

ShopTalk



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October 2016

Upcoming Classes:

Shop Owner

Leadership Mastery

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A.B.M. Always Be Marketing

Nov. 2, 3 & 4 | Dec. 14, 15 & 16

Service Advisor

The Role of the Service Advisor

December 1 & 2

ATI's 7 Step Sales Process

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ATI's 7 Step Sales Process - LAX

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Please be sure to check out the exciting new feature of your ATIconnect App!

With a tap on your phone screen you can now view the most current class schedule, check for class availability and register for classes! Class registration has never been easier!

What Are You Building?

By Erik M. Twiggs, ATI Coach

During my days as a district manager, I had the opportunity to witness the building of several new locations. The builders would arrive on site, and we would review the drawings. I could see how many bays we would have, the layout of the customer waiting area and total facility square footage. As I observed, I noticed an interesting trend. **The actual building process began the same way every time.**

They never started with the exterior lighting. They didn't begin by building the roof. They didn't list plumbing as the priority. **The building process always began by establishing the foundation.** I often wondered why they began this way.

And then it hit me: **You can't expect to have a strong location, if it's built on a weak foundation.**

You may be thinking: "Nice story Eric, but I don't need a foundation. What I need is new customers!" OK, I get it. Starting with the foundation isn't as sexy as the latest car-count-changing "silver bullet."

I challenge you to consider the following trend: During the tough times, **those who cry the most about low car count, are those with the least amount of focus on their foundation.** Meanwhile, the owners who've built the right way, are experiencing success even though it's an election year and all the vendors say it's slow!

So what foundational **focus items** should you consider? Stay with me because I'm **building** toward the answer.

People

While conducting research for his book "Good to Great," Jim Collins examined the performance of over fourteen hundred companies over a forty year time span and found eleven that produced great results on a consistent basis. The CEOs of these organizations had one trait in common: They began the **building process by focusing on the people.**

Collins uses the "the bus" metaphor to describe their step by step process. Their first priority was getting the right people on the bus. Next, they focused on getting the wrong people off the bus. Last, they made sure the right people were sitting in the right seats. **Great leaders don't focus on where "the bus" is going, until they address getting the right people on it and in the right seats.**

Take a hard look at your service writers, technicians and support staff. If you could turn back the hands of time, would you enthusiastically rehire everyone based on what you know today? If you answered "no" for 50 percent or more of your staff, it's an indication of a fragile foundation.

(Continued on back page)

The Coach's Corner

It's Not the 80's Anymore

Out of Date Habit #11: I'm Not Interested in That. I'm Getting Rid of the Car!

Geoff Berman *Coach/Instructor*

In the previous two articles in this series, I stressed the importance of making sure you do the best job you can having the customer leaving feeling the way you want them to, on the initial phone conversation and when they leave after they drop off their vehicle. In this article we are going to review how you want them to feel after leaving the sales call. How many times have you heard a customer say, "I'm getting rid of the car," only to see them return a few months later still driving it? Doesn't that bother you? Don't you think there has to be a better way? Well I hope you do, because there is a better way. Consider this:

Why does this happen?

Have you ever heard the quote "Buyers are liars"? We are all buyers of something and we have all lied when confronted by a salesperson. Say you walk into your local Best Buy store because you are in the market for a TV. You have already been online, you know what you want, and really don't want to talk to a salesperson at this point. You walk through the door and the salesperson says "Can I help you find something?" Your response, "No thank you. I'm just browsing." You just lied. We all do it. It is easy to justify a small lie such as that, but it is a lie nonetheless. So let's say the salesperson approached you in a different manner. "Can I show you to the computer section?" You might say "No thank you. I'm looking for a TV." This is more likely to put the salesperson in a better position to stay with you and helps save you from that lie. The same is true with you. You need to learn how to not make it so easy for your buyer to lie.

How you do this?

You tend to spend way too much time focusing on the car. That really is the biggest issue here. As your customer, I don't care what my car needs, if I don't see how it fits my needs! This is the most overlooked step in the sales process. If you don't know my needs, you cannot connect them to what the car needs. That is why when you call me after doing a courtesy inspection and tell me you see this or that, the tech is recommending this or that, I say I'm getting rid of the car. You have not shown me how what my vehicle needs fits my needs.

In the last article we went over how to find out how long the customer plans on keeping the car. If you did that properly at the drop you did a better job building rapport and finding out my needs and my relationship with the car. All you need to do now is tie this to what the car needs. I have told you I need to

get another 100K miles from this car, or I'm going to drive it till the wheels fall off. All you have to do is lead with that as you approach the sale. Here is an example of what I mean. After you have said hello and are ready to discuss your findings you say something like this. "John, earlier today when you dropped off your vehicle, you made it clear this is a car you love and plan on driving till the wheels fall off. I'm just making sure I understood your intentions properly." If you got it right, which you will, they will respond in a very positive way. "Yeah, I certainly can't afford a new one and need to keep this one going as long as I can." There are two reasons why this step is important.

Reason number one:

Remember I told you "Buyers are liars." Because you addressed the elephant in the room and got this neat little fact out in the open before you asked me to buy, it is now much more difficult for me to tell you I'm getting rid of the car. You are one step closer to making a sale.

Reason number two:

A not-so-obvious benefit, but equally important, is that because you repeated what I told you earlier, I know you are listening to me. This is especially important when you start to make any recommendations because I know you have my needs in mind when making those recommendations. This builds trust and brings you another step closer to making a sale.

Putting it all together

Now all we have to do is bridge the two together. Ask the "when was the last time" question and tie it to their need to keep this car going. "John, when was the last time you had the transmission serviced? Do you know?" It is likely they don't know and will respond something like this: "I'm not sure" or "I really don't know." You then reply, "So it's been a while, is that right?" "I guess so," they say. "John, we recommend your transmission be serviced every 30K miles. With 80K miles on your vehicle, you're almost three services behind at this point. To get you that additional 100K miles you're looking for, do you see any reason why we can't take care of that for you today?" If you use a product like BG or Winn's, this is also your opportunity to sell the lifetime warranty to add even more value, if the mileage is low enough. When you connect the customer's needs with the car's needs, not only will more people buy, but fewer will leave feeling like you are just trying to get in their pockets and lie to you.

Next month we will discuss best practice when delivering the vehicle back to the customer.

Like what you have read? Want more? Email me at gberman@autotraining.net and I will send you more info on bridging the customer's needs.



Sam's Corner

Identity Theft Prevention and Awareness Month

Kim Hickey, ATI Coach

Looking for giveaways that your customers will actually use? Some of you have been victims personally or professionally of check fraud, identity theft, credit card fraud and other scams. We spend a lot of time promoting vehicle safety to our customers, why not spread awareness about cyber and electronic theft safety at the same time?

Karen and Pete Donald from Donald Auto Repair in Hollywood, FL, participated in an event where one of their promotional giveaways were aluminum card cases with their shop information printed on them. Their customers loved them. I see these cases in stores everywhere now, often right at the cash register with a sign that says something like "Protect your wallet" or "Protect your identity." I think you could promote vehicle and identity/credit card safety together. We want our customers to have courtesy inspections performed and with the new year approaching it would be a great time to promote safety. Is promoting vehicle safety new to our industry or our marketing campaigns? No, but combining it with something else may garner some attention while keeping it fresh and relevant.

This is something that would work great for social media. Reach people searching for RFID wallets, security questions and other related items by including them in your quote strings in your Google+ posting. Give out imprinted aluminum card cases to your customers with tips, facts and information about preventing theft of cyber, identity, credit card information, etc.

As a way to help defray some of your expense for the card cases, go to other local businesses and offer to

include their business card and/or a coupon in the wallet when you are giving them to your customers, for a fee. This is a win-win for everyone. It would help to decrease your cost and it would help promote the businesses that participated. If there are any coupons or discounts distributed in with your cases, it would be a great way to enhance the perceived value of your gift: "Stop by for your annual inspection and receive a credit card wallet that blocks RFID frequencies, filled with \$XX worth of coupons and specials." Put an even more personal touch on it and insert an inspirational quote among the cards you put in the wallet.

There is a wealth of information on the internet about RFID and how to minimize your risk. There are also many companies where you can purchase imprinted card cases or protective sleeves. I have included a link below for one of them (I do not have any knowledge about this company, I just included a link for the first one that came up in my search).

<http://www.4imprint.com/search/rfid/product/120060/Aluminum-Card-Case>

Contact your local police station and see what information, flyers, etc., they have available on this subject. In addition to social media, cover it in your newsletter. You should also contact your local newspaper and TV stations and see if they are willing to do a story on this and give you some coverage. This is a great "We care about our customers and community and want to do our part in keeping not only our customers' vehicles safe, but their identity safe as well" kind of message.

C. L. Frederick



**Everything in life is somewhere else,
and you get there in a car.**

~E. B. White



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What Are You Building? (continued)

Processes

So once you get the right people in the right seats and get rid of the wrong ones, your foundation is set, right? Wrong! It's hard to drive your shop forward if the right people don't know what to do. This is why having written processes is a critical part of your foundation.

Your processes are solid if you have the following three items in place: **1. an updated employee handbook with detailed policies, 2. current job descriptions for every position, 3. written operating procedures for every task.**

The more routines you have in writing, the less dependent the business will be on your presence. **Your routines will set you free.**

The key is to work on finding the right people **while** you're establishing the right processes. *Don't make the mistake of allowing "perfect" to become the enemy of "progress."* Getting the right people in each key position takes time.

If you delay your search until you've **perfected** your processes, you won't be prepared if you lose a current employee unexpectedly, or if you suddenly become unavailable. As mentioned in a previous blog, betting that you'll always be available is much riskier than recruiting for your replacement.

Summary

As anyone with beachfront property will tell you, the best time to establish a strong foundation is BEFORE the storm comes. Building your business with strong people and processes will allow you to prosper while your competitors complain about the economic conditions. What are you building?

P.S. I have a new list of competency-based interview questions to help you get the right people on your bus. Email etwiggs@autotraining.net and I will send them to you.