

April/May 2016

From the President

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Fuch Recyclers

By Jason Tourville

Does your auto recycling facility bring the perception of our industry up or down?

Perception starts with first impressions. If a customer's first impression of your company starts on the phone, what do they hear? Is it Roz from Monsters, Inc. talking to Mike Wazowski? Are callers greeted or terrified? If you need to put a customer on hold for a moment are they politely asked to hold or do they hear someone grunt "SALVAGE HOLD" followed by 5 minutes of Jerry Clower comedy while stuck in the black hole of a phone system? The only interaction we have with many customers is over the phone. Being consistently courteous on the phone takes training but makes a great first impression.

What perception does a person get in your customer service area? First and foremost, is it clean, well-lit and inviting? Your sales counter does not have to be the Taj Mahal to make a good impression. We utilize a cleaning service in our modest sales area every week. Daily I hear customers comment that we have the cleanest customer area they have been in. I want a customer service area that I would be comfortable sending my wife, son or daughter into to pick up a part for me.

Do you have many disputes with customers? If a customer's problem escalates and finds its way to me, the first thing I say to them is I want them to be happy calling us again after we resolve the matter at hand. That seems to set people at ease and usually takes the tension out of the conversation. We are not perfect and not all problems have a positive outcome but that is the goal. I can make a customer for life by attending to their troubles and showing that I care. If I win an argument and lose a customer, what have I gained?

Remember, we represent each other every day as we go about our work. I want my customers to have confidence in our industry based on their great experience here. If I fail to do that, I fail for all of us. In their mind we are all alike until proven otherwise. Let's work together to show them how classy our industry has become.

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Missouri Auto & Truck Recyclers News

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Missouri Auto & Truck Recyclers News

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The Question

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Autoz&Truck Recyclers

By Don Hendricks, H & W Auto Salvage

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Recently, I had a conversation with a prospective client. He asked me the question that all of us want an answer to: WHY? Most importantly, why should I pay for someone to come into my business and provide training? He asked me, "Why should I pay you? What's changed?" My reply to him was EVERYTHING! It would be easier to talk about what hasn't changed...

The most important change is the hardest to deal with your customers. They are getting smarter and better at finding the parts they used to get from you. The internet is both good and bad for your business. Customers can now get new parts online for just a bit more than used, get free shipping and get a guarantee as well. If you are not selling your parts online, you are losing this business to your competition. If you have not been selling in the last 6 months, you are not tuned in to the changes that have occurred and continue to change daily. My mentor taught me when I was starting out, "The one constant is CHANGE". The way you used to sell and what you sell is always evolving. If your choice of educators is not up on the changes, you are learning the wrong way, and you may not have the current rules. Ask if the trainer is currently selling online, and if so, what items they are selling. We sell used auto parts, not stuff we don't want any more. These items have special rules and regulations that could cost you money if you don't keep current.

Marty Satz

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Now that the internet has been mentioned, let's get into it! Where do you sell your wares and how? There will always be individuals and companies who want to get your money: calling, emailing, and sending you IM's telling you that they can" blah blah blah".... Here's the honest truth about it - they are trying to make money by selling you a service you probably don't need. If your website is number 1 on search engine A, and no one sees it, what good is it? Your parts need to be where customers are looking for them. There are dedicated sites that cater to our industry: eBay, Car-Part, U Need a Part, and Hot Lines, to name a few. If you know how to navigate these and list on them, you greatly increase your sales potential.

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Now let's discuss who you will train to handle your online sales. Don't over think this one, it is easy. Look at your staff and the tools they use. If the tool box has wrenches and sockets, move on. If the tool box has a computer screen, Rolodex, and a pen, BINGO! We can manage people in the digital age by defining who is really digital! If your sales crew can't answer questions about the items you have on sale online and where they are being sold, you are losing sales, lowering your bottom line. Just because you know all about the item does not mean you can sell it on the internet. Online customers are different than live customers. They are anonymous and may not ask any questions... or they ask too many! Properly training your staff increases sales.



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How about what and where you sell now? Some parts can be sold on eBay, some on Amazon, some on neither. You must be pre-certified to sell some parts. You need to know these things before you try to list. You must learn from someone who has relevant and up-todate experience.

Now for the last bit of good news: the laws and regulations we live by are getting tougher and more complicated as the days go by and the poor economy is not helping. OSHA, EPA, DNR, AND SWPP are letters that can close you down. If you have not had dealings with any of these, you are lucky. If the rules aren't difficult enough, we have recalls to deal with; key switches from GM and Tanaka airbags, to start with. If you continue to list prohibited items, you could be in trouble. Metal prices that are at the lowest levels in years and big corporate companies moving in to your neighborhood are not helping you. If your "expert" does not keep up-to-date, you could lose again. Training is important, but training in current issues is tantamount to your success. If your training is in 1995 best practices, you cannot possibly know what is killing your business today. Do yourself and your business a favor. Find a trainer who is involved in a day-to-day salvage operation. Make sure that they are also currently selling items online. See if he or she has proper credentials in the specific areas you need help with. New aftermarket items must be listed differently than used items. Train for today and continue to train and prepare for tomorrow. Remember, we live and work in a world that is constantly changing.

AULT

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Is Customer Service Gone?

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By Theresa Colbert

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Someone told me the other day, "Customer service is gone! Everyone is so busy with cell phones and iPads that they don't care about helping anyone." I started looking around at the yards that I visit often. Some have the best customer service skills that I have ever seen, but others could use some improvement.

One good example is a yard where an elderly woman in a dress had come in to pick up a light and mirror for her son. The owner of the company put each item into a shopping bag with his company logo and name on the bag. He offered to carry these items out to her car, but before he could get around the counter an employee had already jumped up and was carrying her bags for her! I don't get that kind of service at the grocery store anymore! I was delighted to see this and told him so. You could tell the kind of service this owner gave his customers trickled down to how his employees treated his customers. This gentleman had some of the best employees I have ever heard on the phone. Even when they had an irate customer, they kept their cool and treated them with respect. It was awesome to see and hear!

Probably the worst example of customer service I have ever seen is a yard I was at many, many years ago. They they answered the phone by bellowing, "junk yard!" into the phone. (This yard has since closed – need we ask why?) The owner answered the phone this way and his employees followed suit. If the owner thinks of his auto recycling business as a "junk yard," how will his employees treat the business and his customers? In this case, it was very poorly. Right when you walked in the door, you were greeted with signs that said things like, "NO RETURNS AFTER 24 HOURS" and "60% RESTOCKING FEE ON PARTS RETURNED FOR ANY REASON!" and my personal favorite, "DON'T BE SCARED OF THE DOG, BE SCARED OF THE OWNER – THE DOG CAN'T SHOOT!" At this yard, the customers were not treated well. They were spoken to in a very "naughty" way! I know, I know, hard to believe! If I had been a customer of this yard I can say for sure I would have walked out.

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Those examples are the "good" and the "naughty." With my years on the road with Car-Part.com I can honestly say that there are many more "good" yards and not many "naughty" ones that I visit. Thank goodness!

Vince Lombardi once said, "Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work." I saw this quote the other day and it reminded me that if the "Team Leader" is setting a good example in customer service, employee and vendor relations, etc. then the team should follow suit. How is your team doing?

Have a great month! As always, if you have any questions for me, please email me at TheresaC@Car-Part. com or call my cell at 859-802-2382.

MATR Dates of Interest

2016 April 17-19	ARA Hill Days & Legislative
r	Summit
May 13	Last day of Missouri Legislative Session
Fall of 2016	MATR Annual Meeting
October 26-29	ARA 73rd Annual Convention & Expo, Baltimore, MD

Tools for Success-Share, Listen and be Collaborative

By Ron Sturgeon

The first article in this series listed more than 25 tactics to increase your business success, all of them based on my experience. I started with nothing and didn't get to college, so I know you can achieve maximum success, regardless of your education. E-mail me to get the first article or any of the other articles in the series. Each of the articles after the first takes a closer look at one of the tactics.

Share with others, listen, be collaborative – you simply don't know what you don't know. I wish I had done more of this when I was younger.

I was too autocratic in the beginning of my business career, though I make no excuses for it except to myself. I was relentless. My naiveté and inexperience were quickly overcome by my strong work ethic and willingness to implement ideas.

After I sold my salvage operation to Ford in 1999, I went to work at Ford. I recall sitting in meetings about how to sell more parts to the body shops. A dozen people at the table wanted my insights because I was an industry expert.

By the time it was my turn to talk, I was embarrassed by how little I knew. I was impressed by the quality of the questions they asked and how strategically the members of that group thought about the business issues.

I am proud of what I learned from my 18 months at Ford. I was blessed to work with some brilliant thinkers, including Dixon Thayer, Tim Milligan and Greg Winfield, all of whom are outstanding businesspeople and quickly became experts in auto recycling. It worked because we listened and collaborated.

Some of the most valuable sharing and collaborating for business builders happens at association meetings. Be sure you belong and attend annual meetings. The seminars and break out sessions are important, but so are the informal connections you will make at happy hour after the sessions are over. When I parked myself on a bar stool, I always wanted to share new ideas and innovations with other operators. Trust me when I tell you that most ideas are not a secret. You will gain much more by sharing freely because other perceptive owners will want to reciprocate and share their best ideas with you. Be known as a giver.

Listen to your employees. They have first-hand experiences that can be the source of great ideas to make you more productive. Listening to them is a powerful way to show them that they are valuable members of your team.

Read business books. I try to read at least one business book every month. Use your commuting time to listen to a recorded book about an area of your business you want to improve.



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The classics of management are sure to have a few ideas that will make your operation better and make you more effective. Read about marketing and advertising so that you can get better ROI for your spend in these crucial areas.

Attend seminars and send your employees to them. Helping your most valuable employees learn new skills will pay dividends in loyalty and higher productivity. Challenge and reward them for finding ways to use their new skills to make your business better.

Get your people involved. We keep post it notes on the table when we hold staff meetings. When I am curious about how much of a sales bump we will get from a new imitative, I get my people involved by asking them to write their estimate on a post it note. We tally the results. The group's number is often more accurate than my solo forecast, so I get to tap the wisdom of the



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crowd and they get involved and engaged in making the new initiative hit the forecast. The numbers lead naturally into a discussion of ways to get more from the initiative.

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Remember only you can make business great!

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Ron Sturgeon, Mr. Mission Possible, has been a successful business owner for more than 35 years. As a small business consultant, he can deliver wisdom and advice gleaned from an enviable business career that started when he opened a VW repair business as a homeless 17-year-old and culminated in the sale of several businesses he built to Fortune 500 companies.

Ron has helped bankers, lawyers, insurance agents, restaurant owners, and body shop owners, as well as countless salvage yard owners to become more successful business people. He is an expert in helping small business owners set the right business strategies, implement pay-for- performance, and find new customers on the web.

As a consultant, Ron shares his expertise in strategic planning, capitalization, compensation, growing market share, and more in his signature plainspoken style, providing fieldproven, and high-profit best practices well ahead of the business news curve. Ron is the author of nine books, including How to Salvage More Millions from Your Small Business.

To inquire about consulting or keynote speaking, contact Ron at 817-834-3625, ext. 232, rons@MrMissionPossible. com, 5940 Eden, Haltom City, TX 76117.

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