

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SAY “NO” TO A CUSTOMER?

When you say “NO” to a customer, you will lose that customer’s business on the day he/she calls in or stops by your store for service. That customer will not likely respond to future direct mail advertisements because he will recall that you did not have time for him the last time he called or came in. The customer will not refer anybody to your store because they will remember you were too busy to service him.

Saying “NO” to your customers will cause you to lose a customer for life, eliminate future growth with that customer, prevent referrals, and inevitably shrink your market of available new customers. Saying “Yes” sounds so simple, but if you are trying to reach the best middle/ high income customers within a 2-3 mile radius of your store (5-10 for rural areas) how many months / years will it take to really negatively affect your business? Not long. Bad news travels much faster than good news!

WHAT CAN I DO TO ENSURE I AM NOT SAYING “NO” TO MY CUSTOMERS?

1. FRONT COUNTER TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL TO A PROFITABLE BUSINESS.

Your front counter staff needs to be saying “YES” to all your customers all day every day. We do not schedule customers in for an oil change or other service at a later time or another day; we say “Is now a good time to bring in your car”. (Your front counter staff should go home dreaming of this statement because they have said it so many times each day!). The customer will not come back if you schedule him in later....you just said “NO” to your customer.

2. FRONT COUNTER STAFF NEEDS TO BE SELLING THE COUPON CORRECTLY TO THE CUSTOMER.

Be sure your staff is telling the customers who are bringing in your ad that the Oil change / Seasonal Check-up / Get Acquainted coupon is a great coupon. Staff should be saying “At no additional cost, we will do an inspection of your vehicle and if we find any safety or maintenance issues, we will come let you know”. This allows you to come back and talk with the customer if you do find something to up sell. You can also get a preliminary signal from the customer if they say “All I want is an oil change and nothing more,” or maybe “Great, I have heard a squeaking in my brakes/ funny noise coming from my engine.” These are all buying signs and will help you determine how you can most effectively pitch a job.

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3. SPEED OF SERVICE IS CRITICAL!

How long does it take you to take in an oil change customer, inspect the vehicle, and get back to the customer with any safety or maintenance issues? If your answer is longer than 20 minutes, then you just lost money. You have, on average, 15-20 minutes with most customers before they are thinking about all the things they have to do with their car that day. Your close ratio goes down drastically the longer it takes you to pitch the job.

4. DO YOU LIKE YOUR CUSTOMERS?

Make sure you are thanking each customer for their business and that you are opening doors for your customers. By being polite and courteous to every customer, you will build stronger business relationships and ensure that those customers will return to your shop for their next big repair. Service is a dying breed, so providing outstanding customer service will certainly put you above your competitors. Think about what changes you can make to be that shining star!

