



# Pay Attention to the Details!

Yep...sweat the small stuff

BY KURT A. KARLSON, PRESIDENT, IAG, ILLINOIS AUTO GROUP

Ask the engineers, the tax accountants, the computer programmers, the wedding planners, NASA, and neurosurgeons...it's not enough just to have part of the package. Attention to the smallest components of a business is essential in producing a quality result.

**T**he Better Business Bureau just released numbers that show automobile dealers get more complaints than any other type of business. Fair or not, consumers still feel it's "buyer beware" in the car selling business, yet the Bottom Line looms large and all important when directing the efforts of the organization. Somehow, the details are lost before we get to the bottom line.

Details are all of those small elements that collectively constitute the whole. Even before a consumer ventures on the lot, they view the aesthetics of the dealership, the appearance and demeanor of your sales staff, and the lot guy. During the process, they test drive a car, partake of the amenities, visit the restrooms, endure the sales process, and hopefully, buy a car. Every detail is registered in the consumer's

mind and affects a consumer's perception. The whole car buying process includes not only what they see and experience, but equally important, what they don't see. All the details that are in place, they are handled so seamlessly they are invisible to the buyer. Remember... consumers have big expectations. Make it easy for them to be satisfied. Client satisfaction is an important detail.

We can all relate to a bad experience at a dealership: dead batteries, dirty cars, waiting, more waiting, etc., but before you go out and hire a micromanager, let me share a short personal story that I continue to share with others because it adequately emphasizes the importance of sweating the small stuff.

As a car nut, I have visited a lot of dealerships and have bought more than my fair share of cars. So, at one point, I visited a dealership with my son who was interested in buying a car. We had spoken with the salesperson earlier about a specific vehicle and made an appointment to look at it and let my son take a test drive. We arrived at the specified time; the car had been prepped for the appointment and was ready to drive in perfectly immaculate condition, inside and out. We also found out that the salesperson had come in on his day off to handle the presentation. It all worked, he closed the deal. After the sale, the salesperson noticed a miniscule blemish on the car and had it taken care of immediately. Yes, they did their basic job. They sold us the car and received a decent profit, but what

were the true results? My son and I now have a lasting positive impression of the entire establishment over what amounts to a few details. I even wrote a letter to the dealership commending them on their excellent customer service.

No, they didn't need a micromanager to get the job done; they just recognized and attended to those little details that left me with a great impression. Don't get stuck in the "business as usual" rut. Familiarity can get comfortable and lead to complacency. It is easy to envision that larger problems will arise when even the smallest detail goes awry. Analyzing the hundreds of seemingly small insignificant details all working in tandem is vital to making the constant changes necessary to consistently produce superior results. Knowing the details allows you to quickly react to irregularities that are unavoidable and lowers the possibility of leaving anything other than a great impression.

***Be Better... Sweat the small stuff.*** ✂

Kurt A. Karlson grew up in a family business in Chicago and then bought and grew that business into a multi-million dollar enterprise. Kurt started Illinois Auto Group in 2006 to diversify his business holdings to include the car business that he loves. Kurt serves on the advisory board for Driven Brands, the franchisor of IAG brands, and the owner of Meineke Car Care Center and Maaco Collision and Auto Painting. For more information call, 1-877-644-4IAG or visit the web at [www.IIAutoGroup.com](http://www.IIAutoGroup.com).