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Additional resources:

- **Customer complaints logbook sample (Microsoft Word file)**
- **Manager weekly reporting template (Excel file includes calculations formats)**

Requirements of a workshop manager

As automotive aftermarket businesses grow, there may come a time when the owner of the workshop will consider engaging a workshop manager – someone who can ease the pressure on the owner and inject some management discipline into the team.

But what is a workshop manager? The role is really a step up from that of service advisor.

A service advisor is primarily responsible for everything related to dealing with customers. A workshop manager could include handle this as well, but their responsibility is to manage the whole workshop, and that will involve everything from opening the doors in the morning, to taking responsibility for the financial performance of the business.

In addition, a workshop manager should recruit and manage staff and resolve customer complaints.

Engaging a workshop manager is no different to every other recruitment – job responsibilities and the owner’s expectations must be very clearly spelt out and understood. The responsibilities and job expectations will of course vary from workshop to workshop, depending on the degree of the owner’s involvement in the day to day running of the business.

A workshop manager’s responsibilities

1. Acquire a detailed understanding of the financial goals and business targets. This should include and not be limited to turnover, gross profit, gross margin, net profit, car counts, average dollar sale, staff productivity and efficiency. The manager will monitor these goals and targets on a yearly, monthly and weekly basis.

3. To lead and motivate the team. Managing staff demands that the manager knows the minimum levels of acceptable performance for each position and understands all company policies. The manager will know how to hold effective team meetings and perform reviews, and how to deal with every type of employee issue.

4. To deal with day-to-day customer issues. A manager will confidently and appropriately deal with each situation and will also instinctively know when intervention by the business owner is required to resolve a serious issue. A log of all customer issues should be maintained and be available to the business owner for review. A sample log book can be downloaded from the TaT Biz website at www.tatbiz.net.au/resources.

5. To manage security for the facility, the vehicles, cash, customer information and employee records.

6. To maintain equipment assets and make recommendations on equipment purchase to the business owner.

7. To report on all activities to the business owner. At the minimum, the manager should provide a weekly report on all relative key performance indicators, breaches of company policies, staff issues and any major customer complaints. A sample of a weekly reporting template can be downloaded from the TaT Biz website at www.tatbiz.net.au/resources.

Regardless of the level of involvement of a workshop manager, their basic role is to assume responsibility for the welfare of the business and they must be held accountable for the overall success of the business.

If there is a staff, marketing or customer relationship issue holding the workshop back, or damaging the workshop brand in any way, the manager has an ethical responsibility to advise the owner immediately.

Making the right choice of workshop manager, and ensuring that responsibilities and expectations are clearly understood are essential for the future growth of a workshop. A wrong choice or failure to communicate will most likely compromise the business and could lead to financially crippling results.

The place to start is www.tatbiz.net.au/resources

Just go for it!