

ShopTalk

ATI
Automotive
Training Institute

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Upcoming Classes:

Shop Owner

A.B.M. Always Be Marketing
November 4, 5 & 6
December 16, 17 & 18

Staffing & Hiring
November 9 & 10

Align Your Shop for Profit
November 11, 12 & 13
December 2, 3 & 4

Leadership Mastery
December 9, 10 & 11

Service Advisor

ATI's 7 Step Sales Process - West Coast
November 5 & 6

The Role of the Service Advisor
November 16 & 17
November 30 & December 1

ATI's 7 Step Sales Process
November 23 & 24
December 14 & 15

Advanced Sales Service Advisor
December 7 & 8

Collision

Estimating & Sales Course 1
November 9 & 10

A.B.M. Always Be Marketing
November 11, 12 & 13

Collision Repair Production
November 16 & 17

Leadership Mastery
December 9, 10 & 11

Estimating & Sales Course 2
December 14 & 15

Have You Seen the Light?

by Eric Twiggs
ATI Coach

"Eric, my tire is defective. It just went flat on me!" These words were spoken by my wife after the right rear tire on our Toyota went flat. I could see the wear around the sidewall, indicating that the tire had been low on air for a period of time. I asked her if she had seen any warning lights on the dashboard. Her response was classic: "Nothing out of the ordinary except for a light with the letters TPMS. But it's only been on for the past three weeks." This got me thinking about my experience in the tire business. Eighty percent of the tires that came back damaged were the result of a slow leak, and not of a sudden impact. The customer would ignore the small amount of air leaking out over time. Your business and my wife's tire have something in common. In both cases, ignoring the small losses leads to large failures.



Have you been ignoring the small losses? Since the TPMS light is a signal for low air pressure, I will share some strategies to address the most common "lows" I see shops struggle with.

Low Car Count

The failure to exit-schedule is like a slow leak. Going one day without scheduling the next service for your customers is a small loss. Over 90 days it becomes a large failure. This week, I surveyed some of the most successful shops in the ATI program as it relates to stable car count. They attribute a minimum of 25 percent of their weekly car count to appointments scheduled from prior visits. Since 25 percent of 40 is 10, a location with a 40 car count capacity could be missing out on as many as 10 cars per week by deciding not to exit-schedule.

Low Staffing

The failure to recruit because you are fully staffed is the slow leak. Each week that goes by without posting an ad is a small loss. When your best technician leaves without notice, it becomes a large failure.

Losing a key person and not having a qualified replacement ready is the #1 killer of momentum in the automotive industry. It's like taking a road trip, getting a flat tire, and not having a spare in the trunk. When the tow truck driver arrives, you wouldn't tell him: "I didn't bring a spare because I already had tires on my car!"

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The Coach's Corner

Do You Know the Seven Most Expensive Words in Business?

Geoff Berman, ATI Coach

Do you remember 1980 something? Back then times were good. The manufacturers of the vehicles in this country were still trying to figure out how to build a car that could compete with the lower cost, more reliable Asian products. Finding work was never a problem. Advertise, why? There were always a half dozen broken vehicles on the lot when you opened each morning. Maintenance, what's that? You were too busy keeping up with things that broke to worry about that, and why would you? You were profitable, very profitable!

Now it's 2015. Things have changed over the last 30 plus years. I don't have to bore you with the how and why, you have heard that a million times; vehicles are now better built, they last longer, they are more economic, highly technical, more complicated, etc. These are things you had no control over. Changes that slowly happened over time that were not as obvious while they were happening; but looking back, they are now crystal clear. They happened to you, not because of you, and that doesn't seem fair.

Now your business depends on maintenance to survive. Regular routine service is necessary to keep up the regular flow of vehicles. Advertising and marketing are now something you are forced to confront and can no longer ignore. If you had a choice, I'm guessing that you would prefer the 1980s business model over the current one. Am I right?

The Seven Most Expensive Words

So, what are the seven most expensive words in business? **"We have always done it that way."** Your business cannot grow, heck your business will not survive, if you cling to the notion that the business you once loved is the same as it once was. It is not! It has changed and so must you. Do you think you would still be in business at all if you only did exhaust work? How many exhausts have you replaced this year? Look at the old exhaust franchises. They have all moved to "complete car care." They had to in order to survive. Transmission shops and even lube centers have moved to a complete car care model for the same reason. Your business must evolve too.

Now I'm not saying you haven't changed things over the years. Of course you have. What I am saying is that maybe your state of mind hasn't. Do you ever find yourself thinking or saying "We have always done it that way"? If you have, you are not as open to change as you might think. This is your defense against change. Your excuse to ignore it and fool yourself into believing it is someone else's problem, not yours. Change is often undesirable because what you must do is foreign to you and is seemingly difficult. That makes you uncomfortable, so you just don't do it. Here's a secret you probably already know: It's supposed to be hard. It's the hard that makes it worth it!

If you have watched the Olympics over the years you have seen great examples of what I'm saying here. In 1963 the high jump record was 7 feet 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The current record is 8 feet $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. That is almost a 7 inch increase. I'd be willing to bet those in 1963 would never have thought it possible, and it would not have been had it not been for Dick Fosbury. In 1968 he changed the sport forever when he went over the high jump backward. Now that is the standard. The same can be seen in many other Olympic sports, figure skating and gymnastics to name a few.

What I want you to take away from this article is that what you did in the past was not wrong, it was right for then. It just isn't right for now. It is OK to let go of things you once believed worked in search of something better. Don't let your fear of what might happen if... or the sheer fact that it just seems too hard, stop you from getting what you want. You're better than that. Your staff and your customers are depending on you. Do what is necessary because it is your responsibility, not because your coach made you do it. Embrace the "hard" and let it drive you toward the things you want in life. If you can, you will start to enjoy your work again and when you look back years from now, you will be proud of what you accomplished and the lives you have touched. The only thing holding you back is you.

Be sure to tune in next month for more on this subject. We will discuss some of these out-of-date habits and what can be done about them.

Are you still challenged by old thinking? I would love to hear about it and maybe you will see it find its way into a future article. Email your thoughts to gberman@autotraining.net.

Thank you Felizardo (Yayo) Gaxiola for the inspiration to write this article.



"If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there." –Tom Magliozzi

Sam's Corner

Veterans Day Customer Incentives

This month's article is from Coach Kim Hickey, a coach and former shop owner. Kim loves to share marketing ideas with her clients, and many of them try new ideas which she enjoys sharing with the entire ATI Alumni. Here are a few proven ideas to reward and bring in more of your customers on Veterans Day.

Veterans Day

Kim Hickey, ATI Coach

Veterans Day is coming soon. I wanted to share some information about the day, as well as give you some ideas. Per the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the proper spelling is Veterans Day — without an apostrophe. The website http://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetday_faq.asp also states this:

Many people confuse Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Memorial Day is a day for remembering and honoring military personnel who died in the service of their country, particularly those who died in battle or as a result of wounds sustained in battle. While those who died are also remembered, Veterans Day is the day set aside to thank and honor ALL those who served honorably in the military — in wartime or peacetime. In fact, Veterans Day is largely intended to thank LIVING veterans for their service, to acknowledge that their contributions to our national security are appreciated, and to underscore the fact that all those who served — not only those who died — have sacrificed and done their duty.

You can also obtain posters from the site noted above.

Promo for Veterans

You could use an email blast, Tweet, Facebook, Google +, etc. You could limit the promotion to one day only or for the week. Possible ideas: A discount off repairs or maintenance, complimentary oil service, make a donation of a specific percent or dollar amount of their ticket to the veteran charity of their choice. Partner with your vendors and ask them to provide you with some giveaways so you can offer a gift to every veteran that comes by. Ask them to donate wiper blades or sell them to you at a reduced price so you can offer free wiper blades with any service for veterans. Cross-promote with a local restaurant, car wash, movie theater or any type of business, and get free or discounted gift cards from them to give away. I have seen shops give away a limited number of free oil services to veterans. Again, ask your vendors to partner with you on this.

For those of you with any type of point-based customer loyalty program, offer double or triple points earned for any purchases made by a veteran for a set time period.

Create a "wall of honor" poster board in your waiting room, and invite your customers to bring in pictures labeled with their name on it and post them on the board. Ask your customer for permission to post them on social media. You could post the pictures daily on social media thanking that veteran (or the family of any deceased veterans) for their service.

C. L. Frederick



Halloween Word Search!

W	I	T	U	W	B	S	C	A	R	Y	R
D	Y	X	S	T	B	H	E	L	O	O	E
K	S	T	K	A	H	Q	Z	E	W	I	B
C	T	A	E	C	M	U	M	M	Y	O	O
A	N	B	L	W	W	Q	F	U	M	O	T
L	R	V	E	M	K	E	N	T	R	V	C
B	E	G	T	F	N	G	O	S	E	D	O
Q	T	H	O	U	U	N	O	O	D	E	D
W	N	O	N	X	D	A	M	C	I	T	E
X	A	S	Y	V	Y	R	W	R	P	N	T
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H	O	N	N	P	F	B	Z	P	H	A	I
C	K	A	Q	G	O	P	N	I	G	H	T
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W	J	G	N	L	B	F	D	N	K	L	S

- | | | |
|---------|-----------|----------------|
| BLACK | HALLOWEEN | JACK-O-LANTERN |
| ORANGE | OCTOBER | BAT |
| GHOST | SPIDER | MOON |
| WITCH | SKELETON | CAT |
| SCARY | MUMMY | NIGHT |
| CANDY | COSTUME | OWL |
| HAUNTED | | BOO |





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Summary

You may be feeling the pressure, from low car count or staffing, but I have good news.

ATI is your TPMS light! We make you aware of the small losses before they become large failures. Coming to class, being present for the coaching and updating the portal will keep your wallet from going flat.

My wife is living proof that ignoring your TPMS light can keep you off the road to your destination.

Have you seen the light?

P.S. To help you overcome the problem of low car count, I have created an exit-scheduling kit to make the process of scheduling the next appointment easier. Email me at etwiggs@autotraining.net and I will send it to you.