

**How To Make A Fortune** *continued from Front pg.*

gentlemen have; maybe they were just lucky. But we all must "play the hand we are dealt;" that is just the way it is.

**You Are What You Are**

I really don't mind being the low man on the totem pole when it comes to how much money can be made, because I really do enjoy our industry. But what I do resent is, how other people perceive us.

We are heroes when we have the part they need in stock and we are goats when we don't. We are the greatest when they get a price they like and we are crooks when they don't. They are our best customers when they need a little credit and then we are jerks when we must say "no."

I love it when a guy that I have not seen for seven or eight months comes into my store. I know he is there for a favor or with a problem no one else has been able to help him with. He owns two trucks and a late-model car; he has not purchased as much as a quart of oil from us in a real long time.

So, as always, I greet him by name and then proceed to ask how I may be of service. Well, it seems he went out to start his Chevy pickup one morning and it wouldn't crank. Sure that the battery was no good, he went to the closest Sears store and purchased a new DieHard battery. After installing the battery, the truck did not crank over.

After talking to one of his car wise friends they came to the conclusion the problem must be the alternator, and they proceeded to purchase one from a local big box, discount auto parts store. As the want-to-be mechanics were installing the new remanufactured alternator, the clouds opened up and they got soaked.

Too far into the job to quit, they kept going, turning a relatively easy job into a major construction project. Our heroes finished just as the sun was going down, but of course the vehicle still would not crank. Not all that happy, our truck owner decided it was time to call it a day and get some well deserved sleep.

A new day begins and our hero is full of hope. He decides to call in sick today and get his truck going. Having gone through the vehicle's owner's manual for help and finding none, Mr. Wizard decides to call some more of his car savvy buddies. They all agree the only possible solution to the non-cranking truck is the starter. So, another trip to the discount store is made to purchase a starter, after hours of labor (he was doing it without a jack or a lift) he has the starter installed. Yes, you already know the answer: nothing but a "click" for all his hard work.

So this is when the boy wonder shows up on my doorstep; he needs my help and he does not have very much money left. My first reaction was to tell him to go back to where he spent his money, but I held my tongue, because I didn't want to feel sorry for saying something wrong or unbusinesslike.

I arranged to have his truck towed in the next day. As luck would have it, one of my shop techs came in a few minutes early and did me a favor by running a

few tests. I went back into the store to get ready for the day's business.

Just as I sat down by the phone to start calling our regular suppliers looking for parts that were ordered the day before, the tech walked over to let me know he found the problem with the no start. It was a fusible link from the firewall to the engine block. We had the part in stock, the tech installed it and then he checked the starting and charging system just to be on the safe side.

As I was filling out the labor slip, I called the customer with the good news: His repair was less than \$50 plus the towing.

But my happiness went right into surprise when the customer asked if I could do him one more little favor: Could I call the store he purchased the other parts from and see if they would take them back because, after all, he probably didn't need them, right?

My one word answer was, "no."

**Just a Reminder**

Do you know where your customers and their friends go at night and on the weekends? Many of them head for cruise nights, car shows, monster truck shows, motorcycle rallies, racing tracks of all kinds.

Do you have a presence there? Will people see your store name on t-shirts, decals, track signage, trophies, flyers, specials, or hear your store name mentioned on the PA?

Now is the time of season to be all out. Let people know you're there and what you do. Don't let someone steal your thunder. They might be able to outbuy you and outspend you, but they can't outsmart you.

Think on it, then do it, then e-mail me (at [daytonauto@optonline.net](mailto:daytonauto@optonline.net)) and tell me how it worked out for you.

Happy selling from the front line!



Changing out these parts unnecessarily did not fix the truck. That's a lesson the do-it-yourselfer learned the hard way.

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