



**Havoline®**

# Delivering an Exceptional Customer Experience Builds Loyalty

Improve customer retention by marketing your business in-person and online

BY BILL BEYERLE, AUTOMOTIVE INSTALLED SALES MANAGER, CHEVRON LUBRICANTS

**During our discussions with quick lube operators,** often they express concern that their competition is all about price. Well, it may surprise some that trust is the No. 1 reason most consumers choose a service facility, not price. Sure, in any business there are always going to be some consumers that care only about price. But to grow a base of regular, repeat customers, loyalty and the new business that comes with positive reviews and word-of-mouth begins with earned trust.

Trust starts with the brand image of your facility. Customers are naturally drawn to a business that looks clean, bright, well-painted, with a nice parking area and spotless service bays. As part of your brand image, your employees should always wear uniforms and look professional at all times. Sparkling clean bathrooms and a comfortable waiting area with coffee, snacks and reading material are key to maintaining a positive impression.

A friendly greeting, helpful attitude, and knowledgeable employees all add to the customer's experience and comfort level. It's great if the greeters know the customer by name, but even if not, they should be able to look up and comment upon the customer's previous work. For new customers, set them up in your system right away to expedite future visits, capturing a cell phone number and email address in the process.

"We remind employees all the time that we are not just in the automotive service business, we're in the customer service business," says Dan Kromminga, owner of a Chevron Havoline® xpress lube® in Vancouver, Wash. "If you treat employees as professionals, they will act like one when they're with a customer."

## THINK BEYOND THE STORE

A great customer experience isn't confined to the store anymore. You can attract new customers while reinforcing existing relationships between visits. Digital communications make it easy to stay top-of-mind with customers.

**Review sites:** Actively managing your online reputation through review sites like Yelp and Google Reviews is critical. Consumers, and particularly the growing younger demographics, navigate their lives on the go through their smartphones and are more apt to choose to do business with a location that has 4-5 star reviews. Answer any negative comments in a timely and positive manner or go one step further and ask the customer to come back and give you a chance to change their impression.

**Paid search or pay-per-click (PPC) advertising:** Again, due to trends, search should be your No. 1 marketing spend. When customers search on Google for "oil change near me" your business needs to come up as an option for them to locate, call and/or go to your website to see your promotions. If you're not coming up in search results, then unfortunately, your business is invisible to potential customers.

**Website:** You can't do a paid search ad campaign without a website. There are many local companies out there that can design a professional, easy to maintain website (just do a Google search). Websites should provide basic information—locations, store hours, phone numbers, the ability to schedule appointments, coupons/promotions, pictures of your business and staff, links to your social media platforms, and so on. Websites—like your vehicles—must be maintained and always kept current and fresh.

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—Bill Beyerle, sales manager, Chevron Lubricants

**Social media platforms:** Use social media like Facebook and Instagram to show the personal side of your business, such as community work by employees. Share team photos and special occasions. Put maintenance tips out there and promotional offers from time to time. You want to get your loyal customer base to like and share your posts. And for not much money, you can create and select audience profiles and boost Facebook posts to extend your reach to target audiences.

**Text and email:** Done selectively, text messages and email are cost-effective channels for communicating offers while keeping your customer database up to date.

**Referral program:** Introduce a referral program to encourage customers to tell friends and family about your business and reward them with a free service when a referral comes in—who doesn't like to be surprised and delighted!

Remember, though, all these efforts are for naught unless you actually deliver quality service at a fair price. It's all part of the customer experience that feeds the feeling and belief of trust. Be sure your performance measures up to your promises, and your customers will have no reason to go anywhere else.

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