



## AUTOMOTIVE TRAINING INTERNATIONAL

### COACH or SCOREKEEPER?

By: Tyler Robbins

Service Managers and Fixed Operations Managers around the world have one of the most underappreciated positions in the entire industry. It is also one of the least “taught” positions which makes the position that much more difficult to be an effective leader.

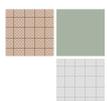
By least taught, I mean, realistically, there is no Service Management “school” where potential Managers are shipped off to learn how to be an effective Manager or Leader. Most Service Managers, in fact, most automotive management positions in general are simply bestowed upon an individual who has demonstrated ‘something’.

One of the roles I fill in my travels all over the world is that of training Service Management, and naturally, I have to assess the ‘type’ of Service Manager or potential Service Manager I am working with in order to effectively teach them.

In an article from a few years back, I wrote that there are effectively three types of Service Managers:

**‘Technical’** – Those who were most likely a former technician or shop foreman prior to becoming Service Management. This type focuses on the “repairs”, and genuinely works well with the technicians in overcoming problem vehicles, etc.

**‘Administrative’** – Those who can recite the manufacturer policies and procedures on a moment’s notice, can tell you, off the top of their head, warranty codes for various claims, etc. This type focuses on the paperwork elements of the role – ensuring technician write ups are effective, time cards are perfect and Advisors have proper write up’s with appropriate signatures etc.





Thirdly, the ‘Marketing’ types – those who are always coming up with some new ‘promotion’ or incentive to sell more. These types are focused almost exclusively, on the sales numbers of the Service Department, as well as ensuring proper Maintenance Menus, and spiffs, etc.

There is no right or wrong type of Manager, each has their strengths and weaknesses, simply, we all have tendencies toward one of these three. The key for all Managers, is to recognize which one of these three represents your dominant ‘type’ and then work to improve the other areas. The ideal Service Manager has a reasonable balance of all three. Let me say that another way, it is not that the ideal Service Manager is 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 – but simply, that they have balance.

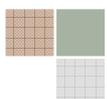
Each Service Operation has different needs, different areas of weakness, and depending on the weaknesses within each operation, will dictate which “type” needs to be dominant within that operation.

This article, however, is not about the three types, as much as it is about the overall focus of Service Management, regardless of their type.

Increasingly, in my travels, I have come to recognize that within all types of Manager, each can be divided into one of two ‘umbrella’ categories.

By umbrella, I mean, every Service Manager, regardless of whether they are Technical, Administrative or Marketing types, falls under an even broader categorization. I call these two categories, the “Scorekeeper” and the “Coach”.

The ‘Scorekeeper’ Manager is just that, keeping score. By that, I mean, he/she knows at every given moment exactly what the labor sales, labor gross, fixed coverage percentage, hours per RO for each advisor, ELR, CSI scores, actual vs forecast, daily, monthly and year to date, etc. Traditionally, this type of Manager is deemed to be “effective” because he/she knows exactly where the business is and how much growth, etc is needed to achieve the forecasts or objectives. In all cases, it is important for the Manager to know this information, and without a clear objective and knowledge of where we stand relative to that objective – how can it possibly be achieved?





However, there is one glaring pitfall in the Scorekeeper Manager's role, and realistically, that is the role of "Coach".

I've stated that it is extremely important to know the "score" so to speak, but realistically, when you know the score, it won't do you much good if you can't improve it.

Think of it relative to a hockey game – the score is clearly stated for all to see on the scoreboard, the statistical data is there too, shots on goal, penalty minutes, etc. But realistically, what difference? I mean, the coach is standing on the bench, behind the players – he's not telling them the "score", the players already know it; he's not telling each player their individual stats, they already know them, so what is he doing?

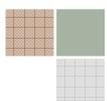
Well – you have to ask yourself, what are you doing? Are you standing behind your team telling them the score? Are you simply watching the game? Or are you working one on one and in groups with your team to improve the overall performance?

Think of it from an everyday Service perspective; Many Managers have adapted the one-on-ones with their advisors and their technicians. Effectively, once per day, week, or month, the Service Manager sits down with each individual to go over their "score-card". The real talent here lies not in the meeting itself, but in how this one-on-one will play out.

Will you, as a Manager – tell your staff their "score" or will you coach them on how to improve their individual and overall performance?

Simply telling an Advisor that his Hours per RO is X and that it needs to be 0.3 higher is one thing, and frankly this "scorekeeping" won't actually accomplish anything. Actually giving this same Advisor some actual directions, suggestions, asking them what they need help with is the difference between knowing the score and improving the score!

The bigger challenge is that any Service Management training received in the past, did not teach Managers how to "coach", it taught them how to keep score. There are all kinds of 'score cards' out there for Managers – Repair Order Analysis and Management Tools are a wealth of information, but, realistically, like the back side of a hockey card – there is really little else there beyond statistics.





Now, don't get me wrong, I am a HUGE proponent of having the statistical information ([www.ATiROAMS.com](http://www.ATiROAMS.com)), the challenge is not having the information – the challenge lies in what you do with it. The “Scorekeeper” simply provides statistical data – a coach, a TRUE Coach, takes that statistical information, merges it with the day to day individual and team actions to teach improvements.

Another way of saying it is simply this – “Don't worry about the score if you have no intention of changing the outcome of the game!”

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