

ATI | ShopTalk

Automotive Training Institute • 888.471.5800

www.autotraining.net

ATI's SuperConference 2019 Upholds 16-Year Tradition of Training, Fundraising, and Celebrating



ATI's 16th annual SuperConference took place on March 20- 23 in San Antonio, Texas at the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort. Over 600 shop owner members, their employees and family, and event sponsors converged on the luxury resort for four days of engaging activities, including discovering new strategies, networking with peers, touring the area, fundraising and celebrating successes.

It's more than a learning opportunity for our members; it's a chance to find out about new services, raise money for local charities, check in with their peers and coaches, celebrate with each other, and have lots of fun doing it.

"We're honored that SuperConference continues to get a great turnout each year. It's more than a learning opportunity for our members; it's a chance to find out about new services, raise money for local charities, check in with their peers and coaches, celebrate with each other, and have lots of fun doing it. The ATI team is excited for next year and have already started planning SuperConference 2020, which will be held in Carlsbad, California" said Richard Meneg, President.

The speaker line-up, which was a closely guarded secret up until moments before their presentations, featured the

following personalities and topics:

Mark Schulman, Drummer to the Stars – Currently on Pink's World Tour Hacking the Rockstar Attitude

Chris "Chubby" Frederick, CEO, ATI Preparing for the Next Five Years

Don Rheem, CEO, E3 Solutions Accelerate Engagement and Put the Brakes on Turnover

Andrew Neitlich, Director of the Center for Executive Coaching 3 Goals and 90 Minutes to Excellence

Mike Michalowicz, Bestselling author of Profit First, Surge, The Pkin Plan, and his newest release Clockwork.

Chris Fix, "The world's largest DIY YouTuber" Using Social Media to Turn Followers into Customers

Bryan Dodge, CEO, Dodge Development How Successful Businesses Think and Grow

Attendees had this to say:

"Super Conference was incredible! Getting to bond with our 20 Group at a deeper level was invaluable. The venue was perfect! The ATI team were on point and there for us! The breakout sessions were like words for our souls! We feel like new dogs

now, we have new goals, dreams, and vision for our business and our lives!" said Kim Smith, Owner of Port Clinton Auto Repair, Port Clinton, Ohio

Michelle Long, Co-owner of Long's Car Care Center, Woodinville, Washington added "This was our 9th Super Conference. I have enjoyed them all, otherwise we wouldn't keep coming, but this one was over the top. Having owners do Round Tables was a great addition. The addition of entertainment in the awards ceremony was the best thing ever (whoever came up with that idea deserves a raise.) The amount of work that goes into putting this on baffles me. Thank YOU! It was an amazing conference! I am so proud to be part of the ATI Family! Can hardly wait for next year!"

The conference was also an opportunity to recognize top shops in the country. This year's ATI Top Shop award went to Eddie and Trish Cleveland of Rob'e Mans Automotive Service in Birmingham, Alabama.

SuperConference is held in a different location each year and chooses a local charity for its fundraiser accordingly. This year's charity was Soldier's Angels – a San Antonio based organization that provides aid to over 360,000 service members, veterans, wounded heroes, and military families. Conference attendees participated in fundraising activities and donated money and supplies. Donation totals are still being tabulated and will be announced soon.

The next SuperConference will be held in Carlsbad, CA in March of 2020.

The Role of the Manager in Employee Engagement

By Chris Frederick Sr., Founder and CEO, published in Motor Age 3/15/19



If you have ever lost a good employee and wondered what you could have done to prevent it, I suggest you keep reading this month. Great techs and advisors are very difficult to find and expensive to replace. There is a tremendous amount of information out there today on hiring and recruiting but very little on how to hold on to them for decades. As if that wasn't bad enough, the millennials who represent almost half of the workforce need to be treated very differently than Generation X and Y associates. In the future, you are going to realize these folks will be more interested in landing a job based on the way it feels versus the way it pays!

Highly engaged shops have 40 percent less turnover, 21 percent more profitability, and average 20 percent annual revenue growth.

If you have been reading our articles you know I let the ATI coaching staff write the articles, because I feel they are closer to where the action is, coaching shop owners every day — 1673 to be exact. This month I feel a need to write this one myself based on the training I have been receiving recently that I believe will help every shop owner in North America and Canada. I tried it out on my very first 20 Group I created 15 years ago to see if they felt it was as important as I thought it was, and they agreed unanimously. These guys are very successful veterans; we call them our Mastermind Group. Also, our coaching staff believes it to be one of the biggest problems facing shop owners today, and we will now be teaching it at ATI.

ENGAGEMENT VS. DISENGAGEMENT

Let's begin by looking at the national averages on employee engagement. Actively engaged employees represent only 5 to 15 percent of our workforce, engaged typically run at 20 to 25 percent of employees, somewhat engaged 35 to 50 percent and actively disengaged 5 to 15 percent of your employees. The last category are the ones that have already quit but they haven't told you yet! I am sure you have had this happen if you've been in business any length of time.

Disengagement looks like gossip, no focus, tardiness, low productivity and initiative. Engagement looks like people loving what they do and looking forward to coming to work. Highly engaged shops have 40 percent less turnover, 21 percent more profitability and average 20 percent annual revenue growth. Even if you are comfortable with your current numbers you know the labor force you

need to maintain and stay the best is hard to find and recruit into your business. You cannot afford to lose any of the good ones.

Another problem coming your way is the economy, which I am preparing ATI members for as we speak. The general economy is going to slow down in the second half of 2019. The segments already in decline that will affect you are the North American light vehicle and heavy duty truck market. All of us old guys know that when vehicle sales slow down the repair market and average vehicle age increase. We used to like this period; then we realized the cars they are not selling will not be coming out of warranty and into our shop someday! This means

a Phase B Accelerating Growth Repair and Maintenance segment while the general economy goes into Phase C Decelerating Growth. Don't worry about a real 2008 recession just yet; that will be rearing its ugly head in mid-2022 and 2023 if my economists are on target. In an accelerating growth market, you have to focus on your quality control, maximizing profit margins and workforce development. Pay attention to training and retention so you don't have more cars than employees!

CULTURE VS. ENGAGEMENT

I know many of you have really been working on culture and have realized it is a very important asset to help people want to work at your business. The problem is your people can be culturally aligned but not engaged! Culture is how things are done around your business. Engagement is individual, between each person and the company.

Also, employee satisfaction does not necessarily mean engagement. Employee satisfaction is just an attitude, but employee engagement is a behavior!

NEW MODELS FOR CONFRONTING DISENGAGEMENT

Most management theory was developed around companies that were built and prospered in an era of labor abundance. Leadership has evolved since we started teaching it at ATI 20 years ago. Leadership 101, I will call it, placed emphasis on the role of the leader within a workplace hierarchy, with specific regard to rewards and punishment. Leadership 201 was more focused on relationships but still relied on hierarchy, and the leader came across more like a disciplinarian than a trusted colleague. Leadership 301

Continued on page 5

Engagement...

Continued from page 4

now is more focused on the whole workplace ecosystem, including the quality of social interactions necessary to create a positive, safe and productive work environment. Does the leader do things to employees or with employees? Now, I will be 69 by the time this article gets read and I can remember many, many years ago smart teachers and mentors suggesting owners shouldn't get involved in their people's personal lives. Too much drama! Boy have times changed!

Leadership 301 now is more focused on the whole workplace ecosystem, including the quality of social interactions necessary to create a positive, safe and productive work environment

Owners should drive culture while the managers drive engagement. While a shop might have a great culture that owners have worked years to create, if your employees work under a manager who is not using Leadership 301 skills, your people are not going to feel the positive impact of the shop's culture. Managers must create the conditions where people want to come to work by creating a safe environment to communicate. They must give validation and recognition while listening well. They need to lead by example while encouraging and mentoring others. If you are wearing two hats, owner and manager, you have a lot of work ahead of you so let me try to help get you started.

THE ROLE OF THE MANAGER IN ENGAGEMENT

The ATI model is to first help you understand what employee engagement looks like. Next, you need to measure it, which we will be doing for all our ATI members in 2019, because if you can't measure it you can't manage it. But for now, just assume your shop is average and there has to be some employee disengagement that needs fixing.

So start aligning your people by

two-way communication, not one-way. Quite often surveys suggest employees want more communication while owners feel like they are sharing their vision and goals completely. The problem is you are not always letting your employees communicate what they want and need.

Then there is the subject of growth and development. Do your employees feel you're investing your time and money in helping them grow? Are you interested in helping them get where they want to be in their life? If you are not, I bet there is a shop owner or

manager out there who is willing to put forth the effort.

Are you and your manager delivering the recognition needed to continually motivate them to succeed? Recognition is much more than monthly or annual awards! It needs to occur daily when your people are doing things right and succeeding in their job.

It's time for your managers and you to build relationships with all your people and create trust, so they can accomplish their goals by working for you over decades not just a few years. I realize they are not all like us and that makes it more challenging than befriending the ones that are like us!

If you want to break the habit of being yourself you could take a course on the science of the brain or you could just take a suggestion from an ole guy named Chubby, who was academically dismissed from the University of Maryland in his fun-loving younger days. "Where your mind goes your ass will follow!" I am sure I will take some heat for that famous quote; however, simply begin focusing your mind on two-way communication, growth, recognition and trust with your people. Give it a try, you'll be happy when you see 40 percent less turnover and 21 percent more profit!

New ATI Family Members!

Collision



Mechanical



ATI Fundamental | Listen Generously

Listening is more than simply "not speaking." It's giving our undivided attention to the needs and priorities of others. Set aside your own judgments and pre-conceived notions. Listen with care and with empathy. Most importantly, listen to understand.



Download The
ATIconnect App!

View the most current
class schedule, check for
class availability and
register for classes.

Questions: Contact Amy Fox at
301-575-9111 or
afox@autotraining.net



DRIVING PROFITS & DREAMS HOME

705 Digital Drive, Suite V
Linthicum, MD 2109



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

**For more information, visit ATIWorkshops.com
Use code SHTK19 and save \$100 off registration!**