

Consultant

INCREASE SALES WITH DISPLAYS



Inside...
 Respect
 A \$elling Conversation
 Handling Tough Technicians



The Road to Retention \$eries
 EVERY \$ERVICE BUSINESS COUNTS



Corky's Comments

Corky Brabler

I was recently going on an international flight. I was to be on one plane for 15 hours. My ticket was for a middle seat. When I checked my bag I asked if there were any available aisle seats. The airline associate said it was a full flight and she didn't think so, but to check at the gate prior to boarding.

At the gate, prior to boarding, I asked another associate the same question. She reiterated the flight was full and it was unlikely but to check back once everyone had checked in and the boarding was nearly complete. When boarding was nearly complete, the attendant walked over to me and, with a smile, handed me a boarding pass for an aisle seat. She then took my middle seat boarding pass and ripped it up.

The plane was completely full, yet she somehow was able to accommodate my request. I was absolutely thrilled and had a much more enjoyable flight because that airline associate was able to honor my request.

If a customer asks for something outside the boundaries of a typical policy, a natural inclination is to say "no." However, a customer's delight is often determined by how you handle their special request. Anyone can say "no," but a customer will likely remember you if you are the dealership dedicated to finding a way to say "yes."

For instance, let's say you don't normally wash vehicles after they're serviced. A customer says he's headed to a wedding once he's done at the dealership and asks if you can wash his vehicle so it shines for the wedding. Maybe that requires someone hand washing the vehicle. It may be a hassle, but consider how happy it will make the customer. And the next time he considers where to get his vehicle serviced, it's likely he won't forget that you honored his special request the last time he was in.

Saying yes to a customer says, "I value your business enough to want to honor your request." Of course, certain requests may be difficult to accommodate. But whenever a customer asks for something you can make happen — do it! Your customer will remember you for it.

6 Have a great day, everyone!

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE



A-Z and out-the-door

Assuring complete customer satisfaction in every Service transaction is an A-Z process in the Service Lane at Register Chevrolet in Brooksville, Florida.

Blue Diamond Service Consultant William Muchler is the straw that stirs the drink in this impeccably managed facility. In addition to serving his own customers, he skates around the Service Department, getting involved in every matter requiring manpower, brainpower or mediation.

"I make sure I'm constantly out there in the drive, helping take up the slack for Technicians, Cashiers, Porters and everyone else around me. I try to be in the thick of it at all times."

From helping to facilitate phone calls, to greeting drive-in customers and answering the daily deluge of questions, Muchler strives for honesty, accessibility and complete accountability.

Critical to every customer contact is an appropriate send-off. *"I make it my #1 priority to speak directly to all of my customers before they leave,"* he says. *"I always explain what we did and why and ask if they have any questions."* ♦

LOOK FOR THE ICONS\$...



The Thumbs-Up icon indicates articles that will help you to improve your customer's experience.



The Dollar-Sign icon indicates articles that will help you to improve your sales and put more money in your pocket.



The Mouse icon indicates the article can be found on serviceandpartspro.com for additional and comment.

FEEDBACK & QUIZZES

Use your fax quiz/comment form or go online to serviceandpartspro.com



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The Customer Retention Company
P.O. Box 87581
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1908-2013 CHRONICLES

105 years of excellence

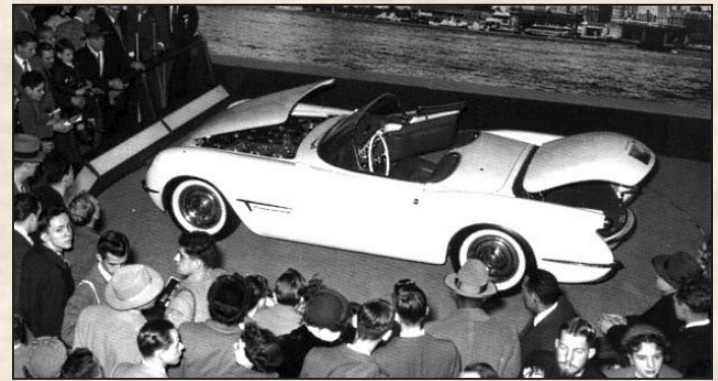


Chronicles continues a series of articles highlighting some of the top technological advancements from General Motors. This month, the innovation of composite-plastic body materials will be explored.

The journey begins during World War II when the Owens-Corning company suggested the U.S. Navy use glass-fiber-reinforced plastic for use in the hulls of boats and radar domes. The material was strong, lightweight and an excellent replacement for metals, which were scarce.

After the War, Henry Kaiser, a noted boat builder, began research into the possibility of using the material as an automobile body at his California facility. The notion was catching on rapidly with the west coast auto enthusiasts and a handful of fiberglass-bodied cars were unveiled at the 1951 Los Angeles Motorama. The craze created from the show was covered in a feature article in *Life* magazine called "Plastic Bodies for Autos." The technology was heralded as rustproof, dent-proof, damage-resistant and easy to repair.

The GM Styling and Chevrolet Engineering departments began studying fiberglass and how it could be used along with plaster molds to expedite the manufacturing of body panels. After a Chevrolet convertible rolled over during testing, a GM engineer noted that there was little damage to the vehicle. Studies revealed that a fiberglass panel that was three times thicker than a steel panel yielded the same stiffness at half the weight.



Harley Takes Notice

Harley Earl, GM design boss at the time, attended a car race in New York and was troubled by the low representation of American-made cars in the competition. The result from the experience began the design project for a new sports car — the Corvette. A wood and plaster concept model was approved for the running prototype stage. During this timeframe, the Glasspar Boat Company produced a car body made of fiberglass and Earl merged the body with his car design. The result was the Corvette and a prototype was on display in January 1953 at the GM Motorama road show. On June 30, 1953, the vehicle was put into production and the fiberglass-bodied Corvette was off and running. ♦



Talk & Win

Join any of our online discussions this month at serviceandpartspro.com and earn a chance to win dinner-and-a-movie for two. Recipients are chosen at random.

WINNER\$ THIS MONTH: Brian Bush, Balise Chevrolet Buick GMC, Springfield, MA; **Michelle Vert**, Diamond Hills Auto Group, Banning, CA.

Listen Up...

People are different. This month Corky begins exploring what exceptional customer experience means for different customer groups. And, the first group he is talking about are the Boomers. The Boomers provide a significant group of customers with their own set of needs and, hence, their own understanding of "exceptional." Joining Corky are some "boomer customers" and market experts to define exceptional customer service, why of course, boomer style.

Using Tires to Move Forward

This month we look at how to build and nurture customer relationships using your point-of-sale tire display. If your dealership doesn't currently have a tire display, consider discussing this article with your manager in hopes of setting up a tire display. Not only is a tire display a good visual reference for customers to see that you sell tires, but it can also be used as a prop to help you sell more tires and build relationships with your customers.

If you're not already doing so, consider doing a quick Service Lane inspection of the customer's vehicle when the customer arrives on the drive. Check each tire for uneven tread wear patterns and tread depth. Invite your customer to join in the process and review the results. If you measure the tread depth and the tires are well into the yellow, or especially in the red, look the tires over more thoroughly, but also walk the customer over to your tire display.

Use the tires on display to emphasize the difference between the new product and what's on your customer's vehicle. Explain how proper tread depth provides better grip on wet and snowy roads along with better vehicle ride and handling.

A tire display allows the customer to see, feel, and smell tires. Comparing the new product on display with the worn tires on the vehicle will help your customer come to terms with their needs and understand what new tires would mean in terms of safety and performance.

When it's time to talk tires, get your customer directly involved in the process. Share your computer monitor with them and let them see the photos, prices and options within your product offering.

Even when your customer's tires are in excellent shape, you can take the opportunity to build the relationship and your customer's value perception. *"Your tires show 8/32 of tread depth, so they're in very good shape. Regular tire rotation and maintaining the correct pressure will keep them that way. Down the road, when it is time to replace them, we've got exact replacements at the lowest price, guaranteed."* This is part of what it sounds like when a consultant works to build a long-term relationship with their customer. ♦



The consultant, using a tire tread depth plunger to check wear, is also engaging the customer in the process.

HUMOR

Customer \$ervice "Foxworthyisms"

Who hasn't laughed at one of Jeff Foxworthy's iconic question-and-answer jokes? His unique ability to poke fun at segments of America has made him an icon and a star all over the country. In the spirit of Jeff's styling, we'd like to offer a look at dealership customer service.

YOU MIGHT BE IN NEED OF A CUSTOMER SERVICE MAKEOVER IF:

- You save the old coffee from your customer lounge to tar your roof each autumn.
- Your customers qualify for volume discounts on roadside assistance.
- The magazine selection in the lounge makes the collection at the public clinic downtown look fresh.
- Your porter takes the Verano to the lube rack before mom has removed the twins from their car seats.
- Technicians have one drawer for duct tape and another for wire coat hangers in their toolbox.

- The wait at your store's parts counter requires a fresh shave by the time your customer gets to the head of the line.
- Most of your customers think doing an MPVI for them will require getting into a hospital gown.
- Your store still has plastic ghosts and witches around when it's time to pack up the Christmas tree.
- There so much dust on the accessories in your glass showcase that customers think you've got a loaned exhibit from the archaeology museum.
- Your electronic parts catalog came free with the purchase of a game of Space Invaders.

The essence of most humor is the element of truth and familiarity tucked into the jokes. Here's hoping these couple of chuckles will inspire you to put your best foot forward with your customers this year. ♦

Share your stories of the humorous side of dealership life by logging on to serviceandpartspro.com.

Take Control

It was mid-morning and the consultant was working alone because his partner had called in sick. He was dealing with one drop-in customer with another one waiting when his phone rang. He excused himself and answered the phone. It was the Body Shop Manager with a problem. The two customers indicated for him to take care of the call. At this point a third customer with an 11:30 appointment walked up to the consultant's station a half-hour early.

As he was talking, the newly arrived customer walked in front of the other two and stood staring at the consultant. He described the look on her face as "How dare you talk on the phone when I'm standing in front of you waiting."

He recognized her as a regular customer, smiled and said, "Oh, you're early. I'll be with you in a moment." However, the Body Shop Manager dragged the conversation on for several more minutes.

The customer then angrily announced, "While I've got three kids waiting for me in the car, you're wast-

ing my time by being on the phone. So I'm a little early, but I did make an appointment. This is no way to treat a good customer. I'm taking my business elsewhere." Then she stormed out.

Point of Defection

The point of defection occurred when the customer self-righteously demanded the consultant's attention ahead of two waiting customers even though she was a half-hour early.

Minimum Acceptable Response

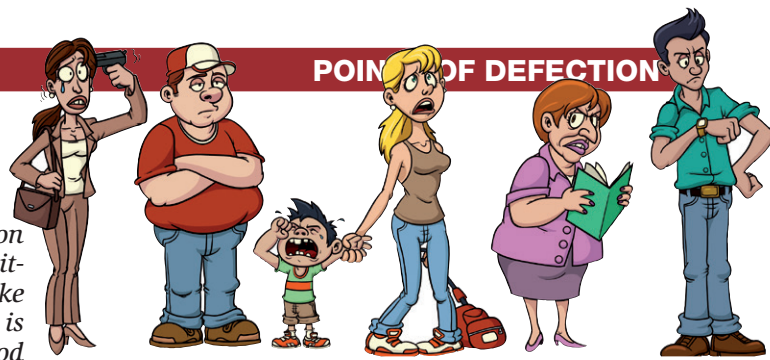
The consultant's immediate response to the Body Shop Manager's phone call should have been, "I have three customers here, I'll call you back as soon as I can." He then should have refocused his attention on the customers who were waiting. By not letting the call drag on he would assure all three customers, especially the early arrival, that they were his prime concern.

The second step should have been to apologize to the early arriving custom-

er for what would be a short delay and explain the two other customers were ahead of her in line. Assuring her that he would be with her as quickly as possible — with some idea of how long she would have to wait — could possibly have prevented her angry departure.

Points to Remember

These kinds of situations are inevitable. As such it makes sense to be prepared for what you will say to each person waiting. Hopefully you have a variety of distractions for them (forms to fill out, TV's to watch, Point of Purchase (POP) displays, refreshments, etc.) to make the wait for service easier. Perhaps the most critical aspect of dealing with high demand periods is to refuse to let them go on without serious consideration for changes that prevent them or make dealing with them easier. ♦



Keep \$miling Through "Wholesale Pain!"

A certain occasional outcome of customer contact work is collecting some aggravation along the way. It's critical that you control your reaction when working with challenging wholesale customers. Here's a scenario with a wrong and a right way reaction:

"Norm Knit-Picker" — nothing you do for this collision customer is ever quite good enough. After busting your hump to fill his thirty-line order, including a last minute expedited part (a 57-cent retainer you drove 12 miles to pick up and deliver to him), he has the nerve to call and berate you. "Ryan, why did you take so darn long getting that last part over here? I was 2 hours late delivering that job!" The *wrong* thing to do would be to fly off the cuff with, "I'm \$O sorry, Norm...if your crew had gotten us that order with more than one hour's notice, I could have done a little better!" Though probably true, it's definitely not prudent to say.

The first rule of handling angry customers is to **listen patiently**. The second rule is to **absorb the anger**. The third rule is to **engage your patience before you respond!**

The *right* way to convey a positive sentiment and smooth things out might sound like this: *Norm, I apologize about the tight time frame. You know I always try to give you the best service possible, don't you, Norm? The traffic across town bring-*



ing that last little retainer was brutal — it ended up taking more time than we imagined. I'll work hard to improve to make sure the next order will go more smoothly. You will let me prove that, won't you, Norm?"

Your tone and pacing is as important as what you say, so take a deep breath and speak through a smile — people can actually hear the difference! Let your customer know they're important to you and that you're committed to providing exceptional service. Your customer's response will guide the rest of your conversation. Stay focused on remaining personally connected to your customer and alert to meeting their needs. ♦



Getting to Know Her ... and Him

OCCUPATION — where they work and their job position.

ACTIVITIES — recreation and contributions to the community.

HOBBIES — things they do to relax or express creativity.

FAMILY — pay special attention to their children.

IMPORTANT EVENTS — weddings, graduations, anniversaries, etc.

VEHICLE U\$E — miles driven, driving habits and vehicle details.

More often than not, the things that enable you to get to know your customer and connect with them are fairly obvious to the careful observer. Bumper stickers, key fobs, vehicle contents and careful listening can get you started.

Looking at the honor student sticker on his customer's bumper, Tim noted, "I see you have an honor student at Braden Middle \$chool. What do they and you like most about the school?" This kind of open-ended question is good because it relates to an obvious point of pride she has about her child and their school.

In his book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Dale Carnegie wrote extensively about how much of his training centered on taking an active and sincere interest in others. Carnegie told countless stories of students who learned that paying attention to a particular detail about a person and asking a question about it could be the start of a meaningful relationship. Carnegie often remarked how his letting the other person talk about an interest or particular point of pride would result in that person perceiving *him* as an exceptional conversationalist. Yet, all Carnegie had done (for the most part) was ask a question and then take sincere interest in the answer.

While this strategy is universal, your female customer will likely respond best because females are more language-centric than their male counterparts. So, as you observe, discover and make record of a female customer's interests, take the time to ask open-ended questions and carefully listen to the answers. Your sincere interest and her willingness to share are examples of what a burgeoning relationship looks and sounds like. ♦

Your female customers expect you to be an exceptional service provider. One way to be exceptional is by getting to know and interact with your female customer on a personal basis. This kind of relationship marketing requires keeping and building a personal record — taking notes every time you have communication with your customer. It makes sense to know and be able to talk about your customer's:

PHONE TIPS

\$etting the Appointment



The key to successful appointment setting on the telephone is to ask a *closed-ended* question — one that can be answered with a "yes" or "no" or asks the customer to make a choice. This differs from an *open-ended* question, where the customer can provide a long, elaborate answer. Following this guideline will help you reach your desired outcome of ending the call with an appointment commitment.

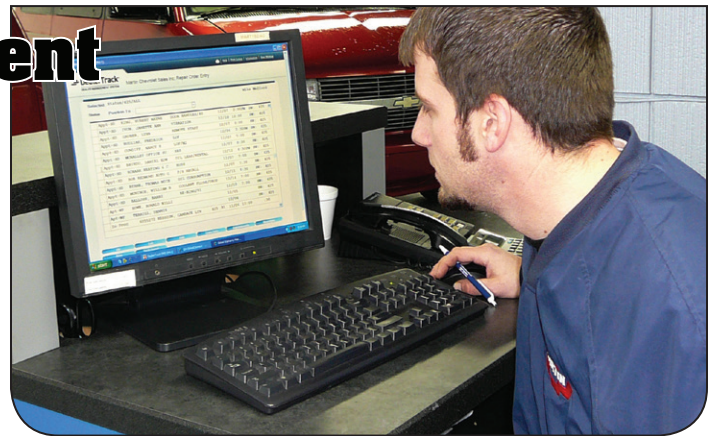
Word Tracks

Here's the *wrong* (*open-ended*) way to ask for an appointment: "When would you like to come in to have the brake replacement work done, Mr. Chance? Asking this way relinquishes control to the caller and you're likely to get an answer like "Well, I don't know. My brakes don't seem that bad and I'm really not in a big rush to get this done. Maybe in two or three weeks. How much is this going to cost, anyway?"

Here's the *right* (*closed-ended*) way to ask for an appointment: "It's important we inspect your brakes as soon as possible, Mr. Chance. I have appointment times available tomorrow morning at 9:30am and also Thursday morning at 10:00am. Which time will be better for you?"

Remember this key point: When asking for the appointment, always give the caller a specific choice of no more than two options. When you do, you'll see your appointment setting success increase significantly.

This coming week, give yourself this appointment setting self-check test by asking yourself the following questions



after every customer or prospect inbound phone call:

- Did I ask the caller to make an appointment to have work done?
- Did I make the caller feel the appointment was being scheduled at their convenience and not when it was convenient for me?
- Did I let the caller know that I would make an appointment confirmation call, or send a confirmation email, the day before the appointment (to avoid a possible no show)?
- Did I give the caller my name and phone number and politely ask that they give me a call back if they needed to reschedule the appointment?

Developing your skills as a good appointment setter will result in increased sales. ♦

Find Yourself and Be Yourself



In the sixteenth chapter in his book *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, Dale Carnegie wrote about the importance taking stock of oneself and being comfortable and confident in your own skin. Carnegie believed this was essential to living a happy and honest existence where a person's best qualities could be tapped and shared with the world.

Carnegie starts the chapter by telling a story of woman who's less than favorable self image could be traced back to her younger years when her average looks and over-weight condition gave rise to a particularly shy disposition. Her retreat from the world continued even after she was married.

The woman's entire perspective changed as a result of a passing comment made by her mother-in-law as she spoke about raising her children. *"Throughout the time my children were growing, I simply insisted on their being themselves,"* said her husband's mother.

That statement started the woman thinking that her circumstances were primarily of her own making. She changed by taking small steps to engage the world and connect with people. Over time she had more happiness than she ever thought possible.

Carnegie tells countless stories of people who would not engage with others either by wholesale retreat from interactions with others or by choosing to act outside their true character. Carnegie was not immune from the tendency to hide his true self. In his early efforts to become an actor and later on as an aspiring author, Carnegie attempted unsuccessfully to copy the success of others. Only through initial failures and frustrations did Carnegie learn that to break through he would have to have courage enough to share with others his true self.

Carnegie admonishes his readers to not waste time worrying because they are not like others. He correctly points out that each of us is quite unique and that no one else in the world before us or after us will be exactly like us. Our chance at happiness requires that we embrace and share what sets us apart and makes us unique.

Carnegie finishes this chapter by writing — To cultivate a mental attitude that will bring us peace and freedom from worry, let's not imitate others. Let's find ourselves and be ourselves. ♦

IT'S BETTER TO GIVE

The Gift of Life

Donate blood. Many people do it. It is a bit time consuming but one simple pint of blood has the potential to save three lives. This time of year as we are looking forward to spring-time, many people that would ordinarily donate blood on a regular basis tend to put it off. For others, there never seems to be a convenient time to spare an hour to donate. This results in a critical shortage for the American Red Cross.

You can help. All you need to do is contact the Red Cross and organize a blood drive at your dealership. They make it simple. They will provide a mobile unit that will come and set up in your parking lot. All you need to do is call 1 800 RED CRO\$S or go online to redcrossblood.org. It's just that easy.

Go to their website and see all the benefits of hosting. Here are just a few:

- Support your community
- Garner goodwill from inside and outside your organization by supporting the American Red Cross
- Join a 125-year movement of service
- Enjoy a partnership where everyone wins
- It feels good to be a part of helping to save lives

This is a great way to make a personal investment, and a very rewarding way to give something back. ♦



In the Lane

Cadillac Premium Care, a division-specific Service initiative launched with the 2011 model year, is designed to increase customer retention.

After two years it's safe to say the free maintenance program (it covers all Cadillac models and includes oil changes, tire rotation and oil and cabin air conditioning filters) is a home run for the Service Department at Ed Morse Cadillac in Delray Beach, Florida.

"It ensures customers from the start," says Service Consultant Garry Frommelt. *"It doesn't cost them anything to come to us. Their MPVI is all printed out, with color codes and future service requirements listed in sequence. We can show them when they need to come in. They can see it and plan for it. It's incredible."*

Program administration is conducted through the existing warranty system. Frommelt says everyone in his store is pumped up with this and all initiatives.

"Strong leadership ensures genuine employee enthusiasm," he says, referring to Service Manager Steve Gianuzzi and General Manager Rich Danahy. *"They refuse to fail and that mindset is contagious. We're all believers now. No one doubts everyone here is a vital part of our business, as if WE own it. So we all 'run it' within the bounds we have. We have the opportunity to succeed or fail like anybody."*

Another customer pleasing strategy implemented in Service that has bled over into Sales and all dealership departments provides open-ended free car washes for all customers.

"Every customer hears the same thing," Garry says. *"Bring it in at any time, for any reason, whenever. They say, 'That's unbelievable, unheard of. You mean I don't have to buy anything?' We say, 'No, just bring it in and give us the opportunity to provide you this service.'"*

Revved-up dealership employees recently took it upon themselves to establish a display board near the Service Department where they can post and share customer's positive letters.

"It's another way to tell customers that this is the place to visit for all their Service needs," Frommelt says. *"We get praise for our ability to work people in and out of here quickly and for our thorough manner in explaining work performed. We want to spread the good word."*



Garry Frommelt

At the Counter

Your main competitor might be the dealership across the street. You're nose to nose with them. You sell a lot of the same products and services.

It doesn't work that way in Lufkin, Texas, where GM retail points operate near each other but choose to cooperate rather than compete.

"We battle for business but we don't want to bury anyone," says Jim Holton, Parts Director at Wright Buick GMC in the town of 35,000-40,000 residents. *"We need to work together. We help them...they help us."*

The Buick GMC and the Chevy store — a stones throw away — assist one another in many ways.

Expertise. When stumped with a technical question or Parts issue Holton's staff will call a colleague at the Chevy store.

Customer convenience. When trying to keep a customer vehicle on the road, area vehicle service providers back each other up.

Parts and accessories on loan. When a Parts Department verifies that a needed part or accessory is being shipped for the next day, they feel comfortable borrowing the same part on a one-day basis in order to complete the order.

Access to tools and bulletins. *"We're happy to look up anything we can for anyone,"* Holton says. *"It could just as easily be us calling them. Being cooperative is better for all of us."*

Beyond all the friendly sharing, Holton's Parts operation looks out for its own interests first.

Holton works in close coordination with Parts Manager Doug Plopper and Service Manager Alan Cates to leverage competitive advantages. They scrap for every transaction and apply their considerable shared experience to maintaining a market edge.

They study local competitive trends on the Internet, sell tires for no profit when necessary, match competitor's deals and offer free tire rotations — all in order to keep customers.

Parts searches succeed through the efficiency of GM's OE Connection that collects data from the Parts Department twice a day.

"It helps us immensely in calculating shipping expenses, discounts and other variables. We can make favorable decisions and protect profit margins." Another major instrument to customer satisfaction is the power of GM's Retail Inventory Management system. *"It's not perfect but I've become very comfortable with it,"* Holton allows.



Jim Holton

GREAT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Trader Joe's

Founded in 1958, Trader Joe's is a privately held company of nearly 400 specialty markets with locations in 31 states. In 2011 MSN Money ranked them number two in their Customer Service Hall of Fame and in May 2012, Consumer Reports ranked them as the number two grocery chain in the country. Trader Joe's builds customer loyalty and love using a not-so-secret weapon — outstanding employees dedicated to providing exceptional customer service.



How Do They Offer Exceptional Service

Trader Joe's emphasizes the need for every employee to create a WOW Customer experience. Employees are asked to "live the Trader Joe's Love Story" and "become smitten with customers," from greeting them with a friendly hello to walking them to the products they need. In some cases, Trader Joe's employees will open a bag of whatever the customer is interested in and offer them a sample.

Employees who strive to deliver an outstanding customer experience attract customers who appreciate the effort — which in turn leads to customers for life.

Want to learn more? Check out the book; *Build a Brand Like Trader Joe's* by Mike Gardiner or Google Trader Joe's for hundreds of links to the reasons behind their success. ♦

Timing is Everything

Albert Einstein once said: “*The only reason for time is so that everything doesn’t happen at once.*” Obviously Einstein never saw the way some dealerships post in social media. Consider the example of the dealership that posts pictures of the proud customer standing by their new car shaking hands with the happy Sales Consultant. Great idea, but not the way the folks at Cox Chrysler Jeep Dodge in North Carolina do it. Every Saturday they post a dozen or so pictures of customers on their Facebook page in a 5-10 minute time span. These sales didn’t happen all at once, but the postings did.

Facebook updates only stay active for a few minutes or hours if you’re fortunate. Generally, users who are online at the exact time you post a picture may see it, like it, comment on it and even share it. However, unless they only like a few pages and have a small number of friends, they most likely will not see your pictures if you post them all at once.

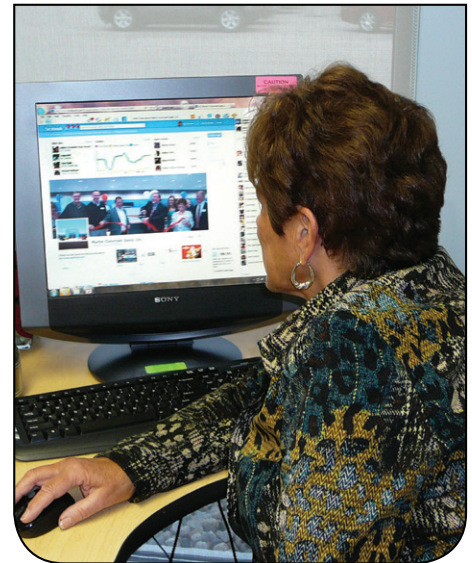
Therefore, it is most advantageous to

post more frequently and spread your updates out over time. Don’t forget that posting pictures, links, updates and videos on the weekends will get your page more comments and sharing. But who has that kind of time for Facebook, especially over the weekend?

Here’s the solution: Schedule your status updates to appear when you think your customers and friends are on Facebook. Just follow these simple steps:

1. Go to your status update box and share a status update, picture, link or video.
2. In the bottom left-hand corner you will see a small clock. Hover over the clock to assign a date and time.
3. Select the appropriate year, month, day, hour and minute you wish to have your post appear.
4. Click on the schedule button and you are finished.

You can also edit the scheduled time and date of the post by highlighting



the Edit Page, selecting Use Activity Log, then select the scheduled post to edit, and change the date to whatever you like.

This little tool makes it very easy for you to spread the good news over Facebook whenever your fans may be reading. Everything does not happen at once. Why would you post that way? ♦



EPC UPDATES

Using EPC Lists

Continuing to highlight EPC features that deliver on our “Year of Exceptional Customer Experience,” we’ll turn our attention back to list features. Using preset lists during customer contacts provides another critical opportunity for Parts Consultants to shine. Don’t leave exceptional service on the table by not using them. Here are some more specific examples of opportunities to improve your service:

Lists for the \$hop Counter — The possibilities here are endless. Manifold gaskets and related parts for top engine work, lists of pads/shoes and all the hardware for those frustrating special light truck applications and full engine overhauls for every job you encounter — *just for starters!*

When your technician comes to the counter with an eight-item repair order sure to keep him busy all day, you can speed him back to his stall by accessing the appropriate lists in literally half the time that another Parts Consultant would finish his specifications. Just set the catalog with the Vehicle Identification Number and jump to lists, and you’ll give that tech a “WOW moment”, becoming an instant hero in the process.

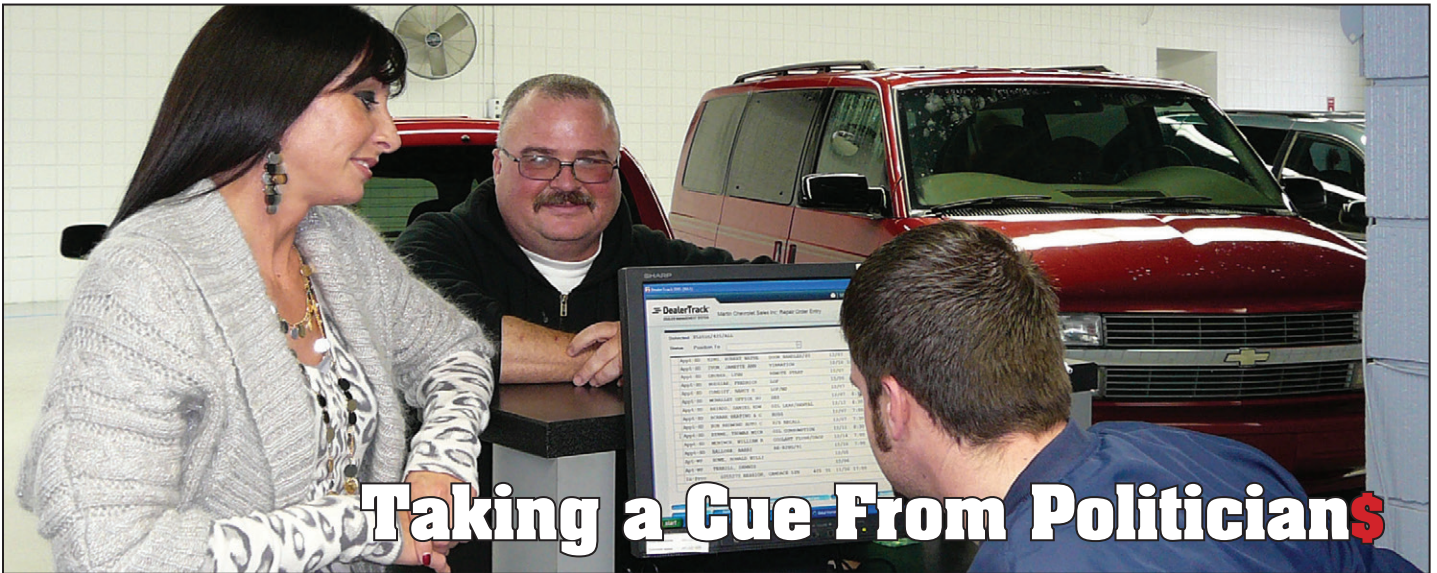
Lists for Independent Mechanical \$hops — The beauty of helping a busy Service Department in your own dealership is that it lets you build the same lists as independent garages will need. So when the call comes in from Mike’s Service down the street for an oddball gasket for a Buick 3.8 V-6



manifold, you’ll have all the related numbers fast enough to spin Mike’s head around. By going through your lists item by item, you can often pick up extra sales, and maybe offer prices that will keep Mike away from the aftermarket!

How does that “look and feel?” — Let’s color in the lines of that last

example. Mike’s Service calls for a coolant bypass tube and o-rings not available in the aftermarket to finish quoting a 2004 V-6 Buick Century intake manifold job. Mike gives you the VIN to set your catalog and you jump over to lists where you know a manifold gasket list is ready and waiting: “Mike, I have that tube and o-rings, but did you know that the factory manifold gaskets are an updated design? I can sell the set and the tube for \$42.45 wholesale. How does that compare with the aftermarket quote?” Mike’s a smart guy, and he’ll calculate the added value of using the improved GM gaskets for only pennies more. Bingo! You’ve captured an extra sale and raised a customer’s expectations of what you and GM can do for him. ♦



Taking a Cue From Politicians\$

Now that the presidential race is in the country's rearview mirror you can say goodbye, for a little while at least, to the unending political ads, back-and-forth negativity, and exaggerated clashes of ideas. This break from politics will be a welcome respite for most Americans. However, with billions of dollars, and millions of man-hours, spent on the presidential election and various congressional races, there are some valuable lessons that carry over from the political process to the Parts and Service profession. Politicians might call the people they serve constituents instead of customers, but in the end it's all about making personal connections.

One of the ways politicians connect with their constituents is through physical contact. If you watch a good politician at work they make sure to greet people with a firm handshake, eye contact, and they might even lightly grip the person's shoulder or arm with their left hand. Making this kind of formal greeting comfortably intimate is a great way to start an interaction with a customer.

Remembering personal details about the people they meet, serve, and even work with, is another method politicians use

that goes a long way toward making those people feel special and valuable. In the Service and Parts profession this can happen by keeping a computer database of your customers' individual information — birthdays, anniversaries, etc. — and using it during appropriate points during their visits.

This also requires forging personal relationships with new customers, taking a sincere interest in their lives, work, families and the like. Gathering these details, then making use of them throughout the working relationship can turn a customer into a friend. Retention depends on redefining the traditional service provider/customer relationship.

People don't usually expect their politicians or their service providers to genuinely care about their best interests. But great politicians, and great service providers, make each person they meet feel important. Service and Parts Consultants show people that they genuinely care about their issues and who they are. Service and Parts Consultants achieve a margin of difference through physical contact, by learning about and bonding with customers over their lives and, most importantly, by truly caring about the customers they serve. ♦

MONEY IN YOUR POCKET



You \$ell Like You Buy

There is a segment of the professional sales trade that has learned that when in a selling role the salesperson tends to adopt the same processes and thinking that they do when in a buying role. In essence — people sell like they buy.

For example, a Service or Parts Consultant is interested in purchasing a new refrigerator. The consultant (in the role of consumer) decides to do some research. He starts by interviewing friends and family — getting their opinions and listening to their experiences.

The consultant turned customer continues by searching the Internet for product reviews and pricing information. After some consideration, he narrows the search down to a few models and decides to check them out by visiting nearby stores.

In each store he interacts with a Sales Associate who answers his questions and patiently explains the features of the products. Then they ask questions about upcoming sales, special discounts and delivery charges. When asked by the appliance Sales Associate for a decision, he says, "Well, I have to think about it a while longer and speak with my wife before I make a final decision." Clearly this consultant is a

very deliberative consumer. As a customer he takes his time, does his research and makes informed decisions about how and where to spend his money.

Back on the job — in the lane or at the counter — he works with customers who come to him with a variety of needs. In some cases their needs must be met immediately and in other cases there is time before the purchase must be made. The consultant takes all of this in stride because he "understands" about the deliberative process. He's okay with answering questions and investing time that does not lead to a sale. He sees it as part of the process.

The consultant is content to sell in the exact same way as he buys — and his sales and income reflect this reality. If he wants his income to improve, he will have to change. Arguably he could first change the way he buys after which it is reasonable to expect he would change the way he sells — and thus garner greater success.

Selling Rule: Everyone has a system for buying. If you do not have a system for selling, you will adopt your system for buying by default.

What is your system for buying and what affect is it having on your success in selling? Go to serviceandpartspro.com and share your system for buying and selling. ♦



The Know-It-All

One type of challenging customer we come across in the service and parts profession is the person who thinks he knows everything — but is actually quite ignorant. Such a person might be *the most* difficult to deal with. In these instances, it becomes a delicate balance of trying to show them where they might be wrong, while also making sure they feel like their opinion is highly valued. It becomes a sort of dance. Learning the steps is the key.

Being in control is often important to the know-it-all. \$o, the first step is to make sure they know (and feel by virtue of the treatment they receive) that they have a right to their opinion. Therefore, it is important to let them say what they need to — *uninterrupted*.

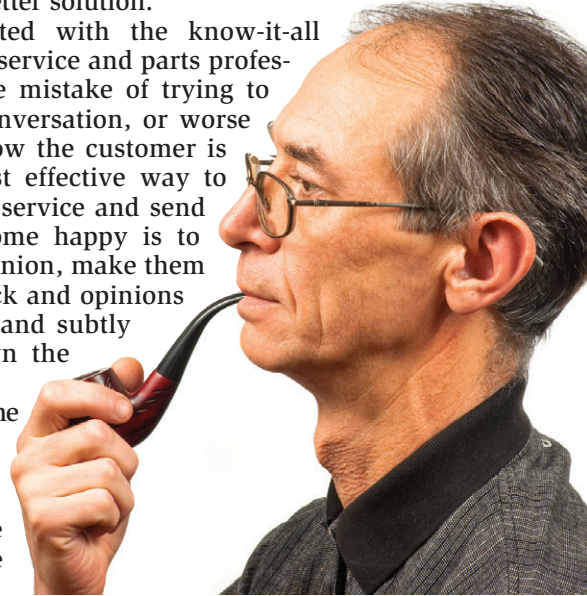
When it becomes necessary to counter a particular point, a subtle change from “but” to “and” can do the trick. For example, “I understand your concern *but* the work will be done momentarily.” Simply replace the word *but* with *and* to warm things up and avoid discounting the customer’s concern. “I understand your concern *and* the work will be done momentarily.”

Another step is to find a way to stroke the person’s ego. For instance, if they stubbornly hold to an idea about how the service should proceed, or what type of service needs to be done, which you don’t think is correct, find a way to change their mind in a way that doesn’t come across as patronizing. Using phrases like, “*You have a good under-*

standing of the issue at hand, and let me show you something else you might find interesting,” or, “*That’s a creative way to go about it, and we’ve worked out a slightly different method that has worked very well,”* are effective ways to let the person know you value their input while also guiding them toward a better solution.

When confronted with the know-it-all customer, many service and parts professionals make the mistake of trying to take over the conversation, or worse yet, point out how the customer is wrong. The most effective way to provide the best service and send the customer home happy is to listen to their opinion, make them feel their feedback and opinions are appreciated, and subtly guide them down the right path.

You can make the customer wrong and save your pride or you can focus on solving the problem and save the customer. ♦



TIRE SELLING STRATEGIES

Conversational Selling

Incorporating tires into normal conversations with customers (including those not currently in need of replacement) is a strategy designed to set the stage for a future sale. Essentially, your customer must know the reason to choose (or at least consider) your business *well in advance* of any need they have for replacement.

In the lane, the intake process should include the mention of tires. This is best accomplished during a walk around that includes stabbing each tire and then recording tread depth on a Multi-Point Vehicle Inspection form.

During this process, Consultants can either take an early step toward selling tires to replace those that are worn or provide reassurance they’re in good shape.

In the latter instance, an Advisor might say, “*Your tires look great and have many more miles on them. When it comes time to replace them, we have the exact replacements at the guaranteed lowest price.*”

Choosing to explain that you’re in the tire business — long before the need — is essential to capturing a

greater share of the market. This is doubly true when a Service Department lacks the space (or foresight) for a well-stocked tire display. In other words, if your Service Lane does not scream that you’re in the tire business — YOU MUST!

Normal Tread Wear

By explaining tread depth, you can educate customers about how well their tires will perform under various driving conditions. Here are the recommended tread requirements as they apply to different conditions:

In \$now — Greater than 6/32” depth is required for good traction. Less than 6/32” depth prevents proper displacement of snow reducing traction and safety.

In Rain — Greater than 4/32” is required to maintain traction. Water cannot be compressed, so it must be evacuated from under the tire. Otherwise, hydroplaning will result.

On wet pavement — A tire with only 4/32” tread depth takes an extra 100 feet of stopping distance. At 2/32” a



tire is considered bald and requires another 180 feet to stop.

Wear bars — Being able to see the wear bars (small horizontal strips between the treads) means the tire requires replacement.

Your willingness to share this information is part of what it looks and sounds like to be in the tire business.

Tires have been a point of defection for dealerships for many years. However, implementing a strategy to discuss tires when there is no need for replacement sets the stage for the sale of tires when the need becomes apparent during future customer visits. ♦

Developing Pedestrian Protection

General Motors researchers are working to develop a driver-assistance feature capable of early detection of pedestrians and bicyclists on congested streets or in poor visibility.

The feature relies on Wi-Fi Direct, the peer-to-peer wireless standard that allows devices like some smart phones to communicate directly with each other rather than through a shared access point like a cell phone tower.

Wireless pedestrian detection is part of GM's ongoing development of vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) and vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communication systems. These systems could provide advance warning about hazards such as slowed or stalled vehicles, slippery roads or intersections and stop signs.

This wireless capability could warn drivers about pedestrians who might be stepping into the roadway from behind a parked vehicle, or bicyclists who are riding in the vehicle's blind spot. The system works when the pedestrian or cyclist is carrying a cell phone that is turned on. Wi-Fi Direct has the potential to become an integral part of the comprehensive driver assistance systems already offered on many GM vehicles.

By eliminating the intermediate step required to reach a cell phone tower, Wi-Fi Direct allows devices to connect in approximately one second compared to conventional wireless systems that typically need seven or eight seconds to acquire location information and connect.

Wi-Fi Alliance, the global industry association in charge of certifying wireless standards, claims Wi-Fi Direct devices can reach each other at a maximum distance of 656 feet. In addition to aiding pedestrian detection, this range could enable secure transfers of files such as MP3s or digital address book information between a home computer and the user's Wi-Fi Direct-equipped vehicle infotainment or navigation system.

"As we move toward becoming a more connected society, having a self-aware connected car will be increasingly important," said Thilo Koslowski, vice president of automotive industry analysis at Gartner Inc., a leading information technology research and advisory company. *"Not only can Wi-Fi Direct help vehicles seamlessly communicate with other consumer devices, it can also augment vehicle-to-infrastructure communications as well, which could lead to better traffic management and fewer accidents."* ♦

GM Training

Chevrolet • Buick • GMC • Cadillac

Tires have proven to be a major component of dealership sales with annual sales in the billions. Tires have also proven to be a customer anchor with seventy-five percent of tire buyers returning to their tire source for service and maintenance.

To keep consultants abreast of the tire market and its sales potential, GM Training offers an optional certification course, *GM Tires: Rolling-In Profits*, (PPS04.01W) covering four topics:

- Why it's important to sell tires.
- Tire product knowledge.
- How to sell tires effectively.
- How to properly inspect tires.

The course provides the latest data on GM procedures, policies and technology related to tires including the warranty process. It also reviews the function of the Tire Pressure Monitoring System in relation to enhancing fuel economy and tire longevity. ♦

VISION



Help Explain Electronics

There are several things people know they will experience when a new vehicle is purchased including — that new-car smell, a flawlessly painted exterior and a spotless interior. Sophisticated entertainment systems have been improving along with all other areas of technology. Complex touch screens and audio systems have at times gotten the best of consumers. The systems caused enough problems among automakers that it held down the overall quality scores in this year's J.D. Power and Associates initial quality survey.

Being stymied by something that is supposed to be used for entertainment and information can cause immediate frustration and aggravation. It may not seem like it is a major concern, but it could have a long-term effect on the customer — even retention. Recognizing the need for a little extra customer education, General Motors seized the opportunity and became proactive.

GM knows the importance of customer retention and they envision their new-vehicle owners learning how to operate the electronic gadgets before they leave the dealership after the purchase. The automaker is training specialists in dealerships to educate customers.

The initial on-the-spot training at the dealership is not enough to satisfy GM. The automaker realizes that the customer is bombarded with a plethora of information at the time of taking possession of their new vehicle. So as a measure to ensure customer satisfaction, trained technicians from GM's Austin, Texas-based infotainment center will make proactive calls to customers after the purchase and inquire if any assistance is needed. To aid in the problem solving, working replicas of dashboards are available to the techs so they can literally get the same hands-on encounter as the customer. After some individualized attention from the tech, the customer can truly enjoy their entertainment system. ♦





Retention With Every Repair Visit

“No service customer should be taken for granted, ever; and every repair visit must be treated with retention in mind,” says Jamie Laferriere. He’s the Buick GMC Service Director for the Bill Marsh Automotive Group in Traverse City, Michigan where retention is the goal of every service interaction.

“We are very competitive and make full use of all the great GM programs like rebates and tire specials that are available to us to offer our regular customers and attract new ones, says Jamie. We also add our own promotions to the mix with a rewards card and special offers on brakes, spring and autumn preps and inspections.”



He explained that those kinds of promotions do bring regular customers in and do help attract new customers, but that their impact on retention is limited.

“To really work at retaining our customers we strive to make every repair visit the gold standard of customer service. We want every customers to leave saying ‘That was amazing; I’m never going anywhere else.’ That’s idealistic, of course, but by establishing that goal we’ve managed to achieve a very high retention rate that is well above the GM average,” announced Jamie.

According to Laferriere, selflessness and the personal connection between consultant and customer are the key ingredients in having customers want to return. Jamie emphasizes the point by saying, *“That’s what we preach and practice. We work to let customers know that their vehicle problem becomes our problem when they drive through that door.”*

The Process

Selflessness, as described by Laferriere, is consultants concentrating entirely on their customer of the moment. Here’s what he insists on:

- Making absolutely sure the vehicle is fixed right the first time by communicating with the technician and staying in touch with the customer whether on-site or by phone.
- The completed job must provide the customer with a full appreciation of your skill as a consultant, the expertise of your technicians and the satisfaction of doing business with your dealership.
- Following a service transaction your customers must be convinced — by virtue of their treatment and the work that was done — that they are truly appreciated.

Whether you are working with long-time customers, estranged customers or new ones, strive to make that *personal connection* throughout the interaction. To help personalize a service visit Service Manager Laferriere makes sure his consultants offer their business card and place themselves at their customer’s disposal.

At the conclusion of their service experience there is no better way to test their perception of the quality of the service they’ve received — or predict retention — than to make the next appointment. Perhaps it will be for scheduled maintenance or a simple, free PitStop 30 to 60 days out. ♦

BOTTOM SIDE UP

Focus on Customer Needs

A first time customer, a plumber with several trucks, drove into a dealership with one of the vehicles. He explained to the consultant that there was a vibration he wanted checked out.

Through inspection it was determined that it needed new ball joints, a stabilizer link and a check of the U-joints. The bill would run about \$1000. Further inspection turned up the need for brake pads, a control arm and two idler arms. Those repairs would bring the bill to \$2000 — over \$700 for the idler arms alone.

Detecting the customer’s concern, the consultant discussed the situation with the technician. The tech explained that though the idler arms would definitely need replacing — based on current vehicle usage, they were good for six months more. Putting off replacing the idler arms, reduced the cost by over \$700 and allowed the customer to work the



repair into his future budget planning.

The consultant’s concern for his customer’s welfare and pocketbook resulted in the customer choosing this dealership for all of his repair work. ♦

HONORS

**BLUE
DIAMOND**
150 Quizzes

Mike Beas
Ed Morse Cadillac
Delray Beach, FL



DOUBLE DIAMOND 125 Quizzes

Scott Bowser, Jon Hall Chevrolet, Daytona Beach, FL; **Connie Koehler**, Vince Whibbs Buick GMC Cadillac, Pensacola, FL; **William Miller**, Jeff Gordon Chevrolet, Wilmington, NC; **Jim Straten**, Anthony Auto Group, Gurnee, IL; **James Warwick**, Pete Moore Chevrolet, Pensacola, FL; **Jay Wright**, Valley Buick GMC, Auburn, WA

DIAMOND 100 Quizzes

Richard Chavez, Mark's Casa Chevrolet, Albuquerque, NM; **Denise Collison**, I. G. Burton & Company, Milford, DE; **Luis Desousa**, Paul Masse Buick GMC, Woonsocket, RI; **Deane Doyle**, Brotherton Buick GMC Cadillac, Renton, WA; **Mary Dunbar-Daluisio**, Fuccillo Chevrolet, Grand Island, NY; **Matt Nenneman**, Burtness Chevrolet, Orfordville, WI; **Mike Tritthardt**, Rockenbach Chevrolet, Grayslake, IL; **Janet Wares**, Stu Emmert Chevrolet Buick Cadillac, Liberal, KS; **Charles Williams**, Vandergriff Chevrolet, Arlington, TX

PLATINUM 75 Quizzes

Mike Allaire, Palm Chevrolet, Ocala, FL; **Tim Hoehn**, Palm Chevrolet, Ocala, FL; **Charles Iannello**, Five Star Motors, Aberdeen, WA; **Lucas Luchsinger**, Bennett Autoplex, Salina, KS; **William Petticrew III**, Williams Chevrolet, Elkton, MD; **Doug Plopper**, Wright Buick GMC, Lufkin, TX; **Scott Stevenson**, Penske Chevrolet, Indianapolis, IN; **Joseph Stillwell**, Holman Motors, Batavia, OH; **Chris Yoder**, Sunset Chevrolet, Sumner, WA

GOLD 50 Quizzes

Najib Ayoub, Dutch Miller Chevrolet, Huntington, WV; **Ziv Baker**, Watson Chevrolet, Tucson, AZ; **Rachel Bergey**, Biggs Cadillac Buick GMC, Elizabeth City, NC; **Mike Droubie**, Watson Chevrolet, Tucson, AZ; **Eric Farken**, O'Connor Chevrolet Buick GMC Cadillac, Augusta, ME; **James Hughes**, Tim's Buick GMC, Prescott, AZ; **Andrew Knotts**, Centennial Buick GMC, Las Vegas, NV; **Melinda Lamb**, Bachman Bernard Chevrolet Buick GMC Cadillac, Greenville, TN; **Cheri Mack**, Southtowne Chevrolet Buick GMC Cadillac, Newnan, GA; **Charles McNiece**, Team Chevrolet, Valparaiso, IN; **Tom Meinhold**, Ferman Chevrolet of Tarpon Springs, Tarpon Springs, FL; **Brian Obryan**, Taylor Motors, Redding, CA; **James Tudor**, Sun Buick GMC, Wantagh, NY

SILVER 25 Quizzes

Ed Baldwin, Ivan Gandrud Chevrolet, Green Bay, WI; **Ryan Capps**, Reliable Chevrolet, Springfield, MO; **Jason Cucksee**, Edd Kirby's Adventure Chevrolet, Dalton, GA; **Perry Daniels**, Don Hall Chevrolet Buick GMC Cadillac, Ashland, KY; **Howard Davis**, Billy Navarre Chevrolet Cadillac, Lake Charles, LA; **Marilyn DeRosier**, Mills Auto, Baxter, MN; **David Elizondo**, Ron Craft Chevrolet Cadillac, Baytown, TX; **Matthew Gordon**, Autoway Chevrolet, Clearwater, FL; **Jeremiah Huff**, Bergstrom Chevrolet of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI; **Zachary Hughes**, Bob Valenti Chevrolet, Mystic, CT; **Julie Ink**, Turner Buick GMC, New Holland, PA; **Ted Judd**, George Nunnally Chevrolet, Bentonville, AR; **Joseph Kinsley**, Barton Birks Chevrolet Cadillac, Newburgh, NY; **Steve Lallaman**, Ivan Gandrud Chevrolet, Green Bay, WI; **Dave Long**, David Chevrolet Buick, Niagara Falls, NY; **Jim McCall**, Franklin Chevrolet Cadillac Buick GMC, Statesboro, GA; **Steve Meche**, Walker Buick GMC, Alexandria, LA; **Kirk Mills**, Town & Country Chevrolet, Milwaukie, OR; **William Passaeu**, Maroone Chevrolet of Pembroke Pines, Pembroke Pines, FL; **Daniel Pfeil**, Fuccillo Chevrolet, Grand Island, NY; **Kyle Rager**, Knoepfler Chevrolet, Sioux City, IA; **Chris Redmond**, Stillwater Motor Company, Stillwater, MN; **Mike Sanchez**, Lone Star Chevrolet, Jersey Village, TX; **Jordan Smola**, Libertyville Chevrolet, Libertyville, IL; **Randy Somerville**, George Carr Buick Cadillac GMC, Vicksburg, MS; **Mike Sparks**, Ron Tonkin Chevrolet, Portland, OR; **Jeremy St. Gelais**, Dover Auto World, Dover, NH; **Chris Talakowski**, Holz Motors, Hales Corners, WI; **Dennis Weiker**, Ed Schmidt GMC, Perrysburg, OH

BRONZE 10 Quizzes

Bob Anderton, George Carr Buick Cadillac GMC, Vicksburg, MS; **Ken Bradshaw**, Three-Way Chevrolet Cadillac, Bakersfield, CA; **Bruce Dougherty**, Williams Chevrolet, Elkton, MD; **Bennie Duck**, Bob Allen Motor Mall, Danville, KY; **Shari Fehrmann**, Deien Chevrolet, Trenton, IL; **Peggy Gleason**, Team Chevrolet Buick GMC Cadillac, Salisbury, NC; **Kurt Haase**, Roper Buick GMC, Joplin, MO; **Avery Harding**, Morrow Chevrolet, Beaver Falls, PA; **Renee Junga**, Hamilton Chevrolet, Warren, MI; **Patrick Karbe**, Taylor Cadillac, Toledo, OH; **Tanya Lyle**, Hudson Cadillac Buick GMC, Poughkeepsie, NY; **Bob Major**, Carl Black Chevrolet Buick GMC, Kennesaw, GA; **Tom Mancuso**, Markley Motors, Fort Collins, CO; **Alex Martinez**, Young Chevrolet, Dallas, TX; **Anthony Meaddows**, Airport Chevrolet Buick GMC Cadillac, Medford, OR; **Matt Murray**, Criswell Chevrolet, Gaithersburg, MD; **Jason Oliver**, Classic Cadillac, Atlanta, GA; **Josh Pigman**, Larry Fannin Chevrolet Buick GMC, Morehead, KY; **Rick Roberts**, Valentine Buick GMC, Fairborn, OH; **Bobby Seydell**, Great River Chevrolet GMC, Natchez, MS; **Lou Ann Sizemore**, Sandy Sansing Chevrolet, Pensacola, FL; **Tyler Thompson**, Erickson GMC, Rexburg, ID; **Randy Triplett**, Jerry's Chevrolet Cadillac, Weatherford, TX; **Roger Wait**, Wheeler Motors, Cheboygan, MI; **Theron Whitby**, Burien Chevrolet, Seattle, WA; **Chebon White**, Bill Estes Chevrolet, Indianapolis, IN; **Robert Zopp**, Heritage Chevrolet Buick, Owings Mills, MD

FACTOIDS

"GM estimates that as many as 90% of their buyers have smartphones already."

Source: www.automotivedigest.com

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOU? Your customers are smartphone users. Market your services through their smartphones. Make their smartphone the primary means of all types of communication with them.

Handling Another Tough Tech



Today we're passing on some tips for handling another challenging person you'll serve at the mechanical parts counter. The goal remains identifying the disruptive behavior and neutralizing it, so you can get everyone back to productive work.

"Mañana Manny" — Manny is a guy whose ambition flags when he gets a job he doesn't want to do. Perhaps it involves undercompensated diagnostics or maybe he's preoccupied with his social life, but his best hope of getting it out of his stall is to ask for a part he thinks you don't stock so he can order it for another day, (hence "mañana"). This behavior is one of the more destructive trends a Parts Consultant can encounter serving the shop. Here's why that's so:

- The immediate consequence is a second customer visit to install the part, wasting their time unnecessarily. (CSI scores are jeopardized.)
- Secondly, the Service Consultant's time will be exhausted explaining the special order and smoothing things over for the required return visit.
- That unneeded part may stay on your shelf and risk becoming obsolete if the customer returns and ol' Manny suddenly fixes the car with something else. (At the very least a time-consuming parts return will have to be completed.)

While some "Mannys" will plainly tell you they want to order a part so they don't have to do the job today, you'll often have to call their bluff. Learn Manny's "tells", as poker players would call them. If he really needs a certain part, he can guide you right to it in the EPC. If he hesitates around an illustration and says haltingly, "I think that's it" at some obscure non-stock item, you've got a clue to his objective. Counter him with "Gee, Manny, I don't stock that part, but the locator says a dealer downtown does; I'll get our driver right over there." At that point he'll either realize he's been caught and select the part actually needed (which is probably in stock!), or he'll leave the counter muttering, "Just a minute: I'll be right back as soon as I check out something."

Be sure to report every instance of a "Manny" at your counter to management. Enabling Manny in his dereliction will only undermine the dealership's reputation. ♦

You Choose

Choice Theory is the invention of a psychiatrist named William Glasser, and it's pretty fascinating. Glasser's idea is that pretty much everything we do is done by choice. There are some exceptions, of course. For example, we typically don't get startled by choice. Our autonomic functions such as breathing, heartbeat, blood pressure, etc., simply are what they are. However, much of our behavior, especially social behavior, is by choice, according to Glasser.

Let's consider depression from the perspective of *Choice Theory*. Despite the commercials we might see on television that tout the prevailing medical model for understanding the genesis of depression, Dr. Glasser would say that depression serves a function. He would say that depression is a tool. He would say that a person has learned, probably from experiences in their family system, to choose depression in response to some things because depression is perceived to offer a secondary gain. Secondary gains are motives that are generally hidden from plain sight. Maintaining family loyalty/rules, gaining control, garnering attention (even if it's negative attention), exacting revenge, and covering up some inadequacy are examples of secondary gains. In Glasser's model, secondary gains are more important than any others.

In *Choice Theory*, language is extremely important. For example, nothing can "make me angry," indeed, nothing can *make* me do anything. If I experience anger, then I do so by choice. In fact, Dr. Glasser would invite us to say, "I'm angering." I know that sounds a little weird, but it's shorthand for the acknowledgement that I am choosing anger as a response to something in my life. Rather than saying, "I'm depressed," a person is encouraged to say, "I'm depress-ing." Of course, we would also be invited to consider the secondary gain for choosing anger or depression. Another important language change in this theory is a kind of distancing from dysfunctional choices. For example, rather than saying, "my depression," a person would say "the depression." "My anger" gets replaced with "the anger."

The idea is a powerful one: to help people regain control over their own lives by showing them how much power they already have. If you can choose one option, then you can choose any option. Glasser wanted people to be set free from the tyranny of circumstances, and he did that by helping people discover that despite messages to the contrary, we always have a choice over how we will respond to life.

Mark

Reach Mark for consultation by emailing mphelps@samaritancounselingmichigan.com. Communications are private.



Mark Phelps
M.A., L.L.M.F.T.

Respect One Another

Mutual Respect

When a customer drives into the Service Lane there are two people primarily involved in resolving their concern — a Service Consultant and a Technician. Sometimes these personalities don't work in unison and the results can be problematic.

Consultants and technicians must be clear about their shared purpose — resolve the problem to the customer's complete satisfaction and get them back into a vehicle that works correctly.

Out in the \$hop

A Service Director we spoke to described his tech group as 'eclectic.' *"We have several techs who verge on genius in terms of their skills and their understanding of automotive technology, but they lack good communication skills. That creates a few hurdles for our consultants. On the other hand we have some very smart techs who are easy to work with."* That's a condition that can be found in every Service De-

partment in the country.

For a shop to run smoothly consultants must respect and appreciate the role the technician plays in getting the vehicle repaired. They must also understand their role in that process — namely writing a clear customer concern. The repair order is the document that enables them to do this, and when written with care on a consistent basis it becomes the cornerstone for building a trusting relationship between the consultant and technician. Building trust starts with the consultants.

In addition to a well-documented concern, consultants must be available to answer questions. Consultants can also play an important role as liaison to the Parts Department helping to ensure that parts are delivered promptly.

For the tech, building trust requires keeping the consultant apprised of job status and notification of any delays or other problems that in turn help the consultant keep the customer informed. Of course, chief among the



factors influencing trust are fixed-right-the-first-time repairs. Techs who take the time to ensure the work is correctly done and who provide the consultants with the necessary details are easy to trust.

The responsibility for building trust begins with the consultant in relation to a clearly documented condition and circles back as technicians complete repairs that result in customers who are confident in the teams that serve them. ♦

DISTILLING \$SENSE OF "WOW"

With all the talk going about making a WOW experience for our customers, we need to remember that a WOW moment does not have to be one hit out of the park, it can be the little things that we do daily that some customer may consider a WOW moment.

Larry Lavada

Airport Chevy Buick GMC Cadillac, Medford, OR

That's the honest truth in a single mouthful, Larry. Just like the big leagues, it's not just those heavy hitters that knock 50 homeruns a year that make a winning team. It's the workmanlike players that churn out base hits in every game that get the job done. Little things like walking customer to the cashier, smiling at everyone in your line all morning long, greeting and extending sincere appreciation to every customer — these are the "base hits" of everyday life in a great GM dealership.

LIKES READING ABOUT OTHERS\$

I enjoy reading articles written by employees at other dealerships. It's refreshing to learn

they have the same concerns and problems as I do. I do have to admit I have used some of their ideas to improve my customer relationships.

Mary Brown

Al Serra Chevrolet, Grand Blanc, MI

It's always nice to know you're not alone in the old "customer service boat," isn't it Mary? Problems and challenges are much the same at dealerships everywhere. And it's always OK to "borrow" ideas — that's why they share them. Being open to good new ideas makes you like a prospector. (Mary is a pretty good one, too, as she found herself in our "Lane of Fame" in 2004!)

GREAT PARTING WORDS!

Treat people the way you would like to be treated. Whether you're selling a pack of gum or a million dollar yacht, they'll always come back to you for more great service.

Chris Johnson

Ed Bozarth Nevada #1 Chevrolet, Las Vegas, NV



yourspace
a place for feedback