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Vendor Spotlight: Throttle

The Patterns Behind Repeat Visits

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The easiest numbers to measure are not always the ones that matter most.

Car count, average ticket and sales tell you what happened today. Repeat visits tell you what is likely to happen next.

They show whether customers are building a habit with your shop. They show whether reminders are working. They can also show when a customer relationship is weakening.

That is why repeat-visit activity deserves a closer look.

Car count is a snapshot. Repeat visits are a trend. Traffic tells you how busy you were. Loyalty tells you how healthy your business is.

A Visit Is Not Just a Visit

Every visit has context.

Think of every customer visit as the start of a countdown, not the finish line. Once the vehicle leaves the lot, the clock starts ticking toward the customer's next maintenance decision. Whether that decision brings them back often depends on what happens between visits.

A new customer coming in for the first time is not the same as a loyal customer returning on schedule. A customer who declined service is not the same as someone who approved the recommendation. A customer who returns every few months is not the same as one whose service interval keeps stretching.

Those differences matter.

If operators only look at total traffic, they may miss what is changing inside the customer base. Car count may look steady while repeat visits soften. A location may look busy while loyal customers are returning less often.

The stronger question is not only, "How many cars came in?"

It is, "What kind of visit are we seeing?"

Customer Experience Shows Up Later

Customer experience can be hard to measure in the moment. A customer may smile at the counter and never return. Another may decline a service, then approve it later after a clear follow-up. A third may leave a review, refer a friend or respond to the next reminder.

For service businesses, the visit experience can shape the next decision. Recent industry research found that for every 10 poor customer experiences, five result in reduced or stopped spending.¹ That does not always happen with a complaint. Many customers simply change their behavior. They wait longer, try another shop, ignore the reminder or stop responding.

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That makes repeat-visit behavior one of the most useful signals an operator can watch.

What to Watch Across Locations

Repeat-visit patterns can reveal what is working across locations and where support may be needed.

If one store brings customers back sooner, look at what can be repeated. Are reminders timed well? Are service recommendations explained clearly? Are customers leaving with a clear next step?

If another store has fewer repeat visits, look for friction. Follow-up may be inconsistent. Reminders may be mistimed. Customers may not be getting the same level of guidance after the visit.

Operators do not need more dashboards. They need better signals. The goal is not to overwhelm managers with reports. It is to help them recognize patterns early enough to act.

Which customers are staying engaged? Which customers are drifting? Which locations need support? Which follow-up efforts are helping customers return?

Those answers help operators act sooner.

Turn Patterns into Action

Repeat visits are not just a marketing measure. They are a business health measure.

Watch four indicators consistently:

- Repeat-visit rate
- Average time between visits
- Declined-service recovery
- Reminder engagement

When operators understand who is returning and how often, they can make better decisions across the business. Staffing, manager coaching, service recommendations, follow-up timing and local offers all become easier to evaluate.

The point is not to chase every number. It is to notice the patterns that affect future visits.

The healthiest quick lube businesses are not always the busiest. They are the ones customers keep choosing again and again.

Every repeat visit is more than another oil change. It is a sign the customer chose you again.

Sources

- 1 [Qualtrics XM Institute, 2026 Consumer Experience Trends Report.](#)

Throttle®, a product of Matrix Imaging Solutions, is a customer data platform built specifically for automotive service businesses. It brings together store-level performance dashboards, campaign tracking and attribution, service interval analytics and direct mail campaign intelligence, all supported by Matrix's print, mail and data processing infrastructure.