

# CAR SIDE MANNER

REAL-LIFE LESSONS IN CUSTOMER RELATIONS



We've talked a lot about how important it is to spend some time answering your customers' questions. This month we're going to take our own advice.

*Import Service* does not print a

"letters to the editor" column, even though we get a lot of mail. But printing those "atta boy" letters when we do a good job always seemed like a waste of space. And when you let us know we've screwed up (and believe me, we do have comebacks from time to time), we'd much rather give you eagle eyes credit for your efforts and a prize in our **Tech Tips** column than print a letter.

There are one or two questions that show up on a repeat basis. With your kind permission, we'd like to address some of those questions and problems in this month's **Carside Manner**.

## Tech Tips

Speak of the devil. There has been a continuing misunderstanding about what the **Tech Tips** department tries to do. We tried changing the introductory copy, and we're in the process of changing the wording on the **Tech Tips** response card. But a nagging suspicion remains that we haven't stated our message clearly.

At least once a week, we get a card with one line written on its face, "Enter me in the **Tech Tips** program." There is no tip with the card, just a request to enter the program. Or a card that simply says "More **Tech Tips**." Again, no tip, just the request that someone else take the time to sit down and write one out.

YOU are the **Tech Tips** program. It was designed as YOUR column, to be written by technicians from all over the country who have found a better way to fix a chronic problem on a given car; who have found a new use for an old tool; or who have some added information or even a correction to an article we've already run.

If you've fixed even one car with a tip from one of your fellow technicians, maybe you ought to return the favor. Too many of you have incorrectly assumed that just because you know about a problem and its related fix, everyone else does too. Everyone doesn't.

If you've ever spent a whole day learning the true meaning of frustration on a nightmare car, and then discovered that the fix was staring you in the face all along, share it. Nobody enjoys eating antacids for lunch.

Most of the good tips we've received have come from conscientious techs who care less about the prize

being offered than they do about sharing information with their fellow technicians. Some of the really sharp guys have appeared in **Tech Tips** more than once, but it would be nice to get more of you involved.

At the present time, we're printing all the good tips we receive. If we start getting enough good tips to fill two or even three pages, we'll print 'em. But someone has to send them in the first place.

## More Diagrams, More Specifics!

We've received a number of cards from shop owners, asking us to start printing complete wiring diagrams in the fuel system articles. Unfortunately, many of the diagrams for vehicle specific applications run dozens of pages, especially when you throw in subsystem charts and continuing product changes. And many of those charts will only apply to one make or model—some for only one year of production.

We don't offer this as an excuse folks, it's just that it's an impossibility.

In article after article, we've stated up front that we try to cover highlights and time-savers. It's a little like hamburger-helper. You still have to buy the hamburger in the form of manuals and training tapes. In the meantime, we'll go on trying to add a few flavorings to the mix.

## Letters

Letters are fun. Some of you have found the reader response cards to be too small for all you wanted to say. Some will point out a mistake or a simple difference of opinion about a specific procedure. You guys read very carefully, and your comments, suggestions, and even criticisms are discussed here on a regular basis. Some letters have led to spirited telephone discussions. Many have helped us add important information that better explains a technique or repair procedure found in an earlier issue.

We read each and every one, good and bad. We want your input and your suggestions. Sometimes we can help, sometimes we can't, but the information—the feedback from our customers is every bit as important to us as it is to you.

## Thank You

Finally, we'd like to take a moment to thank all of the readers who have gotten involved in developing articles, and provided useful information. For every name that does get in print in the magazine, there are a dozen more you never hear about. We can't list all of you, but we do owe you our thanks.

Hope you all keep coming back.

—By Ralph Birnbaum