

ShopTalk



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Employee Reviews

By Kim Hickey; ATI Coach

When you hired your employees, hopefully you gave them a clear understanding of your expectations as well as what they should expect from you. Many business owners boast that their employees know exactly what is expected of them and exactly where they stand at all times. I'm here to tell you that assumption could not be any more false. Luckily there are several tools in your toolbox that will remedy that situation — and one of the most underutilized is the employee review.

I'm not talking about having weekly meetings with your employees, or the five-minute meetings in the morning before you open. I'm referring to an actual employee review that has structure and will be an instrumental part in the growth of your employees and your business. For the purpose of this article, I am going to assume that when you hired your employees, you set up clear performance goals, provided standards for their behavior, supplied your new hires with an employment manual that outlined attendance, continued education expectations, informed your employees that they would be receiving scheduled reviews, and that new hires will have already received their 30, 60 and 90 day reviews before receiving their nonprobationary status.

According to the dictionary, a review is a retrospective view or survey, or an act of carefully looking at or examining the quality or condition of something or someone.

Why?

A review provides a benchmark that you can measure by for productivity, performance and any other goals you set. While a review is one of your best tools for developing an employee, if necessary it can lay the groundwork for nonperforming employees so you can take

action steps for reprimand or termination. It gives your employee the opportunity to have your undivided attention. A scheduled recurring standardized review sets the stage for nonemotional feedback.

When?

So just how often should you be looking at the quality or condition of your employees? There are several schools of thought on this. The timetable that I consistently see the best results with is the quarterly review. Performing reviews quarterly keeps both you and your employees on track. The time period gives a short enough time in between reviews that if a major course correction has to be made, it can be done in a timely manner; and it is long enough in between to be able to implement any changes and track results. When you perform reviews quarterly, low efficiency and other issues can be addressed at a quicker pace.

Be Prepared!

Don't come to the meeting unprepared. Prior to the meeting, gather whatever data is needed and review it yourself first. Don't do it on the fly during the meeting. Have a list of what you want to cover and know how long you are going to spend

on each item. Also prior to the meeting, give your employees the same employee review form you are going to use and ask them to complete it on themselves. Ask them to please take this seriously and put time and thought into filling it out, and you do the same. During the review, lay both review forms on the

table side by side for comparison. If you are doing your job as a leader correctly, the forms should be almost identical. If the employee has scored themselves higher than you scored them, then you have a problem.

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The Coach's Corner

It's Not the 80's Anymore

Out of Date Habit #9: Being nice to my customers is enough; they love me!

Geoff Berman Coach/Instructor

I'm sure you would agree, being a consumer today is very different than it was 30 years ago. The consumer is more educated and has access to more information than ever before. Is it safe to say selling has become increasingly more difficult? Maybe? I believe if you think it is hard, then it will be. How can you find innovative ways to stand out from your competition, if you feel that way? Intellectually, I know you understand that. My concern is what happens after you read this and get back to your daily rat race. That's when the old habits will stifle your growth, and inevitably find their way back into your life. It really doesn't take much to stand out. The good news is that most shops are still stuck in the mindset that it's too hard. This leaves a huge opportunity for you. Eventually this industry is going to wake up, and you will be left behind if you're not helping to lead the charge. So let me share with you a few ways you can increase your opportunities and be a company that will stand out from the others.

◆ First Things First

Stephen Covey once said "Begin with the end in mind." This is true of anything you want to accomplish, not the least of which is how you want a customer to feel when they leave. Have you ever asked yourself that question? How do you want them to feel? They leave at the end of a phone interaction, after they've dropped off or picked up their car, and at the end of a sales call. Every one of these is an opportunity to stand out. If you want to make sure they buy from you, tell their friends, and come back again, you must always make sure they leave feeling the way you want them to. Today, I am going to focus on how they should feel at the end of the initial sales call.

◆ The Two Most Important Things You Must Do

Contrary to what you might believe, getting the appointment is not one of them. It's true, your goal is to get them into the shop, but that's the result from things being done correctly.

The two most important things we must do on the phone is gain and maintain control, and build rapport. If you want to gain control you must be the one asking the questions, and you must either know the possible answers, or know that whatever the answer, the customer is traveling down the path you want them to. When the phone rings, currently you might say "Automotive Experts, this is Tim!" You may even say "Thank you" first, which would be a bit better. Is there anything about what you said that gains control or builds rapport? If anything, it does the complete opposite, and you have no idea where this call will lead. Try this:

"Thank you for calling Automotive Experts, my name is Tim. Who do I have the pleasure of speaking with today?"

Who has control now? There is only one answer I can give you, and when I give you my name, you can use it often throughout the conversation to further build rapport.

◆ Never Give a Price

There are many reasons not to give a price over the phone. Remember the end in mind? You want to stand out. There is really no way to differentiate what makes you different, other than you have a better price from the last shop I spoke to, or the next shop I call. How often has a customer come in after telling you they needed something, you quoted a price, only to find what they really needed was something completely different? A typical current response to the price question might be **"We can't give you a price over the phone, but if you bring it in**

we'll give you a free estimate." Saying you can't in any way, takes away from the rapport you have been working so hard to build. The word "no" is not your friend. Avoid it as much as you possibly can. You have a huge opportunity to really stand out in the customer's mind, or to flat out blow it. This is also a great opportunity to truly empathize with the caller. Consider this as a better way. Let's assume the caller's name is John because you have already asked for it.

"You know, John, that's a great question. Clearly price is important to you. Am I right? (Yes, price is important to me.) John, I get this question a lot, and over the years, I have seen more often than not, what the customer is asking a price for, is usually not what the vehicle actually needs. That's why most of our customers have found it best to bring the vehicle in for a complete and accurate estimate. And while you're here, you will also receive a complimentary car wash. (This last part is optional, but I would do it if you can. No one else is.) Would you like to bring it in at 3 this afternoon, or would you prefer 8 tomorrow morning?"

◆ You Will Not Get Them All

It's likely the caller is calling many shops. What happens next, has a lot to do with where they are in the order of these calls. For example, if this is the first call made, then I have nothing to compare it to, so you must let me go. The key is to let me go correctly, so I call you back after I realize I should have said yes from the beginning. If you're not careful here, then I may not call you back even if I want to. You must save me from myself and not let that happen. If I have already made a few calls, you might already have my appointment booked. Let's assume that John hasn't bit yet. This is where you typically say something like **"Sorry, I can't give you a price without seeing it." Or worse, you give me a price.** Who has control now? Try this instead:

"John, I'm guessing you're looking on Google or some other search engine. Hopefully you're reading all the reviews, and that is probably why we're one of your first calls. As you call around and talk with the other shops, be sure to keep in mind that we give a three-year unlimited mileage warranty. No shop can beat our guarantee! Also we have a free shuttle if you need it, and can even provide you with a loaner car. We have a Concierge Service as well, where we can pick up your vehicle at your home or place of business, and bring it back to you when it is complete. Be sure to ask the other shops you call what their warranty is, and if they provide any of those services. Oh, and don't forget the free car wash. Lastly, John, it is important to me that you get what you need, so if you have any questions at all, even if you decide to use a different facility, please feel free to call me back and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Again, my name is Tim. I really do appreciate the opportunity, John."

His only choice at this point is to book the appointment or say goodbye. Even if he doesn't come in this time, he will not forget that experience, and if anything is subpar where he does end up, he is more likely to try you the next time. The good news is, many of the calls you would have lost, will now decide to book the appointment.

◆ If They Commit, You Must Do This

In order to set yourself up properly for the next interaction, and to be sure they are likely to show, you will want to get as much information as you can now. Things like name, all phone numbers, address, email, vehicle information, etc. If they are willing to give you all that information, they will be more likely to show for the appointment. You will have more time at the counter to focus on them, control the interaction and further build rapport. You will also be in a better position for a stronger sale when you call them in a few hours. Next month we will continue with best practice at the drop. Like what you have read? Want more? Email me at gberman@autotraining.net and I will send you the rest of the phone process and phone log.



Sam's Corner

Super Conference 2016

We couldn't have asked for a more fantastic setting for Super Conference 2016 than the beautiful Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort located in Amelia Island, Florida.

Each year ATI selects a charity in the host city to support. After months of research, K9s for Warriors was selected. K9s for Warriors provides service dogs to veterans who suffer from PTSD or traumatic brain injuries as a result of their service post 9/11.

Over the course of just three days, everyone watched as clients and vendors fed more than \$6,500 in cash into the "money ball" and turned in pledge sheets.

Things really heated up at the Awards Banquet on Saturday evening, when 20 Group members and individual shop owners took to the microphone to pledge their additional support. ATI's 20 Groups Nothin' but Net and Phoenix Rising each pledged over \$18,000, earning them each naming rights to a future service dog. Money Masters pledged \$13,000 and Mastermind pledged \$10,000. 20 Group pledges were also received from the Leading Ladies, The High Mark, and Dollars and Sense, just to name a few. Our 20 Groups really showed up in force to support our wounded veterans.

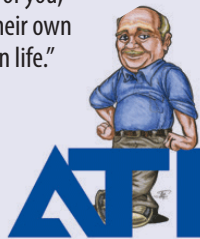
After the pledges had been counted, K9s for Warriors was presented with a check for \$84,427.67. Since we have returned to Baltimore, the pledges have kept coming in, bringing the grand total to over \$102,000!

We are very honored to be selected as a sponsor of an entire class of Warriors and their K9 companions. We will have a very limited number of spaces at our class's graduation, so if any of you are interested in attending please email Amy Fox at afox@autotraining.net. She will notify you when we receive the date.

"I cannot even begin to express the gratitude we all have at K9s for Warriors for all the effort you put into supporting our mission," said Shari Duval, founder and president of K9s for Warriors. "Because of all of you, many American heroes will no longer think that taking their own life is the best option. Instead, these warriors will thrive in life."

For more information on K9s for Warriors please check out their website at www.k9sforwarriors.org.

C. L. Frederick



SuperConference2016 AMELIA ISLAND, FLORIDA

ATI would like to graciously thank our sponsors and trade show participants



"Make the Noise Go Away"

by Larry G. Linne

Bobby Poist/ATI Coach

"Make the Noise Go Away" is a great read for any owner that is stuck working in their business, and feels like there is no way out! This book is helpful for someone that will be using a second in command.

Jim owns an electrical company that is somewhat successful. Experiencing more challenges as the business grows. The day-to-day operations of the business left Jim with an inability to focus. Each day he would go to work with the best of intentions. Making lists that he needed to complete, and not seeing progress. Employees relying on him to handle various tasks they should have been able to complete. Left responsible for every decision relating to the business. Talking to problem clients. The list goes on and on. Jim had to hold everyone's hand, and if he went away things would get worse! This unneeded stress left the owner tired, edgy and completely drained.

Jim realized that he needed a second in command, and sought for the proper person. Unfortunately, finding the wrong person made matters worse. He still couldn't find the time to do the things needed to be successful. Limited sleep at night. Working outlandish hours. Losing touch with his family. The business became his life! How can you do the things you love with no balance? Seemed like Jim sure was living the American Dream. Does this sound familiar?

Jim went through a couple of second in commands. They helped a little, but Jim was still left to perform the same mundane tasks with no improvement. Along came Brett. Having been a successful second in command the connection was almost immediate! Brett started helping by focusing on what was holding the company back. He listened; which was something that hadn't happened in the past. Asked the proper questions, and made sure he understood what the company needed. The first step was creating and encouraging focus from everyone!

Brett was innovative and analytical. He spent his time keeping the company productive. Worked with the clients to build relationships and learning to understand them better. Brett built creative forms like a "solution consequence worksheet." Then he taught the employees how to use it. The employees were to focus on the consequences of their decisions. This made them more productive, and also made their meetings more interesting. They would bring potential solutions and their consequences to their meetings. He in turn would guide them toward an educated decision. In time, they were able to make certain decisions on their own. The employees began to understand the owner's values — one of the most important keys to a successful business.

Making the noise go away allowed Jim and Brett to become more successful than ever! Brett became more than an employee to Jim. He became his partner. Together they explore what made the noise go away. They also discover what made their company become more successful than they ever expected!

Clients ask me all the time what is the most important thing they can do to make their business successful. My reply in most cases is to do what you love. Find the right person to help you run your business and help you to get out of your own way. When an owner can focus on their business and actually be productive the sky is the limit! Finding the right second in command to help do this will make the business even more successful! I bet it would be great to actually achieve the original dreams you had when you opened your business!

And the Winner Is.....

Kathleen Brown from McKonly's Garage in PA, get your driving gloves ready!!! In April, Chubby challenged you all to create your electronic goal poster. The creators of the goal posters were dying for a chance to drive one of Chubby's cars. What made Kathy's goal poster the winner was not only that her goals were clear, but also that she incorporated a goal for each area of her life.



Employee Reviews (continued)

If the employee scored themselves lower than you scored them, then you have a problem. Make no mistake that if an employee does not think they are doing as good of a job as you do, that is equally an indication of poor leadership as if they scored themselves higher than what you did.

Follow-Up!

After the review, it is very important to supply a constant stream of feedback. Follow-up should be ongoing throughout the entire year, not just at the quarterly review.

Make It Effective!

The goals for the next quarter can't be out of sight out of mind. The results from your quarterly reviews are not intended to be "set it and forget it" goals. Set dates, track progress or lack of it.

Figure Out What Makes Your Employees Tick!

This is an ideal opportunity to review your employees' goal posters with them and find out what really motivates them. Tell them "You are important to me, so I want to know what is important to you." Tie in sales/hours goals with how they can earn more money to reach their goals. Figure out what resources you have available that you can use to help them

achieve their goals.

What Types of Things Should We Measure?

- How many hours of continued education they logged (hopefully when you hired your employees you set up a standard for how many hours of continued education per quarter was required)
- Comebacks for the quarter (I know you are using a Comeback Log)
- Productivity
- Percent of Courtesy Checks
- Attendance, tardiness, excessive time off, patterns of certain days missed (example Monday Flu)
- ARO, LHPT, hours billed vs. labor inventory, sales
- CSI scores

The items listed about are just some examples of what you could be measuring, setting goals and tracking progress for. If you have any questions on how to perform a quarterly review, would like sample forms or more ideas of specific items to cover with your employees, please speak with your coach or email me at khickey@autotraining.net.