

## A guide to scan tool selling basics

It's important to keep up with changing scan tool functionality, and know where to go for answers to customer diagnostics questions.



**By Phil Sasso**  
**Contributing Editor**

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**Q.** I feel like I'm always losing scan tool sales because I don't have a background as a technician like some of my competitors do. Any suggestions?

**A.** Here's the core of salesmanship: Selling is part relationship and part product knowledge.

You may think I just said: "selling is half relationship and half product knowledge." I didn't. Relationship

weighs much heavier than knowledge in sales. We buy from people we like and trust. So, work on the relationship building part, first and foremost.

I called several top-selling scan tool distributors for their insights on this question. Some were former technicians. Some weren't. The consensus? You can sell a lot of scan tools without being an expert. Customers don't expect you to have all the answers, they just expect you to know where to get the answers.

Technology is always evolving. Even former techs find their product knowledge gets old if they don't keep up on it.

"There are so many [features] now that I wish were there when I was a tech," says Nick Toyama, a Matco distributor from central California, who's only been out of the bay and on a truck for about four years.

"I was a tech for about five or six years before I did this," says Matco distributor Kyle Vonder Haar from southern Seattle. "Then again, I never used an aftermarket scan tool — I was working at a Toyota dealer... It was definitely something I had to learn when I started at Matco, because I'd never really touched one before."

Rowie Jaron, a 13-year Matco distributor serving the San Carlos, Calif. area, was never a technician. But together with his regional Launch Tech rep, he held a diagnostics seminar offering free food, drink and training. He handed out about 350 flyers inviting customers to his event. A good number of shop owners and technicians attended, and Rowie ended up selling six units as a result of that one seminar.

**Q.** Technology is moving too fast.

How can I keep up with diagnostic technology and all the other new tools coming out, and still have time to run my business?

**A.** You can never stop learning as a tool and equipment distributor.

"Any time there's a training or demonstration, I always make sure I show up to it," says Matco's Toyama. "Any time there's something to learn, I always do it. That helps out a lot."

You can't know everything, so focus on what makes one scan tool different from the rest.

"I always try to pick up on a few key features... Generally I pick something really impressive," says Cornwell dealer Damien DaCosta, who never turned a wrench before he started selling tools. He also says he "leans" on his techs for answers when needed, turning to "people that are reliable and can tell me good information."

"The biggest thing is to spend the money and have a demo (unit) on the truck that's loaded, activated and ready to go. Then just put it in their hands," says Cornwell dealer JR Shipley of Fargo, N.D. "It's no different than selling tools. If you put it in their hands and let them mess with it, they'll take it."

The best non-technical sales technique I heard came from a former Master Tech: "I put them into like a demo program, essentially," says Toyama, who was a technician for nearly 10 years. "So far, every time I've let someone try it out for a week, or two weeks, they've never given it back to me."



A technician can place a device in the OBD II port of the customer's vehicle that remotely reads and clear codes, along with transmitting other data. For more information on the Launch GOLO, visit: [VehicleServicePros.com/11384626](http://VehicleServicePros.com/11384626)





## SALES Q & A

Consider including a demo scan tool on your truck, so customers can get the product in their hands to test it out. For more information on the OTC Encore, visit: [VehicleServicePros.com/11217896](http://VehicleServicePros.com/11217896)

platform, have created quite a buzz. With GOLO, a technician can place a device in the OBD II port of the customer's vehicle that remotely reads and clear codes, along with transmitting other data.

This feature is key for diagnosing intermittent issues. A customer can call in when he or she is experiencing an issue and the tech can get live readings to diagnose the problem.

"A lot of places have been really excited about it," says Toyama. "That's been one of the bigger selling features, too. It's a pretty cool feature."

### Updates

Okay, so updates may not really be a new trend. But today's scan tools are often more about software than hardware, and updating that software regularly is important.

"You should keep track in your system of the scanners you sell every year," says Matco's Jaron. Doing some mental math, he estimated annual updates on the scanners he has sold just in the last year alone could bring in a quick \$18,000 in sales and make for some happy customers.

There are a lot of excuses for not selling many scan tools: You're too old, you're not a technician, it's too much to learn, you can't afford a demo... Some of the tool dealers I talked to for this column sell a scanner or more a week. Bottom line: Put your mind to it and you can do that, too. ■

**Q.** Are there any trends in scan tools I should be promoting?

**A.** In my talks with top distributors, several features seemed to emerge as the growing trends:

### Bluetooth

"Bluetooth wireless capabilities is huge," says Matco's Vonder Haas. "I think Bluetooth has got a lot better on these new units. Just being wireless is a huge thing for people... You can have the car outside in the pouring rain, and if you want to stay dry, you can just walk into the shop."

### Android-based operating systems

"Everything's going toward Android-based," says Cornwell's Shipley. The speed of the new Android-based systems are much faster than Windows-based systems, he says. They're also more user-friendly and much easier to update.

### Remote diagnostics

Products with remote diagnostic capabilities, such as LaunchTech USA's GOLO Real-Time Remote Diagnostics

In case you missed it:  
Check out the 2014 Scan Tool Spec Guide for product details on a number of scan tools. Visit: [VehicleServicePros.com/11543855](http://VehicleServicePros.com/11543855)

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