



# ARE YOU STILL HANDWRITING REPAIR ORDER ESTIMATES? REALLY?

Are the service advisors at your dealership still handwriting repair order (RO) estimates? I'm guessing, based on interactions with many of our customers, that up to 50 percent of dealership service departments still handwrite estimates. If your service department is one of them, your dealership could be losing out on substantial profits.

Believe it or not, your dealership management system's (DMS) service estimate feature is more accurate and has a better memory than your service

advisors. Plus, electronic ROs are more professional and convenient for the customer. So, why aren't more service departments using them?

Getting some people to change is like pulling teeth. When it comes to changing processes and behavior within a dealership, I always recommend a two-pronged approach: mandate from above and make sure employees receive enough training so they feel comfortable with the new system.

Fully adopting electronic ROs has been proven to increase shop productivity as well as profits per job. These benefits are realized with the following features:

#### Technician Accessibility

When an electronic RO system is used, techs can access all information about the vehicle and the customer, including the repair history of the vehicle. In addition, techs can add notes to the RO as well as request parts electronically. The system automatically punches them in and out, eliminating the need for time clocks.

#### Access to Factory Information

Any time an RO is brought up on the screen, a tech or manager can perform a manufacturer inquiry from within the system with just a click of a button. All items will be displayed in a screen that can be easily added to the RO. All open recalls are displayed and automatically highlighted so they won't be missed, increasing revenue potential.

#### More Billable Hours

Here's a scenario with a handwritten RO: When a technician finishes a repair, he walks to the service manager's desk and waits for his paperwork for the next job. If the service manager is busy, the tech is standing there, waiting, unproductive. With an electronic RO system, the tech closes the job and immediately the next job pops up on the screen. No waiting necessary. This feature alone can add several billable hours of productivity for one tech over the course of a week.

#### Improves Customer Perception

Put yourself in your customers' shoes. Would you rather receive a barely legible estimate scrawled onto a dirty piece of paper, or a neatly

printed, professional document that details all the work that needs to be done, along with parts and labor costs clearly broken down so you understand why it costs what it does? And, when the customer arrives to pick up their vehicle, their invoice is ready for them in the system — no waiting for the service advisor to finalize it.

#### Speeds Up Parts Pricing and Availability

With handwritten ROs, service advisors must look up parts prices. This takes time, and remember that minutes add up to hours. If your DMS is integrated with service pricing guides, the system will not only automatically pull up the most recent, accurate parts prices but it will also let you know whether those parts are in stock.

#### Mobile Tablets Make It Easier

If your service department is using mobile tablets that are fully integrated with your DMS, creating ROs is a snap. Just push a button and enter in the customer name, phone number and license plate number or VIN. If the customer is dropping off their vehicle for an oil change and the service advisor notices a cracked drive belt, they can immediately create an estimate, then print it or email it to the customer.

#### Turn Declined Repairs Into Jobs

When an electronic RO is created, all vehicle and customer history is displayed. If the customer previously declined a repair recommendation, the system will display that so the service advisor can re-visit the recommendation with the customer. With handwritten estimates, on a busy morning, service advisors may not have time to pull up customer history and may forget about the previously declined repair. That's potential revenue being flushed down the drain.

Whatever excuses you may still be using to avoid switching to an electronic RO process, be aware that your service department's bottom line is suffering as a result. The good news is, once you make the switch and everyone has time to adjust, you'll be wondering how you ever lived without it and why it took so long to change.

In order to be successful, mandates and training are required for most process changes within a dealership. The transition may cause some initial grumbling among service department employees as they adjust, but trust me, it won't be as painful as pulling teeth — and the benefits will be worth it.

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#### Perform a Multi-Point Inspection on Your Fixed Ops Department:

Item	Yes	No
1. Net Profits Higher Than Last Year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Customer Pay Traffic Up 10%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. CSI Scores Above Average	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Q Lube ROs @ \$125+ Each	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Service Absorption @ 100%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



#### How'd You Do?

If you answered "NO" to ANY of these questions, you need DealerPRO to inspect your Fixed Ops processes and find hidden profit opportunities.

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