



Issue 1

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Superconference in Scottsdale A Huge Success!!!

By Chris Frederick

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I want to thank the 300 attendees for trusting us to create the most successful Super Conference in our history. The ATI staff operated at lightning speed and made the event go like clock work for a solid two days. Richard Meneg kicked off the meeting introducing our special guest, Santa Claus, who fell off the roof to give all the Men and Women a new book entitled 212 Degrees. This was Brian Canning in disguise! With a beautiful video depicting the details of the book on the big screen with many decibels of high quality sound the event was off to warp speed. Chubby introduced the new leadership course for owners by conducting a workshop to begin the process of getting our troops to follow us into battle. This was extremely well received and begins to be performed at the Institute every month in our 2007 schedule. Tom Blaisse demonstrated the new content to make your manager a better leader to give us the opportunity to work on it not in it. The new course will be scheduled quarterly at the Institute in

2007. Bryan Stasch recapped the best operational tips from his 2006 teleconference to bring us back to the basics that made us great! Our first Mastermind Group spent the afternoon sharing their best success stories of 2006 while discussing what it takes to be a great leader. The evening awards dinner was quite the celebration with dinner consisting of shrimp, lamb

morning we all laughed with Mitch Schneider's funniest stories which were really funny. Mitch poked fun at himself and shared stories never read in the Industry magazines. Up next was Ken Brookings of ATI West who taught the secrets of "Selling Your Business For the Highest Price" so you can retire like a big dog. Ken spent two hours with exacting detail on how



and beef. Everyone was really tuned up to see the evening entertainment put on by the comedy group, *The Laughing Stock*. We spent time prior to the event teaching the actors our business and they were simply hilarious. Maybe it was the alcohol but I have not laughed that hard in years. Special thanks to Karen Dee for talking me out of the hypnotist. The next

to prepare for this journey. Then, Geoff Berman, shared the most successful customer acquisition strategies of 2007 and unveiled the new ATI ON Line Marketing Software to help you create your own ads online. Contact your coach for your personal password to this exciting new product. We announced a new Mastermind

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Group forming at ATI in 2007 which filled up immediately with applications to participate. Richard raffled off an all-expense paid trip to next years superconference with many other gifts in tow.

I almost forgot the best part, the auction was awesome! There were plenty of great early and late day deals. Many consigners lost money on their no reserve offerings. I was bidding on the floor at 11:30pm Wednesday night and almost brought a Camaro; as if I needed another one. I am sure you heard the big news about Carroll Shelby's Cobra which went for an unbelievable 5 Million! It was really exciting to watch this action live.

We are sending feedback forms out for suggestions on next years location so if you are interested please tell us where to go! Unless you want us to go somewhere Bad!!!



Micro-Management: A Recipe For Mediocrity

By Brian Canning



Frequently I write articles that represent issues or challenges experienced by our clients or our coaches. A consistent issue that I run into would have to be that destructive species of leader, the micro-manager. I have seen far too many of these individuals over the years, twice worked for a world champion micro-manager and would enthusiastically cry the plague of inadequacy with which they infect our industry.

Owners, or for that matter Service Advisors, who would do it all themselves, who would find it very difficult to trust their employees, who try very hard to control and monitor the minutia and minute detail that make up their job or business are

destined to be frustrated and fall short of their goals and expectations. Along with the difficulty they have in trusting people, they are generally unappreciative of those who work for them and in their manic drive for perfection, they discourage initiative and often suffer huge turnover. Do not hate these poor, lonely, lost souls but run like hell if you see one and abandon any ideas of changing or redeeming them. You will find them decidedly uncompromising and resistant and they will see your attempts as proof positive of your inadequacy. They are entirely happy in their misery.

I have witnessed loud, boisterous owners and Service Advisors stand in front of large groups of angry technicians and not only move them but have

them happy and anxious for the journey and seen soft-spoken owners have crews tripping over themselves to accomplish all that has been asked of them and more. That is the positive effect of leadership that you have heard me expound upon many times over the months and is key to any of us achieving our goals. Effective leadership is driven but caring, consistent and adaptable. An effective leader will allow his people to contribute, will provide an environment that sets expectations & holds people accountable, and is tireless in accomplishing his or her goals. A micro-manager could accurately be described as an anti-leader in that he has little or no use for the people around him, is only willing to employ people because he wasn't born with eight arms and would never do something as vile as complimenting extra effort or a job well done. If he compliments, he might have to give a raise and if he were to do that, he might give the employee the idea that he was something other than worthless, but most frightening of all, the employee might show initiative or pay attention to detail and expect to get compliments all the time. The micro-manager sees turnover as the result of unfortunate human failing, and with little effort toward understanding why he has difficulty in holding onto staff or earning their loyalty, he quickly finds his low opinion of people reinforced again and again and again. He just doesn't get it. Very often, due to the necessity of having to have some permanent staff,

he ends up paying exorbitantly for key personnel and generally suffers disappointment even in these courageous souls. They just never seem to measure up. The truth, of course, is that the micro-manager is never satisfied and pretty much dislikes people due to his lack of trust and his inability to lead or inspire. He is, and will forever remain, his own worst enemy.

I do not care if we are running a quick lube or General Motors, we need to lead, motivate and grow our teams and succeed through our collective efforts. We need to delegate, we need to be willing to set standards, to hold people accountable, and we need to be willing to demand excellence. In my experience, the human being is the greatest as well as the most challenging creation on earth. People are frustrating, at times beyond understanding but remain by far, our most important asset. They will surprise you with their capacity to grow and learn and improve but just as easily, they will confound you and for good or bad they are the absolute key to our success. Love them, guide them, trust them and lead them. I promise they are worth your greatest effort.

Leadership is defined as the process of influencing others to accomplish the desired results by providing purpose, direction and motivation. Sounds simple enough, however leadership doesn't happen unless you are willing to jump in, unless you have a mission and somewhere to go. Be a leader and take your people along for the ride.



ATTENTION SHOP OWNERS AND MANAGERS:
If you have something you would like to share,
e-mail your coach or ATI at
office@autotraining.net.

First In A Series: Dysfunctional At the Top?

By George Zeeks



This article is designed to help shop owners and coaches understand and identify the problems

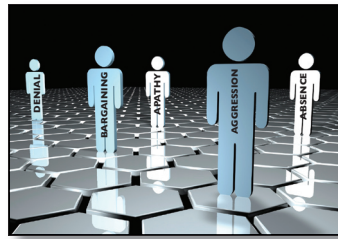
that shops are having today. In the upcoming months, we will look at the aspects of dysfunctional shops, their symptoms, effects, and the actions needed to correct the situation. This is designed to be used reactively to diagnose problems, but more importantly as a proactive tool to help identify problems when they arise and the solutions are easier to affect.

All organizations go through a period in which they become dysfunctional, some make it through this period and some do not. The problem can stem from the top of the organization, its structure, or from the employees themselves.

Research on organizational dysfunction is the study of the organization as an entity, a living, breathing organism comprised of all its members and of the parts from which it is made. We must examine the organization as a whole and then break down the component parts, then we can see where the problems begin and the effect it has on the entity as a whole. The breakdown in the organization shows itself during periods of stress but the root causes are already in place before they begin to manifest themselves. Most of the data that I have found has been focused on the corporate level and much of that does not apply in this instance. I have tried to condense the research in the field and filter it down so that we get a clearer picture of what happens specifically in the automotive field.

Dysfunctional Employees!

If we start with the members that make up the group, we may be able to get a clearer picture of what happens as the organization begins to break down. The breakdown does not have to be total. It can begin with a single person, section, or an area in the body as a whole. The symptoms are basically identical, regardless of the number of people involved. Each employee of an organization has a psychological contract with their employer. A change in the



way the organization/employer operates results in a change in the contract with the employee. This contract has to be reestablished, with both people and groups agreeing that the change is good and will benefit everyone involved. If we do not have the "buy in" of the all of the members then a specific chain of events begins to occur. We may see a steady progression through all of the steps or it may appear to jump through a step. That does not mean that the employee did not go through a step, it just means that the symptoms were kept hidden and never became outwardly apparent. The four basic steps are as follows:

1. **Denial/bargaining** - the employee/group may have become used to the tasks that they are responsible for. The longer the employee has held those tasks to be primary to their job function, then the more likely they are to be resistant to change. As new or different

priorities begin to affect their role in the organization, the "buy in" on the importance of the new functions must be obtained from the employee. Let's use an employee named Bob as an example. Bob is happy in his job and his current tasks involve task A and B. The organization has decided that, for the good of the organization, Bob will also have to perform task C and task D. If Bob is not happy with the new tasks and no new "contract/buy in" is established, then Bob may very well choose to perform some of the tasks but not all of them. He may choose to perform task A and task C but not task B or task D. He may attempt to negotiate his new role or worse, just deny the task altogether in the hope that it may be overlooked. The beginning of any change in the organization must include close measurement and individual accountability for the tasks that have been assigned. Without the measurement and accountability, Bob's denial goes unnoticed & we begin to move to the next stage.

2. **Apathy** - Bob has not been held accountable for his lack of compliance to the new roles he has been given. No action has been taken. Bob begins to become apathetic to all of his tasks. His self image of his importance to the organization begins to falter. He is becoming a "clock monkey". He comes to work each day and performs some or none of his tasks but may appear to be working as usual. The sooner his accountability to the tasks assigned is questioned, the more likely that Bob can be saved. A new psychological contract can still be established but the likelihood of that has dropped to approx 75%. The longer he is able to continue without being "found out" the more likely it is that he

will move to the next stage.

3. **Aggression** - Now that Bob's lack of performance has become apparent, he is confronted by his supervisor as to why he has not been complying with the new order. Bob may start by blaming others for his lack of task attention. It may be a coworker, the new systems in place, or even his supervisor. The aggression may escalate to verbal or physical outbursts that stem from his frustration with the changes that have taken place. Again, the longer the employee has been entrenched in the old systems, the more extreme this stage may become. This stage and its symptoms depend largely on the nature of the individual and may even be perceived as "whining" if the person is introverted and not able to openly express his opinions. At this point, we have approximately a 50% chance of saving Bob by establishing the new "buy in". If Bob's aggression is not recognized, perhaps by a supervisor that avoids confrontation, then Bob will move into the last stage.

4. **Absence** - this stage may begin with Bob coming in late, leaving early. It may progress to the point where Bob is calling in sick or even no-show, no-call with no explanation. This may coincide with aggressive behavior when confronted with his absence. At this point, there is only approximately a 20% chance of saving Bob as a functional employee. The root problem of all these steps again, goes back to measurement and accountability for the tasks assigned to him. The lack of the employer/supervisor to perform their job appropriately has allowed a once contributing member of the organization to decay to the point of termination.



ToolBox Announcement. **Automotive Training Institute**

Online Marketing Toolbox

By Chubby

In our continued efforts to deliver the necessary tools to our clients, I am announcing the launch of the ATI Marketing Toolbox. As you are well aware, it is very difficult to grow your business and increase bottom line profits if you are not seeing enough vehicles to support your efforts. This remains a huge challenge today, but with this valuable marketing tool, we will be in a much better position to serve our existing customer base

with timely retention pieces and referral & acquisition pieces that will allow you to attract new customers. As we launch the Marketing Toolbox, you will note 20-30 templates that you can modify to represent your business. As it grows and is expanded, you will be able to access dozens of eye catching professional marketing pieces that will assist you in your car count efforts.

In assembling this toolbox, we have joined forces with

Millennium Marketing & with their assistance have developed a one of a kind marketing tool that will allow you to create, print and mail professional quality marketing pieces and have them on the street within days of inception. Another exciting feature is that you will be able to access and set up your personal toolbox from your existing data portal. This does not mean that suddenly we can stop doing our courtesy checks or that we do not have to worry

about tech productivity but it does represent a huge step in marketing and gives us some very potent tools in maintaining and growing car count.

You will have the ability to upload your logo along with credit card, vendor & association logos and greatly enhance your current marketing efforts. We anticipate dozens of templates being available which will allow you higher visibility marketing.

Seven At the Top, *Congratulations to All!*

This Month's Winners are:

Joseph Giniel

Budget Brakes & Service
15140 Middle Belt Road
Livonin, MI 48154

Doug Whiteman

George's Sierra Shell
9684 Sierra Avenue
Fontana, CA 92335

Buzz Nasey

Ted & Al's Service Inc.
624 Stanyan Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

Dan & Danny Salter

Pro Trans Inc.
807 Pulaski Highway
Bear, DE 19701

Mel Burgess

Hildebrand Auto Diagnostics
464 College Street
Woodland, CA 95695

Kevin & Patty Leiby

Leiby's Automotive Service
1655 Quail Road
Fulton, MO 65251

Walt Eager

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