



Newsletter Article

On Line Service Menus

Authored by Dan Bowdon

Applied Transportation Concepts, Inc. (ATcon)
2060 Highway 33
Pelham AL. 35124

(205) 995-9040
toll free 1-800-692-2719



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On Line Service Menus

In today's dealership environment, where new car sales continue to decline, combined with fuel prices that are constantly fluctuating and a consumer that is unsure of their economic situation, improving the dealership's fixed operations performance is on most dealer's minds.

"How can I get more gross profit?", "How can I increase my hours per repair order?", and "What can I do to get more traffic in the door?" These are all questions that have been asked by dealer principals, GMs and service managers numerous times over the past several months.

Ask yourself this question---what is the most important point-of-sale tool that your service consultant uses today?

The answer is the Service Menu. Menu sales are highly productive operations that most technicians can perform with less likelihood of a "comeback". And menu parts are typically in stock.

The purpose of a service menu is to:

- Project a positive image of the dealership;
- Build customer trust;
- Assist the customer in following the manufacturer's maintenance recommendations;
- Educate the customer on their maintenance needs;
- Improve overall work mix; and
- Sell additional items or services that are recommended by the dealership.

Most dealerships have some form of a service menu ranging from a printed handout from the service manager's computer to a comprehensive, professionally-printed, multi-page service guide that the service consultants hand out to each guest.

They all work but what about the customer who makes an appointment online or checks your dealership's web site?

There is no argument of the importance of the Internet in today's customers' lives. They can do banking, pay bills on line, and go shopping at their own convenience all without leaving the comfort of their own home or office.

The question is---what type of service menu are you providing to your customers on your website? The on line menu can be as simple as copying your current menu or utilizing one of the companies that offer a complete menu design and setup on your website.

Let's review some of the key points that you should consider when beginning to implement an on line service menu.

Benefits of On Line Service Menus:

- Informs your customer of the required maintenance items for their specific vehicle and mileage that match the owner's manual from the manufacturer.
- Informs the customer of any additional preventative maintenance items and products that are recommended by the dealership based on market area driving conditions.
- The customer is in control of the sales process by choosing what they wish to accept and to decline.
- Increases customer satisfaction by allowing them to choose what is best for their service needs.
- Each customer is presented with consistent maintenance needs for their vehicle.
- A menu process that is "every customer every time".
- Additional items sold on line with the customer making additional selections of services that they would want performed. An average increase of .3 per repair order would not be out of line.
- By accessing the dealership's web site from the service lane, it allows the service consultant to present an on line menu to each customer in the service lane or even over the phone.
- Increases the dollar amount of future appointments.

Implementation of On Line Service Menus:

- Easiest step is to recreate your existing service menu into electronic format on the dealership's web site.
- Some of the manufacturers are assisting with the on line service menu, such as Ford and Volkswagen to mention a couple.
- Develop menus by model specific and mileage intervals and even driving conditions.

- If integrated into the DMS system, looks up by customer name and previous service history by labor operations.
- Build in drop down boxes for VIN decoder to be model specific and provide all possible vehicle combinations.
- Develop menus that are in the format of “factory minimum” to “dealer recommended”. Allows the customer to see each on the menu and make their selections.
- Any service or package that the customer accepts or declines must be checked off in an “accept/decline” drop down box.
- Price service menus and packages and all a la cart items. Any pricing changes can easily be updated in a relatively short period of time.
- Establish links to videos for certain packages or services that better explain the service to customers, such as fluid service or Nitrogen.
- Integrate any rewards points / VIP rewards balances to allow the customer to see their balance to aid in selling any additional services.
- Install a second monitor on the service desk for the guest to see the on line menu at service write up.
- Link the menu to the dealership’s on line scheduling system to allow the customer to make the appointment.
- Make the on line service menu easy to follow and use for the customer.

Dealerships have recognized the power of the Internet and the positive aspects it can have on their financial statement. Review other dealership web sites for service menu ideas. The menu can be as simple as you would like or as complex as an IT person could develop.

Software programs are available from several companies that can assist in the on line service menu development. There will be monthly charges and maintenance fees to sustain the on line menu but, once developed, the changes are relatively simple. Several of the aftermarket chemical companies are even offering to pay for all or part of the cost of the service menu for mention of their products on your dealership’s web site.

A successful service sales process begins with the initial sales presentation. Whether it be a service menu presentation by your service consultant or by your virtual on line service menu, the results can be just as beneficial to the dealership.

If you have any questions concerning on line Service Menus, please contact our office at 1-800-692-2719.