

# ShopTalk

www.autotraining.net

705 Digital Drive, Suite V, Linthicum, Md. 21090 • 1-888-471-5800



October 2014

## Do Not Read This!!

If you're smart you'll ignore this article

## Do Not Read This!!

By Geoff Berman, ATI Coach



Are you kidding me? I told you not to read this. What are you doing? I'll tell you what you're doing. You're thinking if I'm crazy enough to take the time to write and publish my thoughts and then tell you not to read it, then it must be important, and you want to know what the heck this lunatic has to say. Well you're right, it is important and I am a bit crazy!!

Now that I have your attention, I first need to tell you that after you read this you must not say to yourself "That was interesting. I think I'll do that!" and then put it off. If you do, it will be too late and you will miss this opportunity and will have to wait until next year. That would be a shame because this is really good!!

It is a rare occurrence when I talk to a client that is not in some way concerned about car count. I have also found that this is becoming more and more an issue. Our industry is changing, and it is becoming more and more

complicated to find customers and even harder to find the ones that are buyers. Most of you are right now shaking your head in agreement. If you are, then what I am about to say is for you; and if you're not, then I'll let you listen because you might actually learn something too.

Some of you don't, but most of you do send some sort of mailer to your customers for the holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years'). Most of you that do send a mailer include an offer of some kind. If you do both of those things — send a card and make an offer — then you would probably tell me you get a pretty good response. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if you told me this is the best marketing strategy you do all year. What I want to share with you is either how to take what you're doing and make it even better, or how to get started doing it the most effective way you can.

*Continued on page 2*

### Sam's Corner

## Safe Succession Strategies: Part 6

Over the past six newsletters I have outlined how to build a safe succession strategy for you and your family. Based on requests from your ATI surveys, we have created a new course at ATI to help those shop owners who realize that the only safe succession plan is the one that is written down with backups for every employee in your business. Your ATI coach can walk you through a worksheet that will help you get started on your written plan to enable you to work with your accountant, attorney, financial advisor and significant other on this incredibly important final step to your leadership role in your business.

Over the years we have seen many of our clients pass away unexpectedly and leave their business to a family that has not been properly prepared to handle the transition. Last year one of our long-term Mastermind clients, Bob Cutler, was killed in an automobile accident; and it made me realize it's not just about profit and dreams, it's also about protecting the family. So in 2014 we will be awarding the Bob Cutler Succession Plan of the Year Award to the best-written plan in 2014. We hope this succession plan and all the others created at ATI this year will serve as a catalyst to motivate all of us to plan for the inevitable so our families have a safe direction to carry on.

*Continued on page 3*



# Why Let Your Marketing Fall Prey to Autumn Boredom?

By Kim Hickey, ATI Coach



October is a jam-packed month for events and marketing opportunities. Monroe is promoting their "Shocktober" event. It is National Car Care Month, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and Halloween falls in October too.



"Shocktober" is the perfect opportunity for you to really promote knowledge that suspension is not just comfort, but safety. Most advisors who are not successful selling suspension say it is because of the price.

With Monroe's "Shocktober" promotion <http://www.monroe.com/en-US/promotions/> you can offer your customer a rebate. If you don't use Monroe products, most of the other vendors will work with you on some type of promotion if you mention the Monroe one to them. This is also the perfect time to go through all your declined shock repairs and call your customers and invite them to come in and take advantage of the special rebate.



At [www.carcare.org](http://www.carcare.org) you can find information on hosting a car care event. In their Industry Tool Box you will find Car Care Guides you can purchase to give to your customers, a place to register your event, press releases and promotional materials for your event. If you do not wish to hold an event or clinic, at least put together some type of handout to give your customers during the month that

includes maintenance schedules and car care tips, and highlights safety items. You could include a list of must-have items to keep in your vehicle at all times. In conjunction with the list of items, why not make a basket of the items to raffle at the end of the month? Or better yet, make more than one and sell them for customers to give to their loved ones. Miles Auto Service in New Jersey does a teen safety clinic annually and has a great handout outlining the must-have items. Fred at Miles called his basket a "Trunk Survival Bag."



Breast Cancer Awareness Month is something that everyone knows about. Have fun promoting it. Use pink paper for the month for your repair orders. Rod's Japanese Auto Care in Bellingham, Washington, created a pink ribbon watermark that prints in the background of their repair orders. For a fundraiser/promotion, you could donate a portion of the sales to a national or local organization that supports breast cancer patients. To help you find one, send an email blast to your customers asking them if they



are involved in any organizations. Requests for an organization to partner with could also be made on Facebook, your Google+ page and other social media. This is a great opportunity to spread awareness to both MEN and women. Studies show there are about 2,240 new cases of breast cancer in men a year, with 410 men in the U.S. expected to die from it. There are also many young girls and women that have heard about breast cancer, but don't really know any facts about it, or all the symptoms. Consider putting together a flyer with statistics and what symptoms both men and women should look for. You might even think about

having this information printed on the back of your repair orders for the month.



Halloween is a fun time of year. Contact the schools and sponsor a contest for best jack-o-lantern drawing. For your adult customers, have a contest for best carved jack-o-lantern. Hang the pictures up on a board and have your customers vote on the winner. Martin's Auto Repair in Arizona used a Halloween theme to ask for reviews. They put together a s'more package using pumpkin marshmallow peeps and wrote "We need S'MORE PEEPS to review our work." The same type of package could be made asking for "s'more referrals." Be sure to include referral cards and explain your referral program fully to your customers. Make sure your customers know what is in it for them.

Last but not least, if you are giving your customers thank-you gifts, any of the above-mentioned themes could be incorporated. Cadillac Specialists in Florida do an incredible job with thank-you gifts, and Mike and Scott say they couldn't put a dollar amount on the value this brings to their customers' experience or the smile the gifts put on their customers' faces. During October, Mike likes to mix it up. He gives out some thank-you gifts with a Halloween theme and some with a Breast Cancer Awareness theme.



Make sure you are utilizing social media to the fullest. Post any and all of the things you do on Facebook, Google+, etc. If you would like a copy of the handout Miles Service gave out or a copy of the pink ribbon watermark, please email me at [khickey@autotraining.net](mailto:khickey@autotraining.net).

## Do Not Read This!!

*Continued from page 1*

### Why Does This Work?

First, we need to understand why this works. There are many reasons. Here are what I believe are the four most important ones.

- Regardless of your religion, this is the time of year for giving, so to give me a gift during this time just makes sense.

- Most people proudly display their holiday cards for all to see, and for many months, so it hangs around for a while.
- For most shops this is typically a slow time, and this can be a great source of business during these slower months. (Remember I said it is likely that what you already do works. That's why you keep doing it.)
- Customers tend to love it and really appreciate you for sending it.

### A New Offer



Now let me ask you a question. Have you ever received a gift card that you didn't keep? The reason for this is because this card is like holding cash. It has value! Our brains do not see it the same way we see a coupon or an offer for a percent off. >>>

# If I Could Be Like Mike

By Eric Twiggs, ATI Coach

“We’re talking about practice. I mean listen, we’re sitting here talking about practice, not a game, not a game, not a game, but we’re talking about practice.”

– Allen Iverson, Basketball Legend



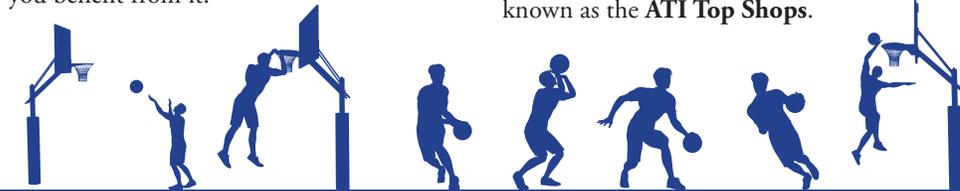
I am a huge Michael Jordan fan. I have always admired his ability to lead his team to victory, even when they were behind late in games.

Gatorade had a campaign that encouraged everyone to “Be **Like Mike**.” I always laughed when I saw the commercials because I figured that being like Mike was impossible. After all, he was born with the skill of leading comeback wins, right?

My perception changed after watching a recent interview where he spoke about his rookie year in the NBA. He mentioned that during **practices**, the coach would have the players divided into two teams. Whenever the team that Michael was on built up a big lead, the session was stopped.

Michael was then switched to the losing team and had to **practice** leading that team to victory. This was why he performed so well when the real game was on the line. **Under pressure, he performed the way he practiced.**

Doing the same job every day isn’t the same as practicing. Some of the worst employees that I have ever encountered were the most experienced. **Deliberate practice** is the key that unlocks the door to greatness. So what is deliberate practice and how can you benefit from it?



>>> Logically we may know that \$20 coupon is the same as that \$20 gift card, but it doesn’t matter. We see the coupon as worthless. You may have even seen printed on a coupon “worth 1/5th of \$100.” Is that really worth \$20? Better than five times out of ten I’m going to keep the gift card over the coupon.

## What About Referrals?

This marketing strategy is typically only used to reach out to our existing customer base.



the people we want referrals from? **Now this is the part you have to really pay close attention**

Have you ever considered asking for referrals? The recipient selection here is important. We should only be sending holiday cards to our top 20 percent or so. If you are, isn’t it fair to say those are



Continued from page 1



## Mistakes That Sabotage Your Plan

1. Not making succession planning a priority
2. Not developing a full plan
3. Not considering the changing workforce
4. Not effectively communicating your plan
5. Not getting organizational support
6. Not effectively monitoring your plan
7. Not providing enough support for your successor



## To Keep Your Plan Alive

1. Build a competency culture
2. Construct an all-inclusive succession plan
3. Involve managers in planning and get their support
4. Link succession plan directly to your ATI Roadmap
5. Link succession plan to your mission statement
6. Turn your plan into an ongoing process
7. Plan for change
8. Emphasize the development of internal candidates
9. Maintain an external network of candidates
10. Continually monitor and adjust

*C. L. Frederick*

– Chubby



Continued on page 4

# Your Available Training Programs for November and December 2014

## November 2014

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

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

## December 2014

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

<b>1 Service Advisor</b> 1 of 4	<b>2 Service Advisor</b> 2 of 4	<b>3 Shop Owner</b> 1 of 9	<b>4 Shop Owner</b> 2 of 9	<b>5 Shop Owner</b> 3 of 9	6/7
8	9	<b>10 Shop Owner</b> 7 of 9	<b>11 Shop Owner</b> 8 of 9	<b>12 Shop Owner</b> 9 of 9	13/14
<b>15 Service Advisor</b> 3 of 4	<b>16 Service Advisor</b> 4 of 4	<b>17 Hanukkah Shop Owner</b> 4 of 9	<b>18 Shop Owner</b> 5 of 9	<b>19 Shop Owner</b> 6 of 9	20/21
22	23	24	<b>25 Christmas</b>	26	27/28
29	30	<b>31 New Year's Eve</b>			

Copyright © 2014 by the Automotive Training Institute, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Printed in The United States of America. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be produced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a data base or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the Automotive Training Institute.

### Do Not Read This!!

*Continued from page 3*

**to:** Over the years we have been doing this, I have found that clients are seeing anywhere from 4 percent to 20 percent new customer response. That doesn't count the 20 percent to 80 percent response from the customers they already have. Add that to the fact that average tickets on both sides are in most cases two to four times what they typically are when a new customer comes in for the first time. (After all, they are referrals, aren't they?) That's not even the best part. Most shops have reported a better

than 50 percent retention rate with the new customers that came from the holiday referral. Compare what I just said to what your cheap oil change offer brings you and you can clearly see why this is something you cannot put off.

### What's Next, Geoff?

There is a lot more to this program than I can mention in this article, and since you have read this far I know you are interested in learning more about it right away. Simply email me now at [gberman@autotraining.net](mailto:gberman@autotraining.net) and I will send you all the details and instructions on what to

do and where to purchase everything you need to get this done before the holidays.

### To Those That Have Done This in the Past

There are many of you out there that have done this already, some for several years in a row. If you have done this before and have not shared how it went for you, **I want to know!** Even if you have shared in the past, please share again. Email me what this strategy has done to help boost your car count during the holidays and to bring you some quality new customers. **ATI**

AUTOMOTIVE TRAINING INSTITUTE