



Technical Training Tip of the Month – April 2006

Maintaining Shop Technical Competency

By Antoinette Mayes

Technical knowledge is one of today's most important growth resources available to any company and the message is clear; the responsibility for training must start with management. The demand for training is continuously driven by the integration of new technology. Technicians need to be equipped with the skills to diagnose a wide range of advanced automotive systems. As product and technology development cycles are continuously updated, proper training is an essential requirement.

Opportunities for training tend to be very limited if management does not see the value in training. One way the value of the training can be gauged is by the outcome it has on a shop's profit and loss statements. It is essential for technical training to become a line item on the fixed operations expense, a calculated expense that will ultimately generate a positive return on your investment.

Create a training budget – and stick to it. Decide on a predetermined training budget and allocate the funds appropriately. Technician training is valuable. Technical skills and knowledge are assets and need to be maintained just as you would maintain shop equipment (i.e. lifts, tools, etc.). It is necessary for both management and employees to recognize the time, commitment and expense associated with technical training.

In order to properly analyze the associated costs of training versus revenues generated, managers must recognize that return on investment is a long-term process. If this process is overlooked, the perceived value of training can be significantly diminished. If the apparent value is diminished, it is possible for management, as well as technicians, to view training to be a nonproductive, added expense.

It is not a question of whether you can afford training. Rather it is recognizing the fact that you cannot afford **not** to train your technicians. With today's ever-changing technology, managers need to realize technical competency directly affects business. One important factor in maintaining employee loyalty is for a company to make a commitment to training. Well-trained employees are happier employees. Providing employees training opportunities reinforces the fact that knowledge and skill is an ongoing learning process. The foundation of any shop is the competence of their technicians. Once an employer acknowledges the fact that they need to do more to earn employee loyalty, the more effective they will be at identifying and retaining the best and the brightest.

InterMotive, Inc. offers technical training courses for fleets, installers and automotive dealers. For more information please visit our website at www.intermotive.net, email training@intermotive.net or contact (800) 969-6080.