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MEETING THE DEADLINE

By "The Man Who Owns One"

Not long ago, I had one of those bad days when everything seems to go wrong.

The first thing that morning I found that the motor of my car was acting up. So I headed for the Packard service station.

There was a new service salesman on the floor. After a quick glance at the motor, he told me it would need tuning up.

I explained that I had to have the car promptly at two o'clock for an important business engagement. He promised it would be delivered to me at that time.

Well, all morning trouble kept popping up at the office. By one o'clock I was irritable and thoroughly disgusted. Even at luncheon the service was terrible and the food was worse.

I returned to the office shortly after two o'clock expecting to find my car waiting for me. But no one had seen or heard a single thing about it.

My secretary called the service station for me. She was told the car was just coming down from the repair shop and that it would be delivered within the next few minutes.

I fretted and stormed around for the next quarter of an hour. I must have looked at my watch fifty times. At half-past two, with only fifteen minutes left to keep my appointment at the other side of town, I was practically raging.

I phoned the station myself. The service man started to apologize and explain they had discovered that the motor still wasn't hitting right. But my temper had reached the boiling point and after telling him what

I thought of his ways of handling customers and his methods of diagnosis I slammed down the receiver.

The only thing I could do was grab the first taxi in sight. Naturally, I was late. That didn't make a good impression on the men I had to see. We never did reach an agreement. Their business went to someone else.

Now, I'm not narrow-minded enough to want to blame the entire loss of that order on the Packard service department, even though they were responsible for my being late. But there is only one way to look at that service situation.

Under the circumstances, the service salesman had no right to promise and re-promise prompt delivery of my car. If he couldn't keep the promise, he should have admitted the fact frankly and allowed me to make other arrangements.

If I were a service man, I wouldn't give a promise until I had made a thorough check of the car and actually found out how long the job would take and whether the shop could handle the work in the time allowed. This service salesman didn't do that. **He based his promise on hope rather than on fact.**

I'd be sure of my ground before I went ahead with the work. If it was impossible to make the repairs in the allotted time, I'd call the owner, tell him the whole story, and ask how he wanted to handle the matter.

To my mind, breaking such a promise is one of the easiest ways to lose customers. No service man should ever make one unless he is sure he can meet the deadline!