

Making the Most of Slow Days

By Paul Rupp
ERE Technical Support

Now that the heat of summer has passed and the bitter cold of winter is still looming, you may experience some downtime in your shop. Since time is literally



money in the car repair business, I plan ahead for slow days by lining up projects for myself and my staff in anticipation of these inevitable non-billable hours.

Here are some ideas to draw in some business:

- Try to reschedule future appointments for the current day.
- Call a day ahead to confirm appointments.
- Call all vendors to remind them of your shop and let them know you have space.
- Call used car lots (previous customers).
- Call your fleet accounts to provide priority service.
- Call all of your merchant referrals.
- Review estimate files and follow up on work that was never done.
- Deliver “we appreciate your business” donuts to new merchants for referrals.
- Call all customers with recommended repairs noted on prior repair orders.
- Call AAA (if you are a member) and let them know you could use some business.
- Call “no shows” from previous days.
- Fill bays with cars to provide appearance of being busy.
- Team huddle to maximize what you can, cheer each other up.
- Notify people of special ordered parts that are in.
- Call “hotsheet” customers who would have had work done before but didn’t have time.
- Extend mileages in database for vehicles due for servicing (such as oil changes or factory servicing).
- Have your employees work on referrals.
- Call on advertised specials to see if they were received.

- Offer pick up and delivery of the customer and/or the vehicle.
- Call towing vendors to let them know you can provide quick service to customers.
- Have mailers created in advance so all you have to do is stamp the expiration date.
- Use under-the-counter \$20 coupons for upsell on the vehicles you do have.
- Call customers regarding second and third vehicles in household.

Here are some ideas to keep your technicians busy:

- Fix walls in shop.
- Change oil in air compressor; note date of oil change.
- Clean out parts washer and sort old nuts and bolts.
- Clean and repair office furniture as needed.
- Polish all work benches.
- Pitch all non-usable cardboard boxes.
- Thoroughly clean lobby; update old magazines.
- Clean off used oil tank.
- Sell and/or haul off old equipment.
- Inspect lifts for loose bolts and pivots, add rubber feet, lube feet screws.
- Repair leaking hoses.
- Repair sheetrock.

This list should keep you busy and help generate revenue even on those mild fall days when alternators are not overheating.

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