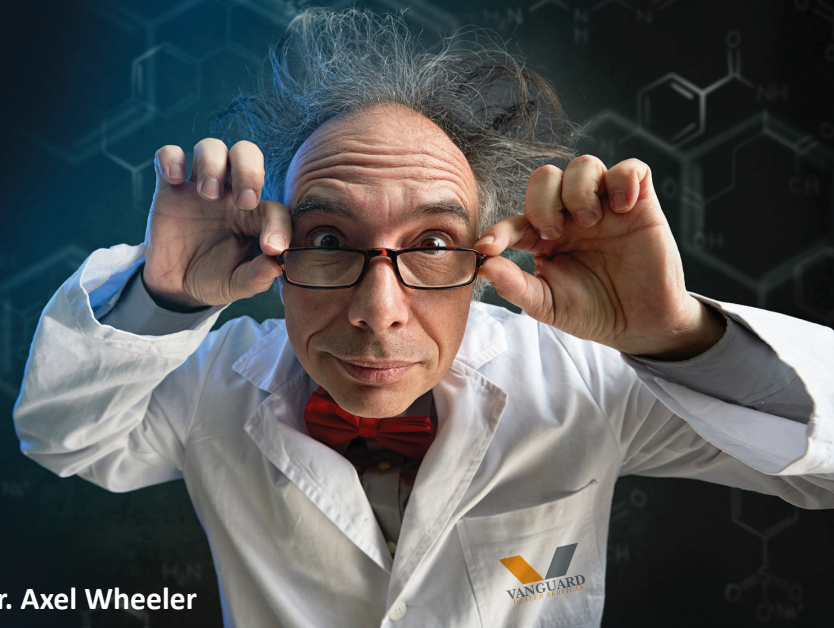


# Customer Retention Through Service



Dr. Axel Wheeler

“Objection Doctor, after running an analysis of our customer database, we have discovered that repeat business is not meeting our expectations. Could you recommend strategies to align our dealership with the goal of creating customers for life?”

## CELEBRATING PROGRESS AND LOOKING AHEAD

Congratulations to us all! Over the past few years, we've made significant strides, and have gone miles and miles in enhancing the consumer buying experience. Our sales process has not only become more efficient and streamlined, but has also become faster and increasingly transparent, showcasing our dealerships' capacity to adapt and welcome necessary changes. By focusing on customer service fundamentals through training and coaching our sales personnel, we've substantially upgraded the buying and selling experience.

However, while we've invested heavily in the initial buying journey, it's crucial to ponder whether we've equally prioritized retaining our hard-earned customers. Auto dealers are constantly reminded about the significance of customer retention by the manufacturers, industry groups, and consumers alike. Most dealerships have initiatives in place they believe encourage repeat business.

However, superb ownership experiences are just as crucial, if not more so, than the initial purchase to retain customers. Assuming that all team members naturally excel in difficult or challenging customer service scenarios is not realistic. Simply advising staff to treat customers as they would their grandparents is not enough. Ongoing training, support, and reinforcement are essential for fostering a culture dedicated to great service throughout ownership.

## Here are Three Immediate Actions for Tangible Results:



**Enhance Value with Retention Programs:** Implement and highlight customer retention programs such as Lifetime Powertrain plans, rewards programs, and prepaid maintenance. Demonstrating the substantial benefits of these programs encourages customer engagement and loyalty. Help them visualize the huge return on a small investment.



**Prioritize Acknowledgment and Updates:** Small gestures of recognition and regular updates can significantly enhance customer satisfaction. For example, acknowledge customers promptly upon their arrival in the service department. A simple nod can communicate acknowledgment. Furthermore, keep them informed by providing updates about their vehicle's status during service appointments to mitigate frustration and perceived waiting times.



**Embrace Customer Concerns:** Train them to treat customer issues as they would dealership issues and strive for resolution together. Acknowledging the problem, seeking solutions, and following up post-resolution are key practices to ensure customers feel valued and keep them coming back time and time again.



## The Enduring Value of a Customer

Carl Sewell's 1990 best-seller, "Customers for Life," estimated the lifetime value of a customer at \$517,000. Think about it. That was in 1990. Considering the inflation of values since then, the current worth is unimaginable. While we invest significantly to attract new customers, it's equally, if not more, important to invest in retaining them.

Let's commit to making every customer a customer for life.

