

ShopTalk



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January 2013

Grow Faster and Have Fun Doing It!

If you want to grow faster, then hang out with people who have already achieved what you want to achieve. You can accomplish this and have fun doing it at our 2013 SuperConference, scheduled on March 13–16 at the five-star Camelback Inn located in Scottsdale, Arizona. The weather in March will be a great vacation from the winter weather in most areas of North America. There will be plenty of networking time to introduce yourself to shop owners who truly are the best of the best, and who enjoy helping others solve challenges you might be facing. In addition, our nineteen 20-Groups will be meeting at this year's event to share their successes and their innovative ideas to improve their service centers. The group with the highest attendance will receive a special reward. Plus, you will have the opportunity to hang out with your ATI coach and instructors.

As always, we will have nine great speakers to educate and inform you, and make you laugh with your peers. One of those featured speakers will be Mikki Williams presenting

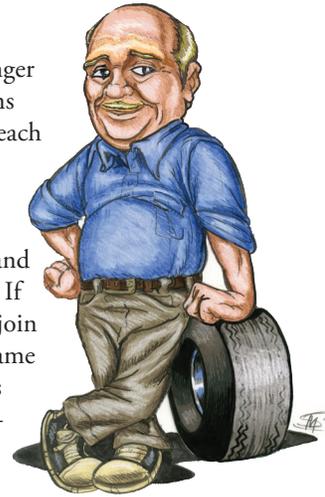
“A Balancing Act: Walking the Tightrope of Life.” Mikki performed at my CEO 20-Group this year for husbands and wives of my group, and she was great! Mikki is an international speaker, trainer, consultant, coach, author, radio and TV personality and entrepreneur extraordinaire. She was recently chosen as one of the best speakers in the country by Meetings and Conventions Magazine, along with Tony Robbins, Bill Gates, Rudy Giuliani, Lou Holtz, Zig Ziglar and Jay Leno. Mikki was featured on the front page of The Wall Street Journal, named one of the Outstanding Connecticut Women of the Decade by the United Nations Association of the U.S., and ABC did a television documentary about her life.

Of course you know there will be plenty of fun in the agenda. Join me and my posse for a real cowboy cookout in a western-town setting atop Mummy Mountain, just a short walk from the Welcome Reception. The Awards Banquet, where we recognize the Top Shops, will be quite the entertainment and food extravaganza, with black tie optional. Friday

night is the Scavenger Hunt, which begins with small teams, each armed with clues and a map of Old Town Scottsdale's famous bar, shop and restaurant district. If you love baseball, join us for a training game at Salt River Fields at Talking Stick — the spring home of the Arizona Diamondbacks and

Colorado Rockies. Experience the splendor of the untamed Sonoran Desert and the majesty of its giant saguaro as your jeep travels through the astonishingly lush plant life of the desert.

The SuperConference 2013 is half sold out already. You can budget your costs if you sign up now by registering at www.autotraining.net/superconference13. So invest in yourself and keep from slipping backwards! **ATI**



SuperConference2013
March 13–16, Scottsdale, Arizona

ATI Client Profile

Accurate Automotive Was As Busy As Can Be—and Losing Money

Lee Weatherby of Accurate Automotive in Mesa, Ariz., is a long-time member of ATI, and now that he's running a busy *and* profitable shop, he plans to remain a member. "There's always more to learn," he says.

Lee studied computer information and actually started working for Hewlett-Packard. But the corporate life wasn't for him.

"I'd always worked at my uncle's gas station and had a fascination with cars, just like every other red-blooded American kid," Lee chuckles. "I decided I wasn't going to do the corporate life and got a job with Buick. I started as a lot guy and worked my way up to head technician."

The Buick dealership operated specific departments, such as the front-end, tune-up and heavy-duty shops. Lee became accredited in several of the shops because, as he says, "I wanted to touch everything. If I was going to

do tires, I wanted to do brakes. If I did brakes, I wanted to do an alignment."

Lee continued to build his knowledge in automotive repair, working for different dealers and doing some work on the side, but his frustration with a corporate lifestyle returned.

"As a mechanic, you never talk to the customers," Lee explains. "Corporate wants numbers. They don't see relationships. They see dollars and cents. And so it was discouraging that they couldn't build relationships and let the dollars come."

It was time for Lee to leave the corporate world for good. He approached a friend who owned a struggling auto repair center and offered to help with overflow, share the rent and bring in new customers. After a move to Tempe, Lee and his wife went out on their own. Eventually, Lee was able to purchase a facility with eight bays, all of which stayed very busy, actually too busy.



"One of my parts reps came to me and said, 'You are a great mechanic, but you need to take a look at how to run your business effectively,'" Lee recalls, shaking his head.

Lee called in a business coach who delivered bad news: The shop was losing \$100,000.00 a year. Another parts rep stepped in with advice that would change everything for the better. He told Lee about the ATI Boot Camp and guaranteed it would be worth the registration fee.

"That rep looked me straight in the face and said, 'If that class doesn't benefit you, I'll give you back your 300 bucks,'" Lee says. >>>

Sam's Corner

Make It Look Effortless

The do-it-yourself movement has ruined America. In the drive for independence, cost-savings and the feeling of accomplishment, we strive to complete projects by ourselves. That's not always a good thing.

Years ago my wife and I tiled our bathroom and kitchen floors. We rented the expensive masonry saw, but we had to buy several other tools. Plus, we had to learn a lot of new skills. I was the one who had to learn how to cut tile with a saw. The results were fine, but it took us days to complete the project as well as several (inevitable) trips to the home improvement store to ask questions and to pick up items we needed but had no idea we were going to need when we got started.

I see this all the time in business. I'll get a question about some tool, a WordPress plug-in or something. It will be from a "do it yourselfer" who is trying to figure out how to run an auto repair shop while also learning how to build websites. My advice? Don't learn how to build websites! All of the money in auto repair is in building a relationship with a group of customers who couldn't imagine taking their cars to anyone other than you. It's easy to find dozens of people who can do the web work for you. Let them figure out the website; this will give you time to focus on what's really important.

To accomplish what I do, I have an entire team around me who helps me be more productive.

I'm a bad speller. Even with spell check, I often make mistakes. Therefore, I have an editor read everything I produce. This allows me to write quickly, without worrying too much about grammar and spelling. The editor reviews what I write to ensure everything reads well before it goes out. Thus, I do what I'm good at, and where I'm not as skilled, the detailed editing, a member of my team steps in.

I have team members handle other day-to-day tasks for me as well.

My team allows me to accomplish a lot more than I could possibly do by myself. There is no disadvantage to relying on others to do some of the day-to-day work in my business. I am still supplying all of the creative ideas, the writing and the marketing. Those are the things that attract customers and keep them coming back. I focus as much time as possible on those profit-producing activities.

Whether you are doing a job yourself or using team members to do some of the work, you always want to make it appear easy.

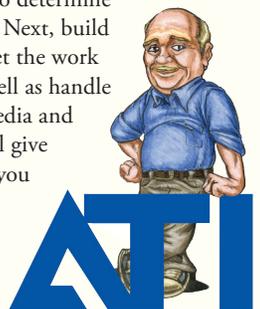
I recently visited a coaching client's shop. He was doing well but couldn't figure out how to

generate the breakthrough success he wanted. I quickly noticed the problem. He and his team were frantically running around the shop. They weren't organized and had to improvise. A lot of emergencies came up as members of his team tried to figure out what they were supposed to be doing.

It's important to invest the time to choreograph everything that needs to happen within your shop. It's not only more efficient and effective, but it also helps you to portray that you are in complete control of the situation. If you or members of your team appear frantic, your customers will notice.

You always want to make what you do appear effortless. Make it look easy.

Focus your time and attention on the real profit drivers for your shop. (Work with your coach to dig into your numbers to determine what those are for you.) Next, build a team around you to get the work done in your shop, as well as handle the marketing, social media and everything else. This will give you the time and focus you need to keep your shop running like a finely tuned hotrod.



Google: The Gorilla in the Closet

By George Zeeks



Let's get right to it. We know that Google is the 800-pound gorilla in the room, we just don't know what the gorilla is doing or why. The Internet local search has become a huge tool for the shops that have taken advantage of the opportunity. The problem is that the window of opportunity is getting smaller and harder to use every day. What happened, why it is harder for small business — let's look and see.

Google toiled long and hard until it had become the most-used search engine in the land; and Google said that this was good. Facebook toiled long and hard until it became the largest social-media tool in the land; and Facebook said that this was good. Google saw what its Internet relative Facebook had and wanted it. Google invited Facebook into the proverbial field, and Facebook saw the rock in Google's hand and said "I'm fine right here, for now." There was room enough for both of them until they decided that there just wasn't.

Since Google wanted to become a social-media giant, like Facebook, it thought it would just start its version. Build it and they will come, Google thought, and Google+ was born. The problem is that they didn't come. Or at least some people came but most didn't hang around. Think of it like this. Google had

a party with dip and chips. Facebook had a party with dip and chips, but they had the keg and music. Where would you go? The big G saw that people had signed up but no one was staying so the company changed its strategy. Google had the attention of the business world because of its power to guide people to the things they wanted. The Google reviews let people say whether the business was good or not, and that helped consumers make an informed decision. The next logical step was to tie the Google search (where Google was strong) to the social-network Google+ (where Google was weak). The way to do that was to force the consumer to join Google+ if they wanted to write a review. Since the businesses, especially the small businesses that make up most of America's entrepreneurs, want the consumer to write reviews, they would have to help push people to Google+ to get the reviews they want and need. The problem is that few people will go to the trouble of creating a social profile on Google+ just to write a review unless they are super happy or super mad. To make things worse, super-happy people tend to mellow down to just happy, while super-mad people get insane!

At the time of this writing, there is still a very small window that is the exception to the new rules. Your customers that have an Android phone have a built-in app called Google+ Local that they can use to write a

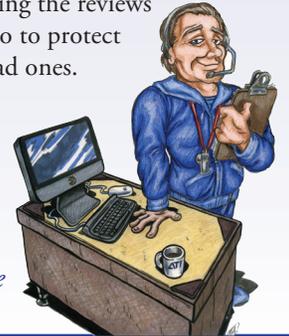
review for you. Android phone users make up around 30 to 40 percent of the population and of your customer base. If you can get your customer to pull out their phone and click on the app while in your store, it will tell them they are in your shop and ask them to rate you. In other words, it will ask them to write a review for you! Here's the problem: this window is closing and is already closed in some parts of the country. In selected areas, the consumer is being directed to create a Google+ account before they can write the review. The first thing you need to do after reading this is to find an Android phone — someone in your shop will have one — and see if they *can* still write a review. Make sure that they *don't* write a review since Google knows that the phone "lives" at the shop eight to ten hours a day. If the window is still open, jump through fast and get as many reviews as you can before it closes. If not, then...

Stay tuned, and next month we will discuss how Google is ranking the reviews and what you can do to protect yourself from the bad ones.

Keep in mind...

A lost battle is a battle one thinks one has lost.

—Jean-Paul Sartre



>>> Lee and his wife liked what they heard at the Boot Camp: "They said they could show us some tricks where I could make an extra \$10,000.00 the next week. I put them to the test and did what they said. We ended up making \$13,460.00!"

Lee says they made monumental strides by implementing the procedures suggested by their ATI coach.

"It's changed our lives," he says. "Since I've been in ATI, I've grown exponentially by having a better understanding of how to serve my customers."

Lee uses customer feedback to improve his customers' satisfaction.

"We put customer surveys in every car," he explains, "and we target customers, have them fill out questionnaires and then send them out to dinner and a movie as a thank-you."

Last year, Lee interviewed 18 randomly selected customers to ask them what they want from his auto repair shop. He says it was very revealing.

"First off, they wanted my lobby to be more friendly and less cluttered," he says. "They loved our drop-off service, where we discussed with them everything we would be doing with their car, including the courtesy inspection. But we found out we had a hole in our pick-up procedure. Customers wanted to have their cars brought to them valet-style in the front of the shop. So we have incorporated that service."

Other customers commented that the waiting room had oil and rubber smells coming in from the work bays, so Lee brought in fragrance diffusers with "friendly" smells such as cookies and popcorn.

"We asked customers to be brutally honest," Lee says, "and they told us we needed to take

notes during our callbacks. Now we send them a quick email that says "Thanks for your feedback. We wanted to make sure we got this down correctly." And then we restate what they told us. People love that because they feel validated."

After seven years of profitable coaching, Lee says he can't thank ATI enough.

"I could never repay everything that ATI's given to me, our family, our employees and our customers," Lee says. "Some of our closest friends are people I've met in the Mastermind group."

According to Lee, you "get what you ask for" with ATI. He illustrates his belief with this story:

A young couple walks up to the wise old man in the town square and asks, "What's this place like?"

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Your Available Training Programs for February and March 2013

February 2013

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

				1	2/3 Super Bowl
4	5	6 Shop Owner 1 of 9	7 Shop Owner 2 of 9	8 Shop Owner 3 of 9	9/10
11	12	13 Shop Owner 7 of 9	14 Shop Owner 8 of 9	15 Shop Owner 9 of 9	16/17
18 President's Day Service Advisor 20 Group 1 Service Advisor 20 Group 3	19 Service Advisor 20 Group 1 Service Advisor 20 Group 3	20 Shop Owner 4 of 9 Service Advisor 20 Group 3	21 Shop Owner 5 of 9	22 Shop Owner 6 of 9 Service Advisor 20 Group 3	23/24
25 Service Advisor 3 of 4	26 Service Advisor 4 of 4	27	28		

March 2013

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

				1 Service Manager 2 of 2	2/3
4 Service Advisor 1 of 4 Staffing & Hiring 1 of 2	5 Service Advisor 2 of 4 Staffing & Hiring 2 of 2	6 Shop Owner 1 of 9	7 Shop Owner 2 of 9	8 Shop Owner 3 of 9	9/10
11	12	13 Super Conference Scottsdale	14 Super Conference Scottsdale	15 Super Conference Scottsdale	16/17 Super Conference Scottsdale St. Patrick's Day
18	19	20 Shop Owner 4 of 9	21 Shop Owner 5 of 9 Service Advisor 3 of 4	22 Shop Owner 6 of 9 Service Advisor 3 of 4	23/24
25 Passover	26	27	28	29	30/31 Easter

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He replies, "Well, what's it like where you came from?"

"The people were fantastic."

And he says, "Oh, that's pretty much what you're going to find here."

Another couple walks up to the wise old man and asks, "What's it like here?"

The old man replies, "Tell me what it's like where you come from."

"Oh, the people were kind of nasty, and we knew we needed to get away."

And the old man says, "You'll find that same thing here."

Before ATI, Lee was overworked and underpaid. He believed he deserved more, and he was willing to make the necessary changes in his business.

"I hear people say 'I can't do this, or I can't do that,'" Lee says. "My advice is to try it and give it a fair chance to work. And then criticize if it's not working. Become a better *post* judge instead of a *pre* judge."

It certainly has worked for Lee. He has gone from being too busy, losing money and in danger of burnout to loving the business he's in.

"I wake up every day with a smile."

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