

Jay's Blog: The Digital and Social Train Has Left the Station. Were You Aboard?

By Jay McAninch

This past year, I heard two things that accelerated my concerns about our industry's future. My list of concerns was already long, starting with the current lag in high-end bow sales; threats from foreign counterfeit products; the rising tide of chronic wasting disease (CWD) sweeping the country; and the uncertainty of taxes, health care and the freedom to merchandise shooting and hunting equipment.

The two more recent concerns relate to the most significant issue facing our industry. The first item was McDonald's decision to add mobile order-and-pay capabilities so customers can pick up orders at the counter or get curbside delivery by providing their parking site.

This option from the folks who gave us Happy Meals confirms the message all retail businesses hear: customers learn all they need to know from their mobile devices. They don't want to talk to store staff and they don't want to wait for anything.

My second concern came from several archery retailers who only want customers to visit their shops in person. Furthermore, they want their customers to buy products and learn all they need to know from themselves and their staff. These shop owners said they hate the Internet, websites and all social media. They also wanted their customers to visit their shops for all their archery and bowhunting needs.

These two concerns, along with all the changes happening in the retail environment, make me worry that too many of our retailers don't realize the digital and social train has "left the station." If you don't believe me, ask the folks at Gander Mountain, Sportsman's Warehouse or any mass merchants



Archery pro shops are about so much more than products and technical advice yet increasing numbers of consumers must be socially or digitally "hooked" before they will consider visiting a shop.

"Retailers have started more people in archery than any other group – by far – and retailers keep more people shooting and enjoying archery and bowhunting than anyone," ATA President/CEO Jay McAninch, said.

in outdoor recreation who, collectively, are experiencing slow sales. Or you can ask former staff from Sears, Kmart, Macy's, hhgregg, J.C. Penney Co., Sports Authority, RadioShack and many more.

I noted another new reality during a recent meeting with leaders of 16 other outdoor recreation industry trade associations and several CEOs from companies that are doing very well: they no longer make long-range plans. Why? Their companies must be prepared to dramatically change their retailing and customer-relation

strategies at least every six months. Each said their greatest challenge was finding ways to engage consumers and making it easy for them to take action.

One of those CEOs – Bob Martin, CEO of THOR Industries – is riding a wave the recreational vehicle industry hasn't seen in decades. Martin credits his company's success to giving consumers what they want, which often isn't a big "home on wheels." Instead, it is sleek, small and very functional motorhomes. The other key feature of these RVs? They are fully equipped with electronics, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and

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every other social and digital connection customers desire.

The bottom line: retailing isn't changing. It has changed.

The question is this: how do retailers keep up, especially the small, independent shops like many in our industry? It is a challenge but we can tackle it together. Our ATA staff is ready to help if retailers only take the time to call or email us. Here's a sampling of what we offer:

ATA ePRO: ATA ePRO is a modern software package that provides retailers with digital tools to run their archery shops and meet the expectations of all customers, especially those who want to communicate and do business with their mobile devices.

Modern, effective websites: The ATA designed three website templates that give retailers the tools to communicate effectively with their current customers while also engaging potential customers. This platform gives customers basic information while connecting through Facebook and other social media.

The ATA's Retail Growth Initiative (RGI): The RGI is a comprehensive set of resources that helps independent retail stores grow and succeed. The program's primary goal is to help retailers recruit new customers, better serve existing customers and increase their profitability. Some of its resources include:

- Must-haves for your website.
- Tips for using social media to your advantage.
- Retailer case studies to see what worked for others like you.
- Tips to help you attract new archers and carry equipment they want.
- Guides to determine your desired profit margins and a sound structure

for service charges.

- A plan to build various classes and lessons to cash in on your range. This includes outlines to help you structure classes, leagues, corporate events and one hour introductory classes for Explore Bowhunting and Explore Bowfishing.
- Dedicated ATA staff to discuss, plan and provide feedback. The ATA's Nicole Nash and Kurt Smith, manager and senior manager of retail programs, respectively, are dedicated to helping retailers grow and thrive. Contact them at nicolenash@archerytrade.org and kurtsmith@archerytrade.org for more information about the RGI and other resources available to ATA-member retailers.

To borrow a line from the movie "A Few Good Men": "We need retailers on that front line, we want them on that front line, we have to have them on that front line." Retailers are the industry's backbone because they are the interface with our customers. Retailers have started more people in archery than any other group - by far - and retailers keep more people shooting and enjoying archery and bowhunting than anyone.

Archery pro shops are about so much more than products and technical advice yet increasing numbers of consumers must be socially or digitally "hooked" to get them to a shop. ATA has platforms like Archery360 and Bowhunting360 that build awareness and interest that push people to pick up bows and arrows. Our hope is that archery retailers will work with us to get those consumers to darken the doorways of your pro shops. Contact us today. Let's get people moving your way.

Explora

By Katelyn Rutland

Thirty-eight million. That is how many people age 5 and older speak Spanish at home, according to a 2011 survey by the U.S. Census Bureau. To meet this growing population's needs, the Archery Trade Association launched "Explora Caza Con Arco," a Spanish version of the ATA's popular "Explore Bowhunting" program, earlier this year.

Explore Bowhunting launched in 2010 as an educational program that helps educators, instructors and program leaders teach youth basic bowhunting skills. Twenty-two states have adopted the program since its release. By adding Explora Caza Con Arco, the ATA hopes to reach a new growing market.

Emily Beach, the ATA's senior director of outreach and education, said Hispanics are the fastest-growing minority. They represent \$1.4 billion in spending power, according to the Census Bureau. "Our industry can tap into this growing market by providing tools to help them become bowhunters," she said. "This includes translated how-to resources like those provided in Explore Bowhunting."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Multistate Conservation Grant Program awarded the ATA \$52,500 to translate, design and print curriculum guides and student handbooks. The ATA finished the project in one year with help from The Language Doctors Inc. and independent translator Andrea Vásquez.

"Explora Caza Con Arco gives Spanish-speaking communities the tools to use public lands and start bowhunting," Beach said. "This will lead to higher participation in hunting, fishing, boating and other outdoor recreation. In turn, growth in these activities helps sustain our hunting heritage and ensure outdoor recreation's future."

Beach also noted the Recreational

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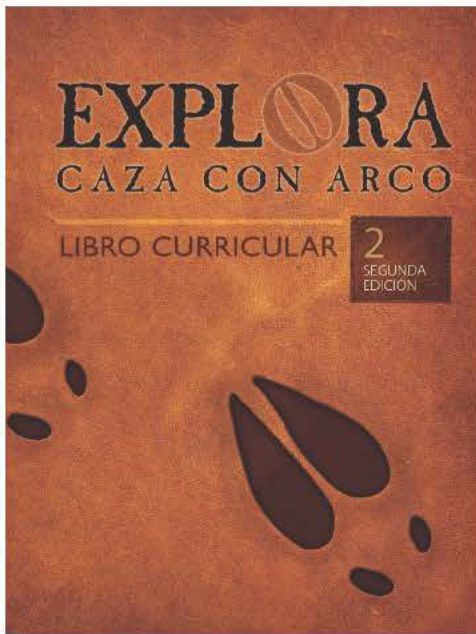
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The ATA's member services are designed to help retailers grow their businesses and promote bowhunting and archery nationwide.

Caza Con Arco is New Outreach



Earlier this year, the Archery Trade Association launched "Explora Caza Con Arco," a Spanish version of the ATA's popular "Explore Bowhunting" program.



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Boating and Fishing Foundation discovered through its Vamos a Pescar initiative that Hispanic visitors especially like how-to pages. "By emphasizing problem-solving and decision-making skills, Explore Bowhunting or Explora



Explora Caza Con Arco was funded by the Multistate Conservation Grant Program (Grant Award F16AP00108), a program supported with funds from the Wildlife Restoration Program and jointly managed by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Caza Con Arco is the ideal resource for introducing bowhunting to this untapped and highly sought-after market," Beach said.

Jay McAninch, the ATA's president/CEO, agreed. "Explora Caza Con Arco is just one more example of how Emily Beach and her team have continued to develop first-class programs to meet the needs of those interested in bowhunting," he said.

"A program like this is overdue and will help state wildlife agencies and local communities tap into a market that has received little attention over the years. For our industry, Explora Caza Con Arco opens hunting opportunities to Hispanic communities and boosts bowhunting and archery participation nationwide, which strengthens participation."

The ATA offers the program for free to state wildlife agencies, federal government agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

To learn more about Explora Caza Con Arco and how to implement it in your state, contact Beach at emilybeach@archerytrade.org.

About Explora Caza Con Arco

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About Explore Bowhunting

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