



10 Service Department Best Practices: Part 2

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In Part 1 of this two-part series we explored five out of the ten best ways to improve your Service department performance and profitability. In Part 2 we present the final five best practices that KEA Advisors commonly recommends during our Service Department Discoveries. As you might remember, the inspiration for these articles comes from Jim Ussery, Executive Vice President of Operations at Nextran Corporation, who, after implementing these practices with his Service Department team, realized a sizeable departmental profit within only one month of his KEA Advisors Service Department Discovery.

The following are best practices 6-10 on KEA Advisors' top ten list:

6. Implement an effective triage process and provide ongoing measurement for effectiveness

- Measure and manage a dedicated triage process to make sure that you are accomplishing your goals.
- Measure the triage outcome: Did the triage technician accurately diagnose the problem? Typically 75% of vehicles triaged will end with a complete diagnosis and the balance will need more in-depth diagnosis and should be dispatched to an "A" technician in the shop.
- Triage is a crucial part of the repair process and it needs to be evaluated and enhanced. The ultimate goal is to maximize the number of times when a repair order is dispatched to the shop, you have parts in hand and customer or warranty authorizations, allowing the tech to be more efficient making the repair.

7. Perform a felt tip review for consistent repair order write up and pricing

- Service advisors need to be held accountable for providing technicians with correct detailed information and management needs to have a way to confirm correct use of tiered labor rates and to verify that accurate SRT times have been estimated and communicated to the customer.
- The only way to do this is to measure your expectations. "Inspect what you expect."
- On a daily basis review repair orders for quality and clarity
 - Are the written customer complains clearly detailed?
 - Accuracy of pricing: Was the order priced on time?
 - Timeliness: Was the repair order closed on time?
- Attention to these details will improve the customer experience, show value to the customer and allow management of departmental profit.

8. Provide for well-organized shop tools and equipment

- Everything has a place and should be in its place. Your goal includes not only the ability to find tools or equipment in a timely fashion, but to have them distributed in the shop conveniently to minimize wasted motion.
- Proper organization saves everyone time and creates an efficient work environment for all.

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9. Provide organized work flow process and service administrative function

- Ask yourself if you are doing things in the most efficient way possible.
- Reduce waste and increase efficiency, not only for the technicians but also for your front line personnel. Often this may required providing the tools and structure needed to produce accurate estimates consistently and repair order management techniques.
- Are you closing repair orders in a consistent manner?
- Remember that nothing good happens when repair orders are left open (see #10)

10. Timely closing of repair orders

- Close repair orders within a 1-2 day window
- The chances of having to negotiate the repair rise quickly the longer a repair order stays open, especially when the order is closed weeks late.
- Be sure to monitor this closely.