

ShopTalk



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February 2016

Upcoming Classes:

Shop Owner

Leadership Mastery

Feb. 17, 18 & 19
Mar. 9, 10 & 11 | Apr. 20, 21 & 22

Staffing & Hiring

Mar. 7 & 8

Align Your Shop for Profit

Feb. 10, 11 & 12
Mar. 2, 3 & 4 | Apr. 6, 7 & 8

A.B.M. Always Be Marketing

Feb. 3, 4 & 5 | Apr. 13, 14 & 15

Succession Planning

Feb. 17, 18 & 19 | Apr. 20, 21 & 22

Service Advisor

The Role of the Service Advisor

Feb. 15 & 16
Mar. 7 & 8 | Apr. 11 & 12

ATI's 7 Step Sales Process

Feb. 1 & 2 | Feb 29 & Mar. 1 | Mar. 24 & 25

The Role of the Service Advisor - W. C.

Feb. 4 & 5 | Apr. 14 & 15

Service Manager Course

Feb. 22 & 23

Service Advisor Advanced

Apr. 4 & 5

ATI's 7 Step Sales Process - W. C.

Feb. 25 & 26 | Apr. 25 & 26

Collision

Leadership Mastery

Mar. 9, 10 & 11

Collision Repair Production

Feb. 8 & 9

Keys to a Successful Collision Business

Feb. 10, 11 & 12 | Mar. 2, 3 & 4
Apr. 6, 7 & 8

A.B.M. Always Be Marketing

Feb. 3, 4 & 5 | Apr. 13, 14 & 15

Collision Estimating & Sales 1

Feb. 29 & Mar. 1

ATI's Top Shop Quest Continues:

Second and Third Round Picks Are In!

By Bryan Stasch, Vice President

Round 2 Top Shops

AAA Complete Automotive Repair	Ottavio Dattolo	Mount Prospect, IL
Accurate Automotive	Lee & Kelli Weatherby	Mesa, AZ
Auburn Foreign Car Repair	Greg & Julia Hochhalter	Auburn, WA
Auto Check 9	Matthew & Mina Roayae	Houston, TX
Auto Stop 1	Tom Lapham	Arlington, VA
Auto Tech	Troy Love	San Ramon, CA
Ayers Automotive Repair	Robert & Nikki Ayers	Santa Barbara, CA
Babcock Auto Care, LLC	Jeremy & Jeana Babcock	Rochester, MN
BG Automotive Inc.	Bryan & Cendi Gossel	Fort Collins, CO
BMW Excluservice	Stephane Grabina	Rockville, MD
Bradham Automotive	John & Claudia Crowder	Alexandria, VA
Bransfield Motor Co	John Eichler Jr	Reisterstown, MD
Brown Motor Works	Keith & Rebecca Huggins	Columbia, SC
C & M Auto Service	Craig & Monica Courtney	Morgan Hill, CA
Cardinal Plaza Shell	Scott & MaryBeth Brown	Springfield, VA
Carmine's Import Service	Carmine Cupani	Kernersville, NC
Caton Auto	Ken & Diane Steinbach	Catonsville, MD
Centerville Service Center, Inc.	Ben & Sharon Forshee	Centerville, OH
Check's Muffler Center	Greg & Cheryl Karr	Stevens Point, WI
Conant Automotive, Inc.	Joe & Erin Conant	Stoughton, WI
Crabtree Automotive Inc.	Tim & Paula Connaghan	Albany, OR
D K Hardee Automotive	Keith & Melissa Hardee	Fayetteville, NC
D'Avico Auto Repair, Inc.	John & Rose D'Avico	Wayne, PA
Escondido German Auto	Dustin & Mindy Michael	Escondido, CA
European Auto Solutions	Tim Allen, Ed Owen, Scott Penney	Waltham, MA
Fifth Gear Automotive	Bill & Rhena Bernick & Rick & Nicole Jordan	Lewisville, TX
Frank's Servicenter	Frank Dischinger	Southampton, PA
George's Sierra Shell	Doug & Linda Whiteman	Fontana, CA
German Auto Works	Steve Sanders	St Louis Park, MN
Haglin Automotive, Inc.	Dana & Judi Haglin	Boulder, CO
Hanover Lube & Brake Center, Inc.	Dean Wright	Hanover, MD
High-Tech Auto & Truck Center	Carl Kessler	Chantilly, VA
Hillmuth Certified Automotive of Clarksville	Doug & Eileen Hillmuth	Clarksville, MD
Hogan & Sons, Inc. - Leesburg	John, Phil, & Susan Hogan	Leesburg, VA
Hogan & Sons, Inc. - Herndon	John, Phil, & Susan Hogan	Herndon, VA
Hontech Automotive	Dave & Sue Newkirk	San Diego, CA
Integrity First Automotive	Damian & Jill Shaw	West Jordan, UT
J C's British & 4 x 4	Jeff Corwin	Englewood, CO
Jeff's Automotive	Jeff Strausser	Easton, PA
Joe's Alfas & Subaru	Joe & Carrie Brazil	Sacramento, CA
Krietz Auto Repair Inc.	Charlie & Kim Krietz	Frederick, MD
Lake Arbor Automotive & Truck	Dana Tepoel	Westminster, CO
Len's Automotive	Ken Mattson	Bellevue, WA
Medlock Gulf	Karl Jaegar	Decatur, GA
Meyers Auto Tech, Inc.	Scott & Jessica Meyers	Kennewick, WA
Midwest Performance Cars	Andy Bizub	Chicago, IL
Milstead Service Center LLC	Mark & Stephanie Milstead	Conroe, TX
Minh's Auto Care, LLC	Tam Truong	Brooklyn, NY
Murphy's Autocare	Dave & Jan Murphy	Beavercreek, OH
Paul Campanella Auto & Tire Center	Paul & Karen Campanella	Wilmington, DE
Plymouth Auto and Tire Center	Al & Danielle Torcini	Plymouth Meeting, PA
Precision Auto	Bud & Jackie Wildman	Germantown, MD



After announcing ATI Top 150 Shops last month, we have been working diligently to identify the Top Shops. The Competition gets tougher every year as shop continue to improve their performance. Keep an eye out to see who makes the next cut. Then, at SuperConference 2016, we will announce our Top 12 winners representing the very best ATI shops in North America.



Over Protective Dad.



Round 2 Top Shops (continued)

Quality Motors	Mike Leeches	Laguna Niguel, CA
Ray & Dana's Inman Auto Care	Dana & Yannet Perone	Colonia, NJ
Robe Mans Auto Service	Eddie & Trish Cleveland	Birmingham, AL
Rocha's Automotive Inc.	Ken & Angie Rocha	Fortuna, CA
Service First Automotive - Champions	Terral Hill	Spring, TX
Service First Automotive - Spring	Nathan Pruski	Houston, TX
Silver Lake Auto Center	Dan & Becky Garlock	Oconomowoc, WI
Skyline Automotive	Ben & Erin Nielsen	Falls Church, VA
Sloan's Automotive	Terry Sloan	Orlando, FL
Smiths Auto and Truck Service	Nick Torcini	Doylestown, PA
South Side Tire & Auto	Jeff & Onna Keeney	Frederick, MD
Sparks Computerized Car Care	John Eckrich	Muncie, IN
Stan's Auto Service	Sheldon & Pamela Barthlama	Loveland, CO
Taylor Company BMW	Bruce Taylor	Pomona, CA
Tim's Automotive	Tim Roozenboom	Clackamas, OR
Tony and Sons	Corey & Donny Perhay	East Peoria, IL
V & F Auto Inc.	Frank & Sheila Palange	Agawam, MA
Van Dam Auto & Truck Repair	Jim & Carolyn Van Dam	Mokena, IL
Walt Eger's Service Center	Walt & Katherine Eger	Severn, MD
Wastler Auto Service	Ken Wastler	Westminster, MD
West Town Monona Tire	Gary & Joann Pivotto	Madison, WI
Westlake Independent Service	Bruce Nation	Westlake Village, CA
Wilton Service Center	Mike Lindquist	Wilton, CT

Round 3 Top Shops

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Hillmuth Certified Automotive of Clarksville	Doug & Eileen Hillmuth	Clarksville, MD
Joe's Alfas & Subaru	Joe & Carrie Brazil	Sacramento, CA
Krietz Auto Repair Inc.	Charlie & Kim Krietz	Frederick, MD
Medlock Gulf	Karl Jaegar	Decatur, GA
Midwest Performance Cars	Andy Bizub	Chicago, IL
Murphy's Autocare	Dave & Jan Murphy	Beavercreek, OH
Paul Campanella Auto & Tire Center	Paul & Karen Campanella	Wilmington, DE
Plymouth Auto and Tire Center	Al & Danielle Torcini	Plymouth Meeting, PA
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Wilton Service Center	Mike Lindquist	Wilton, CT

The Coach's Corner

It's Not the 80's Anymore

Out of Date Habit #4: My Staff Are Mind Readers. They Know What I Want.

Geoff Berman

Coach/Instructor

Have you ever had this thought: "How many times do I have to tell him before he does what I ask?" How often has this frustration caused you to act emotionally and afterward you looked back at how you reacted with some level of regret? You're not alone. This happens to all of us from time to time. The question you need to ask yourself is, why does it happen so often to me? Does it have to be this way? Before you can answer these questions, you first must look at why it started in the first place. When you opened your business many years ago, it's likely your motivation had more to do with your love of cars and/or the skills you had in repairing them, than anything else. You gave very little if any thought to how you will change when you become a business owner. "All I have to do is fix the cars and I'll make money!" That's what you thought! I can do this. How hard could it be? Without any prior knowledge or warning, this was the day you enrolled in the most popular school in the country. Tuition on the surface appears to be free, but it will turn out to be the most expensive education you have ever received. Over the many years that will follow, it will become very clear how little cars have to do with your business. In fact it would be a safe bet if I said you're still attending this school and may never graduate.

Of course I'm talking about "The School of Hard Knocks." Times were simpler back in the 80s and you really could make money as a business owner and mechanic. The vehicles were nowhere near as complicated and technical. Far less equipment and tools were needed. Learning to fix them was much easier and so was finding people that were capable and competent. Very slowly over time things began to change. Tougher and tougher emissions regulations. More computers and technology became part of the vehicles. Vo-tech schools started closing. Fewer and fewer people were coming into our industry. The Internet changed the way people think and access information, and created generations of people that you often find it impossible to understand. All the while you continued to run your business just as you always had.

You began to wonder why you can't find help, and when you did you wondered why they were so incompetent? They didn't have the drive you expected nor did they have the work ethic. You began to accept that this is your lot in life and there are just no good people out there anymore. To make matters even worse it would appear this challenge has continued to worsen in recent years and will get far worse before it finally gets better. There is a quote in "The E-Myth" where Michael Gerber says "It is unlikely you will ever find extraordinary people, but if you have great processes you take ordinary people and get extraordinary results."

Stop looking for the perfect person. The one that knows what you know, thinks like you, acts like you and by all rights is you. That person doesn't exist. There aren't many people who will do what

Customer Retention Strategies

Don Walter

ATI Coach

The easiest way to grow your customers is not to lose them. Are you selling your company's value?

The average business loses around 20 percent of its customers annually simply by failing to attend to customer relationships. In some industries this leakage is as high as 80 percent. The cost, in either case, is staggering, but few businesses truly understand the implications.

Imagine two businesses, one that retains 90 percent of its customers, the other retaining 80 percent. If both add new customers at the rate of 20 percent per year, the first will have a 10 percent net growth in customers per year, while the other will have none. Over seven years, the first firm will virtually double, while the second will have no real growth. Everything else being equal, that 10 percent advantage in customer retention will result in a doubling of customers every seven years without doing anything else.

The consequences of customer retention also compound over time, and in sometimes unexpected ways. Even a tiny change in customer retention can cascade through a business system and multiply over time. The resulting effect on long-term profit and growth shouldn't be underestimated.

Marketing Wisdom can introduce you to a number of simple customer retention strategies that will cost you little or nothing to implement. Behind each technique listed here there is an in-depth step-by-step process that will increase your customer retention significantly once implemented, and will have a massive impact on your business.

1. Losing Your Customers?

Virtually every business loses some customers, but few ever measure or recognize how many of their customers become inactive. Most businesses, ironically, invest an enormous amount of time, effort and expense building that initial customer relationship. Then they let that relationship go unattended, in some cases even losing interest as soon as the sale has been made, or even worse, they abandon the customer as soon as an easily remedied problem occurs, only to have to spend another small fortune to replace that customer. The easiest way to grow your business is not to lose your customers. Once you stop the leakage, it's often possible to double or triple your growth rate because you're no longer forced to make up lost ground just to stand still.

2. Never Get Complacent

So many people do an excellent job of making the initial sale, then drop the ball and get complacent, ignoring the customer, while they chase more business. Your selling has actually only just begun when someone makes that initial purchase decision because virtually everyone is susceptible to buyer's remorse. To lock in that sale, and all of the referrals and repeat business that will flow from it, you need to strike while the iron is hot to allay your customers' fears and demonstrate by your actions that you really care. You should thank them and remind them again why they've made the right decision to deal with you — and put a system in place to sell to them again, and again, constantly proving that they made the right decision.

3. Reaching Back

There's little point in dedicating massive resources to generating new customers, when 25 to 60 percent of your dormant customers will be receptive to your attempts to regenerate their business if you approach them the right way, with the right offer. Reactivating customers who already know you and your product is one of the easiest, quickest ways to increase your revenues. Recontacting and reminding them of your existence, finding out why they're no longer buying, overcoming their objections and demonstrating that you still value and respect them will usually result in a tremendous bounty of sales and drastically increased revenues in a matter of days — and will lead to some of your best and most loyal customers. Know your one-time customer visit, and review your customer frequent report monthly.

4. Frequent Communications Calendar

Using exit appointments, follow-up calls and newsletters will help avoid losing your customers by building relationships and keeping in touch using a rolling calendar of communications. This is a programmed sequence of letters, events, phone calls,

"thank-you" notes, special offers, follow-ups, magic moments, and cards or notes with a personal touch, etc., that occur constantly and automatically at defined points in the presales, sales and postsales process. People not only respond to this positively, they really appreciate it because they feel valued and important. It acknowledges them, keeps them informed, offsets postpurchase doubts, reinforces the reason they're doing business with you and makes them feel part of your business so that they want to come back again and again.

5. Extraordinary Customer Service

Sometimes we forget this step altogether. What we think is great customer service is another one's opinion. Great customer service means never-ending pursuit of excellence to keep customers so satisfied that they tell others how well they were treated when doing business with you. It means moving the product or service you deliver into the realm of the extraordinary by delivering higher than expected levels of service to each and every customer. Key facets include: dedication to customer satisfaction by every employee; providing immediate response; no buck passing; going above and beyond the call of duty; consistent on-time delivery; delivering what you promise before AND after the sale; a zero-defects and error-free delivery process; and recruiting outstanding people to deliver your customer service. Extraordinary service builds fortunes in repeat customers, whereas poor service will drive your customers to your competition.

6. Having a Culture of Being Polite

This is a powerful system that improves the interpersonal skills of your team and changes the spirit of your organization. It involves speaking to colleagues politely and pleasantly, without sarcasm or parody, and treating them at least as well as you would want them to treat your customers. This will help your team to feel worthwhile and important, which makes for pleasant social contacts at work. It also motivates them to provide extraordinary service, encourages them to be consistently pleasant in all of their dealings and to relate to customers in a warm, human and natural manner. This results in better, warmer, stronger, more trusting relationships and longer-term bonds with your customers.

7. Integrity, Which Includes Consistency

Long-term success and customer retention belongs to those who do not take ethical shortcuts. There must always be total consistency between what you say and do and what your customers experience. The design, build quality, reliability and serviceability of your product or service must be of the standard your customers want, need and expect. Service integrity is also demonstrated by the way you handle the small things, as well as the large. Customers will be attracted to you if you are open and honest with them, care for them, take a genuine interest in them, don't let them down and practice what you preach — and they will avoid you if you don't.

8. Measure Lifetime Value Looking at the Big Picture

There's a vast difference between the one-off profit you might make on an average sale, which ignores the bigger picture, and the total aggregate profit your average customer represents over the lifetime of their business relationship with you. Once you recognize how much combined profit a customer represents to your business when they purchase from you again and again, over the months, years or decades, you'll realize the critical importance of taking good care of your customers. And because you'll understand just how much time, effort and expense you can afford to invest in retaining that customer, you'll be in control of your marketing expenditure.

9. Think of a Complaint as a Gift

The two-to-three day follow-up call should quickly identify customers who are not happy with our service. Ninety-six percent of dissatisfied customers don't complain. They just walk away, and you'll never know why. That's because they often don't know how to complain, or can't be bothered, or are too frightened, or don't believe it'll make any difference. While they may not tell you what's wrong, they will certainly tell plenty of others. A system for unearthing complaints can therefore be the lifeblood of your business, because customers who complain are giving you a gift, they're still talking to you, they're giving you another opportunity to return them to a state of satisfaction and delight them. And the manner in which you respond gives you another chance to show what you're made of and create even greater customer loyalty.

Other customer retention strategies include:

blogs, CRM systems, loyalty programs, overcoming buyer's remorse, personal touches, premiums and gifts, questionnaires and surveys, regular reviews, social media, welcome book.

The Coach's Corner (Continued)

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Out of Date Habit #4: My Staff Are Mind Readers. They Know What I Want.

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you want them to do because they understand you so well they can read your mind. Today's workers do not have the same drive that your generation had, and they are nowhere near as intrinsically motivated as you were. So what are your choices? You can keep doing what you're doing and wonder why nothing has changed, or you can change what you're doing. So if you're ready to change, this next part is for you. If you're not ready you can stop reading now.

First, you must remember these aren't bad people. They just need to be led in a different manner than by fear. Most people these days do not respond to fear or dictatorship style leaders — the ones that only know how to "tell and yell." What has to change is you. You must figure out how to take the emotion out of the equation and keep things professional and just about business, no matter how serious the situation may be or how upset you are. This cannot happen without clear written processes.

If you were pulled over by a police officer because you were going 70 mph in a 40 mph zone you would likely get a ticket. Does it matter that you were from out of state and did not know the speed limit? Does it matter that you did not see the sign? Accepting the responsibility of a driver's license means you have agreed to abide by the rules of the road and the laws in the states you drive in. It doesn't matter that you may not know the laws. Ignorance is no excuse. These laws are written down and available to all citizens. If they were not, nothing would govern

the actions of the police. They could decide the law based on how they feel at that moment, and that would create anger and chaos. Without the written rules of what is done and how to do it you end up with the same anger and chaos in your shop.

Processes will help make what is expected clear and takes any grey out of the situation. They also level the playing field and help make things fair for everyone, because we all must abide by the 40 mph speed limit if we accepted a position in your shop. It becomes easier for the new employee to learn what is necessary to be successful and they are not only more likely to get there, but will get there faster. It makes your job in coaching and training your staff much easier as well, because you know that if they follow the process, things will go smoothly. All you have to do is help them see where they failed within the process and get them back on track. With clear written processes you can take the emotion out and no longer be that "tell and yell" leader that often acts in a way you later regret.

Want more information on process? Email me at gberman@autotraining.net and I will send you a few to get you started. You have already implemented processes and have a success story? I'd love to hear it. Please email me your success story or any questions you have as you work through the steps of implementing processes.

