



AUTOMOTIVE TRAINING INTERNATIONAL

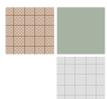
THE CHANGE-MAKER! It's Different Here! By: Tyler Robbins

The three words that all Fixed Operations Consultants, Facilitators, Trainers, Specialists, whatever we prefer to call ourselves, expect to hear no matter where we are proposing to and delivering our training are “It’s different HERE”.

In fact we hear it so often, together, we literally ‘bet’ on how quickly we will hear those words from a Service Manager, Service Advisor even the Owners and Dealers.

Before I get into the details of how this has evolved, it’s important to recognize the context in which these words are utilized when speaking to us. Fixed Operations, for that matter, all automotive, and I bet, all industry consultants, trainers, etc. are employed by Owners, CEO’s, Managers, etc with one objective – Improve a specific element of their business, be that increase sales, reduce expenses, analyze personnel, make marketing recommendations, whatever.

So a Fixed Operations company, division, department or location has clearly identified internally that they need improvement in a specific or general area, taken the time to research various Training, Improvement, Development Companies to select the one that they feel can best improve their specific operation or operational element. They are searching for the “Change-Maker”





So the Fixed Operations Trainers/Consultants (Change-Makers) arrive to deliver the specific training or improvement objectives, naturally working closely with the front line personnel as well as the Management to ensure that the skills, practices and recommendations that we are providing are successfully implemented, sustained and quantifiable.

Of course, what this really means is that we are initiating the change and ultimately holding the personnel accountable for implementing and sustaining the identified improvements.

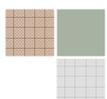
EVERYONE LOVES CHANGE

Now, it doesn't need to be said, but I will anyway, "Change is never hard and always readily accepted." Hopefully you picked up on the sarcasm; we all know that change is rarely just 'accepted' even when the operation has identified internally that change is necessary.

There are 4 distinct stages of change, knowing what they are and that they are inevitable will only help you through the change and onto your success.

1. Denial
2. Resistance
3. Involvement
4. Acceptance

The business of Fixed Operations is becoming more important to the overall success and profitability of dealerships every single day, and the realization that continuing to do business the way we always have will only result in failure is becoming more and more 'accepted'. Let me say that a different way, the business of Fixed Operations is changing, operations are recognizing and accepting that it is changing. That is not saying that simply accepting that the business is changing and making the necessary changes to their own business are the same thing.





It's important to recognize the stages of change, better still; we need to know some of those key phrases, statements and actions that demonstrate your personnel's stage in the process of change.

For those operations that choose to employ "Change-Makers" like my company, you have both attempted to initiate changes yourself and met with limited or no success, or you already know that will be the outcome and are prepared to bring in the "change-makers" right from day one.

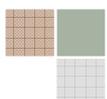
When you choose to employ an outside "Change-Maker", expect some of the following "phrases" to pop up from your staff, some may even come from you when choosing your "Change-maker".

- ✓ "How much experience do you have with X Manufacturer Dealers?"

Now, fortunately for me, I have experience with all of them, yet in my sarcasm, I ask the question; what difference does it make? Honestly – do personnel working in a dealership at brand X accept and initiate change differently than those working in a Dealership of brand Y?

- ✓ "How much experience do you have working in Regional Geography A?"

Again, personnel in Geography A accept and initiate change differently than Geography B?





The ultimate example:

“I have a Service Operation in that particular geography, representing this particular manufacturer or brand, with this particular number of Service Advisors, and that particular number of technicians, running with teams and groups, with a 64/36 male-female staff ratio, a customer base average income of \$43,552.26, in a market that has precipitation 22% of the time, 19% of the market owns more than one pet, 27% of the market has one goldfish, and the local baseball team has an average batting average of .292, and every 3rd Tuesday of the month, we write more than 15 but less than 18 repair orders, and we have a 1 day floater guarantee for technicians, but only if they have averaged 107.45% productivity for the last 73 days. If you have worked with those demographics before, then you can come to my operation.”

Do you know what is really happening here?

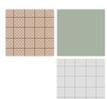
Exactly – in an effort to appear to be “qualifying” the Trainer or the Training Company’s ability to initiate and sustain the required changes, they are in fact demonstrating their resistance to acquiring a Change-Maker at all by making the “qualifications” so ridiculous.

More often though, it is not such an obviously ridiculous example, it is simply “Well, It’s Different Here”

In all of my travels, I have yet to discover that “magical place known as “HERE” where it is in fact different. In the magical land of “Here”, they must put their pants on two legs at a time too!

Whenever you’ve begun the process of finding your “Change-Maker”, you must have accepted that you needed change, so don’t try to eliminate every contenderfind one..... if you don’t – you’re only hurting yourself and your operation.

Realistically, what do you want to know?





You want to know that the potential “Change-Maker” has successfully initiated and sustained, quantifiable changes in a retail fixed operations’ environment. Isn’t that really all you need/want to know?

Now, you obviously need some assurance that the “Change-Maker” has actually done it, and isn’t just claiming to be able to do it, so you ask for references. Of course, you will get a list of references from the “Change-Maker” presumably, these are the Change-maker’s success stories, but before you critique the list as “provided by the change-maker and therefore you expect them to be positive”, ask yourself what would make the references themselves credible or not. If they represent a different manufacturer or a different geographical region does that make them less credible?

WHY? Don’t say “It’s different here.”

It’s NO Different here or there – people are people - Even HERE!



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Tyler Robbins

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