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THE CASE FOR CONSISTENCY

Why the Best Auto Service Businesses Make Excellence Repeatable.

Customers do not like surprises when it comes to doing business with service providers. When they can count on a consistently positive experience every time they visit your shop, confidence grows. That confidence becomes trust, and trust becomes loyalty.

When experiences vary from one visit to the next, however, confidence begins to erode. Customers become uncertain about what to expect and are far more likely to consider alternatives.

Consistency is one of the most powerful competitive advantages a business can create because it directly influences customer retention, referrals and long-term profitability.

For multi-location organizations, consistency becomes even more important. Customers view every location as an extension of the same company. They do not care whether one store has a veteran manager and another has a newly promoted supervisor. If your name is on the building, customers expect the same level of service, professionalism and expertise every time they visit.

When one location delivers an exceptional experience and another delivers an average one, customers rarely separate the two. Instead, they conclude that the company itself is inconsistent.

CONSISTENT INCONSISTENCY

Unfortunately, inconsistency is one of the most common challenges facing automotive service businesses today. A major lesson my team and I have learned from evaluating over 120,000 sales calls (and growing daily) for multi-location shops across the country is that inconsistency kills sales and damages the perception of the brand.

No doubt some of your sales associates are pretty good on the phone. On the other hand, I'm sure you'd agree, some are pretty awful, and therein lies the problem. When a customer calls and speaks with one associate (let's call him Joe), they have a wonderful experience. Joe is personable, customer-focused and committed to delivering a great experience.

However, the next time that same

customer calls they connect with another associate (let's call him Larry), and their experience is miserable. Larry does it "Larry's Way" and is more concerned with ending the call than creating a positive customer experience. From the customer's perspective, their experience with the business is now dependent on interacting with Joe.

Great businesses do not allow customer experiences to depend on which employee answers the phone. They create processes that deliver consistent results regardless of who handles the interaction.

LESSONS FROM CHICK-FIL-A

One of the best examples of consistency in business today is Chick-fil-A. Whether a customer visits a location in Atlanta, Dallas, Phoenix or Charlotte, the experience is remarkably similar. The greetings are familiar, service standards are consistent, and employees follow established processes.

Customers know what to expect.

SHOP OPERATIONS

The key lesson is not that Chick-fil-A simply hires better people than everyone else. Their success comes from creating systems that make consistent execution possible. Expectations are clearly defined, employees are trained on those expectations, leaders reinforce them daily, and performance is measured against those standards. The result is a customer experience that feels predictable, reliable and trustworthy.

The same principle applies to automotive service businesses. Customers should not experience one version of your company when they call your shop, another version when they walk through the front door and yet another version when they visit a different location. Consistency creates familiarity. Familiarity creates comfort. Comfort creates trust.

CONSISTENCY IS A BRAND PROMISE

Customers do not judge your business based solely on one advisor, one technician or one visit – they judge your brand.

Every interaction either strengthens or weakens the confidence customers have in your company. When your team consistently delivers a professional and customer-focused experience, customers become comfortable returning because they know what to expect.

The most successful automotive service organizations understand that consistency is not merely an operational objective. It is a promise to the customer. When that promise is fulfilled repeatedly, trust grows stronger with every visit.

INSTITUTIONALIZING WINS

One of the biggest mistakes businesses make is allowing their best customer service practices to remain isolated to individual employees or locations.

Top shops identify the behaviors



that produce positive customer experiences and strong business results, then transform those behaviors into repeatable processes. For example, if one advisor consistently converts more callers into appointments or one location consistently achieves higher customer satisfaction scores, leaders should identify what is driving those results and turn them into best practices across the organization.

The highest-performing businesses institutionalize their wins. They document successful processes, train employees on them, reinforce them consistently, measure execution and hold teams accountable for results. When successful behaviors become standard operating procedures, great customer experiences become far more predictable.

Every successful franchise brand understands a simple truth: consistency must be taught, reinforced, measured and managed.

Many auto service companies treat training as an event. Employees attend a seminar, participate in a workshop or

complete an online course. Everyone leaves energized and motivated but without reinforcement, most of what was learned is eventually forgotten.

Research consistently shows that training retention drops dramatically when concepts are not reinforced and applied on a regular basis. That is why world-class organizations view training as an ongoing process rather than a one-time activity.

Chick-fil-A does not achieve consistency because employees naturally know what to do. They achieve consistency because expectations are clearly defined, employees receive continual training, leaders reinforce desired behaviors, and performance is measured and managed.

The same principle applies to automotive service businesses. If every advisor develops their own sales process, every manager creates their own customer experience standards, and every location operates differently, consistency becomes impossible.

Training provides the framework that allows employees to execute



proven processes while still bringing their own personality to customer interactions. The goal is not robotic behavior, but rather consistent execution of the behaviors that create positive customer experiences.

EXCELLENCE IS NOT AN ACCIDENT

A successful football coach once said, “You have to perform at a consistently higher level than others. That’s the mark of a true professional.”

Any shop can have a great day. Exceptional ones distinguish themselves by delivering great experiences consistently. They don’t rely on luck, personalities or individual heroics to create outstanding customer experiences. They build systems that consistently produce them.

Whether you operate one location or 20, your customers should receive the same level of professionalism, hospitality, communication and care every time they do business with you. That consistency builds trust, trust creates loyalty and loyalty drives retention, referrals and long-term profitability.

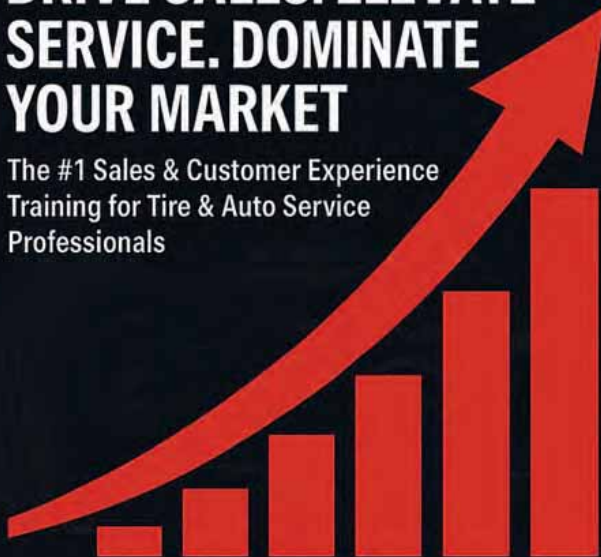
The most successful automotive service businesses understand that excellence is not something that happens occasionally. It is something that is intentionally designed, systematically trained, consistently measured and relentlessly reinforced.

That’s how good businesses become great ones, and how great ones create a competitive advantage that is difficult to duplicate. ■

An avid auto enthusiast, **Steve Ferrante** literally grew up in and around his family’s auto service business in Massachusetts. Today, he is the **CEO and Trainer of Champions of Sale Away LLC**. A true student of his profession, Steve has over 30 years of successful sales, sales management and sales training experience. Specializing in the tire/auto service industry since 2009, Steve has received national acclaim for teaching independent tire and auto service businesses how to improve customer experiences, produce greater sales results, build a “winning team” corporate culture and be the “Top Shop” in their market. To learn more about the Pinnacle Performance program for your team, visit **pinnacleperformancetraining.biz**. Steve can be reached directly at **603-681-0787** or via e-mail at **steve@pinnacleperformancetraining.biz**.

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