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"POT-HOOKS"

By "The Man Who Owns One"

Every time my secretary takes dictation, I marvel at the little "pot-hooks" she jots down so swiftly in her notebook. And I often wonder how in the world she will ever be able to read them.

I was reminded of this the other day when I took my Packard to the service station. The order written up by the service salesman had any shorthand I'd ever seen beaten a mile! I took a good look at it, too, when he handed it to me for my signature.

However, rather than make a point of it, I reasoned that he'd probably been writing orders that way for a long time and that his particular brand of "pot-hooks" could be read by himself and the mechanics just as easily as my secretary read hers.

But that was where I made *my* mistake!

I returned to the service station at the time I had been told my car would be ready. As I walked over to the cashier's cage, I saw the cashier and a mechanic in deep concentration over a repair order. And—it was mine!

Questioning the mechanic, I was told with considerable embarrassment that one item remained to be taken care of; but that neither he nor the cashier could make it out; that the service salesman who had written up the order had gone out to test a car and would be gone at least an hour.

Naturally, I told the mechanic what was to be done. It was only a small matter that required but a few minutes' time—but wasn't that a fine situation?

It does seem to me that writing up orders legibly should be a number one rule among all service salesmen. And, I think if I were a service man—I'd make it a point not only to write legibly, but clearly, too, so there would be no chance of a misunderstanding.

I'd include every essential detail . . . make note of the customer's comments on the possible sources of trouble . . . and I'd be sure that I had his phone number in addition to his name and address, in case something questionable came up after he left.

There's another angle to writing up the order legibly and completely. One copy of the order is the invoice to be handed to the customer. If it is written up neatly and in detail, somehow this orderliness creates the feeling that the repair job will be done correctly also. And there is no possibility of an argument later on.

Writing up an order correctly is a simple thing—but it pays. It saves the mechanic's time . . . insures that the proper work will be done. And, as I say, most important of all it guards against ill-will and builds a great deal of customer confidence in your ability to serve him neatly and well.