

ShopTalk

April 2017
ATI
 Automotive
 Training Institute

www.autotraining.net

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Upcoming Classes

MAY

- 1,2 Service Advisor Part 1 - The Role of the Service Advisor
- 1,2 20 Group - 20 For The Money - ATI Headquarters
- 1,2 20 Group - Dallas Top Twenty - Dallas, TX
- 3,4,5 Shop Owners Course Part 1 - Aligning Your Shop For Profit
- 4,5 20 Group - The High Mark - Salt Lake City, UT
- 4,5 20 Group - Leading Ladies - ATI Headquarters
- 8,9 20 Group - Back In Black - ATI Headquarters
- 8,9 20 Group - Score For More - ATI Headquarters
- 8,9 20 Group - New Baltimore - ATI Headquarters
- 10, 11, 12 Shop Owners Course Part 2 - Advanced Management and Leadership
- 10, 11, 12 Collision Owners Course Part 2 - Advanced Management and Leadership
- 11, 12 20 Group - CrashMasters - ATI Headquarters
- 11, 12 20 Group - Game Changers - ATI Headquarters
- 11, 12 20 Group - Phoenix Rising - Phoenix, AZ
- 15, 16 Collision Repair Estimating and Sales Course Part 2
- 15, 16 20 Group - Best of the West - Irvine, CA
- 18, 19 California Service Advisor Course Part 2 - ATI's 7 Step Process
- 18, 19 MasterMind - ATI Headquarters
- 18, 19 20 Group - Nor/Easter - Boston, MA
- 18, 19 20 Group - Rollin In Dough - ATI Headquarters
- 18, 19 20 Group - Atlanta - Atlanta, GA
- 22, 23 20 Group - Rising Tide - ATI Headquarters
- 22, 23 20 Group - The Buck Starts Here - ATI Headquarters
- 22, 23 20 Group - Money Masters - ATI Headquarters
- 24, 25, 26 Shop Owner Course Part 3 - A.B.M. Always Be Marketing
- 24, 25, 26 Collision Owners Course Part 3 - A.B.M. Always Be Marketing

JUNE

- 1,2 20 Group - European Imports - ATI Headquarters
- 1,2 Peak Performers - tba
- 5,6 Shop Owner Course Part 4 - Staffing and Hiring
- 5,6 Collision Owners Course Part 4 - Staffing and Hiring
- 5,6 Service Advisor Course Part 2 - ATI's 7 Step Process
- 5,6 Collision Production Course
- 7,8,9 Shop Owners Course Part 1 - Aligning Your Shop For Profit
- 7,8,9 Collision Owners Course Part 1 - Keys to a Successful Collision Repair Business
- 12, 13 Service Advisor Part 1 - The Role of the Service Advisor
- 14, 15, 16 Shop Owners Course Part 5 - Succession Planning
- 14, 15, 16 Collision Owners Course Part 5 - Succession Planning
- 15, 16 Service Advisor - Service Manager
- 21, 22, 23 Shop Owners Course Part 2 - Advanced Management and Leadership
- 21, 22, 23 Collision Owners Course Part 2 - Advanced Management and Leadership
- 29, 30 Service Advisor - Advanced Sales

The First Step to Becoming a Top Shop

"There's greatness inside of you, and it's on the other side of your excuses." Mel Robbins

Eric M. Twiggs, ATI Coach

Something happened a few weeks ago that knocked me out of my seat. I was speaking with a shop owner named "Rose" who was concerned about the performance of her shop. She was down in gross profit dollars for the month and suspected that her service manager "Nick" wasn't fully engaged.

Rose recommended that we schedule a three-way call on the following Tuesday with Nick, to get him on the right track. I agreed, and suggested that she ask him the following question: **"What three things are getting in the way of you achieving the shop's goals?"**

Before our call, I was bracing myself expecting to hear the typical "reasons" that tend to surface: "You have to be in a big city to make money"; "The vendors say that everybody in town is slow"; and my personal favorite: "We have an older customer base that's on a fixed income." My goal was to get these **perceived barriers** on the table so that we could address them.

Tuesday morning had arrived and Rose, Nick and I were on the call. Before I could speak, Nick interrupted with the following statement: "Eric, I don't have three things getting in the way; I only have one." What he said next knocked me out of my seat: **"It's ME. I am the problem."**

This was the first time that a service manager ever told me that **HE** was to blame for the negative performance of the shop. I approached the call looking to get him on the right track to become a top shop.

By taking personal responsibility for his results, he had already taken the first step. So, what can personal responsibility do for you?



You'll Get Motivated

There was an experiment conducted on a group of predatory fish known as the pike. This species has a reputation for being a ruthless hunter that will eat anything you put in its space. A group of researchers conducted the "pike experiment" by placing the fish on one side of the tank, and placing their food on the other. They then put a glass divider between the fish and the food.

The pike repeatedly swam toward the food banging their noses against the glass. This happened again and again, until they sank to the bottom of the tank and stopped trying.

Even when the researchers removed the barrier, the pike made no effort to swim to the food and eventually starved to death. **Once the pike lost control of**

reaching its destination, it lost the motivation to move forward.

Here's the big takeaway: **Blaming factors beyond your control is like placing a barrier in front of your goal.** If the local economy is the problem, you will continue to bang your head against the glass, since there's nothing you can do to change it.

Taking responsibility for your results will motivate you to move forward, **because once YOU become the problem, YOU also become the solution.** You can't change the economy, **but you CAN change yourself!**



You'll Get Results

During my tenure as a district manager, there were occasions when someone working for me would arrive late. I never heard them say: "Sorry I'm late, Eric, I guess I need to leave my house earlier the next time."

The number one **"reason"** I received for tardiness was: **"Boss, traffic was really bad today."** This caused many of my monthly managers' meetings to begin 10 to 15 minutes after the stated start time.

This motivated me to take responsibility for the way I communicated the meeting times. Instead of starting at 9 a.m., I announced an 8:45 a.m. start time, with a 15-minute grace period.

I told everyone that after 9 a.m., the door would be locked, and anyone on the wrong side of the door would not be allowed to enter. After making this change, I never had a problem with managers arriving late to meetings. Everyone was in place before 8:45 a.m. Why did this work?

Instead of blaming traffic, the managers began **taking responsibility** for leaving earlier. **Once they took personal responsibility for their punctuality,** they arrived on time, every time! If you desire to change the results at your shop, it's critical to shift from a complex of blaming to a culture of owning.

Want to improve your margins? Try **owning** how you commutate the estimate findings, instead of blaming the customer's finances. Do you need more cars? Try **owning** how you answer the phones, instead of blaming the size of your city. Once you change your mindset, you can change your results!

Conclusion

The following weeks after our three-way conversation, Nick had doubled the gross profit dollar results in comparison to the previous weekly average. By taking personal responsibility, he got motivated and then got results! Have you taken the first step to becoming a Top Shop?

PS: Looking to take the first step toward becoming a 2017 Top? Email etwiggs@autotraining.net to receive a Top Shop Process check sheet.

The Coach's Corner

Stop Taking The Easy Way Out

Do You Know What It Means to Be 'Firm but Fair' With Everyone?

Geoff Berman, ATI Instructor and Coach

Does this story sound familiar in any way?

Your lead technician, who has been with you for many years, is set in his ways and is not willing to follow your diagnostic procedures. Often, he is misdiagnosing or just plain taking too long. Most, if not all, of his certifications have expired. He believes he doesn't need any training or recertification and has not been to class in many years.

At the same time, you have a very green but ambitious new technician who doesn't know much, but is very willing to learn. He needs a lot of hand-holding and you are finding that very frustrating as well. You try to be patient but you find him asking a lot of the same questions over and over and you start to think he will never grasp things.

This pressure, along with many other pressures of your business, has been building for a long time, and it has become increasingly more difficult to keep your cool. Finally, you can take it no longer. The question is, who will be the recipient of your impending wrath? Will it be your lead technician or will it be the inexperienced technician? If I was a betting man, I would put my money on the inexperienced technician. He is the one who's going to get it because he is an easy target. He certainly is more expendable than your lead technician and less likely to engage in conflict.

This starts to become the new norm. Things frustrate you, you ignore the real problems, and he becomes your whipping boy. After all, someone must be held responsible, right?

What is the staff learning?

Think about the example you're setting. Since your lead technician is not being held to any standard at all, he is likely learning he can get away with whatever he wants. Your trainee is probably learning quickly he can't do anything right, no matter how hard he may try. You're too busy to help him, and there is no way your lead technician is going to assist. He gets yelled at if he asks a question, and then gets in trouble if he makes a decision on his own that turns out to be wrong. Sometimes these things seem small, but when you take a step back and really look at what is going on you see the real magnitude of the problem.

What about the rest of the staff? What are they seeing? As they observe this double standard, what are they learning? Do they feel it is fair to let the main guy get away with murder, while the inexperienced guy takes all the abuse?

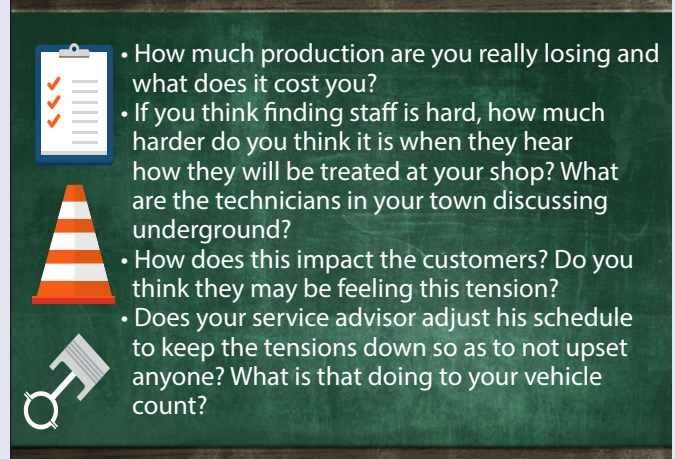
What does all of this do for morale? How does this affect overall production?

One thing I can say for sure is that we all lead by example. The question you need to ask yourself is, are you happy with the example you are setting?

The fear!

I understand why all of this happens. You feel you can't afford to

lose your main technician, because you have no one to replace him, so you treat him different, for fear of losing him? Have you ever looked at what you're losing if you keep him?



- How much production are you really losing and what does it cost you?
- If you think finding staff is hard, how much harder do you think it is when they hear how they will be treated at your shop? What are the technicians in your town discussing underground?
- How does this impact the customers? Do you think they may be feeling this tension?
- Does your service advisor adjust his schedule to keep the tensions down so as to not upset anyone? What is that doing to your vehicle count?

The point is you are likely not seeing the forest for the trees. If you saw the bigger picture, you would be able to make more intelligent decisions, and probably do things differently.

The solution!

The first step in solving any problem is admitting there is a problem to begin with. Now that you have done that, there are two main things you can do to get and keep the entire staff on the same page. These things will provide training that works, and put you in a position where your staff is no longer holding you hostage.

If it is important, put it in writing. The main reason the frustration you feel exists in the first place is because most communication in the shop is verbal. This allows a lot for interpretation and causes a lot of disconnect among everyone. The more you put in writing, the easier it is to get things done the way you want. This also creates a training environment that makes it much easier for the new low end guy to be successful quickly. Any new hire would benefit from this. Once this is established you will find that the staff will be making all kinds of suggestions for improving the processes, and the level of buy-in will be even greater. Do yourself a favor and get everything you can in writing.

There should never be a time when you are not looking for staff. The reason you feel held hostage, is because you have no one on your bench. Think of this like a baseball team. If the pitcher needs relief, we have someone who can step in and keep the game going. The more you have on your bench, the more the power shifts to you. Anyone can comfortably be replaced at any time. As an added bonus, this is just good business practice. Now if someone unexpectedly has to move away, it is much less of a challenge to move forward. The alternative is you have two weeks to find a replacement for a great employee. How has that worked out for you in the past? Always be looking!





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Sam's Corner

We're Halfway There

Kim Hickey, ATI Coach



I was born in NY and then spent my latter school years living in NJ (during the eighties), so you could say that being a Bon Jovi fan was

practically in my DNA. I am a big fan of live music, and have been to more concerts than I can even remember sometimes. A few months ago some friends called to invite me to join them to go see Bon Jovi in Tampa. I quickly scanned through my mental concert database and was surprised once I realized that somehow I had never been to a Bon Jovi concert. How could that be, I wondered? "Living on a Prayer" and some of their other songs were 80s anthems. Even though I had not purchased a Bon Jovi "album" (showing my age here) in years, how could I pass up the chance to go see a group that embodied the working class and fearless youth wanting to make it on their own in the 80s? Before I said yes, I looked at the website. There were pics of Jon Bon Jovi doing splits in the air. Hell yeah! I accepted the invitation. A night of great music, great friends, a band I loved in my youth, and lots of memories of bad clothing choices and big hair. How could I possibly say no?

The night of the concert came, my besties and I could not have been more excited! As we got to our seats, I noticed the stage was very small. I assumed that part of it was blocked off temporarily to allow set-up for Bon Jovi while the opening act played. The opening act happened to be a 16-year-old girl from the local high school where I live and she was fantastic. I felt like I was watching a superstar in the making. Her performance set the tone for an exciting evening.

Amidst cheers, screams and chanting, Bon Jovi took the stage. You could feel the excitement in the air. They opened with a song I had never heard. Okay, I guess they have to play something off their new album. Next lackluster song I heard was off the new album too. So far no energy. So far no air splits. So far, Jon Bon Jovi is just standing in one place singing. Hmm, maybe it's me, I thought. I am not familiar with these songs so maybe that's why I'm not feeling it. They were out of sync, and his voice was cracking. He couldn't hit even the middle notes. They started playing some of their hits, but even then they performed like they had a career of playing at weddings and bar mitzvahs for the past 30 years and were just phoning it in. In fact, I have heard better covers of their songs at a wedding than I was hearing from them. I wanted air splits and Jon Bon Jovi gave me jazz hands! He actually walked to each end of the tiny stage a few times and made jazz hands. I realized then the stage was tiny on purpose.

Before you start asking yourself "What does she want? After all they are in their 50s now," I have to stop you. I recently saw Guns N' Roses, and Axl Rose was jumping around and flying through the

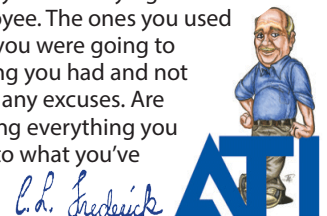
air like he was on fire. Paul McCartney is 74 years old and he brought down the house. Neil Diamond at 76 years old brought more energy in his opening song than JBJ did the entire evening. What I want is what they set up the expectation for. What I want is what I saw in the picture. The other entertainers I just mentioned brought it. They delivered what was promised. Bon Jovi did not.

"We're halfway, livin' on a prayer, take my hand and we'll make it I swear, livin' on a prayer" used to represent to me that I was halfway to my goal, no turning back now. And if you have some faith in what you are doing — nothing can stop you. It now represents to me someone that is only putting in half the effort they used to. Maybe half their tour is over and they are relieved. Maybe they just don't care anymore. Gone are the young cocky musicians with a story to tell, with something to prove, with skeptics to win over. Maybe they just assume that since they have had fans still buying concert tickets and albums for 34 years, that they don't have to bring it any more.

Are you still bringing it every day? Are you still greeting your customers and employees with the same excitement and enthusiasm you used to when you first started working with them? How many of you can say with a straight face that you are still treating each and every customer the same way you did when you were first building your business, when you had something to prove to them and yourself, when you needed each and every dollar they wanted to spend with you? Are you just as grateful for each sale today as you were for your very first one?

At \$150 a ticket, I was very underwhelmed. Bon Jovi didn't lower their prices when they lowered their level of performance. I won't be going to another one of their shows. Instead of resting on their laurels because they have had some of the same fans for 34 years, they should have bowled us over with their performance to thank us for being fans for 34 years. Over the years have your prices continued to rise while your level of service has gone down? Do you show your appreciation and gratitude for your longtime internal and external customers, or are you just taking for granted that they will just always be there?

I guess JBJ forgot the words he penned in 1986 when he was still hungry for success and keen to win over his skeptics and critics and potential fans one at a time: "We've got to hold on to what we've got, we've got to hold on ready or not." I sure hope you haven't forgotten the words you spoke when you were starting your business. The words you used when trying to win over all your new customers one at a time. The ones you used when you were trying to hire your first employee. The ones you used when you said you were going to give it everything you had and not make or accept any excuses. Are you are still doing everything you can to hold on to what you've got?



705 Digital Drive, Suite V
Linthicum, MD 21090

Open Mic Nights *Kim Hickey, ATI Coach*



What Is Open Mic Night?

- It's a live Zoom meeting where you can share whatever you want.
- It's a venue to ask questions of me, our guest speakers, or your peers about equipment, staffing, marketing, or to share POS tricks and tips, what reports you find useful or anything else you want.
- A venue for you to share something that is working great at your shop or something you didn't have good results with.
- A venue where you can watch live tours of other shops with you being able to ask questions as it is happening.
- A venue to have yourself or your advisor present an estimate to us for feedback and suggestions.
- A venue where the possibilities are endless!

Being part of the ATI family, you have a tremendous resource and huge opportunity to learn from other shops. Open Mic Night has unlimited potential. So far we have seen several award-winning shops and a live customer vehicle walk-around, got inspiration from a fellow ATI family member that used his goal poster as a tool to help him lose 132 pounds, discussed what to do with employees that no longer want to go to school, discussed scheduling, and much, much more.

This is not your typical monthly webinar where someone is talking "at you" for an hour. This is an interactive Zoom meeting where your input, suggestions, feedback and questions drive the agenda.

Team Kim's Open Mic Night is open to everyone and our motto is "the more, the more the merrier!" Let's close the gaps between the over 1,500 shops that are enrolled in ATI.

A week or so before each Open Mic Night, I will post what topics are on the agenda for discussion and sharing. The night after OMN, I post the takeaways from the meeting, links to the shops that spoke and any other pertinent links.

Please mark your calendars for our upcoming OMN dates below — you won't want to miss our upcoming special guest lineup!

April 26 - Our President Richard C. Meneg

May 24 - Our CEO Chris "Chubby" Frederick

June 21 - Our VP Bryan Stasch

July 26 - Our VP Chris "CJ" Frederick Jr.

You can find my posts about OMN at www.team-kim.com.

You can find all the upcoming OMN dates and meeting links on my calendar at www.team-kim.com/calendar.