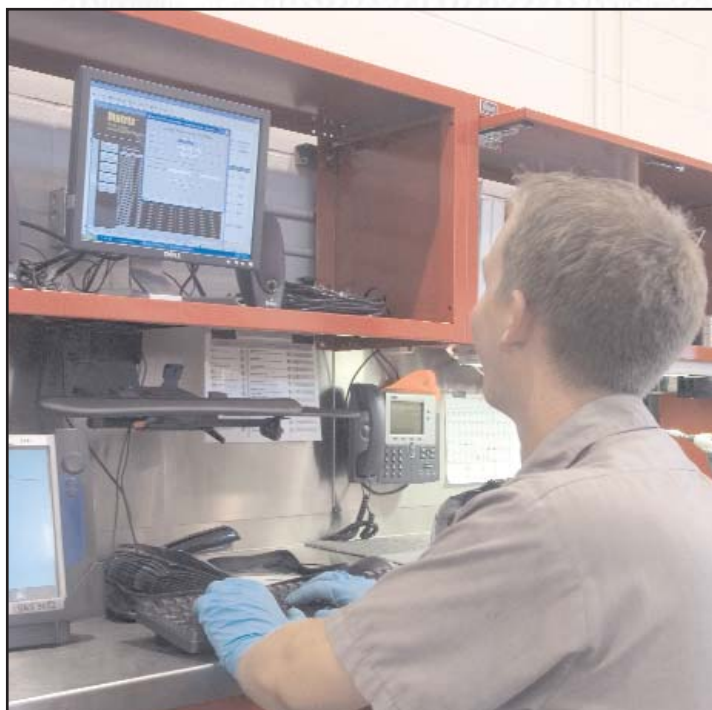




# AUTOMOTIVE DEALER IMPROVES INTERNAL OPERATION EFFICIENCIES WITH MATRIX™



*Maplewood Audi installed the Matrix™ Total Fluid Management System in their new Service Center to increase production and simplify*

management system that tracks oil dispense information from the service technicians' meters by repair order."

The system eliminates the need for technicians to walk to the parts room for dispense authorization, increasing their productivity. The system also saves time with data collection and tank level monitoring. It automatically records dispense information to the DMS (dealer management system), providing dispense history information for invoicing, reporting and ongoing inventory management.

The system the dealership installed was Graco's Matrix™ Total Fluid Management System™. Components include tank level monitors that measure the fluid levels in their organic oil, synthetic oil, waste oil, and waste antifreeze tanks; CleanLine™ filters to ensure clean oil is delivered to the vehicles; and Fireball™ pumps that transfer the oil from the tanks to the bays.

The oil is transferred to 11 banks of Graco hose reels that are mounted on the

"Without a doubt, one of the fundamental components a service organization must have to realize its full potential is efficiency," says Jeff LaMott, Service and Parts Director at Maplewood Audi in Maplewood, MN.

According to LaMott, efficiency is paramount to growing a profitable service center. "Every good service manager knows that the main product we sell is time. We all have an hourly rate that is assigned to most services and repairs. If a technician can complete the work faster than the allotted standard, we make money. If the service takes longer than the

allocated time, we lose! Therefore, if I can provide my technicians with tools to make them more efficient, you can be sure I'll consider their suitability in our environment."

Maplewood Audi had a rare opportunity to do just that recently — improve efficiency in their service center. In February 2006 they moved into a new 40,000 sq ft sales and service facility, featuring Audi's retro-modern "hangar" design. The design offers a spacious and bright showroom and service area.

"Among the many new features our management designed into this state-of-the-art facility is a wireless fluid

## CUSTOMER

Maplewood Audi,  
Maplewood, MN

## APPLICATION

Lubricating &  
Servicing Automobiles

## OBJECTIVE

Improve fixed  
operation efficiencies

## SOLUTION

Matrix™ Total Fluid  
Management System

## RESULTS

Technician efficiency  
has increased;  
dispensing oil and  
booking transactions  
is simple.

ceiling of the service area. These hose reel banks supply fluids and air to 19 service bays, allowing technicians easy access to oil, air and washer fluid. Each bank contains two Matrix metered dispense valves that accurately meter oil into the vehicle, which has been entered into the repair order by the technician.

To activate a dispense cycle a technician simply executes the request right from the shop floor PC at his work station using the Matrix software. He enters his PIN, the repair order number, and amount of oil he needs. He grabs the dispense valve and meters the precise amount of oil into the vehicle.

"Matrix has simplified the process our technicians use to dispense and



*The Matrix System allows the technician to order an oil dispense right from his work station. At the same time, the transfer is billed to the correct work order.*

parts desk or even, walk to the parts desk to let someone know that they've dispensed oil, its not an efficient use of his or her time. We've completely eliminated this inefficiency. Matrix is a tool that makes our technicians more productive."

After the dispense cycle is completed, the amount of oil ordered

***"Matrix is a tool that makes our technicians more productive."***

*Jeff LaMott*

is booked to the repair order on the dealership's DMS, supplied by ADP (Automatic Data Processing). Graco has a certified ADP interface for its Matrix system, fully supported by Graco and ADP.

Saving only five to ten minutes a day per technician would add up to

significant annual savings!

Another benefit the Matrix system provides is inventory control. "In the automotive service business, controlling inventory is essential to a service centers' profitability," he says. "Without control, shrinkage occurs!"

This hasn't been a problem at Maplewood Audi because at their old facility they were using a simpler Graco fluid management system that allowed them to track their oil inventory. But for many dealerships without an inventory control system, shrinkage is often a serious problem that directly impacts their bottom line!

LaMott explains that in the hectic day-to-day operations of a busy automotive service center, vehicles are constantly shuttled in and out of the bay areas. On busy days cars can be waiting their turn for service. In these instances, it's easy for a harried technician to be distracted and forget to enter an oil change or other work on a repair order. It's not uncommon for a busy service center without an inventory control system to lose 10 - 20% of its lubricants to shrinkage,

book oil transactions," says Eric Prosser, Parts Manager. "At our old facility the technician had to walk to the parts desk to request oil at his bay. The parts guy would dial in the amount of oil and the bay it was being sent to. Unfortunately, he could only fill one request at a time. Often we would have a technician waiting for his turn. It wasn't very efficient."

The Matrix system can handle an unlimited number of dispense requests simultaneously from different bays. There's absolutely no waiting!

"Wait' is a bad word in the service industry," says LaMott. "When a technician has to wait to get oil dispensed or wait for a part at the

annually.

"That just hasn't been acceptable here," says LaMott. "We want every quart of oil we dispense billed to the correct repair order."

When a technician initiates an oil dispense from the Matrix software on his PC, the amount of oil is automatically booked to the corresponding repair order.

The matrix software also keeps Prosser apprised of the oil levels in the tanks that contain the standard, synthetic and waste oil. "It's eliminated the hassle of regularly checking the oil levels in our tanks. I don't have to worry about that anymore."

Furthermore, a report of the oil level in the tanks is emailed to their oil distributor so the supplier knows when to deliver another shipment to the dealership. And while Maplewood Audi uses the waste oil to heat its facility during Minnesota's long and cold winters, it monitors the level in

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***"We're a very production driven shop ...taking advantage of new technology like Matrix has helped us become a more efficient dealership."***

*Jeff LaMott*

the waste oil tank just in case they need a recycler to siphon off the excess during the summer.

So, is LaMott satisfied with his service crew's efficiency? "Well, there's always room for improvement," he hedges. "There's always a new tool or procedure that could make us more efficient."

One feature of the Matrix system he is exploring is the system's ability to let the technicians bill other basic service items right from their stations too. "We could put cabinets between each work station that held basic



*Tank leveling monitors, CleanLine™ filters and Fireball™ pumps transfer oil from tanks to nine banks of Graco hose reels and dispense meters serving 19 bays.*

service parts — oil filters, air cleaners, etc. When a technician is performing an oil change the software would automatically book these basic parts with the oil dispense and he could pull them right out of the cabinet. It would cut down his trips to the parts desk and time waiting for these basic parts. He would be spending more time doing the service work he's good at and less time as a parts carrier. Again, it could make him more productive which would make us more profitable."

"The things we do at this



*Jeff LaMott, Maplewood Audi Service & Parts Director (left) and Eric Prosser, Parts Manager*

dealership we do well," concludes LaMott. "We're a very production driven shop and consistently achieve higher efficiencies and technician 'billable' hours than our industry's benchmarks. We balance our responsibility to our customers on one hand, with our commitment to maintain a healthy, profitable business on the other. Customer satisfaction is high and we're consistently a top performer within the Audi dealer organization. It's not always easy but it is exciting. Taking advantage of new technology like Matrix has helped us become a more efficient dealership." •



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