

Attitude Aplenty

As a primary service center for Northern Cincinnati, Colerain RV hires employees and works with manufacturers who embody an attitude of great service.

BY DANA NELSEN

Customers are parked side-by-side, three deep, for blocks, to receive Colerain RV's top-notch service. Ray Miller, the company's director of operations says it's because every aspect of the dealership is focused on an attitude of exemplary customer care.

"I really like the book Jeffery Gitomer's *Little Gold Book of Yes! Attitude* because it's kind of the way I look at things," Miller says. "I wouldn't say this is our company

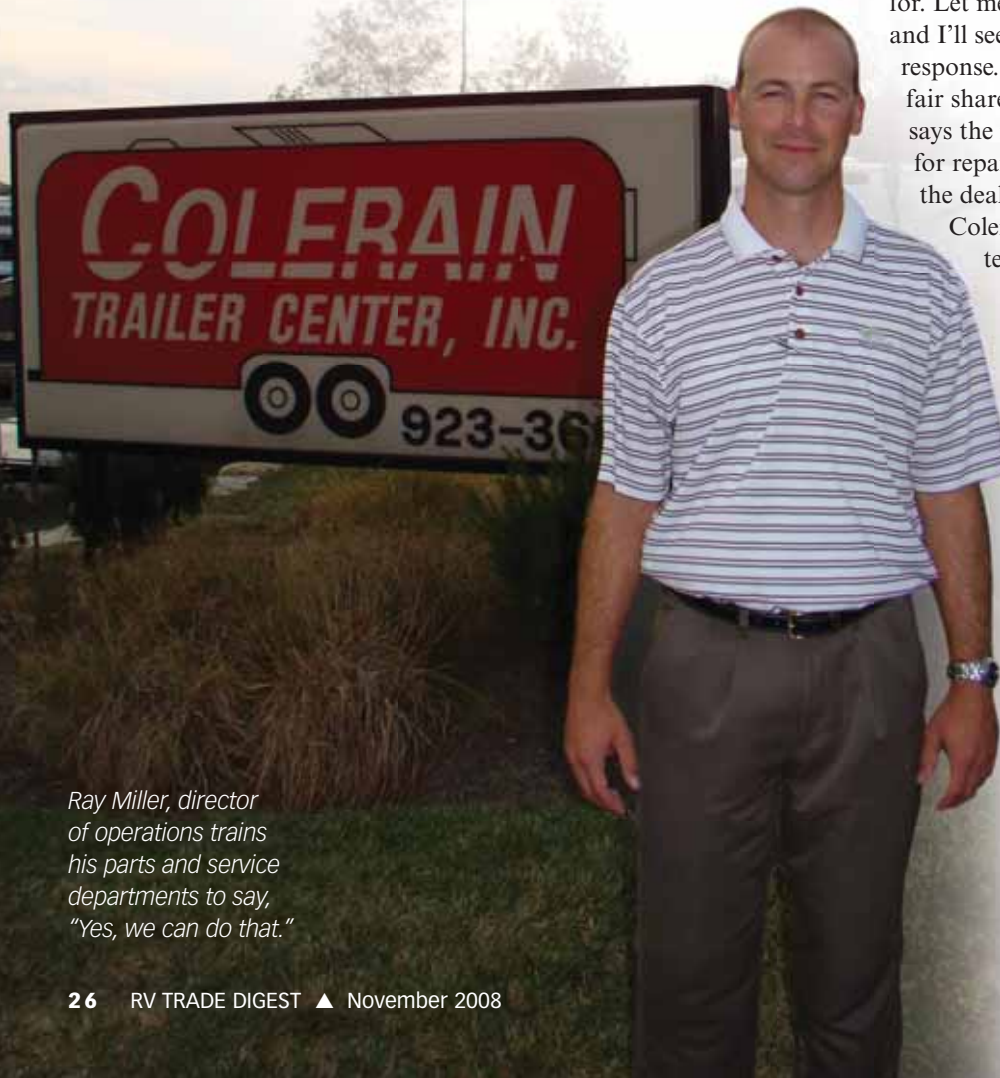
philosophy but our company attitude. A philosophy is something that can be written down or told to someone. Attitude is what we are and do everyday. It is what a customer sees and hears when doing business with Colerain RV."

Much like Gitomer's book, Miller says employees are trained to never say, "No," to customers calling in. Even the most perplexing customer dilemma receives a 'Let me see if I can find what you are looking for. Let me get your name and number and I'll see if I can get something done,' response. While the dealership does its fair share of aftermarket installs, Miller says the majority of work orders are for repairs, body work or touch up in the dealership's 50-foot paint booth.

Colerain RV built a new service center with 15 service bays and two 40,000-pound chassis lifts for full-service repair. It is a certified warranty center for 40 different RV brands and also offers custom cabinetry and flooring installation.

"Everybody who walks through that door has got issues," Miller says. "They need something fixed. I try to make sure that my employees understand, 'Yes, we can do that!' We are going to try on every single customer to get them taken care of."

Miller cites a recent rubber roof replacement as an example of the dealership's dedication to customers. An RVer drove his Carriage fifth wheel under a low-hanging awning



Ray Miller, director of operations trains his parts and service departments to say, "Yes, we can do that."

The dealership sells more than 900 RVs each year in Cincinnati.



just as he was leaving for vacation. The customer showed up late on a Saturday looking for an expedited repair to salvage the vacation. Miller jumped on the phone and asked three of his top techs to volunteer for a Sunday repair, their day off. Each agreed, no questions asked, and the customer had a new roof in six hours.

Stability

Colerain RV opened in 1968 and has grown from having 10 RVs besieging a small shack in the center of the lot, to a premium 11 acre lot situated at the edge of Interstate 275. More than 900 RVs are sold each year. Parts and service account for greater than \$3 million of its \$30 million gross annual sales.

Miller says the longevity of its employees offer stability and is part of the reason the dealership has steadily grown; that, and wisely choosing manufacturers and distributors who share Colerain's customer care attitude.

"If you bought a motorhome from Nick Raymond in the sales department 10 years ago and you come in today, you can buy another one from him. If you came in here four years ago and needed service work, you would have dealt with Jeremy up front," Miller says. "I've been here since 2001 and quite a few employees have been here longer than me. If you come back in today, you can still deal with the same person. Our culture is that we look at the employee no differently than the customer. Since I've been here, there have only been two employees who have left that I didn't want to leave, and one of them is back now."

When Miller was first recruited from the auto industry eight years ago, he was astonished by the lack of parts numbers or build sheets for RVs. He cites having to draw

pictures of needed repair parts and then faxing the etching to manufacturers so they would know what part was needed for the warranty repair.

The industry has made great progress but manufacturers still have a long way to go to catch the automotive industry according to Miller. He points to Winnebago and Jayco as manufacturing leaders other RV builders should strive to emulate on this important topic.

"We've aligned ourselves with Jayco, Winnebago and Starcraft. They have been a staple and are accessible. We can call them and get a hold of upper management at any time," Miller says. "Winnebago has always done a really good job. As far as your parts displays, your online warranty. They did most of that before anyone else. You can go on to Win Net and immediately pull up the build sheet. Partnering with the right manufacturers helped make us a successful and growing dealership and this ultimately it benefits the customer big time." ■

(Left) Chuck Jung, Colerain's general sales manager and Wade Stepp, general sales manager discuss an upcoming advertising promotion

