

# Three Things Independent Shops Do Better Than Auto Repair Chains

Big businesses have major financial advantages. There are some areas, however, where they fall far short against independent shops. Here's where the independents shine.



## Knowing Your Customers

Big businesses can't possibly know all of their customers. If they're lucky, they know a few facts about their average customer. Independent shops know long-term customers on a first-name basis. Relationships inspire loyalty and trust.



### Use the Advantage!

Make sure your service writers and technicians know the importance of paying attention to customers. When talking to customers, don't get distracted by vendors, cars, or other things. Customers decide which shop gets the business!



## Customizing the Experience

Big businesses follow policies and procedures, so they aren't great at providing service tailored to each customer. All shops need some policies in place, but it's easier for independent shops to meet the specific needs of loyal customers.

### ✓ Use the Advantage! ✓

When a repeat customer visits, take note of their preferences, and try to accommodate them at future visits. For instance, if they say mornings won't work, write that information down. Ask if afternoons are still better in future calls.



## Earning a Stellar Reputation

It's extremely difficult for a chain shop to earn a stellar reputation because it only takes one badly run store to tarnish it. The manager of an independent shop has visibility into every customer experience, and can influence each one of them.



### Use the Advantage!

For many shops, online reviews are the biggest contributor to their reputation. Solicit them from happy customers. Monitor them regularly – and when someone is unhappy, reach out to see if you can make it right.

*The more you engage with customers, the clearer things become and the easier it is to determine what you should be doing.*

John Russell, former Vice President of Harley-Davidson

