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Training And The Bottom Line

Last month in “Getting the Most from Tech Support”, we briefly touched on Technical Training and the many ways it has changed over the years. In this bulletin I would like to talk about the different avenues available to acquire training but also the importance and the need for such training.

Training has evolved and taken on many forms. For years, Instructor Led Training (ILT) was and still is the most common and effective source for educating today’s techs. Technology has opened up many other avenues for the training community to get information to technicians in the field. Videos, webinars, and live streaming web based seminars are becoming popular. At the most recent Automotive Training Management Council (ATMC) conference held in Chicago, much of the discussion was about this latest use of technology. There was even discussion of the use of social networking as a viable way of exchanging information.

Each source of training comes with its pros and cons. ILT allows for the most interaction between student and instructor but carries with it the burden of cost and logistics. Videos and webinars can be packed with information but many times the interaction is lost. The student may not be fully grasping the material being presented and there is no way to adjust for that. Live streaming seminars can give the student the ability to ask questions but sometimes an upgrade in equipment is necessary to fully participate in the class. Lastly there is the idea of using social media such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, to get information out to anyone who might be looking for it. I believe here in lies the biggest hurdle of verifying that the information is correct and applicable to a given problem.

No matter which source a student chooses to use, the bottom line is there needs to be a genuine desire to learn. Today’s technicians must have good diagnostic skills. Individuals that can diagnose and repair a problem the first time are in great demand. Anyone can throw parts at a car till the problem or the vehicle goes away. The vehicles we see today in our shops are much too complex and the parts too expensive for the “hit and miss” approach.

Generally speaking only about 20% of today’s technicians are involved in some type of continuous learning program. Given the rapid increase in the use of electronics and advanced systems used in today’s vehicles this trend can not continue. As has been witnessed by the exhaust industry in the last few years, no one is immune to the advances taking place. Critical thinking and the proper diagnostic approach leads to more satisfied customers and higher profits. On a personal note, there is no better feeling of accomplishment than taking a vehicle with a serious drivability problem and sending that car out running like it just came out of the showroom.

To this point I have been talking to the technicians but be assured, this applies to everyone in the industry. Managers, Service Mgrs, Service Writers, Parts Mgrs, Counter People, Parts Distributors, Salesmen and Marketing people all can benefit by keeping up with and even staying ahead of the curve. The advances in technology do not begin and end at the car. They are present in all that we do and mastering each new innovation is an absolute if you want to survive in today’s automotive industry.

I will end this discussion the same way I end my training sessions... with a simple statement:

***The Rules are always changing.
Technology keeps moving forward.
Education is a continual process.***

Cleaning up the environment...one converter at a time

Gary

