

ShopTalk

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ATI
Automotive
Training Institute

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Mr. Right versus Mr. Right Now

By Eric Twiggs, ATI Coach



There's this guy I know that was a district manager with responsibility for a chain of thirteen video stores. One of his locations had five employees, a store manager, assistant manager and three salespeople. One day, this guy had to fire the assistant manager because of a policy violation.

This decision set off a negative chain reaction. The store manager got upset and quit immediately. The next day, salesman number one turned in his notice because he was so upset that the manager was leaving. The following day, both of the remaining sales people quit. The end result was that the district manager had a store with no employees.

The "guy" in this story was me. The reason that I ended up in this predicament was because I settled for Mr. Right Now, instead of Mr. Right. I knew that the store manager wasn't the long-term answer, but I failed to put together a plan to replace him.

Inspired by my failures, I started reading Jim Collins' book "Good to Great." In it, he says that when you are dealing with a business problem, you should focus first on the "who"

before the "what." For example, are you having a low sales issue? Who is doing the selling? Can't get the work out? Who is turning the wrenches? Stuck working IN the business? Who can you hire to replace yourself? Having the right people on the bus and in the right seats is the key to your success. Do you have the right people in place? If the answer is no, what are you doing to find them? Below are the top five resources that our clients are having success with as it relates to finding people:

- indeed.com
- craigslist.org
- Tool raffle with your Snap-on guy
- Career opportunities link on your website
- ziprecruiter.com

Once you find potential candidates to interview, it's critical to watch out for what I call "the law of diminishing grade." According to the law, most candidates will perform a grade lower when hired, in comparison to how they present themselves during the interview.

If you evaluate the candidate as a "C" player, they will probably perform at a "D" level if you give them the job.

Think about it, the prospect is doing everything they can to impress you during the interview, so if you are not impressed at this stage, it only gets worse when you hire them. Hiring someone who presents at a "C" level is a sure way to end up with Mr. Right Now instead of Mr. Right. The key question to ask yourself when interviewing is this: if you were fully staffed, and presented with the chance to hire the individual in front of you, would you make room for them on your team? When in doubt, don't hire!

My decision to settle for Mr. Right Now turned into a nightmare. Using the right hiring resources and refusing to settle for the "C" player will put you on the road to finding Mr. Right and having the business of your dreams.



Sam's Corner

Safe Succession Planning: Part 3

Last month we discussed how to begin to create a written succession plan with your coach by weaving it into your Five Year ATI Roadmap. Then we discussed whether selling your business, or creating a second in command to run it for you, fits your long-term plans. This month we will discuss how to select the second in command. Hopefully, you have a candidate; however, you will need a backup candidate you can start preparing in the event your first choice fails or runs away.

Your first decision is, does your second in command have what it takes, and what will your existing employees think of your choice? If you are determined to appoint a second in command your people won't follow, you will need replacements for those employees that won't work under the new leadership. If it's not the entire staff, a few changes might just improve the operation.

Begin by relooking at your ATI personality profiles in the job factor compatibility section. You might not have focused on the management traits of a potential second in command when you were focused on their sales ability when you hired them for the front counter. These tests are pretty accurate, so look strongly at their administrative traits as well as their management strengths and weaknesses.

If you are going to hire family, remember the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. If you are terrible with details and your significant other backs you up in this area, are you taking your

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Back to School — Are You Ready?

By Kim Hickey, ATI Coach



Back to school is around the corner. What is on your marketing calendar for this time of year? There are many ways you can approach this and the ideas are limitless. Here are a few:

- An absolute must would be to invite your clients in for a “Back to School Courtesy Inspection.” Let your customers know that this is not limited to college students returning to their dorms. There are plenty of new teenage drivers making the daily drive to high school. Many parents drive their children to school, and some are even involved in car pools so they are responsible for the safety of other people’s children.
- Offer a discount if your customer brings in a receipt from school clothing or school supply shopping. It could be a flat percentage or dollar amount, or you could tier the amount of their discount by the amount they spent.
- Raffle off a gift card for an office supply store to help with school supplies.
- Look through your database and see if you have any teachers. If you do, contact them to get a list of needed supplies for their classroom and for any less fortunate students. Designate your shop as a drop-off point and offer a discount (or extra reward points if you have a loyalty program) to any customers that bring in donations.
- Create a reward or discount program for teachers and other faculty from your nearby schools.

Other ways you can take advantage of the back to school season are:

- Contact the schools in your area and see if they will be having any type of career day. Volunteer to be a speaker or presenter. The more kids we can expose our industry to, the better.
- Contact the guidance counselors. Let them know that you would be happy to offer your services for the students that will be looking for jobs, by conducting mock interviews with them. Not only will this be great practice for

It’s That Time of Year Again!

Motor Age Top Shops Contest



It is that time of year again! The annual Motor Age Top Shops contest kicked off today, and Chubby would like you to enter. As ATI shops, we have a responsibility to set the standards for the rest of the

industry to follow. One of the ways we can do this is by entering contests such as this one. Too often, subpar shops win awards because no one with real substance entered. Let’s work together to set the bar and give the judges shops such as yours to review and vote on. If you place in this contest, it will not only be great publicity for you and your shop personally, but other shops will be looking at you as an example. If we can inspire more shop owners to be better, there will be fewer of those shops around that perform substandard work for ridiculous prices and make a bad name for our industry.

More benefits and reasons for filling out this contest application:

- It is good practice for gathering information and completing forms. You

may have to do something similar to be included in a business plan or loan application someday.

- It gets you to REALLY take a look at your shop and analyze what you are doing well and what needs to be improved — when filling this out you are in essence looking at your shop through someone else’s eyes and point of view.
- It is a project that you can work on with your staff, so it works as a team-building exercise.
- You are showing your staff that you are proud of them and what you all have accomplished together.
- If you place, you are giving your employees (and customers) something to brag about and another reason to be proud to work for you.

If you read the application and say things to yourself like “our shop is not clean or organized enough to send in pictures” or “we don’t have current equipment” or “we don’t have any community presence,” then I would say to you “WHY NOT?!!”

The deadline for submission is August 29. Instead of waiting for the last minute, why don’t we pick a deadline of August 1?



the students, this will be great practice for you. When the interview is done, have the students fill out a survey on you and your performance as well.

- You might consider hiring a student part time who is involved in the work-study program. This would be a very inexpensive way to have someone update your Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, etc., on a daily basis.

- If you have any colleges or trade schools nearby, contact them and see if they have any marketing interns (you can volunteer yourself for the mock interviewing here as well). Not only are interns free, they are involved with all the latest and greatest social media and other marketing ideas. A couple of my clients have liked their interns so much, they hired them when the internship was up. **ATI**

Is Your Business Alive?

By Mike Warren, ATI Coach



Early in my business development, my coach asked me this question. I thought he was crazy, it's a building with four walls, no it's not alive!!

At first glance this seems like a

silly question, but with a little thought it starts to raise questions of its own. Would my business exist without customers or employees? Could it survive a move to a new location? How healthy would it be without good record keeping? How healthy would it be without a good appearance or good relationships in the community? How healthy would it be with internal disorganization or stress? The very nature of these questions seems to imply the existence of something that's alive. So I cut my coach a little slack and pursued the question "Was My Business Alive?"

All of these questions are asked from the same perspective that we apply to our own health. Digging in even deeper, I realized that my business had different requirements at various stages of its development, just as we do as we progress through life.

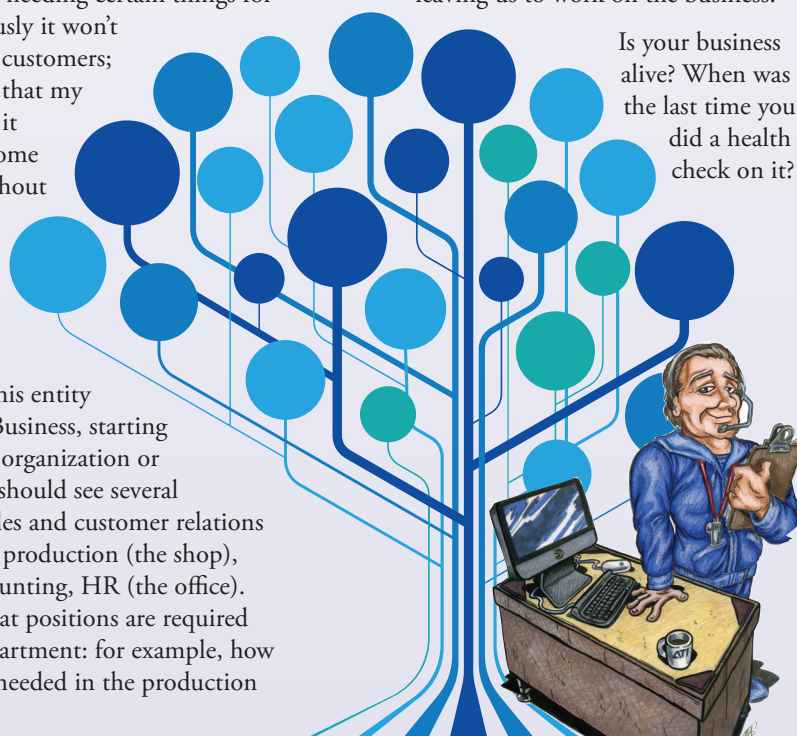
So what does all this mean? It means that we must look at our business as a living breathing entity needing certain things for survival. Obviously it won't survive without customers; and at the stage that my business was at, it would have become very anemic without employees since that would require me doing everything.

Let's look at this entity known as Our Business, starting with the overall organization or Org Chart. We should see several departments: sales and customer relations (front counter), production (the shop), marketing, accounting, HR (the office). Then we ask what positions are required within each department: for example, how many techs are needed in the production

department and at what skill levels? Next we need to look at and identify the specific requirements of each position within each department. Without writing these requirements out, we could end up with someone who is great with accounting trying to diagnose a check engine light, or someone who is great with a trouble tree and schematic trying to sell maintenance. In other words, just because we have warm bodies in the building doesn't mean they are equipped to move into any position in the company and have the business continue to be healthy. Last is to show how all the departments are connected by outlining them on an organizational chart. It now becomes easy to see the parts of the body that make up our business.

When our businesses were new and young we did everything; our Org. Charts were simple because our name was in every position. It's not that these positions didn't exist, it's just that we did everything. As our businesses mature they grow and have different requirements. We start turning over one position at a time and hire people to fill those positions, teaching and instructing as we go to ensure that the company remains healthy by making sure each position is healthy. As this process continues, we eventually hire someone for every position, leaving us to work on the business.

Is your business alive? When was the last time you did a health check on it?



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significant other with you? The odds will be good that genetics will make your children very similar to you in strengths and weaknesses. If you had someone handling your details, chances are your new second in command will need the same help if they have your genes. Many of us have a burning desire to have our family succeed us, but make sure it is what they want and they are ready at this point in their life to assume the role. I have seen many cases where the parents push this too soon and burn out the kids before they are ready for the position. In this case, the kids would be a better backup second in command while you put your energy into hiring or developing someone who is more ready for the position. Your coach would be the perfect mentor in the selection process and would probably be better than you in transferring the skill to your new second in command, whether family or new hire. Most of us have never been trained to teach or coach, so the odds that we can do this ourselves are not good, especially in the case of family.

Next, you will need to write out your organizational chart, and don't forget to put your customers at the top of the chart. Everyone is working for your customers. Then, who are your people responsible to support, and who will be supporting them? Remember, it is not about ruling them; it is about leading them. Your new second in command will need to attend all the owner's classes and will more than likely need more than one visit to the leadership portion of the training. You have unlimited training you have paid for, so invest a little more in you and your people by sending them back to school.

Next month, we will discuss your job descriptions, standard operating procedures and how to anticipate obstacles.

C. L. Frederick

— Chubby



Your Available Training Programs for August and September 2014

August 2014

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

				1	2/3
4 Service Advisor 1 of 4	5 Service Advisor 2 of 4	6 Shop Owner 1 of 9	7 Shop Owner 2 of 9	8 Shop Owner 3 of 9	9/10
11	12	13 Shop Owner 7 of 9	14 Shop Owner 8 of 9	15 Shop Owner 9 of 9	16/17
18 Service Advisor 3 of 4	19 Service Advisor 4 of 4	20	21 California Service Advisor 3 of 4	22 California Service Advisor 4 of 4	23/24
25 2nd in Command 20 Group	26 2nd in Command 20 Group	27 Shop Owner 4 of 9	28 Shop Owner 5 of 9	29 Shop Owner 6 of 9	30/31
					
 					

September 2014

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

1 Labor Day	2	3 Shop Owner 1 of 9	4 Shop Owner 2 of 9	5 Shop Owner 3 of 9	6/7
8 Staffing & Hiring 1 of 2	9 Staffing & Hiring 2 of 2	10	11 20 Group Baltimore Potomac	12 20 Group Baltimore Potomac	13/14
15	16	17 Shop Owner 7 of 9	18 Shop Owner 8 of 9	19 Shop Owner 9 of 9	20/21
22 Service Advisor 1 of 4	23 Service Advisor 2 of 4	24 Shop Owner 4 of 9	25 Shop Owner 5 of 9	26 Shop Owner 6 of 9	27/28
Service Advisor 20 Group Profiteers	Service Advisor 20 Group Profiteers				
29 20 Group SLC	30 20 Group SLC				
Service Advisor 3 of 4	Service Advisor 4 of 4				

Potomac 20 Groups

Group Number	Group Name
# 3	Rollin In Dough
# 11	Profit Force
# 12	Money Masters
# 14	The Buck Starts Here

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