WORKING AS A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE TECHNICIAN

TECH TIP

Clean Clothes Are a Must
Anyone who meets the public in any business must not only be dressed appropriately, but the clothing should be clean. Service advisors and others that greet the public should also be sure that their shoes are shined. Dull, dirty, or scuffed shoes or messy appearance reflects an unprofessional look.

TECH TIP

Never Use Profanity
Regardless of the situation, a true professional never resorts to the use of profanity. If tensions are high and the discussion becomes heated, try to defuse the situation by turning the situation over to someone else.
TECH TIP

Always Have Paper and a Pen When on the Telephone

When talking to a customer, whether in person or on the telephone, have paper and a pencil or pen to record the necessary information. In this case, the customer service representative at a dealer is using a preprinted form to record the service procedures to be performed on a customer’s vehicle while talking on the phone. SEE FIGURE 4–1.

TECH TIP

Smile While You Talk

If you smile while talking on the telephone, your voice will reflect a positive and helpful attitude, which customers or vendors will easily recognize over the telephone. SEE FIGURE 4–2.
Figure 4-2 If you smile while talking on the telephone, your attitude will be transmitted to the customer.

TECH TIP: Use Internet Translation
If the customer is non-English speaking, type the information into a text document and search for a translation on the Internet. Give the copy of the translated document to the customer. The customer request could also be translated into English if needed to help the shop understand exactly what the customer is requesting and needs.

TECH TIP: Google Is Your Friend
If unsure as to how something works or if you need more detailed information about something, go to www.google.com and search for the topic. Using the Internet can help with locating hard-to-find facts and can even be used to help with a service procedure that you have not done before. For a link to all factory service information, go to the Web site of National Automotive Service Task Force at www.nastf.org. Look at the work scheduled for the next day and try to determine as much about the job as possible so you can be prepared the next day to tackle the procedure. Using the International Automotive Technicians Network at www.iatn.net is also very helpful for technical information and can help pin down hard-to-find problems.
TECH TIP

Don’t Touch Other Technician’s Tools
A beginning technician seldom has all of the tools needed to perform all of the service and repair tasks. A technician’s tools are very important. If a tool needs to be borrowed, the beginning technician should ask for permission to borrow a tool. Then when the tool is returned, it should be clean and replaced back exactly where the technician asks for it to be returned.

TECH TIP

Regulated Terms to Use
In some states or areas where automotive service is regulated, such as in California or Michigan, it is important that the term used to describe a labor operation is the term defined by the state agency. This means that some terms used in parts and time guides may not be the same terms used by the state. Always check that the terms used are in compliance with all regulations. Some terms that could be affected include rebuild, repair, overhaul, inspection and R & R (remove and replace), and safety inspection.

TECH TIP

If Late—Call!
When running late, you may know that you will be just a few minutes late but your boss does not know how late you will be. If you are going to be late, even by a few minutes, call the shop and let them know. This does not eliminate your being late from your record, but does demonstrate your concern to your service manager and other technicians who are counting on you to being on time to work every day.
TECH TIP

Ask Me about This
A good service advisor will document what the customer wants done on the work order. However, there are times when the explanation and description would take too long and too much space to be practical. In these cases, the wise service advisor simply states on the work order for the service technician to see the service advisor to discuss the situation. The service advisor can write the basic request to document what is needed.

TECH TIP

Car, Truck, or Vehicle?
When discussing a vehicle with a customer, it is best to avoid creating problems. For example, if a technician asked about a customer’s “car,” the customer could become concerned because they drive a truck and many owners of trucks do not want their vehicle called a car. Use of the term “vehicle,” a generic term, is often recommended when talking to customers to avoid possible concerns.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

What Can a Service Technician Do to Earn More Money?

Because service technicians are paid on a commission basis (flat-rate), the more work that is completed, the more money the technician can earn. Therefore, to earn the most money, the service technician could do the following to increase the amount of work performed:

• Keep up-to-date and learn the latest technical information
• Practice good habits that help avoid errors or incomplete repairs
• Learn from experienced and successful fellow technicians and try to approach the repair the same way the successful technician does
• Purchase the proper tools to do the work efficiently

NOTE: This does not mean that every technician needs to purchase all possible tools. Purchase only those tools that you know you will need and use.
TECH TIP: Technician Skill Level and Severe Service

Most aftermarket service information includes a guideline for the relative level of the technician’s skill required to perform the listed service procedures. These include:

- **A** - Highly skilled and experienced technician
- **B** - Skilled technician who is capable of performing diagnostic of vehicle systems
- **C** - Semi-skilled technician who is capable of performing routine service work without direct supervision

Many time guides provide additional time for vehicles that may be excessively rusted due to climate conditions or have been subjected to abuse. Be sure to quote the higher rate if any of these conditions are present on the customer’s vehicle. [See Figure 4-3.]

TECH TIP: Work Habit Hints

The following statements reflect the expectations of service managers or shop owners for their technicians:

1. Report to work every day on time. Being several minutes early every day is an easy way to show your service manager and fellow technicians that you are serious about your job and career.
2. If you must be late or absent, call your service manager as soon as possible.
3. Keep busy. If not assigned to a specific job, ask what activities the service manager or supervisor wants you to do.
4. Report any mistakes or accidents immediately to your supervisor or team leader. Never allow a customer to be the first to discover a mistake.
5. Never lie to your employer or to a customer.
6. Always return any borrowed tools as soon as you are done with them and in clean condition. Show the person you borrowed the tools from that you are returning them to the toolbox or workbench.
7. Keep your work area neat and orderly.
8. Always use fender covers when working under the hood.
9. Double-check your work to be sure that everything is correct.
   a. Remember: “If you are forcing something, you are probably doing something wrong.”
   b. Ask for help if unclear as to what to do or how to do it.
10. Do not smoke in a customer’s vehicle.
11. Avoid profanity.
12. DO NOT TOUCH THE RADIO! If the radio is turned on and prevents you from hearing noises, turn the radio off. Be sure to return the vehicle with the radio at the same volume as originally set.
   NOTE: Some shops have a policy that requires employees to turn the radio off.
13. Keep yourself neatly groomed including:
   a. Shirttail tucked into pants (unless shirt is designed to be worn outside)
   b. Daily bathing and use of deodorant
   c. Clean hair, regular haircuts, and hair tied back if long
   d. Men: daily shave or keep beard and/or mustache neatly trimmed
   e. Women: makeup and jewelry kept to a minimum

TECH TIP: Adhere to the Times
When starting a new job at a shop or dealership, be sure to ask about the following:
- What time should I arrive at work? This may be different than the scheduled work starting time. For example, the work day could start at 8 a.m., but the shop owner or service manager may want all technicians to arrive and start to get ready to work at 7:50 a.m.
- When is break time? Breaks may or may not be regularly scheduled and it is important for the beginning technician to know and adhere to break times.
- When is lunch time? In some busy shops, the lunch period is staggered to be sure that some technicians are always available for work. Always be willing to adhere to the requested lunch period.

TECH TIP: Keeping “Things” off the Floor
To make cleaning easier and for a more professional shop appearance, keep only those items on the floor that have to be on the floor and find a place off the floor for all other items.
TECH TIP: Look at the Shop from a Customer’s Point of View

To determine if the shop and other technicians look professional, step outside and enter the shop through the same door as a customer. Now look around. Look at the shop and the other technicians. Does the shop give the appearance of a professional service facility? If not, try to improve the look by asking the shop owner or service manager to do the same thing in an attempt to create a more professional looking shop.

TECH TIP: Write It Down

If a technician needs to have another technician finish a repair due to illness or some other reason, be sure to write down exactly what was done and what needs to be done. Verbal communication, while very effective, is often not a good way to explain multiple steps or processes. For example, the other technician could easily forget that the oil had not yet been added to the engine, which could cause a serious problem if the engine were to be started. If in doubt, write it down.

TECH TIP: Don’t Cover Up Mistakes

Everyone makes mistakes. While a damaged component or vehicle is never a good thing to have happen, the wise technician should notify the service manager or other person in charge as soon as a problem or accident occurs. Only then can work begin to correct the problem. If a mistake is hidden, eventually someone will learn about the error and then people will not think it was wise to ignore or to cover up the situation.
# Technician Evaluation

## Technician Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Evaluation</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical Skills</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Ethic</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Work Ethic

- **Punctuality**: Always arrive on time or notify the supervisor in advance of any expected delays.
- **Reliability (Present)**: Be present when scheduled to work.
- **Reliability (Absences)**: Absences should be reported in advance and documented.
- **Quality of Work**: Perform work to the best of your ability, paying attention to detail.
- **Initiative**: Take the initiative to learn and improve your skills.
- **Communication**: Communicate effectively with supervisors and colleagues.
- **Flexibility**: Be flexible and adaptable to changes in the workplace.

## Attitude

- **Punctuality**: Arrive on time and be prepared for work.
- **Dress/Personal Appearance**: Maintain a neat and professional appearance.
- **Safety**: Follow safety procedures and report any hazards.
- **Productivity**: Work efficiently and effectively.
- **Attention to Detail**: Pay attention to details and complete tasks accurately.
- **Adaptability**: Adapt to changes in the workplace.

## Technical Skills

- **Equipment**: Properly use and maintain tools.
- **Diagnosis**: Accurately diagnose vehicle issues.
- **Repair**: Perform repairs and maintenance tasks correctly.
- **Communication**: Clearly communicate with clients and supervisors.
- **Quality Control**: Ensure that work meets quality standards.
- **Documentation**: Record work performed accurately.

## Communication Skills

- **Punctuality**: Communicate effectively with colleagues and clients.
- **Dress/Personal Appearance**: Maintain a professional appearance.
- **Safety**: Follow safety procedures and report any hazards.
- **Productivity**: Work efficiently and effectively.
- **Attention to Detail**: Pay attention to details and complete tasks accurately.
- **Adaptability**: Adapt to changes in the workplace.

## Area of Improvement

- **Technical Skills**: Focus on improving diagnostic skills.
- **Communication Skills**: Enhance verbal and written communication.
- **Work Ethic**: Strive for punctuality and reliability.

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*Note: The above evaluation is a sample and may not reflect the actual content of the document.*