

1. Changed our store names to NAPA AUTO PARTS. All of our invoices, checks and greetings when we answer the phone have also been altered to provide continuity and reflect this change.
2. Sold our customers on the NAPA National Warranty Program. I'm a strong believer in this program because it shows the extensive size of NAPA and it serves as a verifier of the quality of our merchandise. A warranty which is honored on a nationwide basis could do no less.
3. "Pipelined" our stores. Gradually, as time and money have permitted, we've made this changeover. Commonality of our identification just makes sense. If we're going to fly the NAPA flag, let's get going and show it. Common graphics are among the best ways to attract and keep the attention of the consumer, no matter if he is a professional mechanic or a do-it-yourselfer.

In order to successfully fulfill our commitment, we had to make a total marketing thrust and commit ourselves to making it work. It's the only way to prosper. NAPA Jobbers are not going to be able to grow if we continue to simply do what our fathers or grandfathers did. Or even if we continue to do what was done five years ago.

Our business has changed so much. We must worry less about the mundane details of the everyday and look ahead, thinking about where we would like to be in the years to come. This isn't to say that everyday details don't count, they do. But if we are to keep up with the constant changes that are affecting our industry, we must realize that our future in this industry is extremely important, too. Realizing this, and planning for it, is going to make the difference.

As a fellow NAPA Jobber, I offer a suggestion and a challenge which will affect your future. Considering it's something I often do myself, I know its value. This is it: walk out the front door of your NAPA AUTO PARTS store, take a look and then come back inside. Once inside take an additional look around. Now, being unbiased (or as unbiased as any of us can be when we're looking at something that is ours), give yourself a test and ask the following questions:

1. Do you have a recognizable national logo that says you're a NAPA store?

If not, you're missing out on one of the best marketing opportunities you have.

2. Is your store in an adequate location with an accessible entrance and enough easy parking to make shopping at your store a pleasure instead of a hassle? You can bet your competitor's stores are.



3. Do you have a clean, well merchandised front lobby with current displays and priced parts and products? Again, this is a program for which you have or can get all the elements. If you don't already have these elements, get them.
4. Are your salespeople aggressive, clean-cut, knowledgeable and courteous? And do these characteristics apply to both your inside and outside sales force? These characteristics make a big difference. Whether your customers come into the store or call in over the phone, they expect your sales force to be well informed and polite. You have to make sure they are.
5. Do you have tear sheets from your local newspaper placed in key locations throughout the store? And do you highlight those advertised specials? It's your ads which have brought customers into your store, so you should reinforce your advertised items and remind customers of the special prices. It's also a good idea to keep a copy of the ad by the telephones. That way your sales personnel will have the information at their fingertips when customers call in.
6. Is your merchandise laid out so that it reminds customers of possible related items? Often a customer

doesn't remember that it takes more than a single part to do a complete and thorough job. That's why the placement of your merchandise is vital and it's where your aggressive sales force comes in once again.

If your business is on key and measures up to par in these areas, visit with your local banker and ask him about jumbo C.D.'s! If your business isn't up to speed in these areas, call your NAPA Distribution Center's Sales Manager (who, by the way, has been constantly nagging you about this for some time) and discuss how you can make some changes. He'll help you chart your course for the 1990's.

Now, I'm not saying that all NAPA programs will work for you in exactly the same way they worked for me. Each market, and therefore, each store is different. But that's the beauty of NAPA and the programs it offers. These programs were designed to be, and are, adaptable to your location.

The Pipeline Graphics for instance, can be altered to fit any type of store. That's why NAPA offers a special design program through the NAPA Store Design Group.

Your local advertising doesn't have to be in one certain format. It can take on the characteristics of your market and of your budget. When done correctly, a smaller ad can have impact too.

But regardless of how you adapt the programs to fit your needs, remember that you need to plan and, as I mentioned above, look at how you can gain a larger share of your market in the future. Because the future of your business counts.

It may sound a little corny and granted, you've heard it before but the fact is that you do indeed have all the right parts in all the right places. It's up to you to make sure that it all works right.

*Editor's Note: Fred Barron is a NAPA AUTO PARTS store owner in Odessa, Texas and is serviced by the Dallas Distribution Center. Barron was a member of the NAPA National Advertising and Marketing Council in 1985 and, again, in 1986. He played a key role in the development of such programs as the 1-800-customer referral number, the NAPA National Warranty Program, the NAPA Pipeline Graphics, the AutoCare Program and the implementation of NAPA's national advertising slogan, "All the right parts in all the right places."*