

eBook

How to Stay Busy and
Remain Profitable
during the Off-Season



1

Encourage customers to have their equipment serviced now.

Compile a list of customers who have purchased units from you during the previous season and create mail merges in your Dealer Management System inviting them to have their equipment serviced.

“I sent out 3,500 letters to customers that bought equipment from me in the last seven years. I used Ideal’s mail merge to create the letter and the list. The mail merge feature made it easy. I offered to tune up their equipment, pick up, and deliver it. As a result of the mailing, I had 1,100 pieces of equipment in my shop to tune up during my slow season! I grossed \$150,000 in sales from a \$1,700 mailing that took just hours!”

**Mike Grollmus,
Al Joe’s**



Create an incentive!

Offer your customers a **special discount** or **gift** for having their unit serviced during your slow times.

Motivate them and give them a reason to do business with you now.

2

Pick up an Off-Season line.

If it works into your budget and you can invest the time to get it up and running, one of the best ways to make money during the off-season is to pick up a new product line.

“One of the things that helped increase sales during that time was a boost in our motorcycle sales. We added Honda power sports to our business in 1997 and in the beginning we experienced a slow start in sales. Our motorcycle business didn’t really take off until 2001, but it has provided a big boost in sales ever since.”

**Jason Anderson,
Andersons’ Sales and Service**



Do your research first!

Make sure there is a need for an additional product line in your community. Also make sure you have the time, effort, and resources to make the line profitable.

3

Get rid of items that are tying up money and shelf space.

For many businesses, their biggest downfall lies in their inventory management. Therefore, it's much to your advantage to go through your entire inventory and eliminate items that are sucking the life out of your bank account. The most important thing is that you put the profits in your pocket and improve your cash flow instead of having money sitting on the shelf.



4

See what items haven't been picked up.

Use some of your downtime during the off-season to go through your allocated items in your dealer management system that have not been picked up and call those customers. If the customer doesn't want the item, return it to the stock shelf so it can be sold to someone else who may need it.



5

Do a thorough cleaning of your entire business.

When it's your busy season it's difficult to find time to clean and make sure everything is neat and organized. Take some time during your slow season to clean all the nooks and crannies of your business. Re-organize the items on your inventory shelves that are out of order. Replace light bulbs and upgrade ceiling tiles, furniture, landscaping, etc. You invest a lot of money into promoting your business. Now it's time to invest into its physical condition. You'll be surprised at how just a few simple changes can boost the public appeal of your dealership.



6

Provide additional training for your employees.

Knowledge is power so it's very important that all of your technicians and salespeople are up-to-date on all the latest information and attend necessary training sessions. In addition, your slow season is also the perfect time to educate your employees on how to properly use your DMS. Take time and go through your DMS with your employees and make sure everyone knows how to use all applications correctly. It's also a great opportunity for you to look through your system and clean out any unnecessary data.



7

Update your service codes or put together new service packages in your DMS.

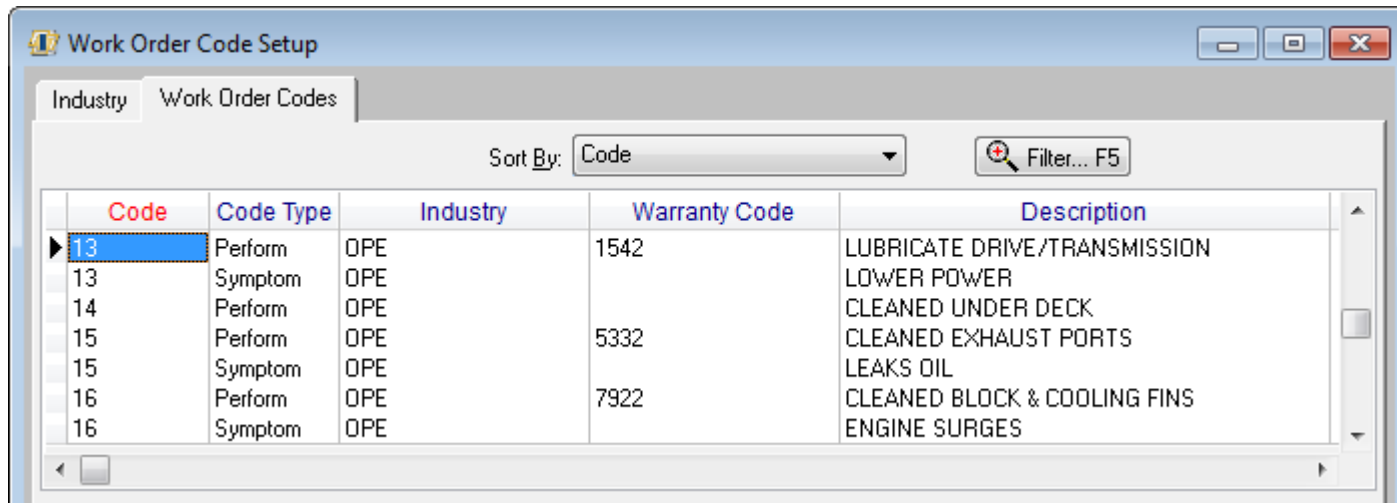
Your off-season is a perfect time to go through your computer system and evaluate your work order module to determine if all of the service codes you've created are working efficiently for your business. Determine if any additions or changes need to be made. It's also a great opportunity to see if you can create new service packages that you can easily add to an invoice, rather than having to add each item individually.



8

Add/update flat rates and warranty codes in your DMS.

Your off-season is also a great time to go through all of your flat rates and warranty codes in your computer system and make any necessary changes. Check to make sure your codes match up with codes issued by your manufacturers.



The screenshot shows a software window titled "Work Order Code Setup" with a tab labeled "Work Order Codes". The window contains a table with the following columns: Code, Code Type, Industry, Warranty Code, and Description. The table is sorted by Code. The first row is selected, showing Code 13, Code Type Perform, Industry OPE, Warranty Code 1542, and Description LUBRICATE DRIVE/TRANSMISSION. Other rows include Code 13 (Symptom OPE, LOWER POWER), Code 14 (Perform OPE, CLEANED UNDER DECK), Code 15 (Perform OPE, 5332, CLEANED EXHAUST PORTS), Code 15 (Symptom OPE, LEAKS OIL), Code 16 (Perform OPE, 7922, CLEANED BLOCK & COOLING FINS), and Code 16 (Symptom OPE, ENGINE SURGES).

Code	Code Type	Industry	Warranty Code	Description
13	Perform	OPE	1542	LUBRICATE DRIVE/TRANSMISSION
13	Symptom	OPE		LOWER POWER
14	Perform	OPE		CLEANED UNDER DECK
15	Perform	OPE	5332	CLEANED EXHAUST PORTS
15	Symptom	OPE		LEAKS OIL
16	Perform	OPE	7922	CLEANED BLOCK & COOLING FINS
16	Symptom	OPE		ENGINE SURGES

9

Check all of your computer workstations and determine if you need to upgrade any hardware.

Ask yourself... do my computers run as fast as I need them to? Are my monitors easy to read? Do all of my keyboards work properly? Do my printers function properly and print clearly? Do I need any new cash drawers or scanners? Do I need any additional workstations?



10

Establish Goals

Run reports in your DMS and analyze how your business did in sales, labor efficiency, inventory turns, etc. Use that historical data to establish goals for the upcoming year. The more prepared you are heading into the next busy season, the easier it will be to achieve and even surpass your desired results.



The more hard work and preparation you do now to get ready for your next busy season, the more **it will pay off in the long run** in both time and profits!

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Check out other resources from Ideal:

[Guide: Take Control of Your Inventory >>](#)

[Guide: How to Evaluate Dealer Management Systems >>](#)