



CAPRICORN
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Other resources in step 5b:

- Job card side 1
- Job card side 2
- Video – importance of job cards

Without a history, how can you have a future

Out of all the pieces of paper in your workshop, the most important one is the job card. Unfortunately, it is not given the respect or priority it should command.

The job card is meant to ensure that the technician working on the vehicle, has a detailed 'patient' file which will help ensure that every job is completed professionally and every vehicle receives the technician's full attention and application.

The job card is also a great tool for your technicians to highlight additional repairs or maintenance items that they notice and which really need attention. This is where your job card works in conjunction with your cross selling lists, a subject to be covered as part of this series of business strategies.

Let's face it, technicians are only human, and they have lazy or bad days, and they might forget things. So the number one role of the job card is to prompt technicians to undertake every job to your workshop's high standard and to the customer's expectations.

To make this work, your job card must contain every item you would like your technicians to check and report on. The job card can be as detailed as you like.

The advantages of a good job card are:

- to reduce idle time by giving technicians the information and tools to be productive and efficient
- to provide clear, logical and suitable information to the technician and to the person costing the job
- to provide a very effective automatic link between the workshop and the front office
- to provide particulars of each job accurately

- to provide detailed information on the vehicle both at the time of repair and on future visits to the workshop.

The job card should contain the following information:

- Job number
Larger workshops use job numbers to identify vehicles and to allow technicians to easily find jobs when required. These can sometimes also be customer numbers. It's important to only refer to job and customer numbers in-house and not directly with a customer. Always refer to a customer by name and their vehicle by make and model.
- Customer's name and full contact details
Correct customer information is very important. Names must be spelt correctly and any titles clearly noted. Make sure the contact phone number is the one on which the customer will be available, and the correct mailing address so you can send them a thank you letter or service reminder. Most point of sale programs will print this out on your job card, but you should always ensure details are correct.
- Complete vehicle details
This would include rego number, make and model, manufacture details including VIN number, manufacture date, engine code and number of cylinders. Such detail is vital when ordering parts. Kilometres travelled must be noted, particularly if related to warranty. Other details might include when the vehicle is due for service or service interval, and registration renewal.
- Jobs required
A very clear and precise job description and detailed explanation of the issues including the history of the issue, if any. If any doubts remain about any issues, the technician working on the job may need to contact and talk to the right person to gain all the information to correctly diagnose the vehicle.
- Time the vehicle is required by the customer
This is important for all technicians to know so priority can be given to jobs.

There should be space on the job card for this kind of information:

- Parts used on the job
This could include part numbers, description and quantity. Any part not on the job card might get left off the invoice and therefore lower profitability.
- Work performed
This must be in detail. Technicians may have to be taught the importance of this information, because it directly influences the invoiced amount. If a technician encounters a problem with a job, they should inform the right person as well as write it on the job card. The time taken is as important as the information on the type of work performed. You could have a section on the job card for recommended time for certain jobs. This can be useful where a technician becomes expert at a particular repair through experience and the time taken is reduced. In situations like this, it is not logical to reduce the invoice amount to match because the repair job still should retain its full value, regardless of how good a technician becomes at performing it.
- Service details

These would include things like brakes, including percentage of brake wear front and back, brake and clutch fluid test results.
Tyres, including tyre size and percentage of wear on all tyres including the spare, tyre pressures before and after the service.
Suspension, a good fair and fail option on front and back suspension.
Timing belt – note whether the vehicle has a timing belt and if it has a service history.
Drive belts – good, fair or fail on drive belts and tensioners.
Coolant – good, fair or fail based on coolant testing.
Battery test results.
Wiper blades – good, fair or fail on both front and back wiper blades.
Windscreen washers – OK or fail on both front and back.
Air conditioning – good, fair or fail and any service history.

There are probably more areas that can be covered in workshops that specialise in areas such as front end, auto electrical, automatic transmissions, exhaust, engine rebuilding and so on. Just think about the information you need at your fingertips to allow you to be more productive and more efficient, then put a spot on your job card for it.

- Part suppliers
A handy reference to trace where parts came from. Include a phone number, contact person, parts ordered or quote received, your price and retail price and time of order.
- Report section
This is a spot for technicians to write a report on other items found requiring attention or to expand on any issues already listed. This is where a note may be made to recheck something next service, or to highlight something quirky about the vehicle.

Check out the job card templates on the Capricorn weblink. Our number one card contains a lot of information and is certainly suitable for workshops that do general service work and well as general repair work. Depending on the repair required by the customer, your technicians will fill out the appropriate sections of the job card.

A good job card, filled out correctly, will ensure that when you need to communicate with the customer at any stage during the repair or service, you will have the information you need to highlight things that require attention.

You won't have to strain your memory, and the customer will be much more inclined to agree to additional work, which, in your professional opinion, should be done when presented to him in such a precise and detailed manner.

If your policy is to ensure your customers leave your workshop with a car which is safe and operating to its most efficient level, it is your responsibility to inform them about any maintenance or repair issues that you find during your work on the vehicle.

Every technician who works on the car must see the job card and make their repair notes or observations on the card. Only through a cooperative effort can you be sure that the job card contains all the necessary information.

Technicians may have to be trained to appreciate and understand the power of the job card. There are, unfortunately, too many workshops which treat job cards with utter contempt, considering them a bureaucratic intrusion into their working day. That attitude will be to their own detriment and quite often, affect their profitability.

It is the technician's responsibility to note every item which they believe needs attention at their first inspection of the vehicle. This is called the 'shopping list'.

The shopping list will contain items which you can highlight to the customer. You might be surprised that many car owners, if they really care about their vehicle and its maintenance, will want some, if not all of the items, looked at and fixed if required. The job card therefore needs to have some space for these items to be listed.

Regular service items are usually printed on the job card to save time and also to act a memory trigger, as shown in our card templates.

Depending on the age of the vehicle, and the kilometres on the clock, the list may be a long one. Before the customer is consulted, your technicians should prioritise the list.

You can then go through the list with the customer, with authority and confidence. In the case of regular customers, it is essential that you have the full history of the vehicle on job cards and these must be made available to the technicians along with the new job card for the current visit.

If previous job cards have been properly noted, they will contain a lot of important information that won't necessarily appear on an invoice.

Before working on the vehicle, technicians should check what was reported last time the vehicle was worked on. Notes about previous behaviours noticed with the vehicle will prompt the technician to go back and check related components or systems. This means you are well on the way to making up your new 'shopping list'.

So the routine is clear. Even before a booked-in vehicle arrives at the workshop, all of its previous job card history should be extracted from the files and examined. This way, when the customer arrives, you will at least know something about the vehicle and this familiarity will stand you in good stead if you later have to seek approval for repairs or parts. It's all a question of building confidence in the customer that you and your technicians are on top of things, and you are well focused on their vehicle and its welfare.

Don't ignore or fob off even the most routine inspection items. At the vehicle's previous visit, you might have noted issues such as tyre rotation and wheel

alignment, brake fluid change, cooling system flush and change, recheck an oil leak, timing belt, the list can be extensive. Unless you have written them down on the previous job card, and you now have that at your finger tips, it's unlikely that you will remember what you mentioned last time. Having all of that previous history noted on the job card, adds to the professionalism of your approach to the customer, and as a result, you are much more likely to get a go-ahead for those extra repairs.

Don't underestimate the power of a well constructed job card. Keep them safe. They represent the 'family history' of your customer's car.

A properly filled out job card will usually contain much more information than you might find on previous invoices or in your computer system.

Establish a filing system, in strong filing cabinets, and file job cards by either registration number or customer surname, or perhaps a cross index of both in case the customer sells the car. Having an efficient filing system is more than half the battle to running an efficient workshop.

This month's challenge is to look closely at your current job card system – streamline it, update it, give it a new home. Do whatever is necessary to build a highly efficient and informative, and easily retrievable library system.

Upgrade your cards with one of the templates on the web link, or use some of the ideas to redesign your own.

Capricorn supplier Orange Dog, the automotive marketing and printing specialists, can print one of the templates or help design your own version of a new job card.

So here's the challenge. In the next four weeks, give yourself a target to review your job cards.

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

Just go for it!