

# Sales is a full-contact sport every single day

Win the game with these three strategies

If you have been in the business any length of time, you know sales is not like riding a bike. Depending on how the front counter is feeling, that day's sales can fluctuate. I was listening to Coach Paul Marsh explain how to stop that fluctuation from happening, and he began by saying:

I am a football fan and one of the aspects I respect and appreciate the most is the dynamics and effects of a great coach. In the movie, *Any Given Sunday*, Al Pacino gives an epic speech to his team at halftime in the locker room. I've watched this scene countless times. I never get tired of hearing him build the enthusiasm and passion of his team. He sends his team back out on the field fired up and ready to win.

What I truly loved about the speech was his reference to the game being a "game of inches." It really is. You need 10 yards for a first down, which is 30 feet, which is 360 inches. Every inch really does count. Reverse it and every inch you allow on defense counts just as much. Don't believe me? Think back to those markers and chains being dragged out on the field. The tension building as they check to see if a team who went for it on fourth down keeps the ball or loses possession. Most of the time it is a matter of inches.

We operate in a world where our ultimate goal may be based on a yearly sales and profit goal. We can divide that goal into 12-month segments. Then into an average of 4.3 segments. Finally, into 5 or 6 segments depending on whether you are open 5 or 6 days a week. You can take that number down to an hourly

or per-minute sales goal — I think you get the point.

What I'm asking you to consider is that winning, for shop owners, is really a "Game of Contacts." Every contact is either pushing you forward towards your goal or pushing you away from it. There are countless contacts every day in your business. Each call, each in-store customer interaction and each time we talk to a technician — all are contacts. When you talk to a counter person, and receive part delivery house calls, these are also contacts. It even comes down to every piece of marketing or piece of info about your shop in print or on the web. Don't know where to begin? Take a page out of our play book for some easy wins.

**WINNING, FOR SHOP OWNERS, IS REALLY A GAME OF CONTACTS. EVERY CONTACT IS EITHER PUSHING YOU FORWARD TOWARDS YOUR GOAL OR PUSHING YOU AWAY.**

## 1. Start with your employees

Developing and improving your technicians and other employees involves many contacts and should be part of your game-winning strategy. Most often, they're the first interaction your shop will have with customers, so their well-being is important. How you greet them in the morning is a tone-setting contact. Do you grunt your hellos, or do you smile and set a positive tone and message to start their

workday off right? It's also important to seek their feedback. Do you have a daily meeting with them as a group or individuals to discuss the day and short- and long-term goals? Do you do weekly one-on-one meetings where you praise them for achievements, discuss performance and ask for their input and thoughts? Your employees should feel like they have a voice in your business and that their feedback is important.

Likewise, when your tech brings you a completed courtesy check, you should take the opportunity to coach them to make sure that they're maximizing your shop's sales potential. Be sure to take time to review and discuss their recommendations to cover what's present and what's missing. Also, make sure that your tech is promoting your shop culture properly along with those services.

## 2. Maximize customer interactions

As you may have guessed, there are many contacts throughout the customer sales process that present opportunities to increase sales.

When you answer the phone, that's a contact that presents an opportunity to make a great impression. Do you sound professional, happy and easy to connect with? Did you ask for and use their name throughout the conversation? Did you have to ask them to come in, or did your conversation give them a compelling reason to come in? Having an incredible phone conversation plays into the mindset of a shopper.

For customers that come in to drop off their car, you should have a process

that ensures efficiency, builds relationships and reinforces their decision to bring their car to you. As Coach Geoff Berman says, “Everything speaks!” What does the appearance of your shop and property say? Do you offer complimen-

tary pick-up and drop-off service, or any other value-added services that fall outside of the key drop box?

Next, when you’re “contacting” a customer about the results of your courtesy check or about a concern they may have about their car’s condition, you should have a sales process designed to present all your findings in a way that sells the value of your recommendations. This process should help to paint a mental picture for the customer to help them understand why these services are needed and the importance of what you’re recommending.

Last, when the customer comes to your shop to pick up their car, make sure that you have a good closing process that reinforces your shop’s value and their investment. This process should also secure return visits by recommending their next check-up. And request good recommendations — thereby limiting the chance of receiving a bad online review. The last “contact” in the process should be closing out the customer’s bill with a smile and remembering to say thank you.


### 3. Work with your supplier connections

Finally, we come to the most underestimated contacts in the sale process — interactions with your suppliers. These relationships are rife with sales opportunities. For example, when the

parts driver comes to your shop, that’s an opportunity to promote your business. The parts driver most likely lives and works near your shop and owns a car. They probably live in a household with at least one other car and have nearby family and friends with cars. Another benefit is that they talk to managers and technicians from other shops that may be seeking employment elsewhere. Based on your current relationship, do you think your parts driver would recommend you as an employer?

### There’s no time like the present to get started

There are so many “contacts” and related opportunities around your shop every day. They’re the “inches” that Pacino spoke of in *Any Given Sunday* and they’re as important as those big tickets we sell or great techs we hire. In fact, these opportunities can lead to even bigger tickets, better techs and better employees. It’s a game of contacts. Contacts that add up to the sum and total worth of your business.

To see if you are getting the most out of your “contacts,” try ATI’s Business Owners Evaluation Checklist. It’s a great tool to see where you stand with your vision for your shop and how well you’ve spread that vision to your team. Simply go to [www.ationlinetraining.com/2019-6](http://www.ationlinetraining.com/2019-6) for a limited time. 

## MAKE PROFITABILITY A HABIT IN THE SHOP

In this Remarkable Results podcast, Carm Capriotto speaks with Mike Michalowicz about his great book *Profit First*.

Mike will give you his innovative processes on profitability. He will provide insights on understanding the core principles and processes of financial gain. It will also shed light on cash flow management system, revenue, support network, profitability, efficiency, and the five core fundamental accounts you need to work your business from.

The episode is painting vivid pictures of how profitability works on the business canvas. It will open your mind to systems and processes to make profitability a habit. And we urge you to read Mike’s book, *Profit First*, cover to cover. Listen in at **MotorAge.com/ProfitFirst**.



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**CHRIS “CHUBBY” FREDERICK** is the CEO and founder of the Automotive Training Institute. ATI’s 130 full-time associates train and coach more than 1,500 shop owners every week to drive profits and dreams home to their families. Our full-time coaches have helped our members earn over 1 BILLION DOLLARS in a return on their coaching investment since ATI was founded. This month’s article was written with the help of former shop owner and ATI member, Coach Paul Marsh.  
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