



## Auto Shop Tip #10

### *There's Power at the Front Counter* *By Michael Strautman*

Do you want repeat business? Does your staff want repeat business? Proper staffing of the front counter includes hiring a person who *delights* in the pleasure of his/her customer. Are your customers *delighted* having done business with you? The front counter of an automotive repair business can be its greatest strength or its greatest weakness. Consider the following in testing the strength or weakness of your front counter staff.

**The power of first impressions** – If a customer calls regarding an issue with their vehicle, does it sound as if the advisor doesn't care to be there? Do you have a pre-planned phone greeting? If so, does it sound like the person answering the phone is happy that the phone rang? After all, you should be happy that the phone rang, right? I have called thousands of shops across the country and most phone greetings sound as if the person is inconvenienced to answer the phone. A well planned, upbeat greeting is essential for first impressions with a customer.

**Look for opportunities to “wow” customers** – Your staff should be trained to listen very carefully to what and how customers say things. They should look for opportunities to do something unexpected for a customer. For example, serve your patrons coffee while they wait (not just turn the coffee pot on for them). What better advertisement for your shop than random acts of kindness? Without this type of thinking, the experience your customer had will not be memorable. On the contrary, it will be just another auto repair to them, ultimately forgettable.

***Auto Shop Tips***© by Michael Strautman  
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**Realize that the unexpected becomes expected** – If something special is done for a customer once, it will then be an expectation of that customer (and any customer that they may tell about your company). Be prepared to continually look for ways to “wow” the individual in each situation.

It takes the unexpected to create a memorable experience. How does your staff do at delivering unexpected acts of service to customers? Do they *delight* in the pleasure of their customers? If you would like to know ways to train your team these soft skills, email me at [mike@turnaroundtour.com](mailto:mike@turnaroundtour.com).

