**Spring Cleaning at the Dealership**

***By Valerie Ziebron***

Spring cleaning is here, and with temperatures above normal for most of the country, there's a good possibility your dealership has already made a swing into high season. Hopefully most of your dealership's to-do list was taken care of in the slower months, but before things get really busy, take a good look around. Does everything look ready for your customers? If you still see some things that need attention, it's not too late for a little spring cleaning. Here are some ideas that don't cost much money and can give your dealership a much-needed makeover.

**Lighten up.**

De-clutter the desks, counters, shelves, walls and floor spaces. There’s often a tendency to want to show every piece of merchandise that is available to the customer. Just remember that approach can appear messy. The best way to showcase merchandise is to allow for space around it. If there is too much jammed into one area, none of it looks special. Pay particular attention to the areas where customers will spend the most time. Is there a clean, open counter for them to review their invoices? Does the sales desk allow room to share documents with the customer and give them space to look at them? Don't be afraid to get rid of things you don't use. If it's been a year or more since you've used something, maybe it's time to let it go or find a place to store or file that item.

**Look up and down.**

   Most of what you see in the dealership on a daily basis is at eye level. Have a look at the ceilings, floors and corners. Are there spider webs or dust bunnies lurking about? Are there areas that may not be part of the regular cleaning routine that need some attention? Perhaps just a good cleaning, fresh paint or a swipe of a magic eraser is all that's needed. Be sure to replace any burnt out light bulbs, and dust ceiling fans. Are their decorations, pictures, posters or anything else that looks tired or out of date? If so, take them down and don't feel the need to immediately replace these things with more "stuff."

**Ship-shape the shop.**

   Just because shop work can get a bit dirty doesn't mean the shop has to give off a cluttered, dingy impression. Order in the workspace is a reflection on professionalism. Tidy work areas can also improve efficiency. The tech bench and bay should be organized, clean and free of old parts. The floors should be swept regularly and mopped on a schedule. When is the last time all of the benches were moved out and cleaned behind? This is also a great time to have a look at work flow and make any adjustments for efficiency before high season begins.

**Open the closet.**

  You wouldn't be alone if you have a drawer, closet or even a room that is a total disaster. Make that area your special project this spring, and turn it around. Sometimes certain areas are neglected because customers don't see them on a regular basis. But you and your team see them. Turn that cluttered closet into something functional. If you take the time to make the special tool area, the broom closet, the loft, and the deep dark places in the dealership sparkle, that organization will trickle into the other areas of your dealership as well.

**Have the right tools on hand.**

  Take a look at your cleaning inventory to ensure you have the supplies needed to keep the dealership looking and smelling its best. Do you have enough trash receptacles and are they all in the right place? Does your current cleaning schedule work for your dealership? Do you need to clean more often to guarantee a good customer impression?

   The task of cleaning up and organizing the entire dealership may seem daunting, but small steps on a daily and weekly basis can make a difference. One dealer had a fantastic idea when he found himself overwhelmed with the task of tackling his store's spring cleaning. He decided to take a weekly photo of the dealership to share with the team. He kept each picture and shared them every week to show his team the progress they made. Not only was this a great motivator, the team could really see what they accomplished every week. It's that sense of accomplishment that has the ability to inspire further improvements.

   Get a jump start on your busy summer season today by giving your dealership a small, inexpensive "spring cleaning" facelift. The changes your make will improve the overall feeling of your store, the attitudes of the people who work there, and the moods of the customers who shop there.