

BY RICK KESSLER

# Dealer Management Software Integrates, Automates All RV Dealership Operations

'A good DMS system is one that really automates all the different departments together as one and really facilitates communication, easy use of data and flow, and is really going to make everything work together as one under one software that connects them all together'



Cirrus Solution's Fred Johansen and Patrick West

## Working in the 'Cloud'

Another major trend is many software providers are now hosting the server running the DMS system at their facilities as opposed to at the dealership. This setup is commonly referred to as being a "cloud-based" system. There are several benefits to a cloud-based system. Most importantly perhaps is the the burden of taking care of the server is shifted onto the DMS provider. This allows the provider to perform DMS and server updates and the dealer -ship is often not aware they even took place.

Another major benefit is users can remotely connect to their DMS system from any Internet-connected device with the software installed. Cirrus Solutions CEO Patrick West said the company he founded three years ago takes what being a cloud-based system mean a step further. An RV dealer principal with a background in e-commerce and logistics, West developed Cirrus Solutions because he wasn't satisfied with the DMS systems on the market. Without any legacy liabilities to limit him, he said he developed Cirrus Solutions to be a true cloud-based DMS system. A device still needs third party software installed in order to remotely connect to a provider-hosted server, West explained, whereas Cirrus Solutions does not.

*During his research, Rochette quickly found dozens of available DMS options, with a handful being among the more widely used in the RV industry including CDK Global Recreation, EverLogic, Integrated Dealer Systems (IDS) and Sys2K as well as Cirrus Solutions, a relative newcomer at just three years old.*

"True Cloud is you need nothing. You just need any modern web browser Safari, Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer -- and you can connect to that server from anywhere. You don't need to install any other software. It's connectable, very transportable and very lightweight. You don't need any other software. You don't need any super fast computers to run it. You just need a web browser," West explained. Curiously, he said that most dealers today seem to understand what "in the cloud" means

better than he expected, and many are seeking a cloud based system.

An advantage of Cirrus Solutions, he noted, is that it's a web-

based system. "We started with the web that's how important we think it is. We took a very innovative approach with it by allowing dealers to self-serve and make all kinds of changes. So, if you want to make a change on an announcement or add a new page to your website, or add a newsletter, you don't have to call us as a provider. You can change that yourself because we have developed a easy-to-use interface to make those day-to-day changes." Meanwhile, any entry made in any part of the system is automatically reflected throughout the system, which he called a "one-change, one time" approach.

## Cost Dependent Upon Users

Dealer Management Systems (DMS) costs vary greatly, reaching up into the tens of thousands of dollars for one with all the bells and whistles. Like a buffet, most providers offer their DMS systems to enable dealers to select those modules and options they require. Since DMS systems are easily scalable, this allows dealers to start with an entry-level system and then progressively add more modules and options. A true cloud-based DMS system was also a key differentiator in developing Cirrus Solutions' monthly pay-as-you-go pricing model, West added. "It's a monthly fee basis as opposed to excessive upfront fees," West said,

noting that on-site and/or web-based training and data conversion fees do apply. "Typically on the server models, you have to buy servers and you have to buy licenses up front. Yes, sometimes DMS providers will host it for you, but that's not truly cloud. You still have that one-to-one relationship -- one dealer to one server -- where we have many dealers in one cloud system per se. That makes us very price competitive especially at the small-to-medium size dealership levels. Anywhere from a 5- to 10-user dealership can get into our system for a very nominal upfront fee and just pay a monthly per-user fee. We believe Cirrus to be the most intuitive, easy-to-use and cost competitive DMS in the market."