

Shop Meetings

Ask any Service Manager, ASM, or Technician, “How often do you have a shop meeting?” The common response is “All the time. Every time there’s a problem, we all get together in the middle of the shop and Management tells us what we did wrong.”

While there are some reasons to call an emergency meeting like that, it is NOT a “Shop Meeting”. Shop meetings should be structured and planned. The true value of a shop meeting is to allow the transfer of information both from management and from the staff. It is the opportunity to discuss “the good, bad and the ugly” as it needs to be shared.

Consider the following to get the maximum benefit from each meeting:

- A major rule of open shop meetings is NO SHARK ATTACKS! The shop meeting is for the benefit of the department---not a beating or complaining session.
- Management should have an agenda to begin the meeting. Keep management’s time to a half hour and then open the floor to the staff.
- Meetings should be kept to about 1 hour as the conversation can clearly go off point if held too long.
- The meeting should be considered a part of the regular business of the department and not allowed to be skipped or forgotten.
- Shop meetings are best kept on a schedule, for example, every 3rd Wednesday at noon.

Some topics that can be discussed are:

- 1) Training;
- 2) CSI;
- 3) Production objectives;
- 4) Upcoming advertising;
- 5) Current campaigns;
- 6) Technical information;
- 7) Policy changes; and
- 8) Vacation and training scheduling.

While it is important to allow the staff to talk about what they wish, it is best to keep the focus of the meeting on the dealership’s operations.

By holding regularly scheduled meetings, all the staff will know that they will have an opportunity to bring up the things they would like to get resolved and it will be done in an orderly and productive manner.

If you have not been holding regular shop meetings, it may take a while for everyone to settle in and provide input, but it is clearly worth the time and the effort to hold regular meetings to get everyone on board.

As we all know---good communication is one of the keys to growth!