

## IN-HOUSE ADVERTISING

### Simple Ways To Make Sure Your Shop Is "Top of Mind" With Your Customers

You've just finished your customer's vehicle, but don't let a simple, cost-effective advertising opportunity slip away. We've used a three-step in-house advertising plan for years, and we've always had a favorable response from our customers. Here are the nuts and bolts of the plan:

After a vehicle is serviced and the technician reviews our list of free jobs (see checklist on page 54), he then chooses an appropriate service. Each of these jobs normally takes less than three minutes. After finishing the service, the technician writes it on the ticket and hands it to the service writer, who then records the service that was done at "no charge" in the blank space on a sticker and affixes it to the customer's invoice. This is always the first thing mentioned by the customer when he or she picks up the unpaid invoice to review the bill. It makes for a pleasant reaction when a customer gets more than they expected. Each sticker costs about \$0.50.

We underpromise and overdeliver  
No Charge for this service performed

#### UNDERHOOD STICKER

The first part of our three-part advertising system is our underhood sticker. This sticker is applied under the hood by

the technician on every car he works on that doesn't already have one. We've found that this sticker really helps get the car back in the shop. When the customer opens the hood if he or she has a problem, our sticker is right there in clear view with our phone number and address. We also have new customers come to us because they bought a car that has our underhood sticker, and they know that we've serviced the vehicle and have the history of the vehicle.

To apply the sticker you first need to pick a highly visible area, such as the core support, air box, strut tower or the firewall. Use some brake cleaner on a rag and wipe the area clean, then apply the sticker. The stickers cost about \$0.60 each.

#### INVOICE STICKER

The second part of our three-part system is our invoice sticker (see above sticker). This sticker is affixed to every invoice after the service has been completed.

#### BUSINESS CARD

The third part of our three-part system is our business card. Each paid invoice leaves with one of our business cards attached. Our business card is no ordinary card; it's a special plastic card that looks and feels like a credit card, and our customers treat it like a credit card. They place them in their wallets



Joe Stephens is the owner of Stephens Automotive in Palatine, IL, and a member of the Import-Car Advisory Board. For the past 10 years, Stephens has specialized in the repair of Toyota and Lexus vehicles at his 6,000-square-foot shop, staffed by three technicians and one service writer. Stephens says he'll always make time to talk shop with any shop owner; you can contact him at [joe@stephensautomotive.com](mailto:joe@stephensautomotive.com).

## Loss PREVENTION

### Heat Stress; Work Smart When Temperatures Soar

It is the time of the year when heat indexes routinely climb into the 90's to 100's or more. Service, parts and body shop personnel who work in non air-conditioned or poorly ventilated buildings are at risk for heat related illnesses. Heat stress is a serious matter. It can cause dizziness, weakness, vision problems, cramps and nausea that can seriously interfere with an employee's ability to work safely and effectively.

Heat stress need never occur if employees are taught to respect the heat and work smart. The following rules provide a good guideline:

#### Rule 1 - Drink Smart

Drink a glass of water once an hour, not just when you are thirsty. Remember, caffeine acts as a diuretic and will actually cause fluids to be removed from the body - so stick to water!

#### Rule 2 - Eat Smart

Hot, heavy meals add heat to the body and send blood away from the skin to the digestive system. Stick to small, light meals.

#### Rule 3 - Be Smart

Alcohol, caffeine, blood pressure and allergy medicines increase your risk of heat stress. So do medical conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. If you have a condition that puts you at risk, let your supervisor know.

#### Rule 4 - Work Smart

Set up a fan to blow through a radiator. Put a cool rag on the back of your neck. Many companies allow employees to wear shorts during the summer months.

Don't ignore the signs of heat stress. You can't work safely under the influence of heat-induced stress. If ignored, heat stress can develop into a serious medical condition.

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# shopmanagement

right with their credit cards, so it's easy for them to find when they need it. It's also hard to loose and it sticks out in a Rolodex like a sore thumb.

No one has a business card like ours; people mention it everyday and are proud to pass it along to friends and family. The cards cost about \$0.90 each depending on how many you order. We purchase our cards from amazing-print.com. You can design and order your cards from their web-

site, which has many options for you to choose from such as pictures, card thickness and even magnetic cards.

So the next time you're servicing a customer's vehicle, remember that a \$0.60 sticker or \$0.90 business card can go a long way in helping them remember your shop the next time their vehicle needs repairs. It's a small investment that will pay off many times in repeat customers and referrals. 

## CHECKLIST OF FREE SERVICES

**Free!!**

*Here are some ways to "over-deliver" a vehicle:*

- ✓ Check spare tire air pressure and check for tools to change tire;
- ✓ Change wiper blades;
- ✓ Lube door locks, hinges and power antenna;
- ✓ Put silicone on window runs;
- ✓ Check tire pressure;
- ✓ Add gas if level is low;
- ✓ Wash vehicle;
- ✓ Check all bulbs and replace as necessary;
- ✓ Complete small electrical repairs;
- ✓ Clean and lube battery terminals;
- ✓ Complete EDT battery test;
- ✓ Check A/C outlet temperature;
- ✓ Tire repair;
- ✓ Check freezing point of coolant;
- ✓ Reset "change oil" light;
- ✓ Complete inspection of vehicle;
- ✓ Locate the locking lug nut and put it in the glove compartment if it's not there;
- ✓ Clean wheels and apply tire shine to tires;
- ✓ Vacuum vehicle interior;
- ✓ Clean vehicles windows;
- ✓ Adjust headlights; and
- ✓ HVAC spray duct treatment.

Circle #54 for Reader Service

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