

ShopTalk



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We Don't Know What We Don't Know

I love this quote from Henry Ford: "If I had asked my customers what they wanted, they would have said a faster horse." Our customers have no idea what they don't know. They see the solution to their problem as more of the same, just faster.

If you ask your customers what they want, they'll tell you "cheap." Too many shop owners take that answer at face value and then try to cater to it.

Instead, we have to understand what customers really need and secretly desire. The fact is they want to buy trust. Trust that the repair is done right by someone with the highest reputation in the community. Second, they want convenience. Building and selling trust while providing convenience will allow you to charge premium prices for your work.

I like the Henry Ford quote for another reason, too. It applies to us as well as it does to our customers. How often do we think that if we just work harder, we can break through? How many times do we keep trying the same old strategies, hoping they will generate different results? What else is out there that we don't know about that would unlock the door to new solutions to solve challenges in our businesses?

I remember watching my old German shepherd, Sarge, chasing squirrels. Sarge would see a squirrel from across the yard and stare at it for a solid minute. Then he'd take off toward the squirrel so fast I thought his legs would fly off. The squirrel would head for the nearest tree and run up about four feet, just out of Sarge's reach. But within a split second, an interesting thing would happen. The squirrel would scurry around the tree to the opposite side from the oncoming dog. Then it would run back down to the ground and hop over to the next tree. Sarge couldn't see this because the squirrel was on the opposite side of the tree. As far as Sarge knew, the squirrel was still in the tree.

Sarge would reach the tree and bark, climb and scratch to get the squirrel. He never figured out that before he even got there, the squirrel

had already jumped back down and run off to the next tree. Sarge would even stake out the tree, sitting under it for a spell and eventually taking a nap right there, apparently planning to wake up and attack the squirrel if it dared to come down. Meanwhile, the squirrel was long gone.

Watching this got me thinking. How many of us are barking up the wrong tree? We saw our goal, we knew it was the right direction and we headed there as fast as we could. But things change, even though often we don't realize it. And barking harder up the wrong tree isn't going to get the squirrel.

For the last five years, ATI has hosted the SuperConference for our coaching members. While it's a great opportunity to see everyone, there's a more important reason to attend. We created this event because we saw too many coaching members barking up the wrong tree. Nothing beats weekly calls with your coach and constant monitoring of your KPIs. Those KPIs are critical, but it's also important to take a step back, learn some things we've never thought about before and reassess our goals.

The lineup at this year's SuperConference includes auto industry insights from the chief

salesperson for the single largest supplier in the auto industry, how to tap into the fastest-growing market for new auto repair customers and what to do about all those reviews of your shop online. You'll receive critical insights to ensure you have the latest information to help you reach your goals with less wasted time and money.



The SuperConference is on March 16-19 at the famous Hotel del Coronado in beautiful San Diego. If you haven't registered, it's time.

It does take hard work to become successful, no doubt. But it also takes the latest knowledge and a recharged attitude to make your hard work efficient and productive. Take a break for yourself and your spouse. Get the best insights on the direction of the industry and discover ways to get more high-value customers for your shop.

Visit www.autotraining.net/superconference11 right now to get signed up. I look forward to seeing you there. **ATI**

Five Diet Plans That Can Hurt Your Health: Sound Advice for the Busy Shop Owner



By Sherry L. Granader
Sports Nutritionist

Before you make your New Year's resolution to eliminate fat, wheat, salt, sugar or carbohydrates to shed some pounds, you must know that strict diets may be harmful to your health. Take a look at the top five weight loss plans and think again:

1. Low-Fat Foods

Cutting back on fat can help you lose weight but only if you reduce the calories too. Avoiding all fat does not offer much variety and boredom usually takes over early in the process. Plus you need good fats so the body can absorb nutrients including Vitamins A, D, E and K plus antioxidants. Beware of fat-free cookies, cakes, pies and desserts which have the same number of calories as the regular variety.

New Year's Strategy: Simply cut out saturated and trans fats and enjoy good-for-you fats found in fish, nuts, avocados, olives and vegetable oils such as olive, canola, sesame and nut. Just don't go overboard because fats have about 120 calories per tablespoon.

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After a Traditional Start, Mike's KARS Learns New Ways to Do Business

Graduation is always an important milestone, but some graduations are more important than others. Michael Bennett, owner of Mike's KARS in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, is a 2010 graduate of ATI's Shop Re-Engineering Program, and he is using what he has learned to take his shop to new levels of success.

Mike found his way into the auto repair business in what he calls the "traditional" way. "I basically fell into the automotive business through my in-laws," he says. "They started this business back in 1980. I met my wife in 1982, so I was around the business for a while, and then one day in 1987, I decided I'd like to start working on cars."

"The problem is a lack of the necessary knowledge and skills. And that's what ATI gives you."

After working for his in-laws for a while, Mike took what he had learned and went to work for dealerships, where he continued to build his knowledge of automotive repair. "I ended up managing some service departments," he says, "but ultimately it became a big frustration to me. I was good at fixing cars and knew how to deal with people, but I didn't know anything about business. Yet I had been put in a position to run a business."

Mike decided to return to the family business with the goal of taking it over and ultimately buying it. "I really can't figure out why I decided to do that," he laughs, "because I didn't like to run the business at the dealership, but I did it anyhow."

Mike brought some additional structure to the mom and pop business and grew it into what he calls a more stable version of the same business his in-laws had been running for years. He knew things needed to change, so he signed on with a coaching company to help him learn how to manage his business better. "We were

in coaching for a couple of years, and that's where we got a lot of our structure. Yet at the same time, I realized financially something was not right," he recalls.

That's when ATI came into the picture.

"We went to the ATI boot camp, sat down with them and went over our numbers," Mike says. "Something clicked with me. It just resonated. I knew right away that these guys had a handle on the problems we were facing in my business. For us it came down to just handling the financials. We fixed cars well. We made customers really happy. But we didn't do the dollars and sense stuff well. You can find people to fix the cars. It's very rare to find a car fixer that can run a business."

With the help of his ATI coach, Mike has become one of those business-running car fixers. "For us, the biggest innovation was the portal because it tells you the real story of what's happening in your business," he says. "You can feel like you're doing good, but emotions don't matter. You don't pay bills with emotions. You pay bills with dollars and cents. And the portal shows you where your dollars and cents are going."

Mike believes any repair shop owner can be successful, but it's not a matter of just working hard. "The guys that own a business are the hardest working, most intelligent and most determined people in business," he says. "The problem is a lack of the necessary knowledge and skills. And that's what ATI gives you."

Now Mike is using his new knowledge and skills to market his business in unique ways. Since taking a social media class with ATI, he has implemented a multipronged marketing program in what he calls "a laser path to get out in front and dominate my market on Google, the Internet and in the social media environment."

Mike has signed on with Demandforce, a company that specializes in transforming a customer base into a social network. "I now have 485 customer emails in my system, and revenue on Demandforce communications has yielded about \$8,600.00. And in my web portal, I now have 10 completed customer web surveys and 23 certified customer reviews. Demandforce is able to flow our certified reviews to Google, and we now have five of

those certified reviews posted to Google. As a result, mikeskars.com has moved from the bottom of Google map search to the number one position!" Mike exclaims.

Mike's KARS also has a new website as well as a new business logo, and now Mike is planning a Google ad campaign. In addition, he is using Royalty Rewards to build his customer base, and he is publishing a newsletter and implementing a mystery envelop program for pre-scheduling.

To beef up communications with customers, Mike's counter staff asks for the preferred method of communications while a vehicle is in for service. "The 30 and unders really prefer texting," Mike says. "The 40 and overs really like the email option. They both work, and the response time is much quicker than traditional phone calls."

Mike says that each of these new programs is starting to show signs of improving the way his company stays in front of his customers. "There's not one magic bullet," he explains. "You have to be proactive. Instead of shooting a rifle at a pinpoint target, you've got to shoot a shotgun at the wall. You need to do many things that each get a couple of new customers instead of looking for one thing that will achieve a huge car count increase."

He continues with this advice for other auto repair shop owners who want to improve their businesses: "What I've quickly learned in business is that the best bang for my buck is to improve the entire scene. In other words, instead of letting myself get caught up in helping my technician fix a car faster, I'd rather let him take an extra hour, and then I'll spend that hour doing something to improve the whole business. It's getting away from thinking I have to be the individual cog as opposed to being the guy that orchestrates the whole mechanism."

In these tough economic times, Mike says it isn't good enough to do business the same way, only better. "You have to find new ways to do business," he says, "and that's why I'm using Royalty Rewards, Demandforce, Google and the Internet. When you commit yourself to changes like that, it's not always pleasant. But you need to take that step." **ATI**

The Yellow Brick Road That Leads to More Cars

By Eric Twiggs



I have a confession that I have never shared publicly. I am a fan of *The Wizard of Oz*. In the movie, Dorothy finds herself lost in an undesirable place. She spends a great deal of time and effort searching for a magical wizard who would give an instant solution to her problem. At the end of the movie, she discovers that there is no magical wizard and that she had the solution the entire time. In her search for the wizard, she overlooked the ruby red slippers that she possessed. She had the power to change her situation and did not know it.

Like Dorothy, many shop owners find themselves in an undesirable place. The “Oz” for owners is the Land of Low Car Count. Many are looking for a magic solution only to discover that they have overlooked the ruby red slippers known as Follow-up Calls. Let’s review three types of Follow-up Calls that will allow you to escape the Land of Low Car Count: Thank You Calls, Recommended Service Reminder Calls, and Where Have You Been Calls. There are other calls that we teach about such as CSI calls and appointment reminders that are also important. Please contact your coach to get the additional details. Our focus for today will be on the three that I previously mentioned.

Thank You Calls – The purpose of this call is to make the customer feel good and to exceed their expectations. This should be done with every customer no matter how small the ticket. Calling the customer with the small

ticket works because they don’t expect it. It is important to have the advisor that dealt with the customer to make the call. This helps to build and establish the relationship. These calls are to be made two to three days after the vehicle is picked up.

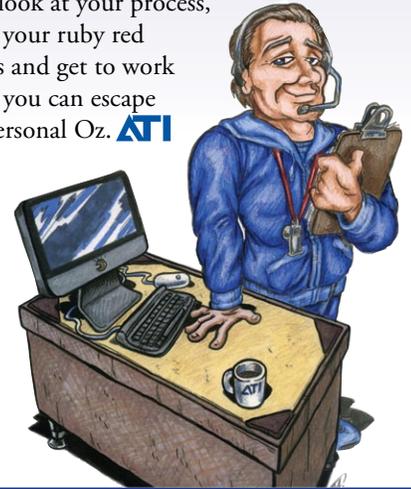
Recommended Service Reminders – This call should be made three weeks after the customer was in for the original visit and declined to have the service performed. It works well to have the person who originally attempted to sell the service make the call. This allows the customer to put a face with the voice and provides the opportunity to answer any questions the customer had from the previous visit. It is always good to know the reason for the customer’s original objection to the sale before making the call. This positions the advisor to be prepared to overcome the objection. Relationship building is important to the success of this call because it gives the call a personal touch. Acknowledging to the customer that you remember something about them other than them not having the service done will enhance the relationship and make the return visit more likely.

Where Have You Been Calls – These calls should be made to those customers that have not come in for service in six months or longer. Did you know that 90% of the customers that are unhappy with service they receive leave the shop without complaining? In most cases they never come back or call to let you know about the problem. Making this call gives you an opportunity to win

back a customer that would normally be lost. Also, when customers purchase a new vehicle, they may have the perception that the dealer has to do the scheduled maintenance. Making the call gives you the opportunity to educate the customer and win back their business.

The ATI coaches have written examples of all three calls, which can be used to promote consistency. If the call sounds robotic or scripted, though, it will not achieve the desired result, so it is important for the advisor to inject their personality when making these calls.

Dorothy has taught us that there is no instant or magic solution outside of the business that will produce more cars. Like Dorothy, you have control over this potential problem. Making the Thank You, Recommended Service and Where Have You Been calls will allow you to leave the Land of Low Car Count. You need to take a hard look at your process, put on your ruby red slippers and get to work so that you can escape your personal Oz. **ATI**



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2. Going Gluten-Free

Those who have pain in the body, arthritis, depression or autism should stay away from gluten – a protein found in some grains which can damage the small intestine. Gluten-free products are not fortified so include plenty of fibrous vegetables and choose brown rice, quinoa, amaranth, sorghum or millet for your whole grains.

3. Low-Salt Diet

If you have high blood pressure or kidney disease or have been diagnosed with heart disease, you should avoid salt; and many do not realize how much salt is in processed or prepared foods, and in restaurant meals. The recommended daily amount is 1,500 mg. (1 teaspoon of salt) and most people are getting twice as much as this. Counteract the harmful effects of salt by getting more potassium from salmon, broccoli, spinach, lima beans, tomatoes and oranges; and choose whole foods at every meal.

4. Vegetarian

A vegetarian diet plan is healthy because it lowers cholesterol and blood pressure, and reduces the risk of developing diabetes, gallbladder problems and cancer. The concern for vegetarians is getting enough protein, iron, calcium, zinc, iodine, omega 3s, vitamins D and B-12. Supplements can help; and make sure you meet with a nutritionist to ensure you are getting everything you need for good health.

5. The Low-Carbohydrate Diet

The problem with this plan is you need carbohydrates for energy and fiber and for your brain to function; and without enough good carbohydrates, your gastrointestinal tract will suffer. Plus if you cut the carbohydrates too much, it makes it too difficult to stick with this plan long-term. Choose good carbohydrates found in the produce section – think WHOLE foods!

See you at SuperConference 2011!

Your Available Training Programs for January and February

January 2011					
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday/Sunday
					1/2
3	4	5	6 San Jose Service Advisor 1 of 2	7 San Jose Service Advisor 2 of 2	8/9
10 Service Advisor 1 of 4	11 Service Advisor 2 of 4	12 Shop Owner 1 of 9	13 Shop Owner 2 of 9	14 Shop Owner 3 of 9	15/16
17 M.L. King Day	18	19	20 Service Advisor 3 of 4 Master Mind	21 Service Advisor 4 of 4 Master Mind	22/23
24	25	26 Shop Owner 4 of 9	27 Shop Owner 5 of 9	28 Shop Owner 6 of 9	29/30
31 Service Advisor 1 of 4					

February 2011					
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday/Sunday
	1 Service Advisor 2 of 4	2 Shop Owner 1 of 9	3 Shop Owner 2 of 9	4 Shop Owner 3 of 9	5/6 Super Bowl
7	8	9 Shop Owner 7 of 9	10 Shop Owner 8 of 9	11 Shop Owner 9 of 9	12/13
14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17 Service Advisor 1 of 4	18 Service Advisor 2 of 4	19/20 Daytona 500
21 President's Day	22	23 Shop Owner 4 of 9	24 Shop Owner 5 of 9	25 Shop Owner 6 of 9	26/27
28 Service Advisor 3 of 4					

Sam's Corner

Renewed Your Goal Poster Lately?

Every day one of us at ATI gets a call from a Service Manager sharing their positive experience about accomplishing something on their goal poster. It could be anything from a new motorcycle to a new relationship. Cutting and pasting your dreams and desires from magazines keeps your goals in front of you every day. The biggest reason most people fail on achieving goals is they don't write them down. The second biggest reason is they write them down, stick them in their desk drawer and never look at them again until they clean their desk out.

I am sure your coach would be happy to keep you focused weekly on your goals if you share them with us. We focus on your Key Performance Indicators every week with you, but there could be a lot more you need to work on. Other areas you want to improve could include your spiritual or mental life, your physical condition, your emotions, your relationships or your living environment. We use a questionnaire to pull out the areas you want to improve by asking "Where were you five years ago, where are you today and where do you want to be in five years in

these categories?" By the time you finish the questionnaire you will find areas that you want to improve. Then you can make a poster, hang it where you see it every day, maybe even in your dressing closet, and let your brain subliminally help you accomplish the changes. So, if you haven't done the "Where you were five years ago" questionnaire lately ask your coach or email me at cfrederick@autotraining.net and I will send it to you along with my goal poster. Try it yourself; don't let your manager have all the fun! 



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