

Be sure you and your mechanic are speaking the same language

Talk is cheap, goes the old cliché. But when it comes to caring for your car, failure to talk can prove expensive indeed.

The nation is paying an exorbitant price in wasted fuel, poor air quality and avoidable accidents. One reason for this stems from a breakdown in customer-mechanic dialog.

As a case in point, the average car owner tends to neglect proper maintenance of his or her car.

In addition, a percentage of automobiles lack basic service to assure maximum safety of operation.

A major root cause of the situation can be rectified by getting the motorist and the mechanic on the same wave length.

According to a U.S. government-financed study, the key to service satisfaction is effective communication. It depends on an accurate as possible description by the motorist of what the problem is.

When the motorist and the mechanic understand one another, there is a high rate of customer satisfaction with the job done, the survey states.

The person who drives the automobile has the responsibility to describe what the problem is, how long it has been occurring and when it occurs. The service mechanic must understand this description and provide

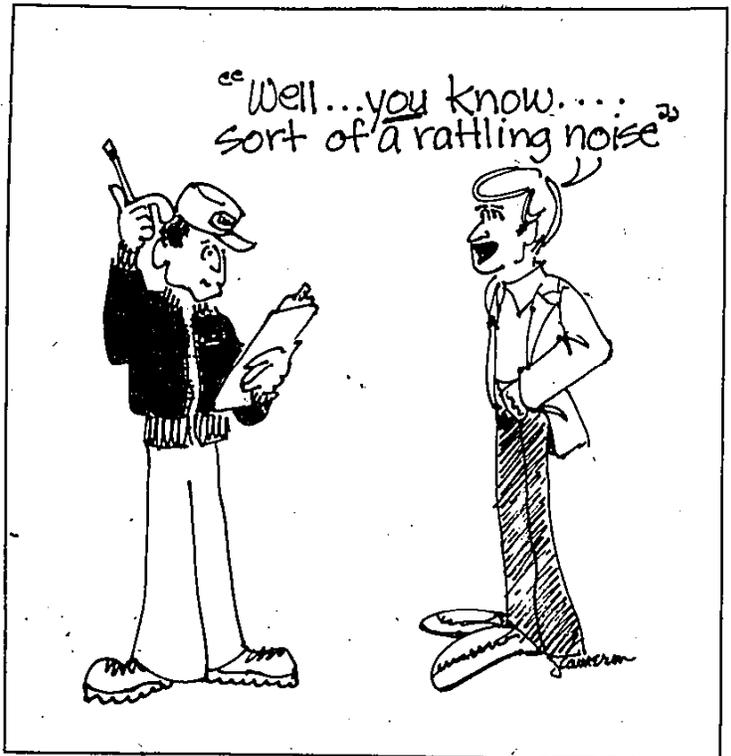
competent service in return.

It may be unreasonable to expect a mechanic to identify and correct a cooling system problem when you drove in complaining about the brakes. It is equally unreasonable of the mechanic to expect an engineer's explanation of a problem from average customers.

To establish such communication, it is most important that the motorist keep a record of all services performed on the car. By doing so, the motorist can avoid duplication of services such as a mechanic's installing a new set of spark plugs when plugs were installed only a few weeks previously.

And you, the motorist, have a right to expect these basics from your mechanic:

- Contact from the mechanic before work is begun, if any problem beyond the ones you complained of are discovered. The same goes for any cost estimates much beyond the original estimate.
- Return of any parts replaced. You may not want to keep a grease-coated set of old shocks, but you should at least be allowed to examine them.
- Respect from the mechanic—who should never overestimate your knowledge or underestimate your intelligence.



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