

Spring is upon us:

Have you put plans into action?

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The last time we appeared in these pages, we suggested that you take some time to reflect on the past year, and how that would help you make plans for the new year. Well, the new year has come and gone, and it's time to start executing on those plans if you haven't already. Spring is usually a busy season in the quick lube business, and it is upon us. What better time to start than now

You may find it helpful to make a checklist of items that need attention to make this a successful year. Based on conversations we've had with operators, here are some common priorities:

Marketing plans: By now, you should have mapped out a plan for the year. What has worked well in the past? Are there any new ideas you want to try? Do you have a budget, and how do you plan to allocate it? If you haven't already, it's not too late to talk to vendors, hear their ideas, and figure out where you want to focus your efforts. Think about whether your website or social media presence is due for a refresh.

Changes to inventory: Take a look at your product mix and make sure it is up to date with the current trends. The move to synthetic oils continues to accelerate, particularly with newer cars. It may be time to switch out your bulk tanks from older viscosities to newer full synthetics. Take a look, too, at your ancillary products – are you seeing enough turnover with them, and does your supply match your anticipated demand?

Share your KPIs with your team: In a small to medium-sized business, everyone on the team has a stake in success, and everyone's contribution makes a difference. Make sure your team is aware of your key performance indicators and how they can help achieve your goals. What are you looking for in terms of car count? What is the revenue and margin per car the business needs to be profitable? What is the average ticket price that will drive that

revenue? It pays to be transparent with your team. When they understand what is required to advance the business, they will be more likely to perform.

Review your suppliers: The industry is still beset with supply issues, product shortages, and inflationary price hikes. Talk to your suppliers about what they expect to see in the future. Be sure you have back up sources in case a supplier comes up short. Get a good idea of which supplier is going to consistently meet your needs.

Review safety procedures: Be sure you are up to date with the latest OSHA requirements and that you have the necessary safety equipment and supplies. Review with your team the protocols and procedures to follow in the event someone gets injured on the job. Keeping safety top of mind is good practice.

Engage with your site manager(s): If you have someone who oversees the shop day to day, or if you have more than one location, make sure your managers are in on your planning process. Get their feedback, encourage their input, and get them involved in your decisions.

You may have other items to add to your checklist based on your own experience. The main point is to have a roadmap and be proactive.

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