

Ride With Your Rep

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TIME ON-HILL WITH PRODUCT EXPERTS

Name: Scott Oreschnick

Shop: Cal Surf

Years as Owner: 17

Years at SIA Show: 25

Home Resort: Hyland Hills, Buck Hill, Trollhaugen

HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR THE DEMO?

I prioritize product with which I am less familiar or on the fence if I am going to order. I will try to line that stuff up for day one and then use the second day to test new models or technologies from brands I have had in the shop.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR MOST?

I like to check out emerging brands and products that are relevant to the Midwest style of riding. I generally spend most of the time checking out boards and bindings, but I do like to mess around with goggles. We do not have bright sunny days in the Midwest winters, so it is cool to check out different lens colors and technologies so we are better equipped to make suggestions for our customers that travel out of our zone.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE YOUR TIME?

I map out a course across the mountain. I only allow the same amount of time for each brand or setup. I often require my reps to meet me in the middle of the run with a new setup if I am going to go over my personal allotted Demo time. They may need to bring tools or a boot changing mat. I love being on-hill and will try to ride the entire day.



TIPS FOR A FIRST-TIME DEMO-GOER?

HYDRATE! The air is thin up there. Get a good breakfast. First run through the Demo area and find out where your vendors are located and which product they have with them. Ride with your rep – take advantage of the shared on-hill time together and the opportunity to ask questions as you are using the product.

HOW DOES THE DEMO HELP YOUR SHOP?

It helps remind me how much I enjoy spending time with other people in the industry. It also helps me solidify some buying decisions. I haven't taken advantage every year, and I regret the ones I missed.

—Eric Smith

Become an Expert

BUILD CREDIBILITY WITH CUSTOMERS WITH SOLID UNDERSTANDING OF NEW GEAR

Name: Mike Vlass

Shop: MTNSIDE Ski and Ride / Wachusett Mountain

Years as Buyer: 20

Years at SIA Show: 32

Home Resort: Wachusett Mountain

HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR THE DEMO?

Our prep starts with our regional shows for an overview and then we create a list of skis and boards for both our male and female testers that we are interested in exploring. At SIA, we focus on new models and new tech that we think is going to have a strong marketing push in the fall, so we can answer the question of “what’s new this year” in September.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR MOST?

We look for new trends and product with strong value. What is going to resonate with our skiers and riders in our demo center next

winter? How broad will the appeal be? What demographic is going to respond to this model? We are always on the lookout for that hidden gem, so we do try to set aside some time to go ride something not on the list.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE YOUR TIME?

The challenge is always to find the ski or board in the right size, so we eat lunch early, look to grab a change of model when the masses have dropped off their morning rides and have headed in for lunch.

TIPS FOR A FIRST-TIME DEMO-GOER?

Go with a plan and a back-up. If a particular vendor doesn’t have what you need, move on to the next and make your time productive. Take notes and pictures, voice-record notes on the chairlift ride. It’s hard to recall, with clarity, the performance of your morning ride from 9:30 a.m. when you are trying to recap over a cold beer at 5.

HOW DOES THE DEMO HELP YOUR SHOP?

It provides instant credibility when we are asked by a customer to recommend a model. We’ve been on it, put it through the test and can speak to its personality. It’s the crux of specialty winter sports retail. In an atmosphere where the online hardgoods purchase is becoming more the norm, we need to present ourselves as the experts and back it up with real on-snow experiences, and continue to give the client a reason to seek out our knowledge.

—E.S.



Manage Time Wisely

PRIORITIZE DEMO TIME BY YOUR STORE'S REVENUE GENERATION

Name: Drew Gelinias, Director of Sports, The Trapp Family Lodge
Shop: The Trapp Lodge Outdoor Center, Stowe, Vt.
Years as Director: 2 (property is owned by Johannes von Trapp)
Home Resort: Maple Corner Farm, Granville, Mass., as a youngster; The Trapp Family Lodge, Stowe, Vt., as a collegiate athlete and ski rep

HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR THE DEMO?

I tend to do some online research and preview the catalogs prior to the Show. Having a solid idea on what I want to focus on is critical because there is so much great equipment. I prioritize equipment that I will carry in both retail and rental for testing. Then I give myself two hours to test any new gear that I did not have on my radar.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR MOST?

I look for gear that skis well, regardless of brand. Oftentimes our guests are getting on skis or snowshoes for the first time. It is important to get them on the best-performing equipment. I always spend a bit more on our rental gear because I have one chance for them to fall in love with the sport.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE YOUR TIME AT THE DEMO?

I prioritize my time by how I generate revenue for the resort. My first priority is rental fleet (both ski and snowshoe). My second



priority is the retail shop. Lastly I test new technology that catches my eye.

TIPS FOR A FIRST-TIME DEMO-GOER?

Buy gear that skis great. Don't get caught up with trying to carry every brand. Align yourself with companies that will provide education for your staff, point-of-sale materials, and demo and rental programs that will allow you to make your numbers and satisfy your guests. Sell what you rent!

HOW DOES THE DEMO HELP YOUR SHOP?

The Demo helps our shop by being able to complete the order and know we are bringing in the best gear for our guests. If you have done your homework at the show and at the Demo, you can educate with certainty that you have the best gear for the guests. Do not overwhelm the customers; pick solid lines that perform well and ensure an amazing on-snow experience.

—E.S.