step 7 – Managing and building your team

*- how to better manage your team
so you attract and retain better quality staff*

step 7z
Are you providing staff with adequate information

o   **There are no additional resources in step 7z**

Are you providing your staff with enough information

by Jeff Smit

Nobody with a few years under their belt will argue that the modern aftermarket workshop is very different to those of our apprenticeship years.

The vehicles are different and the equipment we use is different, and very high tech. But the biggest difference is the amount of information that has to be accessed so that we can undertake repairs and diagnostics for late model vehicles and sometimes even for basic servicing,

The range of information is very broad, from what type of oil goes into a vehicle (which these days is critical), the torque setting for a drive shaft, the engine control unit pin out, frequency of gear oil change, where to find the multi-function control module live, how to reset service lights, how to update digital service records and the time it should take to do a timing belt. The list is absolutely endless.

Everything mentioned above covers the straight forward data and information needed daily in all workshops. But what about the more practical help and information that needs to be instantly accessed to help us do our job, like how to use a particular function on a scan tool, what does a P2096 code mean on a Mazda or how to get the EGR off a VW Amarok. And the best information of all – has anyone had this issue on a Ford Ranger or Holden Captiva, and how did they fix it?

Given that the range and depth of technical information required is huge, we have to accept that there is no single source, no one-stop provider that can meet this challenge.

So it follows that what is needed is broad access to a number of data and information providers and networks.

There are many such networks in Australia and around the world that are free to join, and these can be a great information source. But many are limited by the number of active users who subscribe to the service, and by their individual capabilities and experience.

The industry is well served by a number of quality data providers, but these come at a cost. This should not be regarded as an impediment to workshop skills, or profitability.

All costs related to scan tools, updates and data providers should be passed on to customers. If any form of information has to be sourced to undertake a repair, it is quite legitimate for a technical or data fee to be added to the invoice.

Many workshops have been doing this for years with no customer complaints. Information and data must be treated like oil and filters. They are essential supplies required to complete the job, so should be invoiced.

Having access to data and information is one thing – allowing your technicians the time to use and apply this valuable well of information requires a rejig of the actual process of undertaking a service or diagnosing a problem. Two new key functions must be added to the service or repair process, and they are what we call PR – preparation and research.

Time must be allowed to prepare and research any job that needs a gathering of information and perhaps some practical advice that can speed up or ease the process – a win-win for workshop and customer. The more time a technician spends on PR the the more accurate and quicker they will be on the job. And just like data, this time should be charged out as labour.

The best thing you can do for your workshop and your customers in 2021 is to ensure that you and your technicians have access to good data and information and approach every job with a new approach to the service and repair process, to include a healthy amount of time for PR.

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

Just go for it!