



Troubleshooting starts with talking

We as technicians are all troubleshooters. So why do we all cringe when we're asked to troubleshoot a customer's concern?

The basis of all troubleshooting comes from one thing — communication. This is key to successfully repairing any vehicle problem.

But too often, this crucial step is missed. It leaves us as technicians lost, with no solid beginning point to do an effective repair.

Every repair job starts with a work order written by a service advisor. It's *their interpretation* of the customer's concern.

» Communication is the best tool for diagnosis and repair

GET FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE

To be a good troubleshooter you need first-hand knowledge. You need to communicate with the customer yourself.

We've all had to try to diagnose a noise concern. That work order says, "rattle noise in rear over bumps." So you drive the vehicle and all you hear is the luggage, bottles, or whatever in the trunk. You shift everything and secure it in the trunk or back seat. And drive the vehicle again. No more noise.

But the customer picks up the vehicle and comes back 20 minutes later saying it's still the same — and he or she isn't happy. As

well, your boss is visibly upset with you. You drive it again and cannot hear anything. What to do now?

Go for another test drive — this time, with the customer.

He takes the worst road in town; he's a two-foot driver who hits the brake with every bump. Now the customer says, "Do you hear that?"

Yes you do. No matter *what else* you hear, you have heard what the customer is concerned with. You have done 50% of an effective repair. Because you now know *how that customer drives and where*. It's much easier to start to troubleshooting that rattle.

I always road-test the vehicle with the customer. That's how I've made some of my most successful repairs. While it's not always possible, you can also call the customer yourself. Ask them to describe the noise: a boing, tap, wump, crack, squeak. Or to describe the exact place, time, temperature, moisture.

To be effective — to be good troubleshooters who minimize comebacks and frustration, we need knowledge. Not just from service information sites or manuals; from co-workers with sixty-plus years of experience turning wrenches; or from our own experiences.

We need it from communication with our customers — that's our best tool for an effective diagnosis and repair. 🧠

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