

EMPLOYER PROFILE

John Tomiszer



Assistant Service Manager

Gus Brown Pontiac
Buick GMC Ltd.
Whitby, ON

the workflow, ensuring that all the technicians are working productively and that “customers get their vehicles on time, because it’s the customers who pay the bills.”

The most important skills

Having a technical background in the automotive field and effective time management skills are absolute necessities for what Tomiszer does. Beyond general diagnostic skills and abilities, however, it requires the ability to “help someone who is already well qualified, and who may have more training, to look outside the box of what they are already looking for” to find the right answers. Tomiszer himself has developed a great ability for research, and for looking elsewhere for information.

The ongoing training

For John, acquiring the knowledge to stay current comes in many forms. He regularly takes advantage of the training GM provides technicians through one of their facilities. He makes use of the technical assistance provided online and over the phone. He continuously learns on the shop floor and also by networking with contacts at other dealerships. “In some cases the products are so new that no one has had enough experience with that particular product to instruct

The best part of the job

John enjoys interaction with other people, whether it is “being involved with customers, or dealing with employees, trying to assist them as they try to diagnose the hard to fix problems.”

He also enjoys the problem solving challenge of “the problem that is hard to diagnose, the new product that no one else has had problems with so far, as well as conditions that may be intermittent, for which no diagnostic information has been published yet.” The diagnostic process is often a process of elimination, starting with research into how a part is designed to function, finding a description of how it is meant to work during the normal operation of the vehicle, how it contributes to the vehicle’s drivability, for instance. “Then, if the scanner shows certain properties that aren’t consistent with what the research has told you, you can start to look at why they aren’t the same, and pin it down to the specific area of concern.”

Customer education becomes part of John’s job when he makes sure that customers understand the differences between the two sides of maintenance

repair: the straight forward part replacement with an up front standard charge, and the more involved repairs that involve diagnostic troubleshooting. “When we get into diagnostics, of a malfunctioning air conditioning system, for instance, it may involve an intrusive test for which we have to take things apart to track wiring. When that happens, we make sure the customers know that there will be a charge for the diagnostics. Customers can rest assured that the work will be done by the technician most qualified for this work, so we can identify the problem as quickly as possible and don’t waste the customer’s time and money.”

His greatest work day challenges

With customer satisfaction top of mind, John’s biggest challenge is monitoring

“There is nothing better, than being able to say this is what I do for a living and this is what I have to show for it”

- John Tomiszer on the satisfaction he derives out of earning GM’s Grand Master Gold Award...for the 10th time.



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John Tomiszer, Assistant Service Manager

others on it. In a case like that, if we are having issues, we use our own traditional diagnostic skills and talk back and forth between other foremen and technicians.” says John.

His career path

“Starting my apprenticeship by working on a fleet of garbage trucks gave me a very good opportunity to get a bit of experience on all different aspects of trucks, such as hydraulics welding and mechanical.” John then went on to work on trailers and tractor trailers, followed by several years specializing in transmission repairs at a GM dealer, before becoming shop foreman at the Whitby dealership. “Anything mechanical intrigues me” says John, summarizing the fascination with all types of vehicles and mechanical things that has stayed constant during his years of repairing cars and trucks.

10 General Motors Grand Master Gold Awards in 14 competitions

“There is nothing better,” says John, “than being able to say this is what I do for a living and this is what I have to show for it”. That is how John explains the personal satisfaction he experiences each time he competes in the annual General

Motors Grand Masters competitions. “If you are proud of what you do, why not show how good you are?” he continues. “I enjoy being able to demonstrate what I am capable of in my profession, both to myself and to my customers.”

The annual Grand Master competitions begin with about 8,600 technicians from across Canada taking an online written test. A tie-breaker round determines the top 120 technicians in Canada who get to compete as a national group in the final skills competitions. Although John has competed 14 times, he still doesn’t know what to expect at any one competition. The rules change from year to year. Contestants are given a particular set of circumstances they have to work through without advance warning. “You are judged on how you ‘muddle through’, based on your proficiency, on how quickly and accurately you work, on your diagnostic skills, and how well you meet the manufacturer’s standards. They always use the latest cutting edge technology to try and stump us, things like transmission repairs, engine drivability, and electronic problems with newly designed engines.”

To be one of the top 26 to be recognized as Grand Masters, contestants have to demonstrate their proficiency at real world daily repairs, and understand the basics. “Some of the people have some of the hardest time with core skills, the grassroots of what makes everything work. You need to be able to start from that point in order to be able to expand and improve and get into the newest electronics.” John explains. Those newest electronics include the 300 Volt hybrid battery systems.



Although John believes that technology is leading us to a near future where hybrids predominate, he thinks that electric vehicles may even factor in our driving future. He is excited by the prospect of the “auto industry evolving for better, I don’t think there’s an industry that moves as quickly as the car industry does, always trying to stay on top of things. With the advent of electronics, there’s not limit what they can do. The old ways of fixing things with just a wrench and a screwdriver are long gone.”

Advice to students

“This is a great business to be in. I wouldn’t change my career path if I had to. It’s so enjoyable and you have so many options - anything from repairing, to designing, to engineering. If you know how they work, it makes other related occupations more viable, right down to selling cars. It’s a career choice to move forward with, because there will always be cars and transportation, and vehicles will continue to need fixing.”

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Canada

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