

ShopTalk

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ATI
Automotive
Training Institute

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Dealing With Hostage Situations

Having a child kidnapped has to be one of the scariest things that can happen to a parent. I just watched the movie *Ransom*. In this movie, Mel Gibson plays Tom Mullen, a wealthy man married to a beautiful woman played by Rene Russo. Their son is kidnapped by criminals who demand \$2 million. Later in the movie, the criminals arrange a meeting with Mel's wife, rough her up and then up their demand to \$4 million. It's a great movie, scary but with a happy ending.

Watching this movie reminded me of the way many of you can be subjected to hostage negotiations. Luckily none of you that I know of have had a family member kidnapped. Instead, some of you have been held hostage by your technician.

That tech demands you pay him top dollar because he believes you have no choice. You end up paying him a "ransom" on top of his regular salary. You may not think of it that way. You probably think you are being a generous employer. But it's really ransom money. And it doesn't help the situation in your shop, either.

When a criminal is holding your loved one hostage, he has to threaten you to get you scared enough to pay a ransom. You'll never pay a friendly kidnapper.

Same with your tech. When you have a tech "holding your shop ransom" by threatening to quit, he has to scare you to get more money from you. Shop owners often tell me they've tried to speak to the tech, reason with him and work to give him a second chance to get along with everyone. It's impossible; he cannot become friendly with everyone else. If he does, you won't pay him his ransom money anymore.

I'm all for paying your techs a fair wage. You should even be generous at times to hold onto the best people. However, you should never set pay based on fear. If you are keeping someone because you fear what would happen if he leaves, that tech is holding you hostage.

Paying that guy is like paying a Somali pirate. Your payment encourages him to hold you hostage again in the future. That tech has to be mean to his coworkers and disruptive to your shop, and he needs to create a lot of fear in you. Otherwise, you won't pay his "ransom."

Many shop owners find themselves in a situation where they fear losing a skilled technician. The guy's production makes them money, and they can't see how they'll replace him. In reality, you can't afford not to replace him. You'll never be able to run your shop the way you should until you fire that guy. Until then, you have a "pirate" in charge.

In one of the concluding scenes in *Ransom*, after a scuffle in a bank where the kidnapper and Tom Mullen come flying out the front window, Tom shoots the kidnapper and recovers his son. Suddenly the fear is gone. I don't recommend violence, but you must get rid of any kidnappers you have in your life.

Don't make salary decisions out of fear. If someone isn't on the compensation program, he is a pirate and has to go. Until then, the pirate is in charge, and his ransom money is coming right out of your pocket.

Your coach is there to help you. Talk to your coach about your hostage situation. Your coach will help you replace your fear with a plan of action. **ATI**



Salt-Laden Foods Can Harm Your Heart in 30 Minutes



By Sherry L. Granader, Sports Nutritionist

Those French fries may look relatively harmless but a new study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* shows this salty snack can harm your arteries in just 30 minutes, even in those who have healthy blood pressure.

The study showed the impact of high-salt food by giving one group a low-salt version of tomato soup and another group a version

with 10 times as much salt. Each serving size was one cup.

After the soup was consumed, the volunteers were asked to have their blood pressure taken using ultra sound, which measured how much the arteries widened as the blood rushed back through during deflation of the cuff.

Consistently, the arteries of people who got the high-salt soup widened about half as much as those who consumed the low-salt version. Over time, this can lead to blockages in the blood vessels causing strokes and heart attacks. When the heart pumps blood through the arteries, nitric oxide is released, making the arterial walls relax, thus allowing the vessels to expand more easily to carry the blood flow.

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Bruce Nation on Taking Control of Business ... and Life

Bruce Nation traded his job at a car wash for a position at a dealership that paid a nickel more an hour and overtime. He traded up a few more times before deciding to open Westlake Independent Honda/Acura Service in Southern California. He says he did well working for other people, but those jobs lacked one very important thing: control.

"I started my own shop because I had no control over what was going to happen next," Bruce explains. "When you're working for somebody else, you don't know if they're going to do what it takes to keep work coming in. Once you do your own thing, you've got all the control."

Of course, with control comes all the responsibility for getting customers and running a profitable shop. Bruce says before he discovered ATI, he was out there on his own, trying to do what he saw others doing: "You try different things to see what works. Even if you have somebody in the family with a business background, it's not the same as having somebody who is a professional at what you need."

The result for Bruce was a very busy shop. "When I first started with ATI, we were working on too many cars," he says. "With ATI, we reduced the number of cars, made our life less stressful and made more money."

Actually, it was Bruce's wife who discovered ATI.

"My wife knew we were working on a ton of cars and not making very much money," Bruce recalls. "A letter came from ATI, and she booked us into a boot camp."

Bruce is quick to say the boot camp was great, but at first he wasn't sure he could trust what he was hearing enough to invest his money into coaching. He waited a year, attended a second boot camp and then signed up.

"By the time the next boot camp came around, I had tried some of the things I learned at the first boot camp. They reduced my stress, and I got more out of that first boot camp in actual dollars than anything else. So, when I went back the second time, I was pretty much convinced I was going to sign up."

ATI coaching fit in well with Bruce's desire to take control of his life and business. "The ATI management philosophy is the biggest thing you take away," he says. "If it's not good for the car, not good for the customer, not good for

the shop – you don't do it. With that in mind, we fired a ton of customers."

So, how did Bruce decide which customers to keep? "Basically we like customers who like us," he says. "If somebody starts complaining about price too much, that person is not our core customer. You need to deliver a product your clientele wants, but you need to do it at a number that makes you money. Now we keep the customers we want and charge them what we need to charge them."

Bruce says the ATI training for his Service Advisors has helped them to raise their average repair order, something they are continuing to work on: "I sent my Service Advisors to the ATI program in Baltimore, where they learned 'what's in it for them.' Many shop owners, especially people my age, or baby boomers, are hiring Generation Xers. A Gen Xer doesn't care about the money. What he really wants is time. He wants time to raise his family, time to be at home, time to play golf and travel and so on. ATI has shown my people that if we get the car count down, we make the shop more manageable and they get more time for themselves. I'll brag a little bit, but it takes a forward thinker to think on those terms when you personally don't think on those terms."

Bruce is a take-charge guy, and he took what he learned from ATI and made big changes in his business. "It really didn't take all that much to make the first major changes," he says. "The main thing is just telling everybody that this is how it is now, and I hope you see what's in it

for you. But if you don't, I'm sorry; this is how it is. As it turns out, everybody's been happy with it."

Bruce is especially happy. Now he goes to work at 9 a.m. and leaves at 6 p.m. – if he goes in at all. "It's about 11:30 a.m., and I haven't been at the shop today," he says. "I have a lot of friends in the community that also have automotive businesses, and I find time to go visit them and go to lunch. Sometimes I take two or three hours in the middle of the day and just go."

Another benefit of belonging to ATI is the Mastermind group. "I've become part of the Mastermind group, and that helps me a lot," Bruce says. "I've made some really good friends, people that do what I do, that go through what I go through on the level that I go through it, and it really helps."

Another big help is learning to delegate. Bruce has this advice for other shop owners: "Go through the items you do on a daily basis, and write them down as you do them. Then copy the items that anybody can do. Then find somebody in the shop that has time to do them, or hire a part-time assistant to take over those tasks."

Bruce has three part-time receptionists. "I could do it with two, but when one's gone on vacation or out sick, it leaves a hole in our schedule," he says. "Also, if I have an extra one, I can have that person do the things I would normally do that anybody can do. It gives me a lot more time in my day." **ATI**

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Salt and fat block the release of the nitric oxide that helps support the cardiovascular system, laying the stage for atherosclerosis. When the arterial lining is challenged and doesn't work as well because of a lack of nitric oxide release, it is easier for cholesterol to stick to the arteries.

Practical Tips

- Don't be overly concerned about the exact amount of salt you eat. The aim is to reduce the amount of salt you eat as much as possible, not to keep an exact tally. (**One teaspoon of salt a day** is the maximum you

should eat, and the less you eat the better.)

- When you do season with salt at home, **use sea salt** which is full of minerals and does not elevate blood pressure as much as regular table salt.
- The best approach is to try to always **eat foods with the lowest salt level**.
- At first, food without salt can taste bland, but don't give up. It's just the same as giving up sugar in coffee. After a few weeks **your taste buds will adjust** and you will start to enjoy food with less salt. In fact, you'll wonder how you ever ate food that was so salty!

**See you next month at SuperConference 2011!
Hard to believe it is right around the corner.**

Are you ready for National Car Care Month?

By Randy Somers



Are you ready for National Car Care Month? If the answer is yes, then congratulate yourself for being proactive and progressive. If the answer is

“What IS National Car Care Month?” then I strongly encourage you to go online to carcare.org and find out how you can improve customer relationships and grow your business at the same time. National Car Care Month is promoted on a national level by the Car Care Council. What is the significance of that statement? Over the years I have heard from countless shop owners that they sometimes feel like the proverbial little fish in the great big ocean. Dealers and franchises group together and have strength in numbers they say. Well here is an opportunity to be part of something bigger than yourself. A way for us in the aftermarket side of auto repair to use our strength in numbers. A way for You to

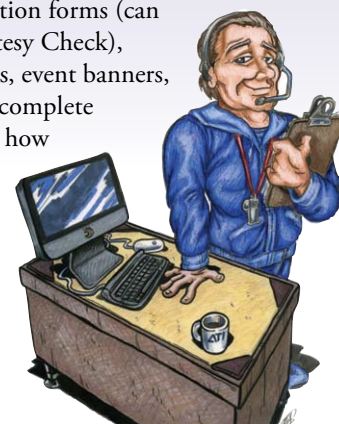
piggyback your local promotion on national advertising. A way to make you a BIG fish in the great big ocean. Some of the signs of continued success and growth of Car Care Month reported in 2010 were national and local media coverage, interviews on radio, television and print, as well as digital media including Fox News, Today Show, USA Today, and the Dailey Buzz. There have been articles supporting this initiative on such Web sites as CNN, Forbes, Investor's Business Dailey, AOL, Yahoo, CNBC, Reuters, Car and Driver and Popular Mechanics to name just a few.

The goal of Car Care Month is to help customers better understand how to protect the second largest investment most will ever make, their vehicle. The Car Care Council has reported results from 2009 of an 80% inspection failure rate, which is consistent with the previous two years. Meaning 8 out of 10 vehicles failed at least one component of the vehicle inspection process. Some results of the inspection lanes in 2009 were 27% failed for engine oil, 26% for engine coolant,

21% for transmission fluid, 15% for tag lights inop, and 14% for brake lights out. This is a tremendous opportunity for you to be involved in a national promotion, give back to the community and educate your customers at the same time. After all, we cannot count on consumers educating themselves on the importance of routine maintenance.

Be involved; take charge of your destiny. Go online and order a Point of Sale Starter Kit. The kit includes a car care guide, brochures to hand out to customers, vehicle inspection forms (can you say Courtesy Check), mirror hangers, event banners, posters and a complete CD/DVD on how to host an event, all for \$59.00. Let us all feel like a BIG Fish.

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SUPERCONFERENCE 2011

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Your Available Training Programs for March and April

March 2011

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

	1 Service Advisor 4 of 4	2 Shop Owner 1 of 9	3 Shop Owner 2 of 9	4 Shop Owner 3 of 9	5/6
7 Service Manager 1 of 2	8 Service Manager 2 of 2	9	10	11	12/13
14	15	16	17 Super Conference San Diego	18 Super Conference San Diego	19/20 Super Conference San Diego
21	22	23 Shop Owner 4 of 9	24 Shop Owner 5 of 9	25 Shop Owner 6 of 9	26/27
28 Service Advisor 20 Group 1 of 2	29 Service Advisor 20 Group 2 of 2	30 Shop Owner 1 of 9	31 Shop Owner 2 of 9		

April 2011

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

				1 Shop Owner 3 of 9	2/3
4 Service Advisor 1 of 4	5 Service Advisor 2 of 4	6 Shop Owner 7 of 9	7 Shop Owner 8 of 9	8 Shop Owner 9 of 9	9/10
			California S.A. 1 of 4	California S.A. 1 of 4	
11	12	13	14	15	16/17
18 Service Advisor 3 of 4	19 Service Advisor 4 of 4	20	21		23/24
25	26	27 Shop Owner 4 of 9	28 Shop Owner 5 of 9	29 Shop Owner 6 of 9	30

Sam's Corner

Time to Shoot?

In this month's newsletter you will see a great article on being held hostage by your employees. I wanted to share with you how important it is for you to take action before all your people get destroyed by one or sometimes two bad apples. It doesn't always make sense but many times one bad employee can be the reason the entire shop won't and can't be made productive. Personally, there is nothing I hate worse than terminating employees. I am the eternal optimist and

believe I can fix everybody but what if they don't want to be fixed? Fixed meaning turning into a positive associate who enables others to want to serve the ultimate benefactor of all our businesses, The Customer!

Many problem employees feel they are entitled regardless of their mediocre performance and negative attitude to your company because they have been with you a long time. They have bashed and will continue to bash you to enable them to look better, even when you try to personally get

involved in their messed-up life and help them grow. Almost every time I have delayed my decision and tried to fix them the cancer spread! Every time they were terminated the disease stopped and those that could be saved were saved. It's normal to feel like you failed to turn them around and bad that you had to let them go, but I have to tell you I can't remember when I ever regretted it after they were gone. If all of us can't get them to understand they are here for the customers, their fellow employees and clients, It Is Time to Shoot!



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