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Shall I Fill 'er Up, Sir?: A Study of the Retail Gasoline Service Station Operator and Methods of Increasing his Profits

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Shall I Fill 'er Up, Sir?

A Study of the Retail Gasoline Service Station Operator and Methods of Increasing his Profits

A THESIS
Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the Requirements for Department Honors.

By K. Linford Loesch
Ursinus College,
Collegeville, Pa.

Approved by
Department of Economics
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Introduction.

The reader of this paper may upon first glance wonder why I have chosen as my subject the independent retail gasoline service station. The reason for my choice is that I was employed during the summer of 1951 by Gulf Oil Corporation at their Brandywine Station on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. My title was "service-salesman," which meant that I did everything from cleaning rest rooms to sweeping the driveway to selling gasoline, oil, and accessories. Also included among my duties as a service-salesman were the fixing of flat tires, lubrication of automobiles, oil changes, and other light garage work.

While at Brandywine, I became intensely interested in the operation of a gasoline service station. I saw a station run as one should be run since Brandywine was company-owned. It is my intention, in this paper, to present pointers for the operation of a gas station, primarily with an eye toward increasing sales.

As this is a subject upon which not too much has been written, I have had to rely on my personal observations at Brandywine and elsewhere. Furthermore, I feel that a paper of this type should be original as far as is possible. The reader will therefore find few footnotes in reference to secondary sources.
I. WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT

The most important means of a service station owner's increasing sales is to understand the likes and dislikes of his potential customers. If he realizes what his customers want, he can give them more satisfactory service and thus increase his sales of not only gasoline and oil, but also automobile accessories and service jobs such as lubrications and repairs.

In order to determine these likes and dislikes of service station customers, I took a poll of the buying habits of gasoline consumers (passenger cars). In this poll I tried to get a cross-section of the American passenger car driver, taking into consideration occupation, age, sex, and geographical location. I interviewed 1,012 persons in twenty-seven states. In two trips through the South and Mid-West by the simple method of "hitch-hiking," I was able to accomplish the desired results to a better extent.

Eleven questions were asked in my poll. They follow, with my interpretation of the final totals.

1. "Do you frequently buy your gas from the same station?"

67% answered "Yes;" 33%, "No." Thus better than

two-thirds of all the automobile drivers interviewed said they were accustomed to returning to the same place to purchase gasoline. This indicates that there must be some reasons for this patronage, and I attempted to discover them. If a station owner can determine why a gasoline consumer buys where he does, he can possibly win over a large portion of the other 33% whom I call the "roamers," that is people who "shop around" at various gasoline stations. I therefore asked the second question.

2. "When you purchase gasoline, what is it that attracts you to a certain station?" (Three answers were to be given to this question: the primary reason received three points, the second received two, and the third, one point.)

Here in graph form are the interesting results I got:
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Buying Habits of Gasoline Consumers
The reader will observe that the "Big 3," that is, the three main reasons why automobile drivers purchase gasoline where they do, are better quality of the gasoline, lower price per gallon, and convenience of location of the station.

I would therefore suggest that anyone going into business as an independent service station owner select one of the major and better-known gasolines to sell. Many people commented that they would consider buying only one of the "Big Six," which they felt were Gulf, Esso, Mobilgas, Sunoco, Texaco, and Atlantic for this area. "A car is too big an investment to take a chance on using 'inferior' gasoline," was a frequent comment.

As for price, the poll proves definitely that people do shop around for lower prices in gasoline. Now, should the independent gasoline retailer lower his price, only to have that met by his competitors? We are all familiar with the recent cutthroat price war, three of which have occurred within the past year. If one stops to reflect for a moment, he will realize that this leads straight to nowhere. To begin with, every station in the area is charging approximately the same price. Then one dealer cuts his price a few cents a gallon. This new price is met by his competitors who make further price cuts, and very soon every station is again charging approximately the same price. However, this time the
dealers are receiving up to nine cents less per gallon. This condition delights car owners; but it wracks ruin on station owners, the majority of whom have most of their worldly belongings tied up in their investment.

The remedy for this situation lies with the dealers themselves, whose only salvation is to see the utter futility of under-cutting each other's prices. It is the only answer as far as I can see, unless the dealers are going to force their weaker brothers out of business. And then it would be merely a question of who can "hang on" the longest.

Convenient location ranked a close third among the reasons given by gasoline purchasers. It is therefore very important for a dealer to select a heavily-traveled thorofare or a central point in his town for his location. I found, after interviewing numerous station workers, that it is better for the dealer to select one of these locations even in the face of higher rents for, when gasoline sales are down, the man in the out-of-the-way place is the first to go.

Practically tied for fourth and fifth places were the fact that the customer liked the attendant or owner and the fact that he gives credit service. As regards the former, this proves the importance of the attendant's being pleasant in both appearance and personality. This was so
important that it received 560 points under the system I explained previously.

However, the dealer had better watch himself with the extension of credit. It is the old story of, "Write it on the cuff, Joe, I'll pay you next week." It is a situation similar to the country general store proprietor who sold so much goods on credit and soon found he had too much capital tied up between that department and inventory. On the other hand, the system used by many dealers who extend credit to their customers, that of credit cards issued by the parent oil company, is perfectly safe. These major companies have the necessary supply of capital for such extension of credit. It is indeed important for a dealer to be able to give credit by this system and charge it to his supplier for it received 525 points, or fifth place, among the reasons given by gasoline consumers in answer to why they purchase gasoline where they do.

Good service (promptness, etc.) ranked sixth, with force of habit, reduction in price to regular customers, free services, attractiveness of station, and advertising following in that order.

At first glance at the chart, it would appear that advertising has but little influence upon the buying
habits of Mr. Gasoline Consumer. However, in the poll I specified that this advertising was that done by the local station. The evidence that advertising plays a great role in gasoline sales is clearly shown in the fact that first place went to "better quality." In other words people buy from a particular dealer because he carries a well-known brand, and this brand was made well-known by advertising. Thus we must not underestimate the power of this medium.

3. "What free services do you expect when you purchase gasoline?"

I felt that this question was important because if the dealer knows what his customers expect, he can give them what they want. To illustrate the importance of free services, I have only too often heard the comment, "I'll never go back to him again—he didn't even wash the windshield!" And so, another customer is lost.

Now what does the average automobile driver expect in the way of free services? According to my poll:
Free Service | % of Consumers Wanting the Free Service
---|---
Wash windshield | 80%
Check oil | 75%
Check and add water to radiator | 67%
Wash rear windshield | 25%
Check and add water to battery | 21%
Check tires | 21%

One blessed soul didn’t expect any free services whatsoever.

And one gentleman wanted his back springs greased whenever he bought gas so they wouldn’t squeak. I explained to him that I meant free services and he repeated that yes, of course, he expected his rear springs greased free whenever he bought gas. All this goes to show that the station attendant never knows quite what to expect when he steps up to a potential customer. However, I believe my poll gives some indication of what gasoline consumers expect in the way of free services. And as soon as the attendant realizes these demands and performs them without being asked, he is bound to have a lot more customers returning to his station. And besides, I have found from experience that it makes for good tipping.

4. "If a lesser-known brand of gasoline were being sold cheaper across the street, would you buy it?"
Only 6\% answered "Yes."

94\% answered "No." In other words, 94\% of the people interviewed would pay more per gallon to get a better-known brand of gasoline.

Here, I believe, is the most striking evidence of the influence of advertising by the major oil companies upon the minds of the public. As long as major companies like Gulf, Standard, Sun, etc., can keep up this belief by means of advertising, they are perfectly safe from competition from lesser-known companies. I say this because 94\% of the people I interviewed told me they would not even try a lesser-known brand of gasoline, regardless of how low the price was.

Here is also a good reason for the prospective dealer to select a well-known brand to sell before entering business.

5. "Many people are of the opinion that all the MAJOR brands of gasoline 'come out of the same tank' and are consequently the same as regards quality (car performance, mileage, etc.) Are you of that opinion?"

19\% answered "Yes," 81\%, "No." I asked this question primarily to satisfy my own curiosity, just for general information. While I worked at Brandywine, I occasionally gave a "pep-talk" on the merits of Gulf
gasolines and oils, and I frequently heard the comment, "Aah—all that stuff comes out of the same pipe out there (they didn't know where, but somewhere 'out there'), and it's all the same stuff." One gentleman insisted there was a huge tank in Harrisburg out of which all the major oil companies drew their supply of gasoline as they needed it.

Thus 19% of all the people I interviewed thought that all the major brands of gasoline were identical and, in fact, even "came out of the same tank." This shows that there is plenty of room for advertising on the part of the oil companies.

6. "If, while you are buying gasoline, the attendant is extremely nice to you and goes out of his way to perform free services, do you buy more gas at that time than you had originally intended to?"

21%, "Yes;" 79%, "No." In other words 21% of the people I interviewed would purchase a larger quantity of gasoline right there on the spot than they had intended to when they pulled into the station, if they were well-pleased with the service. Several persons said something to this effect: "Sure, sometimes I go to get a dollar's worth, and if I get extra-good
service I tell him to go ahead and 'fill it up.'"
Thus, according to the results of this poll, a station operator could immediately increase his sales by better than one-fifth, simply by giving outstanding service.

7. Closely tied in with the last question is this next one: "Do you come and visit that station again for the purchase of gas if the attendant gives extremely good service?"

In this case, the "Yesses" increased to 91%, with only 9% remaining cold to good service.

This proves fairly conclusively, I believe, that the best way for a station operator to build up a following and thus increase sales is to give outstanding, not just "good," but excellent service to his customers. A very frequent comment was, "If I get the kind of treatment I like, I have been known to go out of my way to return to that station to buy gas."

The overwhelming majority of automobile drivers are looking for better service, and as soon as they find a station that gives it, they will make that "their station." This fact should be understood by those attendants who throw a sloppy rag on the windshield and do a careless job of wiping it off, as well as by
those who do not even bother themselves to wash the windshield at all.

Such things as a pleasant "Hello," or an offer to check the tires, are bound to increase sales. Perhaps the driver will take up the offer of the free tire-check. So what—the attendant certainly isn't losing anything, and he may be gaining a customer!

8. "If the attendant is extremely nice to you and goes out of his way to perform free services, do you purchase tires and accessories from him when you need them, rather than from a store?"

41% answered, "Yes;" 59%, "No." I was surprised at the percentage of "Yesses" was that large. I felt that way myself, but I was surprised at the large number of people who agreed with me.

The profit on tires and accessories can be a very great source of income to the station operator if he works it right. He must not get too much capital tied up in inventory, and the best way to avoid this is to "keep the accessories moving," i.e., to increase sales and thus increase his turnover. Now, my poll shows that if he gives his customers the service they demand, better than two-fifths of them will purchase their accessories from him when they need them, rather than from a store. The moral of this story should be self-
9. "Many people are of the opinion that, in the case of a gasoline price-war, for instance, that the gasoline is "watered," or a brand of inferior quality being sold under the name of a major company. Are you of that opinion?"

39% of the people answered, "Yes," that they did believe that the gas was "watered" if the price were cut suspiciously low. Most of those who answered "Yes" commented, "They have to 'water' it, or they couldn't sell it for that price."

This fact supports my original theory that price-warfare leads to nowhere. A station operator should try to increase his efficiency, rather than to decrease price, in order to gain more profits. If he sets his price at a place from which it will yield him a reasonable rate of return on his investment, he will get his share of the market if he is efficient.

The answers to this question show that nearly 40% of gasoline purchasers would be repulsed by extremely low prices per gallon. Again, how fruitless are gasoline price-wars!

10. And now we come to two questions which interest me very much, two very important questions I might add.
While I was employed by Gulf at Brandywine, I was of the opinion that cleanliness of the rest rooms was decidedly overemphasized. The setup was that the rest rooms were inspected hourly, with the employee assigned to that hour responsible for their appearance. After he had completed a thorough cleaning job, he signed his name to a chart on the door. This chart served a dual purpose: It held the employee responsible for any complaints and at the same time informed the public that the rest rooms were inspected hourly. At any time between these hourly inspections the manager or shift-leader, or even the district supervisor, was likely to drop in for an inspection. Now this may not sound unreasonable to the reader, but to us who, on one eight-hour shift, had to clean the rest rooms eight times, even when it appeared they did not need a cleaning, it did sometimes appear unreasonable. It was for this reason that I felt Gulf overemphasized the importance of clean rest rooms.

I therefore included this question in my poll: "If you are on a trip and find a certain brand of gasoline with exceptionally clean rest rooms, do you patronize this brand of gas more later on?"

Clean rest rooms had no effect on 70% of those interviewed. But 30% of the people said they would patronize stations selling the same brand of gas as the one
in which they had found clean rest rooms at the beginning of their trip.

In other words, if they stopped at a Gulf station and found clean rest rooms, they would patronize Gulf stations for the rest of their trip. How easy it would be for a progressive oil company to increase its sales by up to 30% simply by insisting, not just suggesting, but by insisting that its dealers have attractive and clean rest rooms, according to my poll!

11. Closely tied in with this point, I asked, "If you find dirty rest rooms, do you patronize that brand of gas less later on?"

The fact that 17% answered "Yes" to this question further proves the importance of clean rest rooms in the operation of a gasoline service station. According to the results of these last two questions, then, a certain brand of gas which could build up a reputation for clean rest rooms in every one of its stations could win over up to 30% of those people who travel. And if that company had one or more dealers with dirty rest rooms they stood likely to lose up to 17% of their customers.
II. INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS

If the reader has read over the preceding section carefully and thoughtfully, he will notice many suggestions to the service station operator to help him increase his sales. These suggestions I have drawn up from my observations in going over the results of my poll of buying habits of gasoline consumers. In other words, this paper has dealt so far with what the people want. Now let us see how it is possible for the operator to increase his profits by means of internal improvements. He knows now what the people want; let us see if there is a best way to give that to them.

A. Training. If the service station operator is going to employ assistants, it is of prime importance that these men be trained properly. They must be trained from two viewpoints: (1) the safety angle. A customer's automobile is too big an investment for a would-be mechanic to monkey around with. A simple operation, such as an oil change, may result in a $2,000 damage suit against the station. There are cases like this on record, wherein the attendant either neglected to replace the crankcase plug tightly enough or forgot to refill the crankcase with the fresh oil. As a result, the engine "burns out" and the station operator is
faced with a suit for a new car. This is such a simple illustration, yet oh-so-easy for it to happen, and oh-so-costly. At Brandywine we had an excellent scheme. Any man changing oil had to get a fellow employee's initials on the service order, signifying that he had checked and found the plug in and the oil level full. There was much less chance of two men's forgetting than one. What I want to emphasize, however, is that it is important for the employees to be trained properly from the safety angle.

(2) The other important count upon which the employees must be trained is that of sales, that is if maximum profits are to be secured. Each employee should be given a lesson in customer courtesy, personal appearance, and the type of sales policy in use at the particular station. He should become familiar with what the customer wants and how to give it to him. This "training program" is of utmost importance if the station operator is sincerely in earnest about increasing his sales.

As I explained previously, Brandywine is a company-owned station; I therefore feel that my fellow employees and I were instructed in the best possible manner as to the proper methods of pushing sales. Our immediate superiors were men of long experience in the business,
men who "knew the ropes" and who could and did instruct us in what they had learned during their employ with the Gulf Company. Since I feel we received the best possible training, I should like to describe my experiences in this respect.

Another Ursinus student and I started work the same day. On our first day at Brandywine, the manager (who was "head-man" at the station) briefed the two of us for about a half-hour. He instructed us in customer courtesy: "Courtesy First!" He explained the company sales policy, that it was definitely not of the "high pressure" type. He emphasized that it is the worst thing one can do to sell a customer something he does not want, adding, with a chuckle, that it is just as bad not to sell him something he does want. He stressed personal appearance. (We were furnished with three uniforms--pants, shirts, and hats--and laundry service, supplying our own black shoes and black bow ties. And finally he explained numerous generally-accepted sales pointers, in addition to some of his own which he personally had tried and found to be successful.

After this briefing, our manager took us outside and demonstrated some of what he had told us on his own automobile. He explained that the oil dipstick
(the stick used for measuring the oil level) is not always located in the same place in different-make automobiles. In some cars it is on the left side of the engine, in others on the right; in some toward the front, in some in the back; some high, and some low. He told us the dipstick location in some of the more common types of cars, so that we would not waste any time hunting for it. The most convincing evidence to a motorist that an employee "doesn't know his stuff" is when he cannot find the dipstick right away. When the attendant stumbles around and has to ask the driver where the dipstick is on his car, the driver gets a feeling of insecurity. He develops an "I don't want you working on my car" attitude, and drives away. And there goes another sale--lost! I know this is true because it happened to me.

After this practical demonstration, it was time for our test. The manager climbed into his car and, one by one, we had to sell him a tank-full of high-test gasoline, an oil change, and a new fan belt. He was a tough customer. After trying several sales approaches I finally succeeded in selling him a tank-full of regular gasoline, not high-test, and no oil change or fan belt.
But this test was good experience for us. It was far better for us to make our blunders then and there, on the boss, than it was for us to make them on a customer and thus lose a sale.

From here we were on our own, but under the watchful eyes and guiding hands of our manager and assistant manager, who didn't hesitate to tell us when we made a mistake. Also we received constant advice and instructions from the district office in Harrisburg. These were in the form of letters from the office and two company magazines, Gulf News and The Orange Disc. The letters referred to specific items, such as a change in company procedure in a certain field, while the magazines gave suggestions for improvement in general, such as additional sales pointers.
B. Sales Stimulants. We have seen how every Brandywine employee received proper training at the start. Following this up, there were numerous methods used to increase sales, some of which I shall list here.

First of all, we were paid partially on a commission basis. That is, we were guaranteed a certain stated sum, in addition to which we received at the end of each month a commission based on the amount of sales during that month. Commission was paid on everything except gasoline sales. Service orders, such as lubrication jobs, were included also. This system worked fine, with both company and employees as recipients of the benefits. I feel it could be improved upon in only one way, and that is by the use of individual commissions. As it was, all the money set aside for commissions was placed in a central fund, which was divided proportionately among the employees of that station at the end of the month. If a man sold a battery, for example, instead of pocketing the commission, he had to share it with the entire force of employees in his station. If he were dependent upon the commission he alone earned, I feel he would have a much greater incentive to push sales of what we called "T, B, and A" items, i.e., tires, tubes, batteries,
and accessories. However, this would make for difficult bookkeeping. The point I wish to stress here is that every employee in a service station should benefit directly from the amount of sales he made; in other words, a commission should definitely be at least a partial basis of his pay-check.

A second stimulant to sales which would be a good idea for all service station operators to pick up is a prize or prizes, such as the ones we knew as "No-Nox" Awards. (No-Nox is high test Gulf gasoline.) The object of these awards was to increase the sales of high test gasoline. The set-up was this: We were instructed to repeat the following sentence to every customer as he pulled up to the pumps: "May I fill your tank with No-Nox?" Here we find an excellent example of the power of suggestion influence upon the human mind. This sentence, "May I fill your tank with No-Nox?" accomplished two things. First, it acquainted the public with our company's trade name for our high test gasoline; and second, it induced the customer into buying this more expensive gasoline. Now, numerous scouts, both men and women, in plain clothes, driving unmarked automobiles, constantly toured the Gulf stations. If we were following the instructions given us we would repeat the necessary question to these
scouts, since they looked like ordinary motorists.
If we did repeat the question to a scout we received any one of four nice prizes. The prizes were a deck of cards, a tie clip set, a money clip, or a penknife. In addition, our name was placed in a drawing for a larger prize. Now these are nice prizes for merely asking a simple question. If it happened that we did not ask the question of a scout, then we received a card upon which was printed the word "Sorry," and a black mark was recorded against our station.

The primary result of this system of awards was that we all suggested to each and every motorist that he have his tank filled with No-Nox. The secondary results were that the public became acquainted with our brand name and our high test sales increased. This is a good example of a company's efforts to increase sales of a particular product.

Another example of a sales stimulant was the fan-belt award. Under much the same system as the No-Nox awards, we were instructed to check the fan belt of every automobile coming into the station. Of course, if we found a bad one, we were expected to attempt the sale of a replacement. If we happened to check the fan belt of an automobile of one of the scouts, we
received a five dollar bill. If we neglected this simple procedure, we didn't get the five dollars. Naturally, we all checked every customer's fan belt, which was the object of this program.

These are simple, ordinary, easy-to-do practices. Yet what an effect they had upon sales as well as upon the morale of the workers! With these programs in effect we had something to work for, something tangible, just that something more. These examples are important for the station operator as well as the oil company to keep in mind. I cannot overstate their importance.
C. Employee-Management Relations. Employee-management relations are a very important item, for a happy employee is a productive employee. Satisfactory treatment makes for contentment among the workers, which in turn makes for increased productivity in the business enterprise. And this rule is certainly applicable to the operation of a gasoline service station.

In this category, we assume, of course, that wages and working hours are satisfactory. But there is something yet which I feel is more important to the worker than either of these; and that is that he feels he is being treated right "by the boss" in his day by day work.

First off, therefore, it is a "must" for the boss to realize that he is dealing with human beings, with individuals. He must keep in mind the Golden Rule of Industry: "Treat those under you as you would want to be treated, if you are one of them." If he lives by this rule, he should have little trouble in maintaining satisfactory employee-management relations.

But there are yet some other things which management can do to improve these conditions. I refer to concentrated, planned efforts on the part of management
to improve relations in a specific field. To illustrate, I shall cite a few examples which I noted during my employ at Brandywine. Management should take note, for these examples are the ones that really impressed me, as a worker, as well as they did the other employees at Brandywine Station.

One example of a specific attempt to maintain satisfactory relations was a party for all the employees at the Station. Our manager was fortunate in having a large home on a farm, with a swimming pool out back. But he applied this to the improvement of labor-management relations by inviting all of us to a party at his place. The party ran all day long, so that the workers on all the shifts could attend. It was quite some party, the likes of which Ursinus has never seen!

Even the "big boss" (the district supervisor from Harrisburg) was invited. This gathering of all the workers, their wives, and management, joining in the mutual enjoyment of a party, went far to maintain excellent labor-management relations.

It brought together "the Brandywine Branch of the Gulf Family Tree." For days, even weeks, both before and after the party, it was the topic of conversation among employees. And while we were
talking as a group, we were thinking and acting as a group. What a sense of teamwork was brought about by this simple event of an employee's party.

We have seen how worker co-operation can be emphasized by a specific project. Let us now look at an example of a different type method of improving labor relations. This took an even more simple form. It was aimed at making each employee feel that he was important as an individual also. It was the sending of birthday cards on the appropriate date by the district supervisor. It was a most pleasant surprise to us as we, one by one, received a card on our birthday from the "big boss," signed by his office staff in Harrisburg as well as by him. This may sound ridiculously mediocre to the reader at first, but I want to stress that the effect it produced definitely was not. What a sense of recognition it gave each worker! This is exemplified by my reaction: Upon receipt of a greeting on my birthday, I thought, "Gee, they know my name. They know my birthday. They even took the trouble to send me a card." For a ten-cent card, Gulf got an inestimable amount of extra work out of me. I think the reader will agree it was a pretty good investment.
A final illustration of a successful attempt on the part of management was the awarding of tickets to Shibe Park baseball games to employees selling the highest number of oil changes. I could have included this under the section entitled "Sales Stimulants." But I feel it has a definite place here under "Employee-Management Relations" because it went far to improve same, as well as to increase sales.

The system was this: At the end of each month, the employee who had sold the greatest number of oil changes during that month received two tickets to Shibe Park in Philadelphia to see a professional baseball game.

I found this to be a most effective plan for increasing sales in a particular field and for improving labor-management relations. In an effort to increase our sales of oil changes and thus win the prize of the tickets, we approached every customer at the station and suggested that it was time for an oil change. Sometimes we received the reply, "Why, I just had it changed 300 miles back!" This situation was slightly embarrassing, yes. But sometimes the reply was, "Oh, I forgot about that--go ahead and change it while I grab a cup of coffee." Quite often
motorists would say, "I know it needs a change, but I'm in a hurry--can't stop now." To a statement like this we would reply that we could do the job in a very short time, and suggest that he wait in the adjoining restaurant while we did it. We had a "Quick-Changer," a machine which could perform the operation in a matter of minutes, and we were quick to point this out to a motorist giving this type of reply. Very often we made a sale with this extra little bit of effort, a sale which otherwise would have been lost. Thus this system worked as a sales stimulant.

But the point I want to emphasize here is that this system of awarding Shibe Park tickets to employees selling the most oil changes went far to improve labor-management relations. Of course we were getting our regular salary and commission all the time, but in these tickets we had something else to work for, a definite goal for which to strive. We were fellow employees, all striving for something greatly to be desired, a pair of tickets to the ball game. A feeling of "friendly competition" developed among us. I even overheard several bets being placed on the side, bets as to who would sell the most oil changes. "I bet I get more than you today," was a frequent expression. A day-by-day record of each employee's
sales was kept and posted. There were four or five workers of my own age who formed a group to see who could achieve the best record.

All this made for happy employees and pleasant labor-management relations. And remember, "Happy Employees are Productive Employees!"

Conclusion.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that these internal improvements which I have been talking about have been proven in actual, practical application. They are not merely theoretical; they do work in reality.

I have shown what the gasoline consumer wants, and I have suggested means as to how to give him what he wants. Now independent service station operators would do well to look into some of these because the race is on. It is going to be a "survival of the fittest."

The current series of price wars reveals all too clearly that there is over-duplication of stations, that there are too many service stations for the amount of business available.

Therefore, alert dealers had better adopt some
of the suggestions made herein and apply them to their own situations. Wide-awake dealers will do this.

Others will soon be hanging out the "For Sale" signs.