



WHY WOMEN MATTER

In 2012, a survey conducted by Auto MD stated that 85 percent of women dislike going to a car dealership more than going to the dentist. The survey also found that 83 percent have felt overcharged for services at a dealership or repair shop. Currently, women are responsible for close to 60 percent of all final purchases on a car lot. This means that dealerships *must* familiarize themselves on the needs and characteristics women possess in order to successfully build a relationship with them. What can you do to make this experience more enjoyable for your female customers?



Complete a Multi-Point Inspection of Your Fixed Ops Department:

- ☐ Are this year's **Fixed Ops Profits** higher than last year's?
- ☐ Has your **Customer Pay Repair Order count** grown 10% or more this year?
- ☐ Is your **CSI** above **Zone Average**?
- ☐ Are you averaging at least **\$125 per Q-Lube RO**?
- ☐ Have your **CP Hours per RO** increased by .3 hr over last year?
- ☐ Is your **Service Absorption** growing?

How'd you do?

If you answered **NO** to **ANY** of these questions, you need DealerPRO to inspect and diagnose your Fixed Ops process and hidden profit opportunities.

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Understand The Relationship

Providing service to your female customers starts with understanding and acknowledging the relationship women have with their vehicles. The car a woman purchases is seen as an external representation of her personality. This relationship is very different than it is for male customers; it involves a deeper emotional pull. Although men are very emotionally connected to their vehicle, women tend to see the personality extension prior to even stepping on a car lot. Focus on feelings and brand value when making a sale to a woman.

When it comes to service, 88 percent of women trust the advice they are given about what's wrong with their car a majority of the time. However, 60 percent of frequent service users believe they know more about their car than the mechanic gives them credit for. Women conduct research heavily through the Internet and social media, followed by word of mouth and traditional media. This decision is not entered into lightly. Assume your customer is well informed and has made the right decision by choosing your dealership.

By accepting a woman's business, you are committing to help find her personality through a car. Her purchase is not only a financial decision, but also an emotional one that leads to a lasting relationship.

Provide Inviting Environment

Approximately 50 percent of women use a private mechanic, versus 40 percent who use a dealership. If dealers want to see more female customers for service, they may need to change the way they present their business. Local private mechanics tend to have a more personal relationship with their customer versus a dealership that sees hundreds of different people a week. These relationships take time to develop. For an immediate return, a dealership should consider creating an environment that is comfortable and inviting to the female customer.

Making small changes to your environment, such as setting the television station to a neutral or female-friendly channel, offering current magazines that are non-automotive and having a staff who is friendly to females are just

a few ways to start. Some dealerships have even added computer labs, kid play areas, soft music, free snacks and exercise equipment. Keep in mind that women are influencing car decisions even if they aren't the ones buying. Having an environment that is conducive to their needs makes women feel that the auto industry values their time and money just as much as a man's.

The environment extends past the building and into the dealership team. Your vendors and the people on your lot should reflect the same values of excellent service to female customers. Often, this includes adding more female staff and vendors to the crew. Many times, a female consumer will feel most comfortable when surrounded by people like her. These women are valuable assets because they know what techniques best appeal to their fellow clientele. Currently, only 15 percent of the employees in the automotive industry are female. In addition to adding staff, educating current team members is also a great step in the right direction. Some helpful resources for training could include Women's Automotive Association International (WAAI), NADA and AskPatty.com. A few female-friendly partners could include: Colors on Parade, TrueCar, Cox Automotive and ALLY.

Respect The Customer

Most people dislike a visit to the car dealership, but women seem to dread it more. A survey led by Jabian Consulting showed that 26 percent don't feel they are treated equally to a male customer. Women may "only" be making 60 percent of the purchases, but they are influencing more than 80 percent. Keeping these statistics in mind and making sure women feel included in the process of purchasing a car or taking it to get serviced is crucial.

If a couple comes together to a dealership, the woman should be treated with the same respect the man receives from the staff. In order to ensure you are providing a positive experience to all your customers, you should make sure they are all receiving the same amount of respect and sincerity on the lot. Even the simple act of shaking a woman's hand goes a long way, as it commands the same respect a dealer would give to a male customer they encounter. The stigma of women getting taken advantage of on a lot is still a common notion. Treating women with respect is the No. 1 way to best service this customer consistently.

Women have been changing the game for the auto industry for years now. When you consider the fact that, as of 2010, the number of female drivers in the U.S. surpassed the amount of male drivers by 105.7 million to 104.3 million, it really puts things into perspective. It is time for dealers to embrace the new auto customer and make them feel at home in their car again.



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