

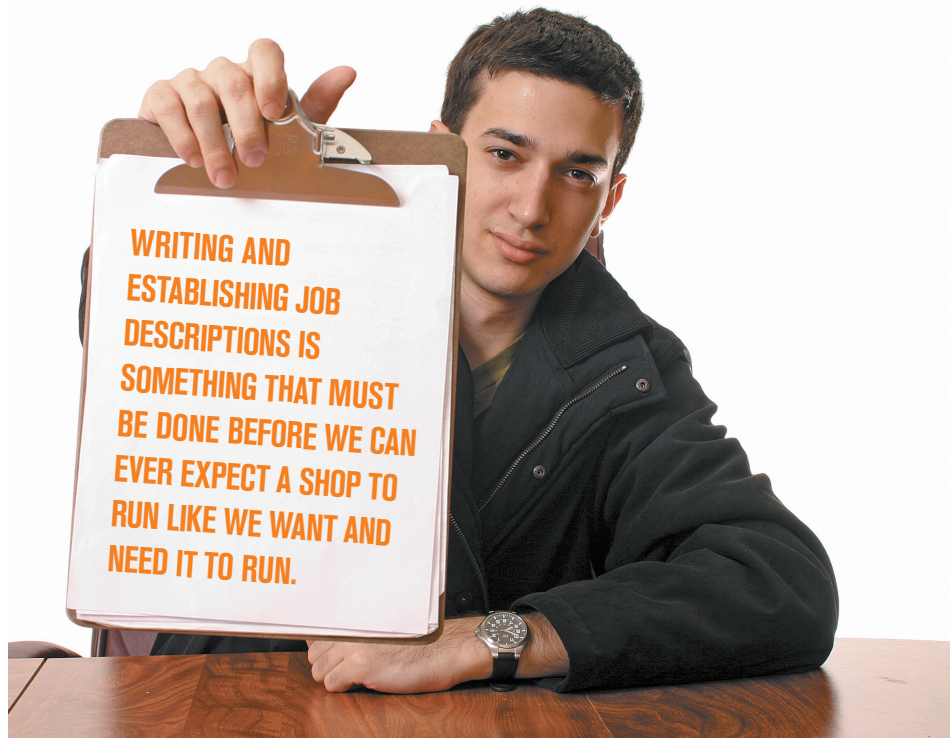
The importance of job descriptions in your shop

Running a business would be so simple if everyone just did their job

We have all heard the benefit of working on your business rather than in it. Not only will profits increase but your free time will increase, and staying the best shop in your market forever is a distinct possibility. Let's listen to how shop owner and coach Rick Johnson recommends getting started or staying on this journey.

During my 23 years as a shop owner with an untold number of employees and over eight years of talking to hundreds of shop owners, it finally occurred to me the other day that maybe — just maybe — things would run a lot smoother if our employees would just do their jobs. And, of course, if we as the owners would do our job of being an owner — leading, holding ourselves and our employees accountable and adhering to job descriptions and shop policies. How much better would our business machine run? Where to start?

How about job descriptions? Oh, you don't have job descriptions? You don't have shop policies and standard operating procedures? So maybe your plan is that everyone should just know what you want done by osmosis? Or better yet, maybe you can be heard saying another favorite statement that I hear all the time, "Common sense should let my employees know better than that." Let me ask you: How is all that working for you? In my opinion common sense died in about 1994! Having no job descriptions and no shop policies is just not acceptable today.



Start working on the business

Writing up and implementing job descriptions and standard operating procedures is something that needs to be done and established before we can ever expect the shop to run like we want and need it to run. If we want our employees to do their job and do it the way we want, we must first establish what it is that we want. It sounds simple, and for the most part it is, so then why is it so hard for us to get it done?

Maybe the reason is that we are so busy working in the business that we don't take time to work on the business. Maybe we have the disease of "If it's going to be done right, I have to do it myself." We convince ourselves

that we need to work harder — put in a few more hours, burn the midnight oil and then somehow it will all come together and everything will be perfect. If that were true, then 99 percent of the shops out there would already be the *Motor Age* top shop of the year every year, because 99 percent of the shops I know already work harder and put in more than a few more hours and burn the midnight oil.

Instead, let's stop the madness, make some changes, decide to work on the business and write up those job descriptions, some shop policies and take control. We need to establish what we want and put what we want in writing. Once we establish what we

need, we must hold those employees and ourselves accountable to what our jobs are and follow through. Just imagine with me for a few minutes what this would look like, could look like.

The service advisor’s job

For example, the service writer does what a service advisor should do. In my ideal world the service advisor knows that his or her primary job on the phone is to get the customer to set an appointment. He or she knows that they are never to give a price over the phone or to try to diagnose a problem. They have been trained to ask for an appointment and to get the customer on the schedule. That’s it, period. That is their job description for phone conversations — man, that’s simple.

And once the customer comes into the shop, the service advisor knows that his or her job is to meet the customer, shake their hand, go to the car with the customer, get the mileage, perform a walk-around with the customer and then come back inside and pull up previously recommended services along with a new maintenance schedule.

Then it’s the service advisor’s job to address the customer’s concern, offer a courtesy inspection and assign the correct technician to work on the car. The service advisor knows that his or her job is not to decide if the car is worth spending money on or whether or not

the customer has the money to invest in the car. Service advisors must do their job and dispatch the car to the proper tech and wait for the diagnosis and courtesy check results. Then they must write up the estimates and ask for the sale.

The technician’s job

The technician knows what he or she is to do because, again, it is in writing what the job is. He or she knows that the job is to properly diagnose the customer’s concern and put in writing the correction of the problem, to perform the courtesy inspection and recommend all needed repairs based on what is broken or worn out and maintenance that is due by mileage. The technician knows that it is not his or her job to decide whether or not the car is worth fixing or whether or not the customer has the money to fix the car. The technician just does his or her job and turns in the repair order to the service advisor.

The shop owner’s job

Finally, the shop owner does his or her job as well. The shop owner is working on the business and not in it. They are not micro-managing every little detail because they have hired, equipped, trained and delegated great employees to work in the business. He or she has written up and implemented job descriptions and shop policies and holds the staff accountable for results

— results that are very predictable in a business that has great employees who know what their jobs are and what is expected from them.

So where do we start? Where do we find the time to work on the business when the business demands so much of our time? How do we turn our focus from working harder to working smarter on the business instead of in the business? Maybe the place to start is with learning what our job is as an owner.

For the most part, most of us started in business with little more thought than just starting a business. Fixing cars for us was the easy part. If just fixing cars was the answer then we would all have a well-run business already. Managing the business is the hard part; it is the part that no one told us about. You can start by turning to trusted sources for information and guides as to what to do as an owner

For a limited time go to www.ationlinetraining.com/2016-07 and we can send you a leader’s operation checklist that can get you started down the road to helping you run your business instead of the business running you. Imagine if you will, a business where everyone just does their job — does their job the way you want it done, because you have written up clear and concise job descriptions and held them accountable. **ZZ**



CHRIS “CHUBBY” FREDERICK is the CEO and founder of the Automotive Training Institute. ATI’s 115 associates train and coach more than 1,400 shop

owners every week across North America to drive profits and dreams home to their families. Our associates love helping shop owners who are having the same struggle as many of them have had, and who are looking for the same answers — and in some cases looking for a lifeline. This month’s article was written with the help of former shop owner and current coach Rick Johnson.

[Chubby at cfrederick@autotraining.net](mailto:Chubby@cfrederick@autotraining.net)

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