

DEALER SPOTLIGHT

Formula for Success

People Power: Delivering 'Memorable Service'

Mercedes-Benz of Fort Lauderdale - Fort Lauderdale, Florida



Two years ago, the fixed operations team at Mercedes-Benz of Fort Lauderdale had a shared vision of revitalizing an operation that was dead last in its market in SES scores.

"We realized that we sell cars to people who are accustomed to great, memorable service. Many of them frequent country clubs, five-star hotels, and world-class restaurants," recalls Allen Majewski, Service and Parts Director. "We asked, 'Why should they expect less when they bring their Mercedes-Benz in for service?'"

That attitude—and the changes it inspired—has driven the Dealership to the top

of the South Florida market in SES scores in roughly 18 months, and led to double-digit growth in customer-pay labor and parts, for example. It's a remarkable turnaround that Majewski credits to "good people using good processes," and it is truly a Dealership-wide effort.

A "grassroots" change. It all began with a "process improvement team" with representation from every area of the store. "We met every week, and every voice was heard, from the general manager's to the service valet's," says Majewski. "We tackled everything from parts department structure to how we park cars, trying to make positive changes wherever possible."

Great ideas emerged, and management simply supported them. "Our job as

managers is to enable people to solve problems creatively," he notes, "and our people accomplished things they didn't believe were possible." Majewski also credits SPOM Bill Norman and the rest of the Jacksonville Region team for "being there in the trenches with us" and taking a very active role in the process improvement team.

Today, the Dealership delivers a consistent, "by the book" service experience, while emphasizing personal service that matches the tastes, needs, and lifestyle of the Customer.

Customer-centered service.

Adjacent to the service waiting area, a comfortable "cyber café" offers business news on a large plasma-screen TV, five computers with complimentary

high-speed Internet access, and wireless Internet access for laptop users. "Waiting can't be 'down time' for our Customers," says Majewski. "They want to be productive, and we make that possible."

The Dealership's enclosed service drive features huge video screens showing clips ranging from informational (service specials) to inspiring (new products). "The 'wall' engages Customers while they wait for write-up or delivery," says Majewski, "and it really promotes our Dealership and the brand." True enough: one woman recently walked back into the showroom and bought an R-Class after seeing a video about the new vehicle in the service drive.

Majewski says simple perks like free car washes and courtesy inspections not only gratify Customers but also keep



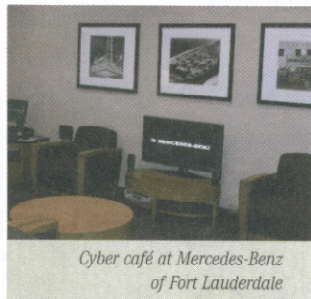
Mercedes-Benz of Fort Lauderdale

them connected with the store. "We grab every opportunity to interact with our Customers, remind them what a great vehicle they're driving, and show them we care," he said.

Indeed, the personal touch is central to the store's service strategy, which includes thoughtful details like keeping *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* on hand. "Many of our Customers are 'snowbirds' from the northeast, and we make them feel at home," says Majewski. What they particularly appreciate is the friendly, "Southern-style" service that permeates the Dealership.

"Folks just like doing business with us now," Majewski concludes, "and it all comes back to our people and their attitudes. You can have lots of great processes and ideas, but only people can make them work."

Wrapped Wholesale
Parts Sprinter Van



Cyber café at Mercedes-Benz
of Fort Lauderdale