

# Successful Dealer Operations

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## Capturing Impulse Sales

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You need to display the right parts in the right way.

By Denise L. Rondini, Executive Editor

**A**t one time or another, we've all left a store with something that wasn't on our shopping list. Buyers of truck parts are no different, and you can capture additional business from them by having impulse items prominently displayed in your showroom.

Impulse buying is defined as the unplanned purchase of a product or service. It is important to remember that although a product is purchased impulsively, it often is an essential item the customer might not need right at the moment or might not know you sell.

Having an in-store display is one way to expose customers to the full range of products you sell. Just putting parts on display will not automatically lead to increased sales. However, the more products customers see, the more likely they are to make a purchase.

Successful in-store displays include innovative visuals, planning of layout and traffic flow, product placement, size of displays and use of signage.

Overall, the design of your parts display should be visually inviting, brightly lit and easy to maneuver while featuring a well thought out layout.

When deciding where to put the impulse items in your parts display, think about how customers typically walk through your dealership. Placing impulse items near the checkout is one good strategy.

Week of August 25, 2011

### Economic Update

- The American Trucking Association's advance seasonally adjusted For-Hire Truck Tonnage Index decreased 1.3 percent in July from June after rising a revised 2.6 percent in June over May.

- Diesel prices dropped for the fourth straight week, slipping 2.5 cents to \$3.81 for the week ended Aug. 22.

- U.S. freight railroads' carloads were up 1.1 percent for the week ended Aug. 20 compared to the same week last year. Intermodal traffic was up 1 percent.

- First-time claims for unemployment insurance rose by 5,000 on a seasonally adjusted basis to 417,000 for the week ended Aug. 20 from the previous week's revised figure. The four-week moving average was 407,500, a decrease of 4,000 from the previous week's revised average. The Department of Labor noted, however that 12,500 initial claims were filed during the week ended Aug. 13 and 8,500 during the week ended Aug. 20 due to a labor dispute between the Communications Workers of America and Verizon.

For more on these and other economic indicators, go to [www.successfuldealer.com](http://www.successfuldealer.com)

A large advertisement for Karmak. On the left is the 30th anniversary logo, featuring a gold '30 YEARS' emblem with 'SERVICE', 'INNOVATION', and 'QUALITY' around it, and a banner with 'KARMAK'. On the right, a white heavy-duty truck is shown driving on a highway at night. The text 'HEAVY DUTY TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS' is written in large, bold, gold letters above the truck. At the bottom right, the website 'www.karmak.com' is displayed in gold.

While the customer is waiting to pick up his parts order he may see something in your display that sparks his interest.

While there are no requirements covering which products can be considered impulse buys, there is some general agreement on things that typically will be purchased on impulse. For example, a customer is more likely to pick up a case of oil on the spur of the moment than he is to select a drive line.

Traditionally products that have done well as impulse items include lights, electrical accessories, tools, polishing supplies and lube products. Often impulse items are things that can be purchased in other places, including non-aftermarket outlets like Home Depot and Wal-Mart.

The advantage a dealer has in having these parts on display is the customer is already at the dealership for something he can only get from you. By having these ancillary products available, you are saving him a trip to another store.

Once a customer gets in the habit of buying these commodity type items from you, he likely will continue to do so. Some dealers have had success having items like shop rags, gloves, etc.

One cardinal rule for success with impulse sales is to make sure all products are clean. Parts are much more enticing when they are clean and shiny and seemingly fresh on the shelf. Parts that are covered in dust are less likely to attract your customers' attention so make sure that someone is tasked with keeping the display neat and clean.

In order to keep your customer interested and browsing your parts display, you will need to change it from time to time. Some dealers have wheeled shelving units to allow the display to be changed easily. One strategy for changing



displays is so match your impulse items to the seasons.

For example, in winter you may want to have end caps filled with anti-freeze, while in summer air conditioning related products are most likely to capture a customer's attention.

Another way to keep your overall parts display interesting is to use demonstration displays. Some dealers have air run to their display areas so air seats can be hooked up and actually demonstrated. Others run electricity to lighting display boards so that customers can see exactly what a specific light looks like and how bright it is.

One sound piece of advice is to make sure you keep the shelves well stocked so there will be plenty of product on hand. The old adage "you can't sell from an empty shelf" applies here.

Once you have a good display in place, you need to work hard to get customers in the door. Cultivate a walk-in trade by sending out promotional materials informing customers and prospects of the range of products you offer.

Remember, if you can't get customers to your dealership, you can't sell impulse products. ■

The advertisement features a dark background. On the left is a large, circular gold logo with the number '30' in the center and 'YEARS' below it. The words 'SERVICE', 'INNOVATION', and 'QUALITY' are arranged around the top of the circle, separated by stars. A gold ribbon banner at the bottom of the circle contains the word 'KARMAK' with a registered trademark symbol. To the right of the logo, the text 'HEAVY DUTY TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS' is written in a bold, gold, sans-serif font. Below this text is a photograph of a white semi-truck driving on a highway at night, with its headlights on. At the bottom right of the advertisement, the website address 'www.karmak.com' is displayed in a gold, sans-serif font.