

Auto Shop Tips© by Michael Strautman

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Auto Shop Tip #34

Three Business Truths – Part 1: Increasing Sales

By Michael Strautman

If you are not satisfied with the [performance of your shop](#) today, there are truly only three ways that you can make more money: Increase sales, increase margin, and decrease expenses. This week, we shall focus on part one of this list: Increasing sales.

If not enough sales is the problem it is usually the result of one of two things: Low car count, and not making each car “count.”

- **Low car count** – Usually a result of lack of advertising, poor image, professionalism, or quality control. Do you have an advertising plan? To whom are you advertising, and who are you attempting to attract with that free oil change? Is your facility inviting to the eye and in a location that catches the eye? When the phone is answered, is there a planned greeting? It could be that your shop is unknown in the marketplace. I would suggest researching something called “Top of Mind” awareness. This is the principle that your business name, logo, business owner/manager appears frequently on a [variety of mediums](#) in your marketplace. Get involved in your community as a sponsor of a well known local event. If you are known by others in town, you will be remembered when it comes to a car that needs service. This allows you to stay “on top of” your customers’ minds.

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- **Not making “cars count”** – Some shop owners do not feel professionally obligated to thoroughly examine each vehicle that enters the shop. The evidence? I went in for a free oil change to a local shop. I pulled in, and handed them my coupon. I was asked my name, address, and phone number. My car, trust me, needs some work. Fifteen minutes elapsed, and I was told, “Thanks for coming by, and we hope you come back and see us.” What if the wheels were about to fall off of my car? What if my brakes were about to fail? I compare it to the doctor’s office giving you antibiotics for an infection, and neglecting to tell you (for fear of being the bearer of bad news) about the apparent heart

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arrhythmia observed during the exam. Is your team walking right by jobs that could be sold? For certain, they will only be sold if they are presented to the customer. When is the last time you observed your team doing the “exams?”

To be sure, there are other factors that could have a negative effect on sales: local economy, weather, etc. However, these are things over which you, as the owner, have no direct control. You can only do your part when it comes to serving each customer that does choose to do business with you. There are more business truths to come in this three-part series – Stay Tuned!

