

# ATI | ShopTalk

Automotive Training Institute • 888.471.5800

www.autotraining.net

## How to Hire the Right Technician for Your Shop

By Eric Twiggs, ATI Performance Coach



When it comes to automotive education, “Bill” has more degrees than a thermometer! He’s a master certified ASE technician. He also has certifications from Ford and Subaru. If you were to survey the tool truck drivers and ask them to name the most productive technician in town, they wouldn’t have to phone a friend or use a lifeline! They would name Bill. His white toolbox is bigger than a Buick, and if he ever got a scratch on it, he would replace the entire drawer!

What if Bill knocked on your door today, with the goal of becoming your next “A” technician? Would you hire him? Well, of course, you would! “That’s a dumb question!” Who wouldn’t right? Well, “Brad” decided to pass!

Brad, a seasoned shop owner, interviewed Bill and decided not to hire him because character is critical to his culture. Speaking with Bill left Brad with several reasons to question his character. For example, during the interview, Bill described courtesy checks as “such a waste of my time.” When Brad asked Bill about his reasons for leaving his previous shops, he responded by badmouthing the service writers at each location. When asked about comebacks, Bill said, “I don’t make mistakes! I never have

any comebacks!” And to make matters worse, Bill smelled like an ashtray and looked like he bathed in grease!

Brad uses the following words to describe his shop culture: “fun, family, friendly, and taking care of each other.” Based on this description, it was easy for him to determine that Bill wasn’t a fit. How would you describe your shop culture? Answering this question will make it easier to hire the right technician for your shop!

### WHAT IS CULTURE?

Culture is the combination of customs, rituals, and values, shared by an organization that must be accepted by new members. As the author and consulting legend Peter Drucker put it, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast!”

There are two types of cultures: The desired, and the default. The desired culture is one the leader can instantly describe because he or she has a proactive focus on it. For example, I can call one of the Top 12 Shop owners right now and ask them to describe their shop culture. Without hesitating, they would have an answer. In this instance, the owner has taken the time to create and reinforce the desired shop culture.

---

*“The fact that you make decisions based on what you value, makes establishing your fundamentals a powerful exercise. The fundamentals then become the building blocks of your shop culture.”*

---

The default culture is what you end up with when you don’t have a vision for what the desired culture would look like. As a result, your team members develop their own customs, rituals,

and values. For example, you train your technician to do courtesy checks, but the default culture says, “We don’t do courtesy checks here!” You send your service advisor to their ATI class, and Randy Somers trains her to make a quality visit to the car with the customer. She returns to a default culture that says, “We don’t have time to do that here!” You have a good technician hired, but he doesn’t come back from his lunch break because your default culture says, “the employee is always wrong!” Here’s the bottom line: Your shop has a culture even if you don’t know what it is!

So how do you create an environment that attracts the right people? You must be fundamentally different.

### ESTABLISH YOUR FUNDAMENTALS

In his book *Fundamentally Different*, David Friedman demonstrates the connection between shared values and business success. He teaches business leaders to create a specific number of “fundamentals” that communicate the core values that each employee will align with. During weekly team meetings, employees are asked to name the fundamental of the week and to

describe what it means to them. The fact that you make decisions based on what you value, makes establishing your fundamentals a

**Continued on page 2**

## How to Hire...

Continued from page 1

powerful exercise. The fundamentals then become the building blocks of your shop culture. For example, one of ATI's Fundamentals is to "Practice Blameless Problem-Solving." If this is one of your values, and the applicant in front of you was blaming everyone for his problems, (everyone except himself, of course!) you would decide not to hire him!

Another ATI fundamental is to "Be Punctual." If your technician applicant arrives at 3:15pm sharp for his 3:00pm interview, your hiring decision just got easier!

One of Brad's fundamentals is, "Appearance counts." Since Bill looked like he just took a grease bath, he was not a fit for Brad's culture! Reading Friedman's book and working with your coach can help you to establish your fundamentals!

### CONCLUSION

So, there you have it. Since Brad established his fundamentals, he's opened two additional locations, and has more qualified applicants who want to work for him, than he does openings!

Establishing your fundamentals will help you to hire the right technician for your shop as well.

## ASCCA Names ATI Partner of the Month



*Automotive Service Councils of California*  
Professionals in Automotive Service ~ Since 1940

The Automotive Service Councils of California (ASCCA) Revenue and Benefits Committee is proud to announce that it has selected ATI as ASCCA's March Partner of the Month. Each month, an ASCCA partner is recognized for their outstanding support of ASCCA, its members, the automotive repair industry, and their commitment to going above and beyond to support ASCCA's Core Purpose: **To elevate and unite automotive professionals and give them voice.**

Since 1980, ATI has been helping independent auto repair and collision repair shop owners improve their businesses and their lives, with proven, measurable, and field-tested strategies and practices. Through their hard work, ATI has grown into the leading coaching and consulting automotive management company in the world, with more than 1,300 active members who represent the best shops in the US and Canada. When asked how ATI's partnership with ASCCA has benefited their business, National Accounts Manager, Jim Silverman, replied "Having a partnership with the ASCCA has helped to elevate ATI's credibility and increased awareness of ATI's services among ASCCA members and shop owners. The partnership has been instrumental to increasing our footprint on the West Coast. Additionally, during 2018, we were able to host 42 workshops for shop owners in California and return a revenue share benefit to the state association."

ATI's partnership has also proven to be very beneficial for ASCCA members. "Our services help member

shop owners grow their businesses, run them more effectively, and gain a greater quality of life. They also benefit from networking and sharing success stories with ATI members that attend ASCCA team weekends and chapter events and meetings."

In 2018, Jim spoke at meetings with Chapters: 5, 24, 42 and 48. ATI also exhibited at the Chapter 25 vendor fair in Clovis and the Chapter 14 trade show in San Bernardino. Jim is a regular participant in the Team Weekends and has been an active member of the Membership

committee and recently joined the Educational Training & Information committee. This year, his goal is to get involved with more chapters and attend as many events as possible during his West Coast trips.



Jim Silverman, Director

When asked about his favorite memory, Jim replied, "The most memorable moment would be the warm welcome

we received at the September Team Weekend hosted at the Cuyamaca Community College and the appreciation they showed to the association for giving back to the future of the industry with the new ASCCA Degree program."

Jim believes other companies in the industry should become corporate partners, stating "Besides the obvious networking opportunities with shops and other vendor partners, there is the educational benefit of the legislative issues and genuine comradery among members."

Thank you ATI for your enduring commitment to ASCCA! Our organization and its members have benefited tremendously from your knowledge and partnership throughout the years.



### Get More News!

Want to read more articles by ATI's expert coaches? Check out The Ultimate Auto Shop Coaching Blog.

[autosshopcoaching.blogspot.com](http://autosshopcoaching.blogspot.com)

# Rainmaker or Order Taker – Which One is Your Service Advisor?

By Rick Johnson, ATI Performance Coach



Recently I was on the west coast facilitating an ATI 20-group meeting. On the evening of the first day we all decided to go to a fancy restaurant for dinner that night. So, we get to the restaurant and they sat us at a huge banquet table. All good so far. They decided to send a waitress to service half of the room and a waiter for the other half. Fortunately, or so I thought, I sat on the side with the waiter – he got us our drinks faster and took our orders faster – and I'm thinking this is great!

---

*Ever wonder why some Service Advisers have a higher ARO than the others in your shop? Ever wonder why some shops have more sales per pay or more hours per ARO than other shops?*

---

Their waitress was a bit slower in getting their drink orders out, taking their meal orders, and bringing the bread. I was so glad I wasn't in her section, but then this happened. The waitress starts bringing the customers on her side a dinner salad. I was eager to get mine too because I love salad. Mine must be just around the corner, right?

Nope, no salad for me! I felt like I was in a Jerry Seinfeld episode, but I wasn't alone. Actually, no one on my side got a salad, not one. Nearly everyone on the waitress' side got salad. Then out comes the main course, and it was good, but I was still curious why we never got salad. So, I asked my neighbor how he got salad? To that he replied, "our waiter asked us." After asking the people sitting on my side, no one had been asked. That's too bad because we all would have

ordered a salad. Now all the sudden I was wishing I was on the other side.

When it came to desert, I noticed that the waitress' customers ordered more deserts than customers on my side of the room. I began to wonder: was she better at (selling) or offering the desert? After talking with some of the people around me, we did some figuring and realized that the waitress' side spent around \$300 more than the waiter assigned to our side of the room. Same restaurant, same location, same hungry clients and yet one side of the room spends more.

This observation got me to thinking about how this selling method applies to Service Advisers and their customers back at the shop. Ever wonder why some Service Advisers have a higher ARO than the others in your shop? Ever wonder why some shops have more sales per pay or

more hours per ARO than other shops? Do you think that maybe that high producer Service Adviser is just better at slowing it down on the sales offer – just like that waitress with the salad orders? I bet that is the case.

So, ask yourself – what's on your menu at the shop and is your Service Advisor upselling and cross-selling your customers these options? One thing is for sure, they're not likely to buy them if you don't at least ask.

## ATI Fundamental | Take Responsibility

Identify what you don't know and find a way to learn it. Ask for what you need and take responsibility. There's no room for victims in a high-performance shop.

## ATI RELAUNCHES "DRIVING CHANGE" PODCAST



ATI is thrilled to announce the relaunch of our podcast, "Driving Change." It's a show hosted by ATI Performance Coach Geoff Berman that highlights the growth journey of our members and the challenges they've overcome through our coaching and training programs.

Each episode, Geoff interviews successful shop owners about how they've reached their goals, what they wish they knew when they started, and what advice they have for new members.

The guest for the March episode is Eddie Cleveland, owner of Rob'e Mans Automotive Service, who will tell us all about how he planned and executed his business exit strategy. This promises to be a great conversation that every shop owner will find valuable and should not miss. You can catch this episode and subscribe to future episodes on: <https://drivingchangeatati.podbean.com>.

## NEW ATI FAMILY MEMBERS!



Check out some of our newest members that came to Owners Class last month at ATI headquarters.



DRIVING PROFITS & DREAMS HOME

705 Digital Drive, Suite V  
Linthicum, MD 2109

PRST STD  
AUTO  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
ROSEVILLE, MI  
PERMIT NO. 35



## Take Your Auto Repair Shop to the Next Level!

### ATI's 1-Day Workshop

- Find and retain the best techs
- Improve cash flow and raise profit
- Increase car count with today's marketing strategies
- Gain free time by standardizing shop operations
- Plan for gainful retirement



DRIVING PROFITS & DREAMS HOME

**For more information, visit [ATIWorkshops.com](http://ATIWorkshops.com)  
Use code SHTK19 and save \$100 off registration!**