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CAUSE OF COMPLAINTS

Inspection and Promised Time

The last issue of the Service Letter contained an article entitled "Cause of Complaints" which had to do with an owner who rightly complained about the charges on a service invoice because the wording of the items didn't explain the work done and justify the charge made.

In this issue we have another type of complaint. The order was beautifully written. Every item was clearly worded and the charges were reasonable and entirely justified in the owner's mind, BUT—

As the owner was about to leave his car he asked the service salesman if he could have it by noon. It was important and he wanted to be sure. The service salesman promised the car at 11:30. The owner returned for the car promptly at 12:00 and had to wait exactly thirty minutes before the car was ready. This didn't help a bit although you may say, "Why should he holler about only a half an hour?"

Aside from the fact that an important appointment was missed, here's what happened. There were three items on the repair order—1-Lubricate the car. 2-Renew floor mat. 3-Adjust brakes. On item one, although it is never done any more, the usual spot of grease was left on one of the spokes of the steering wheel. This got onto a summer suit that the customer was wearing for the first time. Of course, it was only the coat and he still has the pants.

On item number two the new mat was just laid on the floor and not tucked into the metal edges provided for that purpose. The customer's wife, in stepping into the car, tripped and tore the new mat. This again is a small item, but after all when you

buy a new mat you expect it will last more than one afternoon if it is properly installed.

On item number three the customer had not noticed that the brakes were pulling the car to either side of the road when applied but simply that the pedal had more travel than he liked. The travel part was taken care of but the car pulled so badly to the left after adjustment that a roadside stop was necessary in order to correct it. You say, "Oh, that's exaggerated. Such things don't happen any more." Well, maybe they don't, but they did.

Is that customer entitled to a kick and what caused it? To my way of thinking, in the first place, it was a matter of not keeping a promise. The customer left the service station in a frame of mind where even the smallest incident would have resulted in a complaint. A promise made and kept is one of the fundamentals of building and holding owner satisfaction.

The balance of the story is a matter of inspection. A service salesman can make sure that the steering wheel is clean. The service salesman can make sure that a floor mat is properly installed and he can make sure that a brake adjustment is right. In this case the service salesman did none of these, and since he talked to the owner and wrote the order and knew what he wanted done, he was the logical man to make sure that the work was properly done before the car was turned back to the owner.

Some inspection may be the responsibility of the shop but the man who writes the order is the man who should check to see that the work ordered was performed.

Everyone selling service should check themselves on these two items every day.

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