

Integrated Technician Workstations: A Driving Force in a Successful Automotive Service Department

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There was a time when automotive service departments were off limits to the eyes of customers. What happened in the service department stayed in the service department.

There was a good reason for this – in many cases, the service department was a disorganized mess not fit for public viewing. There were cluttered stationary workbenches located across from stacks of tool bins and shelves loaded down with miscellaneous tools, parts, manuals and supplies. And no two toolboxes were the same because they were all brought into work by their technician owners.

Fortunately, times are changing, and most service departments are entering an era of greater organization and enhanced aesthetic appeal. A central player in this modern era of automotive service is the custom-configured integrated workstation.

We at Lista have found that our service department customers are particularly inter-

ested in our combo automotive workbench and technician toolbox. This integrated, modular solution is usually custom configured by Lista to meet

the customer's unique application and aesthetic needs. To customize the workbench, the customer can choose from an array of work-surfaces, including a stainless steel surface.

Lista stationary riser shelves provide the

option of either open shelving or support for overhead cabinets with retractable, hinged or sliding doors. These overhead cabinets allow convenient access to binders, manuals and bulky items such as anti-freeze, brake fluids and

drainage buckets. A popular base option is the wet clean base, which allows easy cleaning, including mopping, beneath the workbench.

Lista's Mechanic's Toolboxes, which can be either stationary or with optional casters, are mini workstations

and high-density storage cabinets on wheels. They can be configured to fit snugly under the workbench, and can also be wheeled out directly to



the vehicle for maximum convenience.

These toolboxes are characterized by all the unique advantages for which Lista's drawer cabinet storage is renowned. The drawers feature a 440 lb. capacity, are available in seven different sidewall heights, and can fully extend from the housing, allowing for complete use of cubic space and easy access to the tools within. They feature Lista's patented PreventTip® one-drawer-at-a-time interlock safety system to prevent accidental tipping. They also come with a locking system for maximum security.



For the fastest retrieval and inventory of parts and tools, Lista's flexible drawer interiors can be individualized with an extensive array of

subdividing options, including dividing and partitioning accessories, plastic boxes, foam cut-out liners or mesh liners for organization and to prevent items from sliding during transport.

These custom configured drawer interiors maximize organization, greatly reduce the time spent looking for tools, and provide a safe, secure home for expensive tools and parts. They also virtually eliminate loss of tools that can result from haphazard storage.

The popularity of Lista's workbench/toolbox combos reflects a shift away from wall-based systems. And if you've ever tried to install a wall-mounted system, it's easy to see why this shift is taking place.

Installing a wall-mounted system requires hours of labor and plenty of expensive manpower. Lista's floor-based work-



stations are basically "plug 'n' play". Unload them from the truck, take them off the pallet, position them, and your set-up is complete. You're ready to get to work. And the benches can be easily moved or repositioned at any time, which isn't practical with wall-mounted units.

We are also seeing a greater demand for customized unique workbench solutions – a demand that is easily met by modular solutions, and a company like Lista that provides free design assistance. For example, we've worked with some dealerships that have wanted a lift pump built right into their work centers. We've met this special request by building hydraulic levers into the workbenches and designing special cabinets for housing the pump.

With customized workbench/toolbox combos at each technician's station, you not only see improved organization and high productivity – you also see happier employees. There is no longer a need for technicians to lug their toolboxes into work from home, and there's no jealousy because one technician has a better toolbox than the next. Happier technicians are also more apt to stay, reducing employee turnover.

These custom equipped service department workspaces also help to promote repeat customer business. Dealerships recognize that service departments are not only tremendous profit centers,

but a potential image booster and instiller of customer confidence. Service is sold as an important element of every new or used car sale. Where once messy, disorganized service departments were kept behind walls and out of customer view, today's service department is often displayed through large picture windows in an established



viewing area. The benches and toolboxes are painted in coordinated colors that fit with the dealership's overall design scheme. These sharp-looking workstations contribute to a complete image that is clean, professional and technologically advanced.

The aesthetic advantages of uniform, modern looking workbenches and storage equipment are not limited to just the service department. In fact, many parts departments are now clearly visible to the customer, making neatness and organization of this area essential.

At Boston Volvo Village of Boston, MA, Operations Manager and Parts Manager Bob Crete discussed some of the advantages of his parts department storage systems.

He said, "Our customers have a clear line of sight into our parts department, so keeping it clean and attractive is essential. It's important for our image and it's great for employee morale. Lista's high end storage systems are not only efficient, keeping work orders flowing, they make us appear more organized. We were able to select a custom blue color for the Storage Wall® systems that matched our current equipment and décor. It's a nice soft color, and Lista matched it at no extra charge."

John Marcinkevich, owner of Team Nissan in Manchester, NH, outfitted both his service department and parts department with Lista workbench combos and other storage solutions. He said, "I'm really happy with the company and its design services, as well as the products. My technicians really like the product. I outfitted my parts department and they're happy too, and so far it's all working great. In fact, my business took off a little more than I expected, so I went back to my original order and put in for more and had additional products installed as well."



Clearly the productivity-enhancing, image-boosting advantages of today's customized integrated workspace solutions are great for our customer's business – which means repeat business for innovative manufacturers like Lista.

Joe Alfieri is Regional Sales Manager for New England for Lista International Corp. He has over a decade of experience helping auto dealers improve productivity in their parts and service departments.

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