



[Is the RV Industry in a Death Spiral?](#)

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DEATH SPIRAL

According to Greg Gerber at the **RV Daily Report**, *“The current RV business model is simply unsustainable and the professionals working in the industry either:*

- *Know what’s going on, are in denial, and remain hopeful the problems will simply fix themselves.*
- *Don’t want to know what’s going on and keep their heads firmly planted in the sand ignoring many very obvious signs.*
- *Are aware of the problem, know it won’t end well, but are simply choosing to ride the wave as long as they can.*

Consumers are frustrated beyond words over product quality and customer service. Every single day I hear about another issue involving a new or experienced RVer. RV owners are seething over the finger-pointing response they receive when attempting to get problems addressed.

Yet, industry professionals are fired up to see 400,000 RV deliveries to dealers this year – the most we’ve seen in a very long time. The twinkles in their eyes suggest

they believe the industry can break the 500,000 mark. One person recently suggested we could see 600,000 RV deliveries in one year.

Riiiiight! Under the industry's current infrastructure, there is not a snowball's chance in July that will EVER come true. Unless something is done now, the industry has less than 20 years of viability remaining. Every year it delays addressing these issues further accelerates its pending demise.

It is as though everyone is having a great time at the wild and crazy all-industry party while delicately ignoring the dinosaurs in the room. I say dinosaurs because the problems have been around longer than I have – yet few people seem willing to really address them.”

The RV Industry is not Changing

Greg Gerber has been a journalist covering the RV industry for the last 15 years. I read his column every week to find out the latest innovations, new RV models, and industry news. When two RV manufacturers gobble up their neighbors taking 83% of the market, times are a'changing.

Gerber says, *“Product quality and customer service was an issue when I first arrived on the scene in January 2000, and it's an even bigger problem today despite the advent of technology designed to improve construction and service.*

I would stake my career on the fact that of the 289,852 people employed in the RV industry, just 3.2 percent – 9,275 – of them actually own an RV. A bunch more may borrow an employer's RV for a long weekend, but my guess is they have never had to experience the pain of getting an RV serviced or in making a campground reservation.”

Mr. Gerber fears his frank observation of the RV industry is going to cost **RV Daily Report** dearly. Let's hope not, because we need this information flowing into the ears of the RV manufacturers, suppliers and service providers.

I can back up Gerber's research with my experience talking to consumers and listening to their complaints. With 20 years in the full-time lifestyle and nine books published on the subject, motorhome owners continue to seek me out to complain about the quality.

Buy Quality

The purpose of my series of books, [*The RV Lifestyle Collection*](#), was to help RV owners become independent of bad advice and slovenly workmanship. The most important advice found in these books is to purchase a quality RV right from the beginning of the lifestyle adventure.

Buying an older, used motorhome of a quality brand no longer being manufactured is a wise decision. If necessary, renovate the interior and add a trendy new paint job. This leaves you with a quality coach for years to come. Not only would you have a custom layout but the overall savings may surprise you.

Today that defines a motorhome manufactured somewhere in the 1990s era. Quality was already starting to drop, but some manufacturers held out for a few years and continued to flow into the market. This also applies to fifth wheel trailers as well.

I observed the Beavers, Country Coaches, and other high-line coaches disappear as a few mainstream manufacturers folded the quality brands into their culture. Customers were still paying high prices, but getting less and less for their money. Oh yes, more glitz and gadgets, more slides, and more engine power are the current trend.

Leaders in the Industry Set the Pace

Following the leaders in the manufacturing industry, now the service industry feels they can charge more and deliver less. Finding a certified repairperson for the gadgets, the slides, and the powerful engines has always been difficult, now it is even worse.

Human nature is such that “not taking advantage of a situation” is almost considered criminal. If the RV manufacturers can scam the consumer and survive, why should we expect a different attitude on the service end.

Another truism from Gerber, *“If you want to know why some companies in the RV industry continue to sell junk, it’s because someone is willing to pay for it. Like huckster David Hannum so famously said, “There’s a sucker born every minute.”*

This blog is following Gerber’s series throughout the following months, hoping to share his research with you and add a little personal insight.

[Read the complete article...](#)

The RV Lifestyle Collection by Margo Armstrong

