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The Work Order is Complete

Be sure to capture everything!

I met Ollie in rural Alabama. I didn't think much of him at first. He owned a small truck repair garage that a client of mine used. It was kind of a backward place that was unremarkable in appearance. Computers were becoming common in fleet garages, and he only had an ancient mechanical calculator.

He was a good vendor and kept most of his promises. His invoices were annoyingly detailed, but he did the work, and his work tended to stay done (very few repeat repairs). If there was a problem, he was right there to make it right. We have given him much business over the years, and I see him regularly. As I got to know him better, it became clear that although he was an everyday kind of guy, he also was quite well off.

When I thought about it, I thought he must have had family money because it was clear that his garage didn't seem that prosperous.

One day, I asked him about it. He said his parents had passed on when he was a young man. He went through a bad patch after being in the motor pool in the Army. But he met Annie, got married, and sobered up. Basically, he had to pull himself up.

He said that since he knew me well, he would tell me the secret of his wealth. He said it was simple but incredibly powerful, so he earned money when others in his business went bankrupt or hung on hand to mouth.

He said when a truck rolls in, he immediately puts a work order under the wiper blade. I listened intensely and was still waiting to hear the secret. I said that's nice, but what's the secret? He laughed and said that's it.

Whenever anyone touches that truck, the activity is jotted down with the time. We may do 4 or 5 little jobs in addition to the big job requested by the customer. Those lost minutes are the difference between prosperity and subsistence. I've never had a customer complain since they know exactly what we did and how long it took.

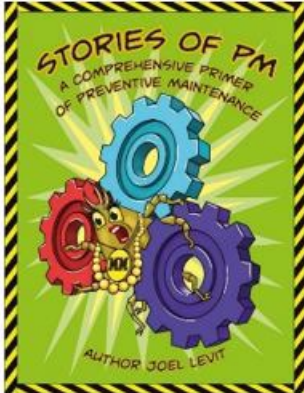
His success in keeping and getting customers was due to the quality of his work and his customer service attitude. His financial success was that he got paid for everything he did. It has taken years for that difference to sink in.

There are two keys in a vendor or in-house garage setting. One key is what you read daily in business articles to be successful and focus on service to the customer. That will get you customers (eventually). Ollie's advice will keep you in business and make you prosperous. Record everything you do and get paid for it (or get credit for it in an in-house maintenance facility).

Once all working time is accounted for and entered into the CMMS, justifying your crews, fighting off outsourcing, and choosing between competitive equipment is greatly simplified. Remember, the key to all analysis is to know what happened. By the way, it doesn't matter what method you use to collect the information; collect it in a usable form!

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Preventive Maintenance



Defect Elimination



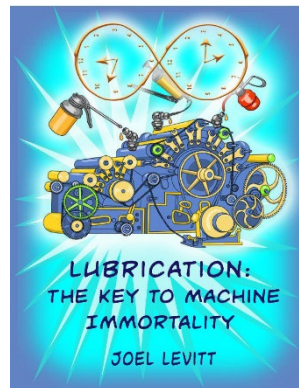
Reliability and fundamentals



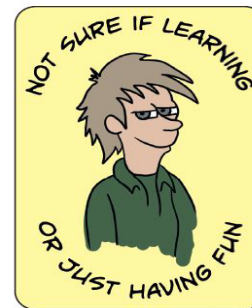
Maintenance quality



Maintenance Planning



Lubrication



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