



Shop Talk

A Publication of the Automotive Service Association – Houston, Texas

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Members
New Board Member
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Tuesday, July 14 Meeting

6:30 Food, 7:00 Program
Meeting at ASA Offices
1050 N. Post Oak, Suite 240
Houston, Texas 77055



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Rethinking Automotive Repair

In the current industry crisis with Chrysler and GM's in bankruptcy, come learn what the regional manager of one the major parts suppliers thinks about the future regarding OEM Replacement Parts and other issues affecting our industry.

Make Your Life Easier: Learn the Ins and outs of IATN and Improve Your Bottom Line

Speakers: Glenn Young, Young Automotive
Dan Nieves, Regional Manager for CARQUEST

Open Forum Discussion

Topic: Should you spiff those who
send you business?

How To Find Us

Automotive Service Association
Houston Chapter
PO Box 925007
Houston, TX 77292-5007
<http://www.asahoustontexas.com>

Need info about ASA?
Call one of the board members on page 3
or contact Nancy Adkins,
ASA Event Coordinator
Phone: 713 869-7361
Fax: 713-694-7387



May Meeting Wrap-Up

Learning about Oil

In May, J.A.M. hosted the meeting and gave a presentation on additives in oils, synthetic versus standard oils, oil change intervals,

and new oils being developed and current market trends.

Oils are no longer just refined petroleum. Even standard oils contain several additives. These include:

Antiwear agents

Antioxidants -These are important for small modern engines.

Antifoam agents- These are important especially for race cars.

Pour point depressants- These

keep the wax in oil from coagulating.

Rust corrosion preventatives

Detergents -to counteract the effects of sludge.

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He also explained there is no longer a legal or industry standard definition of synthetic oil thanks to a court case 10 years ago. The same holds true for the popular synthetic blends. He estimates that synthetic blends may contain anywhere from 1% to 10% of synthetic oil. He describes synthetic oil as much cleaner than standard oil. It is still petroleum but goes through a more rigorous process of purification. (see April issue of ShopTalk, p. 4)

Next he discussed how the manufacturers no longer recommend the standard oil change intervals. Honda is up to 10000 miles, Toyota is at 5000, Ford is 7500, Chrysler is 6000 and GM is at 6500. While oil is better than in the past, he thinks some of these longer oil change intervals are not good for the vehicle. According to the industry information, the average driver goes 4700 miles between oil changes. Longer oil change intervals may account for the increased sludge seen in modern engines.

He mentioned that next year Toyota will have a 0W20 oil next year. Currently GM, Toyota, and Honda all use Exxon Mobil One for their OE oil. Future oils will help improve fuel economy, too.

He also discussed some market trends that show that Quick Lubes are much more successful at upselling their oil changes from standard to synthetic than the independent shops and dealerships. His advice to ASA members was to use OE oils or upgrade to synthetics.

President's Corner



Hello everyone! As you know, this is my very first "Presidents Corner." I would like to thank Jay Meir for setting goals of hosting the chapter meetings at the same location every month and having them full of members. These will be my goals as well. In addition, I would like to invite any shop owner that has not been to a meeting lately to please come by and see the new meeting place that Jay secured for our association. Thanks again, Jay!

Another one of my goals will be - how do we make ASA-Houston a better association for our Associate Members? I feel that if we can work more closely with them, we might be able to help ourselves and our vendors at the same time.

In the past we have published articles on the issue of parts returns, and those were appreciated. My thought is that we could help everyone involved by looking further into the returned parts issue to offer better, more focused technical training. This additional training could help reduce the extra expense that inaccurate diagnosis and incorrect parts ordering causes us as shop owners and parts vendors.

If we can identify specific areas in which technicians are having problems with diagnosis, ASA-Houston will attempt to offer training classes that focus more closely in those areas of need. Accurately diagnosing the vehicle - and ordering the correct parts the first time - would increase shop efficiency and decrease the number of returned parts - a win-win situation. This problem is only getting worse as the cars we work on are getting more complex and increasingly difficult to diagnose. If you have any thoughts how we can achieve this, please let an ASA-Houston board member and your local vendor know.

With the all the turmoil in the new car dealer business, ASA-Houston members may have an unprecedented opportunity. First - there should be many more qualified technicians looking for work. In addition to having a better field of potential technicians to choose from, this situation might even make the existing employees step up their game, knowing that there are additional technicians out there looking for employment!

I would also like to take this opportunity to ask that every member invite another shop owner to attend our next meeting - just to check us out.

As several members have requested, we are considering moving the monthly meeting topic up in our timetable. Our members have mentioned that the meetings have been going too late and still haven't had enough time to discuss the topic thoroughly.

If you have any suggestions about meeting topics, or any questions about ASA-Houston, feel free to ask me or any board member, and we'll get you an answer.

Chris Newhouse
President

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JUNE MEETING WRAP UP

Legislative Wrap Up

Goal Setting, Part II

Editor's note: June's meeting was hosted by Jasper Engines and Transmissions. David Eschbach, Jasper's regional manager, discussed successful goal setting and wrote the summary below.

Did you do it? Did you wake up the next morning wealthier, wiser, more successful, better looking and two inches taller? Of course not, it wasn't magically going to happen without any effort from you. Therefore, a more accurate question would be, did you make any action plans to wake up one morning wealthier, wiser, more successful, better looking and possibly two inches taller?

During the June ASA meeting I had the honor to speak in front of many successful colleagues. My topic was goal setting. I believe that goal setting is the only true vehicle for success. I also believe that many great colleagues never invest in themselves to achieve their goals. Instead they become enslaved by circumstance and controlled by events of the day. All too often the title of business owner or manager becomes a position of nothing more than Chief Problem Solver. Remember problem solving does not produce results; it only prevents damage.

So I challenge you to produce results and invest in yourself and encourage your employees to invest in themselves. Capture your wildest dream, your most ambitious wish and turn it into a goal. Who knows, you might make that dream come true or at the very least, you'll gain life experience and wisdom during the process.

Capture your goal by writing it down on paper. Define your goal to assure it is truly something that will benefit you. Share your goal with others and become accountable for your actions. Ultimately, take time every week to review your progress, the obstacles encountered and your accomplishments. If you're ready to accomplish your goals or if you want your employees to recognize their true potential by accomplishing their goals but are unsure of how to construct a truly affective action plan, there will be a goal workshop offered in September. Upon completion of the workshop you will have a thorough understanding of goal setting and a completed action plan. For information on the workshop you can contact David Eschbach either by e-mail or phone. dleschbach@gmail.com (936) 524-8807

An Old Farmer's Advice:	Forgive your enemies. It messes up their heads.
Your fences need to be horse-high, pig-tight and bull-strong.	It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge.
Keep skunks and bankers at a distance.	You cannot unsay a cruel word.
Words that soak into your ears are whispered...not yelled.	The best sermons are lived, not preached.

Here is the latest word on legislation related to automobiles in Texas.

TEXAS LEGISLATION

HB 4526- Bill on Estimates
SUMMARY: Would require strict regulations on repair facilities related to estimates. In addition, the legislation requires that shops obtain a signed statement from every customer for each repair visit.
OUTCOME: Came out of committee but was never scheduled for a vote. We will probably hear about HB 4526 in 2011.

HB 4124 – Bill on Mechanics Liens
SUMMARY: Bill proposed to give financial institution's liens primacy over Possessory (Mechanics) Liens.
OUTCOME: Never left committee

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

“Cash for Clunkers” Law
Bill passed the House of Representatives and the Senate
As of press time, still awaiting Presidential signature
SUMMARY: Bill will allow a car owner to retire a drivable vehicle getting less than 18 mpg and in exchange for buying a brand new vehicle that is more fuel efficient, the government will pay the car owner via the authorized dealership up to \$4500. The vehicle cannot be older than 25 years. Congress approved \$1 billion for the program and will take effect July 1 for one year duration. There is no repair option included in the legislation.
See the government website titled Cars Allowance Rebate System: www.cars.gov



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- Mirror Hang Tags
- Yellow Pages Program
- Wolco Leasing Program
- Be Car Care Aware Booklets
- Shop Supplies
- Car Care One Credit Card
- Car Care Professional Network
- Quarterly Marketing Kits



Semper parati: What You Need to Know About Utility Service Interruption Coverage

By Katie Smart, Meadowbrook Insurance

Some of you may have bought business interruption insurance and discovered you were not covered when you were without power for two weeks after Hurricane Ike. Coverage for loss due to lack of incoming electricity caused by damage to property away from the insured's premises is referred to as "off-premises power coverage." This is not provided in a standard property insurance policy but is available by endorsement. Utility service interruption coverage endorsements vary widely as to what utility services are included, whether both direct damage and time element loss are covered, and whether transmission lines are covered. Ask your agent to review your policy with you and make sure you have the following endorsements.

Business Interruption: Utilities

Standard Loss of Business Income Coverage

Most people know that loss of business income insurance (also known as business interruption insurance) is very important. What many people don't realize is that most standard business interruption insurance only covers the suspension of business caused by direct physical loss or damage to the premises described in the declarations. In other words, it does not cover utility service interruption. For example, when hurricanes or tornadoes damage power lines that are not on your premises, most standard business interruption insurance does not cover that interruption.

Ask about Utility Services – Time Element:

Fortunately, standard business interruption coverage can be easily extended to include utility services interruptions. The expanded coverage is known as "Utility Services-Time Element". When damage from a hurricane or tornado knocks down power lines or damages water pipes away from your premises and those damaged utilities cause you to be without power and/or water so you cannot conduct business, Utility Services-Time Element pays your profit plus continuing expenses, up to the limit you have chosen or until the utility comes back into service, whichever comes first. Other agents or insurers may not explain Utility Services – Time Element coverage, but it is very important. Call me. I am an Associate member for ASA and I will always quote it on every piece of new business and can add it on any renewal that doesn't already have the coverage.

Make sure you also have Utility Services – Direct Damage:

As utility service is restored, sometimes a power surge damages expensive equipment. There is a coverage for that as well, known as "Utility Services-Direct Damage". This coverage takes care of repairing or replacing any item that has been damaged due to a power outage, up to the limit of insurance you have chosen, and caused by a covered cause of loss in your policy.

Do you need these two extensions of coverage if you are not in a coastal area? Absolutely! Both apply to any covered cause of loss that happens away from your premises, not just hurricanes. We know that tornadoes can happen anywhere. Or a vehicle can run into a utility pole putting the whole neighborhood out of power. A fire a block away from your store can do this as well.

If you don't know how much coverage you need, we usually suggest buying ten percent of your total annual sales for Utility Services-Time Element and ten percent of your personal property limit for Utility Services-Direct Damage. However, it is ultimately up to you to buy the amount you think you will need.

Here is what you need to remember about these two coverage extensions

- You must have Loss of Business Income coverage to buy Utility Services-Time Element. It is an extension of your Loss of Business Income coverage.
- The utility must be out due to a covered cause of loss. Since flood is not a covered cause of loss, these extensions do not provide coverage if a utility is out due to flood.
- If you have a deductible or waiting period on Loss of Business Income, it will be the same on Utility Services-Time Element. You must provide documentation to prove your loss if you are down more than two days.
- You must have Personal Property coverage to buy Utility Services-Direct Damage. It is an extension of your Personal Property coverage.
- The deductible that applies to your Personal Property coverage will also apply to Utility Services-Direct Damage. You must provide repair receipts as proof of loss.
- You must report all losses as soon as possible.
- Loss of business due to lack of customers is never covered on a traditional commercial insurance policy. (Sometimes business declines even though the business did not have damage and the power never went out. Unfortunately, there is no coverage for this situation.)

If you have general questions about insurance, please contact me. I'm always happy to help.

Katie Smart, Meadowbrook Insurance, Manager, Texas Territory
 214-850-9626- Cell, 866-225-9148- Toll Free, 877-577-7172- Fax
 katie.smart@meadowbrook.com

Bringing Back The Good Old Days Of Auto Repair

By Sybren van der Pol, Adolf Hoepfl Garage

Here is a question for you. If you weren't already in this business, would you enter it today? And if you say the answer is no, since you are in this business, what are you going to do about it?

All of us reading this newsletter have probably been in this business long enough to remember when cars broke-- a lot. Those were the good 'ole days. They needed tune-ups every 12,000 to 15,000 miles, brakes every 20,000 miles and transmissions after 30,000 miles. Things have changed. There are no more "tune-ups." Transmissions last for 150K or more if maintained. Even brakes on some vehicles last 100K.

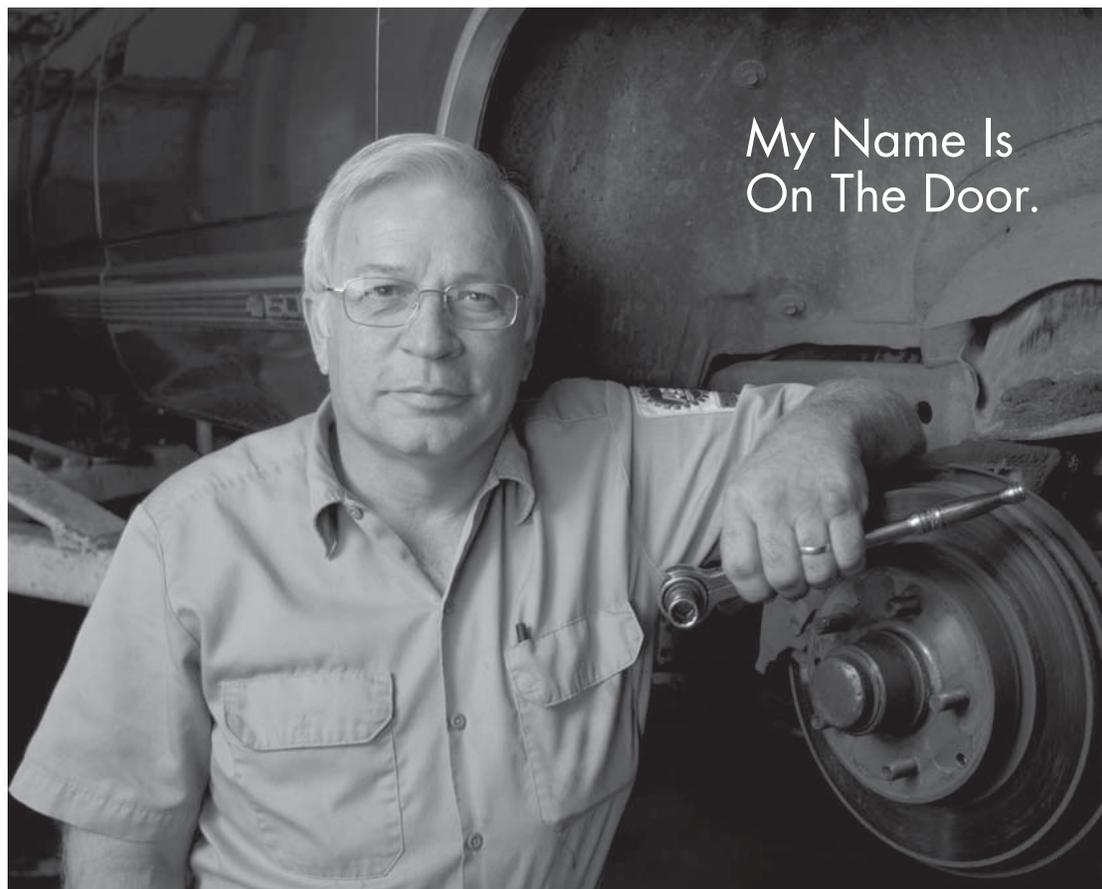
Jack Welsh said, "If change is happening on the outside of your business faster than on the inside, the end is in sight." Are you in that position? Or, are you doing something about it?

The successful remaining dealerships have discovered that the only way to stay in business is to do all the maintenance work on the vehicle. In this way they build customer loyalty as well as making the only money they can, since new cars aren't selling well.

We as a independent auto repair businesses need to do something that is unique for our customers and provides a true service for them.

One such program is Gary Gunn's Car Care Aware 24 Month program. By implementing this, you will get your customers used to coming in at least four and possibly five times every year. All that's required is to set an appointment for a courtesy maintenance check, much like your dentist does. The second part of the program is to have a discussion with your customer to let them know just how much they can expect to lay out on their vehicle over the next several years of its life. The Car Care Aware program forces us to communicate with the customers. This leads me to another Welshism: "Follow up on everything. Follow-up is one key measure of success for a business. Your follow-up business strategy will pave the way for your success."

Once your customers are trained like your dentist has you trained, you will catch all their maintenance and repairs. Of course, there will be check-ups that are free to the customer, but they will really appreciate you for keeping an eye on their vehicle. They will love you more than your doctor since not even he/she does a free check up. To learn more about Gary Gunn's program go to www.Turnaroundtour.com. Click on FREE PAYOFF TOOLS.



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Marketing Basics: Know thyself and thy customers

By John Miller, Freedom Automotive, Stafford

We are always looking for new marketing ideas, for information about what has worked for others or validation of our own concept of what constitutes good marketing. In these challenging times that has become even more important to successful shop owners.

One of the pitfalls of hiring an outside company to do our marketing is that we have little idea of how successful they may be for our particular market segment. Only after investing what for most of us is a lot of money will we know how well they perform. When we are working with a limited budget, bad advertising can be worse than no advertising.

Taking charge of your own marketing program in-house is one way to ensure that you spend your hard earned money most effectively. Notice I said "taking charge." In-house marketing is not something that can be successfully done as an afterthought or slapped together during an evening think tank session at the local pub. A viable marketing plan takes thought, research, planning and continuous effort in the execution.

The very first thing you have to know is just who YOU are! What do you have to offer that will entice folks to spend their money in your shop? What services do you offer? What are your strengths? What are the added value services that set you apart from every other independent shop, dealership or franchise out there?

Next, who are your customers? You need the demographics for your area. If you specialize in high end European cars and you live in an area with an average family income of \$50,000, the chances are that there are not too many customers to draw from locally. However, if the average income is over \$100K, you may do very well. If you plan on being successful you can either mold your offer to fit the community, or move. There are a lot of companies that will sell you demographics, but if you are a member of ASA you can get them for free at www.asashop.org.

You market differently and offer different services to different groups of people. The high tech computer crowd may want all communications by email or text messages. They may want to see your profile on Facebook or My Space and will not even know you exist if you don't have a website on the first page of Google. They will research your business online.

Professionals may value their time above all else. They will want a quick turn around when dropping off or picking up their cars, and if you can offer concierge service that would be even better. If they need a rental, they will not be happy with a "puddle jumper." They expect promptness, courtesy and cleanliness as a right of their position.

The white collar / blue collar guys and gals want to relate to you. They want you to remember them when they come in, talk to them about their kids, sports, houses and vacations and oh yeah, by the way, fix their car, too. They want a fair price, a good job, a good warranty and the feeling that you are their friend.

Women customers, from Gen X to Baby Boomers, are pretty much all in the same boat. They are busy. Their lives are full of things to get done and the last thing they want is a car in need of service. The only thing worse is a broken car. Women expect to be treated with respect and as an equal. If you schedule an appointment they expect you to honor it by being ready for them and focusing on their needs, just like their hairdresser would. If their car is going to be out of service for very long, they need alternate transportation. The easier you make this for them the more successful you will be in retaining their business. Most men drive to work and back home. Women leave the house, drop the kids at school or daycare, run an errand like dropping off laundry, and then go to work. At lunch they run errands like paying bills, shopping or visiting a sick friend. After work they stop for groceries, pick up kids, shuttle to sporting or school events, then drive home to fix dinner. If their car breaks down, life falls apart.

Once again, I suggest going to the ASA website and looking up the articles that are archived on the Information Center in the ASA Members Only section. There you will find hundreds of articles on targeting women customers, how to take advantage of shared marketing, and reaching out to your community. You will also find other articles on management, business strategies, statistics, employee retention, recruitment and just about any other area of business where you may need help.

Identify the top 20% of your current customer base and clone them! You will find that this group accounts for about 80% of your business and almost 100% of your referrals. They are also usually the easiest customers to work with because on some level you have connected with them. Examine this group, talk to them, listen to them and find out what the common factors are. Search your memory or records if you have them, and find out what originally brought these good folks to your door. You want more of them, not more of the bottom 20%.

Take some time to ask your current customers what they read, what they watch, where they go on a regular basis and who they hang out with. These are the places your ads need to appear.

If your shop is in a suburban bedroom community full of young families with kids, you may want to sponsor ball teams, advertise on the outfield wall, in the school booster magazines and the neighborhood newsletter. If you're in an urban, upscale area maybe you will find advertising in the local arts venues or magazines. Participating in a local charity drive or community event touches the local pride and places your name in front of your customers. If you are in a poorer neighborhood, maybe touting the "Low Income Repair Assistance Program" is a good idea. For any area articles written for the local newspaper can establish you as the resident expert. Just be sure that the tone of the article matches the attitude of the clients you are seeking. If you don't feel comfortable writing, get a ghost writer to put your ideas into print.

Once you know yourself and your target customer, you will have to set a budget and devise a plan of action. An advertising campaign is not a blitz. It is a steady, consistent message to your audience, offering them what they need. It has to reflect the interests and motivations of your desired customers. You should have a plan of what you are going to spend and do each month for a year and just as important you must have a way to track everything you do. As the results come in be ready to modify your plan to enhance what is working and discard what is not.

When you have a clear idea of your target, your value to those customers and a plan of action you can employ a mailing service or pro

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The Good Old Days - continued from Page 8

motional company to carry the out the plan for you. Whatever conclusions you reach after careful study and discussion stick to them. Don't allow a mass marketing company to divert your plan and waste resources on projects that do not focus on your target group. Remember, no one knows your business or customers better than you do.

There is no shortcut to long term success. It takes a persistent, consistent effort and that is what sets us apart from those who fail; the willingness to do! The sooner you start the farther down the road you will be this time next year.

DID YOU KNOW...

Many years ago in Scotland, a new game was invented. It was ruled 'Gentlemen Only...Ladies Forbidden' ... and thus the word GOLF entered into the English language.

~~~~~  
The first couple to be shown in bed together on prime time TV were Fred and Wilma Flintstone.



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Austin, Texas 78762-6337  
512-476-2401

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or call 1-800-ASA-SHOP



Tim Hogan, the State ASA President swore in the 2009-2010 officers. From left, John Helfrich (Board Member), Kathryn van der Pol (President-Elect), Chris Newhouse (President), Kevin Spencer (Vice-President), Deanna Pate (Secretary-Treasurer), Jay Meir (Past President).

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