

STUART MEARS

# OVER- BOATED?



THE ZEN OF HOW TO SELL YOUR BOAT  
AND NOT GET ROYALLY **SCREWED!**

[www.over-boated.com](http://www.over-boated.com)

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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to the white hats, the black hats and that broad church of good and decent folk in the marine industry among whom the odd verifiable saint is there to be discovered, usually with a caulking mallet or some such ancient tool in hand.

I am humbly indebted to you all, for only by virtue of your ministrations have I earned my professorial doctorate in the psychology of the boat owner, having graduated with significant scar tissue from that most ancient and venerable of learning institutions, *The University of Screw U*

God bless you all!

## Foreword

In corporate land, from which place I was rudely ejected long ago, every citizen was encouraged to have ready on hand, an ‘elevator speech’ meaning: a succinct summation of what you’re about.

That being the case, this here ‘elevator speech’ goes something like this.

“When the day comes that you know you have to sell your boat, there’s an inevitable feeling of doom that accompanies the decision.

It’s not just that you’re quite attached to the old girl and can’t quite imagine life without her; more to the point is the certain knowledge that you’re about to be royally screwed...again!

Somewhere between the pestilential broker pushing you to accept the offer of some bottom feeding opportunist and the bottom feeder himself who confidently expects to steal your boat for a miserable pittance (Oh....it’s a buyer’s market don’t you know), there’s one thing that you do know as surely as night follows day.... your ‘will to live’ is about to take another hit.

More often than not, selling a boat via the conventional, lazy, boat broker route is a soul destroying process.

Well my friend, if this is NOT what you need in your life, it's high time we turned the tables!

By ‘turning the tables’, I mean *a reversal of roles* whereby the vendor becomes the screwer and the buyer the screwee! And by the way, we sack the boat broker.

My role as your humble mentor is to facilitate your education and guide your progress.

*That's what this little book is about.”*

The only question Dear Reader is: *are you up for it?*

## It's about triggering the buyer's emotional response

**F**irst things first, I assert Dear Reader that you're very unlikely to be an expert in this curious business of selling a boat.

How can I make such a bald statement when we're barely acquainted?

The answer is that even the self-promoting, so called industry experts, are anything but expert in the one area that must be mastered in order to *make sales unfailingly in this market*, which leads me the question you may be asking yourself: "Why not just pass the whole shebang across to a boat broker?"

To that good question my friend, there is a compelling answer.

You're about to discover (if you don't know already) that the boat market routinely exacts a ruinous toll upon the uninformed.

Conversely (you might even say...*perversely*) this market pays big dividends to the minority who understand boat buyer psychology and position their offerings accordingly.

And while it would be reasonable to expect that the boat broking fraternity would be alive to buyer psychology- after all ‘selling’ is central to the business- the truth is that 99.9% of boat brokers haven’t got a clue about the art and science of understanding what makes the prospective buyer tick.

Expressed differently, boat brokers don’t care a whit about buyer psychology. The boat broker doesn’t care because he doesn’t need to.

His success is not influenced by achieving the best price for your boat at the margin. His business model is a two-step process; first, about securing an exclusive contract with the vendor that delivers a favourable rate of commission; second, about moving a sale across the line for a minimum outlay on his part and for whatever price you can be bludgeoned into accepting.

The bottom line: boat broking is a numbers game. The broker’s commission might be coming out of your pocket but you’ll be the one he leans on in a price negotiation. You can count on it.

How do I know?

The truth is that once upon a time in my peripatetic career, I was a boat broker myself. My specialty was negotiating the deal. I was good at that aspect of the transaction (not so good at others).

But I could see that the industry had no future. As early as a decade ago it was obvious that the Internet was poised to excise the boat broker's value proposition like a samurai's katana blade launched at the head of a pumpkin.

Assuredly the penny is dropping. Vendors are increasingly embracing DIY; some realising that the only missing piece that makes the DIY route faster, surer and much better paid is insightful knowledge of *buyer psychology*.

And that Dear Reader is the quintessence of this book: a simple, easy-to-follow system rooted in powerful, highly effective principles of buyer psychology.

That is why I say; “it’s all about triggering the buyer’s emotional response”, herein described as ‘the Over-Boated Formula’. When you get this right, watch out below!

At a minimum I guarantee that ‘the Over-Boated Formula’ will put thousands of extra dollars into your pocket, if not tens of thousands and it’s as easy to understand as it is simple to execute.

For every \$AUD1,000 extra you generate on your investment of \$AUD47 in the book you hold in your hands, that is a 2,027% return on your investment.

Of course if you later reveal to me that a mere \$1,000 is all that you actually made from the exercise, I’ll have to be restrained from slashing my wrists, such will be the measure of my disappointment!

If that’s your story please don’t ruin my day.

Why so? This material is verifiable dynamite and not one percent of boat vendors are alive to it.

How can I be so confident you may ask, that the market is ignorant of these principles?

Simply by running an educated eye over boat advertisements placed by brokers and vendors, I can tell if the copy-writer is working with buyer psychology.

Soon you will understand the meaning of this statement because you too will be evaluating advertising with the same critical eye.

All of this is good news for you because it means that your informed offering is destined to stand-out like a wildebeest in the frozen food isle of the supermarket.

So, my hearty congratulations to you Dear Reader; simply by opening this book with intention, you're on your way to becoming part of an educated elite. 'The Over-Boated Formula' is explained here in simple understandable terms.

Believe me when I say that I'm no Einstein. If I can sell a boat successfully using 'the Over-Boated Formula', just as surely as the sun rises upon God's Green Earth tomorrow morning...so can you!

I give you this guarantee; go ahead and implement 'the Over-Boated Formula'.

Follow the steps faithfully. If you have done so and 'the Over-Boated Formula' doesn't deliver for you, contact me directly via [www.over-boated.com](http://www.over-boated.com) I will re-fund the purchase price of this book, no questions asked!

So to your first question: What peculiarity of life experience you're wondering, qualifies me to be giving advice that will outrage legions of self-styled professionals in the industry?

Perhaps I should start at the beginning.

# How the hell did I end up here?

Possibly like you, I sometimes wonder: “how the hell did I get to be here, doing this?”

In the Sanskrit Vedas the ancients say that sentient life is lived in a dream state. Verily there are times when you’d have to believe it.

The love of boating and all that goes with it started a long while ago. I have worked with friends and acquaintances for years, buying, selling and restoring boats. I have bought, sold and owned boats since age ten. In later life I lived aboard my own piece of maritime archaeology for two decades.

At some point I must have decided that there was beer money in advice, only nowadays... ahem... having seen the light... one no longer drinks alcohol. The first visit to the clapboard church serving as the local meeting hall for Alcoholics Anonymous changed all of that. Verily the electrifying first shock of self-realization is a moment that every alcoholic remembers notwithstanding that there are whole

chunks of memories past that have disappeared in-to a cosmic black hole.

My lurch into the marine industry rather late in life followed one of those seismic events; you awake in the morning and the landscape has changed. All of the carefully constructed foundational supports of material and emotional existence; the pillars that you imagine define who you are, crumble before your eyes like a sand-castle in a raging storm.

The information systems business into which I had invested most of my life energy over three decades was broke. The part of that business that I did well, I did with ease and facility. The part of the business that I didn't do well, had been strangling the life out of me for years.

While staggering along this tortuous road in varying degrees of obdurate denial, I had acquired a dose of clinical depression, drug dependency and a problem with alcohol.

Along with all of this, I was afflicted by that peculiar blindness, restricted it seems to the males of the human species.

While my wife and I had a few issues we were I thought, nowhere near the precipice of matrimonial disaster. I was wrong about many things but dead right on that particularity. We weren't *near* the precipice. We were way over the bloody edge.

The day of awakening found me, like the coyote, the proverbial road runner's nemesis, wind-milling in

the air while contemplating the thousand foot void beneath my feet.

The proposition from my good wife: “I need some space... how about you go live on the boat for a while?” was shocking in its economy and finality of intent. It needed no elaboration. Fourteen years of marriage had taught me basic translation of marital discourse 101: our marriage was all over red rover!

Consequently it is soon thereafter, in a squally half gale - my mood matching the grey sleeting weather that day- I find myself rowing out to what had been ‘our’ old sail boat, which presumably has by now become, ‘my’ old sail boat. It together with three green garbage bags of stuff in the bottom of the dinghy represents the sum total of all that I now own. Apparently!

SV Velella is seventy something years old. She leaks!

She is and ever was a restoration project. I remember once after one of our marital ‘scenes’ leading up to this, I had retreated to the boat to do some fit-out work. Looking around the little saloon and forward cabin, wondering with a certain subliminal prescience: “If push came to shove...could I live in this space?”

“Nah... no way...couldn’t live here...not possible!”

Ha... if you want to make God laugh, tell her what’s not possible.

Stowing my stuff aboard, I decide to sail down the coast to Sydney Harbor to a marina which I vaguely recall somewhere being mentioned as a live aboard community. In truth the pall of depression is such that I hardly care where I end up, so long as it's well shot of the geography of here.



SV Velella (1938)

I arrive at Cammeray Marina to be greeted by an amiable chap introduced as “Scotty” together with his poodle. Beside him, the somewhat circular figure of Paul the boat broker, a personage I later come to regard as a paterfamilias, the greatest of friends, a teacher and the moral epicentre of this new universe.

Throwing a line to shore, as prosaic as it seems, is like the opening of a door to a new life. When I think back to the events that follow I seem to have parachuted into a landscape peopled with a rich cast of diverting characters, some of whom become close friends and remain so to this day.

Providentially in the weeks that follow, I discover the marina to be the center of a vibrant social scene.

Every other night seems to present an excuse for some kind of entertainment, from a barbecue with

cruising neighbours to a full throated rock-n-roll party. In many ways it is reminiscent of life as a student: cask wine and shared digs.

And when later, some degree of closure seems possible, pain morphs into relief. I recognize that on the other side of loss lies freedom. In the confusion and hurt of the moment it can be difficult to recognise a blazing truth that lies just a degree or two to the left of one's myopic field of vision.

This was the end of my suited and collared life in corporate systems. I had been presented with an opportunity to do what I enjoyed doing: mucking around in boats. My wife was self-sufficient financially with her own business. She didn't need me; perhaps she never needed me and what did it matter?

Somehow I knew that I would scratch a living. I was thanks be to providence, free and didn't need much to support a simple life afloat.

Encountering a circle of acquaintances with boats, small repair jobs materialise along with the odd bigger job and the occasional restoration. Later I gain skills working alongside genuine old school shipwrights. In coastal cruising mode, boat repair is a transportable vocation.

I buy, restore and sell boats making a few dollars here and there. The broker offers me a job. When my amiable broker friend retires from the business I am left as sole operator, corporate HQ being the quirky cabin of my ancient yacht moored in Wreck Bay, possibly the most private and picturesque little

bay in all of Sydney Harbour. The brokerage speed-boat is permanently moored alongside.

Notwithstanding the unconventional nature of business infrastructure, the brokerage prospers until the business is sold.

At that point I decide to re-invent myself as an amateur shipwright in cruising yacht mode. I am not a trained shipwright. But having been around wooden boats all my life, worked in boatyards as a school boy and watched the odd genuine shipwright roll caulking oakum on his thigh, what could possibly go wrong?

Providentially not much did go wrong and within a couple of years I developed another little business around boat maintenance and diving (hull cleaning with a hooka), once again quartered from the cabin of Velella; but this time in north Queensland.

The next bout of itchy feet resulted in a landfall in southern Tasmania but that's another story.

As a sailing nomad you do what you can to get by, wherever you happen to be.

The cruising life is a learning school on the subject of sail-boats, their characteristics at sea and in live-aboard mode. Boat repair provides another dimension of insight into the peculiar peccadilloes of boat owners.

Among the curious things I have learned regarding the latter, is how so many owners have no real business being such. By this I mean that, for many

boat owners, the acquisition of a boat simply doesn't add-up by any practical metric.

Of course every buying decision is attended by some or other rationalization, but the truth for the most part is that all such rationalisations are storeyed bunk.

Why one has to wonder, do people buy boats that languish unused and end up as albatrosses around the neck of the owner?

It is an interesting question because therein lies the key to selling a boat in this proto-depression market.

When you know the answers you will be comfortably equipped to sell any damned boat in any damned market on God's Green Earth.

All that is required is a willingness to dig deep and apply a few street smarts, the dividends of long and colourful experience with boats, owners and buyers.

This book I hope will be your guide.

Good luck and God speed

## This Depression is just *'noise'*

I daresay dear boat vendor that I'm not telling you anything that you don't already know, by observing that the boat market today is moribund compared with the peak- level of activity and prices achieved prior to the GFC. It may be frustration with these very circumstances that has brought you to this publication.

If so, you're well aware that conventional marketing isn't near enough to breathe life back into this corpse. Indeed it's as effectual as the administration of aspirin to a flat lining victim of a coronary infarction.

The theme of this book is that you need 10,000 volts to produce signs of life in this boat market.

The 2008 Global Financial Crisis was the first seismic crack portending a confluence of titanic forces bearing down upon the middle classes.

Rest assured there will be further, far greater and more terrible shocks in the future. The political class in concert with fiscal and monetary authorities in Western countries, has created a magisterial mess from which there is no escape short of eventual systemic monetary collapse.

We are in the early stages of the greater economic depression of the post- Industrial Revolution era and it will last for at least a generation.

The boat market has been one of the early canaries in the coal mine. It will not recover within any time frame relevant to either of us Dear Reader.

But fear not; the cosmic truth is that none of this ultimately matters.

Boat buyers still exist as a species, fewer though they may be and spoiled for choice though they undoubtedly are.

The aforementioned economic facts as forbidding as they may seem, are secondary if you remember the singular commandment of this book, namely that boat buyers are only ever moved by emotions and not by logic; just as they were in the halcyon days of 2006, just as they were in the time of Homer's 'wine dark sea' and just as they ever will be.

In his book “*No B.S. Wealth Attraction in the New Economy*”, Dan Kennedy refers to two “sword in the stone” secrets that will serve to underwrite your success, while all around you is despair and failure.”

“Firstly, no matter what, each and every individual will buy when what is offered is perfectly and precisely aligned with his greatest, highest, burning-brightest personal interest, desire, or need. He will buy without price resistance or hesitation.

Secondly, in order to prosper, you need only (a) align whatever you sell with your ideal prospects' greatest, highest, burning-brightest personal interest and (b) invest in presenting your business *only* to those targeted individuals.”

To achieve this alignment that Kennedy speaks of, it is necessary to dig deep into your commitment, to strive to identify the ‘probable buyer’ and understand the emotional psychology that drives his or her buying decision. It is not then a big step to express your buyer’s brightest burning, personal interest in your descriptive material.

We break this idea into its components. And the net result of your efforts in laying this foundation, is the occasion of your prospective buyer’s inspection of your vessel in the special circumstances of an ambient scene of your creation.

In his or her presence, you need the discipline to be silent when every screaming impulse urges you to pitch your message if not to shove it down your prospect’s throat.

You need the disciplined restraint to understand that the ambience of the scene, which you have so carefully crafted, does the selling on emotional levels that no words can penetrate.

As your self-appointed mentor, the message of this book is: If I can achieve this and I have done so many, many times, nothing is more certain than the proposition... so can you!