



## Inspired Leadership, “I Hate Selling and Salespeople!”

By John Lewis

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I can't stand salespeople. I hate 'em! They are a pain in the neck and they waste my time, ad-nauseum.

If you have not said these words or something similar you have certainly heard someone else say them. Truth be told, like it or not, selling is something we all do, some of us better than others. I suspect some of you are reading this and saying to yourself, “No way Jose!!” I hate to sell even more than I dislike salespeople. Well, please hang in there and give me the opportunity to explain.

Selling is really the gentle art of persuasion with a price tag attached to it. Some time in the past you were probably sold something by a salesperson that really impressed you. You probably commented to someone after you made the purchase about what a great sales person they were or that they could ‘sell ice to Eskimo’s’. If you are going to lead and lead well, it is important that you are as good at selling as that salesperson was.

Leadership is very much about the gentle art of persuasion. The most successful business owners & managers in the world today are

excellent at selling their ideas to others. They know how to build consensus and get others to buy into their ideas and what they want to accomplish. They don't do it by convincing others that they are right, they do it by asking subtle, smart questions that lead others to the conclusion that what the leader wants to



accomplish is a good thing and the right thing to do.

Great leaders also utilize the answer to that age old question asked mentally if not orally, “What's in it for me?” They make sure that “What's in it for you” is exactly what you want and they discover what others want by asking what others want or as they say, ‘taking your temperature’. They are quick studies regarding body language and personality type, and they know what motivates different people. As you well know from the training and coaching you have received at ATI and maybe elsewhere, (books,

seminars, school, mentors, parents) there are 5 basic personality traits. They are: the desire to be the best or the greatest, the desire for gain, the desire for comfort and convenience, the desire for security, and fear, usually of the unknown which probably causes more procrastination than any other emotion.

Money will usually motivate the folks who believe they are or want to be the best and will always motivate the person with a desire for gain. That's why you want one of these folks on your front counter. Give one of these folk's good sales training and a compensation plan that rewards performance along with some recognition for the ones that want to be recognized as the best and your business will rock and roll. But I digress.

The folks who are a part of these 2 personality ‘types’ make up about 15% to 20% of the population. How do you ‘persuade’ the rest? The answer is in the word *care*. Caring about the folks who are your ‘internal’ customers, the ones who are a part of the repair, service, delivery, and exceeding your customer's expectations process is the solution. Care in this context means discovering what is important to them, (their

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families, homes, cars, boats, hobbies etc.) and making sure that they get their fair share of whatever that is for accomplishing whatever their job description entails in a quality and timely manner. Whether it is more time off for extra production or a boat to use with the family on the weekend, everyone of us is motivated by something. If you persuade us that we can have what we want by giving you what you want, then the job will get done.

If you are like me, you have set goals for your life and your business. In order to accomplish those goals it is going to require the help and commitment of those you associate with and interact with everyday. Persuasion is both art and science. It is all about human relations and sales skills. It is about caring about yourself and others; enthusiasm, passion and your ability to communicate clearly.

Every great leader in this world was born but none of them was born a great leader. They learned those skills through experience, study, and practice and the best of the best never stop searching for that little psychological edge that will take them where they want to go a little easier or a little faster. May I recommend the following books for your enjoyment and to assist you in your quest? Zig Zigler is a master persuader and salesman. I have read and continue to study every one of his books. He is entertaining, funny, and I recommend them all. Most of them can be found on CD. *'How to Win Friends and Influence People'* written by Dale Carnegie is a classic. Remember that the difference between a good performance and a great performance is the degree of passion. Have a great month and lead on. 🪄

## Same Story, Second Verse, Thirteen Years Later.

By Richard Menneg



While dusting off some old files I found an article I wrote for Georgia Automotive Business magazine in November of 1992. Yes, that was almost exactly thirteen years ago to the day. As I read it, I thought - "Wow, I could have written this yesterday."

In my last article, we discussed significant changes in the ways in which automotive service is changing. Although the automobile population is increasing (more two income/multi-car households coupled with an increase in vehicle age mix) and the overall number of shops is decreasing, shop profitability is becoming a more challenging quest every year. Customer insistence on competitive pricing and high quality is forcing every repair facility to concentrate on increased technical standards, better management of expenses and a much higher awareness of how important the total repair experience is to the consumer's overall satisfaction level.

Historically, independent repair shops have captured the majority of consumer out-of-warranty repairs & maintenance. This has been largely due to overall apathy of the dealer to retain this business in favor of more profitable warranty work. Dealer pricing hasn't been competitive & inconvenient, slow turn a rounds have been the norm.

For years, the dealer principle saw the back bays as a necessary evil. The entire focus of the operation was geared towards new car sales. The expectation that service covered a minor amount of the fixed overhead

reduced its level of importance. It is thus understandable that dealers never aggressively went after out-of-warranty repairs.

The rules have changed dramatically over the past 24 months. New car sales have plummeted to an all time low. Dealers have closed their doors in record numbers. It is no exaggeration to say that the dealers who have survived this downturn are the ones who maintained focus on the service department. Thus, OEM's and dealers alike are turning their attention to selling service as aggressively as they have gone after showroom sales in the past.

What has started out as a marketing whisper will more & more dramatically influence the purchasing habits of the out-of-warranty automotive consumer as time goes on. Dealers reconfigure their service departments to better handle quick service operations. Pricing and fast turnaround which competes directly with the independent instead of the dealer around the corner is now the strategic plan. The average dealer has more money for advertising and promotions, more pleasing facilities, a higher investment in equipment and personnel and stronger factory support to back this new strategy.

As consumers become more aware of convenient competitive dealer service options, the independent will be pressed harder to upgrade their own level of service. Although this will not affect price erosion, it will

require independents to make face-lifts to their facilities, invest in new, updated equipment and training programs, & pay significantly more attention to service presentation and customer care.

An astute businessman must constantly look for dynamic changes in his or her market. The ability to anticipate change and react in a favorable and profitable manner is key to long term growth and survival. By paying attention to what your

competition is doing and more importantly what your customer is truly looking for is a key ingredient of success. The free enterprise system has the uncanny ability to weed out the weak and unprepared. The independent's customer loyalty will be more and

more aggressively challenged by increased dealer competition. Rising to the challenge today will ensure your business's future for tomorrow.



**ATTENTION SHOP OWNERS AND MANAGERS:**  
If you have something you would like to share, e-mail your coach or ATI at [office@autotraining.net](mailto:office@autotraining.net).

# The Role of Leadership In the Development of a Compensation Plan

By Brian Canning

It is critical to the success of any compensation plan that the supervisor, foreman, manager or owner exercise strong and overt leadership throughout development and implementation of the plan. Beyond implementation, this same leadership is crucial to the long term success of the plan.

Compensation plans, in whatever their form, are designed to optimize shop operations through improved technician productivity & sales efforts that drive both gross dollars and profitability. Just as important, compensation plans develop the team, focus the efforts of the entire staff, and make everyone accountable to each other and the final outcome week after week. In very direct terms

these compensation plans promote time efficiency but also encourage and promote behaviors such as courtesy checks, the recommendation of maintenance services, and improved customer service. Strong incentives encourage initiative and creativity.

Any change in how a person is paid is very likely to cause fear and concern among staff. It is very important that we communicate well and often in the development and implementation of a comp plan and show a quick willingness to address concerns and answer questions that might come up. It is beneficial to run the new plan parallel and give staff members the opportunity to try it on and get comfortable with

the plan, and the changes it brings to their lives, before final implementation. In introducing the plan, it is often effective to show staff the expected extremes in the plan by using recent good weeks and recent bad weeks to demonstrate both the up side potential and the down side. Highlight the built-in incentives and begin to set expectations.

The success or failure of a compensation plan will be entirely the result of commitment to the plan and effective leadership in getting staff on board and comfortable with the plan. Do it right, and the business will enjoy the very positive result of improved productivity, sales, customer service, and profitability.

Knowing and accepting that the plan should help address the performance of your shop will only get you half the way there. As the leader you will need to pick up the plan, know every aspect of the plan and working through your staff, you will need to work the plan. Driving sales and profits and getting your shop to that next level demands your very best effort. It demands that you be willing to ask your staff for a better, more focused effort and that you provide them with the tools, the motivation, and the road map to get there. Done right, you will occasionally have to rein them in. Done wrong, you will spend your days struggling to get them to move. Which will it be; the reins or the whip?

## Marketing Strategies

# Attract New Customers With the WOW Factor!

By Jim Stratton, President, Zap Innovations, Inc.

This month's direct marketing topic is dimensional mail. Dimensional mail refers to any type of unique mailing



format that visually stands out in the mailbox clutter.

First, the format surprises the recipient and has breakthrough "wow power." In addition to initial impact, a well-done dimensional mail piece invites repeated interaction—pulling the tabs, discovering how it works—so the amount of time spent with your brand imagery and

message is dramatically increased. Finally, dimensional mailers can impart a considerable amount of information to the recipient in an interesting and logical way.

Although every dimensional mail project is unique in its goals and creative content, marketers considering dimensional mail experience similar issues and follow a similar learning curve. While not all marketing challenges are suitable candidates for a dimensional program, there's typically a place for dimensional mail in every marketing plan. We've done dimensional marketing pieces for medical practices, large pharmaceutical companies, universities, radio stations,



technology firms, telecommunications, banks and many for the automotive industry. One of the most effective mail pieces that exploits the "wow factor" is the Wallet Mailer. This clever design looks like a real wallet & the message and offer are inside the wallet. Amazingly the exact same message and offer

sent in an ordinary envelope will have a lower response rate.

If you are interested in jump-starting your shop's car counts with a new customer campaign—consider the pulling power of the Wallet Mailer. **(Editor's Note):** Speak to your ATI coach if you are interested in a wallet mailing.)

## Sam's Corner

By Chubby

**Barrett-Jackson 2007.** By the time you read this many shop owners will be returning from Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. This is our Annual Client Appreciation Advanced Owners Course with 2 days of training and 4 days of fun in the sun. I would like your feedback on next year's event being held in Scottsdale, Arizona two days prior to the Barrett-Jackson Collector Car Auction. The weather should be great and it is one of the best car shows with over 1000 collector cars. Please e-mail me

at [cfrederick@autotraining.net](mailto:cfrederick@autotraining.net) to give me your opinion. I'll bet if Sam was still with us he would take Mary to Barrett-Jackson.

Phoenix airport is easy and has many direct flights. If we book early we can get great hotel rates as well. Typically, the event is structured around activities like the beach & fishing. I have a passion that many of you share with me, Collector Cars. This year the auction lasted for 6 days. There were some very reasonably priced cars averaging \$30,000 each. Then the big boys showed up with Ray Allen's 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle LS6 Convertible which won the US Nationals and The

Super Nationals competitions. This car never lost a race the entire time it was campaigned. It sold for under \$6,000 brand new in 1970 and went for \$1,150,000.00 Saturday afternoon at the auction.

This year the auction was just the best car show you could attend. A one-of-only two built, 1954 Pontiac Bonneville Special Motorama Concept Car sold for \$2,850,000 and the 1950 General Motors Futurliner Parade Of Progress Tour Bus went for \$4 Million. ATI will buy you a 6 day pass and kids go for free if you send me an e-mail right now that you want to go with the Fat Boy.

The ultimate question is

"are collector cars as good as the stock market for your retirement money?" Well, you can't drive your 401K around getting thumbs up from neighbors. You can't relive that first wonderful experience you had in some of the back seats of your first rides. You could lose money on either investment but you can't play with your stock investments. Let's also consider the business aspect of collector cars. Car Clubs holding meetings at your shop could be great for business. It could attract attention to your shop as well as expose you to potential collectors to help them maintain their cars. Those of you challenged by computers call me at 888-471-5800x 9101.

## Seven At the Top, *Congratulations to All!*

### This Month's Winners are:

#### Randy Eakin

Randy's Automotive  
26 Spring Street  
Medfield, MA 02052

#### Mike Leeches

Quality Motors  
27912 Forbes Road  
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677



8611 Larkin Road  
Suite 200  
Savage, MD 20763

#### Rick Wood

Woods Car Care-Sterling  
47064 Harry Bird Hwy  
Sterling, VA 20164

#### Walt Eger

Walt Eger's Service Center  
1450 Grim Road  
Severn, MD 21144

#### Dennis Schlundt

Dennis Auto Repair Inc.  
1817 E. Hammond  
Fresno, CA 93703

#### Dan & Kris Cesena

Honda Hospital  
330 S. Claremont Street  
San Mateo, CA 94401

#### Ed Cushman

C&H Foreign Auto Repair  
E. 620 N. Foothill Drive  
Spokane, WA 99207