

ShopTalk

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January 2014

Third Round Picks Are In!

By Bryan Stasch, ATI Vice President

Starting from ATI Top 150 Shops, elimination rounds have brought us to the Top 50! The competition gets tougher every year as shops continue to improve their performance.

Keep an eye out to see who makes the next cut.

Then, at SuperConference 2014, we will announce our Top 12 winners representing the very best ATI shops in North America.

Here are the Top 50 Shops:

| Shop Name | State | Shop Name | State | Shop Name | State | Shop Name | State |
|------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|
| Accurate Automotive | AZ | Frank's Servicenter Inc. | PA | Krietz Auto Repair Inc. | MD | Rocha's Automotive Inc. | CA |
| AG Diesel Repair | OR | George's Sierra Shell | CA | Mac's Service Center Inc. | VA | SAS German Auto | CA |
| Auto Check One | TX | Good Works Auto Repair LLC | AZ | Meyers Auto Tech Inc. | WA | Shadow Mountain Auto Service | AZ |
| Auto Stop | VA | Haglin Automotive Inc. | CO | Milstead Car Care | TX | Sparks Computerized Car Care | IN |
| Bradham Auto Electric Service Inc. | VA | Hillmuth Automotive- Clarksville | MD | Minhs Auto Care LLC | NY | Taylor Company BMW | CA |
| Bransfield Motor Co. | MD | Hillmuth Automotive - Columbia | MD | Murphy's Autocare Inc. | OH | Uncle Dave's Auto Repair | TN |
| Burke Centre Automotive | VA | Hogan & Sons Inc. - Fairfax | CA | Performance Plus | CO | V & F Auto Service Inc. | MA |
| D'Avico's Auto Repair Inc. | PA | Hogan & Sons Inc. - Leesburg | VA | Plymouth Auto & Tire Center | PA | Walt Eger Service Center | MD |
| Emory Transmissions | PA | John's Auto Care Center | ID | Precision Auto | MD | Webster's Import Service | NC |
| Empire Automotive Inc. | CA | Kelly Automotive | AZ | Pullen's Garage | NJ | Werner's Mercedes & BMW | UT |
| European Auto Solutions | MA | Ken's Muffler & Brake Inc. | CO | Quality Motors | CA | West Town Monona Tire Inc. | WI |
| Fifth Gear Automotive | TX | Kleyn Mobile Repair LLC | MI | Rieger Motor Sales | IL | Westlake Independent Service | CA |
| | | | | Rob'e Mans Automotive Service | AL | | |

Sam's Corner

Why in the World Do I Need a Coach?

If you want to stay the best shop owner or the best athlete, remember: you are in the game, and you can't see the whole field or the big picture when you are in it. As the famous Earl Weaver, baseball manager for the Baltimore Orioles, once said, "It's what you learn after you know it all that counts." We all have blind spots, and a good coach will enhance your strengths and reduce your weaknesses. Successful athletes, shop owners, CEOs and actors have coaches!

If you want to increase profits, the right coach could decrease the time it would take you to achieve greater profits while reinforcing what many owners need to hear, which is, it is OK to make money in your business. If you are comfortable and just want more free time, a coach can work with your employees and keep an eye on your money while you are on vacation, plus help you grow your second in command. Most owners have difficulty transferring their own skills because they have never been trained to teach. If you are in a slump and stressed out, a coach can help you make the right decisions, which might

be impossible for you at the time. A good coach has been sitting in the middle of a bunch of shops talking to owners, making him or her a great clearinghouse of information.

If you don't like change and just want things to stay the way they are, you really need a coach because this industry is changing rapidly — I know, based on my 40 years of working in it! If you don't like change, you might have developed a bad habit of not taking anyone's advice, including the coach you sleep with, who probably knows you better than anyone.

I can tell you that I would never have been able to grow ATI to where we are today if it were not for my three coaches. I am guilty of all the above and fought hiring my first coach until about 10 years ago. I rarely listened to my wife, and that was a big mistake as well! Today, there is not any important decision I make without asking for advice. I have also seen tens of thousands of shop owners accomplish things with a coach's help that they never thought possible and in less time than they ever imagined. We just don't know what we don't know!

Sometimes a coach has to be a confidant and a friend because 50 percent of the time the problem can be more of a personal nature, and we all know what those problems can do to us on the job.

Since coaching involves change and change contains seeds of fear of the unknown, your coach must be fearless and infect you with that fearlessness.

In summary, coaching can be an effective tool for accelerating learning and dramatically improving performance across a wide range of skills that benefit both you and your organization. At ATI we are extremely proud of the job our coaches and their entire support staff do for shop owners all over North America. It is a challenging career; however, it can be extremely rewarding to watch you grow, so don't forget to give them a big thanks once in a while!

C. L. Frederick
—Chubby



ATI Client Profile

Service Manager Howie Graf Moves Forward by Embracing Change

Unlike a lot of people, Howie Graf seems to love change, especially in the automotive business. From new methods for repairing and servicing vehicles, to what we'll be able to do with a car in the future — à la James Bond — Graf is hooked.

In fact, it was Graf's love of embracing new challenges to learn new things that led him to the automotive industry, after his friends told him about an open parts manager position in the collision side of Kumler Automotive's facility in Lancaster, Ohio. He began there in November of 1997.

"...A coach is vital. His input, his support, his feedback — on every aspect of the business — is very important..."

Three years later, and still enjoying all he was learning, Graf saw a new opportunity present itself when the facility's service manager departed. Graf expressed an interest to management and because his enthusiasm, integrity and belief in organized, structured operational procedures had not gone unnoticed, he was offered the position.

And with that, Graf suddenly was faced with quite a different role. He vividly recalls the biggest initial challenge: getting buy-in from his new colleagues.

"The customers were easy. I had dealt with customers in the golf cart business. But what I didn't realize was that an auto tech is a bit different than a guy who works on a piece of golf equipment. Auto shops pay flat rate and there is more pressure and I just didn't realize that trying to get buy-in from technicians and staff would have been as tough as it was. They were trying to get used to me — I was the new coach, you know — no different than when a coach takes over a football team. But things change. And I could see that some of these guys weren't buying in. They were fighting everything we wanted to do. We were talking with them individually and we eventually had to let go of a couple of people for the simple reason that it just was not working. That was the toughest part."

Fortunately, Graf had help at his side: his ATI coach. He was encouraged to present procedural changes as a collaborative process and involve those employees who embraced the goal of making the shop better. And that's exactly what he did.

"From there, with the employees that we had left, it was all about taking baby steps and involving them — getting them to understand what we wanted

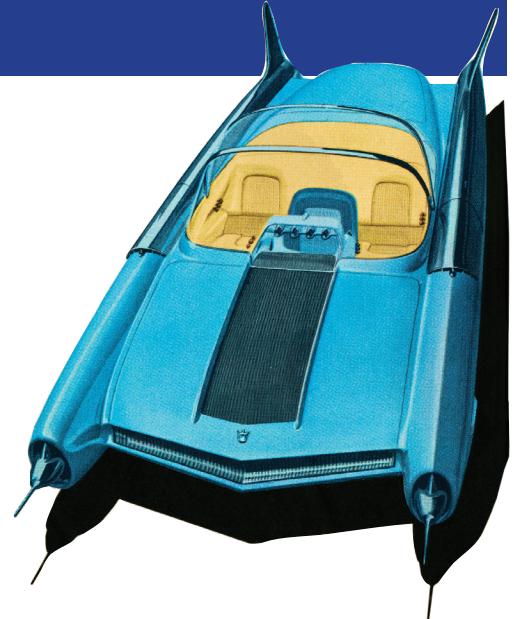
to do, but also allowing them to communicate with us about what they felt we need to implement."

Graf continues, "I'll never forget trying to implement the courtesy check. My ATI coach said to me, 'Just go out and talk to the guys and say, hey, we just want to implement a courtesy check so we can make sure we're looking at everything. What do you guys think we ought to have on that list?'"

"We sat down with the guys and let them rattle off everything they could think of. I took my notes and put together a list and came back to the guys, and from there I couldn't believe it. They began to implement everything on their own. I said to myself, 'Man, that was too easy. I should have done that years ago!'"

Graf says he has come to depend on and appreciate ATI's constant guidance as he has continued to fine-tune and maintain Kumler's performance as a business.

"That support has been vital," emphasizes Graf. "I could go on and on. Whether it was a personnel issue, something we were looking at having to take care of as far as pricing or marketing, the folks at ATI were able to talk me through it and help me with different ideas. Sometimes we didn't implement the ideas they gave exactly the way they wanted to do it, but a lot of the ideas they suggested, we did implement, and they successfully improved those processes."



When asked if he could maintain course with just his new knowledge, but without a coach by his side, Graf was quick to respond.

"No. A coach is *vital*. His input, his support, his feedback — on every aspect of the business — is very important. I remember the first year with ATI. Mike Haley was my coach and I couldn't wait to talk to him every week. We would talk about what was going well and the issues we were having difficulty with. We would also work with the portal to look at GP and parts and make small adjustments. I couldn't do it without a coach."

In addition to his relationship with his ATI coach, Graf depends on the collective wisdom and constant encouragement of other shop owners he met

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Tools of the Trade

Hang Up Your Advertising?

By Geoff Berman, ATI Coach

If you're tired of direct mail and you're looking for a different approach, I would have you consider front door hangers. Door hangers can be one of the most cost-effective and powerful ways to reach targeted customers. Door hangers are more effective than most direct mail products because they force interaction: The targeted customer has to physically remove it from the doorknob and view your message, without a handful of mail to distract them. **These are not paper.** They are made of hard thick plastic. They will absolutely grab your attention, and with the attached gift card (you know how well gift cards work) and a strong offer, the recipient will have to consider you. Best of all, you can put these on the doors you want and not rely on the shotgun approach of direct mail.

To learn more, go to your portal, to the **Resource Center**, and to the **ATI Marketing Tool Box**. Once in the **Tool Box**, click on **Gift Cards**. The first thing you will see is the door hanger. If you need further assistance, ask your coach or contact Jennifer at FSR. She will be happy to assist you. She can be reached by email at customerservice@fsr1.com or by phone at 434-973-4152.



Shop Owner Options:

- [Shop Owner Home](#)
- [Message Post](#)
- [Resource Center](#)
- [Referral](#)

Then click here

Click here



Resolution or Revolution?

By Kim Hickey, ATI Coach



Intentions and promises. We all have them. We all make them. Especially this time of year. According to the dictionary, intention and promise are two of the words used to describe resolution. We know that intentions and promises very often do not make it past anything but an intention or promise, but yet we make them again and again. We know that they don't work, so why do we continue to make them? One of the most common reasons we continue to make them is because we are procrastinators. By making promises to do something AFTER the new year, we are giving ourselves permission NOT to do it today. By making New Year's resolutions, we are acknowledging our dissatisfactions. When we make a resolution, we are basically admitting that we haven't been doing something we should be, or that we haven't been doing something as well as we should have been. Some people feel that resolutions are all about hope. The hope for a better year, the hope that we can make changes, the hope that we can become better versions of ourselves. But hope is not enough.

Resolutions are not a bad thing. Resolutions are the point of origin for all great revolutions. Revolution is defined as a *dramatic and wide-reaching change in the way something works or is organized or in people's ideas about it*. Metamorphosis, transformation, innovation, and also *a fundamental change in the way of thinking about or visualizing something: a change of paradigm*. Can you think of a word that better describes what has to be done? When you resolve to make a change, whether it is in your personal or business life, how often does that "change" not affect other things around it? Furthermore, have you ever made a business decision that didn't affect your personal life in even the smallest amount or vice versa? Someone once told me a long time ago that for every action, there is a reaction. I have found this to be true every single day. Let's just say you make a resolution to take more time off work to spend with your family. How many things will this affect? On the personal

side of your life, how will this affect the people you want to spend more time with? Will they have to now adjust their schedule to fit you in? Will your driving somewhere with them cause them to have to take a different vehicle with a higher passenger capacity? On the business side, will your spending less time at the shop mean less productivity? Will less productivity mean less net profit? Will less net profit affect the quality and amount of time you take off work to spend more time with your family?



Right now, as you are reading this, the automotive industry as a whole is in the throes of its own revolution. Social media, electronic inspection forms, the ability to text pictures and videos to your customers, hybrid vehicles, AAA opening their own shops, car manufacturers and dealers offering free maintenance for life, the decreasing number of great technicians and service advisors, the list goes on. To keep up with the revolution in the automotive industry, you need to cause your own revolution at your shop. You can no longer keep your head in the sand and try to wait things out. You can no longer rest on your laurels of what you have always done before. You can't, for even a minute more, take for granted that your loyal customers that have always come to you will keep coming. This is not only foolish, it is reckless. Right now, this minute, you need to stop relying on history. Stop accepting that you will be slow in December because you are always slow in December. Stop relying on you will be busy in May because you are always busy in May. Stop making and accepting excuses for when you and your business are not performing at the level you should be.

It is time for your metamorphosis, your transformation, your wide-reaching change. It is time to spark your own revolution. Start by making a list of resolutions. Look at your list and first analyze how many of those items are affected by the other items on your list. Work smarter and more efficiently. Are there any items that you can group together? By making one change in the group, will it affect other things in the group? For example, if you have low productivity, low morale, employees calling in sick, perhaps an adjustment in your current pay plan can help all of those items at once.

Next, prioritize your groups in order of importance. If you are not sure, ask your coach to help you determine the order you should make these changes so that you can maximize your results. Once you determine the order, you need to come up with a plan. Make a list of the action items that will need to occur to accomplish this change. At the top of the list should be the reason you need to make the change. You have to start with your own belief system. Why do you want to make the change? How will it benefit you and everyone else it will affect? Once you know and truly believe in your quest, it is only then that you can work toward changing the belief systems of all that will be involved. If you don't have conviction, if you waver, if you are not sure, it will never work. If you are wishy-washy, with luck, you may temporarily be able to effect change, but it won't last, it will never be permanent. Be specific in your list of action items. Step by step. Along with your detailed, step-by-step action items, assign a date to perform those actions or the dates to have them completed by. If we don't assign a timeline and completion dates, they will drag on and could possibly become next year's resolutions.

Last, I encourage you to utilize all of your available tools. Get to any classes you are missing. Utilize the teleseminar library. Share your plan with your coach and get their input. Remember above all that a change that is not permanent is a resolution and not a revolution. Only you have the power to lead your revolution.



Fitness Matters A Series by Gary Siegel, Fitness Matters Gym

Seven Ways to Talk Yourself into Keeping Your Own Promise

It's the new year. You made that resolution – in front of witnesses – to exercise regularly. Here are seven reasons you will feel really good about following through.

- No. 1:** Exercise controls weight by burning calories.
- No. 2:** Exercise combats health conditions and diseases by boosting immune response.
- No. 3:** Exercise improves mood by releasing beta-endorphins.
- No. 4:** Exercise boosts energy by building strength and increasing circulation.
- No. 5:** Exercise promotes deeper, more restful sleep.
- No. 6:** Exercise will put the spark back into your sex life. Seriously? Seriously!
- No. 7:** Exercise can be fun. Watch the kids. They call it "playing."



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Gift Certificates Available

Your Available Training Programs for February and March 2014

February 2014

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday/Sunday |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|--|-----------------|
| | | | | | 1/2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 Shop Owner 1 of 9 | 6 Shop Owner 2 of 9 | 7 Shop Owner 3 of 9 | 8/9 |
| 10 Service Advisor 20 Group Profiteers | 11 Service Advisor 20 Group Profiteers | 12 Shop Owner 7 of 9 | 13 Peak Performers Shop Owner 8 of 9 | 14 Peak Performers Shop Owner 9 of 9 | 15/16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 Shop Owner 4 of 9 | 20 Shop Owner 5 of 9 | 21 Shop Owner 6 of 9 | 22/23 |
| 24 Service Advisor 1 of 4 | 25 Service Advisor 2 of 4 | 26 | 27 Service Manager 1 of 2 | 28 Service Manager 2 of 2 | |

March 2014

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday/Sunday |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| | | | | | 1/2 |
| 3 Service Advisor 1 of 4 | 4 Service Advisor 2 of 4 | 5 Shop Owner 1 of 9 | 6 Shop Owner 2 of 9 | 7 Shop Owner 3 of 9 | 8/9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 Super Conference Puerto Rico | 13 Super Conference Puerto Rico | 14 Super Conference Puerto Rico | 15/16 Super Conference Puerto Rico |
| 17 Saint Patrick's Day | 18 | 19 Shop Owner 4 of 9 | 20 Shop Owner 5 of 9 | 21 Shop Owner 6 of 9 | 22/23 |
| 24 Service Advisor 3 of 4 | 25 Service Advisor 4 of 4 | 26 | 27 2nd in Command 20 Group | 28 2nd in Command 20 Group | 29/30 |
| 31 Shop Owner 8 of 9 | | | | | |

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Service Manager Howie Graf Moves Forward by Embracing Change

through ATI classes, as well as those in the 20 Group he belongs to.

"It's great to go to dinner with guys after each class, talk to folks at lunch, hear about what they are doing and realize that I am not on an island by myself — that shops out there are having the same problems. And the members of my 20 Group are constantly emailing each other about things, coming up with different ideas and sharing them. The 20 Group meetings themselves are great too. Everyone who attends comes home recharged, with a new perspective and new ideas."

Graf is even more direct about shop owners who are overwhelmed and floundering. "The first thing they need to do is to get help. This is a great industry but it is constantly changing. They are going to have a lot more fun once they get the help they need to get things in place and get organized. Structure around numbers and procedures and employee policies is critical to staying organized, operational and profitable. Without a support group, you will never fix your problems — let alone get where you want to be in the future."

Graf acknowledges there will always be some amount of stress at work, but that working with ATI to implement positive, proactive change has given

him a sense of peace he didn't have in the past — and that has translated into a better personal life.

There's even a quote Graf calls to mind from time to time that sums up the past four years:

"Incredible change happens in your life when you decide to take control of what you do have power over instead of craving control over what you don't."



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A U T O M O T I V E I N S T I T U T E T R A I N I N G M O D U L E

Linthicum, Md. 21090

705 Digital Drive, Suite V

Training Institute

Automotive

