

IN THE FAST LANE

How Acura of Thousand Oaks offers clients a better, faster service experience

Acura of Thousand Oaks in Thousand Oaks, Calif., has been offering clients precision crafted performing vehicles since 2008. Now, the store is also providing clients with Acura Accelerated Service (AAS), a high-performance, precision crafted service experience in 30 minutes or less, or under an hour with car wash and vacuum.

Clients appreciate the convenience of not having to make an appointment for a basic service and inspection, and the confidence of knowing their vehicle has OEM parts installed by factory-trained technicians. They're not just getting a quick oil change or service, but a clean bill of vehicle health and a human-centric, Acura-worthy experience that earns—and rewards—their loyalty.

"Acura Accelerated Service is more than a quick oil change," agrees Ed Pouster, senior manager, Acura Parts and Service. "It incorporates anything a vehicle needs, maintenance-wise, that can be replaced quickly and efficiently." AAS techs work in their own bay—always in teams of two—and handle only A, A1, B1, A12, B12, A16 and B16 services. Because they only offer the simplest, most-frequent services and keep parts out in the bay, they're able to move cars through five to six times faster.

Opening an AAS bay requires staffing adjustments, accounting changes, some minor renovations, and an acceptance that, as Pouster says, it "breaks almost every rule you've learned as a manager," such as using service appointments to control the flow of customers or always keeping parts in the parts department.

Kam Javid, vice president and general manager at Acura of Thousand Oaks, admits there was concern that moving basic services to a separate bay would mean less work for non-AAS, main-shop technicians. "But that didn't happen," he says. "In hindsight, AAS is probably one of the best things we've done. It makes a lot of sense financially." Setup takes about three months, and most dealers see a return on investment in eight months.

What kind of return? "Higher labor sales, higher parts sales, high retention," says Pouster. After converting a service bay to an AAS bay, most dealers see a 50 percent increase in cars that go through the bay within six months, and almost 70 percent of clients using AAS buy additional parts.

Chuck Kriger, service manager at Acura of Thousand

Oaks, says his department has been busier than ever. "We can take in service all the way up until five o'clock Monday through Friday," he explains. "We weren't able to do that with a lot of confidence before." The increased business and self-sufficient format have won over his technicians, too. "AAS is a shop inside the shop, so there's a feeling of ownership there," he adds.

And with clients more likely to wait at the dealership, many participating dealers even see more car sales. "I've had a dealer wag a finger in my face and say, 'You didn't tell me I'd sell a dozen cars a month out of the waiting room because the clients stay here,'" Pouster recalls.

With the renewed focus on Precision Crafted Performance, Acura is partnering with consultancy Service Operations Specialists and the Acura Tool and Equipment program to support dealers who join AAS. "It's imperative that dealerships represent the brand with a service department that meets the many differing expectations of what a luxury service department should be," explains Pouster. "AAS allows us to offer a luxury experience that clients expect." ⚙️

With AAS, you can give a high-performance service experience in

30 MINUTES

or less

or under

AN HOUR

with car wash and vacuum

A

A1

B1

A12

B12

A16

B16

Types of service AAS techs handle

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CHUCK KRIGER, SERVICE MANAGER

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