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THE MOTOR DEALER REPORT FROM AUSWILD & CO
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GMs: START YOUR DAY OFF RIGHT!

Getting the day started on the right foot is extremely important as it can set the tone for the rest of the day. Starting the day in a positive and productive manner can help increase motivation, boost energy levels, and improve overall performance.

When you start the day with a positive mindset and a clear plan, you are more likely to be focused and efficient in your work. This can help you accomplish more tasks and feel a greater sense of accomplishment as the day progresses.

On the other hand, starting the day on the wrong foot can lead to a feeling of being overwhelmed and stressed, which can negatively impact your performance and productivity throughout the day.

When a General Manager (or Dealer Principal, if the dealership does not have a General Manager) arrives for work early, it can have a positive impact on staff morale and productivity. By arriving early, the General Manager is demonstrating their commitment to the job and setting a positive example for their team.

This can also create a sense of urgency and motivation among staff, as they see that their leader is already hard at work and they are more likely to follow suit. It can also help to foster a culture of punctuality and accountability, as employees are more likely to arrive on time and be prepared for the day ahead.

In addition, when the General Manager arrives early, it provides an opportunity for them to connect with staff and address any concerns or issues that arise. This can help build trust and foster open communication between the General Manager and the team. It can have a positive impact on staff morale, productivity, and overall organisational culture.

Here are some suggestions of what activities you should focus on first thing each day:

- Drive or walk the lot, paying close attention to how your inventory is being merchandised. Make note of vehicles both well placed on the lot, but perhaps more importantly, those that can be displayed to greater advantage. Also look to see if your inventory has any holes that need to be addressed. Is everything clean and trim? Will your customer be impressed or will they wonder why you have not taken care of weeds or cleaned up any rubbish in the lot? Is the lot ready for business?
- Walk through your showroom. Is it clean and tidy? Are the showroom vehicles clean, tidy and unlocked ready for viewing by customers? Are the vehicles displayed appropriately and with sufficient space to enable customers to walk around and view the vehicles with all doors and tailgates opened? Are customer restrooms clean and tidy with no overflowing bins? If there is a customer waiting area in the showroom, is it clean, tidy with refreshments and current reading material? Is the television set turned on and running current brand marketing material?

- Walk through the service department – is the service department ready for business and ready to welcome the first customers of the day? Is it ready for the technicians to start operating productively immediately? Are vehicles in their stalls with a repair order under the windshield wiper? Is the area clean and presentable for your customers? Will customers be impressed when they first appear in the Service Drive? Are there any things that can and should be improved?
- Make special note of any “carry over” vehicles and how many vehicles are on the finished line and ready for customer pick up. Question why vehicles were carried over, or why customers have not yet picked up those that are completed.
- Review the Service Appointments for the day with your Service Manager. Does the number of appointments indicate that your workshop can be highly productive and busy – or are you counting on too many “drive-ins” to keep everyone occupied?
- How are the Service and Parts Departments getting ready for the day’s business? Are the managers in place and ready for business? Talk to your managers and their teams as they arrive for work. An encouraging word from the General Manager can go a long way to raising morale and improving the atmosphere.
- Take note of the Service Drive procedure. Does your Service Drive look coordinated and professional? Do your Service Drive personnel appear professionally groomed and attired? Do Service Advisors do “walk arounds?” Do they pop the hood and the trunk? Are they using any point-of-sale equipment or opportunities? Will your customers be impressed when they get there; or will they question the wisdom of their decision to use your services?
- Don’t ignore the Customer Waiting area. Whilst many franchisors have certain minimum standards that your Customer Waiting area must adhere to, would you personally want to spend time there? Is it clean and tidy? If you have a coffee machine, is it in working order, and is there someone tasked with the responsibility to make sure coffee/tea and milk supplies are not running low or empty?

The Service Department starts earlier than the rest of the dealership – take advantage of this by paying attention to that area first. Show you care, then expect results.

This month’s article is adapted from a DealersEdge blog and is an excerpt from the General Manager’s Desk Reference and Operating Guide, published by DealersEdge.

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