



Dealer Solutions

Are We Really Open On Saturdays?

In the many dealerships there always seems to be the same ongoing challenge in most of them: ***Saturday hours.***

Let's take a look at some of the challenges:

- Should we be open and what should our hours be?
- Saturday staffing
- What type of work is scheduled?

Should we be open and what should our hours be?

The quick answer is...yes. Ultimately, we want to accommodate all of our customers, all of the time, and in our world of customer convenience and retention, Saturdays play a major role. If you think about it, if we don't offer to service our customers on Saturday, someone else will, and that "someone else" may become our customer's Monday to Friday service shop, as well.

Now the biggie: hours of operation. Most customers in the retail world (including myself) take full advantage of getting things done on Saturdays. One reason for this is that most times, due to our Monday to Friday work schedule, we can't get anything done during the week because that time is consumed by our jobs.

My feeling on this is quite simple; if you're going to open, be open as you would on your normal Monday thru Friday schedule excluding evenings. If you open at 8 am and close at 12 pm, by the time the staff wakes up from their Friday night events and starts the day, they are already thinking about closing at noon and by 10:30 we can't or won't take any more work for the day. Dealers that have Saturday schedules until noon, 1 pm or even 2 pm generally start to see and hear advisors in service departments start saying to customers at 12:30 or 1 pm that they can't take any more work today. Imagine what is said by them when you close at noon.

Saturday Staffing

Saturday staffing should be as it is during the week, as well. If you choose to have fewer technicians on Saturday, be aware that the mix of advisors to technicians that you have during the week should also apply on Saturday. Example:

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| • M-F Advisors | 4 | Saturday Advisors | 2 |
| • M-F Technicians | 12 | Saturday Technicians | 6 |

Also don't forget porters, cashiers and shuttle drivers as they also play a very big role on Saturdays. Not having the correct support staff on Saturday will only mean that the advisors will have to handle all of those positions as well, making for a very nonproductive and aggravating day for everyone.

*Note: most importantly, be sure your parts department is properly staffed for Saturdays, as well.

What type of work is scheduled?

This is an area I believe (outside of being open Saturdays to begin with) that is most talked about when it comes to Saturdays.

History dictates that there is an unwritten code amongst the service departments that when it comes to Saturdays (I relate this to, let's say, the president's secret book of codes), these should be a maintenance or "gravy" day. Being in retail for 25 years before becoming a consultant, I had the same outlook on Saturdays, but the truth is that if we are to be open on Saturdays, we need to accommodate every customer (within reason) that calls for a Saturday appointment. Be sure, however, that you have the proper mix of technicians to accommodate everyone and not just have your "c" techs working Saturdays.

In Closing

Sooner or later we will all have to face the fact that Saturday service is a very important part of what we do as an industry. Our focus over the years has gone from dollars to retention and customer satisfaction. Why? Because of free manufacture maintenance, all the national promotions, leases, CSI and vehicles all around just being made better. The fact is that as an industry, customer pay RO traffic for the most part in dealerships over the past couple of years has decreased 8-12%. Can we really afford to lose even more customer pay business by not being open on Saturday?

So, what we need to do here, folks, is do what we need to do to accommodate our customers, so they feel we are the "go to" place for service, Monday to Saturday and not just Monday to Friday.