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Channel Mastery Podcast, #117: Sutton Bacon and Darren Bush, Big Gear Show

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Kristin: As I touched on in the introduction to this show today, we're here to talk about the December 9th announcement of The Big Gear Show, which is a brand new show launching for the trade with a consumer day in Salt Lake City in 2020 in the month of July.

So, even though that may feel like a ways away, it's going to be here before we know it. And obviously there's a lot of planning going on right now, a lot of conversation. And that's why I'm just delighted to have the two of you here on the show today to kind of build a little more context around discussion of The Big Gear Show. I think it's important that you both touch on or one of you touches on the Paddlesports Retailer show and then pivot into The Big Gear Show.

Sutton: Sure. This is Sutton. I'll take this one. So, yeah, let's dig into Paddlesports Retailer. Like I said earlier, Darren and I served for many years on the OIA board. So, we've seen the outdoor trade show dynamics from a variety of perspectives. And we actually worked hand in hand with OIA and Nielsen at the time on paddle sports industry issues and in an attempt to keep paddle sports as part of the larger summer show. But really Paddlesports Retailer was born when OR finally announced the date shift into June. So, the selling season for paddle sports is already short and introducing product that early was just not feasible for much of the industry. So we launched Paddlesports Retailer in Madison in year one, which is where Darren lives and where he hosts Canoeopia. Because we very much had sort of a home field advantage, if you will, Darren's there, the exhibitors knew the hall. Well, and it just made sense.

For years two and three we moved the show to Oklahoma City and at face value we got a lot of questions about, well this is an odd move. Until you realize that Oklahoma City's invested \$100 million in the most state of the art, whitewater and flat water paddling facility anywhere, perhaps in the world, in walking distance from the convention hall. So we were able to combine a traditional B2B trade show done with a really dynamic whitewater and flat water demo.

And so as retailers we built our value proposition for Paddlesports Retailer around the motto of for retailers by retailers. And the response to PSR was overwhelming. Brands loved it. The show was a fraction of the expense and the hassle of OR. We put all the key paddle sports dealers in front of them. We had strong return rate from exhibitors. Our

buyer satisfaction rate was well over 90% from those who attended. And we grew the number of unique stores that attended the event each and every year.

But the show was still small and there were two pieces of consistent feedback that we kept hearing from exhibitors and retailers that we just felt at the end of the day, the current show format couldn't solve. First, given some of the industry sales dynamics within paddle sports, brands felt it was just imperative to get more non-endemic buyers to the show. So maybe that stores that used to be a paddle sports but aren't anymore. Maybe that stores that could potentially be new dealers. We tried everything we could to get more mainstream stores to PSR, but ultimately as siloed as that show was, focused on paddle sports, it was just really difficult.

And the second and sort of the flip side of the same coin, retailers consistently said they wanted to see more brands at the show, especially from complimentary categories like camping and climbing gear and accessories. And even though we supported last year alone over 150 shops with hotel reimbursements, there's still a great amount of expense and time and opportunity costs for buyers to attend trade shows just in the first place.

So, buyers wanted and needed more value for their time. So, just like the original launch of PSR was an evolution from OR, we then evolved it again in the move to Oklahoma City. The idea for The Big Gear Show was yet another evolution building on what we had done with Paddlesports Retailer, but really with the intent to solve the two key things that we felt the current format wouldn't allow us to do, which is get more non-endemic buyers to the show and broadening our exhibitor fix. Darren, anything to add there?

Darren: No, that pretty much nailed it. It's that we're super customer centric, right? It's not about what's best for Darren and Sutton, it's about what's best for the industry. And because of that, they say we have a problem, we say we'll solve it.

Kristin: And I do, again, I appreciate it so much. This is great. Sets a great platform for us to talk about the points of differentiation, some of the challenges that you're facing, et cetera with The Big Gear Show. And I also invite the audience today to have an open mind and consider the solutions that you need to best continue to modernize your businesses, to really, I think be remarkable to and provide great experiences to that north star for us here at Channel Mastery, which is actually the shopper. Right?

And ultimately I think that's a really great point for us to start from. I would love to have you just point out what specifically, like who is this show for within a retailer team, if you will, a buyer team. And also, perhaps I think before that and before we talk about that specific person on the team within the retailer, let's talk about the fact that you've conjoined multiple active outdoor lifestyle industries under your big tent.

And if you go to biggearshow.com you'll see what I mean by their branding in terms of inviting more people into that tent to be more consumer centric. So why don't we go ahead and start with your takes on why you decided to include multiple sectors of the active outdoor lifestyle market together under the big tent.

Sutton: Sure. So, maybe we can start with the what and then move to the why.

Kristin: Okay.

Sutton: The what is, you know, I think would be sort of helpful background. And so, The Big Gear Show is a multi-category event for paddling, biking, climbing, camping and accessories. Like you mentioned, it's a B2B show with the consumer day. It'll be held this summer in Salt Lake City from July the 22nd to the 25th. And there are, I think, a few key points of differentiation that I'd like to sort of start with to lay the foundation for the why of what we're doing.

Sutton: The first is this is a show for the industry by the industry. I mean, it's actually just Darren and me. I mean, there's no Wall Street conglomerates driving up booth fees, no stock ticker. I mean, we are singularly focused on the needs of outdoor gear shops and equipment manufacturers. No distractions, no George Foreman grills, no container bumpers who don't respect retail distribution or IP. We are for the industry, by the industry, for retailers, by retailers.

Number two, retailers can earn a lodging reimbursement to help offset the cost of attendance. Like I mentioned a few minutes ago, we hosted over 150 shops at PSR last year alone. Now I know Grassroots has some more structure, but most national shows do not.

Number three, our show has a cost structure that's actually affordable for gear companies to exhibit. So, our prices are a fraction [inaudible 00:17:36]. We're talking like 50 to 60% less and we're taking no markups and booth decorations, drayage, et cetera.

Number four, we have a highly technical in show demo opportunity throughout the whole show. So, we feel like the current pre-show demo model's broken. Exhibitors and retailers consistently told us it's more appropriate, the pattern for gear demos is-

Yes, the pattern for gear demos is, see, try, buy, not try, see, buy. So it doesn't make sense to have the traditional demo on the first day and nothing else. So we're going to have it throughout the show. And the fifth, as we talked about, we'll talk I'm sure more about later. We're inviting consumers into the big tent. It allows our brands maximum buzz and reach by taking their products and their brand stories directly to consumers. And so we're really excited about that. I think it's transitioning to the why. We talked a little bit about the evolution from Pal's Sports retailer, but let's elevate it up a level.

The way we see it globally is that the outdoor industry was forged by men and women who took the same risks and businesses they did on rivers and mountains. And they refuse to accept the status quo. They built gear that would keep their friends safer, drier, faster, warmer. They were scrappy, selling gear out of the back of the cars in Met and Reno to have a good time, but also for some commerce. And years later we look at the outdoor industry day. The outdoors has become mainstream. Mass markets love our plaid shirts, our fleece, our sandals. It's just a way of life for tens of millions of people.

But the industry is at a crossroads. Big-boxes are failing our brands. Amazon is suffocating many of our local gear shops. The big are getting bigger and Wall Street and private equity investors are threatening the soul of our industry. And so the Big Gear Show is a show for the rest of us. It's show to the innovators and startups and the domestic manufacturers. And local gear shops like Rutabaga, where the staff walk the talk, they bring in novices and send out enthusiasts. We're not beholden to the demands of big-boxes and mega brands and stock tickers. We're saving our exhibitors over 50% in exhibition fees so they can keep money in their pockets and reinvest in innovation, a product, and people. Because your company's, and harkers and manufacturers, they just don't have the margins to afford expensive trade shows. So that really is the why behind the what that I just described.

Kristin: Thank you. That is super informative. And before we... I'm going to ask Darren a couple of questions around dates and location, but before I do that, I'd also love to have one of you speak a little bit more to what you just said there, Sutton, which is how you're going to be developing innovation and product and people at this gathering and at this trade show. I don't think that inviting people to come to the big tent from different markets per se is enough context in this show to offer the listener what they need to know in terms of what they'll receive.

I think there's an air war in a ground war, right? There's an air war in terms of opportunity for learning and collaboration and the ground war is being able to see new things and delight and discuss. Enable discovery for our target and shoppers. So I just wanted to ask a little bit around, I guess, air war in ground war. I hate to use war analogies, but it's also a marketing analogy that we use a lot. If you could speak a little bit around how you'll be innovating people in terms of how they're developing their businesses beyond just hard goods.

Sutton: Sure. Darren, you want to take that?

Darren: Sure. So it gets back down to the retailer, which gets down to the consumer and we work backwards from there. So an example for that is I have for years attended trade shows for other sectors, Sea Otter, Interbike. Basically to go to seminars, right? And to see what people who do exactly the same thing that I do every day, just with a different mechanism. How they run their businesses and what they do. And what I've found is that 95% of what we do, it's all the same. So to have an artificial divide between bike and paddle and camp, it's silly. Anybody who paddles, bikes. Anybody who bikes, skis. We all do this. So it is really a Big Tent for that reason.

One of the things that we've found over the years as the retailers is I'll get phone calls from people saying, "Hey, can you meet me at the coffee shop around the corner at Squatters or whatever? I want to sell you something." It's like, "Okay, well sure." And it's a guy that's invented this little widget that there's no way he can afford a \$3,500 booth. It's like we want those people there. Those are the guys that are tinkering in their garages. That's where Yvon Chouinard made his first piton, was in his garage. So we need to support those people because they're the innovators. So giving the retailers a chance to a) talk to their peers in other sectors to help solve the problems that they

have and to allow them to see smaller brands and innovators. Number one, it gets them first access to cool stuff.

And number two, it gets them juiced about things they get to do in their industry. So that's the stuff that I get excited about. When I see another big whatever from a big whatever company. Yeah, that's nice. But when I see a titanium folding stove that burns twigs designed by a guy from South Salt Lake County, it's like, "That's really cool." that's something I can bring into my shop.

So that's the one part of it. The other thing about the value proposition is, like I said, there's technical stuff, but there's also shop practices, things like that. But there's also materials. So I use carbon fiber, paddle sports uses carbon fiber, so does bike. We never talked to each other about materials. So it's the perfect opportunity for some of the manufacturers of those materials to get in one spot and to talk to both customers at the same time. And for us to go, "Hey, that's cool how they use that." And for them to say, "Hey, that's cool how paddle sports uses that. Maybe we should talk more." So that that kind of community is what we're all about building.

Kristin: Thank you. That's awesome. And we will get more into more details on that, I know as we have our conversation here today. So before we move on to my next line of questions, the two of you, I would love to have you address why you chose the dates and the location of the Big Gear Show.

Darren: Well it's a pretty simple thing and again. We're super customer responsive so we put the show where people want it. We were somewhat constrained this year by dates, so we put them at the best possible place we could, the end of July. We can see moving it a little bit forward or a little bit backwards, whatever, into August. That would be great. But ultimately we're going to go where the manufacturers and retailers tell us to go. And I know there's no perfect date. There never is. If you do a survey, it's going to come out with a big flat line, 20% want it this week, 20% want it the next week. But in general, listening carefully, we can figure out the best time to do it. That's the date issue. As far as where. Salt Lake, it's been home for 20 years. More than that. And it's a great outdoor community. The city loves us, the city supported us and outdoor really didn't leave Salt Lake. It never has. Who's there still? Clearfield, Utah is the home to some of the biggest companies in the industry. Black Diamonds, their pencil's there. So it's still very much an outdoor place.

Kristin: Do you want to speak at all to the environmental backdrop and why the show left in the first place? Because I know that that's a question that came up in the research that I did around the show.

Darren: Yeah. I really can't speak to why they left. I don't know that it was 100% because of that. That's just my opinion. Frankly, Utah probably spends more time and money on outdoor stuff than pretty much any other state. Governor Herbert paid state funds to keep the federal parks open during the government shut down because he realized how important that was both to the users and to the revenue coming into the state. They've got the first office of outdoor recreation. They're the first ones to develop that.

I've got pages and pages of grants and programs that they put together to help support things like trail access and those things that help people use the outdoors. Now the land policy thing. Let's just say the land policy is really complex, but most of the stuff we're talking about is at a federal level, not at a state level. So Bears Ears is a touch point obviously, and people are concerned about it.

We're not going to have the ability to impact what Utah does unless we have a seat at the table and going back to Salt Lake gives us that seat. Frank Hugo Meyer used to say, "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu." And I very much believe that. So we're going to do the best we can to work with the office of Outdoor Recreation, to work with the governor, and to work with the folks there to make our impact known.

Kristin: Thank you so much for addressing that. And then as we go into my next topic here, I

think that it ties together really nicely. So let's go ahead and talk about the show directors that you have to deploy on paddle sports, on cycling and on outdoor respectively. So I would like one of you to talk about some of the news that you just released. I think the show will be coming out about a week after one of those big announcements, but talk about the team and then I have a few questions for you about that in terms of bringing bike, outdoor paddle and other tertiary outdoor markets together under the Big Tent as it pertains to that.

Sutton: Sure. I'll take that one. So as everyone knows by now, we're excited to welcome onboard

just two huge industry icons, Kenji Hartounian and Lance Camisasca to the team. So Kenji was former show director of Outdoor Retailer for many years. Lance was his counterpart and show director at Interbike. And then we also have Charles and the whole Paddle Sports Retailer team. So literally we have the former show directors of Interbike, Outdoor Retailer and Paddle Sports Retailer all working together toward our shared vision. So I don't think there's another show team in the industry that brings as much experience and expertise to the table. And so we're really excited about that. Those guys are hitting the ground running and I can't think of better leaders to help communicate our vision and articulate what we're doing and why we're doing it than Kenji, Lance and Charles.

Kristin: Awesome. And then one of the main questions that I have around that news pertains to exactly what you just said. Choosing these leaders who can be construed as old guard, putting them in the role of supporting and shepherding your vision for a new show format. Can one of you address that please?

Sutton: Sure. Yeah. Look, both Kenji and Lance are well known within the industry for having an entrepreneurial spirit and authentic voice. They have such breadth of experience, which is what you talk about, especially as Kenji's days as a store manager and guide at Adventure 16. They totally understand our for retailers by retailers mantra. And I also applaud Kenji's tireless efforts around diversity and inclusion for the industry, which hopefully we'll talk a little bit about as well in terms of the definitions of outdoor. But yeah, to answer your question, the unique thing that these guys bring to this show are best practices of what to do, some scar tissue about what not to do, and also the

perspective of what they would have loved to do, but they just weren't allowed to do. And so they understand we're all about the future, not the past. And I think the combination of that perspective and our forward outlook is going to be critical and be the recipe for success.

Kristin: That's a great answer. I don't know, Darren, if you have anything to add on that point before I jump to the next topic here.

Darren: Anecdotally I have some turnover here, some long term employees that left to pursue their passion in the industry, and we promoted from within. An assistant manager who sat down with me and gave me a list of things that he'd been wanting to do for years but wasn't quote unquote "allowed" to because of the way that the business was structured and they were all brilliant ideas. So new blood and old blood is a nice mix. So we get the experience but we also get a completely different perspective. I come from a consumer show background and having people on the team that are consumer show driven and also trade show driven, it's a nice mix. We can feed off each other and we'll come up with ideas that work better just because we get to have that cross fertilization.

Kristin: I totally agree with that. And I also believe, and this leads nicely into the next area that we're going to go into here, that I think moving the goal post, if you will, so like giving this team with a wealth of experience, different metrics for success is going to be really interesting in terms of what we're discussing here today. So with that, I think that it's important to talk about exactly who the show is for. Who will benefit. Obviously retailers are busting you know what to kind of modernize, evolve, keep the lights on, keep providing that goal of customer experience, et cetera.

So understanding who on the team this is really built for and what you're hoping they'll bring back to the hive would be great. So I think talking about that as we're also considering the context of these communities of bike, paddle sports and outdoor, as well as the leaders of these shows coming together to create a new foundation to help support the modernization of the specialty retailer in this space is a perfect place for us to go next. So who is this show for and what is the best mindset they could bring to this show in order to really, I think, cross train if you will, for their retail teams when they go back to their shops.

Darren: Well I can tell you that we have a buying team here and hard goods and soft goods are completely separate. And the reason that's the case is that you buy hard goods and soft goods very differently. With soft goods, it's cough and a one and done. You place your order very early. So we're placing orders now that we're going to see next September because of the lead times in clothing, which is why the show has been moving moving back. More and more to accommodate clothing.

With hard goods we can chase it more. We have better turns and more skews. Or actually more styles. So it's a little bit tougher to do that. So it's a different skill set. It's a different buyer. So being able to send hard goods buyer to one show without the distractions of clothing and then send the clothing person to their show.

And so our clothing buyer goes to GOA, and it's focused on nothing but clothing. You know how focused that show is, it's just boom, boom, boom. And then they go to the Hard Goods Show. That's the division. The other thing that's interesting is, I have a friend who has a cargo bike shop and I basically gave him an inflatable, a standup board, to hang up in the shop.

Think about the zero carbon footprint. So you get on your bike, go to the Lake, pump up your board, go for a paddle, roll it up, put it back on your bike and go home. And a friend of mine owns an inflatable stand up paddle board company says he opened nine shops last year and five of them were bike shops. So that cross pollination as well is huge. I don't know why bike shops don't sell more dry bags. If you go to a bike shop, there are no dry bags there. It's like, why wouldn't you fill a pannier full of dry bags? So there's gear cross-pollination as well as ideas cross pollination. And I think that allows retailers to walk over in the bike area from the outdoor space and go, "Hey, that's a pretty cool gizmo. I've never seen that before." Well that's because there's been a firewall there before and now there isn't.

Kristin: That is a really great point. Thank you for sharing that. I also think it's important to talk about what you guys explained to me earlier in one of our rehearsal calls around the democratization of floor space, because I think that plays into kind of this larger topic of Lance, Kanji and the multiple categories of outdoor active life.

Sutton, would you be able to talk a little bit about the cost investment structure around this? I know you've touched on it, but specifically around the ROI, again, in the context of a different type of success metric.

Sutton: Sure. So specifically to cost, I mean, it's pretty simple. Our base rate is \$15 a square foot. It drops to \$13 a square foot for booths over 500 square feet and \$12 a foot for booths over 1200 feet. We will have booth size limits. We really are about the democratization of floor space and putting innovation forward, whether it's a big company or a little company. We're not going to have tenants in ballrooms, we're all going to be on the main floor together, but let's just, just for the sake of comparison, let's compare our prices to Outdoor Retail or Summer Market from last year. So our base rate is \$15 a square foot, OR space rate is \$38 a square foot, and that went down to \$30 a square foot, and that's for last year show.

So for example, that means if you have a 400 square foot booth, at OR you're paying \$15,000 just for the booth, not including all the surcharges, fees, the decorator, et cetera. With us, that same booth is just \$6,000, that's a \$9,000 difference, and we're not taking commissions and markups on things like dry edge, booth carpeting, et cetera. I mean, our goal is to keep things as affordable as possible. And so to answer your question a little bit about our strategy and kind of going back to what Darren was saying about the differences between hard goods and soft goods, I mean, we really are focused on breaking down the artificial and unnecessary industry segmentation really based on longstanding trade shows and trade associations and just the way it's always been. I mean, we're so excited to welcome the bike industry into our big tent.

I mean, there's no reason that the bike industry should have been separated from what we consider the core outdoor industry for so long. And the thing, the sort of the commonality is, like Darren said, hard goods are totally down to soft goods and whether you're making a boat, a bike or beaver, you have a lot more in common with your cross-category brethren if you're making hard goods then you do with soft goods. So our show is all about parity, it's about prioritization and innovation. It's about that person who has the new innovation that they're working on in their garage, putting them front and center, having innovation showcases, new product showcases, where buyers really can experience the sense of discovery that so many report to us is one of the main reasons that they go to trade shows to see what's next. Our whole show is going to be about a sense of discovery and we're also challenging and expanding definition of outdoor to what's been sort of considered tertiary in the past.

It could be overland, RV, fishing. I mean, there are things that bind us all together. One, the distribution pressures that we talked about earlier, Amazon, the big boxes. Two, the currently shared consumer. Paddlers are bikers, bikers are climbers, everybody camps. It's just the consumer is all the same. But third, sort of having this industry wide dialogue around who will be our future shared consumer because the reality is even though in the sort of our broadened industry definition of what is outdoor still doesn't reflect the composition of our country and Kenji has been a leader and on the forefront of diversity and inclusion initiatives within the outdoor industry. So we're excited about that and we hope that in a small way, Big Gear Show can help contribute to that discussion.

Kristin: That's awesome. Thank you. And it ties really well into the next question that I had that I received a lot of different feedback, different sides of the coin on the Consumer Day. Again, this is a topic I'm inviting the audience to open their minds on because ultimately what you guys are trying to do here, it's a big vision. I applaud you for really going big and ultimately the focus that you're trying to put on again, modernizing specialty retailers and brands in our space to really, really up level how they're serving that consumer in an ongoing way. Let's talk about that Consumer Day, your approach to it.

Darren: I was going to say, as a retailer that's the first thing we thought of when we did the Consumer Day is number one is we want to protect local retailers. We don't want the show to be a competitor with them. We want that to be a thing where they work together. So we're requiring our attendees who, if they want to sell anything, and it's certainly not mandatory, that they work with their local retailers to make sure that they're made whole. And that's just coming from me as a retailer, just having some empathy for those people that are around there.

Sutton: Yeah. From our perspective, I mean, I think consumers are just the missing, the crucial voice in an industry celebration like this. I mean, I think what a Consumer Day does and gives brands, especially the small and upcoming brands, up and coming brands, is just unparalleled access to consumers and industry media to get their brand stories out. I think that enhances their ROI for the show as an exhibitor, both to be able to get that brand story out and do some selling as well. But I think in an already cluttered media environment, it really benefits brands who are our targets, who are the brands that invest the most and most heavily in innovative new products. And yeah, like Darren said,

and we're going to have guardrails. The Consumer Day is meant to be brand celebration first, with selling, if any, at the brand's discretion.

They got to work with local retailers and dealers, which isn't as relevant to paddle sports given the geography, but definitely relevant to biking and climbing and camping. Not required to sell and the other thing that I've heard, especially from some retailers, I don't think they fully appreciate because they don't often stick around until the end of OR, is that the last day of OR and other big national shows, like it or not, are effectively consumer days right now. There's a lot of batch trading and non-industry locals running around looking for vendors to dump their samples, which definitely hurts local retailers. So our approach is by sanctioning this activity, we can put actual controls over directing sales in a positive manner for local shops and brands rather than destructive ones. So bottom line, like Darren said, I mean we're committed as retailers to the Consumer Day being a positive for the industry and the brands and local retailers and that's how we're framing that Consumer Day.

Kristin: That's super helpful. Thanks. And again, I feel like if the listener can open their mind and realize there really isn't an apples to apples comparison for the Big Gear Show. Obviously we'll have different discussions after we get through our inaugural year and I'm looking forward to keeping tabs on that with both of you here on Channel Mastery, but ultimately I'm inviting the audience of Channel Mastery to really think about what a consumer day could actually... how it could benefit them as part of this investment to send a team member or several team members out to Salt Lake for the show this year and maybe there's a way they can actually offer their insights to you. I know that you guys are actively updating your Facebook and you shared with me just before the show that both Darren and Sutton are committed to updating their website with updates on exhibitors, attendees, et cetera. So that can be found right at biggearshow.com, but I feel like this consumer day actually is quite an opportunity if we approach it with an open mind.

Darren: Well, it happens at Canoecopia is we think of Canoecopia as a sale, but it's also a giant focus group because the smart vendors have a product designer there and they're watching people crawl in and out of booths and they're asking them questions and when they look at a color and wrinkle their nose like, "Hey, what do you think of that color?" So they use that. So for the brands, this is a great opportunity for them to have a giant focus group talking to people. Someone stops in front of your booth and looks at something, you say, "Hey, have you seen this before?" "No, I'd never seen that before. Hey, this is really cool. Tell me more about it." "Hey, put your name and email on this card and we'll keep you updated on new products."

And they're going to direct them to the retailers. Right? So think about that attachment to an end consumer. Again, it's not bypassing, it's actually helping steer. Right? And I think I said to you before, it's like when they legalized pot in Colorado, they were able to control its distribution a lot more and able to keep tabs on what's going on. And so by putting the guardrails that Sutton and I are talking about, we can mold that. That experience is something that's beneficial to everybody.

Kristin: That's such a good point. And I love the analogy not only because it's funny, I mean, let's

all admit it's funny, but it's so spot on because ultimately the consumer... they're already finding their way into these gatherings if you will. So that'll be great to see how that unfolds and I love that you bring your feedback from Canoeopia in because obviously there's not a person in the industry who knows that show that would not point to it as a real fantastic example of a win with a consumer show. And I know that the cycling industry and the community of cycling per se is definitely looking at Sea Otter, for example, as not only the kickoff to the season, but the global leading consumer gathering if you will. So it's just interesting that you guys are adding this on at the beginning and I'm wondering how it's going to develop because obviously Salt Lake is a great location to potentially expand this, so we'll see what goes where that goes in the future.

And on a similar note, I was hoping that we could talk a little bit about how you're talking about structuring the networking and collaborative education opportunities of the Big Gear Show. I feel like there is a, let's get down to business, let's really, really do curation discovery, but then there's also that bridge to the shopper that we all share. The shopper that loves to go on their mountain bike, loves to paddle, etc. We know that it's one consumer enjoying all of these outdoor activities. So how are you planning on enabling us to up our game in terms of how we're discovered by, how we nurture, how we serve and ultimately convert that shopper today?

Sutton: Sure. So one of our great partners, one of the best relationships that we have is with the National Bike Dealers Association. They represent 1,100 independent bike dealers from around the country and that organization is heavily invested in dealer education. And we're working with the NBDA and a variety of other stakeholders as we speak on a really dynamic education and retailer, peer-to-peer retailer education program. So we should be making some announcements about that here in the next few weeks, but needless to say, we strongly believe that retailers will benefit from just the cross pollination of best practices and innovative ways of approaching local events and that by retailers working with other retailers across category lines that have never really been in the same room before, there's going to be just this great collective learning for the industry. So it's going to be a big part of what we're doing, stay tuned for some more information on that, but we're excited about making that a core pillar of what we're doing.

Kristin: I can't wait to see what develops there and I sincerely mean it. I just feel like people are hungry for that right now and I also just have this like vision in my mind that I smile every time I think of it, of walking down the aisles and seeing great brands from paddle sports, from outdoor and from cycling all in the same place serving buyers that are expanding their minds with every step they take. That's a perfect world scenario, but on this show we have always pontificated and beaten the drum on the fact that we are sharing a consumer and a shopper obviously across all of these markets because everyone who's in these markets I think loves cycling, loves outdoor, loves camping, loves all of it, even overlanding, right? And I just feel like it's been one of the things that has needed to be modernized for a long time is not having these trade shows held in different buildings in different cities.

I do understand as you're educating us on today, the continued moving target of the buying cycle, etc., but ultimately, we always have to go back to how we serve that

shopper today and I love that you guys are focusing on that. You are disrupting and I do think that you've brought up a great point that I'd love to wrap up here today with maybe some final thoughts on, we can't have just one big trade show solution for such multifaceted specialty businesses that we run today.

So Darren, I have a question I would like to direct to you. There are some in the outdoor community who believe there should be an alternate show, should it be successful like the Big Gear Show, would pull attendees and participants away from Outdoor Retailer, which some see as the industry's largest convergence. And knowing that Emerald Expositions and Outdoor Industry Association are conjoined financially with Emerald of course being the producer of the Outdoor Retailer show, that could potentially hamstring the power of the industry's voice collectively on important issues like climate participation and diversity, things that the Outdoor Industry Association shepherds for us. What's your take on that?

Darren: Well, as Sutton and I have both said before, we've both served on the OIA board for two full terms each and have a tremendous amount of respect for what the OIA has done. We've been to Washington, we've done the capital summit, so we know what they do and it's good stuff. That said, we're pretty simple guys.

We just wanted to do what we think is right for the industry. We started Paddlesports Retailer, that model, to do what's best for paddlesports. Which is to keep the prices down where people can afford them, so they can reinvest the money they have, instead of spending it on very expensive trade shows, they can spend it on likes like RND, salaries for their employees, keeping the lights on, stuff like that. So that's all we want. We wanted to create a business model that would be viable for the hard goods section of the industry. As far as, if it's going to ruin the show, going to hurt it or whatever, they said that when GOA started to connect and it didn't seem to make that big of a difference. GOA has a really cool business model, connects a great show and serves a completely different purpose than winter OR so I think we're fine here.

Kristin: Thank you. That's a great answer. It does seem interesting when you think about it. It's hard to use your company as a vehicle for positive change if you are financially challenged, like so many people are in this industry so I see your point of view there.

And I'd love it if you could just kind of wrap up the show here by really talking about how you're hoping to be additive and really bring a boost of the discovery and the curation of the hard goods, which I think really does attract a big part of this shopper today to the community that you plan to build around the Big Gear Show.

Sutton: Sure. I mean, look, pretty much everyone in the industry acknowledges that the current show model is broken and what's worked in the past just doesn't meet a lot of needs, especially around focus and honestly, just around the exorbitant costs of exhibiting at and attending the show from exhibitors and retailers both. And so sort of my parting thoughts would be if you look closely at our logo, it's a mountain range shaped like a big tent and that's exactly what we are, we're a big tent. We want to invite the industry into our tent. Like you said, visit our website for updates, reach out, start a dialogue with us. I mean, we're small, we're agile, we're hungry, we want to earn your business and your

trust and your partnership because, I mean, there's a lot at stake. I mean, main street gear shops are struggling, some are closing.

We all see the emails and the updates on that. The world out there is evolving and in some ways, many ways it's evolving faster than the speed of national trade shows and associations. And so the Big Gear Show gives the hard goods industry and the local retailers the opportunity to break out of the current paradigm and try something new and importantly, keep the industry hard earned dollars within the industry and the innovators of the industry. So I really appreciate your interest in the show and what we're doing. We look forward to seeing everyone in Salt Lake and please don't hesitate to reach out to us. It's Darren and me, Kenji and Lance, Charles, Gavin, the whole team is here for you, so we look forward to working with everyone.

Kristin: Thank you. And it has been an honor to have you guys on the show today. I realize this is a fast and furious time for you. Congratulations on the recent announcements of both Kenji and Lance. We have a lot of affinity and respect for them over here at the Channel Mastery podcast, and you guys have built a true, just A plus team over there at the Big Gear Show and we'll definitely be including all the links where people can go and learn more about what you're offering. And again, it's www.biggearshow.com. Thank you so much to both of you for joining me here today on the Channel Mastery podcast.

Sutton: Thank you.

Darren: Thank you.