

ENTERPRISE

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Nuts & Boats expanding locally, thinks nationally

Kevin Gale

After doing \$1.2 million during its first year, [Nuts & Boats](#) is targeting South Florida ma-rinas as the precursor to a national rollout.

The company is providing services at three marinas operated by [Seven Kings Holdings](#) and a fourth owned by entrepreneur Scott Huizenga.

Nuts & Boats' strategy is to provide marina operators and boaters with a one-stop shop when it comes to maintaining, repairing, crewing and provisioning boats. The privately held company, which targets 35- to 70-foot boats, ultimately wants to establish a national brand in an industry known for mom-and-pop operators.

It bills itself as the second-largest detailer of boats at shows nationally.

President Tom Godart, previously a commercial real estate broker, expects to make a number of acquisitions shortly.

"We are looking to dominate the South Florida marketplace as a leading service provider so that we then have a track record to grow the company on a national basis through franchising and acquisitions," said Godart, whose startup was profiled in the April 11, 2003 issue of The Business Journal.

Bringing aboard executives

Since that article, Nuts & Boats has gained William J. Brown, former managing director of worldwide services at [Citrix Systems](#) (NASDAQ: CTXS) as chief operating officer.

Robert Shiner, a former senior VP with [American Stock Transfer & Trust Co.](#), is director of operations and Vito Miceli, a former regional sales manager for [Motor Boating](#), Yachting and the Robb Report magazines, is sales manager.

Raymond Graziotto, president and COO of Seven Kings Holdings, said he has received positive initial feedback about Nuts & Boats from customers and marina managers. Among the locations where Nuts & Boats is offering service are Harbor Islands in Hollywood and Maule Lake in Aventura.

Graziotto said he and Godart have a similar business philosophy of branding at multiple locations.

Seven Kings has eight or nine marinas either built or under construction and is uniting them under the [Loggerhead Club](#) and Marina brand.

He hopes Nuts & Boats will solve a common problem for marina owners - making sure vendors are properly licensed, insured and make a good impression on clients.

Referral-oriented relationship

The relationship between Nuts & Boats and his marinas is referral-oriented, rather than payment-oriented.

"My goal is not to get rich with a relationship with Nuts & Boats," Graziotto said. "What we are trying to do is have exemplary service in our facilities."

Huizenga, son of Miami Dolphins owner H. Wayne Huizenga and the owner of Williams Island Marina, said he isn't promoting Godart's company exclusively at this point.

"We are of the opinion that he has a good service and our customers will enjoy and benefit from it," he said. The marina hasn't seen many vendors that can offer Nuts & Boats' breadth of service, which he sees as a plus.

"I think people always like using the same company," he said. "If they were using Nuts & Boats and they were happy with them in South Florida, I think they would be happy with using them up and down the coast."

E-mail Editor Kevin Gale at kgale@bizjournals.com.

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