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Your dirt riding customers are only hibernating. Wake them up.

Fran O'Hagan, President, Pied Piper Management Co.

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In 2005, more than 275,000 dirt bikes were sold in the U.S., but over the next six years dirt bike retails plummeted 75 percent – more of a drop than any other motorcycle category. Most of those dirt bike customers are still

around, but do they still ride? Are they riding, but just not replacing their bikes as often? Is it possible to coax these dirt riders out of “new-bike-purchase-

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hibernation" to get them interested in buying a new dirt bike again?

Hollister Hills is a 4,000-plus acre off road riding state park in Northern California. According to the park's director, Jeff Gaffney, visitor attendance grew steadily from about 150,000 annually in 2000 to about 200,000 visitors annually in 2006, which also happened to coincide with the peak of U.S. motorcycle sales. We know what happened to motorcycle retails after 2006, but what happened to dirt rider attendance at Hollister Hills between 2006 and today? Did the dirt bikers who stopped buying also stop riding?

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Fran O'Hagan, left, is a dirt rider himself, so he's seen prospective dirt bike buyers out and about.

Unlike the figures for dirt bike retails, which plummeted over the next several years, the figure for Gaffney's dirt-riding visitors remained constant at 200,000 annually each year through 2011. No decrease in riders. Then, starting last fall, attendance at Hollister Hills began to increase again, and current 2012 attendance is up about 5 percent.

2012 dirt bikes have plenty of new product advances compared to 2005 or 2006 dirt bikes. Ask any OEM's product specialists, and they will list pages of improvements and talk about completely new models.

Your homework at the dealership is to dust off your 2005 and 2006 dirt bike retail sales records, track down those buyers, and entice them back into your dealership to see what's new. Wake them up from

their hibernation.

Fran O'Hagan is President & CEO of Pied Piper Management Company LLC, a Monterey, Calif., company that works with motor vehicle manufacturers and dealers to maximize performance of dealer networks. One of Pied Piper's most popular services for the powersports industry is Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index (PSI) sales mystery shopping to help turn more motorcycle shoppers into motorcycle buyers.

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