

SEIZING A CHANCE

CAN YOU MAKE HAY WHEN THE SUN ISN'T SHINING WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS?

BY CHRIS "CHUBBY" FREDERICK | CONTRIBUTOR



WHILE the first day of summer doesn't officially happen until June 21, the bountiful days of summer are coming. The world of automotive typically experiences a boom in the four or so months of summer that can rival the other eight months of the year. There is air-conditioning work, overheating vehicles and clients preparing for trips by catching up on their needed maintenance.

Our service advisor instructor, Randy Somers, trained more than 1,000 advisors just last year, and I heard a great story sitting in his classroom. Here's his story.

What Is Making Hay?

My mom used to have a saying, "Make hay while the sun is shining." She said this in spite of the fact that we never made hay, not once in my entire life.

One time when I was younger, I asked my mom when we were going to start making this hay she kept talking about. My mom, with the patience that only moms can have, explained that the saying was an idiom that meant you should take advantage of the opportunities available while you can. Do not put off till tomorrow what you can do today.

Now being curious as a child, I sat and pondered what this meant, and I believe I experienced my first ah-ha moment. I figured out what she was trying to say: I should be playing Nintendo every chance I had, because if I didn't, then one of my



JUST
SCAN IT 

Scan this QR Code to watch ATI's video on your smart phone. Or visit MotorAge.com/ProfitMatters412

GET A FREE SCAN TOOL APP AT:
www.scanlife.com

WHAT IS THE LEAST EXPENSIVE TECHNIQUE TO STABILIZE CAR COUNT? LEARN HOW DENTISTS MAKE THE NEXT APPOINTMENT BEFORE YOU LEAVE!

CHRIS "CHUBBY" FREDERICK [ATI CEO]

sisters could start playing it if I went out to cut the grass.

When I tried to share my ah-ha moment with my parents, they somehow didn't think it was as clever an idea as I did. My mom then explained to me again what the "make hay" statement was all about. She said that sometimes you need to do what you don't want to do, when you don't want to do it. That is how you get things done in life. We all have things we want to do, but we also all have things that we need to do. Balancing the wants versus the needs was a key to mastering life.

Needless to say I never made the Nintendo/grass mistake again, but I did learn a valuable lesson.

This is your hay-making season. As with all good things, it is hard to remember the rainy days when you are playing in the sun. Unfortunately, September is our rainy day and it is on its way. As much as we might wish, hope and pray that the good times last forever, we cannot stop time from marching forward toward our "rainy day."

Who wouldn't want a full daily schedule? Who wouldn't want to take out the peaks and valleys of car count? Who is going to train our customers to do this?

Retrain Your Customers

I vote to start retraining our customers and to start preparing for the dreaded "back to school." What are you doing today to prepare for three months from now? There are a ton of different options.

You can and should start with the basics. Start asking today for the next appointment. The average driver in the U.S. drives between 12,000 and 15,000 miles a year. That is an oil change three to five times a year depending on your recommendation of a service either every 3,000 or every 5,000 miles.

When your customer comes to pick up their car, do you have a process? Is there a procedure for handling this vital relationship-building process? Asking for the next appointment is a simple process, one that gets better with practice.

Pencil Them In for Their Next Service

When a customer comes picks up their car, we should let them know that they are a good customer. Tell them that you, keeping that fact in mind, went ahead and penciled them in for their next service. If they say they do not know what their schedule is in three months or so, tell them not to worry. You just wanted to hold them a spot because you know how difficult it can be to get an appointment at times.

Let them know you will call them one week before their appointment to make sure it is convenient for them. If it isn't, you will just reschedule them. Also let them know that you have a referral rewards program and that you like to do follow-up with all your customers after the service. Ask how do they prefer to be contacted. Now comes a very important fact. You cannot pause after the statement "If it isn't convenient then I will just reschedule it."

You need to move right into the rest of your check-out procedure. Referrals, email addresses, visit us on Facebook, etc. If you pause, then the customer will take that as a sign that you are asking about the next appointment instead of informing them of their next appointment.

Use a Mystery Envelope

A mystery envelope is an envelope that is handed to the customer with the instruction that it must be brought back when they come in for their next service and opened at that time. It can contain all kinds of gifts and offers: a free rotation, a \$5 off coupon, a pair of movie tickets or a free loaner car. Use your imagination or ask your coach for help if you get stumped or need someone to listen to ideas.

This will give the customer something to look forward to and might help your counter person with the appointment process by making it more fun.

We also can re-educate them on what is the best way to take care of their vehicles. Good for the customer, good for the car and good for the company.

Most of us learn by seeing new things in action. We have a video to help you make future appointments before your customers leave from their existing appointment. Go to www.ationlinetraining.com/2012-04 and see it for yourself. 



**CHRIS "CHUBBY"
FREDERICK
CONTRIBUTOR**

Chris "Chubby" Frederick is CEO and president of the Automotive Training Institute. This month's article was written with the help of ATI's Service Advisor Instructor Randy Somers to help readers stabilize their car count.

 Email Chubby at cfrederick@autotraining.net



Free Video Reveals...

Make More Money by Repairing Fewer Cars

- How to calculate how many cars you need to meet your sales goals.
- What your average repair order goal should be for each ticket.
- The secret to generating more profit on fewer cars and provide better customer service.



To give back to the auto repair industry Chubby is making this online training video available for free, visit www.ationlinetraining.com/564 for immediate access. This free video is available for a limited time only.

