

ShopTalk



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October 2013

The Employee That Should Scare You the Most!

By George Zeeks, ATI Team Leader/Coach

Vacation is a great thing, partly because it gives you a lot of time to think. During my vacation, I found again and again that the things I remembered the most were actually my employees — the ones that probably made the least. In the automotive world, we think of the A technicians as being the most important members of our team, but in the world of business, the lowest-paid person on your team can make or break your shop. Think about it: the person who does your oil change doesn't just make a customer unhappy — they can blow up their motor! The server doesn't make much if the tips are bad, but they can make or break your whole dining experience.

In one of the dining establishments (and I use that term loosely) we went to on vacation, the men's bathroom was a complete wreck. Given the fact that I'm comfortable using the bathroom in a stagnant swamp, I would expect a bit better when I'm paying for it. I asked the server if the staff used that bathroom and she replied, "There's no way I would use that one!" They have a separate bathroom for the staff and it's kept clean, by the staff, since they use it. This just shows the disconnect between what the employees feel is most important and what the owner would hopefully want. The cashier, the person who answers the phone to help with a problem, the person who helps when you have to return an item because you had a problem with it — they are all on the low end comparatively of the pay scale in the business.

There are many steps to getting your people invested in your shop. I'll just cover the main three. First and foremost, you have to get to know your people on a personal basis so they know that you care if they live or die. I know that sounds extreme, but way too often, people feel like they are just parts of the machine that can be replaced at any time. So why should I give a crap! It's hard in any business to slow down and get to really know your people. The problem is that if you ignore your lower level staff and cater to the "players," then you are running a great risk. The interaction they have with your customers can do far more damage on a smaller but consistent basis; and then suddenly you don't have to worry about their impact because they have left to find somewhere else! What you DO have to live with is the damage that has been done. The time spent getting to know your lower-paid staff is truly time well invested. Your main job, as an owner, is

to get your people to buy into you, the company and the job. This way they begin to invest more of their self-image and ego into how well they perform. Without that, it's just a paycheck.

What are they supposed to do? Way too often the lower level employees are set free to do the job — but what is the job? If we don't take the time to define and outline what we expect from them and the skills that they should be learning, anything they do or not do is okay, right? After all, YOU didn't think it was important enough to clearly lay out what the job entails, so why is it up to them to try and figure it out?

I know you're probably sick of hearing this one but, if you don't give praise when your staff is doing the right thing, then there's no point in trying. I get paid the same no matter what I do and no one notices — so who cares? I hear it all the time! I even heard it from my own father: "You're supposed to do the job right or don't do it at all." Well, what if I don't have the same idea of what's "right" that you do? That's where the praise comes in. Everyone wants to feel like they aren't wasting their time and what they do matters, so that's why you have to notice and praise them for it. If you want superior results, then you have to praise them for it.

I challenge you to start looking around at the places you frequent. What are you happy with and unhappy with? More often than not those things



begin with some of the lower level employees. If you don't give them a reason to care about their job, a reason to feel like it is worth doing a good job and a feeling that this may lead to something greater; then you get what you get and don't complain. Just because you might pay more for an employee, doesn't mean that they are worth more to your shop in the long run. **ATI**

Welcome Home Troops

By Mike Haley, ATI Team Leader/Coach

Last week I was fortunate enough to participate in ATI's first "Operation Welcome Home." We have been talking for months about how we need to do something as a group that gives us a chance to give back and allows us to spend time with one another outside the same four walls. We decided our first event would benefit "Operation Welcome Home Maryland," a nonprofit dedicated to supporting our troops, which has welcomed more than 180,000 home as they come from overseas. The volunteers help put goody bags together prior to the troops' plane arriving. Volunteers also create posters prior



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Is Your Customer a Severe Driver?

By Geoff Berman,
ATI Coach/Instructor



When it comes to maintenance, most vehicle manufacturers supply the customer with a schedule for “Normal Service” and one for “Severe Service,” sometimes referred to as “Special Operating Conditions,” in their vehicle owner’s manual. This is not groundbreaking news, but how many of you use this information to help the customer see their true maintenance needs? How many of your customers follow the “severe schedule” or even know what that is? Most of you understand the importance of maintenance and do ask your customers to follow a more aggressive schedule. The question is, how many of your customers understand this and really buy into this concept?

The challenge

I hear clients tell me over and over how difficult it is to sell maintenance these days. You know the excuses (the gas prices, the economy, the weather, taxes) — you get the picture. While I do agree we are in a tough market, I also feel we tend to lean on these excuses as a crutch that keeps us from looking at how we sell and so keeps us from changing. We can’t expect customers in a tougher market to buy if we sell the same way we always have. If they are thinking differently, so must we!

In all the research I have done, I have found some interesting statistics. AATA and AAA both say that most motorists drive under severe conditions and most of them don’t even know it. In AAA’s 2009 study, they found that more than half the driving public follow the wrong maintenance schedule. They also found that when asked, only six percent of drivers felt they drove under severe conditions. That number rose to sixty-two percent when they were asked more specific questions relating to how they actually drive.

How can you use this information?

Now imagine if that was you talking with your customer. If you are able to help your customer see they are actually a “severe driver” (and “Normal Service” no longer applies to them), they begin to buy in to the need for more maintenance. If you also understand the customer’s needs and how long they plan on keeping their car (this is done at the drop, not when you ask them to buy), you can tie in the importance of following that “severe schedule” to get those years or miles they are looking for. In addition, you’re able to present this in a way that does not contradict what the manufacturer is saying but actually align yourself with their recommendations. This credibility goes a long way with your customer and helps further build trust that ultimately gets more people coming back more often. Not to mention the additional profits you will generate.

So what is “severe driving”?

“Severe driving” from what I have found can be defined by the following:

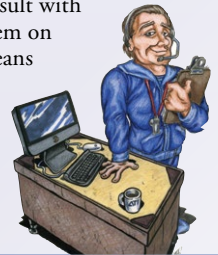
- If you drive on dusty or muddy roads
- If you drive where there is salt, sand or gravel on the road surface
- If you are in a hot climate or one where there are severe climate changes (seasons)
- If you drive in stop-and-go traffic
- If you are in any situation where your vehicle idles a lot
- If you tow a trailer, have a camper in the back of your truck or use a car top carrier

So now I ask you, how many of the vehicles you service fit into one or more of these categories? My guess is it’s likely more than half, and could be as many as all.

In conclusion

If you look at the “Severe Service” schedule of most vehicle manufacturers you are likely to find many shorter intervals between fluid services.

So start taking the time to consult with your customer and educate them on what “severe driving” really means and how it affects them. Not only will it show them you are looking out for their best interest and that you care, but you might actually make a few bucks as well.



Welcome Home Troops

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to coming to the event. I was humbled by the dedicated volunteers who come on a regular basis to welcome troops home no matter what time or what day.

While we were preparing for the troops to come, I noticed a young lady walking by and taking notice of all the activity in the terminal area. She paused and asked one of the volunteers what was going on. Once she found out, she said, “I’m from Canada but would love to participate.” I thought to myself, “this person doesn’t even live in this country but sees the value in what we are doing.”

While waiting for the troops, I was able to speak with co-workers I might not normally take the time to talk to if I was passing by them in the hall or in the restroom. What surprised me was how naturally we discussed anything but work. We talked about the troops and what sacrifices they make. That sparked discussions about our families. It let me look at each person in a different light, that I would not have seen in a working atmosphere.

Then the announcement was made that the plane had landed and they would be out soon. To watch everybody jockey for a good position from they could be sure to see and reach out as the troops walked by was something to witness. The first soldier came out and the terminal erupted. I think after the initial surprise of what was going on, he became a little emotional. I don’t know how to explain the feeling you get saying “Thank you” or “Welcome home”

to a stranger, except to say that it felt like greeting an old friend. Every few minutes you would see a Mom or Dad seeing their son or daughter for the first time in what I’m sure seemed like an eternity. The Moms were hugging so hard the soldiers’ feet nearly came off the ground, and if that sight didn’t make you tear up, I don’t know what would. I even saw George Zeeks mist up once or twice.

After the troops moved on to the next terminal for connecting flights or went with family to the hourly

parking lot, the ATI team was left looking at each other, emotionally spent and full of energy at the same time. It was great to hear everyone talking about what an inspiring event it had been and how they couldn’t wait to do it again!

If you’re looking for a team-building event with your employees, please consider spending time giving back to a worthy cause. I promise you will not regret it. **ATI**

Fitness Matters A Series by Gary Siegel, Fitness Matters Gym

Protein – How Much? And When?

Protein is good for active bodies. If your workouts are in the morning, first consume some protein (eggs, power bar, milk, tofu, soy).

But not too much! When you consume too much protein before a workout, your body more readily stores any fat and carbs you have consumed while it first tries to use the excess protein for immediate energy. And protein left over after your energy needs have been met is stored as fat too.

Daily protein consumption formula: 10-25% of your daily calorie intake or 0.36 grams per pound of body weight. Example: 170 pounds x 0.36 grams = about 61 grams/day.



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November 2013

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

				1 Shop Owner Part 3	2/3
4 Service Advisor Part 1	5 Service Advisor Part 1	6	7 Service Advisor California Part 2	8 Service Advisor California Part 2	9/10
11	12	13 Shop Owner Part 1	14 Shop Owner Part 1	15 Shop Owner Part 1	16/17
18 Service Advisor Part 2	19 Service Advisor Part 2	20 Shop Owner Part 2	21 Shop Owner Part 2	22 Shop Owner Part 2	23/24
25 Shop Owner Part 4	26 Shop Owner Part 4	27	28 Thanksgiving	29	30

December 2013

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

					1
2 Service Advisor Part 1	3 Service Advisor Part 1	4 Shop Owner Part 1	5 Shop Owner Part 1	6 Shop Owner Part 1	7/8
9	10	11 Shop Owner Part 2	12 Shop Owner Part 2	13 Shop Owner Part 2	14/15
16 Service Advisor Part 2	17 Service Advisor Part 2	18 Shop Owner Part 3	19 Shop Owner Part 3	20 Shop Owner Part 3	22/22
23	24	25	26	27	28/29
30	31				

Best Of Class

Announcing Service Manager Course

October 14-15: Randy A. Somers Sr., Instructor

"Great class! Randy is informative, funny and a great instructor! I really enjoy it."

The ATI Service Manager Course is built upon the foundation of ATI's Service Advisor Class. This course is geared toward service managers, general managers and owners of multiple locations. Come join me as we go through employee management, service order audits and setting up for success.

I believe that at ATI we can help manage your business from a thousand miles away. This course is designed to teach YOU to do just that at your own shop. This two-day course is only offered four times a year so don't wait, ENROLL Today!*

*Please note: The Service Advisor Part 1 and Service Advisor Part 2 courses must be completed before you attend the Service Manager class.

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