

The President's Hotline

How Do You Handle Warranties?

COLUMN BY JIM THOMAS

We all know that the biggest headache is the dreaded warranty—but how you handle the customer makes the difference. The customer is upset, but don't let the customer take charge. Explain to him that you have a specific procedure in place to handle warranties and you have to go through that procedure to make the proper determination.



Attitude: Is the customer always wrong when it comes to warranty issues? Do you play the blame game and try to make the customer feel as though he knows nothing? Remember warranties are a partnership and both halves are important to make it work.

Procedure: Do you have a specific warranty procedure? Do you use the procedure? Do you ever give the customer a different unit to determine if that solves the problem? Do you tear down the warranty unit and analyze what failed? Do you document the issues with paperwork including what the customer said happened so you can present the info to your supplier? Do you offer to split the repair costs with your customer when the warranty shows

some negligence? Do you credit sales with the cost of the warranty, including your labor, so you are not paying taxes on product that is going out the door as warranty?

In summary, control the customer. Gather the facts and work your procedure. Draw good conclusions about the warranty and try to have one person be in charge of all warranty problems. Ask questions, get answers, solve problems, make the customer happy. Remember all of us have some warranties and are willing to help when needed and sometimes it's the knowledge of the equipment or vehicle that can help with why a warranty occurred.

Finally, always remember the three most important things in auto electric: bad grounds, bad grounds, bad grounds.

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