Lessons to Be Learned

New England Institute of Technology Professor Teaching PWA University Training Lessons to Automotive Students

by William Groak

completed lessons and more than 1,600 lessons which have been assigned and are currently being worked on.

And many of them are coming from Martel’s knowledge-hungry students at NEIT. “The PWAU lessons are a fantastic learning tool and the students love them,” he said.

NEIT’s automotive campus is located in Warwick, RI (www.neit.edu), and offers a BS degree in Automotive Service Management and AS degrees in Advanced Automotive, Automotive, Advance Automotive with High Performance, Automotive with High Performance, Auto Body/Collision Repair and Marine. The automotive program is certified by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF).

Martel, who created the high-performance programs five years ago, said they educate students on developing horsepower and torque by means of bolt-on performance accessories, powertrain modifications, custom

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powertrain tuning and suspension tuning. "What's really cool is the students can make mods and measure horsepower improvements on New England Tech-owned vehicles or to their own vehicles on the school's new chassis dynamometer."

A lot of the aftermarket parts the school and students use come from down-the-road neighbor, PWA stalwart Ralph Accinno's Racer's Equipment Warehouse. "Ralph was the guy who introduced me to the PWA and PWAU," said Martel. "He's been a great asset to us."

Martel said he met Accinno through a local magazine rep they both advertise in. "He came over and we've had a great friendship and partnership ever since. His place is just a few miles down the road. He's made product donations, given us a library of product catalogs and offers students and the school discounts on parts. He also introduced me to reps from Comp Cams, Holley and others."

Accinno thought Martel might be interested in PWAU's lessons, and he was right. "We started using them in January, 2012," Martel said. "We slowly implemented them at first, but now they are a big part of the program. Now we give them out as homework assignments. They are great lessons for students to learn about certain product lines."

"I knew while Derek was explaining his program that PWAU was going to be a home run for NEIT," said Accinno. "The task was to get Derek to understand how the program worked and how he could make PWAU an integral part of his curriculum. That's when I had Scott King, our PWAU Administrator, get into all the details, especially the backend operations. Apparently he did a really good job, I'm impressed with Derek and the program, and make it a practice to bring reps and factory people for the tour of his classroom".

Added Towle, "I'm glad Derek is utilizing the lessons on PWAU and his students are responding. It makes so much sense and validates the information the lessons provide. I'd be surprised if other auto instructors don't follow suit because knowledge is power, especially when it comes to understanding performance aftermarket products."

Martel said that while the PWAU lessons are geared to help counter people, inside/outside salespeople and reps sell products, they are the ideal teacher's aids. "All lessons are product-oriented," he said. "They are not overly time-consuming – about 20 to 30 minutes each – so they are manageable for students to do. They are short and to the point. By completing them, they have a thorough knowledge of the part, its application, etc. This kind of information will help them in any auto-related field, whether it is in sales, manufacturing, design or installation and service."

The PWAU lessons offer Martel's students a variety of choices. "My students complete four to five lessons a week and choose the lessons they are interested in. They complement my lectures and the interest levels stay high. The lessons give them a great resource outside the class to keep learning."

The only compliant from Martel and his students is the desire for more lessons. "We're spoiled and want more," he said. "To be honest, I'm surprised some big, iconic brands like Holley don't have lessons up yet on PWAU. My performance students are interested in more lessons on superchargers, turbos, nitrous and computer-controlled electronics. That's where the industry is heading."

Martel believes the high-performance industry is back, and it will be a great source of employment in the future. "Daily drivers are now 300 horsepower and people want to modify their cars. We're going to need a lot of service technicians and installers. With the help of fantastic programs like PWAU, we can educate and build a much better workforce. Companies and retail stores are going to spend more time for training. It's all going to snowball."

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business and attending college in my early 20's... I had professors that called me evil because I was in business and making a profit... some help that was.

However, I did get help... my parents instilled in me a work ethic and a sense of morality that saw me through many tough times. Some of my friends and family encouraged me to "go for it." Many of my employees worked their tails off for me... For decades; I learned early on that living by the "Golden Rule" paid big dividends with employees, customers and suppliers. Yes, we did all receive help in some way along the line, but the difference is that WE EARNED THE HELP RECOGNIZED IT, UTILIZED IT AND THANKED THOSE WHO GAVE IT TO US.

I highly recommend reading the book "The Amateur" by Edward Klein, a book about "an inept, arrogant ideologue who maintains an absurdly high opinion of his own talents even as he blatantly fails to achieve his goals." (Quoted from the NY Times review.) Klein is no arch conservative... he worked for the New York Times for years. He interviewed over 200 acquaintances of Obama and found that many of his loyal friends of the past are highly critical of him and feel he has betrayed them... even the preacher Jeremiah Wright. Many express the opinion that he is incompetent, in over his head and downright dangerous. You will get a good idea of his lack of knowledge of the world of business and many other areas. Bill Clinton was 100% right when he named Obama "The Amateur."

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"PWAU is focused on product training," said Towle. "Everyone agrees that employees who are better trained will do a better job. Not just for their company, but for the consumer. Consumer confidence will grow and more will return to the places of business with a knowledgeable staff for their automotive needs. I commend Derek Martel and NEIT for realizing the educational potential from PWAU lessons. Why not educate everybody?"