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## What The Owner Wants

A YEAR AGO, in the Packard Sales Educational Lesson, Vol. 4, No. 3, there appeared an excellent article entitled "Code of Service." It covered the problems of service in a most thorough and common-sense way. We have read a great many words on the subject of service, but in our opinion the "Code of Service" covers the subject better than anything we have ever read. Every dealer and distributor would do well to review it again.

The "Code of Service" was written by Robert B. Parker, President of Packard Incorporated, Philadelphia. Beginning his Packard career nineteen years ago, in a very minor position here at

the factory, he has spent most of those years encountering and solving problems that arise in the retail field. His experience permits him to speak with authority.

In this issue we are pleased to print another article by Mr. Parker, which was written some time ago for the benefit of his own service department. The instructions were written for a large organization, but the thoughts contained in it are every bit as applicable to the smallest service department as they are to the largest.

If you have wondered, what really constitutes real service in the eyes of the owner, read this article carefully—several times—and profit thereby.

## What the Packard Owner Wants and How to Give It

1—WANTS TO BE MET WITH A WELCOME: A Service Salesman should be at the Service door at all times with order blank in hand, ready to jump to the running board and, with a smile, say, "Good morning, Mr. Jones, what can I do for you this morning?" First impressions are most vital. Make them good ones. Show action and let your customer be impressed with the fact that we are wide awake, alert, efficient and here to serve. Show such interest in your customer's welfare that he will ask for you the next time he comes in. The Service Salesman's relation to the customer is like that of attorney to client. It is his responsibility to see that the customer gets what he is entitled to as a Packard owner. He, the Service Salesman, stands as the connecting link between us and the public good-will toward us. Don't let any customer feel that he must go "higher up." You do the "going," if necessary.

2—WANTS TO GET A QUICK ANALYSIS OF HIS TROUBLES: Most customers are not mechanics and do not know what they do want. They know the result they would like but not the specifications of the work required to get it. They need advice. It is up to the Service Salesman to give it or get it. If it requires road testing or expert inspection, call an inspector. Do not let a customer order something that is not necessary. For example—a customer may find that his car lacks power. He may tell you to "clean carbon and grind valves" thinking that is the cause of his trouble. It may not be. Lack of power may be caused by a number of things. The result he wants is standard power—see that we know and advise him what is required to get that result. Look up previous jobs and see if the car has been in for the same trouble before, if so—"red flag" job.

### "Better Service Means More Car Sales"



3—WANTS TO PLACE HIS ORDER AND GET AWAY: Service Salesman should stay with customer until order is completed. Be sure customer understands what he is ordering and what it will cost. Our standard operations with their definite prices known in advance, make this possible in nearly every case. Thank him for his order—assure him you will give it your best attention and *then proceed to do so.*

4—WANTS TO GET HIS CAR BACK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE: Get car to proper shop immediately. Minor jobs should be done quickly on the first floor. Shop Foreman should get a mechanic on the job as soon as possible after car reaches shop. If the Shop Foreman does not fully understand just what is to be done, he should call Service Salesman and find out. Special attention to "red flag" jobs. It is bad enough to have a car come back for the same trouble twice but almost inexcusable the third time. Rapid progress on repair jobs calls for efficiency and co-operation on the part of the Stock Department in serving the shop with parts and material promptly.

5—WANTS ACCURATE ESTIMATE WHEN HE CAN GET CAR: Service Salesman should consult with Shop Foreman in order to make estimate accurate. It is Service Salesman's responsibility to follow up. If job cannot be completed as estimated, 'phone the customer, tell him so and give him a new estimate. The customer will be disappointed enough anyway in not getting his car when expected without adding insult to injury by permitting him to come to you to find it out. Be sure estimates are conservatively made. Do not let customer force you into a promise that you do not anticipate—at least when made—that you can keep.

6—WANTS TROUBLE CORRECTED ONCE AND FOR ALL: This depends on shop efficiency and careful inspection. The same inspector should inspect car at completion of job as inspected it when the order was written. He and the Service Salesman best know just what the customer had in mind. It is desirable in some cases that the inspector ride with the customer and let *him* inspect the car too before taking it away.

7—WANTS CAR READY TO DRIVE AWAY WHEN CALLED FOR: Service Salesman should know where

car is. If there is room available car should be ready on the first floor, provided we know approximately when the customer will call. Due, however, to congestion on first floor, car will often have to be held on some other floor, and therefore the greater responsibility of prompt attention to quick delivery.

8—WANTS CAR IN AS CLEAN CONDITION AS WHEN HE LEFT IT: Steering wheels should be wiped off. Great care should be used not to soil upholstery and seat covers and to prevent scratches on body and fenders. If car is dirty when brought in, ask if the customer does not want it washed. If gasoline is low in the tank, ask if he does not want it filled. It may save his getting stuck on the way home. Facilities are offered for checking loose articles to prevent their loss while cars are in our shop. Offer this service, as we cannot be responsible for articles lost that are not checked.

9—WANTS A CORRECT AND INTELLIGENT BILL: Job orders should be written clearly and segregated into *definite* items. Bills should be made up by item corresponding to the items of the original order. Copy of the original order should be attached to the bill—customer may then intelligently check his bill with his order. Bills should be carefully checked before mailing to avoid errors.

10—WANTS FAIR PRICES: In spite of the fact that we have well over a million dollars invested in facilities for service and that our supervision is more extensive and intense than the average, our scale of prices is no greater than that of the smaller average repair shop. These extra expenses increase our overhead, of course, but not our prices to the customer. It is a sacrifice of profit that we assume to give Packard owners the best service at lowest prices. Our incentive is one of service and satisfaction with the Packard product, resulting from good service, and not one of profit only. No other repair shop in town can purchase Packard parts at a discount. Therefore, to make a profit on parts—they must either buy Packard parts and overcharge or else use "pirate" parts which are offered us every day at reduced prices, but which invariably are inferior in quality and more expensive in the long run—



though parts on which a considerable profit can be made. Our mechanics are the best we can hire and can do a job as quickly—consistent with good workmanship—as any. Therefore, for any given mechanical operation—our prices should be as low—and lower—because of our special Packard tools and familiarity with special adjustments and standards than that of any other shop. Our danger lies in “over-selling,” brought on by especially high standards. For instance—customer asks us to estimate work necessary and the price thereof, to put his car into good condition. We inspect carefully and we outline a complete schedule of work to be done. If there is a slight squeak, we include the cost of eliminating it. The customer accepts our schedule as our recommendation. We tell him it will cost \$400.00. He visits another shop and they tell him \$300.00—they do not figure on doing the work which we have suggested—their standards are not as high. It is the duty of the Service Salesman to thoroughly acquaint the customer with the facts. Our schedule and estimate may not be our recommendation. Possibly, if we owned the car, we might find many items suggested that we would not, ourselves, order done. The squeak may be too slight to warrant the expense of elimination. Go over each item with the customer and find out his wishes—it costs a lot to be over critical. If customer could be sold on doing really necessary work only, he could save a lot of money. It is our duty to discuss each job with him in detail and at least give him every opportunity.

11—WANTS ANY COMPLAINT ATTENDED TO PROMPTLY: See that complaints get into the hands

of the proper individual at once. Nothing is more serious in the case of complaints than procrastination. Insist on action and decision and bring the matter to a conclusion. Interview the customer personally, when possible. Do not allow a controversy to drag. Always assume that the customer is right—and then investigate, in order to discuss *facts*. Any controversy is ordinarily the result of misunderstanding and lack of knowledge of facts. Someone is mistaken. In the case of any controversy, we should be able to prove to the satisfaction of any reasonable man—by facts—that we are right or else frankly admit that we are wrong, and if wrong, be quick to correct. Always give customer benefit of any doubt. Unfortunately among the many customers we have, there are bound to be a few who will seem to insist on getting something more than they are entitled to—they want special dispensations of one kind or other. They want us to do something for them that we could not include in our service to all Packard owners. Such requests are unreasonable and we could not—in fairness to our other good patrons—grant them, as it is just such special and unusual requests which, if granted, build up our costs of service, and this, in turn, owners themselves resent.

Our policy must be fair and equitable—our efforts direct and efficient and unencumbered by unnecessary “red tape”—our service prompt and courteous and we can then always, with confidence, refer to our slogan, “ASK THE MAN WHO OWNS ONE.”

ROBERT B. PARKER,  
*President.*

## A Challenge

**I**N Packard Service Letter No. 10, we tried to put over the return post card idea of following up the owner after repairs had been made on his car. We stated that it took NERVE to send out cards such as were illustrated. How many service stations have courage enough to send out

these cards and can prove it by mailing one to us here at the factory service department?

Come on, let us inscribe your name in our hall of fame for being one who has “guts” enough to ask the customer what he thinks of work that you do for him.



# Answers to Questions Contained in Service Letter No. 11

1. When the motor is started or when the oil is low in the crankcase air will sometimes pass into the oil pump with the oil. This causes the ball in the relief valve to chatter against its seat, because it will not be held away from its seat when air is passing through the valve. The noise stops when the air has worked its way through the pump.

2. Leakage through the oil control valve which lubricates the cylinder walls can be determined by disconnecting the pipe carrying the oil from the valve to the cylinders and running the motor with the choke against the dash. No oil should flow unless the choke is pulled out.

3. Leakage from the rear main bearing or the rear camshaft bearing can be checked by plugging the drain hole at the bottom of the clutch housing and driving the car from 5 to 10 miles at a speed in the neighborhood of 45 M. P. H. If no oil flows when the plug is removed it means that these two bearings are tight. If the leakage occurs only at high speed the loss is apt to be in the rear main bearing, because the camshaft bearing is apt to leak at any speed if it leaks at all.

4. The purpose of Ethyl gasoline is to prevent detonation, and it is not claimed that a car will

start any more readily than with standard gasoline. High test fuels if they are properly prepared will permit the motor to start more readily.

5. End float in the axle shaft will cause backlash in the driving line, will throw an excessive load on the outside bearing and will increase the tendency of the brakes to squeak.

6. The end play can be eliminated by the use of a shim between the vertical face of the bearing retainer and the outside race of the bearing itself.

7. A piston slap is more noticeable after idling the motor, because at idling speeds only a small quantity of oil reaches the cylinder walls from the connecting rod bearings and the oil film on the walls becomes thinner. Pistons having a normal clearance will often slap if the motor is idled long enough.

8. The oil in the crankcase is changed chiefly on account of dilution, and the dilution is not as serious in the summer-time, because the choke is not used as much and because the operating temperature of the motor is higher. Dilution goes down as the operating temperature goes up, and this is the reason for supplying the motor with the proper protection in cold weather.

## Ask Me Another?

1. Why are the transmissions in some of the new cars noisy until the car has been driven for a minute or two?
2. What are the chief causes for quick depreciation of the ignition breaker points?
3. What is meant by a "hot" spark plug, and when should a plug of this type be used?
4. When will such a plug be unsatisfactory and why?
5. Does the side clearance between the connect-

ing rod bearings and the crankshaft affect the lubrication of the cylinder walls?

6. Why not use cylinder oil in the chassis oiling system?
7. Why not use an ordinary transmission oil?
8. How is it possible to distinguish between rear axle gear noise and the noise set up by the tires?

NOTE—Save these questions. Answers, only, will appear in next PACKARD SERVICE LETTER.