



Featuring Guest Writer Noah Rickun

A frank discussion on attitudes, the economy and why “The Phone Just Doesn’t Ring Like it Used To.”

FEATURING



Summer holidays

Father’s Day and the 4th of July present marketing opportunities in “Product News.”

Consumer Confidence and You

— John Daulton

Many reports suggest the economy is improving, which is great. Who among us isn’t totally and completely sick of hearing about the economy? However, we aren’t out of the woods yet. Unemployment is still an issue and the fallout of the recession is still taking its toll on both attitudes and bottom lines. Many businesses are still unstable, some will still fail.

Consumers know this.

An important thing to understand about “consumer confidence” is that, well, it matters. One part of that concept is that people don’t want to do business with a business that they are afraid isn’t going to make it. Which is not to say that they won’t help out a struggling business that they care about if they think that some effort on their part might save the enterprise. But it is to say that, people aren’t going to invest their time and money in a business that isn’t going to be there for them down the road. They don’t want to invest time forming relationships with professionals that aren’t going to be around tomorrow. They don’t want to buy things that won’t have a viable warranty tomorrow either. They want to have “confidence.”

Now we all know there are no promises about what’s going to happen tomorrow. However, we do know that “perception is reality” in many cases. Whether a business is rock solid or struggling,

one great way to create or improve a perception of strength is to do what strong businesses do. Beyond just doing good work and keeping a positive attitude, it’s important to keep up the appearance of success too. Keep the place tidy and professional looking. Keep the personnel looking tidy and professional. And do the “little things” that the big, successful businesses that are going to be around when the economic dust settles do.

One of these “little things” is sending out newsletters. A newsletter does a number of things for your shop and your customer. First, it is what in marketing-lingo is called “a touch.” Every time you communicate with your customer, every time you have your shop’s name go through their mind, you have “touched” them. A newsletter is a touch. You want to touch your customers at least four times a year to keep your shop in their active memory.

The second thing a newsletter does is it gives your shop an opportunity to explain in detail why certain things (maintenance inspections, preventive maintenance, etc.) should be done. It helps them understand, in a non-shop environment, things you want them to know and understand when they are IN the shop. They get information from you, but in the comfort of their own home. Less pressure to decide if they

should do something or not. They can make calm decisions without worrying about disappointing you or about whether it’s just a sales pitch or not.

A third thing newsletters do is show that you care. Now this is an easy concept to write off. People will roll their eyes when they hear that, but it is true, and here’s why: Whether your customers are completely “converted” into believing in the value of regular maintenance or not by a newsletter from you, they do know that you spent the time and money it takes to come up with one and to send it out. Yes, they know that you want them to come to your shop and buy service, and they will associate that desire with



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your newsletter. However, they cannot help but recognize you are spending time and effort providing them with real information, and even a little humor and fun, in your effort to invite them back to your shop. People do not think ill of a shop that brings them information, humor and fun. In fact, they feel positively about it; they like it. It's a positive feeling, and it does a great deal to reinforce the EMOTIONAL attachment you want them to develop and maintain towards your shop. That is powerful stuff.

A fourth element of newsletters that matter to a shop is the opportunity to include offers or promotions. The bottom of our newsletters have a coupon area that can include discounts or promotional offers. Does your front-end parts supplier have a rebate program going, a volume special, maybe a trip giveaway for the highest selling shop? Do you just want to drive in a few more cars? Here's your chance to grab some extra attention for what you are trying to do.

The fifth thing that the newsletter does is to help reinforce the sense your customers have of your shop's stability. Newsletters are "evidence" of your shop's ongoing success. They project an unspoken message that says, "We're totally solid, just doing our thing, and will be here for a long time." It's a confidence building mechanism, giving your customers extra proof that having chosen your shop for service, and continuing to choose your shop, is a safe investment of their time, money and energy. They can be confident in you.

Our Summer Newsletter is now available and it's a solid mechanism for building or strengthening the perception of your shop's staying power in these uncertain times. Let your customers know you are going to be there for them, and make a few extra service sales while you are at it with an offer that brings a few people in. Call your account manager if you'd like to know more, or log onto Weblink and have a look at the summer edition that is up now.

Guest Author – Noah Rickun



We'd like to introduce (and thank) Noah Rickun, CEO of Jeffrey Gitomer's TrainOne, for guest writing the following article for our newsletter this month. Noah's straight-to-the-point, no-nonsense approach has earned him respect as an industry speaker and has helped him push sales professionals and business people to greater success for years.

"The Phone Just Doesn't Ring Like It Used To..." (and why it really never has)

by Noah Rickun

It's no secret that things are different today. The economy stinks. Get over it.

"In this economy..." has become the introduction to every rationalization for mediocre performance from every repair shop owner and manager I have talked to in recent months.

"In this economy..." is the precursor to statements like "I'm only down ten percent" and "We're surviving."

"In this economy..." is a symptom. It's a symptom not of a poor economy, but of a poor attitude. Your poor attitude.

Here's the reality: most people think they have a great attitude, but few actually do. Let me frame this in a way that you will get it:

Have you ever been in an argument where the best comeback popped into your head ten minutes *after* the argument ended? It's because you couldn't think straight during the argument. It's because NEGATIVITY blocks CREATIVITY. In business, your creativity defines your ability to differentiate yourself from the competition and to win despite the challenges you face.

*"Whether
think you*

If there is only one element that will help you to be successful in life more than anything else, it is that of having a positive attitude. Attitude is the foundation for success. It's the difference between complaining and blaming everyone else, and doubling your average weekly gross.

There's a million quotes on attitude, but the one that sticks with me most is, "Life is 10% what happens to you, and 90% how you react it." It is a Charles Swindoll quote that my mom hung on the refrigerator when I was growing up. There are many more quotes that I often refer back to, but my mom's refrigerator magnet has been burned into my mind.

I have been visiting shops since 2001, and I have heard nothing but complaints from 95% of their owners about how things "aren't as good as they used to be," and of course, "the phone doesn't ring like it used to!"

Be honest with yourself. The phone has never really "rang like it used to." Sure, twenty years ago when cars were totally different and the internet had not yet been invented, the phone might have rung more. That might be because there was no other effective form of communication—or of researching repair options. When did you receive your first email? How about your first text message? When did you first make a purchase online? I'll bet if you really think about it, about the same time.

People long for the past when they have no understanding of the future. While you were sitting around complaining about the lack of phone calls, the future arrived and suddenly you were not only unprepared for the future—you were no longer prepared for the PRESENT.

Once you come to the realization that the success (or failure) of your business is entirely dependent on YOU, you will have made the

er you think you can or
ou can't – you are right.

— Henry Ford

first step toward achieving growth in any economy.

It's all about YOU. Always has been.

When you accept that reality, you'll be ready to start the rest of your business life.

Here's what to do:

1. **Find something inspirational to you.** Something to help you focus on the big picture. For me, it's reading great books or quotes on attitude every day. Ten or fifteen minutes in the morning and I'm ready to take over the world. Jeffrey Gitomer's Little Gold Book of YES! Attitude, Elbert Hubbard's Message to Garcia, Napoleon Hill's Think and Grow Rich, or quotes my friends and customers have sent me over the years. They know I have a collection.
2. **Call your last one hundred customers and ask them simply, "Why did you buy from me?"** Document their buying motives, their story, and their testimony and you will not only double your sales, you will also reaffirm your own self-belief. By interviewing your past customers, you will uncover additional opportunities for business as they share their experiences, their buying motives, issues with the other cars in their household, and their level of satisfaction with your services. When you hear why people do business with you straight from their lips, you will automatically approach new prospects armed with powerful insight—insight that will lead to your ability to create a buying atmosphere and to earn more business than ever before. What's more, when you listen to your customers explain their reasons for doing

business with you, you'll receive an instant boost to your self-esteem. The more confident you are in your ability to help your customers, the more believable

your pitch will become.

3. **Join LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and then go one step deeper**—almost every automotive association has an online group or forum. Join the group, post new ideas and respond to others. Ask your customers to follow, friend, and link to you so that you can communicate with them quickly and cost-effectively. Look for the opportunity to capture customer testimonials online and then share them!!
4. **Become known as a person of value within your local community.** Take leadership positions at your chamber of commerce, rotary club, and other networking groups. Give a talk on the importance of changing your oil. Or on the effect of under-inflated tires on fuel efficiency. Give value first, and enjoy never having to cold call again.
5. **Train and educate your employees.** I'll bet you've put your technicians through all sorts of ASE certifications and ongoing technical seminars. And, I'll also bet that you haven't provided one ounce of valuable sales training to your manager. That puts your shop at a decided disadvantage to those who invest in education. With the advent of low-cost, online sales training the financial investment itself has become nominal but the return can make the difference between success and failure.

Noah Rickun is the CEO of Jeffrey Gitomer's TrainOne (the world leader in online sales training) and a Gitomer Certified/Audience Approved speaker. Noah delivers customized and personalized seminars on sales, customer loyalty, and personal development. For more information go to www.rickun.com or email noah@rickun.com.

What Are You Doing About Recommended Services That Get Declined?

You spend time and money getting every vehicle that comes in to your shop inspected as part of your service. You have to inspect it, write up recommendations, look up parts and labor, and then speak to the customer. Some approve the work, some don't. Whether they buy additional services beyond what they came for, you spent time (and money) on the inspection and write up.

So what kind of follow up are you doing after they leave?

For many shops, the answer is, "Nothing." Ouch! For others the answer is making follow-up calls or sending a note "when they have time."

"When they have time" means, when they aren't busy. Which they would be if they were doing the work that got away!

We have ability to capture those technician recommendations that YOU PAID YOUR TECHNICIAN TO MAKE but that got away. We can remind your customers to come get those recommended services done. What better opportunity for increased service sales than someone who has already been to your shop, already knows you and the quality of your work, and already has an established service need? That is a PRIME opportunity. .

Technician recommendation reminders are subject to accessibility based on the shop management system (SMS) that your shop uses, so if you are curious about capturing these great opportunities and bringing them back, give your account manager a call today and he or she will be happy to determine if your SMS is one of the many we work with every day.

1.888.942.5448

Product News

Father's Day: Father's Day is a unique chance to make a service offer that speaks to your customers' hearts. Choose from a selection of unique marketing messages that present your shop's services as a gift.



Summer Specials: The weather might not be steamy and hot just yet, but there's no point letting your customers wait for the heat to discover they should have planned ahead. Send out a Summer Special and give them the chance to be prepared!



Summer Newsletter: Some good advice for your customers about taking care of their cars before and during summer time. 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.



Independence Day: Fireworks, flags, and fun are all familiar visual associations with the Fourth of July. These recognizable and emotive images afford great marketing potential for your shop. Send an Independence Day special card and bring some extra business in.



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