

## **7 Tips on Delivering Extraordinary Service**

*By Bob Cooper of Elite*

Most shop owners will start pumping more money into their marketing campaigns when they are looking to increase their car counts. This can help bring new customers into your shop, which is certainly important, but the value of your new customers diminishes if you're unable to keep them coming back to you. There will be no greater key to your success in the coming years than your ability to create a memorable customer experience that shows your customers you genuinely care about them, so here are 7 tips that will help you deliver extraordinary service, and keep your customers coming back to your shop for years to come.

#1. Always under promise and over deliver. If you apply this principle to your business, you can often exceed your customers' expectations. For example, when your competitors are asked how long it will take to do a minor service, they will typically tell the customer something like, "It will take about an hour." Unfortunately, they have now set an expectation in the customer's mind. What they should have done was ask the customer how soon he needed the vehicle. If the customer were to then respond by saying, "I need it by noon" (and it's 9:00 a.m.), your service advisor now has three hours to complete a one-hour job, and can pleasantly surprise the customer by getting it done before noon. It's no different when you put together an estimate. If there is any way that you can come in even a few dollars under your original estimate, your customers will be thrilled when they come in to pick up their vehicles! Always under promise, and then look for every opportunity to over deliver.

#2. Make sure that all of your employees follow the Marriott Rule. This rule states that any time a customer comes within twenty feet of any employee, the employee should smile and make eye contact. If the customer comes within ten feet of an employee, Marriott employees are asked to smile and give a salutation like, "Good morning!" I would strongly encourage you to ask your employees to not only smile and give a salutation, but to also ask the customer, "Have you been helped yet?" Discuss this at your next employee meeting and watch employee morale, and customer satisfaction, go straight up!

#3. Empower your service advisors so they can put out small fires before they turn into more serious issues. All that you need to do is implement a policy similar to the one used at the Ritz Carlton. At the Ritz, they empower all of their employees with a predetermined budget that they can use for customer satisfaction. You should do the same. Set aside a small budget that your service advisors can use to resolve customer complaints on the spot, and long before you have to get involved. To reward your employees who provide exemplary customer service and do not need to exhaust this budget, you can give them a portion of the unused money!

#4. Be very careful with using the word "free." Most people view something that's free as being of little or no value. What you should do is tell your customers that the service is "no charge." This will send a strong message that there's a value to the service, but you are setting the cost aside for them.

#5. Make a habit of always asking your customers, "Is there anything else that I can help you with?" If you ask this question when you're writing up the customer it can obviously lead to additional sales, but beyond that, it's a question you should ask throughout the entire customer experience. You should ask the very same question after your customers have authorized your recommended services, you should ask it at car delivery, and you should ask it when you have completed your customer follow-up calls. The value in asking this particular question is that it shows your customers that you genuinely care about them, and that you embrace every opportunity to help them in any way possible.

#6. Always follow through on what you say you are going to do. If you give a customer an estimate, then we all understand it to be just that: An estimate. On the other hand, if you tell a customer that the repair won't run over \$500.00, and you find out later on that it does, then you should pick up the difference. Not only is it the ethical thing to do, but that customer will sing your song for years to come, because people always enjoy dealing with people who make promises ... and then deliver.

#7. Never forget: It's what you do after the sale that counts. Follow-up thank you calls that are genuine and from your heart, are priceless.



*Since 1990, Bob Cooper has been the president of Elite ([www.EliteWorldwide.com](http://www.EliteWorldwide.com)), a company that strives to help shop owners reach their goals and live happier lives, while elevating the industry at the same time. The company offers one-on-one coaching from the industry's top shop owners, service advisor training, peer groups, along with sales, marketing and shop management courses. You can contact Bob at [contact@eliteworldwide.com](mailto:contact@eliteworldwide.com), or at 800-204-3548.*