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Larry's Ramblings

Have you ever heard this saying? ***"I want to know how much you care before I care how much you know!"*** Every day I read articles on how to close more Sales, how to increase Gross Margins, and how to implement the latest and greatest marketing plan ever invented.

What I seldom hear is how important the customer is to your Dealership's success! I hear a lot about how important it is to demonstrate how much the Dealership cares about their Employees. Without happy, enthusiastic customers, who cares if your Employees are happy?

Too often in today's world the customer has been reduced to a slogan or a data point on someone's computer. Here are a few examples:

"We value our customers"

"At Hometown Motors, our customer is the King!"

"We have 25,000 customers in our database"

"Our average Employee has worked at our Dealership over 15 years!"

Here is the question that really needs to be addressed... does this Employee have fifteen years of experience, or, does this Employee have one year experience repeated fifteen times?

"At Hometown Motors our Employees are like one big, happy family!" Is this a dysfunctional family?

Customers judge whether or not to do business with a company based on the feedback that all of their senses provide them. Their sense of sight is a huge contributor to their decision to continue doing business with your company or seek out another company to spend their money at. Consider this, when a customer walks into a business what they see in the *first ten seconds* set the direction for the customer. When a customer first visits your

Dealership's Service Department, what will they see in the first ten seconds that will give them a positive impression?

- Will they see your Employees in neat and professional looking uniforms?
- Will they see Employees interacting with other customers in a "friendly" manner?
- Will they see signs and promotional literature that speaks to the **Features, Advantages and Benefits** of being a customer at your Dealership?
- Will someone from your Staff actually look the customer in the eye and acknowledge, either verbally or through body language, that "*I SEE YOU*" and "*I WILL BE RIGHT WITH YOU*"?

Showing customers that you care through your Employee's actions, your facility's marketing message, and actually acknowledging that the customer exists is much more important than fancy slogans, complimentary doughnuts, or free washes!

It is no accident that when a customer drives up to a Ritz Carlton Hotel they will always see several uniformed Ritz Employees waiting to greet them. Just like there is a reason that once properly greeted, these Employees will *walk* the customer into the Lobby and personally introduce them to the Receptionist.

In order to have a Dealership that delivers "*world class*" service, you must do more than simply create catchy slogans. You must also understand that it takes a lot more than "happy" Employees. You must train your Employees to **VALUE** every customer contact. You must ensure that your Dealership communicates non-verbal messages that say to potential customers... "*We value your business*" and what you see reinforces that message.

"*World class*" is not a slogan, it is a complete operating process that controls every aspect of customer interactions within your business.

Recently I read in Automotive News that Donald Trump said in a speech in Flint, Michigan last month that really clarifies how upside down our world has become. Trump said "*I can remember a time when Cars were made in Flint, Michigan and you could not drink the water in Mexico. Now we live in a world where cars are made in Mexico and you cannot drink the water in Flint, Michigan.*" This is truly a sad state of affairs and I pray that our

It's NOT too late to Enroll
in *E&A's*

Service Manager

College Course

November 15-17, 2016*

deadline is October 13, 2016

or

Collision Manager

College Course

December 6-8, 2016*

deadline is November 11, 2016



ENROLL TODAY!

Note: Click on Course above to Enroll

**These classes are not confirmed until we receive 5 enrollments & then we will notify you that the class is confirmed*

Do You Have A Merchandising Plan?

Marketing is all of the things we do to convince customers to visit our Service, Parts, or Collision Department. Merchandising is all of the things that we do to convince customers to make a buying decision once they arrive at our Facility. I see Dealers spending thousands of dollars each month sending out follow-up letters and advertising for customers. Then, they completely forget to have any meaningful merchandising tools in place to convince customers to make a positive buying decision. Here are the most common tools I see- Menus (that are out of date or have no prices), some Manufacturer banners ("*we now sell Tires*"), a few training certificates, and maybe a sample copy of a Lifetime Collision Warranty. In Parts, I see Chrome License Plates and Key Chains without any prices on them!

Here is a partial list of the minimum merchandising tools you should have in place at your Dealership:

Service

- Tire Display with at least 30 Tires of all brands and sizes
- Manufacturer Specific Service Menus
- Wheel Display with all of the different wheel size and style options available. These look even better if they have Tires mounted on them

- Accessory Display with a full line of both Manufacturer and Aftermarket Accessories available to your customers
 - Navigation Systems
 - DVD Players
 - Back-Up Cameras
- Worn Parts Display with at least one of every maintenance item on a vehicle. The display should also have the actual mileage of the worn part on it so the customer can see how quickly an item wears out
- "Wall-of-Fame" Display with all of your training certificates and all of the certificates and pictures that show your company's civic involvement from the United Way to sponsoring the local softball team
- Displays should include brochures with package pricing for accessories and Tires

Collision

- Ten things you should know before having your damaged vehicle repaired
- Copies of all the warranties you offer
 - Sheet Metal
 - Paint
 - Workmanship
- "Wall-of-Fame" Display with all of your training certificates and all of the certificates and pictures that show your company's civic involvement from the United Way to sponsoring the local softball team
- Signs showing the type of equipment you use
- Before and after repair photos
- A sign that indicates you have Low Cost Rentals available
- A sign that explains your Dealership's "Concierge Collision Repair Service"

Parts

- Accessory Display with a full line of both Manufacturer and Aftermarket Accessories available to your customers
 - Navigation Systems
 - DVD Players
 - Back-Up Cameras
- Maintenance Kits
 - Oil
 - Filters
 - Gaskets
 - Maintenance Stickers
- Hard Parts Display with competitive price comparisons and Parts

Warranty

- Clothing
 - Shirts
 - Hats
 - Umbrella's
 - Gloves
 - Shoes
- Performance Displays
 - Superchargers
 - Turbochargers
 - Computer Upgrades
 - Exhaust Systems

Don't forget color coordinated uniforms and name tags for all Employees!

Remember, customers are 85% more likely to buy what they can see rather than what someone tells them they need. Visit your Customer Areas in the Service, Parts, and Collision Departments and ask yourself this question... *"Is there anything here that might encourage me to buy something that I did not come in here for?"* If there is not anything there, then I would say that all of the money you are spending on marketing to get customers into your doors is **being wasted!**

E&A is bringing our Service Manager and Service Advisor Classes to You!

Classes are being held in the following cities-

Atlanta, GA
Newark, NJ
Chicago, IL
Columbus, OH
Chicago, IL
Dallas / Ft Worth, TX
Las Vegas, NV



Click here to [**ENROLL**](#)

Executive Learning Resource for Top-of-the-Line Fixed Operations Managers or those who want to be *Volume 167, October 2016*

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