



THE 5 BEST PRACTICES FOR

DELIVERING STATUS UPDATES

IN SERVICE



The **5** BEST PRACTICES FOR DELIVERING STATUS UPDATES IN SERVICE

Customer experience is key when it comes to Service. When a customer's visit to your Service Department exceeds his or her expectations, the likelihood of that customer returning skyrockets. This leads to repeat visits and further revenue generated in Service *and* Sales.

One of the easiest, and most effective, ways to boost customer experience is by providing regular vehicle status updates. However, with

the current shift in focus for many dealerships to schedule more repair orders while operating with fewer Service advisors, less status updates are being given. Additionally, without proper organization in this area, dealers risk losing lifetime customers. This impacts both CSI and the dealership's bottom line.

Top dealerships utilize these ***five best practices*** when providing vehicle status updates to ensure top-notch customer experiences.

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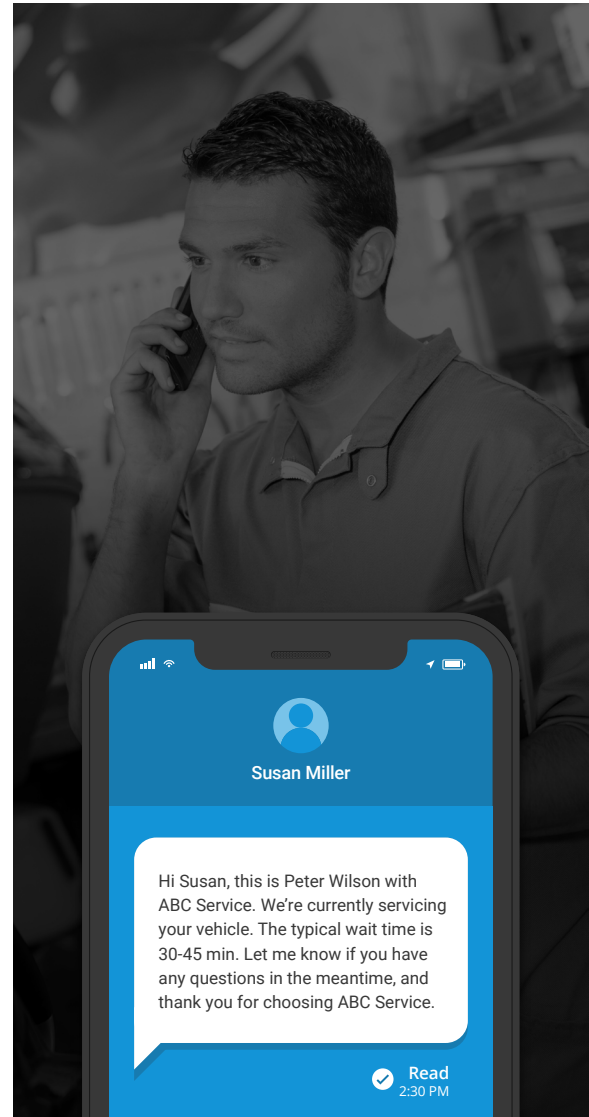
PRACTICE #1

SET PROPER EXPECTATIONS

The current market is showing unprecedented levels of activity in Service Departments. With low new vehicle inventory and shipping delays with parts from OEMs, consumers are going to continue to hold onto their cars longer which will lead to increases in routine service. This high need for vehicle maintenance is filling Service calendars on a weekly basis. With Service bays filled and bandwidth stretched thin, wait times for customers have understandably increased. That being said, this result is not justification for a lack of communication or clear expectations.

Customers need to be aware of realistic wait times and kept informed of any changes to that timeline. Let's say you have a customer who has done routine maintenance with your Service Department before when times were significantly reduced. This customer may have experienced a turnaround time, from the moment they dropped off their vehicle to pickup, of about two hours. Today, this same customer returns for a similar service but their turnaround time has doubled. The customer is not happy and they are unlikely to return again.

A solution to this problem is setting proper expectations from the start and using vehicle status updates to keep the customer informed. Brief the customer on how busy your Service Department is and provide an estimated wait time, erring on the side of caution by sharing the longest you expect the vehicle to be in the Service bay. Customers will be pleasantly



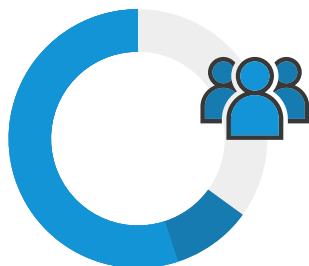
surprised when their vehicle is ready sooner than the time originally expected. Lastly, explain how they will be informed along the way while their vehicle is being serviced. Use the customer's preferred method of communication throughout the duration of their wait to notify them if their vehicle should be ready sooner or later than initially told.

PRACTICE #2

CUSTOMER SERVICE IS ALWAYS KEY

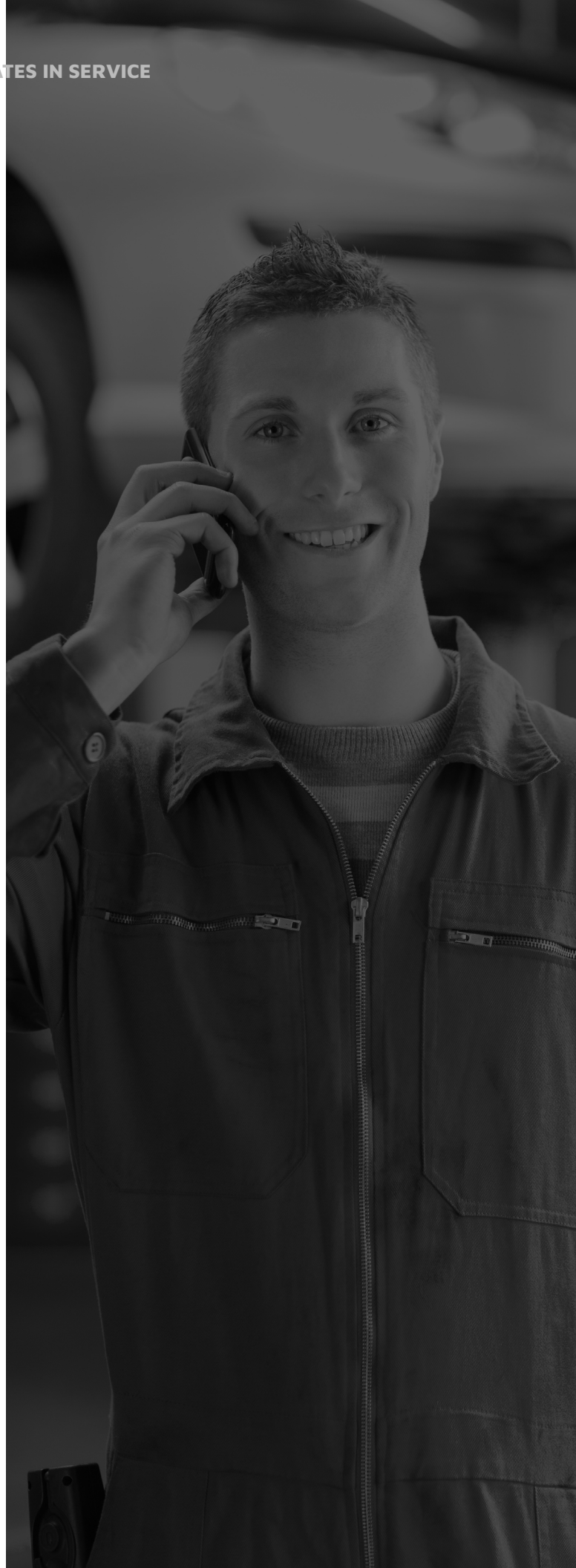
Customer experience in Service is critical. Successful Service Departments see about a **55-65% return rate for their customers**. If your dealership is below that mark, you should investigate where your Service drive is falling short of providing a top-notch experience.

55-65%
Return Rate for
Service Customers



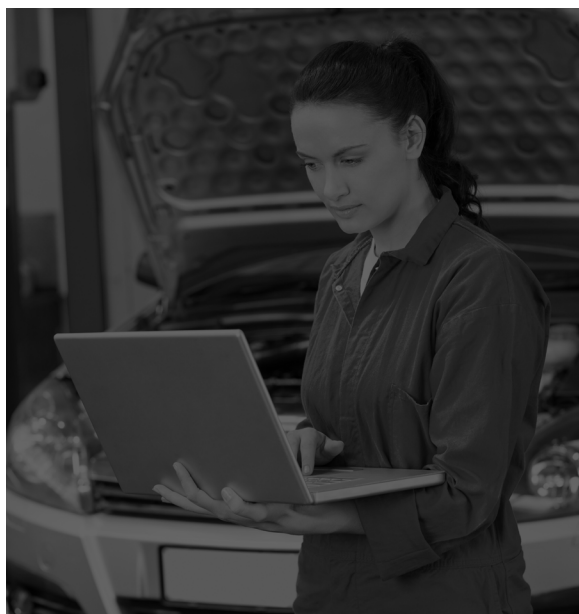
More often than not, the reason a customer is upset regarding Service, outside of price, is because they are not aware of the status of their vehicle while being serviced. The customer is left in the dark and may even attempt to call in, but — to no surprise — the call isn't answered and goes straight to voicemail without a call back. That experience is unfortunately common, but it is also avoidable.

By reaching out to customers and making them aware of their vehicle's status, regardless of the news being good or bad, customers are kept informed. This will improve overall experience and satisfaction with the service provided, increasing the likelihood of repeat visits.



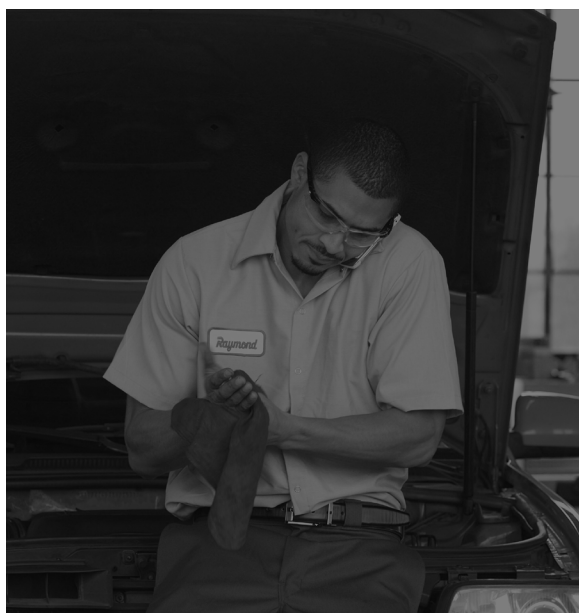
PRACTICE #3

KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS' COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES



From paper mail to phone calls, and email messages to text messages, the ways in which we can send and receive information have become more diverse and instantaneous. With the different communication methods available, understanding your customers' preferences can determine the success of your Service agents reaching their intended party.

When a customer doesn't answer his or her phone or respond to an email, try sending a text message. Today our phones never leave our side, and that text message notification you send to the customer will make the customer aware of his or her vehicle's status succinctly and efficiently. In fact, [the average open rate of a text message sits at about 99%, with 97% of messages being read within 15 minutes of delivery.](#)

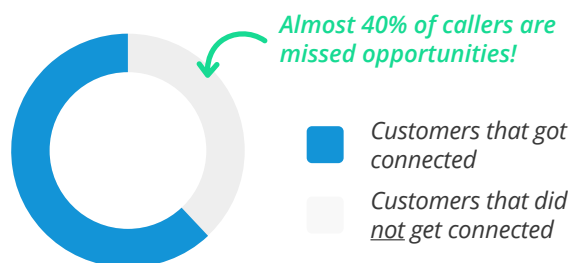


Sending a text message about a vehicle status update to a customer does take time and effort for Service agents. However, that investment will be worth it. In fact, some technology solutions can automate this texting process as well! Service agents can also ask customers what communication method they prefer when they drop off their vehicles. This ensures both customers and agents are aligned.

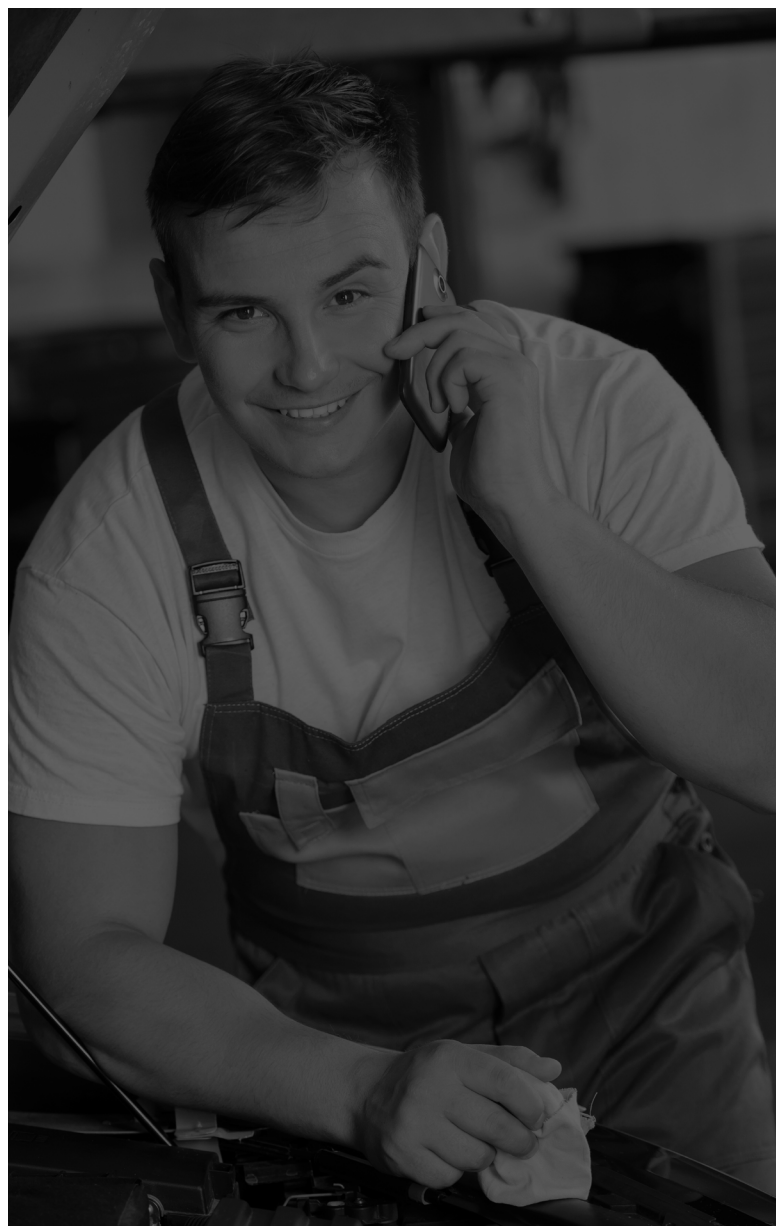
PRACTICE #4

RETURN YOUR MISSED PHONE CALLS... PLEASE!

Missing phone calls in Service is inevitable, but that simple fact should not be an excuse to not call a customer back. In 2021, [only 62% of customers calling into Service connected with an agent who could assist them](#). That means nearly 40% of callers are not receiving the help they need when calling a Service Department. When a call is missed, return that call as soon as possible.



Carrying this out can look like scheduling specific times in the day for a designated agent to solely return missed calls, consistently checking your voicemails, and immediately following up on unconnected calls. To assist dealers in their follow-up process, Car Wars offers [missed opportunity alerts](#) that immediately notify designated staff members when a customer's call isn't connected. Furthermore, you can prevent calls from being missed in the first place by setting up roll-over phone lines to handle multiple calls during busy times of the day or using a warm transfer process to connect the customer ear-to-ear to their designated party to get their question answered instead of sending to voicemail.



PRACTICE #5

GO THE EXTRA MILE

You've been emailing, texting, and calling customers left and right keeping them in the loop on the status of their vehicle. *Surely there isn't much more you can do, right?* Wrong! You can always do more with a customer's experience. What separates the good dealerships from the great ones is that the good ones satisfy the expectations of the customer; the great ones exceed those expectations to create an experience the customer will remember.

One way to create a memorable experience for the customer is to add that personal touch — status updates provide an opportunity to do just that. For example, keep a record of your customers' birthdays, and when a customer is waiting for their vehicle on their birthday, send out a message hoping their birthday is

going well along with letting them know their vehicle is ready for pickup.

However, creating an experience may not always take the form of acknowledging a birthday. Unforeseen issues could arise that can affect the customer experience. If a customer is going to have to wait longer for their vehicle, use status updates to provide the news along with sending a \$5 coffee eGift card as an apology and appreciation of their understanding and patience in advance. The gesture will go a long way in turning a bad experience into a positive one and is a small price to pay to keep that customer happy.



IN CONCLUSION

Overall, vehicle status updates do not have to be a nuisance. Implementing these best practices into routine processes will have a valuable effect on Service agents and customers. In turn, the quantity of calls that come in will decline and Service teams can focus on what really matters — generating revenue and providing top-notch customer service.

Check out the full [Car Wars Service Data Study](#) to learn more recent trends in Service, and see how Car Wars has been helping thousands of dealerships Own The Phone in Sales and Service!