

AUTOMOTIVE



SOLUTIONS LLC

TELEPHONE: +1 (817) 293-3232

FAX: +1 (817) 887-0847

EMAIL: JVIVAR@AUTOMOTIVESOLUTIONSLLC.COM

2120 RIDGMAR BLVD., SUITE 206

FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76116 USA

WWW.AUTOMOTIVESOLUTIONSLLC.COM

SALES BULLETIN – JUNE 2014

The following article is from the October 2012 publication of Search Auto Parts. It was written by Brian Canning.

SALES AND THE CONFIDENCE OF SELLING QUALITY

There are no absolutes to selling. Customers are a fickle and unpredictable bunch, very apt to go their own way and do their own thing. But there is no doubt that the sales process is much easier and much simplified if we believe in and have confidence in the parts, products and services we provide.

Though customers come into our shops prepared to spend money, this does not mean they are throwing it at us, and it sure does not mean that they are not leery of us and worried about what our intentions are. Though our customers are very dependent upon their cars and not necessarily trusting of us in this process. Our job as shop owners, as service managers and as service advisors is to inform and educate our customers on the repairs and services needed to keep their cars safe and reliable. In a larger sense, our job is to sell them on us and the value, quality and integrity we represent. If we are successful here, the selling of the repairs and services will be much, much easier.

There is no doubt that a confident salesperson is a successful salesperson. The reason for this is simple: Our customers are mostly unaware on what goes into the servicing of their vehicle, so right off the bat they are out of their comfort zone. Any hesitation and uncertainty on our part is very likely to be interpreted as an attempted deception on our part and our chances of making the sale and satisfying the customer are immediately diminished. Having confidence in the quality of the parts and thereby the services we provide is a key to our selling success.

Installing quality parts, from quality parts suppliers is a key to building our selling confidence. If we are confident in what we are selling, our customers are much more confident in their buying. Confident customers buy; it is as simple as that.

In the automotive repair industry, we tend to be hyper sensitive to price, though the funny thing in this is that our customers are far less concerned about price than we are. Customers

want value for the dollars they spend. But in survey after survey our customers list quality, convenience, reliability and support after the sale as being much more important than price, though for some reason we tend to go to market stressing price over these other factors. It would seem that customers are more than smart enough to know and understand the difference between price and value, though many of us the industry are seemingly much slower in the uptake.

Quality parts and quality services have a value far beyond our being the cheapest guy in town. That buying confidence is driven by a fair price for the superior parts and services we provide. That confidence and our actions after the sale will have customers coming back again and again.

Being a shop that has highly capable technicians, that installs quality parts and stands behind the repairs and services performed, is a shop that will enjoy very high retention rates as well as consistently high customer satisfaction. The quality of the service experience across all industries is very poor in the US and customers know and appreciate quality. This is particularly true of the automotive repair industry.

Building a Brand

In the marketing world they would call this association to quality and value a function of branding. Branding is our conscious decision to present our business in a specific light, such as quality of service or honesty and this has both internal and external benefits for our shop. Externally we create perceptions and an identity that clicks with our customers and would be customers. In essence, we create an identity that resonates with customers and in this process, we form emotional relationships with our customers.

The emotional aspects of branding are important because though many customers try to be logical, informed and aware in making their repair and service decisions, all of us buy emotionally. Branding is the emotional and psychological relationship we have with our customers and would be customers. Hopefully in this branding effort, we are eliciting positive and confident emotional responses. Highlighting the quality of our parts, our strong warranty and our efforts after the sale to make sure our customers are taken care of is a great way to make a customer feel good about their association with us and their decision to have us work on their car. Remember that confident customers are buying customers. They are also customers that keep coming back.

Internally branding serves to keep us and our staff members aligned with one another and also aligned with our customers. It is a way of not only assuring that all of us talk the talk, but assures we are all also walking the walk. If we are careful in our branding and believe in the quality of the parts we sell and in the quality of the services we provide, our presentations will be consistently confident and consistently successful.

Our unapologetically recommending the best parts and best services to me and exceed our customers' expectations is our selling with confidence and without reservation. This is true, because we believe it to be true and because we passionately believe in the great things we do for our customers. Our customers will believe it as well because in our words and in our action it is true. We go to great lengths to be convenient and provide a great service experience for our customers. We have highly experienced technicians. We install nothing but the best parts and have the best warranty in the business. We go to great lengths to take care of the customer after the sale and respond quickly whenever an issue would arise.

Price is what you pay, value is what you get. The value that comes from installing quality parts speaks to the peace of mind of our customers by assuring that their car is safe and reliable. The value in installing quality parts has nothing to do with price but everything to do with our willingness to stand behind the repairs and services we provide.

There is a confidence that goes with quality. How confident are you in parts that you are installing on your customers cars? Would you install them on your own car? If not, maybe those reservations are showing up in your sales presentation.

Sell parts with confidence, sell quality!

Automotive Solutions LLC
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