

YOUNG'S AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

BY BILL CANNON, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

How does a mother of two and her journeyman electrician husband end up with a first-class automotive shop in southeast Houston, TX? It started with Glenn Young loving to work on cars in his spare time. When he decided to give an automotive shop a try, Betty Jo began to “practically raise her children at the shop” while she helped out.

As they ran Young’s Automotive, Betty Jo and Glenn became involved with the Automotive Service Association (ASA). At the same time, Glenn got involved with the CARQUEST Technical Institute (CTI), and eventually began teaching courses for them.

This turned into four days per week and as Betty Jo says, “Suddenly I was a full-time shop owner. I didn’t have an innate interest in cars. But now [looking back], after 30 years, you become a family. I want to take care of our customers, and when they’re broken down or upset, I guide them and do the best I can. I have my Accredited Automotive Manager (AAM) degree [from the Automotive Management Institute (AMI)] and Glenn has moved into the state level of ASA.”



SHOP TALK

NAME YOUNG'S AUTOMOTIVE CENTER
LOCATION HOUSTON, TX
NUMBER OF SHOPS 1
YEARS IN BUSINESS 36
EMPLOYEES 6
SQ. FOOTAGE 3,500
NO. OF BAYS 6
VOLUME 30-35 CARS PER WEEK
AVERAGE REPAIR COST \$335-\$365
ANNUAL REVENUE \$600,000

When Glenn Young (left) decided that teaching was more in his future than running his shop, Betty Jo, his wife, took over and hasn't looked back.

NUTS AND BOLTS

Young’s Automotive Service has two techs, two service advisors and a female office manager.

“I believe in a strong support staff. The one making the money is the tech, so I work hard [at] keeping them

working. He can make himself and you a whole lot of money,” says Betty Jo. “Our techs are ASE-certified. Since we’re very involved in the CTI program, if our techs want to go, I pay for it. In fact, we pay for all training and ASE certification.”

Betty Jo says that most of their business comes from referrals: “We’re a little off the beaten path. So the first

thing I tell new customers is that we don't spend anyone's money without their permission. But before the customer picks up that car I'll have a preventive maintenance check done on it and later ask them to sign up for our program."

Betty Jo describes their Houston community: "We're much more of a commercial community today. We're

not far from a medical center and we have quite a few company accounts. We've always been involved in co-op programs with area colleges."

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE

"The most important thing about being a service dealer is the safety of your customers," says Betty Jo. "You must have qualified people, quality

WORDS OF WISDOM

Betty Jo has this advice for new shop owners:

- Join an association. Don't try to do it on your own.
- You must have training; equipment isn't enough. B- and C-level techs can be brought up to A-level with training.
- Take care of the customer, and they will refer to you.
- Train your customers that diagnostic time has to be paid for.
- Get back into preventive maintenance; we are the ones who created a market for quick lube service.



parts and a recheck program. You have to document everything.

"The most important thing is that the customer is satisfied and that we have exceeded his expectations. Then I have to protect myself and my shop. It involves communication from beginning to end. If you are not a people person, hire someone who is."

RECOGNIZED BY THE INDUSTRY

Betty Jo was invited to be a panel member at the 2006 Global Automotive Aftermarket Symposium in Dearborn, MI and is now starting her own company called, "YES," Young's Educational Systems.

She also teaches courses for ASA and CTI. It appears there is no stopping this woman who found herself a shop owner by default and then made more than the best of it.

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