



GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND:

How Personal Touch and Effort Can Go a Long Way in Service

A customer's experience, whether positive or negative, is subjective. One tool can be leveraged to set your team up for success and lessen the chances of negative CSI scores – the phone.

The phone is the best resource to get in front of the customer. Car Wars recently sat down with Drew Benson (Fixed Operations Technology Process Manager) and Montana Lopez (Client Care Manager) at Qvale Automotive Group to ask them questions regarding the Fixed Ops industry and how their teams utilize the phone. In the following article, Drew and Montana discuss why the phone is vital in Service, outbound calling best practices, and how to deliver top-notch customer experiences through the phone.



Drew Benson
*Fixed Operations Technology
Process Manager,
Qvale Automotive Group*



Montana Lopez
*Client Care Manager,
Qvale Automotive Group*



What are some phone processes you and your team emphasize with outbound calls?

“For my team, I always tell them to prepare the advisor for success,” Montana stated. “Before we even call the customer, check for recalls, check if they are due for service, check for deferred services. I want the advisor to have all the information before the customer gets to the Service Department.” The customer experience journey begins before the first call is even made. **Montana and her team, in a way, predetermine the visit of the customer.** The advisor can then prepare ahead of time as to what services the customer needs and what questions the customer could ask. The customer then doesn’t feel they have to repeat the same questions over again with multiple team members and instead finds that their one Service advisor is able to give them the answers.

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In addition to the preparation, having beneficial tools speeds up routine processes and saves time. “One of the things we utilize heavily is the click-to-call chrome extension through Car Wars. It changes all our phone numbers into a hyperlink so that we can click that number so that it rings our phone and then it dials out to the customer,” Drew added. “Imagine all that time it’s saving for our advisors. Our advisors are very busy, so if I could save them a couple of seconds, those seconds add up.” With phones ringing off the hook, greeting customers pulling up to the Service drive, or walking around Service bays checking on the status of vehicles, advisors are busy and pulled in many directions. When making necessary outbound phone calls, having the ability to save time, even in small increments, can add up and free up more time for advisors to complete the other tasks they are responsible for.

What types of outbound calls are your team making and do you have word tracks for these to help them be successful?

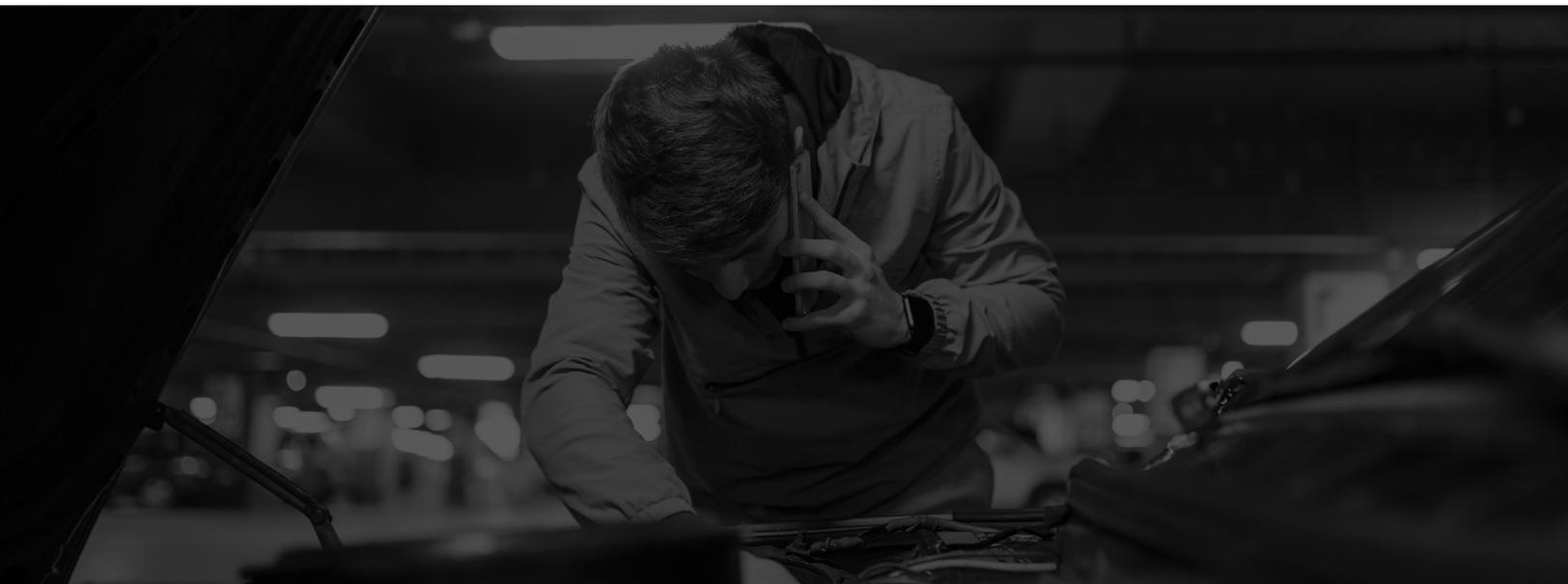
"Anytime you call someone, they automatically think you are a telemarketer," said Montana. "I tell my team to start by saying where you are calling from. 'Hi, this is Volkswagen Brandon Service Department. My name is Monty and I'm calling to let you know you have an open recall on your vehicle.' At the same time, I don't want to make it like a sales call; I want to make it personal. I want to let the customer know that we still care about you. In terms of types of [outbound calls], its appointment confirmations, recalls, service due, deferred services, etc. At the end of the day, we just want to let [customers] know that we care." Addressing who is calling and the purpose of the call at the forefront allows the customer to be receptive to the call. Then, showing consideration for the customer and doing what you feel is in the customer's best interest adds to that personal touch of care.

Drew and his team use multi-point inspection videos to make sure customers agree to the work about to be done to their vehicle, so they are fully aware. "We're so engaged with videos in multi-point that we want to make sure they watched the video we sent them," Drew highlighted. "We want to see if they want to move forward with the repair. We're so heavily engaged in our process; we want to make sure the customer is too." With multi-point inspection videos, and adding an outbound call to that, customers see the extra efforts made to give them a great experience. Once confirmed, Drew and his team can then move forward without concern of the customer being surprised when they pick up their vehicle.

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What are some methods you use to motivate your team to make calls?

“Everyone is going to say do competitions... I've noticed that yes, that does work, but it's temporary,” mentioned Montana. “The other half of that is if you don't let them in on what the goal is for the department, how are they going to be motivated? Let them in on what the goal of the department is. What's our purpose for being here? What does the BDC stand for? To bring customers in. Once you install that in them, the competition portion of it or a spiff is just a bonus. At that point, they aren't there for the money, they are there because they care about what this department is here for.” The automotive industry is competitive by nature. Although competitions can push team members to perform tasks and create a fun atmosphere internally at your dealership, it can be paired with having pride in what you do to generate self-motivation.

How do you respond to negative CSI scores?

“You always got to make a phone call,” Drew said. “If it's not the advisor, it's got to be the manager or a team lead. You have to do what it takes to turn it around. We are trying to do right by the customer. It doesn't take any time to make a phone call and figure out how I can make it better for you... It's about effort and seeing what you can do to make that situation turn around.” Outbound phone calls can be nerve-wracking, especially the ones to customers who did not have a good experience and left a poor review. Being able to see the opportunity to learn from a bad experience and make the call allows your team to not repeat the same mistakes in the future, and potentially, save a customer and convince them to come back.

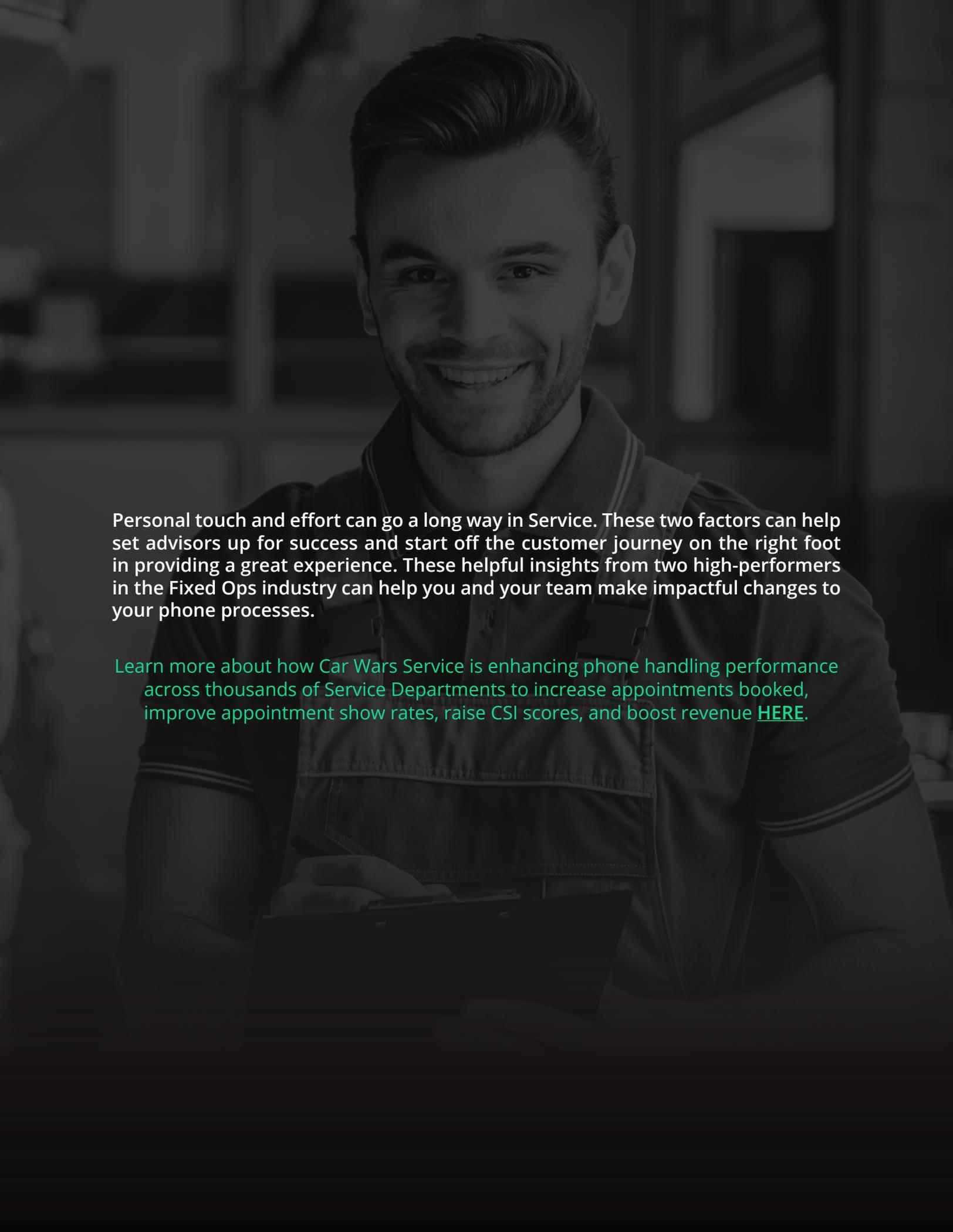
Another strategy Montana and her team use is getting in front of the customer prior to them leaving a review. “We try to get ahead of it. We call each customer to see how their experience was,” Montana emphasized. “If it was negative, we will send them over to a manager ASAP. Whether good or bad, we have to make that phone call.” **The phone is where you can hear it and feel it.** A customer wants to speak to someone to share their experience and know it's been heard by another live person. Hearing these experiences allows your Service Department to continue what you are doing right and correct what you are doing wrong.

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Personal touch and effort can go a long way in Service. These two factors can help set advisors up for success and start off the customer journey on the right foot in providing a great experience. These helpful insights from two high-performers in the Fixed Ops industry can help you and your team make impactful changes to your phone processes.

Learn more about how Car Wars Service is enhancing phone handling performance across thousands of Service Departments to increase appointments booked, improve appointment show rates, raise CSI scores, and boost revenue [HERE](#).