
Women's Car Care Clinic Kit

A How-to Guide

Created by the Car Care Council
Women's Board



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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Why host a Car Care Clinic?*

Two of the best reasons to host a car care clinic are to attract new customers and to reinforce loyalty of current customers. Consider the following:

- A customer who is educated about the benefits of regular vehicle maintenance is a better customer.
- Customers need to understand the basics of automotive maintenance.
- Knowledge is power; customers appreciate those who empower them.
- A seminar provides one-on-one face time with customers and potential customers.
- Events such as clinics build trust and loyalty.
- Participants can become credible, third-party promoters of your business.
- The event provides an opportunity to dispense promotional materials like service interval schedules, tire gauges, mugs, magnets, etc.
- You have the opportunity to enhance your relationship with vendors.
- As an educator, your credibility is enhanced and you are perceived as an expert in the automotive field.
- It can expand your customer base/ mailing list.
- It provides an opportunity to build relationships with local groups.
- You can receive lots of press IF you let the media know.
- Your shop will be viewed as customer-friendly.

2. How do I start?*

- The simplicity or complexity of the event depends on you.
- It should be well thought-out in terms of time, physical space, budget, participants and staff.
- It doesn't have to fit any specific format but it must be workable.
- Talk to staff and customers – what would they like to learn? What day or night of the week would be most appropriate? How much time would they be willing to invest? What would inhibit their participation?
- Determine your objective, set well-defined, measurable goals. What do you want to accomplish and how do you want to measure those accomplishments?

*From "A Service Provider's Guide to Hosting a Successful Women's Car Care Seminar" published by Car Care Canada

3. Who do I include?*

- Planning the event takes teamwork – obtain buy-in from staff and vendors.
- Make sure everyone understands the scope and benefits of the project.
- Ask techs to be available for hands-on demonstrations (request that they save old parts and components needed for exhibits).
- Service writers and parts people should all be involved and visible.
- Include vendor partners in the presentation by asking them to describe their product, what it does; and why it's important.

4. How do I advertise?

- Use promotional venues that are free or almost free: marquee, in-store signage, window signage, newsletter, email, mailing list, tags on radio spots, add to regular print ad or flyers, flyers in cars after repair, press releases, calendar of events, local talk shows.*
- Get your information to women's groups, senior citizen centers, school/college faculties and offices. Enlist the assistance of your Chamber of Commerce. Ask large companies for space in their company newsletter. Consider offering the clinic exclusively for specific groups or businesses.*
- If investing in paid advertising, ask vendors to help share the cost. Some associations, such as AAA or the Chamber of Commerce may have their own newsletters, request space in this publication. Investigate co-sponsors such as local radio station or newspapers.
- Send press releases to the local newspapers and radio stations.
- Send information to large employers/agencies in the area.
 - i. State office buildings
 - ii. Hospitals
 - iii. Insurance offices
 - iv. Banks
 - v. Rotary, Lions Club, Legion, Local Chamber
 - vi. High school teachers
 - vii. Local colleges
 - viii. Women's clubs or organizations
- Submit the information to the local newspaper, radio and TV stations.
- Post to online calendars.
- Run an ad in the local newspaper utilizing your best vendors/utilize co-op marketing dollars.
- Send e-mail blasts to customers.

*From "A Service Provider's Guide to Hosting a Successful Women's Car Care Seminar" published by Car Care Canada

5. What should be taught?*

Below is a short list of some ideas to consider for your Car Care Clinic content.

- Familiarize the participants with the vehicle and educate them about the need for preventive maintenance.
- Don't teach participants how to perform a brake job. Rather, teach brake check intervals, explaining the telltale signs of worn brakes and the dangers of not having them checked.
- Discuss maintenance logs and their importance for the consumer and the service provider. Mention the value that these logs provide at resale time.
- Discuss severe service driving. Explain what type of motorist is a likely candidate and why this type of driving is tough on an automobile.
- Explain diagnostics, briefly introducing participants to the complexities of onboard computers and the need for diagnostic charges.
- Explain importance of maintenance and how it impacts safety, dependability and fuel efficiency.

6. Where is the clinic held?

- The clinic is usually held in the shop area.
- Consider the waiting room area to start off the clinic, providing a general overview of what will be covered and addressing any topics for which a hands-on demonstration will be necessary. Then, transition to the shop area for the hands-on portion of the clinic.

7. How long does a car care clinic last?

- The clinic will usually last about 2 hours including thank yous and door prizes.

8. How many attendees is a good number?

- 25 to 30 people is a good number to target. Remember, there will always be some no-shows.

9. Should I have food and refreshments?

- This is a definite! Recommended food options include:
 - Veggie tray, cheese and crackers or a deli meat tray
 - Light snacks – granola bars, apples, are adequate
 - Coffee, tea and water are also a must
- If the shop is crowded, you can keep the beverages and snacks in the waiting room

10. What about chairs and tables?

- Clipboards/name tags
- A table and chairs should be set up for beverages and snacks
- Goody bags

*From "A Service Provider's Guide to Hosting a Successful Women's Car Care Seminar" published by Car Care Canada

11. What should attendees be given when they arrive?

- Name tags
- Clipboards, paper, pen to take notes
- Handouts

12. What should attendees be given when they leave?

- Goody bags

13. What should go in the “Goody” Bags?

- Windshield washer fluid
- Car Care Guide
- Keychain, coupons
- Tire pressure gauge
- Tire tread gauge/looks like a credit card
- Your own promotional material (pens, keychain, t-shirt, hat)
- Ice scrapers/snow brushes if appropriate
- Chocolate candy
- Marketing promotional piece for your shop, like;
 - Free trip check / safety check
 - Dollars off first service or repair
 - Free windshield wipers (note value) for first service or repair

14. Should I have door prizes and how many? A fun way to hand out door prizes is to ask questions to see if those attending learned anything and award prizes to the individual with the winning answer or just for asking a question.

- Door prize ideas include:
 - Free oil change
 - \$50 gift certificate for pedicure / manicure
 - Car emergency kit
 - Gift certificate to a local restaurant
 - Gift certificate to a local movie theater
- Encourage attendees to bring a friend and for each friend they bring, their name will be entered into a prize drawing
- When sending invitations, it’s good to include a call to action – invoke a sense of urgency with an RSVP – you decide whether all RSVPs or only the first “X” RSVPs will be entered into a prize drawing.

15. How much should I plan on paying for goody bags and door prizes?

- *Very little!* Talk with your vendors and local businesses. Most are more than glad to help out with donations for goody bags and door prizes.

Best Practices

Leigh Anne Best – Mighty Auto Pro, Medina, OH

- Women, Wheels and Wine Event
- Best timeframe - Wednesday evening – 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
 - Previously scheduled 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. but found too many people went home after work and stayed there. By beginning at 6 p.m. they found that most people came right from work and brought co-workers.
- Staff are not paid to work the clinic – they loved working it, embraced doing it as it gave them the opportunity to shine.
- Had approximately 55 attendees per class – free style open house with five different “stations” including;
 - How to change a tire
 - Computers and your car
 - Checking fluid levels
- Appetizer, wine and truffle or chocolate covered strawberries were served.
- Attendees wore name tags indicating if they were a current customer or a potential new customer attending as guest. Provided great networking allowing potential new customers to ask of existing customers how their service experience had been.
- Posted to Website and appeared on front page of local newspaper.
- Feedback indicated attendees enjoyed the “education stations”.

Car Care Canada – Excerpts from “A Service Providers Guide to Hosting a Successful Women’s Car Care Seminar”

- Look at the shop with a critical eye to ensure that it is clean and presentable.
- Begin the evening with welcome and housekeeping items (restrooms, agenda, etc.).
- Tell participants about your business and services.
- Assume you are talking to people who know nothing about your shop.
- Outline the shop’s technicians’ certifications and local affiliations. Describe what this means to the customer in terms of the service their vehicle is receiving. The fact that a shop employs certified technicians and belongs to the Chamber of Commerce or Better Business Bureau should be positioned as a value-added benefit.
- Mention how long you have been in business.
- Ensure there is time for Q&A after each session.
- Treat all questions with utmost respect.
- This is an ongoing public relations/marketing effort, not a one-time event.
- Hold goody bags and handouts for the end of the evening so participants aren’t distracted during your presentation.
- Prepare packets for handouts including helpful Websites, service internal schedules and assorted brochures.

- Use and/or reprint items such as articles related to the topics you cover.
- Avoid cramming too much information into the session.
- Create a schedule – stick to it.
- Have a rehearsal to ensure an on-time finish.
- Include a rogues gallery for comparison of old/worn and new parts. Consider leaving this educational display in your shop full time.
- If a question or comment arises regarding a competitor, take the high road by avoiding unfavorable comments.
- Know your capacity – limit participants based on this number.
- Consider offering childcare by partnering with a daycare center or childcare class.
- Don't be discouraged if you don't have a large number of participants the first time – attendance will build.
- Invite the media – take photos to send with a follow-up press release. Include photos on your Website or in your newsletter.
- Send thank-you notes and evaluation forms along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to participants the next day, or send e-mail.
- Hold a meeting with your staff to evaluate the event on every level: promotional, presentation, participation, cost, etc.

Testimonials

“Having Women’s Car Care clinics at our auto repair shop has been a true Win-Win. We are educating and empowering women about their cars, and increasing business, and getting great press for little or no cost. We have run three clinics so far with about 20 women per class, and plan on having one class per month December through April”.

**Amy Mattinat, Auto Craftsmen, Montpelier, VT
September 22, 2009**

“We have held Women’s Car Care Clinics (WCCC) the last two 2 Aprils since April is National Car Care Awareness Month. The cost to hold one of these clinics is very minimal. The only real cost is what you decide to spend on door prizes and food/drinks. We were fortunate to have all of our door prizes donated by our vendors. We have found women like finger foods (something light) healthy and chocolate for dessert. I don’t have a total number of sales generated from our WCCC. Every WCCC we held there are women returning the next day for services we discussed. Nitrogen in tires was a topic that drew attention and sales. Our experience has been that the women enjoy the shop time looking at cars under hood, brakes and under the car versus the classroom PowerPoint approach. The “buzz” that is generated from customers when they see us advertising the WCCC or the link on our website that shows pictures is what blows me away. We get comments on our CSI cards throughout the year asking when is the next WCCC or Thanks for helping me be so informed about my car.”

**Russ E. Carter, Griffin Brothers, Charlotte, NC
June 23, 2009**

Promotional Materials

Radio Script

Don't miss the opportunity to learn how to maintain one of your most valuable investments - your automobile. Plan to attend the Car Care Clinic being held on [DATE / TIME] at [BUSINESS NAME / LOCATION] where there will be free food and a chance to win great prizes while you learn all the tips and tricks to maintaining your car, truck or van. Space is limited so RSVP today by calling XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Broadcast E-mail

As a loyal customer of [BUSINESS NAME], we are extending this invitation for you to attend a Car Care Clinic where you can learn how to protect one of your most valuable investments – your automobile. Don't miss this opportunity to learn all the tips and tricks to maintaining your vehicle. The event will take place [DATE / TIME] at [LOCATION]. There will be food and great giveaways. Be sure to invite your friends but remember, space is limited so RSVP today by calling XXX-XXX-XXXX! We look forward to seeing you there.

On-Hold Message

Don't miss the opportunity to learn how to maintain one of your most valuable investments - your automobile. Plan to attend our Car Care Clinic scheduled for [DATE]. We'll have free food and a chance to win great prizes while teaching all the tips and tricks you need to know to keep your vehicle in top-running condition. Space is limited so RSVP today!

Flyer

Car Care Clinic

[DATE]

[TIME]

[Business Name / Logo]

FREE FOOD! GREAT GIVEAWAYS!

Space Limited – RSVP – XXX-XXX-XXXX!

Learn how to maintain your car – save money – prevent the high cost of major repairs!

Evaluation Form

[Event Name]
[Business Name/Logo]
[Date]

Thank you so much for participating in our Car Care Clinic. We hope that you found it beneficial. In order to improve future clinics, we would like your feedback regarding your experience. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is strongly disagree, 3 is neutral and 5 is strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
<u>Instructor(s):</u>					
The instructor(s) presented material clearly.	1	2	3	4	5
The instructor(s) exhibited knowledge regarding subject material.	1	2	3	4	5
The instructor(s) treated all participants with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Clinic Content:</u>					
The information presented was valuable.	1	2	3	4	5
The information was presented in a clear, organized way.	1	2	3	4	5
The course information met my objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
The length of the course was appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
The pace of the clinic was appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
The handouts and other take-home materials are valuable for future reference.	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Overall Clinic Evaluation:</u>					
Overall, the course was valuable.	1	2	3	4	5
I would recommend this clinic to friends/family.	1	2	3	4	5

What was the most useful aspect of this clinic?

What was the least useful aspect of this clinic?

In what ways can this clinic use improvement?

Additional comments / suggestions for future clinics:

Is this your first time visiting this shop? (circle one) Yes / No

May we quote your comments? (circle one) Yes / No

Optional contact information:

Name: _____

E-mail address: _____

Phone number: _____