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THE MOTOR DEALER REPORT FROM AUSWILD & CO
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How Dealerships Can Use AI to Slash Turnaround Times

David Cerqueira, the Service Director at Benzel-Busch Mercedes-Benz in the USA has spent more than 17 years building deep relationships with his customers – and that is precisely why he avoids using fully automated AI bots to interact directly with his database.

"If we are not doing it the old-fashioned way, picking up the phone to talk a customer through a repair or sending a carefully crafted email or text, it is a no-go. It just doesn't work for our clientele," Cerqueira says.

However, that does not mean his New Jersey-based dealership shuns modern technology. Instead, the service department leverages AI behind the scenes to polish advisor communications, refine marketing copy, and fast-track administrative hurdles. The operational impact has been staggering: by integrating AI assistant tools, the dealership has dramatically slashed its average turnaround time, boosting overall workshop throughput and profitability.

Polishing Customer Communication & Reducing Cycle Times

The dealership employs 43 service technicians. While they are all highly skilled and their mechanical expertise is elite, not everyone is a natural wordsmith. To bridge the gap, around 30 mechanics and advisors use a dedicated texting platform to polish their customer-facing updates before hitting send.

- **Clearer Explanations:** The tool effortlessly translates complex mechanical diagnostics into clear, jargon-free explanations that customers can easily comprehend.
- **Guaranteed Legal Compliance:** Instead of advisors wasting valuable hours drafting or vetting messages to ensure they are fully compliant with consumer regulations, the AI tool instantly formulates a professionally structured, legally safe response.

> *The Results: Before integrating AI into their daily communication workflows, the dealership's average vehicle turnaround time—measured from the moment the repair order is written to when it is officially closed—stood at 6.5 days. Post-implementation, that figure plummeted to just 4.3 days.*

Drafting Compliant Technical Repair Stories

When it comes to processing warranty claims, precision is everything. Mechanics at the dealership now utilise Microsoft Copilot to draft compliant technical stories. By simply uploading raw diagnostic findings and repair notes, Copilot instantly structures a technical narrative that ticks every regulatory box.

Crucially, this ensures that every story – particularly for warranty repairs – perfectly addresses the fundamental **3Cs of dealership servicing: Concern, Cause, and Correction**. For flat-rate mechanics who are constantly fighting the clock, offloading this administrative burden allows them to spend less time typing and more time on the tools, directly improving individual productivity.

Instant Feature Verification & Service Desk Support

Customers frequently call the service desk asking how to operate specific new features on their new vehicles.

Rather than wasting time flipping through thick physical manuals, service advisors use AI to instantly pull the exact answer. The AI securely searches the manufacturer's official web portal and extracts clear, step-by-step instructions. Advisors can simply copy, paste, and send a flawless 1-to-5 step guide directly to the customer in seconds.

Localised Marketing and Agile Asset Creation

Historically, launching localised marketing campaigns meant relying on external creative agencies – a process that was both slow and costly. When the dealership launched its new mobile service van, they bypassed the traditional route entirely. Using Anthropic's Claude AI, the internal team drafted and designed a polished promotional flyer in just 45 minutes, dramatically speeding up their time-to-market.

Accelerating Apprentice and Technician Onboarding

Onboarding new workshop staff efficiently is vital for maintaining safety and productivity. To streamline this, Cerqueira fed the official manufacturer training curriculum into an AI platform. When onboarding a recent trade school graduate, the AI analysed the new hire's specific training history against workshop requirements.

The result was a highly tailored, comprehensive onboarding checklist. It captured crucial granular details that busy workshop managers often overlook – such as verifying exactly how many physical tools the new hire has on day one. This automated oversight ensures no critical step is missed as new hires transition into active roles.

The Horizon: Automated Vehicle Damage Scanning

Looking ahead, the dealership is set to integrate an AI-powered diagnostic hardware and software solution. This AI powered damage detection software will automatically capture a complete visual record of a vehicle's exterior condition the moment it drives into the service lane, eliminating manual inspections.

Currently, three employees must walk around inbound and outbound vehicles with iPads to manually log scratches and dents. Automating this process removes human error, protects the dealership's liability and frees up staff from tedious roles that are notoriously difficult to retain.

This month's newsletter was adapted from an article written by Alysha Webb and published in WardsAuto.

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