

ShopTalk

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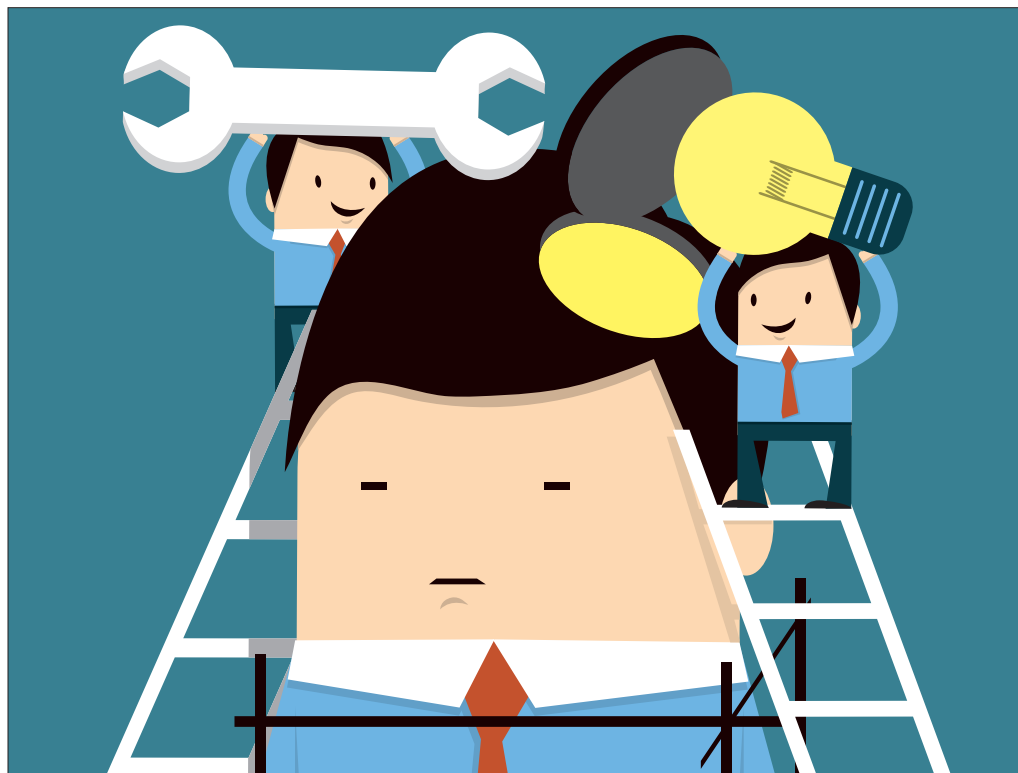
ATI
Automotive
Training Institute

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September 2014

Are You Coachable and Why Does That Even Matter?

By Scott Fleckinger, Community Car Care



Are you coachable? That is one of the first questions Chubby and his staff ask when you show an interest in the program. It was February 24, 2013, in an ATI Boot Camp. Since I have owned my own business for just under 25 years, I thought "What can they teach me? I'm a success!" Twenty-five years and going strong, how many small business owners can say that? Then comes the cost of training! They have to be crazy, 'cause after all, I'm no newbie. I'm doing good, or so I thought.

I agreed to a one-on-one consultation and a profit or loss assessment. Soon it became very clear. For the price of a nice luxury car, this high school grad who learned to fix cars and treat people right can go to business school and get my degree (so to speak) from ATI. It's not just in some vague business field, but in the automotive business. That's something that will have a direct effect on my income and time away from the business.

The other moment of clarity that day was accountability. Do you hold your employees accountable for their actions? Who holds you accountable? Who do you answer to? If the answer is no one, and you have all the money and all the time in the world to enjoy it, then you did it right. If not, then you are missing something. Everyone needs to be held accountable for their actions. People come to you every day and you solve their problems. When you have a problem, do you have someone to turn to? Who is it? Your spouse is probably tired of hearing about issues at the shop. That is what I saw.

As for the "cost," I quickly realized it was an investment, not a cost. How often do we as owners invest in a piece of equipment at that price or close to it? Do we expect a return on it? Of course we do! Do we always get it? Is it just the

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Sam's Corner

Safe Succession Planning: Part 5

Last month, we discussed how to weave your safe succession strategy into your ATI Five-Year Roadmap with the help of your coach. Hopefully you have bought in to the fact that the safe succession plan needs to be written because you might not be around to implement it, and you owe it to your family to help them carry on. You might also want more free time right now and want to begin the journey sooner rather than later.

Since a safe succession plan incorporates a plan in place for all of your positions, you will need accurate job descriptions for all your people. Since he or she can't read your mind, begin by writing down exactly what you do as owner for the second in command. You need to list all your responsibilities in operations, finance and marketing. Then, decide which responsibilities you will move first to your second in command. Your ultimate goal is to move them all; however, your second has to be ready to handle it. It could easily take three to five years to prepare a second in command for everything. I would strongly suggest at this point enrolling them in the second in command Twenty Group, so they can rub elbows with players at different levels of development. Our president, Richard Menneg, will be participating in these meetings; and believe me, he has experience being a second in command.

Your next step is to produce in writing your standard operating procedures. You might use some of ours or modify them to your liking and culture. These procedures should include phone, drop-off, presentation at the counter, delivery, follow-up and your reminder procedure. When you have these standards written down, it will be easier for you and your coach to coach to your standards.

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See You in September

By Kim Hickey, ATI Coach



September 1 is Labor Day, the first of the fall and winter holidays. Send out an email blast, post on Facebook and Twitter in the beginning of each month, reminding your customers not to wait until the last minute to have repairs and maintenance performed the day before the holiday. Encourage them to schedule a trip for inspection early. You could offer a discount or raffle ticket for a prize if they schedule their appointment by a certain date.

Monroe Shocks and Struts "Shocktober" promotion starts on September 1. If you haven't received anything from your parts vendors in regards to this yet, ask.

Do you have a nice, roomy waiting area? Offer your shop as a location for kids to come and do their homework after school. Do you have a high school or college student in your circle that may be willing to volunteer their time? If you do, you could offer tutoring as well.

Take a blank piece of paper and make 12 columns, one for each month starting with January. Start jotting down holidays, awareness campaigns, etc., for each month. Once you start penciling in your ideas, you can start figuring out what you want to do for those days, how much it will cost to promote, and the dates you will have to start preparing these things by. Now you can transfer this to your marketing calendar in the portal.

When you are jotting down ideas, remember that you don't have to promote awareness during the months everyone else does. When you do things "off season" they will not only get

more attention, but the chances are greater that your customers won't already be overloaded with other requests and ads for the same things. You can collect food for the food bank during the summer. Nationwide, food banks are bare during the summer because most people donate food around the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. The need for food is actually greater during the summer because children are home during the day and not being fed breakfast and lunch at school. Winter coats can be collected during the beginning of spring. More people will be likely to donate their coat rather than to have to pack it away for summer.



Send out an email blast, Facebook, Twitter, etc., that you are looking for charities and organizations to highlight once a month. Ask your customers for suggestions and find out which are near and dear to their hearts. You might want to consider highlighting one charity a month and kick off each month by having a representative for that charity at your shop for a few hours to hand out literature and answer any questions. **ATI**



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up fast — so
register today!

Go to www.autotraining.net/superconference15



A True Story By George Zeeks, ATI Coach

The story I'm about to tell you is true.



We make choices every day. Some are no big deal, some have a great positive impact and some just morph into a Greek tragedy.

It was a hot, humid, beautiful August summer day in Maryland. A perfect day to swim, even if it's in a place clearly marked not to swim. It seems that many people drown there every year. Perfect. The four of us were rock climbing above the Potomac at a place called Great Falls. After several hours of climbing, we decided that the other side of the river was too perfect not to climb. The fact that we would have to swim across was an added benefit. We were young and invincible, in a way that only the young and blindly cocky can be.

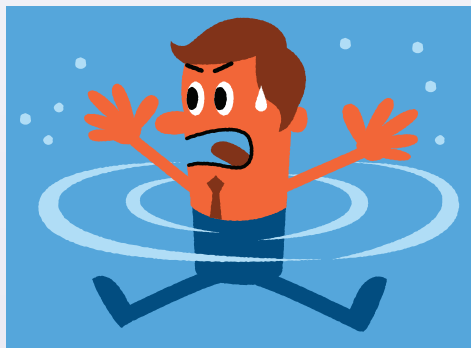
There were two islands between us and the opposite shore. The problem was getting the rope and all the gear to the other side with us. The plan was simplicity, it seemed. One of us would attach the rope to themselves, swim across and then anchor the rope as the others crossed using the rope. The last person would carry the pack and the remainder of the gear. Being gifted with ample amounts of ego and stupidity, I volunteered to be the first swimmer. The first two stretches between the islands were only about 30 meters each. The water was cold and delicious. The plan was working perfectly. This was a "piece of pie"...

The last section was almost 40 meters, but the current was noticeably stronger. The rope, knotted (yes, knotted) around my waist, was wet and heavy at this point, but everything had gone so well so far. What could go wrong? I started out strong for the other side, feeling the pull of the current downstream. I had planned for drift; after all, I had guided white-water rafting for a couple of years now and felt I knew what a river could and couldn't do. My partners in this comedy of errors were feeding the rope out behind me, in an attempt to maintain some illusion of control. None of us had planned on the river taking that much of the rope downstream.

The rope, instead of making a straight line from my crew on the island to me, had gone down river for at least 20 meters. Every bit of that rope was pulling me, like the ocean pulls your feet in the surf break, to come take a journey with it to the white water below the island. I was literally almost laying my hand on the rock of the opposite shore when I flew backwards like on a cheap carnival ride. The rope stopped on the back side of a mostly

submerged rock, with me pressed into the bottom of the rock by the weight of the water. It was incredibly loud in that washing machine. My face was banging into the rock like tennis shoes in the dryer. What to do?

First thought, why am I not going anywhere? My fellow actors in this comedy were trying to pull me back upstream. I just knew that they would try that. The rope was still tied in a knot — remember that great choice? And between the tension of the rope and the tightness of the knot, trying to untie it wasn't even a choice. Second thought, I'll just swim to the surface and yell and they will let go of the rope. Between the swim and now the fight to the surface, I was spent and never got out a word. I settled back to the bottom and braced my feet on the rock to limit the beating. My first thought was that I had done everything I could, and this was it. Game over. It's amazing how things start to slow down but your mind is going faster than it ever has. The air is almost gone. That "take a breath" alarm was full volume now and not going away. Oh well. By the way, your life does flash around in a weird way, no particular rhyme or reason. Much closer to Dr. Seuss than anything else, at least for me.



Then I became furious. There is no way you can stop fighting. I bunched up against the bottom of the rock and with all I had left, pushed with my feet and pulled as hard as I could. That's the last thing I remember. I had pulled the rope from their collective hands and floated unconscious to the surface. The pain from the kayaker holding my head above water by my hair was my next memory.

It would have been very easy to stop and accept the obvious. Each day we all face choices. Have I done enough? Of course I have. When is "enough" the right thing, the best thing, the thing that helps to raise the level for all of us?

When it's tempting to give up, go the extra step and never give in. The rewards could be worth life itself.



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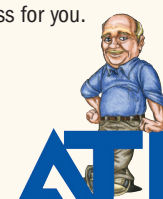
The next step will be training your people for their new positions. Remember, it will take three to five years to develop your successor, so encourage all your people to go back to school. Do in-house training as well as ATI training where they attend the owners' and service managers' courses. Some of the best coaching will come from your ATI coach, which is why thousands of Alumni have utilized their coach to develop their second in command. Your second will also have to learn about your operating bank account, passwords, tax identification numbers, preferred vendors. Once you give them the entire reins, they will need to understand your sales and expense budgets, bill paying, payroll and taxes, and have some level of authority on purchasing decisions. If you're a nervous Nelly on the checking account, you can transfer money in and out of an operating account with a limit.

The thing to remember about training is that most people have to hear, read and write something six times for 62 percent retention. So they will need to watch you, which is called shadowing. Then you must empower them and let them take over while you are there. Now you can mentor them, building a relationship of trust while you become their role model. Finally the toughest job, coaching! Since they can't see the entire playing field while they are on it, they will need feedback on what they are doing right and wrong. Learn from your coach because it is easy to demotivate by doing this incorrectly.

Next month, we will discuss how to ensure a profitable future working on your business while your people operate the business for you.

C. L. Frederick




— Chubby



Your Available Training Programs for October and November 2014












October 2014

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

		1 Shop Owner 1 of 9	2 Shop Owner 2 of 9	3 Shop Owner 3 of 9	4/5
6 Service Advisor 1 of 4	7 Service Advisor 2 of 4	8 Shop Owner 4 of 9	9 Shop Owner 5 of 9	10 Shop Owner 6 of 9	11/12
20 Group	20 Group				
13 Service Manager 1 of 2	14 Service Manager 2 of 2	15	16 Service Advisor California 1 of 4	17 Service Advisor California 2 of 4	18/19
20 Group	20 Group				
Columbus Day		Shop Owner 7 of 9	Shop Owner 8 of 9	Shop Owner 9 of 9	
			20 Group	20 Group	
20 20 Group	21 20 Group	22	23 20 Group	24 20 Group	25/26
27 20 Group Leading Ladies	28 20 Group Leading Ladies	29	30	31 Halloween	
Service Advisor 3 of 4	Service Advisor 4 of 4				

November 2014

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday/Sunday

					1/2
3 Service Advisor 1 of 4	4 Service Advisor 2 of 4	5	6 Service Advisor California 3 of 4	7 Service Advisor California 4 of 4	8/9
10 Advanced Sales	11 Advanced Sales Veteran's Day	12 Shop Owner 1 of 9	13 Shop Owner 2 of 9	14 Shop Owner 3 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 3 of 4	25 Service Advisor 4 of 4	26	27	28	29/30
					

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Are You Coachable and Why Does That Even Matter?

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cost of doing business? I can truly say this investment has cost me nothing after six months.

Chubby followed his own advice and built a world-class staff, from Richard down through all the coaches/teachers, that compares to none. You will not find a more passionate, dedicated staff

to get your adrenaline pumping and clarify the voices in your head.

Here I am, 18 months later, spending most of my working time on my business, not in it. I was just accepted into a 20 Group made up of some of the most elite shops in the country.

Now, I must say, I am more fortunate than most. I have been blessed with an unbelievable

support staff, some as long as 20 and 25 years. Whether you have that or need to build that, ATI can help you get there.

One visit to the ATI facility in Linthicum will show you they don't just talk the talk, they walk the walk. They practice what they preach. **ATI**

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