

COMPACT TARGETS

A photograph of a hunter in full camouflage gear, including a hat and jacket, aiming a bow. The hunter is positioned on the left side of the frame, looking towards the right. The background is a blurred outdoor setting, possibly a field or woods, with a white vehicle partially visible on the left and a red vehicle on the right. The overall tone is natural and outdoorsy.

Every customer needs a target to practice on, before, during and after the hunting season. The compact models we're highlighting here fit easily in closet or trunk. They do the job whether your hunter is shooting in front of his family in the backyard or with buddies at hunting camp.

I was thirteen years old when I used my lawn mowing money to buy my first compound bow, a Bear Whitetail Hunter, and six 1918 aluminum Game Getters. Until that time, I shot a light draw weight Ben Pearson recurve and wooden arrows. My only backstop was a bale of hay. It was enough to handle wooden arrows and the heavy aluminum shafts from the 50-pound Bear, but I sure won't try using one to stop a carbon shaft sizzling through the air at 300 feet per second (fps).

With so much energy packed into the draw cycle of today's high-

powered bows and with the small diameter of many of the most popular arrows, we are asking a lot of our targets. They must not only stop these fierce missiles but also do it a few thousand times. It takes something special to get that job done; no longer will homemade targets come to the rescue.

With bowhunters facing the challenge of stopping their arrows, top quality archery targets are a necessity and have the potential to be a profitable part of your annual sales. There is enough room for profits in target sales that you can

easily achieve a very respectable 40 percent margin, and in some cases, even more.

The number of good targets available to archers and bowhunters has never been greater. All these targets can be broken down roughly into three categories: 3-D targets, bag targets and broadhead targets. The latter two categories are truly portable and can go with you wherever you plan to shoot.

3-D targets are too expensive to handle every off-season arrow and are too cumbersome for you to haul around in your vehicle, but when

shot sparingly with a group of friends they provide a great way to become accustomed to aiming at real game and provide a lot of fun. Bag targets are the real workhorses and will take literally thousands of shots from field point tipped arrows before they need to be replaced. Finally, broadhead targets are designed to withstand the abuse of cutting blades and serve as the best backstop when tweaking your hunting arrows.

The well-rounded bowhunter needs a target from each category, but in this feature, I'll cover only the last two target categories in detail: bag targets and portable broadhead targets – the travel targets. Here are the newest materials and the latest products.

FOR LOVE OF BAG TARGETS

A quality bag target can take thousands of impacts and keep coming back for more while costing the archer a fraction of a penny per shot. They are affordable enough and

portable enough that a bowhunter can keep a bag target in the trunk of the car or back of their pickup for easy midday practice during the hunting season. In addition, many will also have another, more permanent, target in their backyard or inside their workshop.

Today's bag targets retail for around \$35 to \$60, and should last the average shooter for years. A few may even last the better part of a lifetime. Most have a multi-layer filling consisting of several materials. Plastic sheeting, synthetic fiber batting and woven fabric are the most common fillers. The only downside of the bag target is the fact that after heavy use the target face may become worn enough that the stuffing begins to come out. To remedy this, many of the companies making bag targets also make replacement covers for even greater target life.

Some bag targets are really little more than woven poly, painted with aiming points and filled with cast-off materials, so there is not much over-

head in making these products. As a result, there are dozens of companies doing it. I have not shot them all, but I have shot enough bags to know that they all function well enough for general use. Choosing the best bags to sell may end up being a roll of the dice. Talk with the companies you already work with and find out what they have to offer and the margins you can expect. Because shipping charges are substantial, be sure to check out your delivery options. Here are many of the companies offering bag targets.

Morrell Mfg.: The Outdoor Range sets the standard for big bags, but is still reasonably affordable for most bowhunters. It is 30 x 32 x 14 inches. When combined with the company's holding fixture, it is all the target any serious shooter will ever need. The smaller Quick Stop (23 x 23 x 12 inches) is one of the most popular bags on the market and comes with an internal frame for easy setup.

Bracklyn Products: The free



The same rubbery "self-healing" foam used in making the durable Rinehart 3-D targets is used in an 18-1 shown at left. This is a geometric solid foam target that can be shot on 18 different faces. It measures 16 inches high and comes with a molded in carrying loop.

The Rinehart Field Target (below) is just 9 inches in diameter, the same size as a deer's vitals or the paper plates many bowhunters will practice on. Small enough to fit in a duffle bag or in the overhead compartment of an airplane, this target has a base weighted with sand so it will rock back up after absorbing a shot. The loop makes it easy to carry or to throw for hunters who prefer to practice their "roving" skills on something kinder to costly arrows than a stump or dirt bank.

You can reach the Janesville, Wisconsin target manufacturing firm at (608)757-8153.



standing Carbon Monster is a real workhorse. It weighs 30 pounds and is 24 x 24 x 12 inches. The target will reportedly take 20,000 shots from carbon arrows. A replacement cover is also available when the first cover wears out.

Southern Archery ProStop: The High Velocity target has 160 layers of poly batting to stop carbon arrows up to 400 feet per second (fps), but requires a minimum arrow speed of 230 feet per second (fps) or the arrows will merely bounce off. This bag measures 24 x 24 x 14 inches. The ProStop Magnum is an affordable target and has the added feature of an optional replacement cover if the first one wears out before the stuffing does.

TW Design and Manufacturing: The Dominion Series target features a layered system that is just as effective on the edges as it is in the center. It measures 18 x 26 x 13 inches. Independent reviews I've read on the product are very complimentary of its stopping power.

Delta: Delta offers every kind of target including bags. Their Deadstop line includes several. The Deadstop Burly is 25 or 30 inches across the face (two sizes) and is

filled with synthetic filler for weather-resistance and long life. You can also replace the outer shell for even longer life. The Dead Stop Quad offers four-sided shooting and is free standing for easy set up anywhere. The bag has 18-inch square target faces.

R & M Targets: The Tough Bag and Monster Tough Bag are very affordably priced and designed to stop thousands of arrows from high draw weight compounds. The Tough Bag measures 22 x 20 inches while the Monster measures 30 x 30 inches and has 24 pounds of fiberglass filler. R & M offers a separate replacement cover for both bags.

U Stuff-It Targets: U Stuff-It features 16 different covers that rough-



The Yellow Jacket F/P (for field point) has become Morrell Manufacturing's top-selling bag target. The 23 x 25 x 12-inch target has an internal frame to maintain its shape, and the company's patented internal layered construction for long life. Morrell sells replacement covers for this model. Call the manufacturer at (800)582-7438.

ly resemble animals such as coyotes, bighorn sheep and even a life size elk. There is also a standard rectangular bag that measures 36 x 41 inches. Your customer provides the stuffing and saves big on these targets. U Stuff-It offers a list of commonly found materials that work great at stopping arrows.

Magic Stop Targets: The Magic Stop Bag II is 24 x 30 x 18 inches and weighs 22 pounds. You can also buy a replacement cover. The bag will reportedly handle six thousand shots from a high draw weight compound bow. Magic Stop also makes the smaller MS Lite bag target.

Arrow Brake Targets: Arrow Brake offers seven bag targets that range in size from 24 x 24 to 24 x 30 inches. The Deer Vitals Target will stop carbon arrows up to 400 feet per second (fps) and features deer vitals on one side of the bag and five aiming dots on the other side. Arrow Brake advertises that their top bags will last 30,000 shots - a lifetime for most bowhunters. The Arrow Brake I is the most affordable target and



James Daugherty displays bag style and layered foam targets from Magic Stop. Call (800) 992-5972.

will stop carbon arrows up to 275 fps and will handle approximately 15,000 shots. Arrow Brake II is 24 x 30 inches and will stop carbon arrows up to 350 fps. Arrow Brake also sells a portable target stand.

YellowHammer Outdoors:

YellowHammer produces three Slammer bags. The forty pound Carbon Slammer is at the top of their line with a woven synthetic fiber filling that will stop even the fastest carbon shafts. It is a big (26 x 26 x 12 inch), heavy (40 pounds) stand up bag that your customers can pound for years. The Slammer is slightly smaller (23 x 23 x 10 inches) and lighter (33 pounds) yet it still features the same guts for extreme arrow stopping and long life.

The Mini-Slammer has the same features but is portable enough to fit in the trunk of a car so your customers can easily transport it to any location for shooting practice with friends or pre-hunt preparation. All three targets are self-standing.

Spence's Targets, Inc.: STI makes



The wide line of field point targets from Delta Industries includes the Burly (left), available in two sizes, and the freestanding Quad. Reach the Iowa firm at (800) 708-0673.

three bag targets: the Super Stop, Magnum Super Stop and Infinity. The Super Stop and Magnum Super Stop both feature a foam target face and layered construction for arrow stopping power. The Infinity is an 18-inch thick foam covered, cloth-centered field point target that will stop all types of arrows from all types

of bows.

Hips Targets: Hips Targets makes several bag targets to go along with their complete line of broadhead targets. The coolest bags in the line are the Super Bag, Big Bag and Little Bag. These are self-supporting targets that will take tons of abuse from fast carbon arrows.



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PORTABLE BROADHEAD TARGETS

There's no reason for a bowhunter to shoot broadheads all summer long, but it is critical to fine-tune the actual hunting combination during the last two weeks leading up to the season and to stay in tune during the season. Most bowhunters hate shooting broadheads because there is a notable lack of good, inexpensive targets to shoot them into; and there's no way they can afford to tear up a 3-D target each fall. While bag targets are very affordable, you should never use broadheads on bag targets. A good, affordable dedicated broadhead target is the only answer.

Most dedicated broadhead targets are made of ethafoam or some combination of urethane and ethafoam. Because they don't last long, the solid foam versions are not very sophisticated; their primary purpose is to keep cost down. I would not recommend shooting field points into most of these solid ethafoam broadhead targets because it is hard to remove the arrow.

Another alternative is the layered target that permits the archer to shoot either broadheads or field points. Though these targets will give up some lifespan if shot excessively with broadheads, they do present a viable option for those who don't plan to shoot several hundred broadhead arrows each fall.

For my money, when it comes to broadhead targets, I want something cheap and I'll save my more expensive layered foam targets primarily for use with field points. But that's just me, many bowhunters have enough discretionary income to justify a layered foam target every year—which is about how often they will have to replace them if they shoot daily with broadheads. In that case, these designs present the ideal combination target.

Morrell Mfg.: The Humungo Broadhead Target is 30 x 30 x 10 inches and is constructed of several layers of dense foam. It will stop all arrows including high-speed carbon



The King Series of targets from American Whitetail use different densities of foam layered from face to back. The Cube broadhead target (lower right) comes in several sizes, from 18 x 18 x 12 inches all the way up to 30 x 30 x 20 inches. Reach American Whitetail by calling (888) 233-1976.

arrows and will retail for around \$45. The Six Shooter is one of the newest broadhead targets from Morrell. It offers six-sided shooting so it takes much longer to wear it out, even when shooting broadheads. It is solid and measures 22 x 22 x 22 inches (a perfect practice cube). Two sides of the Six Shooter are designed for broadhead use while the other four sides are designed for field point use making this a great combination target.

Spence's Targets Inc.: STI offers nine different broadhead targets. Their top unit is the Kinetic Kruncher in three sizes: 30 x 28 x 18 inches, 24 x 20 x 18 inches and 18 x 16 x 18 inches. This foam target is thick enough to stop any arrow whether tipped with a broadhead or field point. The Kinetic Kruncher is free standing, and believe it or not, STI offers a two-year warranty on the product. The Standard Bullseye and the Pro Plus targets come in the same height and width but are not as thick, being 6 inches and 12 inches respectively. The Traveling Buck and other 2-D photo realistic animal targets (elk, bear, antelope and turkey)

are excellent broadhead targets with the added benefit of realistic size and coloration.

American Whitetail: The Cube has become synonymous with broadhead targets. This target is made of several layers of heat-bonded laminated foam. The bonding process produces a very durable target that can be shot from every side. The Cube comes in nine sizes ranging from 18 x 18 x 12 inches up to 30 x 30 x 20 inches. American Whitetail also makes other broadhead targets such as the FoamLite and PowerLite Series.

The real workhorse just may be American Whitetail's King series target. These targets are affordable and have a good lifespan due to the way they are made with layers of foam having varying densities. The Compound King is 16 x 16 x 20 inches to give any bowhunter enough



Layered foam targets are great for shooting in the backyard and in hunting camp for both field points and broadheads. This target is made by Black Hole, a division of Field Logic that focuses on a affordable, portable open layer targets. The Superior, Wisconsin firm can be reached by retailers at (800) 282-4868.

arrow stopping ability to handle even a fast carbon arrow. With a suggested retail price of \$38, this target has the potential to last at least one season and quite possibly two seasons making it a good value.

Field Logic, Inc.: The Block has created a strong name as one of the very best all-around targets on the market. Your customers can shoot it with field points all summer and then handle broadheads leading up to the season. Testing has shown that the Block Pro Model will take more than 10,000 shots from field points and testimonials from shooters suggest that it will take more than 2,000 shots with broadheads. The Block is constructed by sandwiching many layers of thin foam under tension with the edges facing toward the shooter. The Block comes in five sizes.

The new Block 4 X 4 offers four-sided shooting as opposed to the original Block that offers two-sided shooting. The aiming points are offset to reduce the chances for a pass-

through after you have worn out one side of the target. In reality, the 4 X 4 may not have twice the life expectancy of the original Block, but it definitely will handle a lot of arrows before all four sides are worn out.

R & M Targets: R & M's solid foam broadhead target is made of high-density 6-p o u n d ethafoam and measures 24 x 22 x 2 inches. It has an 8-inch square replaceable core.

D e l t a : Delta offers three lines of Delta arrow stopping broadhead targets. The Arrowstop comes in eight styles including a heavy-duty model that's constructed of three plies of 4-pound density ethafoam. Their Arrowsuffers come in four sizes, all are five inches

thick and constructed of laminated foam. The Shot Absorber is a layered foam target that is 18 x 18 x 14 inches and will handle both broadheads and field points. It has a handle for easy carrying.

Hips Targets: If you've been around archery for a while you've seen the Stanley Hips target and its smiley face bulls-eye. I'm not sure if it was the first true broadhead target, but it has been around for more than 35 years. This firm now markets Hips targets in a dozen sizes and styles, so there is definitely one to fit any situation. Also, the core section on most of the solid foam targets is replaceable so these targets are very economical to shoot. The most unique targets are the Pick A Spot Broadhead target, the Omni-Directional Broadhead target and the Carbon Catcher.

Rinehart 18-1 Rinehart makes the most outrageous selection of 3-D targets you can imagine from life size giraffes to 13-foot tall aliens and every manner of trophy whitetail including replicas of several of the world-class bucks we see in magazines. These are used in the Rinehart R100 fun shoot that's helping to build interest in 3-D among hunters who don't care that much about competing on a 3-D course. Rinehart also makes about 50 different animals for sale to individuals and

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clubs. With all that experience crafting foam, it is little wonder that Rinehart also makes an innovative broadhead cube called the 18-1, shown on this feature's opening spread. This target has six 8-inch square target faces and 12 edges at a 45 degree angle to the sides that give you lots of angles and options. If you wear out one side, you can simply turn the target 45 degrees and keep shooting.

A THROW TARGET

Rinehart Field Target: The new Rinehart Field Target is a completely new concept in archery practice. It is made of self-healing foam and is counter-weighted with sand so you can throw the target (using the hoop handle) and it will always stand up straight offering a 9-inch target face to shoot at. The target is obviously portable enough for any bowhunter to keep in the back seat of their car, in their trunk or in the back of their pickup truck. It is ideal for a few quick shots each morning or afternoon to keep shooting muscles loose and the eye sharp.

TARGET FACES

Target faces are the most affordable aiming surface and they work great when pinned or draped over a solid backstop such as an excelsior bale or the like. I used to get bales of plastic packing material free from the local manufacturing plant where they actually banded them and set them outside as garbage. One man's garbage is another man's gold. I try not to make a habit of rooting through dumpsters, but those bales

were a definite windfall. Anyway, I used Ames targets pinned to these bales and I could shoot daily for months without ever wearing them out. Other companies also make good, affordable target faces.

Maple Leaf Press: Maple Leaf Press out in Grand Haven, Michigan is a one-stop source for paper target faces of all sorts. For instance, in the NFAA Official target series you can find the Indoor and Hunter bulls-eyes, the Field target faces sized for shooting from 20 feet out to 65 meters, and 28 colored animal faces that carry the kill zone lines for any National Field Archery Association or International Field Archery Association round. They're grouped in four sizes from a prairie dog printed on 11 1/4 by 14 1/4 inch backing up to moose or bear on 28 by 40 inch stock.

If your customers are looking for a truly life-size target, there are two in the Authentic Animal Targets series from Maple Leaf Press. The Whitetail Deer and Bear are printed on 125 pound tagboard on a 35 by 45 inch sheet. Like all 11 Authentic target faces, these have the skin lines, kill area and vitals outlined faintly, so they're visible when you walk up to

the target, but invisible at normal shooting ranges.

Delta: The Tru-Life paper animal targets have probably been shot at by more bowhunters than any other target made. They are standard issue at most ranges and are a fun alternative to shooting at spots. Each has lightly marked scoring lines for those who want to use them for competition. I once shot an indoor winter league in Michigan and these targets were all we shot. It was a blast.



The Block comes in a number of sizes from super portable targets that you can keep in the trunk of your car, up to targets that work best as backstops at archery club ranges.

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Compact Arrowsnuffer foam targets from Delta Industries.



Target faces from Maple Leaf Press cover all the major archery disciplines, including spot and animal rounds. The deer target at upper right is available in a life-size version for realistic hunting practice, while poker and dart games can be used for friendly competition.

Ames Industries: Ames All-Weather target faces are made of burlap and available in 10 different animal designs and offer the ultimate low price, do-it-yourself bag target. Sew two All-Weather targets back-to-back with an open top for stuffing. Grommets at the four corners permit the target to be suspended. Your customer supplies the stuffing. The target is a full 40 x 40 inches making it one of the largest on the market. You can also drape the target face across any kind of backstop to provide a durable aiming point.

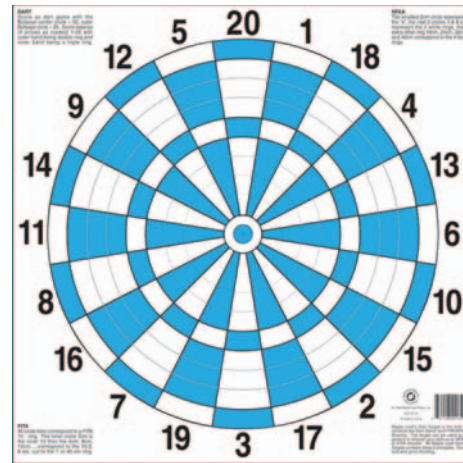
Third Hand Archery: Unlike Ames, Third Hand makes a complete bag cover that your customers can stuff with plastic or even old clothing to construct their own bag target. For that matter, they can use any of the replacement covers offered by the other bag target companies in the same capacity. By simply adding their own stuffing, your customers can get the benefits of a bag target for about half the cost. Third Hand's cover is a large 32 x 34 inch in size and has an easy to seal Velcro top.

OTHER TARGET SYSTEMS

I once invented my own target that featured four 2 X 4s, eight big washers, four threaded rods, four threaded handles, four large caster wheels and a bunch of cardboard boxes from the toss-out pile at the supermarket. I built a compression system in which I stacked cardboard and then using the threaded rods, I

pressed the paper together tightly enough to stop a fast arrow. It was very inexpensive and worked well as long as I didn't get it wet. When I shot the center out, I merely pulled the destroyed cardboard out of the target and fed in several more sheets at the top and compressed everything again.

Now a company called **B a l e b i n d e r** makes a similar, though much more sophisticated system that that you can sell your customers in which they can compress anything that will stop an arrow, including cardboard, layered foam and even hay bales.



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