



Ever Wonder Why Service Customers Don't Return?

The following scenario should make it quite clear why some service customers never return:

The basics of my last service visit.

I recently went to a dealership to have my car's oil changed. I didn't call for an appointment, I just drove in. I drive up and some guy at the other end of the drive waves and yells at me, "All the way up!" So I pull forward and get out of the car and wait and wait and wait. I overhear another customer ask one of the service advisors how long it will take for an oil change. "Oh god, it's going to be at least an hour. Can you leave it?" she asks.

Which way is the exit line?

Finally, a service advisor walks over to me and inquires, "Do you have an appointment?" She doesn't smile, doesn't ask how I am doing—nothing. I reply, "No, I just need an oil change." "You don't have an appointment?" she asks again. "I have to tell you, it's going to be a while."

Customer service in the service lane.

Spend an hour or so in your service drive and just listen. Listen to the negative tones, the negative answers, and the inconvenience that just bubbles out from everyone there. Most service advisors have no idea what good customer service is.

Training of service attendants is key.

Teach your service advisors how to be prompt and understanding of the customers' point of view. Teach them how to listen, how to be nice, and how to make customers want to return in the future. Warranty work is down, maintenance intervals are stretched, and cars don't break down as often as they used to, so the only way you can survive is to increase customer retention and for that you need service advisors that understand good customer service.

*Randy Johnson is president of **Car People Marketing**. For more information, please call 866-227-7337 or email rjohnson@carpeoplemarketing.com.*