



Martin Flory Group

public relations

product promotion

industry representation

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Do You Know Your Source?

If my e-mail inbox were a boat, I'd be on the phone daily with our technical editor, Steve D'Antonio, trying to troubleshoot the leak that has left me awash in unsolicited "editorial content" from various marketing agencies and the freelance writers they employ with increasing frequency. I'm not talking about traditional labeled press releases from a company's public relations or communications staff informing our editors of a new product, project, or hire that might be of interest to readers—material designed to intrigue us to the point that we would call to follow up with interviews and a story. As insistent as some conventional PR operatives can be, their approach is refreshingly transparent compared to the murky material that now floods my inbox.

Advertorial, native advertising, or sponsored content—call it what you may—is a trend that blurs the line between editorial content and paid advertisement, and it leaves readers with no way to differentiate between credible editorial information and carefully composed, subtly placed product advocacy. Readers of any publication deserve to know the sources of all the printed material in it. This is particularly true for a magazine like *Professional BoatBuilder*, which delivers often-complex technical material written by experienced industry professionals. If readers are to trust our printed words to influence how they make their living, it's important that they can identify our writers and sources, know their credentials, and, in some cases, what their professional affiliations are. It should also be reassuring to know that we determine our editorial lineup without giving any special consideration to advertisers. In short, editorial is not for sale here.

But even with that crystal-clear policy in place, the recent shift in publishing standards too frequently leads new marketing reps from advertisers to ask when we will publish "the story" about their work or product, or to offer us such "articles," composed by their hired writers, free of charge. More insidious, we've found seemingly legitimate writers pitching stories when, unbeknownst to us, they are being paid by the subject company's marketing department upon whose behalf they submitted the idea. This is marketing masquerading as editorial content to deceive editors as well as readers. We've identified and rejected a few of these would-be Trojan-horse sources over the years, but I still feel paranoid when we vet new, unfamiliar writers.

As Dudley Dix reminds us in his Parting Shot (page 80), about boatbuilders' vulnerability to Internet scams, we should always be skeptical of new potentials that seem too good to be true. A ridiculously cheap engine, a seemingly miraculous new product, or an unnaturally eager writer should all be checked out carefully. Indeed, much of the work of creating this magazine is vetting sources, asking for supporting documentation, and demanding some names of known and trusted builders or experts who might have used a new product or material.

Mark Lenci's account of converting a house bank to lithium-ion batteries (page 46) is a case in point. While we aren't about to just publish the unvarnished performance claims of any battery manufacturer, we have printed a lot of data and research about the potential of lithium-ion batteries to change the way onboard electrical systems are designed and managed. Lenci, a retired U.S. Navy submarine commander and software developer at Microsoft, responded to those articles with his assertion that he'd successfully adopted the technology, which performed as expected precisely because he designed the system and sourced and installed components carefully and deliberately. He had checked out the claims and realities of numerous components from multiple manufacturers and suppliers, and he was willing to pass his experience, warts and all, on to us. To boat builders or owners with questions and doubts about lithium batteries, Lenci's firsthand account, which hasn't been subjected to someone's marketing filter, is in the long run far more helpful than some sponsored content from a manufacturer.

Aaron S. Porter

From the industry:



December, 2020

Kelly,

Good morning, hope all is well with you and your family.

Wanted to pass along my congratulations on the milestone Martin Flory Group has achieved and recognized for in today's *Boating Industry's* Top News. GSW is very appreciative of our relationship with your team and the work all of you provide to the Marine Industry as well as for NMRA. Please share our congratulations with everyone.

<https://boatingindustry.com/news/2020/12/17/martin-flory-group-hits-pr-milestone/>

Merry Christmas.

Craig Cochran
GSW and Associates



September, 2021

Dear Kelly –

We are happy that you send releases we can use, often more than one (like for September) for an issue! Keep them coming!

Cheers,
Sue Ingle Owen
Sea Technology magazine

CRAIG D. RITCHIE MEDIA

Kelly,

Just a short note to thank you once again for making my job as a writer and editor so much easier. I confess, I was a little surprised to realize that it has indeed been almost 20 years now that we've worked together in the boating and RV industries. I always appreciate receiving your new product and client news information because it's always on target, always on time, always complete and always ready to go. I love the fact you go the extra mile and attach Canadian distribution information along with links to great quality, high resolution photography right on the release, so I don't have to go digging it out myself. The releases always have pricing information, packaging details, contact details for more info ... basic elements that so many companies just don't think to provide. So when that major deadline is looming, it is inevitably the companies you represent that get the ink and appear in the finished magazine.

I think you know how many announcements I receive in a given week. The reason I've always used your releases is because, quite simply, no one else does it better. The fact so many of your clients have remained clients over such a time span says enough about how well you represent them. So thank you!

Seriously Kelly, you have no idea how much your hard work is appreciated.

Warmest personal regards,

Craig Ritchie
www.craigdritchie.com

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Take The Next Step

After seeing the many ways in which your PR program could produce editorial coverage to contribute to your sales growth, let's make plans to work together. You can contact us at:

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You likewise can see the types of press releases we create for clients by visiting our Media Resource Site at www.martinflory.com.