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On the Trail of the Owner

THRU the favorable recommendations, of the majority, of our owners we prosper. Thru the adverse influence, of the majority, we fail.

No organization is strong enough, no product is good enough, to survive without that customer goodwill, which is as necessary in business as air is to life.

When we become fully alert to the value of public approval, we have learned one of the great laws of business success. Until this fact is recognized, we, like a rudderless ship, stand a good chance of ending on the rocks.

Upon the books of Packard, the sum of one dollar represents goodwill. This insignificant sum is used for conservative financial reasons—not, because goodwill is measured by that amount.

The place that Packard occupies in the mind of the public is its greatest asset—and who can measure that in terms of money?

Necessary to the success of your business is a strong personnel, capital, adequate building facilities, proper system, stock of merchandise, suitable shop and office equipment, advertising. In addition to these essentials, add one more important element—**satisfied customers**. Try to operate without the last named element and see what happens!

None of us would wilfully abuse a typewriter, electric drill, wrench or any other tool or piece of equipment. We see readily the utility value of

these things and are careful to handle them properly.

It is more difficult to perceive the utility value of a satisfied customer, because it is seldom that we see the customer actually working for us. Nevertheless, the value of a satisfied owner is many times that of any tools and equipment, so by the same token, we should be more careful in our handling of him than we are of those other things which are of less value to us.

How many service stations prize the friendship of their owners sufficiently so they maintain a well laid plan of follow-up?

How many know which of their owners are going elsewhere for service?

How many don't give a damn?

If, as service manager or sweeper, you don't realize that the customer provides you with your bread and butter, then brother, you are ignorant of an almighty important fact. He does! So play up to him.

We know of several Packard service stations which are so solicitous of the owner's goodwill that the day after his car is in for repairs, a postcard with a return card attached is sent to him, requesting a report on the service he received. "Old stuff?" Sure, it's old stuff, but it takes **nerve** to send them out. If your service is not what it should be you will soon know about it if you adopt this system.

"Better Service Means More Car Sales"

Card sent to owner, Address on reverse side

Date.....

Recently we were entrusted with the handling of certain repair work on your car.

While we believe that we have endeavored to give you as good work and service as is possible to give, we are very much interested in knowing if this work is satisfactory to you since we returned your car.

Our interest in your car does not stop with the payment of your bill. If there is anything that is not exactly to your liking on work just completed, please return the car to us for correction. The attached stamped card is for your convenience. Please tell us frankly what you think of our service, and any information you give will be treated in strict confidence.

Very sincerely yours,

Service Manager.

Some service stations prefer sending letters, others like the telephone for following up owners. Personally, we like the foregoing postcard idea because it makes it so easy for the owner. You will receive better returns by using the postcard method, and it is only a few minutes' work at the end of the day to send out the cards.

Ninety-nine owners out of a hundred cannot help being pleased, to know that you are interested sufficiently, to find out whether the service you give is satisfactory.

True, you will receive complaints, but if things are not as they should be, certainly, you want to know about it. You have heard the slogan, "If our service is satisfactory, tell others—if it isn't tell us." Let the customer sing your praises to the multitude, but make it convenient for him to tell his troubles to you only.

If you should go into a high-class restaurant and order two boiled eggs, which turned out to be bad, you might or might not register a complaint. However, if the head waiter should saunter up and inquire about the meal, you would, undoubtedly, tell him about the eggs. He, being a sound business man, would adjust the matter to your satisfaction and thereby earn your goodwill. He would, thus, forestall any action you might take in informing your friends that the Itching Palm Restaurant served aged eggs.

Isn't it mighty important that you should know whether your owners are satisfied with their cars and your service? Can you afford to have any knockers running around? Then, for safety's sake, follow up each repair job the day after it is completed.

Card filled out and returned by owner. Your address printed on reverse side.

R. O. No..... Date.....

Did our service department completely correct the trouble your car was giving you?.....

Was your car ready when promised?.....

Did you receive courteous treatment?.....

If you have any reason for complaint, please state particulars:
.....
.....

Signed.....

Phone..... Address.....

FORM 181

NOTE—R. O. No. filled out by service station before card is sent to owner, to provide easy reference upon return.

It is also the duty of every service department to maintain a system of following-up owners who have not been in the service station for a period of time. Like the postcard idea, this need not be complicated. We believe the card system of follow-up is the best as it is the simplest. There is some difference of opinion as to what information should be recorded.

Some service stations go so far as to state, briefly, the character of the work performed, such as repairs, oil and grease, accident, accessories and washing.

Others, enter the total amount of the repair charges on the card, showing a division between regular charges and policy costs.

Again, others (and we believe this is very important) provide spaces to show when the owner was followed up and the method of follow-up, whether by post-card, letter, phone or personal call. They, also, briefly state the reason for the owner's absence.

The cards can be made as complete as desired, depending on the time available for keeping them up. We know that in its simplest form only a few minutes each day are required to record the necessary information from the repair orders.

For those who desire a card of this kind, but in a simple form, we have developed one that will fill the need of the average service station. We shall be glad to furnish these cards (form D31) in quantities of fifty for seventy-five cents. The card is 5" x 8" in size.

SERVICE FOLLOW-UP RECORD											
NAME					RES. ADDRESS						
BUS. ADDRESS				BUS. PHONE			RES. PHONE				
MODEL		TYPE		MOTOR No.			VEHICLE No.				
DATE PURCHASED				NEW OR USED			FORMER OWNER				
DATE	R. O. NO.	DATE FOLLOW-UP	* FOLLOW-UP	REMARKS			DATE	R. O. NO.	DATE FOLLOW-UP	* FOLLOW-UP	REMARKS

* P-PHONE P.C.-POSTCARD L-LETTER C-PERSONAL CALL

D-31 2M-7-27-MCO.-40654

1. Fill out one of these cards for each car in your territory.
2. Enter date, and repair order number, every time the car is in for service.
3. When an owner has not been in for service, for three months, get in touch with him and fill in the date column of follow-up; also, signify by symbol, method used in following up.
4. Under "remarks" briefly state result of follow-up.

This makes a simple form, easily kept up-to-date, and gives you the information as to when the owner was in your service station last. The important feature of the system is to **get in touch with the owner** when he hasn't been in for three months, **and find out why**.

Forgetting for the moment the new car sales angle, let us look at the service department from a strictly selfish business standpoint.

Your business is limited, exactly, by the number of Packard cars in your territory. To successfully conduct your shop, you need a steady

volume of work and parts sales. If a part of your owners are going to independent garages for service, then you are not getting the maximum in labor sales. What is equally important, the independent garage is, whenever possible, substituting wildcat parts in place of genuine Packard parts. Thus, you lose two ways.

We believe all will agree, that it is criminal to sell a man service that he does not need. Doing this is just plain stealing. We do not believe that any Packard service station would intentionally do a thing of this kind.

On the other hand, the lack of endeavor to sell service when it is needed is a sure sign that someone is content to be a bovine-like order-taker. To him, the word "salesmanship" means as much as "pep" does to a Cigar Store Indian.

To be ignorant of the reasons why certain customers have not been in for service for a period of time signifies indifference—lack of simple system—ignorance of the great value of owner goodwill.

If you would build up a good reputation and a profitable business—**Then keep on the trail of your owners**.

More About Returned Goods

THE following memorandum, from the factory parts department, should be of interest to those distributors who do not wish to wait an undue length of time in obtaining credit on parts returned for credit:

"If the practice of distributors in shipping material to the factory without claim tags was an epidemic occurring only in the mid-summer we could easily trace the fault to vacation time or a similar cause, but invariably all through the year there are two or three large shipments waiting the arrival of claim tags which are very essential to the opening up of these

cases and checking them into our receiving room.

"Apparently the distributors forget that these old parts represent so much hard cash, and the longer the delay in getting the claim tags through to us, the longer that amount of money is tied up on their books.

"If you can see any way of imparting to the distributors, the importance of getting their claims to us before arrival of the shipment, you will be doing something that has never been done before."

WILLIAM F. FOX,
Service Adjustment Division

Artist or Shyster?

WHEN I lie on my back and look up at an engine, after the lower-half has been removed, I can almost tell, from the way the cotter pins were replaced, the type of mechanic who last assembled the motor.

"If the slots in the screws of the battery box cover are parallel with the lines in the cover, I feel that when the battery was last inspected the job was well done.

"If we could only put our name on our work, as the artist signs his on the picture he paints, it would instill within us a feeling of pride. It

would be an assurance against, even, the small things being slighted."

THOMAS ROSCOE,
Packard-Jamestown, N. Y.

NOTE—Tom is right. If all mechanics had to place their names on the work they did, you could bet there would be fewer "butchered-up" jobs. A man with any pride at all, doesn't like to have his name linked with shoddy work. After all, the difference between a real mechanic and the shyster, is a matter of pride. By the way, the definition of shyster is: a trickish knave; one without professional honor. We prefer to think of Packard Mechanics as artists. An artist is "One who shows trained skill or rare taste in any manual art or occupation."

Ask Me Another

1. What trouble is apt to result from a poor connection in the line between the generator and the battery?
2. What is the easiest and quickest way of checking this line?
3. Why does steering "tramp" occur at high speeds and not at low speeds.
4. What is the objection to a thin lubricant in the steering gear in warm weather?
5. Where are cylinder head gaskets most likely to fail and how should this trouble be guarded against?
6. Why is it incorrect to use alemite connectors in lubricating the universal joints?
7. What is the proper spark plug gap, and when is a wide gap apt to cause trouble?
8. What condition is apt to follow the excessive use of the chassis lubricator?

Note—Save these questions. Answers only will appear in the next Packard Service Letter.