



Service

Excerpt from an Article in Automobile Topics by
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WE must render real service. We must produce the kind of service that justifies confidence in us. We must satisfy the customer. Right now I can hear a voice saying—"it can't be done." I know, gentlemen, I have encountered that type too. But I am speaking of the average owner. He must be satisfied, if we have to sit up all night finding out how to do it, for ten nights running. Unless he is satisfied we will have no service stations to operate, because they will be seized for taxes. Satisfying the customer in the work that we do is of far greater importance than satisfying him regarding the price. Money to all of us is a relative matter. It is what we get for our money that most interests us. We have all of us known people who quibble over a small bill and take a big loss without a whimper.

The man who knows a thing is good, places cost second. You do it yourselves. The customer in your service station is no different. We must give service, therefore, of the finest grade we are capable of. And our capability must not be static, but progressive. We should give better service this year than we gave last year, because we have the benefit of experience, study and planning. We must keep abreast of the progress in our science, for automotive service is a science, and an exact science. We must know the most improved methods, use the most modern tools and follow the most efficient shop and managerial practice.

Our mechanics must likewise be alert and informed. They cannot drift along with blacksmith shop equipment, mental or physical. We must know that they know their jobs. Price does not present so difficult a problem. Stabilization has been fairly achieved in this as in so many other branches of our activity. Uniformity of rates for standard operations has helped to build confidence in service charges. And if we keep constantly before us that there are twenty-six million vehicles to be serviced this year, we will confine our suggestions as to work required on those we get to service, to what is reasonably necessary, we will have time to plan how to surmount the biggest problem that the shop operator has to face. There are in this country 100,000 service stations and repair shops, and 51,000 dealers. I am sure none of you needs any assistance to discover the meaning in that comparison.

Assuming that dealers have 50,000 service stations, there are still 50,000 more. One for one—there is a corner shop for every one operated by a distributor or dealer—and the so called small "corner shop" has its clientele too, and make no mistake about that. We can write interesting booklets about the advantages of going to the dependable dealer for genuine service and authentic parts, but until we can give the owner what the small shop gives him, namely: personal and interested attention, we can expect competition from that source in a degree that will give us plenty to think about.

There is no secret to the formula for attracting business that the small shop and the so called "super station" have successfully used in the face of unquestioned superiority of technique possessed by the skilled mechanics of the closest authorized service station, maintained under the closest kind of supervision. It is largely this—personal contact—"Good morning, Mr. Owner, what can we do for you?" and the follow up of the close contact during the receipt, testing and delivery of the vehicle.

The magnitude of our scale of operations is its chief danger. Unless we can inject into our service stations and our service contacts the friendly, shall I say—small-town familiarity with our patrons, knowing them by name and taking a personal interest in the service problems that are so big in their eyes, we can never hope to reclaim from the unofficial service stations and alley shops, the business that naturally belongs to us. But this can be accomplished. It requires thought, study and a great amount of effort and perseverance. We must overcome the impersonal quality of the big service stations, too big and too impressive and too distant for the customer to be called Joe or John. That is what deflects business to the little shop where the owner is sure of attention, and personal attention that pleases his natural sense of his own importance. He is somebody, and is made to feel that he is, through the intimate contact that the corner shop affords. They didn't do such a wonderful job on that bent fender last month, but he's seen worse, and they did their best. So he goes back for more punishment, perhaps because he gets it with a smile.

This difficulty which has seemed to be almost a handicap can be overcome if all of the men from the top to the

bottom—from the Manager to the mechanic, will all bear in mind that the majority of our customers are no different than we ourselves. They are only looking for the same kind of service that we expect under similar circumstances. By and large they are no harder to please than we are, but they do insist upon a kindly interest.

Calling on the New Owner

Mr. Wishart, Supervisor of Districts, recently called the attention of the District Managers to what sounds like a very effective introduction of the Service Department to the man who has just purchased a new Packard car. We want to pass it on to you, as we feel it has unusual possibilities:

"Our San Antonio Service Manager, Mr. E. A. Garner, recently has been carrying out a procedure of contacting with new owners, which, I think, can well be copied elsewhere.

When a new car is delivered to a customer his acquaintance with the service department is, at best, rather casual. He is somewhat excited, of course, over his purchase of a new car and the things that are told him, at such a time, are necessarily brief and generally do not register any too well.

Garner, consequently, has been telephoning for an appointment and calling on each new owner some time between *three and seven days after delivery*, generally in the evening so that he may have a chance of talking to the purchaser's family as well. He then explains to them certain features in connection with the operation and care of the car, goes a little further into mechanical details in explaining how Packard has tried to protect its owners' investments, such as the metal spring covers, chassis lubricator system, and other things. He also gives them a talk about the service facilities of the local distributorship, explaining their prices and special rates on greasing, etc. He explains the tourist policy.

From all I can find, this makes a much better impression on the customer than the normal procedure of writing a form letter. It is certainly a great deal more friendly and I believe, has caused the percentage of service business San Antonio is getting to increase materially.

I think you would do well to recommend this procedure." It sounds worth trying.

Replacement of Rear Axle Shafts

Recently some rear axle shafts have been returned to the factory for credit and an examination of these shafts indicated that there was no good reason for their removal and, of course, credit cannot be extended in such instances.

These shafts, from the information given, were replaced in an attempt to correct back-lash in the rear axle. If black-lash existed, it was due to some other cause since the wear at the splined end of these shafts was so slight that nothing was accomplished by their replacement except a waste of labor and the material.

Before the change in the method of lubricating the axle shaft splines, an examination of some of the splines on shafts returned, indicated a sufficiently worn condition to justify their replacement. This, however, is not the case in those recently examined. A repair order should not call for the replacement of an axle shaft without first obtaining an inspection report to determine whether such action is necessary. It is sometimes difficult to determine by the usual diagnosis and road tests, just what

is causing the back-lash in the rear axle and should you encounter such trouble, an order to remove and inspect the parts which you feel are causing the trouble should be made and then a supplementary order issued calling for the replacement of any worn parts, which are causing the back-lash.

We suggest that a more careful diagnosis and inspection in such cases be made, as credit cannot be allowed on material which has been replaced where neither defect nor wear is apparent.

Keeping Owners Posted

We were very much interested in receiving from two dealers located in opposite sides of the country, bulletins which they send to Packard owners. This type of contact may produce what some people call "an intangible result." We are convinced, however, that it does its share of Good Will building.

The subject of a recent film is "Increasing Service Business," it deals in detail with the subject of "Retaining and Increasing the Good Will of each owner." If you have not seen this film, we urge you to obtain a copy



and show it to every man who comes in contact with Packard owners. It has additional ideas for promoting Owner Good Will, which does increase Service Business.

Now is a good time to go after your full share of the Service Dollar, which each owner is spending on his car. In most cases this dollar is being divided with the Super-Station; the Accessory Store and with your Service Department. You are logically entitled to the whole dollar; you can give the owner better value for it than anyone else. Why not convince him of this fact and continue to keep the fact in front of him. As the advertising manager says "Repetition means Reputation."

Generator and Regulator Test Box

The Mechanical Supervisors have used with considerable success, a generator and regulator test box designed by the Owen-Dyneto Corporation. It is used for checking the setting of the regulator to obtain the correct cut-in and cut-out speed and will assure you of correctly operating generator and regulator. If you are not equipped with this device, it may be purchased from any Owen-Dyneto dealer, also the Owen-Dyneto factory in Syracuse direct. The net price is \$20.00.

Ask Yourself These Questions—

Question: How many bad accounts does a "cash" grocer have on his books?

Answer: None. He does business for cash.

Question: If your gross volume in the Service Department is \$10,000.00; your gross profit is fifty per cent; you run charge accounts on eighty per cent of your volume and thirty per cent of your accounts receivables are written off at the end of two years, how much profit did you make the first year?

Answer: Not nearly enough.

Question: What is a Repair Order?

Answer: A Repair Order is an agreement between a customer and your organization for a certain amount of repair work on his automobile.

Question: Is this all that a repair order should be?

Answer: No. A repair order should be a contract between your customer and your organization for certain repairs required on his car at a definite cost to the customer.

Question: What are the important parts of a contract?

Answer: There are three; the form, the terms and the agreement of the two parties.

Question: Is the form of contract, which you are using, correct?

Answer: Yes, if it is the repair order contract form handled by the factory service department, or a form similar to it.

Question: What is important about the terms, or conditions of this type of contract?

Answer: It is important that the contract be legible; that the terms be thoroughly understood and that a definite amount be agreed upon for the work listed.

Question: How important is the signature on this type of contract?

Answer: It is just so important that it represents the difference between collecting for the amount of the bill or not collecting for it in a good many cases. The volume of work you are doing in the shop is important only if you are collecting for all that is actually billed to customers.

Question: What is the difference between the man who has a conveniently poor memory and a man who objects to signing a repair order?

Answer: There is no difference—it is the same man.

Question: The old-timer says "This isn't necessary, I can trust my customers to remember such an order and the price I quoted"—is this good practise?

Answer: No. A signature on the repair order is worth all of the memory courses that have ever been written.

Question: There is a little moral to this story—do you get it?

Answer: We hope so, it means more cash, as well as more satisfied owners.

Firing Order

116-126-133-226-233-326-333-426-433-526-533

1-5-3-6-2-4

136-143-236-243

1-3-2-5-8-6-7-4

336-343-443-6th Sr.-7th Sr.-8th Sr.

1-6-2-5-8-3-7-4

Carburetor Charts

Some time ago we sent to all distributors and dealers charts made up by the Detroit Lubricator Company, showing the operation and correct adjustment of the Detroit Lubricator carburetor used on Packard cars. It may be that some of the dealers appointed since the date these were mailed out do not have these charts, or it may be that the chart which you have has become dirty, soiled and torn—if so, you will be interested in knowing that we have a number of these charts in the Service Literature Department and we will be very glad to mail these in any quantity that you can use to advantage and they will be mailed without charge.

The chart, as you will recall, is a large one and well illustrated; it is thirty inches wide and about forty inches long and suitable for use in the shop on a bulletin board. If you do not have one of these, we suggest that you obtain one by writing to the Service Literature Department.

Radiator Rust Preventive

The Sun Oil Company has notified us that the preparation formerly sold under the name of "Emulso" is now being sold under the name of "Emulsifying Oil." This is a rust preventive for use in radiators and the material has been recommended in previous issues of the Service Letter. It is the substance which produces the milky color in the radiator solution found in the radiators of new cars.

Battery "Dopes"

The National Better Business Bureau recently sent out a bulletin on the subject of "Storage Battery Dopes," which should be called to your attention. It seems that a large number of patented solutions have been put upon the market recently and are sold as "rejuvenators." They are being extensively advertised and greatly exaggerated claims are made for these products.

The Better Business Bureau states that laboratory tests indicate that these claims are entirely unjustifiable. They state that while these solutions are not necessarily harmful to the battery, they have no beneficial effect and their use is not advisable.

The regular Electrolite of pure sulphuric acid and water in the correct proportion is the only suitable solution for use in storage batteries. Do not use any other preparation in the battery.

With reference to battery compound, the Better Business Bureau states that a number of battery manufacturers have informed them that they will construe the use of such compounds, as grounds for cancelling their warranty.

We are passing on this information to you since it comes apparently from a most reliable source and because of the fact that you are interested in protecting your customers' interests.

We Welcome Suggestions and Inquiries from Packard Service Men. Address All Communications Care Editor, Packard Service Letter.