

Career Opportunities

Appreciating The Potential Of Automotive Careers

(NAPSA)—Government figures forecast that the automotive industry needs 35,000 people for new high-paying auto technician jobs and tens of thousands more for sales, finance and other jobs in auto dealerships in this decade alone. However, a new study released by Automotive Retailing Today (ART) shows that few students, parents and educators are aware of these jobs or job benefits.

Jim Willingham, chairman of ART, said, "Anyone interested in job security and making a very good income has a world of opportunity in the auto service and retailing industry. Today's vehicles are very sophisticated, computer-driven machines requiring technicians who can work with cutting-edge high-tech tools."

Today, there are more computers in a typical new car than there were in the first U.S. lunar landing module. In fact, the sophisticated diagnostic equipment used by today's auto technician demands high-tech training.

The comprehensive study, commissioned with Wirthlin Worldwide, was designed to measure awareness of and attitudes toward auto industry careers among students, parents and educators. The bad news is that few teens currently aspire to automotive careers; only two percent would choose a career in the automotive industry. The good news is that the disinterest results from a lack of information, and quickly reverses when they learn about the high demand and pay.

"Sixty-five percent said that they would be more likely to seek a career as an automotive technician when they heard that, as master technicians, they can make in a range of \$70,000 to \$100,000 a year doing something that can give them a great deal of job satisfaction," Willingham said.

The survey found that, on average, teens begin thinking about career plans at age 13, and that parents strongly steer those decisions. The study also found that teens consider choosing a career direction a three-year process—



When they know the facts, students often steer themselves toward automotive careers.

from first conversation to deciding on a career preference—culminating in the junior or senior year of high school.

Educators are more likely than parents to recognize the skills training required for careers in the automotive field. But most (78 percent of teachers and 52 percent of counselors) say they do not receive specific information about automotive careers to share with their students. This misses a real opportunity to inform students as 52 percent of teachers and 68 percent of counselors say they speak with their students about career options "quite often" at school.

The study demonstrates a need to do a better job in combatting outdated images of the industry and raising awareness among students, parents and educators about the incredible potential of these jobs. When people understand the nature of today's auto technician and retailing jobs, these careers become attractive. The survey also shows that the industry needs to create awareness earlier in the career decision-making process.

Automotive Retailing Today is a coalition that includes all major automobile manufacturers and dealer organizations. ART works to promote better understanding of the industry and to build stronger customer relationships.

For more information on ART, visit www.autoretailing.org.