

Case Study: Auto Magic Springfield, Missouri

Sales and service soar after 'makeover'

By Christine Van Matre

Auto Magic had a challenge – a big challenge. The southwest Missouri car wash and fast-lube chain was



seeing a deep dip in customer service levels, a drop that was showing in the company's bottom line.

That's when they asked Mark Holmes to help – from upper management to the employees who towel dry cars – they needed to reach a new level in order to raise sales and increase customer loyalty in a tough market.

"They needed to increase sales, and they knew that better customer service would drive repeat business and customers buying additional services," says Mark Holmes, consultant and sales specialist.

Holmes says he began by interviewing Auto Magic salespeople and their managers, then had the sales force complete a detailed skill inventory to zero in on what each employee needed to learn. Customized training followed, with accountability built into the plan. Training was then spread out over several months to increase the staying power of new

practices. "Expanding the training time leads to lasting results, which greatly extends the ROI," Holmes says.

Awareness of, and appreciation for the customer is up. "My people skills have improved and I let my customers know that I *see* them, whether it's their first or fiftieth time through," says Location Manager Wes McMillan.

Holmes' training produced real evidence that a top-down approach *works*, and Assistant Manager Lance Comstock says he knows why. "The enthusiasm of the managers is rubbing off onto our employees," he says.

The training taught Auto Magic employees to build trust with the customer – a move that has led to skyrocketing sales. "Sales have improved tremendously," Comstock says. "The overall experience for the customer has vastly improved due to the friendlier atmosphere and improvement of the product. Our customers now trust us *and* the finished product. They want to come back and they don't mind spending a little extra money, because they believe they are getting what they pay for."

Did the company realize higher sales? "Yes — we have had a huge increase in sales, and our package sales have exploded due to the customer's trust in our service," McMillan says.

Managers agree that the ultimate result of training with Holmes has been a new desire to raise the bar that has replaced the stale feeling of business-as-usual. Auto Magic employees now have a sense of pride in delivering the best product possible to customers, which leads to new levels of great service. "One year ago, we had average customer service," McMillan says. "Now we stand by our standards. We are setting the standard for customer service."

Holmes' comprehensive approach makes super selling results a given. "By putting out a higher quality product on a consistent basis, our repeat customers return more often and tell people about us, and those new customers soon become repeat customers," says Jason Eakin, assistant manager. "(After this training) there is no way sales *can't* improve."

Tim Vaughn oversees the Auto Magic chain as General Manager, and says there's no question that Holmes' training approach has raised both morale and profits. "Better service leads to customers buying more and buying more often," Vaughn says. "I have seen the proof in the sales reports."

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