

# FORD PRO-FILE:

*Gus Schagen*

Many FordPros started their automotive career by working the retail floor and then move to the commercial side of the dealership. This was not how Gus Schagen entered the work truck world.

Back in 1986 Gus started selling commercial vehicles for mega-dealership Don Kott Ford in Carson, Ca. He had never worked the retail floor.

"I just started knocking on doors. Los Angeles is a great area for that. I would take a page from the Thomas Guide (a thick street map book of the LA area) and walk that page," Gus recalls. "I would be in the garment district or the produce market at 3 in the morning knocking on their doors."

Learning from the streets, Gus became successful and worked at Don Knott Ford until 1993. He then spent 2 ½ years in his native country, Argentina, following an opportunity to start a Seat (VW Spain) distributorship and to be near his family. He became frustrated with the government regulations there and returned to America. He started working with Sarasota Ford located in Sarasota, Florida, about 50 miles south of Tampa, six years ago. Gus Schagen is now Fleet Manager with Sarasota Ford.

Gus uses Work Truck Solutions (WTS) on the dealership's website to drive growth for his department. "We use WTS in many ways," Gus explains. "The way it presents the product to the public is phenomenal. The ability to go into a commercial site and see exactly what we have in inventory is a great plus. It is a dynamic experience to go to our website and pick out a flat bed, a box truck or whatever you need. Commercial sales for me and the dealership have increased 200+% since we began using Work Truck Solutions."

"We also use WTS as a sales prospecting tool" Gus continues. "We use a database and send emails to peo-

ple based on their trade. For example, we send out a simple email with a picture of our crew van to painting and landscaping companies. The same picture is on the website. It's a great way to prospect. It is inexpensive and it does bring the people in."

"Since my clients are mostly leasing companies, the retail department has benefited from WTS even more than me," Gus said. "The commercial department closes on the weekends. So WTS sends the leads to the Internet Manager on the weekends and to the commercial department Monday through Friday. We don't waste a bit doing it this way."

The large amount of inventory they have on the ground is a big reason for their success. "We try to have about 80 Transit Connects and 80-100 Transit vans. Super Duties number about 45-50. We like to keep 15-25 empty cab chassis to upfit as needed by the leasing companies."

"Our entire inventory is posted with WTS. A lot of the leasing companies look at your inventory online. This is why I have been successful with the leasing companies," Gus says.

Sarasota Ford is the early bird that gets the worm. "The dealership is committed to responding to a sales lead in 7 minutes. If you do not respond in time, the dealership sends you to the back of the line," Gus says. "When a unit is



posted on the internet it may go out to hundreds of dealerships. With Work Truck Solutions there is a button you push to accept the lead, and at the same time an email goes out to your lead. It can all be done in 30 seconds, even through your phone."

Gus is a Central Florida Ford Truck Club member. He is also a life-long soccer fan. He coaches a competitive, travelling soccer team of 13 year olds. He is usually travelling with the team on weekends and coaches 3 nights during the week.

Gus has had to be resourceful his entire life. He enjoys life in sunny Florida and continues to find ways to increase his success. Gus is still using his wits to stay ahead of the pack in the work truck world.



By Ken Keller

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