

Digital Dilemma

ROBERT MAZZUCA's seamless customer communication strategies.

I**N AUTO REPAIR**, communication is key, and one area where shop owners and service advisors can truly stand out is by creating a seamless interaction with their customers. Many shop owners are also consumers themselves, so they understand the frustrations of not receiving timely updates or having to chase down information about a service. Imagine a customer who receives a text reminder about their overdue oil change while sipping their morning coffee or taking a quick break from work. This interaction isn't just convenient; it's proactive, and it highlights the power of effective communication in improving customer retention and satisfaction.

The traditional method of communication between customers and shops often involved phone calls, but in today's busy world, not everyone has time to pick up the phone. Many customers are multitasking, whether at their jobs or taking care of personal responsibilities. This is where digital solutions, such as automated text messaging and digital vehicle inspections, come into play. They help shop owners connect with customers in ways that fit seamlessly into their lives. For instance, a text message regarding a vehicle issue can be read and responded to when the customer is free, whether during lunch or on the commute home. This small shift in communication makes it much easier for customers to stay on top of their vehicle's needs.

One powerful result of this integration is that many customers have started saving the shop's contact information in their phones. Think about the significance of that—a shop is now a trusted point of contact, occupying a place of real estate in the customer's mobile device. When something comes up, rather than picking up the phone to make a call, the customer can send a quick text. This shift not only fosters loyalty but also saves both the customer and the shop time. Texting is faster, more convenient, and often more efficient than a phone call. For the shop, it frees up time for service advisors and managers, allowing them to focus on more complex tasks rather than fielding routine inquiries.

For shops, this shift in communication reflects a broader change in how business is conducted. By moving from

traditional methods, such as phone calls or handwritten notes, to digital systems, shops are improving efficiency and, ultimately, their bottom line. Shop owners might be hesitant to embrace these changes, particularly those who are used to the old ways of doing things. As the saying goes, "teaching an old dog new tricks" can be difficult. But once they see the impact that streamlined communication has on customer retention, satisfaction, and shop productivity, they understand its value.

At the heart of this transformation are three key factors: time, efficiency, and money. Texting creates a direct line of communication between the shop and the customer, allowing shops to manage their time better. Efficiency comes from reducing back-and-forth phone calls or trying to decipher a service request scribbled on a piece of paper. Finally, improved communication leads to increased revenue. When customers are satisfied with the seamless interaction they receive from



a shop, they're more likely to return for future services. It's a win-win for both the customer and the shop owner.

Digital communication tools like automated texting don't just streamline customer interaction—they enhance it. By staking a claim in the customer's phone, shops are ensuring that they remain top-of-mind when the customer needs a repair or maintenance. Customers no longer have to navigate a complex phone tree or wait on hold. Instead, they can shoot off a quick text and get the answers they need.

Additionally, many customers find texting less intrusive than a phone call. It's quick, convenient, and allows them to respond on their own time. This flexibility fits into their busy schedules and contributes to a better overall customer experience. And when customers have a good experience, they're more likely to recommend the shop to others, further boosting the shop's reputation and customer base.

For shop owners and service advisors, this new approach requires a bit of a mindset shift. It might feel faster to jot down a note on paper and pass it to the service advisor, but digital systems have the advantage of being clearer and more reliable. They reduce the chance of miscommunication, prevent lost information, and ensure that everyone in the shop has access to the same details at the same time. This not only improves internal communication but also enhances customer interactions, as the staff is better equipped to answer questions and provide updates.

Ultimately, adopting digital communication tools isn't just about staying current with technology; it's about creating a better experience for both customers and staff. Shops that embrace this change find themselves working more efficiently, reducing mistakes, and building stronger relationships with their customers. And as those relationships grow, so does the shop's profitability. Customers who feel valued and appreciated are more likely to return, spend more on services, and even recommend the shop to friends and family.

In the end, the switch to digital communication tools is a no-brainer for shops. It saves time, improves efficiency, and increases profitability. By creating a seamless interaction between shop owners, service advisors, and customers, shops can ensure they stay ahead of the competition and continue to thrive in an ever-evolving industry. And who would have guessed that such a simple shift could have such a significant impact?

← **Robert Mazzuca** has a range of work experience in the automotive and technology industries. Currently, he serves as the Director of Sales & Onboarding at Bolt On Technology.



Streamline Efficiency

Bolt On equips shops with award-winning software tools aimed at improving marketing, workflow, customer communications, and business growth.

Personalized messaging is crucial for targeting the right customers. Analyzing customer data prioritizes high-value customers. Digital vehicle inspections help identify deferred work items.

Shop owners can benefit from focusing on retaining existing customers through cost-efficient strategies like car count management and targeted marketing.



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