



7 Basic Service Processes

for Delivering the Best Customer Service

The most important role in your dealership

The service that you are able to offer to your customers is the lifeblood of your dealership. It builds trust with your customers and establishes your reputation. The majority of this responsibility falls on the shoulders of your Service Writer.

Your Service Writer, by far, communicates with more customers in your dealership than anyone else.

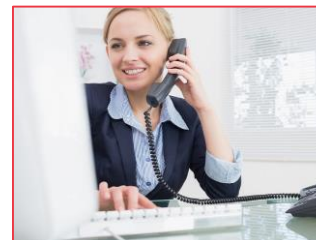
With such a vital business role, it's essential that your Service Writer has the tools and skills necessary to reach their full potential in both the service they offer and the profitability they generate.

To put it in perspective, if your Service Writer, on average, makes 20 touches per day, that's 5,120 touches per year!

In comparison, your sales rep may only make 3 touches per day, which only equates to 768 touches per year.

7 Basic practices every RV dealership must implement

With the help of leading **RV industry expert, Chuck Marzahn**, we've listed 7 basic but sometimes overlooked practices your Service Writer and service department must implement to ensure your dealership is providing the best in customer service.



#1. Appointment Setting

This is where all communication starts and the first impression is everything. When your customer initially speaks with your Service Writer, it's imperative they collect as many details about the service work that needs to be done so they can make sure they meet the customer's expectations.



Marzahn recommends that your Service Writer requests a list of to-do items from the customer. This way you can collect all of the information up-front so it can easily be scheduled.



Your dealer management system (DMS) can play a vital role in capturing customer requests. The quicker you can get service information into your system, the better off you will be.



Make sure to include labor lines for each job so they can be scheduled ahead of time. This will also make estimates easier and it gives your technicians a target as to what needs to be done.

#2. Reception

When the customer calls and schedules an appointment, it's essential you schedule what Marzahn refers to as "Drop Off."

Schedule 10-15 minutes for you and your customer to physically walk around the RV, take pictures and see, first-hand, what is getting looked at.

This will set the stage as to what the customer should expect from you and your service department.



Key questions the Service Writer must be able to answer

1. How much will it cost?

This seems like an open-ended question, but Marzahn says it shouldn't be.

A good Service Writer will know the flat rate charges on basically everything but electrical work or water leaks.

If the Service Writer takes down the correct information from the customer when they list the items they'd like

serviced, they should be able to give the flat rate estimate for these requests.

If it's electrical or any other issue that needs to be diagnosed, the Service Writer must start off by estimating the diagnostic fee.



Key questions the Service Writer must be able to answer



2. When is it going to be done?

Marzahn says you should be careful not to underestimate when answering this question. Typically you know how long it takes to order parts and the problem OEM parts that can cause delays, so don't give your customers a false sense of hope that service will get done.

An estimated completion time, even though it is likely to change, is better than leaving the customer to guess.



3. What are you going to do?

This is another question that takes a little prep work ahead of time. If the Service Writer does a good job of collecting notes, before the customer arrives at the dealership, they can take the time to talk to a technician and come up with a game plan that they can present to the customer. This way everyone knows, from the beginning, what to expect.

3. Production Dispatch

Once the RV has been dropped off for service, the next step is for your Service Writer to stay on top of what's going on with the unit.

Fortunately, your DMS can simplify this process for you.

The Service Writer must understand the customer's needs and concerns and interpret their requests clearly in your DMS so your technicians can efficiently handle the work that needs to be done.



Important Customer Information

If you keep well-managed, up-to-date information, anyone in your dealership should be able to instantly provide the following pieces of information to your customer:



- **Work Order Status**
If processes are tracked in your DMS properly, you should easily be able to inform the customer how the service is progressing.
- **Promise Date**
If an estimated completion date is given, this should be tracked in your DMS so it can be communicated to the customer. It's imperative to know when completion is due for the sake of planning and scheduling the Work Order.
- **Comments**
It's very important for your Service Writer and your techs to record comments in your DMS. This way everyone in your dealership is on the same page and can easily inform a customer on their service.
- **Job Line Status**
If properly configured, this should happen automatically as the tech clocks on and off each job line.

4. Quality Control

Another important aspect of your Service Writer's job is to ensure all of the service work is done as the customer requested.

Again, it's important to keep detailed notes in your DMS to keep everyone in your service department on the same page.

The Service Writer should go through all of the info entered in your DMS, compare it to the original requests, and discuss the work with the technicians to make sure all information is credible.

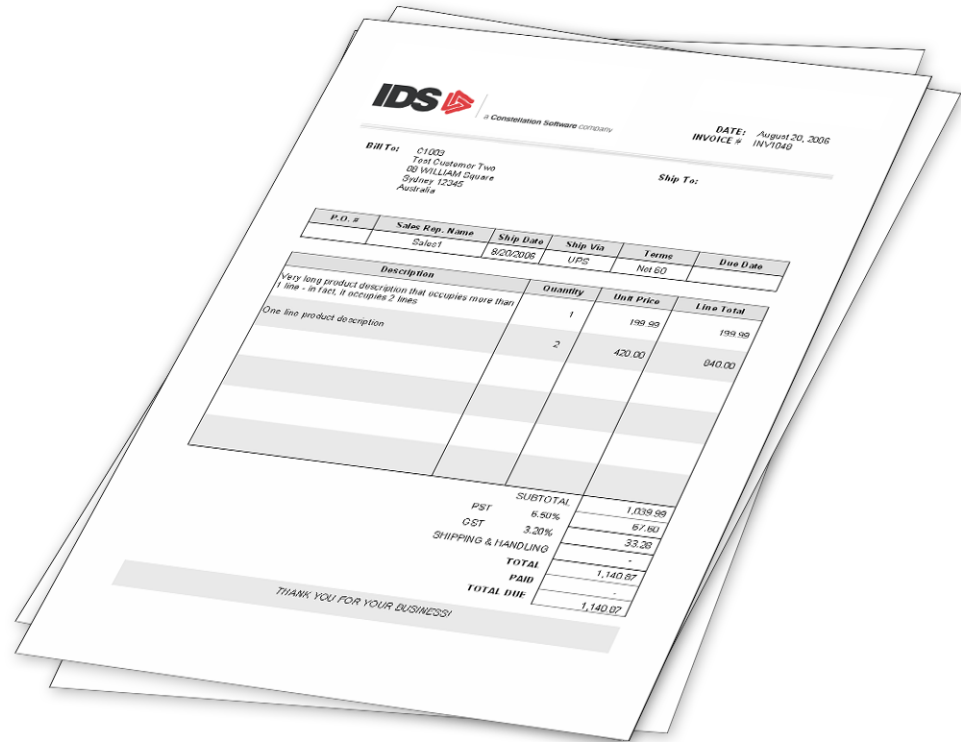


5. Invoicing

This is what Marzahn refers to as a “meeting of the minds” with the customer.

There should be no surprises in the invoice.

All line items and charges should be communicated, in full, with the customer so everyone knows the end result.



6. Active Service Delivery

This should be the best part of the customer experience. When your customer comes to pick up their RV, make sure you schedule enough time to review the work.

- Your Service Writer should take the customer around the RV and review all the line items and show them the exceptional work your service department did.
- Be proud and show that confidence to the customer.

The more confidence and good work you show to your customers, the more confidence they'll have in your dealership and the more likely they'll continue their relationship with you.



#7. Follow-up

Your follow-up process can literally set your service department apart from all the rest.

Once an RV is returned to the customer, it's important for your Service Writer to follow-up and maintain communication with the customer.

Giving that added touch can go a long way in keeping repeat business.



Are you ready to “wow” your customers?

By incorporating just a few of these practices into the experience you provide for your customers, you’ll quickly begin creating the “wow” factor that you are looking for when it comes to creating a solid base of loyal customers.



More Resources

There's always more to learn!

Gain Control of Your Inventory

Discover a 7-step path that will lead you to gaining control of one of the most important aspects of your business.

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How to Evaluate Dealer Management Systems

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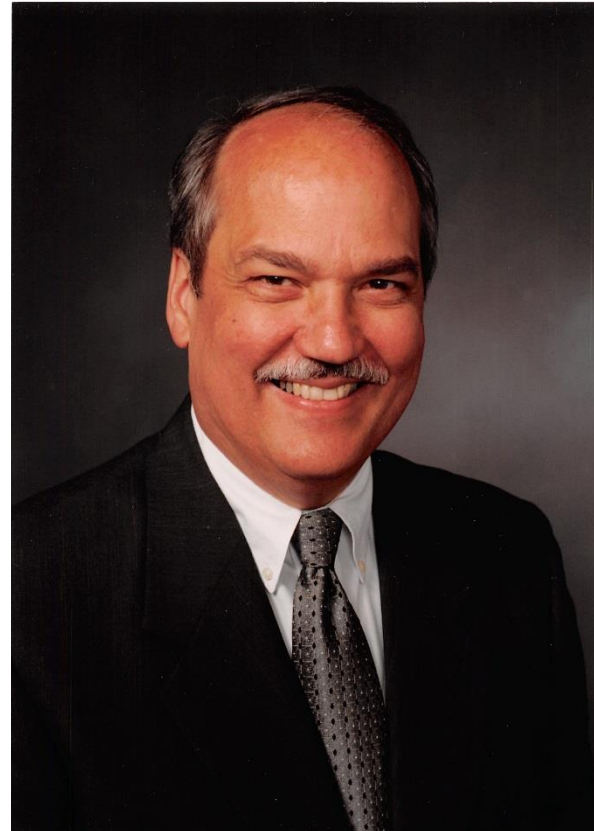
Chuck Marzahn

Chuck Marzahn, co-founder of Marzahn and King Consulting, Inc. is a nationally recognized RV Industry expert. He is considered by many to be an expert in the customary and usual practices of running a dealership from the perspective of ownership or from that of general manager.

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