

Stand Up and be Counted



One of the hottest sports out there, stand up paddleboarding has surged in just a few short years from a niche fad in a few coastal communities to a nationwide paddle sports phenomenon. Once only found in coastal surf shops, stand ups are now a ubiquitous presence in paddle sport stores across the entire country. Quickly climbing the product adoption curve, SUPs firmly anchored themselves in the early adoption phase with 5% of all specialty paddle boat sales this April. With no signs of slowing down, the category looks poised to make the jump to mass acceptance. Thanks to an exceptionally proactive industry aggressively marketing to a brand new and incredibly wide ranging audience, that acceptance, and accompanying sales, will come sooner than later.

According to Leisure Trends Group's Paddle Sport RetailTRAK, a full 80 percent of all paddle specialty retailers stocked paddleboards this April, up from just 54 percent a year ago. With so many more specialty retailers standing up and taking notice, it is no wonder that specialty SUP unit sales surged 397 percent when comparing this April to last. Retailers are bullish on the category, too. At the end of this April, specialty retailers had 4200 more stand up paddleboards in stock than they did a year ago, a 145 percent increase. With so many more paddleboards on-hand, sell-through at the beginning of this summer selling season stood at a respectable and, more importantly, sustainable 45 percent.

As with any new and growing category, the innovators now have to share the marketplace with increasingly competitive fast followers. With at least 19 brands currently selling into specialty outdoor and paddle retail, the number of available models and types of paddleboards has exploded.

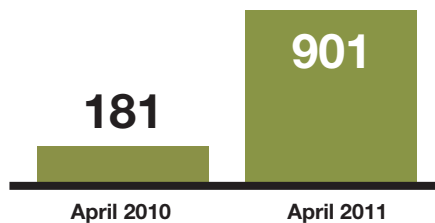
The potential stand up paddler now can choose from recreational, river/surf, race, fitness, fishing and even inflatable paddleboards. Additionally, paddleboards are now available at outdoor and sporting goods chains, online and even mass discounters.

Inevitably, retail selling prices at specialty stores have fallen. Year-to-date, the average retail-selling price for a stand up paddleboard at outdoor and paddle specialty declined \$203, or 16 percent to \$1092. That price pressure also pushed retail margins down four points to an uninspiring 28 percent. Compare that to recreational kayaks which maintained a 34 percent margin. On the bright side, lower retail-selling prices also lower the barrier to possibly hesitant consumers. Stand up paddles, retailing for \$190 this YTD (down from \$262), saw margins edge up one point to 38 percent.

As the category grows it is essential to remember that the stand up paddler is a different creature with unique motivations and lexicon. The smartest retailers welcome and embrace consumers that place as much importance on cross-training, core-strength, yoga, zen, better views, long distance and/or sprint racing as they do on surf, flat and white water conditions.

The paddle sports industry has done a spectacular job communicating the joys and benefits of stand up paddling. Scott Jaeger, senior retail analyst at Leisure Trends Group, states, "Rarely, in my 12 years at LTG, have I seen a new sport so well promoted by manufacturers and retailers alike. With all the demo days, races, events, rental fleets, and even yoga classes, it is getting harder and harder to find a lake or beach that doesn't have someone stand up paddling. I predict that stand up paddling sales will continue to grow at a rapid pace and quickly become a full-on, established paddle sports category." ●

Unit Sales at Outdoor and Paddle Specialty



Inventory Units at Outdoor and Paddle Specialty

