

Hook the Customer

‘Retention’ and ‘marketing’ aren’t synonymous, says **ROBERT MAZZUCA**.

ONE TREND THAT WE’VE SEEN A LOT in the last six months is shop owners that really picked up steam around the time of the pandemic—saw a huge jump in sales in year-over-year growth from 2020–2022, from both the PPP money and then customers hanging on to used cars, new car sales being down, everyone getting things fixed—are now seeing business start to flatline, and this growth is disappearing. That’s where technology can be a true differentiator in helping you get that growth back.

When you’re implementing these systems, it all starts with what you want to achieve in your business. Every shop has a different pain point—they’re in a different demographic, geographic—so understanding what that pain point is helps illuminate the training needed, and most shops can find that efficiency in their business.

And it may seem like at first that it’s going to be hard to get to that point of efficiency, but a lot of times with digital vehicle inspections (DVI), it’s about building trust and transparency with your customers, but also bringing a new level of average repair order or raising that up.

Those are the types of questions you want to ask yourself: What are you looking to achieve? Are you looking to raise the average repair order? Are you looking to just have a more streamlined approach in your business?

I think that’s where it expands past DVI. Digital vehicle inspections are the start, but if you’re flat rate, these technicians want to turn and burn through those higher ticket items. It’s about putting those higher-ticket items back into the shops.

That’s where retention and customer retention tools come into play. You want to make sure that first, the customers that came in, got the inspection done and deferred some items, comes back to your shop for those items. And second, that your general customers that have come in a handful of times but haven’t been seen in

six or 10 months, are coming back. Having that streamlined approach in the background for a shop owner to know that, “Hey, these customers are going to come back and spend that same average amount of money that they’ve always spent at the shop,” that is a great way for a shop owner to, at minimum, stay consistent.

But when you bring back those deferred work items, getting that back into the shop is important for those shop owners to continuously see that upward trend of revenue year-over-year. The power of that tool is making sure that we are reaching out to the right customer at the right time with some form of messaging, primarily text messaging—It’s one of the most personal ways that



you can communicate with a client or prospect—but there are email and direct mail aspects to it, as well.

Ultimately, what we want to do is dive into that data. We want to see exactly what percentage of your customers have come in once, but also what their spending habits are. What is that average spend per customer? And what does that mean to you as a shop owner, in terms of your yearly revenue? If you’re spending 60 percent of your time on customers that come in for an oil change, and that’s only bringing you in 2.5 percent of your revenue, you probably need to start spending some more time on getting some messaging out to that upper echelon of your customer database.

I think it’s that word “marketing,” that causes people to think dollars spent to acquire new customers. But it’s equally important to focus on all those customers that have been to the shop but haven’t been back in 12 months. Those are just as good as a new customer, at that point, but it’s far more cost efficient to get them back, and they’re good spending customers that are just going to continue to fill up those bays for however much longer you can bring them back into the shop.

We discover where you should be spending your time, and then we bring them right back to the doorstep, where it’s not just up to your team to open that door, put that car back in the bay, and perform that DVI. And that cycle just keeps on going.

← **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.



Bolt On Technology team will contribute exclusive content to Auto Service Leader each month at bolton.autoserviceleader.com.