

Service Manager's **PLAYCARD**

6 Steps to Lead Your Service Team Toward Victory



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by DealerSocket

When a customer drives into your service lane, do they feel like an MVP or just a bench warmer? Technology in the service lane is a wonderful thing, but it's no substitute for the tried-and-true best practices that make a service department successful. As the Service Manager of the dealership, consider yourself the head coach or captain of your team. What do you do to motivate and inspire your team to give it all they've got in order to create a successful operation that delivers excellent service? We've created a playcard filled with simple strategies and tactics you can use to ensure you and your team leave the service bay victorious every single day.

1. GAME PLAN

Run your service department like Bill Belichick. OK, don't deflate your customer's tires, but have a plan before every day's appointments. Sometimes thinking outside of the box is necessary. Think back to Super Bowl XXXVI when Belichick defeated the Rams by having the Patriots defense target star running back Marshall Faulk, rather than typically gunning for quarterback Kurt Warner. What's your out-of-the-box strategy for leading your team to victory? Here are some things to consider:

///Hold a morning meeting every day before you open for business.///

///Who are your star performers and who are your team members that need extra motivation?///

///Set the example. Your team will only be as passionate and as confident as you are. Make time to walk around the shop and offer help to anybody struggling.///

2. KEEP SCORE

The importance of frequently assessing your situation can't be stressed enough. Impulsive decision making, rather than well-thought-out strategies, can have devastating results. Seattle Seahawks head coach Pete Carroll made this mistake when he chose not to give the football to running back Marshawn Lynch at the one-yard line with 26 seconds left on the clock. This cost his team the Super Bowl, and left a whole lot of fans frustrated and confused. There are simple areas you can monitor in order to assess how your team is currently performing:

///What's your average hours per RO?///

///Ensure all of your techs have work.///

///Phones are getting answered.///

///MPIs are getting completely filled out.///

3. HALFTIME HUDDLE

After losing to the Rams 51-17, a reporter asked then Giants head coach Ben McAdoo what he said to his team who was losing 27-10 during halftime. McAdoo answered with an awkward "Um..." lasting an extremely uncomfortable 15 seconds. Don't be Ben McAdoo. Failing to plan is planning to fail, so take the time to evaluate your service department's performance as a team and determine if any adjustments need to be made. If you find it difficult to get your entire team together, a simple 5-minute conversation with the shop foreman works just fine. Here are some examples of tweaks that might need to be made:

///Determine if more work is needed.///

///Does any work need to be redistributed to another tech?///

///Have all customers with completed repairs been contacted?///

4. TOUCHDOWN DANCE

Your team probably doesn't dab, floss or nae nae (ask your kids) at the end of every successful day in the service department. But it's important that you acknowledge successes as a team and congratulate those who go above and beyond to provide excellent service to customers. Aside from organizational incentives from the manufacturer, does your dealership have incentives in place for individual employees who go the extra mile? We're not talking cold hard cash. It could be something as simple as:

///A gift card to a nice restaurant.///

///Tickets for a movie, concert or sporting event.///

///A paid day off or extended lunch break (if coverage isn't an issue).///

5. GAME FILM

Every team in the NFL participates in film study to prepare for the coming week's game. The coach will dissect the previous game, identify strong plays and correct individual as well as team mistakes. We're not suggesting you go and spy on your employees using surveillance cameras around the dealership. Rather, the Service Manager should walk around the shop (as encouraged in Step 1) and point out strengths as well as correct mistakes. Additional ways to evaluate your department's efficiency and productivity as a team includes:

///Creating a set of individual and organizational goals every quarter.///

///Recapping highlights and mistakes from the day before during morning meetings to make today better than yesterday.///

///Hanging white boards that keep track of your techs' and advisors' performance.///

6. STATISTICS

Drew Brees didn't become one of the greatest QBs in the history of football overnight. His dedication, resilience and humility allowed him to apply everything his coaches taught him and become the all-time passing yard leader. Now it's time to take all of the information you learned, including your observations from walking around the shop, and determine the impact these findings have on your KPIs (key performance indicators). These are our recommended benchmarks your service department should be hitting:

///2.5 hours per RO.///

///Gross profit more than 6%.///

///Unapplied labor less than 10%.///

///Tech efficiency rate at least 90%.///

Strengthening your service operation starts with strengthening yourself. Your employees mirror the same attitude and the same actions as yourself. Becoming the leader and role model in your dealership's service department will inspire the motivation and dedication of others, making victory inevitable. As former Indianapolis Colts head coach Tony Dungy once said: "You can't always control circumstances. However, you can always control your attitude, approach, and response. Your options are to complain or to look ahead and figure out how to make the situation better."

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