

## WHITE PAPER

# Automotive Entry Level Training

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In the retail automotive business, a comprehensive training program for entry level personnel is essential if an organization wants to realize market success, meet sales goals and ensure customer satisfaction. Part of that training is ensuring employees understand the technical aspects of the products, as well as the sales and after sales processes. While this may sound straightforward, it requires far more than a one-time knowledge dump. It is a careful, calculated process that requires a great deal of planning, organized execution and thorough follow-up

An underdeveloped training program will have a negative impact on a company – from brand management to after-sales activities. Consider this: Points of sales and service offerings must grow at the same pace as the hiring and training of qualified, brand-specific employees. Establishing and expanding dealerships without the necessary qualified staff in place will compromise the brand, and training employees without a location for them to put their skills to work is inefficient. This is merely one illustration of why entry level training is a tricky, time sensitive – and essential – endeavor.

### EXPERIENCE SHOWS THE FOLLOWING OBSTACLES FREQUENTLY IMPEDE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENTRY LEVEL TRAINING:

- **Insufficient training program development processes**
- **Lack of central deployment, which ensures consistency and reduces inefficiencies**
- **Failure to account for cultural and educational diversity in trainees, which can vary significantly, especially in emerging markets**
- **Lack of qualified local trainers**
- **Limited beginning skill sets of trainees**

Fortunately, these obstacles can be avoided or surmounted through careful planning.

### CENTRALIZED, YET SPECIALIZED

A central deployment strategy improves program organization, reduces redundancy, promotes consistent messages and branding, and ensures smooth implementation and transition phases. However, the program and curricula must also adapt to the needs of each market, readily accommodating different cultural, legal and organizational requirements. While trainees enter company programs with vastly

different backgrounds, automotive OEMs still expect the same high standard of customer service to be delivered across the world, irrespective of the location in which it is delivered.

### PROGRAM OPTIONS

Providing companies with options for training program development allows them to create programs that best suit individual company needs and goals, particularly pertaining to certification processes. While some customers opt to skip the full, external accreditation process (as this can contribute significantly to program costs), others believe nationally recognized qualifications are worth the added expense. Leaders are often concerned employees will only stay with a company long enough to acquire a qualification before seeking employment elsewhere. However, research and experience have shown us opportunities to earn qualifications actually foster company loyalty, especially when coupled with prospects of attaining additional, higher-level qualifications.

Another question leaders face is whether any or all of a company's entry-level training can or should be outsourced. Some organizations outsource this training to local colleges. While this is often a

relatively inexpensive option, the courses offered are generally generic and unnecessarily lengthy. Furthermore, they often use outdated vehicles, components and systems, making it very difficult to ensure training is directly related to the employees' OEM requirements. While classic teachers may fully understand the theory of the training program, they're often disconnected from the real business needs of a retailer in a fast-paced market. In many scenarios, these issues can be remediated when professional training organizations work hand-in-hand with local colleges and OEMs. The automotive experts provide the necessary business acumen, partnering colleges supply access to accreditation standards and relatively low cost facilities, and the OEMs provide access to the latest product lines.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Curriculum cannot stand alone; it needs to be a part of the new employee onboarding process, and must constantly link to real business processes.

Raytheon has been working with an integrated, competency-based approach for more than 20 years. Our Entry Level Courses blend into the mainstream curricula and enable rapid knowledge transfer while maintaining high quality training.

In the UK, our Automotive Service Technician apprenticeships are designed to build the skills needed to find and repair faults and carry out routine services on a range of different cars. Apprentices also learn the ins and outs of cost estimations and customer relations. Upon completion of the program, they are prepared for a wide range of jobs including Automotive Service Technician, Automotive Mechanical Installer and Servicer, Parts Manager, Service Manager, or Motor Vehicle Inspector/Tester. The courses incorporate a mix of classroom, e-based learning, on-the-job coaching and assessments.

Courses are built in a modular fashion with multiple levels of complexity, skills and certification levels. They are readily adaptable to different markets and awarding authorities.

## TRAINER ACQUISITION AND QUALIFICATION

Trainers need to be familiar with the local markets' language and customs. Entry level trainers must also be equipped to work with young learners and individuals who are new to the field. The needs and learning styles of this audience are often very different from those of more mature retail employees. Where there is a lack of trainer resources, a local acquisition and qualification process must be implemented.

To ensure consistent, high-quality training, Raytheon operates a comprehensive Instructor Certification Program (ICP). This program includes instructor selection, program preparation, training delivery, instructor standards/operating norms, assessment/evaluation and annual certification.

These are just a few of the factors that companies must consider when developing a training program. An external training partner can guide companies through these decisions and anticipate issues, inefficiencies and program flaws before they arise.

### About Raytheon Professional Services

Raytheon Professional Services is a global leader in learning solutions and services. RPS helps businesses meet their critical objectives by designing, implementing and managing efficient and effective training solutions that improve the performance of their global workforce.

Raytheon Company, with 2012 sales of \$24 billion and 68,000 employees worldwide, is a technology and innovation leader specializing in defense, security and civil markets throughout the world. With a history of innovation spanning 91 years, Raytheon provides state-of-the-art electronics, mission systems integration and other capabilities in the areas of sensing; effects; and command, control, communications and intelligence systems; as well as a broad range of mission support services. Raytheon is headquartered in Waltham, Mass. For more about Raytheon, visit us at [www.raytheon.com](http://www.raytheon.com) and follow us on Twitter @raytheon.