

ShopTalk



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A Favor for You

As selfish people, we are always thinking about what we want. We want our customers to call us for an appointment, to drop off their car for a quote and to purchase what we recommend.

Our customers are selfish people, too. While they may like us and may be willing to do us a favor, they are much more interested in doing themselves a favor.

Every time you ask your customers to do something, whether it's completing a survey, RSVPing for an event or bringing in their car for service, you must always ask by telling them how the action will benefit them. The survey is so you can provide service suited to their tastes. They are RSVPing to ensure there is a seat reserved for them. And they are bringing in their car for service to ensure the safety

and convenience of their family. The fact that each of these may help you in your business is irrelevant; instead, always talk in terms of what your customer has to gain by doing these favors for you.

In his book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, Robert B. Cialdini says one of the triggers to influence people is reciprocity. If you give something of benefit to people, even if they didn't want it, they are more likely to give you what you want.

A coaching client recently tried out Cialdini's theory with a survey he wanted his customers to complete. He mailed them each a small gift and asked them to complete the survey. It was a terrific little gift, and he received several appreciative notes and positive comments

about it. However, he received few completed surveys. There was no reason to do it; they already had the gift.

So, this client decided to tweak Cialdini's theory of reciprocity. In the next mailing, he told his customers he'd give them the gift after they completed the survey. He received 12 times more responses by withholding the gift than he did by giving it to them in advance. People are always motivated more by the prospect of future gain than they are by reciprocity for what they've already received.

I see this in the association world all the time. Associations will attempt to convince you to become a member based on the great breakthroughs they have already achieved. For instance, they'll ask you to renew your membership for 2012 based on the great breakthrough law they got passed in 2011. That may be nice, but it's not very compelling. Before members pay their dues for 2012, they want to know what they have to gain in 2012. Appreciation for past results isn't enough to motivate them to get out their wallets and join the association.

Always phrase your request so it sounds like people are doing themselves a favor by giving you what you want.

"Can you do me a favor" may get someone's attention, but it's not going to motivate them. Better to give them a personal incentive to get something done. If you want customers to post a review of your shop online, give them a gift or an incentive for doing it.

I recommend you try it. While finding the right words is often a challenge, it becomes a mindset that will serve you well. Everyone around you is more likely to give you what you want when they understand how it will benefit them.



ATI Client Profile

Van Trieu: On Success and Surfing (whenever he wants to)

Southern California. Surf's up, and Van Trieu is headed to the beach with his surfboard. That's something he gets to do a lot more often these days. But that's jumping to the end of Van's story. Let's go back to the beginning.

Aiwa Auto Repair in San Diego is a family business. Van's father started the shop, and after Van earned a degree in computer science, he went back to help his dad.

"My dad was getting a little older, and he needed help at the shop. So here I am," Van says.

Three years ago, Van had little if any time for surfing. The repair shop consumed all his time and energy.

"Things were absolutely horrible before we joined ATI," Van recalls. "I was good at getting customers in, but our profit was low. We didn't know how to do things like courtesy checks, and we were borrowing money all the time just to pay the bills."

Van kept getting mailings from ATI, but he ignored them. Finally he became frustrated enough to give ATI a try.

"People would look at our shop and say, 'Wow, you guys should be doing well,'" Van

says. "I couldn't handle it anymore, so I went to the seminar and signed on."

Van says he researched other shops and read their testimonials before making the investment in ATI.

"It had turned out pretty good for them," Van explains, "and ATI said they guarantee it'll pay for itself. Finally I thought, 'What else have we got to lose? If we don't do something different, we're going to be bankrupt anyway.'"

Far from going bankrupt, Aiwa Auto Repair is now on solid financial footing, and Van can enjoy life in San Diego.

"Work is a lot less stressful now," Van relates, "and it's more structured. The training my service advisor got was invaluable."

Part of Aiwa's new structure is doing courtesy checks on every car that comes into the shop.

"Before ATI, when a car came in for a starter and we saw a cracked hose or cracked belts, we would wait to tell them the next time because we didn't want them to think we were trying to rip them off," Van says. "But ATI convinced us it's not our job to say whether or not the customer can afford the additional repair. It's our job to tell them this hose might break; this



cooling hose might burst later on. Doing the courtesy checks consistently has upped our profits and our pricing, too."

Van describes his old way of pricing as "Oreo" pricing, that is, checking other shops to find the lowest and highest labor rates and then keeping his own in the middle. He doesn't do that anymore.

"We noticed that 95 percent of the time, customers didn't complain about pricing. We inched it up a little bit with no complaints, so we inched it up a little bit more. Still no complaints," Van says. > > >

Sam's Corner

Why 20-Groups?

In 1925, Napoleon Hill described Andrew Carnegie's first master mind group as the "power which you may have when you shall have organized the faculties of your own mind and allied yourself with other well-organized minds for the attainment of a definite chief aim in life."

With fall approaching, it's the time when our eighteen 20-Groups and their 318 members meet at the new office at BWI airport, to share ideas and learn new strategies for their businesses.

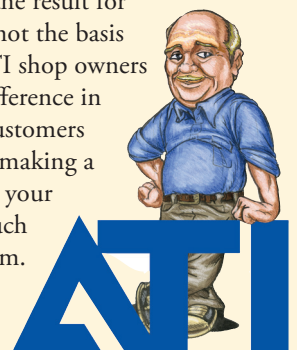
Like Napoleon Hill and Andrew Carnegie, we at ATI believe that helping others is the best way to help ourselves. Twenty-Group members help each other by sharing innovative solutions they have found when faced with new challenges in the changing North American auto repair market. Being a 20-Group member helps you grow both

personally and in your business. The feeling you receive helping other shop owners solve a problem that has been stressing them out and confusing their decision process can be very rewarding. There is tremendous opportunity for every member to give as much as you receive, which is why I beg you not only to attend the meetings but to really be there when you are present. Once you process issues that are important to you, remember that you are also there for the other members in your group and they are counting on you. Try to fight the urge to email, text or take phone calls, and be there for your fellow shop owners.

Being a 20-Group member is a fun way to keep from slipping backwards and a wonderful way to give back to others that need our help. Members all share wanting to be the very best, to become the standard

that others try to duplicate. We all believe our business should enhance the quality of life, not hamper it. Twenty-Group meetings remind us of why we went into business in the first place: to have a better life and to help our customers maintain a reliable car.

At this fall's meetings, talk about how to show your community why you do what you do. At ATI, we act as much from the heart as from the head. We truly believe that although profit is the result for shop owners, it is not the basis of our mission. ATI shop owners want to make a difference in the lives of their customers as opposed to just making a paycheck. Remind your customers how much you care about them.



First Five Minutes

By Rick Johnson



Over the last several years of running a shop and being a coach, I have made a discovery that I feel may be the answer to most problems

in running a business. I don't want to oversimplify this and make it sound like someone has finally come up with the "silver bullet." I have learned that it is not really any one thing you do that makes your business successful; rather, it is a hundred little things you do that contribute to the big picture. But what I have discovered is this: what you do in the first five minutes of each and every thing you do determines the outcome of your actions and whether or not you're going to be successful. So let's dig into this concept of the first five minutes.

Years ago when I first started my shop, I would notice that my technician partner would let the guys struggle for two or three hours on a diagnostic problem. Then after this much time went by, he would go out and spend five minutes and figure out what the problem was. He would at that time come in and tell me how the tech had started off on the wrong path and was going down rabbit trails. I would ask him why not spend that five minutes on the front end of the job and help the tech start down the right path and keep him off the unprofitable rabbit trail.

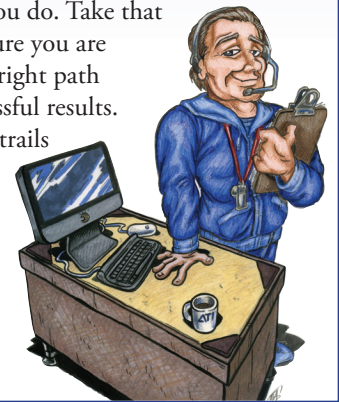
Even back then I was beginning to see the value of five minutes when applied properly.

Recently in my own shop, I saw one of my techs make a big mistake in his first five minutes on an alignment he had just done. He had done an alignment on a Suburban on Friday and found that it drove no better or maybe even worse after he was done. It was scheduled to be redone on the following Monday. Well, Monday morning comes. He pulls the truck back in, re-hooks the sensors, prints out the specs and tells me that the alignment is fine according to specs. I tell him there must be a bad tire or something, and my other tech says he will help him look it over.

In about five minutes they tell me that the control arm bushings are bad, the ball joints are bad and the right front tire is bad! I asked the tech who did the alignment whether he had checked out the front end parts before he did the alignment on Friday. He told me that he had gotten the job a little late in the day, and to "save time" he just did the alignment and did not check out the front end parts. Of course I spent a few minutes going over with him how the five minutes he thought he saved really cost us a lot of unbillable time and most likely a customer. Just imagine, if in his first five minutes he had done the job the right way and inspected the parts, we most likely would have sold the job and had a happy customer. Now to be fair, this is a brand new tech right out of tech school—so a lot to learn to be sure.

I see this all the time with service writers as well. They too have an opportunity in the first five minutes of each and every transaction with the customer. All too often I see writers in a hurry to just get a customer off the phone so they can take another call. Or when a customer is in the shop, a writer may hurry to get them out the door. I prefer that the writer take the time on the phone, talk to the customer and get the concerns handled. Then check the customer's recommended services and offer those as well. When this is done, sales increase of course. But in that five minutes, if writers don't spend that time and check those records, customers may not have time to discuss the recommended services when they show up for the appointment. Then those sales are lost. Why? Because the advisor "saved time" in the first five minutes and did not build on the relationship, did not want to check recommended services. And now look at what those five minutes cost.

So starting tomorrow, I would ask you to slow it down a bit in the first five minutes of everything you do. Take that time to make sure you are starting on the right path to ensure successful results. Chasing rabbit trails has never been very profitable for me.



>>> One of the things an ATI instructor asked Van to do shocked him — but he tried it anyway.

"When I first went to seminars, they told me I had to slow down our car count," Van says, shaking his head. "I was like 'Really?' I mean, you tell any business to slow down their revenue or their customers, you're crazy, you know? But it was the truth. With the staff we have, we couldn't give 70 cars a week the attention they deserve. They were just in and out, in and out, in and out. When you slow down your car count, you're able to focus more on what's needed and what's not."

Van has joined the Automotive Service Council of California, and he and his service

writer and techs attend biweekly meetings for training and support.

"Each city has a chapter, and every other Tuesday we have training or we just sit around and have discussions about what works and what doesn't," Van explains. "It helps a lot with choosing vendors because I can ask someone in the business about who's good and who's not. What am I doing wrong? What am I doing right? So we just exchange ideas. It's constant training for my service writer and techs. It helps out a lot."

So now we can head back to the beach. Van is happily single, surfing at Del Mar on his Al Merrick board whenever he has the notion.

"Now that we have our service writer trained and our staff working better, I can pick up and go surf when I want to," he says. "I choose to be around the shop because I just like being around."



Having gone from being frustrated and eyeing bankruptcy to happily working when he wants to work and surfing when he doesn't want to work, Van has this advice for other shop owners:

"First things first: Don't argue with the coach!" he laughs. "Some ideas might not sound right, but hey, you weren't doing it the right way before. So you might as well give some professionals a try. And stick to the basics. Don't be hardheaded." **ATI**

Your Available Training Programs for November and December 2012

November 2012

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

			1	2	3/4
5 Service Advisor 1 of 4	6 Service Advisor 2 of 4	7 Shop Owner 1 of 9	8 Shop Owner 2 of 9	9 Shop Owner 3 of 9	10/11 Veteran's Day
12 Service Advisor 20 Group 2	13 Service Advisor 20 Group 2	14 Shop Owner 4 of 9	15 Shop Owner 5 of 9 California S.A. 3 of 4	16 Shop Owner 6 of 9 California S.A. 3 of 4	17/18
19	20	21	22 Thanksgiving	23	24/25
26 Service Advisor 3 of 4	27 Service Advisor 4 of 4	28 Shop Owner 7 of 9	29 Shop Owner 8 of 9	30 Shop Owner 9 of 9	

December 2012

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

					1/2
3 Service Advisor 1 of 4	4 Service Advisor 2 of 4	5 Shop Owner 1 of 9	6 Shop Owner 2 of 9	7 Shop Owner 3 of 9	8/9 Hanukkah
10 Service Advisor 3 of 4	11 Service Advisor 4 of 4	12 Shop Owner 4 of 9	13 Shop Owner 5 of 9	14 Shop Owner 6 of 9	15/16
17	18	19	20	21	22/23
24	25 Christmas	26	27	28	29/30
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See Automotive Training Institute Next At . . .

MDA – New Orleans, LA
September 30 – October 2

ASTE – Cary, NC
October 5 – 7

ASRW – New Orleans, LA
October 10 – 13

AC Delco PSC Summit – Arlington, VA
October 19 – 21

AVI – Las Vegas, NV
October 29 – 30

SEMA – Las Vegas, NV
November 1

American Towman Exposition – Baltimore, MD
November 16 – 18

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