

The 3 **Biggest** Mistakes Automotive Dealerships Make!

1. Incorrect Processes

We often sometimes think of Processes as a waste of time or a hassle because at the end of the day no one follows them anyway, right!? It's important to realise that sometimes the reason why a process fails or isn't followed correctly is because to a staff member that process did not perform to the way they expected. To put it another way, the effort they put into following a process did not equal the value they received in exchange. It is vital that your staff understand why a particular process is in place, who is responsible for completing each step, when and how they do so. An excellent definition:

*"A **business process** is a collection of linked tasks which find their end in the delivery of a service or product to a client. A **business process** has also been defined as a set of activities and tasks that, once completed, will accomplish an organizational goal."*

Having processes that staff members understand creates great team culture, they appreciate how much easier they can get their job done and build their confidence because they know what they have to do and why. Processes enable your company to grow and drive profitability because they identify strengths and weaknesses and also skill gaps that staff may need coaching on.

It's also important to realise that processes are not set in stone, as business is always changing you need to be able to move with the times, technology etc so it's crucial that your processes do also.

2. Staff Meetings/Training

You may think everyone is on the same page but not everyone can read your mind. Do you feel your passion for your business filters down to your staff? That's why regular meetings with your staff are so important! They enable you to share your plans and ideas and also get staff feedback on. Your staff will feel like you truly value their opinion and feel like they are an important part of the business.

Have a weekly agenda and time for your meetings ie Financial Controller, Management, Sales, Service and Parts etc, and the weekly agenda is non-negotiable. They even run when you're not there! And don't feel like they have to go on forever. Short, sharp and sweet is the key. Just identify beforehand what you expect out of those meetings so things stay on track. Most of all make sure they all finish on a positive note.

Many business owners seem to view employee training and development as more optional than essential...a viewpoint that can be costly to both short-term profits and long-term progress. It is totally understandable why businesses fall into the trap of thinking training and staff development as an expense rather than an investment....why? Because in most cases the training you send them to or the trainers you get into your dealership for the day they "pump their tyres up" but because there isn't anything or anyone to measure the results and keep them motivated, the salesperson easily reverts back to old habits and it doesn't last - hence you only view training as an expense. In my opinion, no one is born anything, just like no one is born a salesperson, some have more focus than others which escalates their progress, but ALL skills have to be learnt and practiced to become great.

Staff training needs to be engaging, interactive, enjoyable and everyone needs to be involved through input and roleplays. Otherwise you're not going to get the commitment and "buy in" from your team to make it successful. It needs to be ongoing that means SET TIMES, SET DAYS, NO EXCUSES! It must be another process in your dealership that everyone understands and can see the benefit of involvement. Content is also a vital part in training, if they are learning something that will help them make more sales and they can relate back to their "real world" guess what...they will use it!

But it must start at the top and you must always lead from the front, if you don't see training as important then neither will they. Don't get sucked into the lame excuse "I just don't have time".....there is always time for important activities! Your employees will care so much more if you take a genuine interest in their future.

Remember your team will always be a reflection of you and a business will never outgrow its owner!

3. Good Customer Service

Apparently everywhere you go nowadays gives good customer service, do they? Really? Do you just want to be like everyone else and give that same "Good Customer Service"? Do you want your dealership to be like every other dealership? You may say..."Well our service is good, we don't get any complaints" But the problem with being like everyone else, when you just "serve" your customers you become average, your customer then thinks well if all dealerships are alike, then I'm just going to go with the cheapest because you don't give them anything else to consider other than price! Your customers will always remember how you made them feel, not necessarily what you sold them!

One question...What's the one thing that no other dealership can offer? What's the one thing only your dealership has?

Answer...YOU!

You need to build value in you, your dealership and your staff!

It's not about a service, it's about creating knockout customer experiences!! Don't get comfortable in your business, always be looking for ways to take your customers eyes off the price. You need to create an advantage over your competition because let's face it your customers can get what you're selling somewhere else, be it down the road, on the phone or on-line. So think about it for a moment, why should people buy from you? Other than product or price, WHY!?

Whatever you do in your business ALWAYS times it by 1! What can you do every day just a little bit better? You'll find by improving what you do every day by just a little bit and then a little bit more that eventually it will give you fantastic results, awesome team culture and a more structured easy to manage business.

What would you like your business to look like?

