

Calls for car-care transparency

Automotive body says move good for industry, consumers

COMPLETE transparency and openness of communication with customers at every stage of the car-servicing process will aid in customer retention and win more business for automotive companies, says Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI).

The professional body for individuals working in the automotive retail industry urges automakers and their authorised service centres to convey their ability to provide a positive service experience for customers by making it publicly known that they have internationally qualified technicians and customer service advisers.

According to the J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2015 Malaysia Customer Service Index (CSI) Study, Malaysian vehicle owners are expecting more out of their dealer service experience, but authorised service centres are finding it a challenge to meet expectations. The study shows that only 12% of vehicle owners have a better than expected service experience and that customer satisfaction with after-sales service is decreasing on a yearly basis, with a five point decline this year from last year.

The JD Power study, now in its 13th year, evaluates new vehicle owner satisfaction with the service experience by examining dealership performance in five factors, including service quality, service adviser and service initiation.

“In today’s highly competitive automotive market, providing exceptional service, epitomised by professionalism, is the key differentiator for automotive companies if they want to retain customers and win new business. In addition to communicating with customers at every stage of the servicing process, automotive companies and the service centres should also explain to customers what it means to have IMI accredited technicians and customer service advisers attending to their needs”, said IMI South-East Asia senior manager Matthew Stuart.

He added that IMI trained and qualified technicians and service advisers could serve as a powerful endorsement for automotive companies and communicating this to customers can provide them with the added assurance that they are being attended to by professionals with international accreditation.

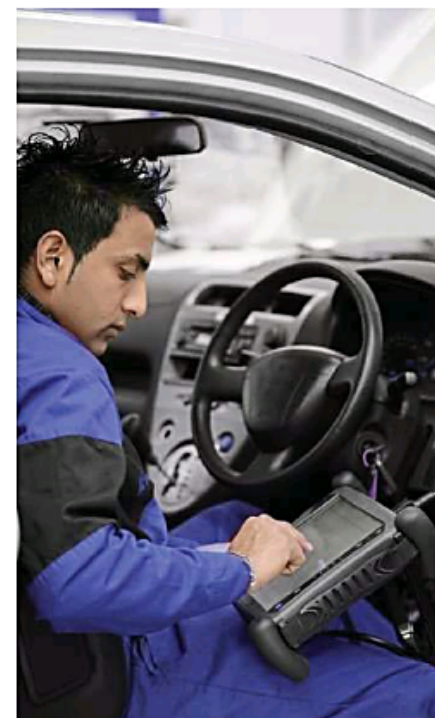
One of IMI’s approved centres, Bermaz Motor Sdn Bhd, which is the distributor of Mazda vehicles in Malaysia, is a testament to how IMI qualified workers can help drive customer advocacy.

The company has been given the highest rank in the J.D. Power 2015 Malaysia Customer Service Index. The study reveals that Mazda service centers perform particularly well in the service initiation and service quality factors.

“The IMI has been collaborating with Bermaz to upskill its employees since 2012. Last year, 153 Bermaz technicians were awarded with the internationally recognised Level One to Level Three in Light Vehicle Maintenance and Repair qualifications. A further 12 individuals in Bermaz were also given the opportunity to study the IMI Diploma in Automotive Retail Management Level Four, to ensure that management-level customer-facing employees are also able to offer world-class customer service”, said Stuart.

The IMI takes a holistic approach to ensure both technical and non-technical disciplines are covered in their qualifications, so the entire service team is equipped with the relevant skills to provide customers with a positive service experience. For more than 10 years, they have been working closely with automotive players and education bodies in Malaysia to enable them to become IMI approved centers offering internationally recognised IMI qualifications.

“Good customer service can be a game changer for automotive companies when it comes to customer retention and succeeding in a competitive environment. Automotive companies should leverage their IMI qualified staff as customer advocates in order to better meet rising customer expectations”, ended Stuart.



Better for consumers: An IMI trained and qualified technician working on vehicles at one of the car service centers and IMI approved centers in the UK. — filepic