

THE AUTO DEALER'S ORIGINAL FIXED OPERATIONS RESOURCE

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FIXED OPS

LOOMING TECH CRISIS

COMBATTING THE TECHNICIAN SHORTAGE

OPEN RECALLS: 52M OPPORTUNITIES

VIDEO SHOULD NO LONGER BE AN 'OPTION'

ORGANIZING RECON

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

WHAT I LEARNED BY USING VIDEO TO COMMUNICATE

BY JOE SHAKER

It's been five years since I called my best customers. Not the good customers, or the people I wanted to be customers, but my best.

With a bunch of repair orders in my hand, I asked their opinion of my Service Department. They replied with compliments about the quality and the dealership, and each mentioned specific Advisors by name.

Finally, rather than end on a high note, I asked, "You had a big bill. I was wondering if you ever had any doubts? If you really needed any of these repairs?" Every customer paused and said, "Well, Joe, you are always going to have doubts."

That moment was an eye opener. These were my best customers. What about everyone else? If they don't completely trust me, what relationship do I have with the rest? I needed a way to wash away the doubts such that there would never be a question about my dealership's integrity. We have great businesses with great customers. I wanted total trust.

I needed video.

Video communication, it turns out, is the one concrete way to execute trust. Trust is the holy grail in any service business.

We want our customers to trust that the work recommendations we are making on their car are necessary. We want our customers to trust that the part we supply will work as promised. We want them to trust that we looked over their car, like a doctor does a patient, and everything checks out.

Why Video

Why is video the best way to convey information?

First, video provides both a narration and moving images.

Second, it is the primary way that many people consume information today, so why change their behavior? Over 8 billion videos are watched on Facebook every day. In fact, this is the first time

we've been able to speak to the customer in their preferred environment. Viewers retain 95% of a message when they watch it in a video, compared to 10% when reading it in text.

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Third, it is super easy, on both sides, to create and consume. Technicians can now easily record a clip and explain what they are looking at and advise the customer on recommendations. The customer can effortlessly see and understand the issues and they are more likely to accept them.

The Customer's Language

Years ago, the auto industry introduced the multi-point inspection (MPI) as part of the process for the Technician to look over the car and make sure everything was in good shape.

The biggest success with the MPI was in standardizing the process and the documentation of the results. What never worked was how it translated to the customer.

We mark things as green, yellow or red, but has anyone stopped to ask the customer if they even know what that means? We directly surveyed over 200 customers to find that only 15 knew what it was (top answer: traffic light).

Why are we trying to create a new language for our customers? Why shouldn't we be communicating with them in the format and terms that they already understand?

Active Delivery

In most dealerships, the expectation is that the Advisor needs to "actively deliver" the inspection results to the customer, which is supposed to happen when the customer is picking up their car.

Manufacturers make it a customer satisfaction index (CSI) requirement, but we find that the customer is so focused on getting out the door that they don't give us any time to discuss the results in an intelligent fashion. As a result, the ultimate benefit of keeping the customer in the loop and preparing them for future work goes unmet.

Our customers demand transparency from us, but then are unwilling to give us 60 seconds for us to fulfill it. With video in the mix, the active delivery

actually happens when the customer watches it, so we've accomplished our goal by communicating when and how they want.

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A significant benefit of using video in your Service Department, one that we didn't expect, was how it fixes the communication chain. Previously, information would be omitted or lost in translation when passed from one person to the next. Now, all the recommendations that go to the Advisor also go to the customer and to anyone the customer wants to share with.

It's an unadulterated, consistent message that all parties share.

Ongoing Training

Recently I asked my Service Director what other things he had learned by living with video for the last four years. What he said was, "videos make my Advisors smarter!" He mentioned that regular videos on vehicle inspections serve as a way to train and educate his Service Advisors.

The simple act of watching the inspection videos every day improves their knowledge and improves their confidence in presenting technical information. It helps them believe in what they are selling.

He also said videos "gives them a bit of swagger." With video, some clients are able to hire people who are less technical, less sales oriented and less expensive, and ultimately present employees who are more focused on the customer experience and are more process oriented.

What People Are Saying

The biggest evidence that video works is what we've been told by customers, Technicians, Advisors and Managers: Service customers have told us:

1. "I can finally see with clarity what the vehicle needs and I know it is legit."
2. "I love learning about my car and understanding my repair."
3. "The experience of you sending me the video shows the dealership is at the next level."
4. "The ability to share the video allows me to communicate properly with my significant other when I'm not sure what to do."

Automotive Technicians have told us:

1. "I feel comfortable all my recommendations and explanations on repairs and maintenance are getting to the customer."

REGULAR VIDEOS ON

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2. “Customers are buying more because they can now see the tire, brake, fluid or filter condition. There is no mystery.”

3. “The shop seems more efficient because the response rate is quicker with the texting and video platform. I am not taking cars off the lift as often while waiting for an answer.”

Here is what the Service Advisors have told us:

1. “Customers who watch a video believe me and have great questions which I can answer instead of spending so much time trying to explain everything.”

2. “I don’t have to try to paint a picture on very technical repairs or maintenance.”

3. “I don’t have to walk in the shop or talk to the Tech since I get the video for approval before we send it off to the customers. It has helped our internal communication.”

4. “My sales and CSI are going up. Customers no longer wonder if they need

something like a filter when we talk. They can see they need it.”

Here is what Dealers, GMs and Service Managers are saying:

1. “We gain a customer’s trust after one or two videos, not three years.”

2. “Sales per repair order are up on average 25%.”

3. “The positive comments from customers in the text threads are incredible, and one of every four factory service surveys mention the video.”

4. “Having a record of our video, email and texts to our guests is allowing us to stay on process and track the experience from beginning to end.”

There is no other execution or software you can use that will give you three bites at the apple: increased revenue, higher CSI and trust from your customer. The answer to trust is video communication.

You don’t need to change the way you do business; you just need to change how you communicate.

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Joe Shaker is an owner at Shaker Auto Group, a seven-dealership chain in New England. He is also a Founder in TruVideo, a video and texting communication platform designed specifically for the auto service industry. Joe’s experience in technology dates back to his first startup in 1999 and he has been an auto dealer for over 25 years. Joe has chaired and sat on multiple manufacturer dealer boards.