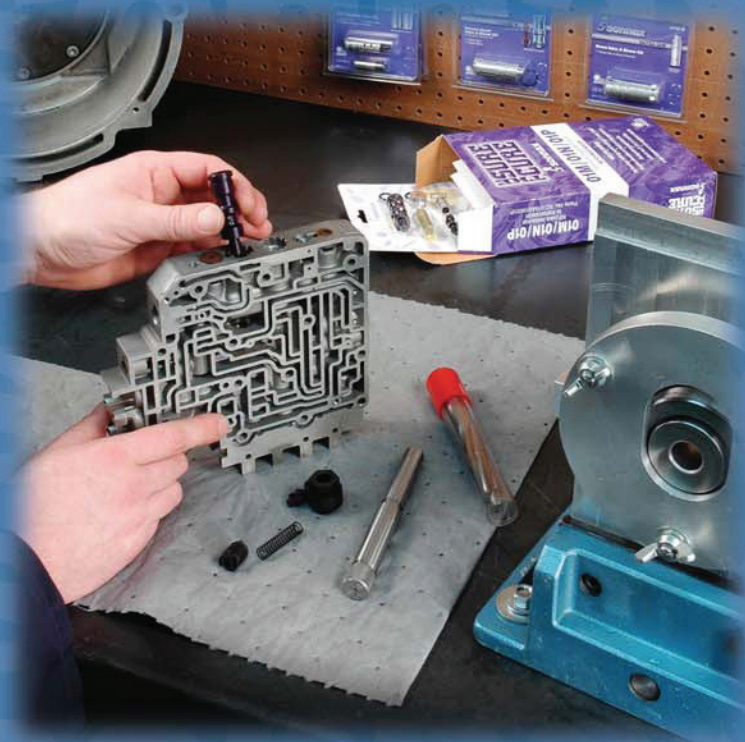


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“I’ll Take a Large Order of Success, Please.”



by Dennis Madden
www.atra.com

As technicians, we’re accustomed to fixing problems with a new part or update. You have a soft 1-2 shift? There’s a new spring that’ll take care of it. Got a chatter from the converter clutch? There’s an update available to fix that.

So, when you’re trying to build your business, it’s no wonder so many shop owners consider a similar approach. They look into buying a bigger Yellow Pages ad, a fancy web site, or maybe even a commercial on TV or radio.

These aren’t bad things. A presence in the Yellow Pages is still a worthwhile investment, and a web site is a terrific way to let consumers know who you are. These are valuable, even necessary parts of any transmission repair shop’s marketing strategy.

The problem is, everyone knows that. And every shop in your neighborhood is doing exactly the same thing. Even the shysters up the block who sell “complete rebuilds” for \$495. Especially the shysters! In fact, they probably do it better... because that’s the only tool they have for bringing cars into their shop.

So how do you set yourself apart from everyone else? By building a reputation based on trust.

The difficult part about developing trust is that there is no component you can buy... no extra you can order at the drivethru. Trust is developed through commitment over time... a lot of time. It’s an ongoing effort that you have to be willing to commit to totally.

This effort affects your marketing and advertising plans too. It’s not

about pushing a certain product or service, or convincing customers to buy whatever it is you have to sell. It’s about getting the attention of people so you have the opportunity to build a personal, one-on-one relationship with them.

This is why community involvement is such an effective form of marketing. Every time you sponsor a high school activity or church event, serve tables at the town pancake breakfast, or assign spaces for the community flea market, you’re building your reputation, because you’re working with the people in your community to do it.

What’s more, this type of community commitment isn’t something you can fake. Either you’re committed or you aren’t. Going through the motions won’t do it. You can’t “work on your reputation.” Your reputation takes shape based on the work you do and the connections you make.

That may be the hardest part of the equation to follow. Your reputation isn’t something you can force; it’s the one form of advertising you can’t even track. It grows when you consider the needs of others. And if you aren’t sincere in your commitment, you’ll never build the trust that’s so important to your success.



A great example of this is detailed in the Making it Work article on page 44. There, you’ll see how Mario Jauregui of Express Transmissions built his reputation and improved his business in one of the most depressed cities in the country; Stockton, California. It’s really a miraculous story, but one that can be duplicated by anyone with a sincere interest in the needs of their customers; the people of their community.

Success. It isn’t something you can order off a menu or a part you can replace and it certainly isn’t something you can purchase. But if you go into every day with the right attitude, and do what’s right, success won’t be far behind.



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