

# Small Shops, **BIG GOALS**

3 ways smaller repair shops can do more with less.



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# BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER

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Small shop owners know there are advantages to running a not-so-huge shop, and customers appreciate them, too. In fact, a [survey from AutoMD](#) shows that 67% of respondents trust an independent repair shop over a dealer, citing their relationship with their local mechanic as the most important factor. Along with the advantages, though, smaller shops face some unique challenges. Chief among them is making the most of what they have. This ebook will help you up your efficiency.

## We'll cover:

- Developing a culture of productivity
- Building efficient teams and processes
- Using your physical space wisely

**Let's dig in.**



## Section 1:

# FOCUS ON CULTURE

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If you want to meet any goal, you need your team behind you.

And when the goal is as big (and important) as business-wide efficiency, it's even more essential to get everyone on board

Here's how to do it.

# START AT THE TOP

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The culture of a company starts at the very top. If that's you, take note. You truly set the tone for your business. If you want your shop to be more efficient, you hold the power to make it happen.

Do it by:

- Being open about limitations and goals. The first step to getting everyone moving in the right direction is to tell them which way to face. Be candid about where you want the business to go and be sure to convey how that will trickle down and benefit your employees.
- Practicing what you preach. Your techs notice how you behave and pay attention to the business decisions you make. That's why modeling efficiency is even more important than simply talking about it. If you take part in repairs, demonstrate how you want everyone to handle jobs, follow procedures you've set up and always look for ways to make the most of what you have.
- Recognizing and rewarding productivity. When you focus on efficiency, your staff will too. Keep the ball rolling by acknowledging it when it happens and rewarding when appropriate.
- Giving your staff what they need to be successful. If and when they come to you with ideas to increase productivity, do all you can to support your employees. They're in the trenches, too, so it's wise to take heed to their advice. If they've expressed that scheduling is a pain point, for instance, do your research and see if updated software could help.

Section 2:

# FOCUS ON TEAMS & PROCESSES

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While you're building your culture of efficiency, be sure to prop it up with the right foundation. Namely, support it with the right hires and procedures.

# MAKING THE RIGHT HIRES

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Your employees are an important ingredient in your recipe for efficiency. It's key to find the right people to support your vision of productivity. Coach your current staff as necessary, and when the time comes to make a hire, approach it carefully.

Take some time to think about what you need in a staff member. This means considering what experience level and skillset is appropriate, but it doesn't stop there. Also consider attitude and energy. What traits do your most efficient team members have? Take note and look for people with similar styles.

Every business is different, but for most small shops, hiring team members with a true "team" mentality is vital. You need techs who will help each other finish a job in time, take on their share of duties and look for ways to improve the business as a whole.

# PRODUCTIVE PROCESSES

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Your team needs a game plan to be successful. Time is a major component in productivity, and it's essential to have established processes in place to keep things rolling. Procedures and plans tend to reveal themselves, so it's important to keep an eye out. Look for both pain points and successes. What's going well and why? Find out and spread it across the team. What's not working? Brainstorm ways to improve it.

Need a place to start? Improving scheduling can often make a big impact. That means both jobs and staff. The key is to make sure they sync up correctly. It takes diligence, but orchestrating the right balance of techs and jobs will pay off. Many small shops also find it's important to make a full inspection an expected step in every job. Don't rush through jobs assuming faster is always better. Consider the larger picture, too. When finding additional issues is built into the process, for example, techs can easily multiply revenue.



### Section 3:

# FOCUS ON YOUR SPACE

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Whether it's by choice or practical, economical and physical limitations, small shops have less floor space, and that means you need to make the most of what you have.

Here's what to consider.

# PLANNING WISELY

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Floor setup matters in any shop configuration, but those with less space need to be even more diligent when planning. Two important factors are:

## Equipment.

When choosing new or replacement lifts, owners of smaller shops need to weigh versatility, efficiency and ROI. Just like small business owners wear many hats, a lift in a small shop needs to be able to handle a variety of vehicles and tasks. Make sure the equipment you choose can accommodate the range of vehicles you typically see.

Price is a major consideration, too. Small shop owners should look for well-priced equipment that will hold up over time. While buying a lift directly through a website may save a few dollars up front, it's important to take into account after-sales support. An extensive support network and the availability of parts will make your dollar go a lot further and in return, increase the lifetime value of your equipment.

Product

## SPOTLIGHT:

### FS77 Scissor Lift

If space is really tight, a scissor lift is a great option. Taking up less than 44 square feet of space, the [Forward Lift FS77](#) is durable yet not bulky. You can add it to existing concrete if it meets installation recommendations, or it can be flush mounted for added clearance.



## PLANNING WISELY (continue)

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### Layout.

Your lift manufacturer or dealer can help you understand clearance requirements and offer suggestions for a layout that will help you make the most of your space. Be prepared to help them understand how you use the shop. Do you need to leave room on the floor for cars/repairs that don't require a lift? Do you plan on having two techs share three lifts or is a 1:1 ratio a better idea for your team? The perfect setup varies from shop to shop, so take the time to find yours.



## Don't Forget About Tool Storage

When deciding where to put that new lift or how to rearrange, remember to put your tools in a smart place. When they're easily accessible by all (or most) or the team, it will help your productivity efforts.

# SMALL SHOPS DON'T NEED TO HAVE LIMITED GOALS

You might face some unique challenges, but with the right planning and effort, you can make big changes.

Need help choosing a lift or planning the most efficient layout for your shop?

Give us a call at 800-423-1722 or Email us [here](#)

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