

2015 TMC SuperTech Awards Luncheon Speech

Thank you, Mike. On behalf of WheelTime, I would like to thank TMC for allowing us to participate in this awesome event for the sixth year in a row! Celebrating our industry's best service technicians and rewarding their hard work is so important.

Last year, we celebrated the value of this SuperTech competition and recognized its revolutionary impact on tech training and professional tech development. Since that time, we've continued to look at best practices in tech training, and we've come up with an interesting conclusion: The revolution isn't over ... this current age of SMART, digital technologies and innovations is going to drive even more changes in how techs train and work in the future.

We are all adapting to life in this Smart Age. Think about it -- we have personal computers and tablets; we are converting to SMART TVs; we use SMART phones for waking up, for taking pictures, for sending messages, for navigating, for socializing, for playing games, for asking questions about the universe, and for speed-dialing friends and family. Let's face it, SMART technology enhances our lives every day.

And it is also going to impact the nature of business - including our business. Today, a street fair artist can run your VISA card right on the sidewalk with his phone. Maybe you got to the street fair with Uber. Uber wasn't possible before SMART technology. Uber is the five year old San Francisco tech company that enables people to set up rides electronically from their SMART phones. Not only can you find your ride quickly, via an app, but Uber drivers can easily navigate any city due to nav apps on their SMART phone. Gone are the days when it takes an experienced taxi driver with an encyclopedic knowledge of a city. Uber is redefining, if not replacing, the role of specialized taxi cab drivers.

The point is that technology is redefining how work gets done because it's suddenly putting vast amounts of information at our fingertips. Creative minds are figuring out new ways to use this new avalanche of readily available data to re-design industries. We can already see it -- *Technology is changing how our work will get done.*

The modern truck can easily have in excess of 20 separate ECMs. Engines are electronically integrated with transmissions. The engine/transmission combo speaks to other on-board computers with a precise, electronic language measured in thousandths (millionths? We'll ask George) of a second. Gone are the days when the experienced tech can listen, feel, smell and confidently diagnose the problem. Understanding what's going on is becoming a whole new game, requiring a whole new level of knowledge about diagnostic methods.

No question, you represent the best and brightest of the best and brightest in the industry. Just the process of getting here and competing has likely opened your eyes to a whole new level of learning and skills. But with the rate of change, can anyone ever learn it all? Not likely. But don't worry - the revolution in technology will be matched with a revolution in the way techs work, and the tools, techniques and resources you'll have at your fingertips to work with.

You've already proved you have what it takes to learn new ways just by being here. You're already using electronic diagnostic tools today, which increasingly draws upon your computer skills. But what's coming next?

All of you have no doubt hit the books, or online courses these days, to prepare for this event – and that's the first clue. The pace of change is setting a new bar for the types of men and women that will be the top techs of the future – like you, they will be learners – not afraid of truck technology changes, or the new tools required to service them. But they will also be using new methods for absorbing new information faster. There are people in this room that have already used advanced training techniques to improve their skills in the shop, and their chances here at SuperTech. On-line skill assessments can tell you where you are strong, or need help. Advanced on-line training with photos, videos, and other information resources can allow you to build expertise in specific areas, such as electrical componentry, at your own pace. You can effectively prep for valuable ASE certifications. Some of you have even prepared for today using advanced gaming that teaches a range of tech skills, with programs similar to the advanced teaching games developed by the Navy to reduce injuries on the decks of aircraft carriers. The job is getting more technical and challenging, but new and better technology is arriving to help you stay out in front.

But technology will not just help you in training. New, advanced diagnostic computers are on the way to help you do the work better, faster and right the first time. And don't worry that these "advanced systems" will be harder to use. Your SMART phone is an incredibly sophisticated computer. The fact is, today, advanced computers are generally *simpler to use*. There are diagnostic systems in use now that once plugged in will automatically cycle through every electronic system on the truck – regardless of the make – and point out anything that may indicate a problem. These same tools are starting to store an incredible amount of information on the problems they find – information on troubleshooting steps and repair processes that used to require going through a variety of separate hard copy or on-line sources. Soon it will be available instantaneously, wherever you are working, whether in the shop or by the side of the road.

It will never be all about the tools. It will always be about the skill of the technician, and what the tools can do in the hands of an expert. And it's not always about the latest tools. Combining the latest advances with solid ASE process, and with existing tried and true methods is exactly what the future tech professional will be best at. Proficient use of oscilloscopes and multimeters will always have their place, but in expert hands, we can combine those with the latest methods to create advanced diagnostics that have never existed before.

For the employers in the room, there will be an investment in creating and keeping top techs in top form. But the returns are tangible today, and will be even more so in the future as we continue to study the impact of tools and training. For those of you new here this year, seeing large, returning companies investing in large teams and wondering how they afford it, you can trust in three things:

- *They know training is an investment not an expense,*

- *They know there is a positive return on the investment.*
- *And, they know nothing accelerates the process of creating excellence like SuperTech*

The best in class players in any industry are typically the ones to drive innovation and redefine an industry. Thanks to all of you, who through your efforts to be the best, are going to redefine ours.

Good luck competitors!