

# Michael Dolan

Leesburg, Florida



Adventure Boat Share

## *Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Michael Dolan:*

After graduating from Leesburg High School in 2001, Michael Dolan, Owner of Adventure Boat Share, was intent on joining the Coast Guard.

Unfortunately, as a diabetic, he was unable to do so. Instead, he followed in his father's footsteps and became a Leesburg Police Officer at the age of 19. After five years, he joined the family business and never looked back. Dolan shared the story behind his journey and why he was inspired to launch Central Florida's newest and most unique boat club.

"My parents moved from Fort Lauderdale to Leesburg to purchase Holiday Marine," he said. "It was always an option for me to work for the family business, but I wanted to get some life experience first. After five years as a police officer, I was ready."

Dolan spent the next eight years learning the ins and outs of the boat

sales, service and rental industry. He also made an observation that eventually led him down the path of owning his own business.

“I noticed that all these residents of The Villages were moving into the area and they had nowhere to store a boat,” Dolan said. “Most of them were past boat owners, but they didn’t have the means to do it again because of HOA regulations and a lack of storage options. It just didn’t make sense for these people to have their own boat. That’s where I got the idea from to start a boat club.”

In early 2017, Dolan put pen to paper and developed a business plan.

After working through rules and regulations, purchasing two boats, securing boat slips and dealing with a hurricane that fall, Adventure Boat Share was officially open for business in January 2018.

“We started off with a great marketing plan,” Dolan said. “We partnered with The Villages’ newspaper and purchased a highly discounted advertising package. Between print, digital and radio advertising, word spread quickly that we were open for business. We also did a show in The Villages. Between the advertising and the show, we drummed up a lot of business. In fact, that February was our most successful month to date. Since then, word-of-mouth has been our biggest source of new business.”

Adventure Boat Share offers its members the choice of two plans – a full-time option and a weekday option. Both options require the member to pay a one-time initial fee, along with monthly dues between \$195 and \$275 to have unlimited access to 13 boats at three different locations.

Membership includes insurance, cleaning and maintenance, tow coverage, access to a reservation app and the option to apply your

initiation fee towards the purchase of a new or used boat.

Despite two other boat clubs in the area, Adventure Boat Share has experienced steady growth over the past two years. Dolan attributes his business' growth to several factors including, the unique reservation app designed to automate the process, the limitation of rules and regulations imposed by other boat clubs and the ability to use the boats when and where members want. Plus they have boats for skiing & tubing. They also cater to fisherman by providing top of the line fishing boats equipped with the latest fish finders and trolling motors, allowing members to land a big one from sun up to sun down.

Dolan shared what he enjoys most and what the future looks like for Adventure Boat Share.

"For me, the best part is meeting our members and exposing them to the boating lifestyle in Lake County," he said. "A lot of people in Central Florida are unaware of just how many Lakes we have here. The boating opportunities are endless."

Dolan continued, "In terms of future goals, we're focused on expansion through franchising. We're working on the model right now. We even have a franchisee lined up and waiting. The ultimate goal is to go international with our franchise model."

What advice does Dolan have for aspiring entrepreneurs? "Growing slowly and proving the model is the smartest thing to do," he said. "Also, don't wait. Act now. My only regret is not starting sooner."

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