

ShopTalk



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Upcoming Classes:

Shop Owner

Align Your Shop for Profit

September 9, 10 & 11
October 7, 8 & 9

A.B.M. "Always Be Marketing"

September 16, 17 & 18
October 14, 15 & 16

Leadership Mastery

September 23, 24 & 25
October 28, 29 & 30

Service Advisor

The Role of the Service Advisor

August 31 & September 1
October 5 & 6

ATI's 7 Step Sales Process

September 28 & 29
October 26 & 27

The Role of the Service Advisor- West Coast

October 15 & 16

Service Manager Course

October 12 & 13

Collision Course

Collision Repair Production

October 19 & 20

Keys to a Successful Collision Repair Business

October 7, 8 & 9

Always Be Marketing

September 16, 17 & 18

Collision Estimating & Sales P1:

September 21 & 22

Collision Estimating & Sales P2:

September 28 & 29

The Disconnect

Eric Twiggs, ATI Coach

"What is necessary to change a person is to change his awareness of himself."

~Abraham Maslow

The year was 2002 and I had the world by the tail. I was a district manager with responsibility over 17 automotive service locations. Out of 81 districts in the company, mine ranked first in net profit percentage to sales and third in sales increase. The company gave its employees the opportunity to give 360-degree feedback to their supervisors, evaluating their strengths and weaknesses.

Since I was consistently receiving awards and "kudos" from my superiors, I was looking forward to the upcoming review my managers were about to give me. I figured this would be just another feather in my cap, confirming what I already knew about my leadership abilities. Before the review went out, my boss asked me what I thought about the morale in the district. I replied: "We are a team and everyone is on board!"

The actual results told a different story. My managers hammered me! Several made comments about how I was too hard on them. Others mentioned how I always harped on the negative. There were comments stating that I didn't recognize my people's accomplishments. Why was my perception of my leadership and theirs so different?

I was the victim of something that happens to leaders known as "The Disconnect." This occurs when you and your team's perceptions of your leadership are vastly different. It may be the real reason you haven't been able to attract the right technician to come and work for you.

This happens because we tend to have an inflated view of our own abilities. According to a study done by Success Magazine editor Darren Hardy, 75

percent of people in leadership positions believe they are in the top 10 percent of their field when it comes to leadership ability. The math just doesn't add up!

I thought I was in the top 10 percent, until I received my managers' feedback. Below are two steps I took to get connected with reality.

Three Ups and Three Downs

I had monthly meetings with my team. At the end of the meeting, I gave everyone a sheet of paper instructing them NOT to put their names on it. On the front, they were to list at least three things they liked about my leadership and the district (three ups). On the back, they would put three areas they felt needed to change (three downs).

I took note of what they liked and kept doing those things. The negative feedback coming from multiple managers gave me insight on how my direction was really being perceived. If they shared the same negative opinion, it meant that I needed to change my approach.

For example, five people said that I didn't provide enough recognition. Based on this feedback, I started presenting certificates to my top performers at the beginning of every meeting.

Bad news is different from fine wine because it doesn't get better with age! Most of the major morale issues I have encountered in shops, started out as minor problems that didn't get addressed in a timely fashion. Implementing the three ups and three downs process will reduce your stress and allow you to address problems while they are smaller.

Exit Interviews

When someone left my organization, I conducted an exit interview. I wanted to know why they were leaving and if there was something I could have done better. In addition to doing the exit interview personally, I would have *(continued on page 3)*

Sam's Corner

Stupendous News!

SuperConference 2016 Registration Is Open for Business

I'm sure you've heard by now that registration for SuperConference 2016 is open. This year, the conference will be held in Florida at the beautiful Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort from March 16 through 19.

If you've been to any of our SuperConferences, you know we put on the best show in the business. World-class speakers, informative Round Table sessions, more networking and fun than we should be able to squeeze into three and a half days — and all in the luxury of a destination resort. If you haven't been to SuperConference yet, well, what are you waiting for? But don't take my word for it, ask any other shop owners you've met at ATI.

SuperConference officially kicks off at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 16, 2016, with our 20 Group Summit and SuperConference Orientation, but for those of you planning to arrive early we will be offering all-day Inshore and Offshore Fishing Charters on Tuesday. We're also going to have a 5K Fun Run/Walk on Wednesday morning to benefit our SuperConference charity (to be announced later this fall).

After the Welcome Reception on Wednesday evening, we'll be hosting an optional Dine-Around on property. This is the perfect time to catch up with old friends or make new ones as you break bread together in one of the Omni's signature restaurants.

General Session kicks off on Thursday with our best SuperConference speaker, yours truly. After lunch, we'll be offering Round Table sessions hosted by our coaches. Later that evening, meet with top vendors in our industry and enjoy cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at our annual Trade Show.

Friday morning kicks off with a bonus round of Round Tables before we resume General Session with more of the greatest speakers and topics ever. After lunch, spend some time learning from some of our preferred vendors at two Bonus Breakout sessions. Then, join us on the beach for a SuperConference tradition, the Beach Olympics! That evening, we'll be hosting our Scavenger Hunt in historic downtown Fernandina Beach.



We'll be providing a continuous shuttle, so after the Scavenger Hunt you will have time to take in some local cuisine at one of the many local restaurants.

Saturday morning we'll wrap up our best SuperConference General Session ever and you'll have the opportunity to see the sights with one of our Optional Tours. Tours include: the Segway Tour, the Amelia Island Trolley Tour, a half-day Inshore Fishing Charter, and the Amelia Island River Cruise. For more information click on "details" during your registration. Saturday evening join us for our Re-Engineered Awards Banquet as we recognize the industry's top shops. We wrap the evening up with great entertainment. Then, join us at Afterglow — the SuperConference After Party to say goodbye to friends old and new.

Check with your coach to see what incentives you qualify for. We've been overwhelmed by the response since registration opened and expect to sell out again this year, so please don't wait to get registered. SuperConference is not to be missed! Ask anyone who attends year after year.

If you need help with your registration, please call Helen Sullivan at 301-575-9127.

C. L. Frederick

—Chubby



“The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary.”

~Vince Lombardi

(continued from page 1)

my HR person speak to the employee.

I found this to be helpful, because it gave the former employee a neutral person to speak with. Sometimes they would give my HR person valuable feedback that they wouldn't share with me.

As an ATI coach, I have done several exit interviews for my clients' exiting employees. I did one in particular where my shop owner's best technician named Jack was leaving to work for the competitor down the road. The technician told the owner he was leaving the shop for more money.

Jack told me a different story. He said the real reason for his resignation was because the owner's negative approach made him impossible to work for! I dug deeper and discovered that the service manager and the other technicians at the shop felt the same way.

Thanks to the exit interview process, we were able to address the owner's leadership style, which was the root cause of his staffing

issues. He now has regular team meetings and is doing a better job of attracting and keeping good people.

Based on these results, I recommend having your ATI coach conduct an exit interview with your employees who decide to leave.

Conclusion

As a result of making these changes, my 360 results dramatically improved. The following year, my ratings in each 360 category were well above the national average! I found it easier to attract top talent, and to get my people to do what I was asking them to do.

If you implement my three ups and three downs, and follow the exit interview process, you will overcome "the disconnect," and reconnect with your goals!

P.S. If you would like a copy of a 360-degree feedback survey, so that you keep "the disconnect" from happening to you, email etwiggs@autotraining.net, and I will send it.

The Coach's Corner

Language Barriers

José Cruz Sr., ATI Coach

Is there a real language barrier in your area? Actually, there just may be. Two of the top five languages spoken in the world are English (#2) and Spanish (#3).

Most of us live in areas where we have a diverse clientele. How is this dealt with, especially when one cannot speak to the customer in their native tongue? How can you as a shop owner effectively communicate your point to someone with limited knowledge of the language? Is it possible to find someone that is bilingual? Of course, but such a person is a hot commodity. You in fact could be that hot commodity. I have found that person to be one that most companies look for. One that can communicate between two languages, English and Spanish. It's not always easy. Different dialects are usually a problem, or in some cases the speed of how fast someone speaks. But you have tools such as Rosetta Stone, or Google Translate, or even night-school classes.

As someone who has operated multiple auto-related repair shops, I have come across several people with Latin descent who are limited in their English vocabulary. The need to slow things down in order for them to comprehend and get an accurate description of their vehicle's problems can be trying. The language barrier can cost you a lot of money.

Here are some tips for you that may help you with the "language barrier."

1. Conduct surveys within your demographic area. You can perform a Wikipedia search online, drive around the area or

even take a walk. You would be surprised at how diverse your area truly is.

2. Use the technology you have. If you have access to the Internet, you can learn a language. Google Translate is a great resource for you to be able to translate. Be careful, there are words that aren't used in everyday conversation and do not translate properly, for which you will need clarification.
3. Use visuals. That's right; it can be a lot easier if you escort you customers to their car. We are visual creatures, and if you can show them what's wrong with their vehicle it is easier for them to understand. And perhaps they can even tell you the correct wording for whatever the problem may be.
4. Avoid using vernacular/slang. Not everyone can understand certain terminology that we tend to use from time to time. Keep it simple, easy to comprehend wording.
5. Hire a bilingual employee. This will be the most difficult but not impossible. Take out a want ad for an employee who is first experienced in automotive and is also bilingual. Make it known this is what you are looking for. Do not discount a possible great employee if he or she doesn't speak another language. But make it known this is your primary focus. Look for a counter person and even a technician.
6. Don't be shy! You may know some words or phrases that can help you get past that language barrier. Words you have picked up over the years can help you out.

If you follow some of these simple tips, you will overcome the language barrier in ways that assist in your success of creating a profitable business.



For All You Crafty Clients!

Kim Hickey, ATI Coach

I saw this adorable idea in a magazine. I also love the idea of her "Blue Christmas without you" jar because it could easily be changed to "It would be a blue Christmas without you." I think any of these jars would be a great way to give out referral cards.

The thing about these jars and the other great ideas that some of you come up with is that besides showing your appreciation for your customer and the business they give you, you are giving them conversation pieces. These types of gifts are not just gifts, they are literally conversation pieces. These are items that your customers will show and tell all of their friends about. Ask yourself when was the last time you received something special, regardless of how small, from someone you purchased a service or product from. Talk about creating a customer experience and not just completing a transaction!

Let your imagination run wild. This would be great for awareness months as well. I can picture jars with pink candy and maybe a pink bow with a little card inside giving possible life-saving information about breast cancer. If you make any themed jars, please don't forget to send me pictures and the contents of what you put in them so that I can share your brilliant idea with everyone on our team.



Make it yourself!

1/2 cup M&M's Minis
8 oz. wide-mouth mason jar
12 wrapped caramels
Small apple
1 tsp. water
Lollipop stick

- To assemble jars to give as a gift, dump M&M's into bottom of jar and top with wrapped caramels. Screw on lid and place apple on top. Using baker's twine, secure apple atop jar.

- To make caramel apples, remove M&M's and place them inside lid. Unwrap caramels and place in jar. Add water and microwave for 1

minute at 50% power. Stir and microwave for another 15-30 seconds at 50% power; stir until smooth. Be sure to watch carefully.

- Insert stick into of apple, then dip apple into melted caramel. Use knife to coat entire apple in caramel. Dip and roll apple into M&M's. Set on parchment paper and enjoy! Makes 1 apple.