FBC over the past year.

NMMA HOSTS AMERICAN BOATING CONGRESS

ABC begins on Wednesday, April 21 at 1:30pm ET, and runs through Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 3:00pm ET. Featuring remarks from members of Congress, administration officials, and key political movers and shakers, NMMA has a robust agenda in store for ABC 2021. Speakers will be announced as they are confirmed.

MARTIN FLORY GROUP HIRED BY SLAMMER MARINE

To support expanding its market share and increasing product awareness, Slammer Marine has hired Martin Flory Group for public relations in the US and Canada. The firm manufactures and markets the Slammer Integrated Dock Fender system, which mounts directly onto the side of a dock and eliminates the need to hang fenders.

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CALENDAR & EVENTS

Stay tuned for upcoming announcements.

WELCOME

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