

Allparts Automotive Ltd and ATA

The Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) commissioned the University of Leicester to undertake a study of the return on investment (ROI) from ATA at leading parts distributor, Allparts Automotive Ltd. The study focused upon ATA-PA (Parts Advisor) .

ATA is the first national voluntary accreditation scheme for individuals working in the automotive sector. It is a means to proving the current competence of an individual in their industry field, giving reassurance to customers as well as raising the professional status and credibility of skilled individuals and their businesses. It is open to those working in either franchised or independent businesses and is backed by all major vehicle manufacturers, independent service and repair organisations, as well as consumer groups.

Allparts Automotive Ltd is a leading distributor of automotive parts - based in High Wycombe, they distribute OE quality components throughout London and the Home Counties. In February 2009 Allparts Automotive opened their dedicated 4,500 sq ft training centre at their existing premises in Hayes, West London. From there, they set up a structured training programme for all of their Parts Advisors, culminating in Allparts Automotive Ltd becoming the first parts distributor to achieve 100% ATA Parts Advisor accreditation. Allparts are also the 2010 winner of the prestigious IAAF 'Distributor of Excellence' award.

There are two levels of ATA accreditation available within the parts discipline - Parts Advisor and Senior Parts Advisor. The scheme is designed for parts advisors who ideally have two years' industry experience in an appropriate role and/or hold a nationally recognised qualification with 12 months post-qualification experience.

ATA enabled Allparts Automotive Ltd to significantly reduce the number of 'returned parts' - this provided considerable savings to the business and a return on investment of 136%. In real terms, ATA accreditation demonstrated that the parts advisors at Allparts Automotive were accurately fulfilling the vast majority of their sales orders 'first time'. The company philosophy is that 'good training aligned to ATA accreditation is the right formula for providing exemplary levels of customer service and sustained industry leadership'. As its business continues to expand, Allparts Automotive remains committed to its training programme and to ATA for its current and future parts advisors.



ATA and the Parts Advisor

Prior to 2008 there had been no structured training for the Parts Advisor role within Allparts Automotive Ltd.

ATA was introduced to the organisation in Q1 2008. By Q4 2009, all Parts Advisors had completed the accreditation and ATA has now become something to aspire to (see quotes from the anecdotal survey). NB. At Allparts Automotive Ltd, parts advisors are not permitted to interact with customers without first having been trained to the standard required by ATA.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) include: Conversion ratios of telephone calls to order placement and invoices, Gross sales, The level of returns, Net sales (gross less returns).

An anecdotal telephone survey was undertaken as part of the main ROI study. Six Parts Advisors and as many managers were chosen at random from a series of branches in the Allparts network. The results were very encouraging, with the majority emphasising the importance of the ATA standard as a measure of their personal confidence and as a demonstration of competence to the trade and customers alike (NB. The survey was anonymous).

ATA and Management at Allparts Automotive Ltd

Allparts Automotive believe that good training aligned to ATA is the key to staying at the top of your game and to leading the way in your sector.

ATA helps facilitate management control within the organisation and drives efficiency – this is particularly significant when optimising the ratio of Returns to Gross Sales.

ATA has enabled Allparts Automotive to make a ‘step change’ in the way that their staff are trained to achieve customer retention and to deliver a superior service.

Anecdotal Evidence

Quotes from Parts Advisors:

‘It’s good to have something to show for 18 years of selling car parts. It’s like CORGI [now Gas Safe] for the motor trade – I’m very happy that it’s come along.’

‘...if customers question if we’re telling the truth or giving correct advice, we show them the ATA logo in the shop and our badge. I believe that wearing our card in the shop should be made compulsory. I wouldn’t let a non-Gas Safe person work on my boiler!’

And for those still not sure about the benefits of ATA: ‘Don’t think twice – just do it. It’s a “no brainer”. You want to have that accreditation behind you.’

Quotes from Managers:

‘Gives them a better understanding of dealing with parts, customers and what they have to do. It makes them more aware. A realisation of their competence level.’

‘Gives the industry more credibility and the consumer confidence that they are dealing with competent individuals and outlets. It is bringing the industry under a brighter light!’

‘Uniformity across the whole industry. It’s a benchmark to work to. It’s a recognised accreditation.’

‘I believe that our company is one of the first to get all of our advisors accredited – it therefore shows our staff that we are investing in them and are looking to be the best at what we do – stand out from the rest.’

‘It gives us competitive advantage and we can also use ATA to benchmark our employees’ performance against others who also have ATA.’

For more information about the ATA scheme, visit:
www.automotivetechnician.org.uk

