

# On the Line

## Working Smarter, Not Harder Doing More With Less

While some shops focus on increased car counts, others enjoy steady growth with fewer vehicles. It's not magic...it is just a matter of performing inspections and making the needed service recommendations. The customer trusts you with their second most expensive investment and you have a responsibility to take a best interest approach when servicing their vehicle. Give attention to and make service recommendations based on your inspection, even if your shop does not offer those services.

### LESSONS FROM THE PAST

Fill it up and check my oil. How long has it been since you have heard that request? Some of the younger techs never have, as those facilities were past history when their automotive careers began. Full service gas stations are a thing of the past. For those of us that worked in those facilities early in our careers you will recall how each vehicle that pulled to the gas pumps got a thorough inspection, as much as could be inspected without getting the vehicle on a lift or pulling a wheel. We sold a lot of services, parts and lubricants and kept the customer's vehicle in good operating condition.

- 1) Every vehicle that pulled to the gas pumps got their windshield washed and their wiper blades inspected. Today, the wiper blades only get attention during or following a rainstorm or after the windshield is damaged from worn out or damaged wiper blades.
- 2) As a courtesy, every vehicle was vacuumed and a free litter bag included.
- 3) Tire pressures were checked and the tread depth measured on marginal tires to determine how much wear was left. When uneven front-to-rear tire wear was identified, free tire rotations were offered as a means of getting the vehicle on a lift to perform a brake and suspension inspection. Many brake jobs, shock absorbers, exhaust system components and suspension and alignment services were performed as a result. Today, the only time a tire gets attention is when the Tire Pressure Monitoring Lamp is illuminated or a tire goes flat. Front to rear tire circumference is critical with today's All Wheel Drive vehicles, making tire rotations an important service to prevent major driveline damage. The brakes only get attention when noise is present or a lamp is illuminated.



RATHER THAN DEPENDING ONLY ON THE CUSTOMER TO REQUEST A SERVICE, BOB RELEASES THE MUNCHKINS ON EVERY VEHICLE!

- 4) The oil level was checked and any evidence of leakage was brought to the attention of the customer. This resulted in a lot of gasket and component replacements. Many oil and filter changes were sold based on low fluid levels or dirty, contaminated lubricant.
- 5) Air filters, hoses and belts were common replacement items. Today, tensioners and idlers are critical, as many components drive from a single serpentine belt, making a failure a catastrophic event.
- 6) All fluid levels were inspected and topped off when needed. Low brake fluid levels were a good indication of excessively worn friction and that was another opportunity to get the vehicle on the lift for a more in-depth inspection.

We inspected the vehicle as a matter of good business and most importantly for the benefit of the customer. If you are not performing inspections, the shop is losing money and costing the vehicle owner money, too. Technicians should be knowledgeable of the products and services offered, the advantages and how and when these services should be performed.

### PAY AT THE PUMP

We are in an age of pay at the pump and pump your own fuel. No one is available on a weekly basis to make those basic checks. With extended maintenance intervals, we have fewer chances to inspect the vehicle, making it more important that we perform a thorough inspection. Inspections have always been a major part of shop growth. Do not get caught up in a pattern of only providing the services requested by the vehicle owner. When this occurs, it costs the shop and the vehicle owner a lot of money. It is your responsibility to provide the customer with an honest and complete inspection of their vehicle. Remind them that a small investment in maintenance can prevent a lot of unnecessary and costly repair expense.

Does your parts supplier provide you with the necessary merchandising aids for your waiting room to help promote available services? Visual aids and reading material should be made available to you to help promote these services. Ask your Mighty Rep for assistance, as he has the tools and training.



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Technical Services