



## Okay, I Have a Facebook Page... Now What? —By John Daulton

For some shop owners, getting a Facebook page with smrt™ 2.0 might seem like inheriting a giant pipe organ from one of those old European cathedrals. Sure, it's neat to look at, but how do you make music with this thing? In talking to clients, I've heard comments like, "Facebook is for teenagers," and even, "I don't care what people had for lunch." And it's true; a lot of teenagers do use Facebook, and many people (teenagers and adults) will write about what they had for lunch. Life is a silly place, and nowhere is human absurdity made more apparent than Facebook. However, that's not all that happens there. People connect with people in very real ways, and it doesn't necessarily have to do with what you had for lunch. It has to do with who you are and what has value in your life. Getting that song to play properly can take some practice.

While there are lots of contests and other ways to make your shop's Facebook page pay off (which I will cover in future articles), the first and foremost way to make music on the pipe organ of your shop's Facebook page is really just to be yourself. Your professional self, but yourself.

One way to make that kind of music is to share real things about you and your shop. For example, let's say you just got a new piece of equipment that you are really happy about: an alignment rack or a new diagnostic tool. Brag about it. It's perfectly acceptable to think something is totally cool, and it's perfectly acceptable to go onto your Facebook and say, "Hey, we just got the new Hunter Super-Mega X37 Turbo Alignment machine! This is the greatest alignment machine of all time, and we are totally excited. It does, X, Y and Z which will help our customers get more mileage and save money on gas and tires." Not only is that perfectly acceptable, THAT is good social media. It shows your excitement (making you human and approachable), but it also shows your customers that your shop is always on top, always cutting edge, always getting the latest equipment and training to keep their cars in great shape. When they see that passing across their Facebook wall, it reinforces your shop's brand as a good kind of place to take a car.

On the topic of posting, sometimes we get asked if shop owners should post things about their dogs, their grandkids or about their

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## Postcards, Email and Mobile Phone Marketing

While postcards are still the backbone of a successful marketing campaign, it is important to collect email addresses of your customers. While it is true that a lot of people don't want email reminders, it's also true that many do, and it's good to give them the option to "opt in" for that service (as you hopefully know, you get unlimited free email service reminders as part of service bundles—if you didn't know, ask your Account Manager to tell you about bundle options and benefits).

Perhaps just as important to remember is that many people who have email also have their email forwarded to their smart phones. Here's the cool part: you don't have to get them to "opt in" to receiving emails via their cell phone if they have opted into email. Opted in is, well, opted in. Which means, since they are the ones who set up their email and phone to work together in that way, you will actually reach many of your customers with service reminder messages right to their phone. It doesn't cost them extra for a text message (many people have to pay a fee for texts), and they still get to see it on their phones. That's a winning scenario for everyone.

But to really cash in on this opportunity, you do have to get email addresses for your customers. A key part of that is to make sure everyone who works your front counter is in the habit of collecting email addresses when writing up customers. Plus, if you're in a hurry to capitalize on email opportunities, **we can also get many of your customers' email addresses for you; ask your Account Manager about an "email append."**



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fishing trip last weekend. And that's a good question. Are posts about dogs and vacations sour notes or sweet music to your customers on social media? The answer, in the end, comes down to what it's going to do for your shop.

If you have a shop mascot, like a dog, it's perfectly fine to feature Facebook posts about it. The customers who know you, and know the dog, might like that (if it's not overdone). However, newer customers who decide to "like" your page don't know the dog. In addition, potential new customers who find your Facebook through Google searches or some other search engine don't know it either, so they might not be as impressed if all they see is a string of "Rover did this," "Rover did that," and "Here's a picture of Rover chewing on an old fan belt." They may be dog people and love it. They might not. Ultimately, it's up to you to decide how you want to convey the personality of your shop.

People buy from people, but remember, they buy from professionals first.

What you post on Facebook allows you to shape the perception people have of you in other ways. The things you share (links to articles and videos and even other Facebook pages) reveal what you value. If you find useful information that in some way improves your customers' lives, they will respond. An example of this kind of information might be as simple as sharing a link to an article about new child safety seat weight requirements. It might be

a video you found that explains new tire pressure laws, or even just where to find the cheapest gas in town. It might be any number of things, but whatever it is, it's going to be the kind of thing that YOU are interested in, that YOU are exposed to in your world, and that is based on YOUR experience, interests and expertise. And you are sharing it with them because you are an engaged automotive professional who's got his or her finger on the pulse of the automotive service universe.

Your Facebook page allows you to share your particular skill set in a non-pushy way with your customers. You post it, it shows up on their wall, they can read it (or not) as they please. If it's good, honest content that truly matters to you, it will matter to them, at least some of them—and they will share it with their friends.

You become the neighborhood expert. Sure, you always were, but now your customers get to know you faster. It won't take them five or six visits to get to know you, really know you, over the course of two or three years. They will see who you are right away, in weeks or months, not years. Better yet, your customers have friends on their Facebook that live nearby too, people who may never have been to your shop or even heard of it. But now they will hear and they might come. They will see what kind of shop you run, one operated by interesting people who care about automotive things in a genuine and human way. That's how you play the Facebook pipe organ to maximum effect.

That's good marketing.



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*Technology makes it possible for people to gain control over everything, except over technology.*  
—John Tudor

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# Auto Repair Marketing – How's Your Customer Experience? —By Dave Dickson

When you think about auto repair marketing you probably think about a flyer, a newsletter, an email or some other type of "thing" that gets sent out to potential customers. These are all important, but the biggest auto repair marketing tool is good service. It pays really well not to suck!

In my work coaching and consulting with auto repair shops all over the country I come in contact with hundreds of shops every month, and one of the things that always drives me crazy is how low the bar for customer service is. This is an auto repair marketing disaster.

I talk to grumpy service writers. I talk to uninformed service writers. I talk to service writers who just don't seem to care. And this is at shops that have at least some awareness about auto repair marketing. It gets really bad when you start talking to the shops that don't have a clue.

So, that's the bad auto repair marketing news for them, but it's the good news for you. In the

biggest, most powerful area of auto repair marketing the competition is lame. All you have to do to dominate with this piece of your auto repair marketing is be friendly and responsive.

So now that you understand how important the customer experience is to your auto repair marketing effort, how do you make sure that your service writer and the rest of your staff excel?

Two simple tools; first, pay your service writer for each testimonial they get. Tell them it's a limited time deal to help raise everyone's awareness. Do it for 30-60 days and it will become habit. Your customer service will improve, plus you'll get a lot of great testimonials to use in other auto repair marketing pieces.

The second tool is to lead by example. The best way to get your employees to deliver a great customer service experience is for you to deliver a great employment experience. This doesn't mean coddling them or lowering the bar on performance, just the opposite: it means

requiring that they perform at "Super Bowl" levels. It also means giving them the tools and encouragement to do this.

Creating a great customer experience is one of the most overlooked auto repair marketing tools. Use these tips to uncover this golden opportunity.

**A note about the author:** *Dave Dickson is an accomplished automotive service industry pro with a proven track record of automotive shop success. A genuine "rags to riches" story, Dave started as most shop owners do, with a shop and a dream, and in the span of four years, found himself at the helm of a 21-store empire. His meteoric rise in the automotive world is the subject of the book Slingshot, and now, Dave shares his experience with automotive shop owners everywhere through his consulting company, Perfect Day, Inc. You can check out Dave Dickson's auto repair marketing tips and resources at <http://autorepairmarketing.org>.*



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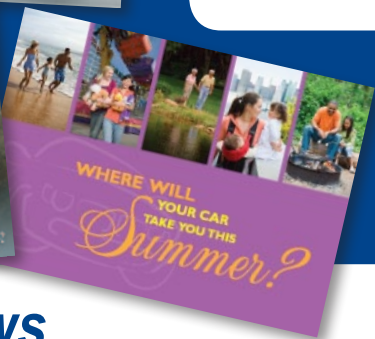
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## Product News

Summer brings numerous opportunities to get more business into your shop. Take advantage of some of the following specials and promotions to help your business capitalize on the hot weather and increased travel of summer.

### Summer Specials:

Your customers will be traveling often over the next few months, and the biggest favor you can do for them is to remind them that there are things they should be doing to be prepared. Send out a Summer Special and help them ensure their trips do not include unexpected time stuck beside the road.

### Air Conditioning and Cooling System Maintenance:

Get specific! Some customers are happier if your service reminders are precise. With summer comes heat, and often with that heat comes the experience of overheating—whether it's the driver or the cooling system. Send out an Air Conditioning or Cooling System Special (or combination of both) and give your customer the heads-up on keeping their cool this summer.

### Preventive Maintenance:

Summer, winter, spring, or fall... some preventive maintenance doesn't have much to do with the seasons changing at all. Odometers spin regardless of temperature, time or conditions of the road. Let your customers know you are their best choice for taking care of the preventive maintenance on their vehicles.

### Summer Newsletter:

Here's a source of good advice for your customers about taking care of their cars during the hot summer months. Each article is written to help maintain and improve customer loyalty to your shop. It's entertaining, informative, and, ultimately, built to drive more business into your bays.

