

Out of This World Service

BY [ALISA CLICKENGER](#) ON JUN 14, 2012



How do you successfully run a large dealership in a very small market? Jimmy Allison, owner of Champion Motorsports of Roswell, New Mexico, has a plan that should appeal even to aliens: superior customer service. Consistently a top dealership in the nation, they must rely on selling to the same customers over and over. Champion is the largest dealership in Southeastern New Mexico, but they are tasked with thriving in a very small market — there are only 90,000 residents in the shop's 85-mile radius.

Champion is proud of the fact that after 26 years in business, they are now selling to a third generation of loyal customers. And it's little wonder that they have achieved this generational landmark —

Champion itself is a family business. The dealership's general manager Alyse Dowson is Allison's daughter and grew up in the business. Her first job was cleaning the restrooms. Mr. Allison's son-in-law runs parts and service, and his other daughter runs the motorclothes department, which she took over after his wife retired.

Not just family, they are all motorsport enthusiasts and ride a variety of vehicles. One look at the vintage motorcycles on display, in the showroom or in the service department, and you'll see a lifetime of dedication to powersports and passion for riding. "We enjoy the business side, but at the end of the day,

we're enthusiasts," says Allison. Proof of his philosophy can be seen not only in the variety of motorcycles he rides, but the variety of brands the dealership sells. Champion carries all the big four Japanese brands plus Harley-Davidson.

Allison personally rides an FJR1300 for street, a DR650 for dual sport and a WR250 for dirt. He can also be seen riding one of his vintage bikes from the 1910 Harley to the 65 FLH to a BSA A7SS or an AJS. Allison also rides vintage trials on a Sammy Miller framed Bultaco and vintage motocross on a BSA Gold Star and occasionally a Monark and Bultaco. If that's not enough, he is currently building a 1929 Indian 101 Scout for the Cannonball in September. That's 3,800 miles in 16 days from New York to California on 1929 and older motorcycles.

When asked if he has a simple formula for turning your passion into profits, he says, "as an enthusiast, you must become a business person in order to be profitable so you can enjoy your passion." And that's exactly how he started. He knew at age 15 that he wanted to own a motorcycle dealership and started working in one at 16 years of age. This year marks his 43rd year in the industry.

Champion offers customers a great opportunity to compare all the models, all under one roof. "It's good for customers because they can look at a brand they might not have considered," says Allison. "Sometimes one manufacturer will have a program that is more beneficial than the others, and this allows us more options when it comes time to show a customer their options, whether it's financing, free accessories or rebates."

Asked what the key to longevity in the business is, Allison explains that it's flexibility and controlling expenses. Over the years, Champion has sold numerous products, including lawnmowers, generators, lawn tractors, bicycles, boats, PWC, trailers and radio controlled cars, all in the quest to stay in business as the economy has changed. Currently, they sell motorcycles, ATVs and UTVs in addition to parts, accessories and clothing.

To expand their current customer base, Champion is starting to carry a larger inventories of pre-owned motorcycles as well as sourcing more financing options. They also offer unique monthly promotions that often benefit a charity, and tap into the local culture. Just take a look at their display in the center of the store, and you'll see the artful blend of aliens, local military culture and Harley-Davidson t-shirts. Seems like good business, too. When asked if they've had any aliens come in to do demo rides, Allison answered, "Every day."