

ATTRACTING & KEEPING SKIERS: WHAT THE SKI INDUSTRY IS DOING TO PROMOTE NEW SKIER SUCCESS

Professionals throughout the skiing trade are coming together to make alpine skiing a sport for everyone. Growing the ski industry has become the primary focus for most organizations and they are working harder than ever on every aspect from developing new equipment to improving on-slope services. This article will take a look at what all the 'players' are doing to get you the right gear and keep you skiing.

The innovations in equipment technology and teaching techniques make learning to ski this season easier than ever before. Now is the time whether you've tried it in the past or are completely new to the sport to take advantage of superior products and services that will leave you booking your next ski holiday before you've finished your first one. Here's what various ski industry organizations are doing to provide you with a successful skiing experience.

RESORTS:

Ski resorts have recognized that new skiers need special attention and services. By improving resort signage and accessibility to special new skier orientation areas, skiers are starting their day in the right place. Most resorts are upgrading their beginner terrain with user friendly lifts and designating specific areas of the mountain to people learning how to ski.

SKI SCHOOLS:

Across the country ski schools have developed lesson packages for new skiers that include lift tickets, rentals, and lessons. Most areas offer a variety of lessons: private, group, adaptive, women only clinics, and specialized children's programs. Instructors devote a significant amount of time every season to improving their teaching skills. Modern teaching techniques use goals established by beginners and take into consideration individual needs and learning styles.

RENTAL SHOPS:

Rental shops offer everything from clothing and protective gear (goggles/helmets) to boots, skis, and poles. Some resort based rental shops are set up to provide new skiers their own area for renting equipment and trying on boots. Many rental shops have upgraded their equipment packages and offer modern skis and boots that make learning to ski easier and with less effort. Rental staff are also trained to service equipment regularly, giving guests skis that are tuned-up and waxed for the snow conditions.

MANUFACTURERS:

Today's snow sport equipment is both fashionable and functional. They've made clothing and ski boots more comfortable and designed skis that are light weight, responsive, and easy to maneuver. Manufacturers are also working with rental shops and ski instructors to better understand new skier needs and suggestions for product development. They also provide rental shops with guidelines on how to maintain equipment.

NATIONAL SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION:

This organization has programs in place to better understand the new skier population. Part of the NSAA's efforts guide resorts in building programs and facilities that accommodate new skiers.

SNOWSPORTS INDUSTRIES AMERICA:

This national ski industry association supports winter sport product retailers. They have also launched the "Winter Feels Good" program which promotes health and fitness through snow sports.

VERMONT SAFETY RESEARCH:

This company collects ongoing research to make the sport safer and distributes "Tips for Knee Friendly Skiing" (see previous articles for program description).

SKI AND SNOWBOARD MECHANICS WORKSHOP:

These workshops provide nationwide hands-on training to rental technicians in the inspection, maintenance, tuning, and dispatching of equipment.

The ski industry recognizes first time skiers, and they are strengthening programs and services to welcome new skiers into the sport. New participants are encouraged to visit resort websites and review programs such as the New Skiers Gearing To Go Guide. This information will explain what to expect and help you prepare for a day on the slopes.