Vacation is a great thing, partly because it gives you a lot of time to think. During my vacation, I found again and again that the things I remembered the most were actually my employees — the ones that probably made the least. In the automotive world, we think of the technicians as being the most important members of our team, but in the world of business, the lowest-paid person on your team can make or break your shop. Think about it: the person who does your oil change doesn't just make a customer unhappy — they can blow up their motor! The server doesn't make much if the tips are bad, but they can make or break your whole dining experience.

In one of the dining establishments (and I use that term loosely) we went to on vacation, the men's bathroom was a complete wreck. Given the fact that I'm comfortable using the bathroom in a stagnant swamp, I would expect a bit better when I'm paying for it. I asked the server if the staff used that bathroom and she replied, “There's no way I would use that one!” They have a separate bathroom for the staff and it's kept clean, by the staff, since they use it. This just shows the disconnect between what the employees feel is most important and what the owner would hopefully want. The cashier, the person who answers the phone to help with a problem, the person who helps when you have to return an item because you had a problem with it — they are all on the low end comparatively of the pay scale in the business.

There are many steps to getting your people invested in your shop. I'll just cover the main three. First and foremost, you have to get to know your people on a personal basis so they know that you care if they live or die. I know that sounds extreme, but way too often, people feel like they are just parts of the machine that can be replaced at any time. So why should I give a crap? It's hard in any business to slow down and get to really know your people. The problem is that if you ignore your lower level staff and cater to the “players,” then you are running a great risk. The interaction they have with your customers can do far more damage on a smaller but consistent basis; and then suddenly you don't have to worry about their impact because they have left to find somewhere else! What you DO have to live with is the damage that has been done. The time spent getting to know your lower-paid staff is truly time well invested. Your main job, as an owner, is to get your people to buy into you, the company and the job. This way they begin to invest more of their self-image and ego into how well they perform. Without that, it's just a paycheck.

What are they supposed to do? Way too often the lower level employees are set free to do the job — but what is the job? If we don't take the time to define and outline what we expect from them and the skills that they should be learning, anything they do or not do is okay, right? After all, YOU didn't think it was important enough to clearly lay out what the job entails, so why is it up to them to try and figure it out?

I know you're probably sick of hearing this one but, if you don't give praise when your staff is doing the right thing, then there's no point in trying. I get paid the same no matter what I do and no one notices — so who cares? I hear it all the time! I even heard it from my own father: “You're supposed to do the job right or don't do it at all.” Well, what if I don't have the same idea of what’s “right” that you do? That's where the praise comes in. Everyone wants to feel like they aren't wasting their time and what they do matters, so that's why you have to notice and praise them for it. If you want superior results, then you have to praise them for it.

I challenge you to start looking around at the places you frequent. What are you happy with and unhappy with? More often than not those things begin with some of the lower level employees. If you don't give them a reason to care about their job, a reason to feel like it is worth doing a good job and a feeling that this may lead to something greater; then you get what you get and don't complain. Just because you might pay more for an employee, doesn't mean that they are worth more to your shop in the long run.

Welcome Home Troops

By Mike Haley, ATI Team Leader/Coach

Last week I was fortunate enough to participate in ATI's first “Operation Welcome Home.” We have been talking for months about how we need to do something as a group that gives us a chance to give back and allows us to spend time with one another outside the same four walls. We decided our first event would benefit “Operation Welcome Home Maryland,” a nonprofit dedicated to supporting our troops, which has welcomed more than 180,000 home as they come from overseas. The volunteers help put goody bags together prior to the troops’ plane arriving. Volunteers also create posters prior to the troops’ plane arriving. Volunteers also create posters prior to the troops’ plane arriving. 

Continued on page 3
Tools of the Trade

Lock Your Customers In. Lock Your Competitors Out.
By Geoff Berman, ATI Coach/Instructor

Most of the times I discuss car count with a client, his or her focus is on the short term: “Today I need cars!” But it is hard to make a permanent change to car count without taking into account the whole picture and what the long-term goal is.

There are many strategies that should be implemented to achieve that goal. The one I want to share with you today is the Auto Advantage Card. It gives the customer one full year to take advantage of $500 worth of savings and gives them four free oil services. That alone makes the card worth the purchase price of about $95.

So picture this. For only $95 the customer gets four free oil services and many other valuable things related to maintenance on his or her car. That should be a no-brainer to sell, and those that buy have just pre-purchased from you for the next 12 months. They are not concerned with that $15 oil change down the road, because the one they have with you is free. Think about it!

If you want to learn more, go to your portal, click on Resource Center and then click on the ATI Marketing Tool Box icon. There you will see the Auto Advantage Card and can place your order. If you need further assistance, ask your coach or contact Jennifer at FSR. She will be happy to assist you. She can be reached by email: customerservice@fsr1.com or by phone: 434-973-4152.

Shop Owner Options:
• Shop Owner Home
• Message Post
• Resource Center
• Referral

Then click here

ATI's Jim Silverman will be attending the American Towman Expo in Baltimore, MD, on November 14–17, 2013. Stop by to visit at the ATI booth.

Sam's Corner

Want Your People to Behave Like You?

Most of us want more free time and the only thing standing in our way is, will my associates behave like I do when I am not there? I call this leadership because you need followers who follow when you are not around. So how do I get my associates to believe in my beliefs?

First, convince them of the good that will be created if they follow in your beliefs, when it comes to building relationships with customers, for example. Then explain the benefit to them and your business if they behave the way you are suggesting, and the negative results if they don’t.

In David Friedman’s book “Fundamentally Different,” he explains how to create fundamentals for your people explaining how you want them to behave or believe about your business. Then they have to become involved in your fundamentals every week.

At ATI, we have 24 Fundamentals and every week we open up every meeting in every department with the Fundamental of the Week. Our management team takes turns sending emails about this week’s fundamentals telling what it means to them. Karen Dee’s perception of the fundamental “Take Responsibility” is one of the best!

This fundamental takes me back to my childhood. When I was 7 years old, I decided to play with matches. I was home alone and it was a windy day. I caught my shirt on fire and ended up with second- to third-degree burns on my stomach. After I put the fire out, I thought I knew all the answers. In incredible pain, I showed my brother but made him promise not to tell. I thought it would heal on its own and no one would need to know. Then, knowing I couldn’t wait any longer and after thinking up a ‘great’ story, I told my parents. I told them I fell out of bed and scraped my stomach on a metal bar. OK, so I was really a naïve 7-year-old. My parents never questioned me or got angry. I guess because all they thought about was getting me medical treatment. The next day my dad took me out on our patio and asked me if I had anything to tell him. I knew then my story wasn’t that ‘great.’ That day my dad taught me the definition of being responsible. He made me realize I needed to be accountable for my actions.

We must be accountable for everything we do. We can’t make excuses or really great stories. We need to take our responsibilities seriously. It’s OK to make mistakes, but we must learn from them so we don’t waste time and energy by repeating them. It doesn’t do us any good to blame others or wait for someone else to do a task. Take charge and be the person to make a positive difference.

“The moment you take responsibility for everything in your life, is the moment you can change anything in your life.” — Hal Elrod

Chris “Chubby” Frederick
Welcome Home Troops
Continued from page 1

to coming to the event. I was humbled by the dedicated volunteers who come on a regular basis to welcome troops home no matter what time or what day.

While we were preparing for the troops to come, I noticed a young lady walking by and taking notice of all the activity in the terminal area. She paused and asked one of the volunteers what was going on. Once she found out, she said, “I’m from Canada but would love to participate.” I thought to myself, “this person doesn’t even live in this country but sees the value in what we are doing.”

While waiting for the troops, I was able to speak with co-workers I might not normally take the time to talk to if I was passing by them in the hall or in the restroom. What surprised me was how naturally we discussed anything but work. We talked about the troops and what sacrifices they make. That sparked discussions about our families. It let me look at each person in a different light, that I would not have seen in a working atmosphere.

Then the announcement was made that the plane had landed and they would be out soon. To watch everybody jockey for a good position from they could be sure to see and reach out as the troops walked by was something to witness. The first soldier came out and the terminal erupted. I think after the initial surprise of what was going on, he became a little emotional. I don’t know how to explain the feeling you get saying “Thank you” or “Welcome home” to a stranger, except to say that it felt like greeting an old friend. Every few minutes you would see a Mom or Dad seeing their son or daughter for the first time in what I’m sure seemed like an eternity. The Moms were hugging so hard the soldiers’ feet nearly came off the ground, and if that sight didn’t make you tear up, I don’t know what would. I even saw George Zeeks mist up once or twice.

After the troops moved on to the next terminal for connecting flights or went with family to the hourly parking lot, the ATI team was left looking at the same time. It was great to hear everyone talking about what an inspiring event it had been and how they couldn’t wait to do it again!

If you’re looking for a team-building event with your employees, please consider spending time giving back to a worthy cause. I promise you will not regret it. ATI

Fitness Matters    A Series by Gary Siegel, Fitness Matters Gym

Protein – How Much? And When?
Protein is good for active bodies. If your workouts are in the morning, first consume some protein (eggs, power bar, milk, tofu, soy).

But not too much! When you consume too much protein before a workout, your body more readily stores any fat and carbs you have consumed while it first tries to use the excess protein for immediate energy. And protein left over after your energy needs have been met is stored as fat too.

Daily protein consumption formula: 10-25% of your daily calorie intake or 0.36 grams per pound of body weight. Example: 170 pounds x 0.36 grams = about 61 grams/day.
Your Available Training Programs for November and December 2013

November 2013

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Best Of Class

Announcing Service Manager Course
October 14–15: Randy A. Somers Sr., Instructor

“Great class! Randy is informative, funny and a great instructor! I really enjoy it.”

The ATI Service Manager Course is built upon the foundation of ATI’s Service Advisor Class. This course is geared toward service managers, general managers and owners of multiple locations. Come join me as we go through employee management, service order audits and setting up for success.

I believe that at ATI we can help manage your business from a thousand miles away. This course is designed to teach YOU to do just that at your own shop. This two-day course is only offered four times a year so don’t wait, ENROLL Today!*

*Please note: The Service Advisor Part 1 and Service Advisor Part 2 courses must be completed before you attend the Service Manager class.

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