Driven

NADA MANAGEMENT SERIES SP25



A DEALER GUIDE TO

Handling the Morning Service Rush

NADA
NATIONAL AUTOMOBILE DEALERS ASSOCIATION

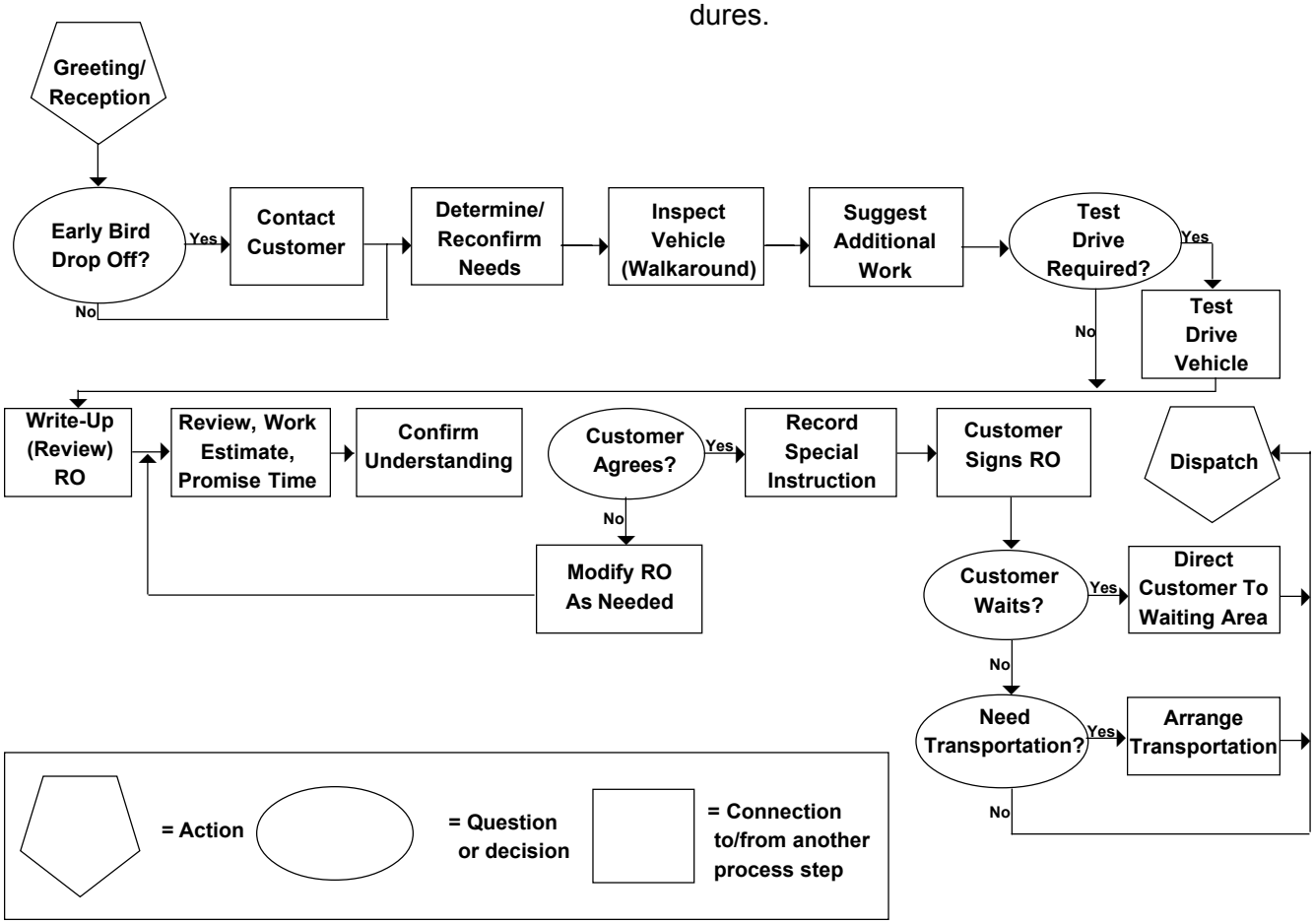
The National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) has prepared this management guide to assist its dealer members in being as efficient as possible in the operation of their dealerships. The presentation of this information is not intended to encourage concerted action among competitors or any other action on the part of dealers that would in any manner fix or stabilize the price or any element of the price of any good or service.

Handling The Morning Service Rush

Do the mornings in your service department progress in a smooth, professional manner, or is it a crazy, unorganized mess? Can you afford to lose another customer to a more organized, efficient competitor?

In order to provide your customer with the best possible experience and to encourage return business to your dealership, the service write-up process during the morning rush must be handled in an efficient and organized manner. Take a look at the flow chart below. It lays out exactly how an organized and profitable service department interacts with their customers. It is suggested that this entire process should take between 5 and 8 uninterrupted minutes per customer. How much time do you spend with your customers? A quick minute or two where you lose any chance for customer rapport? Or a time-consuming 20 minutes filled with interruptions that only give your customers heartburn?

A quick note about flow charts: each procedure is enclosed within a different shape, depending upon the action required. For example, all action items are inside pentagons, all question or decision statements are inside ovals, and all connection points are inside squares. Let's take a deeper look into a few of these procedures.



Determine/Reconfirm Needs

The service advisor should take this opportunity to verify all the customer contact information: current address, work number, home number, cell phone number, email address. Then the service advisor should restate what he/she believes is the service that the customer wants performed. The customer can clarify in person what the problem is with the vehicle while the service advisor listens, clearly documenting all vehicle symptoms, using specific descriptions to give the technician as much information as possible.

Inspect Vehicle (Walk around)

The service advisor should perform a walk around inspection of every vehicle that comes in for service, even if the vehicle is in for an oil change. It eliminates any barriers between the customer and the service advisor, creating a private conversation between the two with the focus being the customer's vehicle. It also allows the service advisor to document any existing damage to the vehicle along with the opportunity to point out to the customer additional items that may need service.

Write down the VIN number. Sit in the vehicle and write down the mileage, turn on the lights, and open the hood. Walk to the back and then all the way around the car, checking for other service opportunities. Walk to the front and check the battery, lights, tire wear, belts, leaks, and fluid levels. Many dealerships have been successful in using a form that is 2-part carbonless, printed in three colors: green, yellow, and red. The service advisor notes their opinion on the health of each portion of the customer's vehicle: green meaning okay, yellow meaning keep watch, and red meaning immediate service is recommended.

Suggest Additional Work

Based upon what the service advisor has found during the walk around inspection, now is the time to present whatever menu package your dealership provides. This advises the customer of their maintenance needs based on the mileage and condition of their vehicle. While reviewing the appropriate items, ask the customer if they'd like to take care of these items while they're here. If the customer declines, give them a maintenance menu with the service advisor's business card stapled to it for future reference.

The service advisor can now move on to offering the customer a free maintenance inspection while placing no obligation on them to have any service performed. Shown on the next page is a sample of an inspection form. This form should be given to the customer when they pick up their vehicle.

Review Work, Estimate, and Promise Time

Now is the time to review everything that has been discussed with the customer. Is there agreement on the type of work to be performed? Is there agreement on the amount of the estimate? Is there agreement on the time the vehicle is to be ready?

The service advisor must be able to accurately record the customer's wishes on the repair order, monitoring the progress of each vehicle throughout the day, and updating customers via their preferred contact method. (home phone? email? work phone?) If anything that was promised to the customer changes, the customer must be notified immediately.

Conclusion

Organization and communication are the keys to effective customer write-up in the service department. Each customer needs to be handled in a professional manner, and you need to communicate to him what is going to happen or what might happen before it does. Following the procedures in the flow chart will make the morning rush easier to handle as it creates an organized outline for all service advisors to follow.

There are many more duties and functions the service advisor performs throughout the day. Please refer to NADA *Driven* Guides SP.23, *A Dealer Guide to the Three Ps of Effective Service Management: Profit, Productivity, Personnel*, and SP.11, *A Dealer Guide to Greater Service Opportunities.* These guides give a comprehensive look at all aspects of the service department, and are extremely valuable tools.

Free Maintenance Inspection

For your continued driving pleasure, one of our expert technicians has performed the following multi-point inspections on your vehicle. You are under no obligation to purchase any recommended repairs. We only wish to keep you informed of your vehicle's condition so that you may protect your investment.

Name _____ **Year** _____ **Model** _____

Phone _____ **Mileage** _____ **Date** _____

Item	Inspected	Potential Problems
Check all lights, horn, and turn signals	_____	_____
Check wipers and wiper blades	_____	_____
Visually inspect belts and hoses	_____	_____
Visually inspect battery and cables	_____	_____
Check air filter	_____	_____
Check all fluid levels	_____	_____
Check tires for wear and pressure	_____	_____
Visually inspect brakes	_____	_____
Visually inspect exhaust	_____	_____
Visually inspect undercarriage	_____	_____

Service Advisor _____ RO # _____

Technician _____

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