

SELLING TO WOMEN

WOMEN AND AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR

Are you the person responsible for maintenance decisions concerning your vehicle?

**Yes 81% No 6%
Shared 13%**

Do you feel you are treated differently (at repair shops) because you are a woman?

Yes 88% No 12%

Who drives the oldest vehicle in your household?

**You 71% Spouse 18%
Child/Other 11%**

(Information provided from the results of the Car Care Council Women's Board Internet survey of women drivers)

1. Women now purchase and are the primary drivers of about half the vehicles on American roads.
2. The frequency with which women visit repair shops is increasing steadily.
3. That means extra profit for the shops that recognize the value of their female customers.
4. More women are deciding where to take their vehicle for service and repairs. As this trend continues, females will represent the majority of customers with whom we must communicate.
5. Most women don't trust shop owners.
6. Improve the image of the shop.
7. According to a survey of women drivers by the Car Care Council Women's Board, 75 percent of women say that technicians explain the work that will be/or has been done to their vehicle. However, comments such as "But it usually is explained in complicated mechanic jargon;" "If the technician is a woman, I get a much better explanation" and "Yes, but the explanation isn't effective without an understanding of the mechanics before the repair becomes an issue."
8. Females look for facilities that are clean, that have modern equipment and have a courteous and friendly staff. They look for things that make them comfortable.
9. One of the biggest things is when there is a female counter person (that works

at the shop). Even if that person doesn't assist them, female customers see this as a level of comfort.

One stigma attached to women and automotive service is they aren't as knowledgeable as men or that they are bringing the vehicle in for service simply because their significant others don't have the time. However, female customers are probably easier for shop owners to get along with than male customers.

On one hand, women don't want to feel that technicians are speaking down to them. But on the other hand, women ask more questions than men. They want to know more and they want to know how things work more. They like to have everything explained to them, but not in a tone that's condescending or makes them feel belittled.

Which still leaves us with the dilemma of how to market your dealership toward female clientele. Obviously women will frequent a shop that they've found suits their needs and won't return to one where they had a bad experience. But shouldn't the individual shops themselves go actively looking for female customers?

"I think a big thing shops can do is some type of community outreach program," Guzik said. "A chain here (in Herndon, VA) hosts a lot of car care clinics that are run by a female technician.

"Some type of outreach program because at least my experience has been that perception of the technician (needs to be improved). Women need to realize that technicians are there to do a job and help motorists out. Repair shops need to take that burden of responsibility."

According to the Car Care Council's survey, when asked about what they

disliked when it came to repairs, women responded with such answers as "I don't know who to trust with my car repairs;" "I dislike not knowing what the mechanic is talking about" and the big one "Not knowing exactly what is wrong, therefore fearing that they may try to scam me into unnecessary repairs."