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PROFILES IN LEADERSHIP



PROFILES IN LEADERSHIP:

Chuck Cashman

Sr. VP Global Yacht Sales, MarineMax

By Wanda Kenton Smith

Before he launched his career in the boating industry, Chuck Cashman supervised residential and commercial real estate as a project and construction manager. In 1992, fate stepped in and he was personally recruited by Bill McGill to work as a sales professional for the original Gulfwind Marine flagship store in Clearwater, Florida.

Bringing a wealth of passion for the boating lifestyle, a competitive edge and a heart for the customer and his team, Cashman hit the wake with purpose and quickly rose within the ranks to become an integral leader within the emerging MarineMax dynasty.

He was then tapped to open a small second outpost location in east Tampa and became a selling general manager. He returned to Clearwater in 1997 to lead the sales team prior to the company going public.

In 2006, Cashman advanced to lead the burgeoning southeast division of MarineMax, followed by an appointment to vice president of east operations, overseeing the company's entire eastern seaboard locations from 2012 to 2016. His next role as chief revenue officer came in 2016, as he assumed major responsibilities for overall operation revenue growth, including a focus on yacht and super yacht growth and acquisitions.

Never one to rest on his laurels, Cashman was named to a newly created position as senior vice president of global yacht sales this past October, reporting to CEO Brett McGill. He is focused on the MarineMax yacht and superyacht brands and service companies including Fraser, Northrop and Johnson.

More than three decades following his first marine industry stint, Cashman is as enthusiastic as ever about the boating business and his ongoing work at MarineMax.

Boating Industry (BI): You've had a long career at MarineMax and continue to evolve professionally. What's been the secret sauce to your ascent up the corporate career ladder?

Chuck Cashman (CC): It starts with loving what you do! I feel blessed to go to work and do what I do every day. Passion is an important trait in my make-up, as is grit. I have an intense desire to get things done.



Family boating time is the best of times for Chuck Cashman and his favorite crew.

It also stems from a couple of things that have remained consistent over many years. I'm extremely competitive and I want our team to win, but we must do it the right way. "Take care of the customer and take care of the team" is a mantra I repeat regularly. It's also a culture of doing all the little things correctly and consistently so you earn the right to "Expect to Win."

BI: Speaking of winning, how do you measure success?

CC: There are so many metrics in our business. We of course measure profitability, market share and we expect to achieve our goals when it comes to those well-established metrics. We also have a world class Net Promoters Score which measures customer satisfaction. However, more simply put, I would say success is a happy customer and an engaged winning team.

BI: With your many work-related responsibilities, how do you personally stay relevant and on top of your game? Any strategies for professional development?

CC: I worked very hard throughout my life to get an edge. Even a small edge

is hard to hold onto. I think remembering how hard I had to work to get somewhere keeps me focused. I'm blessed with a competitive spirit which makes it hard to sit back and enjoy the view for long.

BI: Those of us who have worked in the industry for many years understand the ebb and flow of business cycles. What are the biggest challenges you've faced in your boating industry career and how did you navigate successfully during those times?

CC: When you think about 34 years and what has transpired over that period, there are very repeatable cycles of prosperity and challenges. There is always a challenge around the corner. Unfortunately, we don't always get notice. I think being honest with yourself about a challenge you are facing and owning it allows you to work through it in the best possible fashion.

Covid taught us a lot about fluidity. Our stores were being shut down along with the rest of the world, but then there was some light. And in fact, for our industry, the pendulum swung far to the other side. We went from the worst-case scenario to the best of times in a few months.

Chuck Cashman and team are actively engaged in Habitat for Humanity, having gifted nine homes in the Tampa Bay area.



Long term, I'm hopeful that the world will find balance between boating and environmental concerns.

Chuck Cashman
Sr. VP Global Yacht Sales, MarineMax

Tariffs today are tough on foreign product and create a challenge, but there are answers – some we know and some we still need to unlock. My mindset is, there will always be challenges. The sooner we can understand and accept the challenge the sooner we can overcome them.

BI: What do you believe are the biggest challenges for the recreational marine industry in both the short and long-term?

CC: Short term, the rising cost of entry is a real issue. The entry point to boating is much higher today than five years ago. Long term, I'm hopeful that the world will find balance between boating and environmental concerns. The boaters I know care a great deal about the environment and invest heavily to enjoy it. We need sensible solutions so everyone can enjoy the environment.

BI: Talking about enjoyment, as you reflect on your own career, what have you enjoyed most so far?

CC: Undoubtedly, the people. The clients that I've grown to know through the years are truly some of the finest people in the world. They invest their time and money to spend irreplaceable time on the water with their loved ones. They truly understand the "why" to life. The people category also includes our team. Our team does everything they can daily to provide a world-class experience on the water for our clients.

BI: Besides your work for MarineMax, are you involved in any other marine industry initiatives?

CC: I'm on the board of directors of the IYBA which owns the Miami Yacht Show, and on the board of directors of the Marine Industry Association of South Florida (MIASF), which owns FLIBs. I also serve on the customer advisory board of Informa, the largest boat show promoter in the world. I joined these organizations to give back to industry and to help create better customer experiences.

BI: There's been a lot of conversation over the past few years about ways to improve and enhance Customer RX. As a leader in the retail space, what do you believe the overall marine retail community must do to achieve that critical goal?

CC: The retail experience in boating lags many luxury experiences in the world. It's an extremely complicated ecosystem with manufacturers' warranty, component warranties, dealership responsibilities and customer expectations. We need to smooth out the rough spots and provide an experience to keep clients in the game.

BI: As a retail leader with multiple stores and scores of professionals working in multiple capacities, what advice do you offer young professionals contemplating a marine industry career?

CC: I love this question because it's been asked so many times by people trying to join our team.

First, take it seriously. There is less structure and a more engaging environment than a lot of careers, but it takes hard work and

discipline. Second, think long-term. The first couple of years are tough. Third, ask yourself if you have passion for the water. And fourth, ask if you care. When a client chooses to do business with you, did they make a good choice?

BI: You mentioned the importance of having a passion for the water as key for a successful industry career. Could you talk about your own boating background and experience?

CC: I grew up boating in Florida on very modest boats and felt blessed to have that opportunity. I had a passion for the water from a very early age. Every day on the water is different from the one prior – it's really magical!

BI: What does your perfect day on the water look like?

CC: My perfect day would be in the Exumas with my family, living our best life, sharing memories and experiences that only come to us through boating.

All my best boating days are filled with family and friends. Not long ago, I took our boat out of the slip, anchored 1000 yards from my house and cooked dinner on the boat. It felt like a world away, but I didn't go far. I think a mistake many boat owners make is making too big of a deal about going out for a ride. Just untie and enjoy!

BI: If you had to choose a word to describe yourself, what would it be?

CC: Grit.

BI: Anything we don't know about you that might be a surprise or interesting?

CC: I was hit by lightning on a boat when I was 15... it may have sparked my career! ●

Wanda Kenton Smith is a former magazine and newspaper editor and marine industry journalist/columnist of more than 25 years. She is also an award-winning marketer, advertiser, publicist and an industry speaker. Visit www.kentonsmith-marketing.com.



The annual boating escape to the Exumas is top on Chashman's vacation list.