

Never too Late for a Great Idea: Octogenarian Launches Dot-Com

Eighty-year old entrepreneur and RV enthusiast Orren Hall has launched his latest venture: an online club targeted to campers and RV owners.

Livonia, MI ([PRWEB](#)) May 4, 2005 -- In the heyday of the dot-com boom, the popular image of the new digital entrepreneur class was of energetic, precocious twentysomethings with tattoos and piercings in strange places taking their dogs to work, drinking endless quantities of cappuccino, and revolutionizing the world of business between games of ping-pong in the office rumpus room.

A stock market meltdown and a sudden influx of bankers with credit slips in hand changed a lot of that, slapping the wacky newcomers down a notch or two with a buttoned-down reality check. Suddenly, the business of e-business was business.

Enter an opportunity for the influence of age and experience. And enter unlikely "infopreneur" Orren Hall, founder of OmniRV Travel Club, a web-based business catering to the growing ranks of RV owners.

"I was retired in Florida, and I was bored," Hall says. "I got tired of playing golf. Pretty soon, I was saying to myself, 'I've got to start a business.'"

And thus it happened that this half-century veteran of the business world emerged to show younger budding e-biz titans just how it is done. Hall combined his lifelong experience of, and enthusiasm for, camping and RVing with a lifetime's worth of accumulated business savvy to create a membership-based organization dedicated to meeting the needs of RV travelers.

A fortuitous meeting with another RV enthusiast was what it took to get the budding firm started, along with an abortive business partnership. "Unfortunately, a partnership just doesn't work sometimes," Hall says. "But it was a hot idea, and we got started pretty fast." The early false start convinced Hall of the soundness of his business model, and led him to develop the current OmniRV Travel Club on his own.

"When you look at the numbers, they are unbelievable," he enthuses. "There are thirty million RVers in this country, ranging from weekend campers in pop-up trailers to people who spend the entire year on the road." Hall decided to focus his efforts on an under-recognized but significant market segment: the mounting numbers of affluent newly-retired RV enthusiasts. "The majority of our demographic falls between fifty to seventy years old," Hall explains. "These are adventurous people who want to see more of the country, but who want to and who can afford to travel and live in a degree of comfort that they're used to."

Hall's ideal customers are the retired couples who can be seen trundling along the nation's freeways in immense, sleek RVs, often with a small car or boat in tow. Drawing upon his own experience behind the wheel, Hall recalls the information he needed but didn't get when he first took to the open road. "For example, not being a mechanic, I had to depend on other campers to tell me where to find a good RV repair facility pretty often," he says. "Not to mention where I could camp and where I could park in a new area." Bridging that knowledge gap became Hall's business model.

Hall's firm joined a growing number of travel clubs most operated by the vehicle manufacturers dedicated to providing campers with such information on a subscription basis. Hall elected



to carve out his own market niche by providing a singular suite of services addressing not only the RV experience, but other lifestyle issues surrounding it. Hall presumed, for example, that customers would appreciate receiving material in a bound volume, as well as online, reasoning that the majority of users would rather have the information they needed at their fingertips as well as on-screen. Hall also resolved to fill in informational and service gaps left by other firms, developing affiliations with third-party firms to provide everything from insurance to on-the-road service assistance at discounted rates.

Entrepreneurship in and of itself is nothing new to Hall, who founded his first business – a Michigan advertising agency – in 1961, and who has operated a steady series of successful start-ups and franchises in the years since. Entering his eightieth year seems to have done little to cramp Hall's style or mitigate his drive. In conversation, he remains enthusiastic and effusive, describing a series of new ideas and plans for expansion, including the launch of his own RV magazine. "Every RV needs up to date information and common sense tips," he declares. "Our members will get it mailed directly to them." His days are often spent on the phone with potential affiliates, setting up deals to provide his customers with everything from rental services to eyeglass discounts. Current offerings include a guide of over 3000 free RV parking sites and a list of over 1000 campgrounds nationwide, as well as an alliance enabling members to get discounted fuel.

So does Orren Hall ever consider slowing down? He laughs. "As you get older, you kind of settle down," he says. "But I've had businesses since 1961. I might take a little more time off to enjoy myself. But I'm proud of what I've gotten started, and so long as I'm living, I'm going to be out there some place."

In other words, nope; Orren Hall's leaving retirement to the young folks.

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