

TEAMING UP

(Editor's Note: *Highly valued by customers, professionalism is a key to sales success. From wearing a uniform to answering the telephone "NAPA AUTO PARTS," your employees send the message of competency to customers. In this issue, Outlook begins a series on how you can maximize a positive, professional appearance.*)

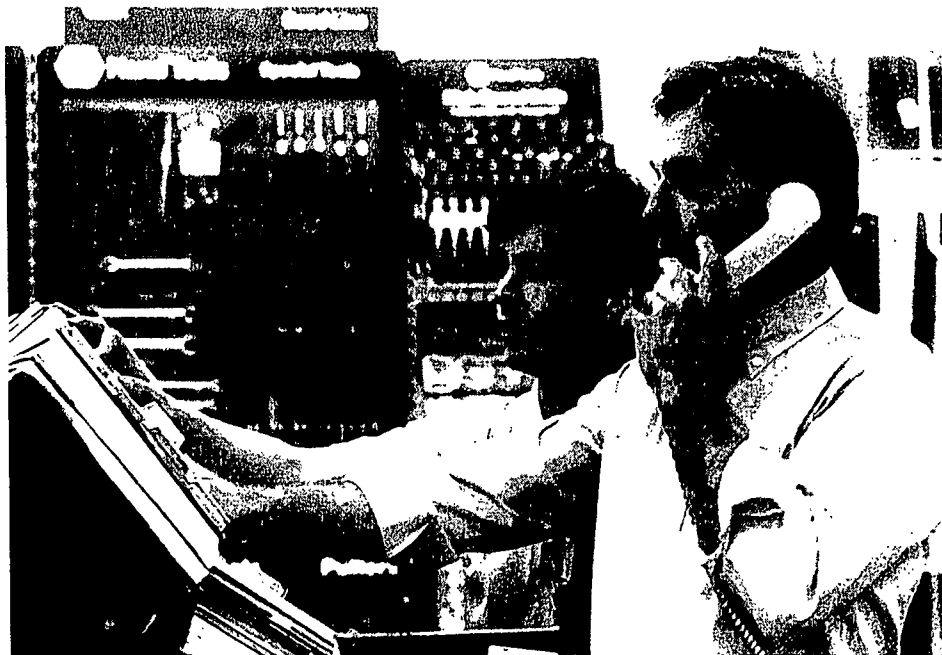
The home team is easily identified on the court by its colorful uniform. Your NAPA AUTO PARTS store employee team can convey the same recognition and project a professional image in the same way—with a uniform. Wearing a professional outfit automatically gives your store and your employees a higher service rating from 90% of your customers, according to researchers.

However, professionalism extends beyond your counterpersonnel wearing a uniform. It reaches to your delivery drivers donning a NAPA jacket and NAPA hat as they complete orders as well. After all, what better means to reinforce your store's professionalism to your customers than to have them see delivery drivers step out of the truck wearing a NAPA jacket, hat or shirt?

Your delivery drivers not only make sure the orders are filled in a timely manner but also send a message to your customers through their appearance. And appearance, in this instance, means more than just a clean uniform. Arriving in a clean NAPA AUTO PARTS truck counts too and it says that your drivers are part of a team that cares. In essence let customers know they can rely on your store professionals.

Remember that as the manager/owner you coach your employees in professional appearance by establishing the guidelines which make up a positive image and attitude for successful selling. Identify each employee's responsibilities to clear up any possible gray areas. If an employee does not know the answer to a customer's question, the prospective purchaser should be told that he/she will receive a reply when the answer is found. Employees should never respond with "it's not my responsibility." Then, that employee or another employee needs to follow up and get back with the customer by phone or in person. Good service breeds repeat business.

Displeased consumers seldom complain to the manufacturer or store management—less than 5%. Instead, they stop buying the product and complain to



nine or 10 other people. If a complaint is resolved quickly, repeat purchases occur 95% of the time. Getting that repeat business is worth the time you invest in making sure employees look and act as they should.

Don't forget the value of praise as a little praise goes a long way. If an employee makes an exceptional sale, delivers top service or demonstrates a big improvement in attitude or appearance, recognize that individual. You set an example and by encouraging your employees through praise you cultivate a positive sales attitude, which will work its way down to the way your personnel deals with customers.

To thoroughly promote that professional appearance, your counterpeople need to have the product knowledge to properly serve both your retail and traditional customers. When first time customers come into your store, the salespeople should know the right questions to ask and be able to identify the complete product needs and be well versed in the various product lines. It's a sure step to closing a transaction with related sales. Although everyone is not born to sell, effective sales techniques can be learned. And your Distribution Center can help in the learning process with a variety of NAPA training courses including "Inside Selling Skills" (ISS) and "Delivering NAPA Service."

A positive selling attitude and appearance reaps more success than any other single item. Win new customers and maintain your current ones with positive employee spirit. Begin a clean sweep of sales and service with professionalism.

TIPS ON THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

Stay on top of your business with a priceless technique—a positive attitude. The following are guidelines to developing and promoting the kind of attitude that yields successful employees and sales.

- Observe and analyze employees' actions to praise positive action or direct negative actions to a positive outcome.

- Create an environment that relieves pressure and tension on employees in their day-to-day activities.

- Encourage positive, friendly conversation in order to keep voice tones positive on the telephone and in the store.

- Stress a clean, professional appearance in your store and from the people who work there.

- Have employees treat customers well no matter what the size or importance of the transaction.

- Develop a flexible, fair customer satisfaction policy to allow for your employees' ability to handle various situations amicably.

- Set an example of enthusiasm and encourage employees to be positive toward their work.

- Offer opportunities for employees to feel positive about their jobs and the future. Encourage an open constructive direction for communication and all dealings.