



CAPRICORN

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- There are no additional resources in step 7w

Join the training revolution

by Geoff Mutton

The headline on the front cover of the first TaT magazine back in February 2008 was ***Modern repair techniques may save this car – but who's going to save him.*** A dejected old-fashioned mechanic was wandering off into the distance while modern 'surgeons', using scan tools and the like, worked on the car's engine in what was set up to look like a medical operating theatre.

That cover pricked a lot of consciences and it could be said that it stimulated a significant transition into a new era of auto repair.

The story pulled no punches – for mechanics to survive, they needed to become technicians and that would involve a long career journey of learning and knowledge sharing.

After years of preaching the penny has finally dropped.

Modern vehicle technology has forced many workshops into retirement. At the peak of this transition, workshops, or more accurately, garages, were closing at the rate of one every week across Australia.

Those who survived and the new technicians who have joined the industry have an attitude that is totally different to that of just ten years ago. They no longer have an 'I know everything'. They no longer see their fellow workshop as the enemy. They see them as allies and happily share information and tools.

First hand evidence of this trend was clearly demonstrated at a recent oscilloscope training session that TaT ran in conjunction with the Australian Repairs Council of Australia (ARCA) and Capricorn Society. The Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane events sold out within a week.

Ten years ago, this would have been a hard sell with reps pleading for workshops to attend. For once, 'Book early to avoid disappointment' became reality.

Surprisingly there are still some in the industry who say they can't find good training. Sorry, but they are not looking hard enough.

In each edition of the TaT magazine two pages are allocated to training events. The likes of Repco Autotech, Diesel Help Australia, Valhalla industries, Bosch and Autologic are all out there providing quality training at very reasonable prices. They cover a range of topics from diesels through to electric vehicles.

Most training providers reveal their programs at least three months in advance.

Every workshop owner and manager should go online at least every quarter, print out the training on offer and discuss it with their team.

Getting staff involved is vital. You will quickly identify those who really want to have a future in the industry and the plodders.

Training in a rapidly advancing industry cannot be seen as one-off events. Like most other professional industries training is an on-going career requirement. As an ex-chartered accountant, I can tell you first hand that to maintain a license to operate you need to attend around 30 hours of structured learning or assessment each year. The Law Society of NSW requires a minimum of 10 hours of continuing professional development per year. These are not optional. Dodge these hours and you can no longer work in the industry.

Following the lead of other professional industries the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA) and ARCA are looking at the possibility of introducing Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) in Australia. ASE it was established in America in 1972 as a non-profit organisation to help improve the quality of the automotive service and repair industry.

ASE certification must be earned. It requires a minimum of two years of work experience outside an apprenticeship followed by a series of tests. Every certification lasts just five years, and the tests need to be repeated.

The marketing plan would be aimed at educating car owners about the benefits of using highly trained and certified ASE technicians, thereby giving those workshop owners who employ ASE certified technicians a huge marketing advantage.

In November 2018 an ASE pilot scheme was conducted in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, with great success. As a result a second trial is scheduled in every Australian capital city for early 2020. More information will be circulated once dates and locations are finalised.

Attending training costs money and takes time so participants need to plan to ensure they reap the benefits that suits their business and career.

It's never too late to start improving your skills. Make it a new year resolution to attend external training or better still, get involved in the second round of ASE pilot testing.

The place to start is www.tatbiz.net.au/capricorn

Just go for it!