

ShopTalk



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September 2012

And Then There's P90X

Have you seen the infomercials for the intense P90X exercise program? The company behind the product, Beachbody Fitness, has sold 2.8 million copies of this program.

Now the same company has come out with another program that's even more intense. It's called the Insanity Workout. I've watched Beachbody's marketing strategy since the first time I saw a P90X infomercial.

The diet and fitness niche is infamous for outrageous claims of obtaining that bathing suit body while eating your favorite foods and sitting on the couch. At the high end, there is the Range of Motion cross training machine that offers a four-minute workout for an investment of \$14,615.00. At the low end are the drugstore wonder pills that promise to suppress your appetite. With almost every product in the weight-loss industry, there is a race toward quick and easy.

Weight Watchers emphasizes the ease of its program. With Nutrisystem you don't even need to go grocery shopping anymore because

all of the food is included. No thinking, just eat and lose weight.

Then we have P90X and the Insanity Workout. Their commercials glorify sweating, they emphasize the work necessary and they illustrate great results. They tell you it's *simple* to lose weight — just follow the instructions — but they never say it'll be easy. Instead, these commercials build up your pride in your accomplishment and in your new body.

I find this to be a fascinating development. While my nickname is Chubby, I've tried to watch my weight, and I'm always interested in ways to improve myself.

In weight loss, it's not enough to have a terrific method to lose weight and get into shape. You have to convince buyers they can and will use your method and get results. Plus, you've got to help customers overcome all their disappointments with the products they've already tried. Most, they'll acknowledge, failed because they didn't stick with it long enough, but regardless, their self-doubt will stand in the way of their buying a new weight-loss tool.

Here at ATI, we share an important similarity with weight-loss companies: We also sell people on improving themselves.

While we all know ATI coaching will improve the bottom line performance of an auto repair shop, we have to convince shop owners that they can do it and that the results will be worth their investment of money and time. Plus, we have to convince them that this time will be different. Just as weight-loss customers have tried many diets, shop owners may have tried other programs in the past. But

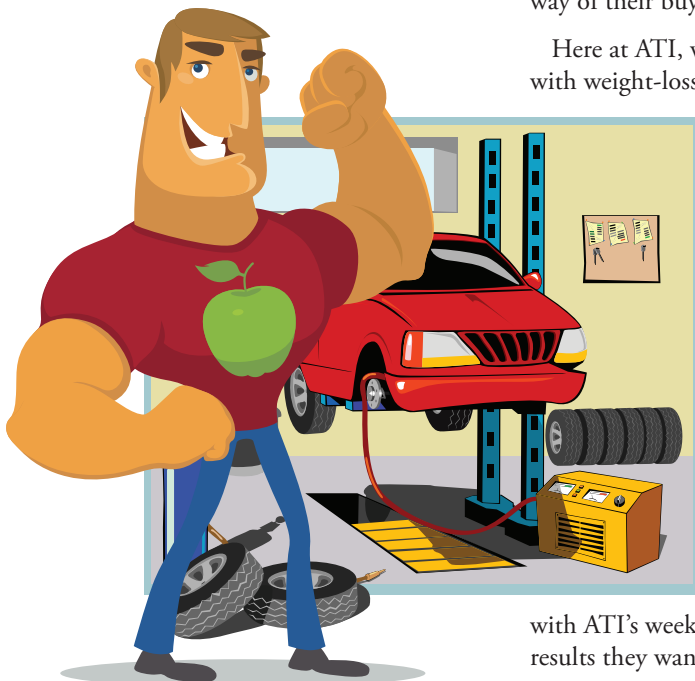
with ATI's weekly coaching, they'll get the results they want.

We share another similarity with P90X, Weight Watchers and all the other weight-loss companies: We have competitors. Although none of them provide ATI's frequency of coaching from individuals who have run a shop themselves, have as structured a training process as we have developed or have as many documented success stories as we have, that doesn't stop those companies from claiming they've got the "secret pill." These people compare what they deliver to ATI's program, even though the difference is as stark as selling an iPhone and then delivering a rotary dial telephone from 1964.

Next time you come across a P90X infomercial, rather than turning the channel to watch SportsCenter repeat itself over and over, watch the infomercial. Study how they compare their product to their competitors' products. Pay attention to how they don't stop their pitch when they are finished describing their product. Rather, they build their buyers' confidence, convincing them they have what it takes to succeed with P90X.

You are providing a critical service; you are repairing and maintaining automobiles that transport their owners to work, home and leisure activities. You help provide a livelihood and a lifestyle for your customers and their families by keeping their cars running reliably. Even so, customers don't always want to invest in repairs. After all, a repair simply restores a car to what it was before the repair was necessary.

That is why it is critical to get our customers excited about making improvements, and happy to invest in themselves by taking action right away. And who knows? Maybe you'll be inspired to shed a few extra pounds while you are at it. **ATI**



ATI Client Profile

Taking a Good Shop and Making It Better

When you grow up on a farm like Walt Eger did, you learn to fix things, including your cars.

“On the farm, everything is done in-house,” Walt explains. “When I was 8, my father had me out in the shop to help repair equipment.”

After a stint in Vietnam with the U.S. Army, Walt was stationed at Fort Meade. When his GTO needed a new clutch, he took it to the BP station near the base. He ended up doing the work himself — and getting a job.

“I kept blowing clutches,” Walt laughs. “I was going to go see my family for Thanksgiving, so I dropped off my car a couple of days early. When I went back, it wasn’t finished. I told the owner I could do it if I could borrow his tools. I threw in a clutch in about three hours. He offered me a job because I was faster than his own mechanics!”

Walt ended up working at the BP station for 10 years as manager and head technician. After that, he went into business with a partner for five years (“a big mistake,” he says, “but you learn

from your mistakes”), and then in 1986, he opened Walt Eger’s Service Center in Severn, Md., this time on his own.

“Your business is your baby,” Walt says. “Most owners will die before they’ll give up control. But as we get bigger, we have to delegate because we cannot do it all ourselves.”

Walt has always done two things: go to training to help improve his business and give back to his community. He has been on the advisory boards of two schools, and he helped design the vo-tech programs to require a prerequisite pre-engineering course that includes math and electronics.

In 2005, Walt’s business was doing well, but after attending two ATI Boot Camps, he decided to get into coaching.

“I was making a decent living,” Walt recalls. “The minute I opened the doors of my shop, I made money. And every five years we doubled the size of our business. So I was never on the verge of bankruptcy. But ATI made me look at the bigger picture.”

Walt acknowledges that maintaining positive change is hard to do, and that is where ATI comes in.



“People have a way of sliding back to their old ways,” Walt smiles. “I’ve learned from experience that if you pay somebody good money to teach you something, then you should listen to him!”

And you should listen even when what your coach wants you to do is hard.

“After you sign up with ATI, the first thing they’re going to tell you is if you have one of those guys that’s your top tech, but he’s driving everybody else out the door, get rid of him,” Walt says. “I had one of those, and I had to fire him.”

After that experience, Walt learned to prevent bad hires by using ATI’s interview process, which includes personality and aptitude tests.

As Walt’s business has made money, he has been careful to invest back into the business, improving his equipment and facilities. >>>

Sam’s Corner

Twenty-Group Members — Fishing Anyone?



More than 250 ATI clients have learned the value of spending time with other successful shop owners they don’t compete with in their market. Many of our clients are building personal, as well as business, relationships through this networking medium that we call 20-Groups. The relationships are as valuable as the new strategies we learn from each other in the 20-Group meetings.

Here’s an idea for a way to spend a little more time together and have a heck of a lot of fun doing it. I would like for you to consider a day of fishing in the Chesapeake Bay on your next visit. The fishing is excellent, and the crew of the Becky D have been taking ATI beginners and seasoned salts fishing for more than three

decades. I will supply the food, nonalcoholic beverages, ice and coolers for your day of networking and fun on the Bay. You split the charter fee and the tip among six anglers for a very reasonable day of fun in the sun.

I have been fishing with Captain Ed Darwin and his mate, Jim Stikney, for more than three decades. As many of you know, I was heavily involved in offshore fishing with my own boat and a charter business serving Ocean City, Md.; Hatteras, N.C.; and Islamorada, Fla. I have met a lot of captains in my day, but not one can hold a candle to Captain Ed. When the Maryland Department of Natural Resources needs striped bass for research in a certain size category, they ask Ed to catch them. The Chesapeake Bay nautical maps are highlighted with structures named after Ed: Ed’s Lumps and Darwin’s Rockpile. At 83 years old, Ed will fish right beside you all day, and when you get tired and sit down he will still be standing. He is a true legend on the Chesapeake Bay! Ed’s mate, Jim, will clean your fish, teach you how to catch big striped bass and entertain you all day while you network with your 20-Group members.

Ed loves families on the boat as well, so if you want to turn your visit to ATI into a minivacation, I assure you that your family won’t

forget the experience. More than 500 ATI clients have fished with Ed over the years, and almost all of them keep coming back each year. The picture in this article is from our last Mastermind meeting, and the happy camper holding the fish is Dave Murphy with Patrick Connell and Steve Ammazalorso. We limited out on big bass that day, which is more the norm than the exception. The season begins in May and ends in November. In the spring, the bigger fish use the shallower water around the Bay Bridge as a staging area before entering the Susquehanna River to spawn. If you can get the fish home, the bass are excellent to eat, as are some of the biggest white perch you have ever laid your eyes on. I am a catch and release fisherman the majority of the time, but Jim is more than happy to clean and bag the fish for you.

Make your reservation before your next 20-Group date because Ed is busy, but tell him Chubby sent you! Ed’s number is 410-974-0263 — give him a call! Next, let us know what day you need lunch, and get ready for some outdoor excitement.



Still Riding the Business Roller Coaster?

By Geoff Berman



You get to the shop early on Monday morning. You smile because you see the lot full with vehicles dropped off or towed in over the weekend. “Today is going to be a busy day,” you think to yourself, and you are right. You are so busy you can’t get it all done. As you move into Tuesday, the shop remains busy. “Boy I hope it stays this way,” you think to yourself. Then Wednesday comes and everything changes. The phone stops ringing and the work flow slows to a crawl or worse yet, stops completely. “What happened?” you think. “Why does this happen so often?” I guess it’s fair to say that hoping for this to change is not going to change anything. The only way to fix it is to take action. You must change the way you look at the problem, which will ultimately change your behavior.

Start with a plan

I’m sure this scenario is not unfamiliar to you. It happens to all shops (some more than others). The question is what is the cause, and how do you stop it? I wonder how many of you start your day with a plan for success. This plan should start with knowing how many labor hours you need to sell to have a successful day (what your staff is capable of), and how many labor hours you have scheduled in. If you know

both of these numbers, then the difference between them, or the labor inventory gap, is what you need to fill to have a successful day. No more, no less. If you have a target to shoot for, you will be more aggressive when you don’t have as many cars, but you will also be more willing to move hours to other days. This will help you create a more even flow, and your staff will stop shortcutting when the shop is overly busy. The opportunities you are missing now will no longer be missed. Surprisingly, you will find it easier to fill that labor inventory gap because of the increased labor opportunities.

End with a plan

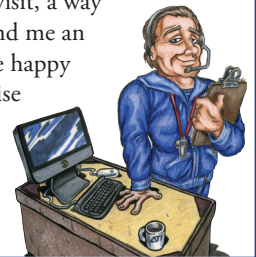
There isn’t a shop that goes through the program that doesn’t in some way struggle with the idea of scheduling the next appointment. It is such a drastic change to most and so foreign to your customers that just the thought of doing something that different causes you to immediately put up a wall and say NO! I understand that fear. Change can be scary. That said, I want you to consider this. If you were able to schedule your customers for their next service, would they come in more often? If they did come in more often, would your schedule be fuller? If your schedule was fuller, would it be easier to fill your labor inventory gap? If you filled your labor inventory gap more often, would you still be seeing the ups and downs of the work flow? Or would the roller coaster slow down or maybe even stop!

So what are we talking about here?

This is all about learning to stop just reacting and hoping for change, and starting to take matters in your own hands to make change happen. Is this more difficult than just waiting for the phone to ring or for a tow truck to drop off a car? Yes it is! My question is, knowing that you’re seeing fewer and fewer broken cars and that the world outside is changing, why aren’t you? It is time to take control of your business again and stop letting it control you! Just look at other similar industries that have changed over the years. I’ll bet you make an appointment to see your doctor and your dentist. I also bet they know their labor inventory. Try to just walk in for maintenance. That’s not going to happen. What about getting your hair cut? Now more and more, appointments are required, for the exact same reasons. The world has changed. It is time we change with it.

Want more?

I will elaborate more on the labor inventory in another article, but if you are looking for a simple but proven way to schedule your customers for their next visit, a way that absolutely works, send me an email requesting it. I’ll be happy to send it to you. I promise this is not the same old thing. It is radically different, it works and you can do it.



>>> “For the first five years, I put all my money back into the business,” Walt says. “Now we’re known as the best shop. We have more equipment than most dealerships.”

Walt gets the word out about his business by using cable television advertising. He refers customers to his website, where they can view the ad as well.

In addition to business coaching, Walt’s ATI coach also gave him some good health advice: to get a personal trainer and strengthen his back. After two years of strength training, Walt says his back gives him very little trouble, so he can turn a wrench whenever he wants to.

“I’m a hands-on guy,” he says. “I do like to get out there and turn a wrench once in a while. It relaxes me.”

Walt Eger’s Service Center stresses integrity and honesty — and that doesn’t come cheap.

“If you go online and look at our reviews, they’re great,” Walt says. “People love us. They’ll

say ‘He’s not cheap, but he does quality work at a fair price.’”

Walt includes a car wash with every repair over \$300.00. His attention to detail and high-quality service is paying off with increased business and growing sales. He credits this success to having great people.

“I’m blessed with a great office manager,” Walt says. “She pays the bills ahead of time. She’s on people if they owe me money. I also have a great service writer. He is pulling numbers like you wouldn’t believe.”

Those numbers? \$1.5 million last year, and they are on track to do \$2 million this year.

“I have open books,” Walt says. “I don’t hide anything from my employees. They get performance bonuses and raises every year. So my guys make very good money, and we’re slammed with business.”

But even though Walt Eger’s Service Center is “slammed,” Walt will tell you he is not.

“When I first got in this business, my average week was 80 to 100 hours,” Walt recalls. “You’re not going to build a future by working only 40 hours a week. Now I’m reaping the fruit of my labor. I go on 10 weeks of vacation a year and two mission trips a year. I can do anything I want. I don’t even have to come to work if I don’t want to.”

Walt says he delegates much of the day-to-day operation of his business to trusted, well-paid employees so he can enjoy his family more.

“I didn’t get married till I was 50,” he says. “My wife had one little boy, who I adopted when he was 1 year old.”

Having come from a family of 15 children, Walt was thrilled when he and his wife had a second child, a daughter.

“Somehow God blessed us with a miracle,” Walt smiles. **ATI**


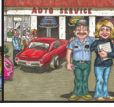

Your Available Training Programs for September and October 2012

September 2012

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday/Sunday
					1/2
3 Labor Day	4	5 Shop Owner 1 of 9	6 Shop Owner 2 of 9	7 Shop Owner 3 of 9	8/9
10 20 Groups Profit Force (Chicago) Rollin in Dough NEW Group 12	11 20 Groups Profit Force (Chicago) Rollin in Dough NEW Group 12	12	13 Master Mind Service Advisor 1 of 4	14 Master Mind Service Advisor 2 of 4	15/16
17 Rosh Hashanah	18	19 Shop Owner 4 of 9	20 Shop Owner 5 of 9	21 Shop Owner 6 of 9	22/23
24 Service Advisor 3 of 4	25 Service Advisor 4 of 4	26 Yom Kippur	27	28	29/30



October 2012

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday/Sunday
1 Service Manager 1 of 2	2 Service Manager 2 of 2	3 Shop Owner 1 of 9	4 Shop Owner 2 of 9	5 Shop Owner 3 of 9	6/7
20 Group The Collective	20 Group The Collective		20 Group Irvine	20 Group Irvine	
8 Service Advisor 1 of 4 Columbus Day	9 Service Advisor 2 of 4	10 Shop Owner 7 of 9	11 Shop Owner 8 of 9	12 Shop Owner 9 of 9	13/14
15 20 Group Austin	16 20 Group Austin	17 Shop Owner 4 of 9	18 Shop Owner 5 of 9	19 Shop Owner 6 of 9	20/21
			California S.A. 1 of 4	California S.A. 2 of 4	
			20 Group European Imports	20 Group European Imports	
22	23	24	25 Baltimore 20 Group 20 Group 20 for the Money Back in Black 20/20 Vision Score for MORE Nothin' But Net	26 Baltimore 20 Group 20 Group 20 for the Money Back in Black 20/20 Vision Score for MORE Nothin' But Net	27/28
29 Service Advisor 3 of 4	30 Service Advisor 4 of 4	31 Halloween			
20 Group Leading Ladies: Chubby's Angels					

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