

Crest Cadillac



Cooperative Education Program Produces Skilled Automotive Technicians

Crest Cadillac

Automotive training program leads to postsecondary credentials, increasing technician efficiency to 140 percent and dealership retention rates to 90 percent.

Crest Cadillac, a leading automotive dealership in the Dallas metro area, provides superior value and customer service to its client base. The business specializes in sales and is committed to outstanding service of Cadillac and General Motors (GM) brands, which requires its technicians to be highly trained and to have specialized knowledge of maintaining and repairing those brands.

When GM entered the Dallas market, its product service training division struggled to find the appropriate talent it needed in the area. It recognized the need to create a skilled talent pool of service technicians, and therefore established a partnership with Brookhaven College of the Dallas County Community College District to grow its own specialized workforce to meet its unique product knowledge and skill requirements. General Motors created the dealership sponsored Automotive Service Education Program (ASEP) to provide its dealers nationwide with a source of trained professionals. Based on a robust set of educational and workplace supports, ASEP helps the business maintain strong operational performance, high customer satisfaction ratings and improved employee retention in a highly competitive labor market. Crest Cadillac saw the value of this program and immediately joined it after the dealership opened in 1984.

Cadillac recently worked with Brookhaven College to offer students scheduling flexibility in order to facilitate combining work with school, which helps students maintain financial stability. ASEP requires students to take four courses called “cooperative work experience” which constitutes their internship, for which they are paid and earn up to 12 credits toward their associate degree. During their internships, students work with a senior technician, who offers mentoring and career navigation support, a practice which is encouraged by management. In addition to the

Business Outcomes

- Increases retention rates from 50 to 90 percent
- Increases efficiency to 140 percent
- Improves GM Customer Satisfaction Scores
- Enhances technician skill levels

Employee Impact

- Full factory training
- Paid internship with flexible scheduling
- Tuition reimbursement for associate degree attainment
- Competitive salaries available and lower student debt; bonuses available

Automotive Service Education Program (ASEP)

- Nationally recognized cooperative degree program
- Paid ASE training and certification
- Curriculum meets industry needs
- Similar Dallas partnerships graduated 530 from 2006-2009 and realized a 92 percent job placement rate

PERSONAL STORY

Jeff Steger had no college aspirations when he graduated high school. Had his uncle, who worked for General Motors, not told him to enroll in ASEP at Brookhaven, he would not have considered any college program. Steger enrolled, graduated with his Associate Degree in Automotive Technology, and shortly afterward started working for Crest Cadillac. He has been with the company for 21 years. As a roadside technician, Steger focuses on technical roadside and customer service, and is currently working toward his ASE master certification. He said that the program “put him miles ahead” of people that did not go through the same rigorous training. Without the support from school and work the program provided, Steger would not have completed his postsecondary education. “It was life-changing for me—I feel like I have more options in the job market, and I am making a better living.” Steger now mentors youth finishing the program and thinks it is a life-saver for young people that are technically inclined but have no college plans.

Industry Co-op Partnership with Community College

The Automotive Service Education Program (ASEP) is a nationally recognized, dealership sponsored cooperative associate degree program in automotive technology that has been operating for over 30 years. Through ASEP, working learners combine a paid, part-time internship at the Crest Cadillac dealership with part-time school during the week. Crest

paid internship, the dealership provides tuition reimbursement based on grade performance, and offers students a secured position at the company upon graduation from the two-year program. New graduates are then assigned to a senior technician to begin an informal apprenticeship period.

Crest Cadillac also pays for costs associated with training and tests to obtain Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications, the industry-recognized credential often pursued after automotive technicians earn associate degrees. The company offers bonuses to technicians that earn the ASE master technician status. Technicians can also take advantage of web-based training sponsored by GM, and scheduling flexibility and paid school time to support continued training and learning.

“ASEP provides brand-specific, highly-trained and qualified technicians at the end of the two-year program.”

- James Freel
Service Director
Crest Cadillac

To further support the partnership, the director of Crest Cadillac has served on Brookhaven’s ASEP Advisory Board for 15 years to provide feedback on curriculum development. Having employer input is critical to ensure that the program continues to meet local industry needs. The Board also sees that the curriculum meets the standards of the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF), so that the degree program is nationally recognized and certified.

Similar Industry Partnerships Across Dallas

Crest Cadillac’s partnership with Brookhaven College is one of nine similar automotive industry partnerships supported throughout the county by the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD). GM, Honda, Ford, Nissan and Bridgestone/Firestone have all played a role in customizing automotive degree programs through Learn and Earn part-

nerships across the District’s campuses. These business-led partnerships have produced over 530 graduates from 2006 to 2009, with a 92 percent successful placement rate, and have strengthened workforce and economic development in the region.

Competitive Talent Pool and a Loyal Workforce

ASEP directly contributes to Crest Cadillac’s human capital and talent management outcomes by making graduates of the program better able to achieve high GM Customer Satisfaction Scores, to increase their areas of expertise and to “clear tickets” at the dealership—an important factor affecting the dealership’s operational efficiency. Given the high-quality, technical nature of ASEP and its specificity to GM products, graduates can hit the ground running and provide high value client service, operating at 130 to 140 percent efficiency. This is in contrast to graduates of other area trade schools, with a more generalized knowledge of GM products, who operate at 110 percent efficiency. The GM-specific nature of the ASEP curriculum is a critical factor vital to the program’s success.

ASEP graduates record a 70 to 90 percent ability to “clear a ticket” with 6 to 8 areas of expertise, while non-ASEP graduates show a 40 to 50 percent ability to “clear a ticket” with 2 to 4 areas of expertise, demonstrating a true value added. The program has also had a positive impact on the dealership’s employee retention rates, with a low turnover in a competitive labor market contributing a measurable benefit to the company. Retention rates for ASEP graduates average 80 to 90 percent, compared with 50 percent for non-ASEP graduates. There is a high loyalty factor, with some technicians continuing employment for 20 years or more.

Through ASEP, Crest Cadillac receives highly-educated technicians with current GM training and the ability to meet specific business needs. The partnership forged between Brookhaven College and the automotive industry in Dallas provides individuals with relevant work experience and postsecondary credentials that lead to career opportunities, while meeting local labor market demands.

For more information about Crest Cadillac, please visit www.crestcadillactx.com

HISTORY: Since 1984

SECTOR: Automotive

SERVES: Dallas metro area

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About Corporate Voices

Corporate Voices is the leading national business membership organization shaping conversations and collaborations on public and corporate policy issues involving working families. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, we are a unique voice, and provide leading and best-practice employers a forum to improve the lives of working families, while strengthening our nation’s economy and enhancing the vitality of our communities.

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Find Out More

Corporate Voices is committed to identifying and spotlighting businesses supporting postsecondary completion while making significant contributions to internal company goals. “Best practice” talent development models that increase access to career opportunities through education and training are being examined for characteristics that are transferable and replicable to other employers. This research is being conducted with the guidance of the Corporate Voices Learn and Earn Business Leadership Team consisting of business executives leading promising models and those interested in peer-to-peer learning. If you are interested in joining, contact Peggy Walton at pwalton@corporatevoices.org. Team members include:

- Verizon Wireless
- UPS
- Convergys
- Expeditors
- CVS Caremark
- AOL