



COMBINATION CREATES INDUSTRY POWERHOUSE

Long considered an innovator in Web site, lead management and marketing automation solutions for the marine and recreational vehicle industries, Channel Blade Technologies significantly enhanced its breadth of client services earlier this year.

The Virginia Beach, Va.-based company was acquired in late April by ARI Network Services Inc. of Milwaukee, a leading provider of electronic parts catalogs and marketing services to dealers, distributors and manufacturers in the powersports and manufactured equipment markets. The acquisition creates an industry powerhouse, poised to generate new growth opportunities for the 100-plus manufacturers and more than 25,000 dealer locations worldwide that ARI and Channel Blade currently support with their easy-to-use, cost-efficient solutions and hands-on education programs.

“If you think of the acquisition as a circle, Channel Blade and ARI were equal halves,” explains Chuck Lewis, Channel Blade founder and the combined organization’s industry lead for marine and RV. “Joining the two companies completes the circle, effectively creating a one-stop-shop for OEMs and dealers to service all their online lead generation, sales and marketing needs. It’s truly a win-win for both companies’ existing and future customers, as well as the industries we serve.”

In these challenging economic times, marine businesses are looking for the most “bang for their buck” when it comes to investing in new technologies. The combination of Channel Blade’s unmatched strength in lead generation and lead management tools and ARI’s dominance in the areas of e-commerce solutions and web-based information

on parts, garments and accessories gives Channel Blade customers access to the most advanced product offerings and services available in the industry. Almost immediately, the acquisition opened new doors for existing Channel Blade clients anxious to expand their online retail and website marketing capabilities.

“Through the acquisition, Channel Blade broke into the online catalog business overnight,” Lewis says. “Selling products easily online is a critical part of the marine business. Joining forces rounded out our business portfolio and created a full-service product offering that positions Channel Blade customers for maximum profitability and success.”

Channel Blade’s development of inventory-focused Web sites and the Footsteps™ Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool revolutionized the way the marine and RV industries establish Web-enabled business by driving customers from online leads to the showroom, ultimately resulting in increased sales. The company’s award-winning Web site solutions provide manufacturers and dealers with a compelling, informative and easy-to-maintain online presence, engaging prospects, generating leads, and increasing dealership traffic, sales and profits.

“It’s one thing to have a piece of technology; it’s another thing entirely to have the technology, understand the distribution channel and bring it all together to help OEMs and dealers execute against a measurable objective,” Lewis explains. “Combining the strengths of Channel Blade and ARI helped bring a consolidated, affordable approach to our clients and offer them the most advanced toolset available in the market.”

Becoming part of ARI eliminates a

major barrier to entering the world of retailing parts, goods and accessories online. Dealers are looking to get all their information on the Web through a single-source provider so that consumers can, in turn, retrieve that data with a few clicks of the mouse. Many companies view the conversion of hard-copy documents to acceptable, Web-ready files as one of the primary road blocks to getting their businesses established online. ARI breaks down that barrier to entry with its publishing arm, simplifying the print-to-online transition, taking the hassle out of document conversion, and paving the way for smooth entry into online marketing and retailing for both the manufacturer and its dealers.

“Manuals, guides, catalogs—there’s a whole department at ARI dedicated to transferring hard-copy documents to the Web,” Lewis says. “This takes down a big barrier to entry for most companies and encourages them to pursue a strong online presence to increase market visibility and ultimately generate increased profits.”

The combination of Channel Blade and ARI creates an industry leader that provides an entire suite of online solutions to help manufacturers and dealers drive increased sales and profitability. Both Channel Blade and ARI customers benefit from the formation of a new industry powerhouse, gaining additional benefits and competitive advantages to grow their business.

For more information about Channel Blade products and services visit www.channelblade.com or contact the main office toll-free at 877-242-5233, ext. 4.