



CustomerLink

1376 Lead Hill Blvd. Suite 150
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Product News

Winter Specials

Winter is here. Mail your clients one of our Winter Special cards to prompt them to make an appointment for seasonal maintenance.

Winter Newsletter

Our quarterly newsletter, the Car Care News, is designed to inform your clients in a fun and entertaining manner while reinforcing your position as their preferred automotive professional.

Valentine's Day

Let your customers know that you understand the LOVE they feel for their vehicles by sending a Valentine's Day Special to motivate customers to return for routine maintenance.



2010 and Beyond

By Mark Hockridge



It's amazing how quickly another year has gone by. Time flies when you're having fun, right? Well in our case, those couldn't be truer words. This time last year, we announced our new **smrt**™ Marketing technology to the industry at the CARS trade show in Las Vegas. Since then, we've seen a wonderful response and are enjoying fantastic results in both response rates and return on investment for our customers.

In large part, the introduction of **smrt** Marketing was to respond to the rapidly changing marketplace, where consumer behavior and marketing approach are evolving literally every day with the explosive growth and innovation driving information technology. The way people communicate is not the same as it was ten years ago, five years ago or even as it was last month. It's changing that fast.

Part of our announcement of **smrt** Marketing last year included the promise that we are committed to keeping up with the rapid changes in the industry, sorting through the technologies and concepts, and

helping our customer, find the best use of the available technologies to market your business in the most efficient and effective ways. In keeping with that commitment, in the coming weeks, we will be rolling out **smrt** 2.0.

Smrt 2.0 is an expansion of the services, techniques and technologies that we rolled out so successfully over this last year. With **smrt** demographic segmentation at the core of it, always informing you who your best and most valuable current and potential customers are, we are prepared to unveil a whole host of new ways to go after those best customers and to keep them coming back.

To follow is a brief preview of features you will be seeing in the near future. Our goal is to serve you and make your business grow. We look forward to working with you to get some of these amazing tools up and running for your shop.

Until then, I would like to thank you for being our customer and wish you and yours happy holidays and best wishes for the new year.



Fighting for Google Love – The Value of Current Content

By John Daulton

Google the words “content is king” and you will find tons of articles using that phrase, a phrase originally coined by Bill Gates back in 1996 in an essay by that name. If you Google it today, you will find lots of arguments about what it means and if it is still (or ever was) true. So, to make one element of “content” on the Internet less confusing and seemingly shape-shifting, here's one thing about content that, at least to this point, still holds true: if you want to be found online, you'll want to have good, relevant content on your website.

“Content” means information, which includes photos and videos as well as text. To a certain extent, the more content you have, the better. That is a highly qualified statement, because nobody knows exactly how the Google algorithms work—they are kept secret and they change frequently—but there is no doubt that having a decent amount of quality content related to your area of specialty and your locality helps you get closer to the top of a search engine query looking for services that you offer at your shop.

If you have a small website, maybe no photographs and only a few hundred words of content text, and other shops have bigger websites with several pictures and a few thousand words, your shop's website is likely at a disadvantage. Search engines, particularly Google, tend to favor more content over less content.

Another element of content that matters is how recent and frequently updated content is. The pattern of Google search preferences indicates that having new content added to a website regularly gives that website an edge over websites that just sit there and never change month after month, year after year. Adding fresh information not only increases the amount of content, it shows search engines that the website represents a business that is active and engaged.

This is where things like blog posts and shop reviews come into play. It's not just a matter of adding content—although that is a critical function of either strategy—but about keeping fresh NEW content showing up, proving to the picky search engines that your shop's website is perhaps more relevant than that old stale website of the shop down the street. In the modern online world, the position of “king” is now being fought over by other things, but content still matters a lot. How good and recent is yours?

Automated Customer Reviews (CSI)

- 100% of your customers reachable by email receive surveys to rate your shop.
- Includes a simple 1 to 5 "star" rating and a space to write a comment about their experience.
- When completed, YOU will be notified via email that you have a shop review waiting for you.
- With a click of a button, your reviews are published online in lots of popular and important places.

Search Engine Friendly Online "Customer Review Publisher"

- Search Engine Friendly "Reviews Web Page"
 - Search engines love fresh, regularly updated, customer-generated content. We will publish reviews to your custom-built landing page, providing additional online presence for you in a ways proven highly effective for getting your shop found by potential customers searching online for local vehicle maintenance and repair.
 - This page will include:
 - Shop address and important contact information.
 - "About My Shop" content.
 - Links to your shop's official website.
 - A list of services your shop offers.
 - A "create a coupon" tool that allows you to easily build and manage online only offers.
 - An appointment scheduler.

Social Media: Facebook and Twitter – Automatic Updates

Using your current Facebook and Twitter accounts (or creating them for you at no cost), we will automatically enable your customer reviews to be published with the

click of a button on both of these massively popular Internet sites. You get:

- Your Social Media accounts will include a "Special Offers Section."
- Reviews gathered by smrt will be seen on a special reviews tab.
- Your web-based information, created on your smrt Reviews Web Page (mentioned above), will be published here along with your special offers.
- Finally we will provide you with the ability to easily login and add content or news to Facebook as well as stories and seasonal reminder articles provided to the industry by our writers.

Online Visibility Report Card & Review Alerts

smrt 2.0 searches for your shop website's presence in popular online directory sites that rank highest in search engines – the places where consumers are most likely to look for information on your company. smrt 2.0 also finds reviews, ratings, and other consumer-generated content related to a business, helping you harness the power of social networking. Furthermore, we make it easy for you to add enhanced content and correct erroneous information in online listings. This service identifies the presence or absence of your business listings on relevant local sites and scores your business for its completeness there.

- Find out how complete and accurate your shop's information is on local directories, search engine local listing services and social networking sites that matter to your shop.
- Notification when anyone writes about your shop on some of the most relevant "consumer comment" sites on the Internet.

Why Would an Auto Shop Need

facebook



By John Daulton

There aren't too many people who haven't heard of Facebook, but there are more than a few people who think it's "just for kids" or that it's "a waste of time for people with nothing better to do." And you know what, I'm not even going to argue that it is anything more than a place for people with nothing better to do, even though I believe it is. But here's why I believe it matters for automotive shops: As of July 2010, Facebook had over 500 million active users. 500 million. Think about that for a second. That's a lot of people—and a lot of potential customers.

And they're not "just kids." Facebook reports the following stats that should be of interest to every small business owner in America:

"More than 29 million Facebook users are between the ages of 35-54 with another nearly 10 million 55+."

Note that the 55+ crowd has grown by over 900% in just this year, so it's definitely not just youngsters getting on there. And something else to consider is that a whole bunch of those 500 million people, young and old, live in your community. They drive cars, trucks and SUVs, and they all need service and repair. They really are potential customers.

Now, you knew that last part already even if you never gave it much thought. That's not really the super-important part of what I'm getting at. What's most important for you to understand as a shop owner or manager is WHAT all those vehicle-owning people living and working around your shop right now DO when they are on Facebook.

They write about stuff they like. They write about and pay attention to what matters to them, and then they share it with their friends (who may also be your potential customers).

One of the major functions/features of Facebook, for those of you who don't have an account, is a thing called "Like." Basically, whenever anyone likes/enjoys/believes in something that someone writes or directs them to (like YOUR shop's Facebook page), that person has an option to click a little button that says "Like." If they like it, for ANY reason, they click "Like" and the system registers that their friend's amusing comment or someone's puppy photograph or your shop's Facebook page has

gle person who likes your shop. And not only can you deliver the message, you KNOW they are going to see it because it is ON THEIR WALL, their interface with the thing that 500 million people go to every day. Whether "they have nothing better to do" or not, they will be reading your shop's marketing messages. Maybe \$25 off a brake job will give them something to do.

Seriously. This is so much marketing power, any shop that has not spent time looking at the potential of this communication medium is re-

"They are giving you permission to communicate with them."

another "like." It's keeping score. That might not seem super important at first glance, but it is.

Here's why: Every time people click "Like" on your shop's Facebook page, they are giving you permission to communicate with them. And it's not just like saying it's okay for you to send them an email that they may or may not choose to open. No, it's not that at all. What it is is they are giving you permission to write on what is called their Facebook "wall."

Writing on a "wall" is Facebook lingo for sending people a message that they are going to see without having to open it. Every time a Facebook user logs into their account, they see a home page called their "wall." Messages appear on it. Think of it like an actual wall, and everyone that they have accepted as a friend or that they have "liked" (like your shop) gets to write "graffiti" on their wall. In essence, your shop can spray paint a message like "We're doing brake jobs for \$25 off until Friday" on their Facebook wall.

Here's where that messaging gets even more powerful: You don't have to go to every wall of every person that has "liked" your shop to get your message out—that could take forever. You just write the message once, on your shop's wall, and it shows up on everyone else's wall that has "liked" you.

Think about that. For 1.375 seconds of work, you can deliver a custom message to every sin-

ally missing something huge.

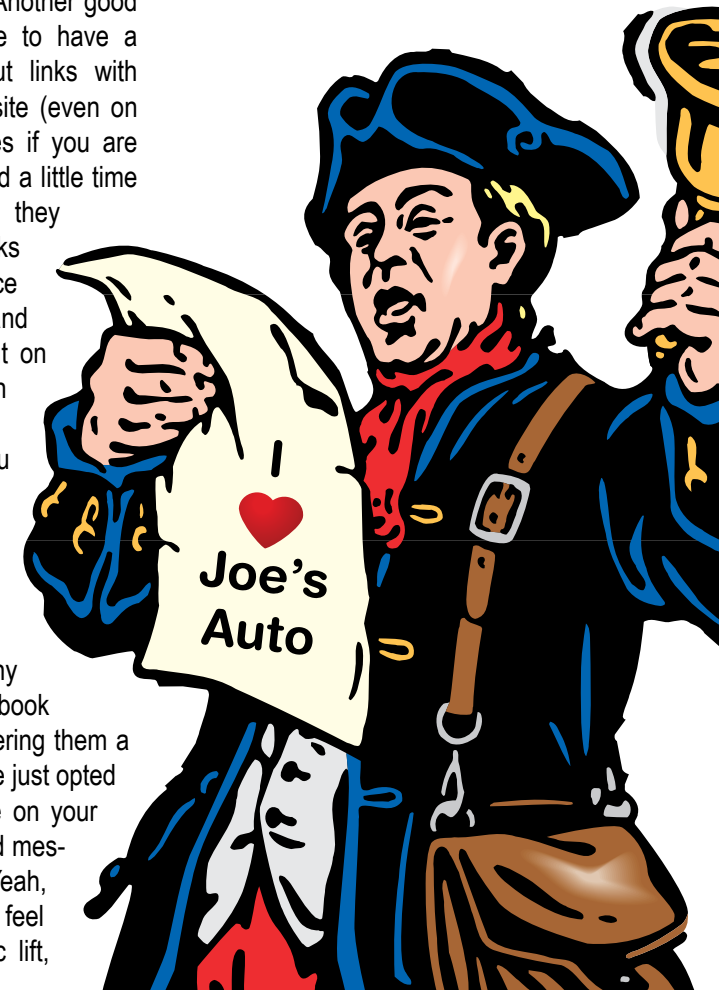
"What's the catch?" you're asking. Good question. Here's the catch: you have to get people to "like" your shop.

"How do I do that?" you ask. Another good question. For starters, you have to have a Facebook account. You can put links with the Facebook icon on your website (even on your business cards and invoices if you are motivated). From there, you spend a little time talking to your customers when they come in. "Hey, Mrs. Jones, thanks for coming in and letting us replace that serpentine belt for you. Oh, and hey, don't forget to check us out on Facebook. We have a coupon on there for your next oil change."

Yes, you heard me right: You have a coupon on there. See, that's how to get people to "like" your shop's Facebook page. You give them a tiny little incentive, and, because people are very engaged with their Facebook life, many of them will go "like" your Facebook page simply because you are offering them a discount. When they do, they have just opted in to seeing everything you write on your wall—remember the 1.375 second message thing I mentioned above? Yeah, you can do that every time you feel like having some midweek traffic lift,

a spontaneous two-day-only sale. No planning involved. You just look out and notice your bays are a little light, log into Facebook, and type in, "Today and tomorrow only: oil changes are only \$15. Mention you saw it on Facebook." Bam, instant marketing.

Granted there are techniques and a small learning curve to make all this work, but it works, and it's going to work more and more and more as time goes on. The sooner you get on this train, the sooner you get to enjoy the ride. With our new smrt 2.0 program, we can help you manage your Facebook account so you get the most from your shop marketing. From appointment setting, to special offers, to actually posting reviews to your shop's Internet landing page which helps people find you via Google search, we can help you do a lot of neat things with Facebook. It's time to start looking at it seriously. It's not just for the kids anymore.



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