



“I WANT TO TEACH PEOPLE THAT THERE ARE STILL GREAT TECHNICIANS OUT THERE.”

Repair Life X ANNMARIE ARISTIGUE
CO-OWNER
ARIZONA AUTO & RADIATOR REPAIR

Photography credit: AnnMarie Aristigue wanted to be in an owner spotlight and wanted her staff to shine. She even had her husband take the photo.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREA D. CASTARON

ARIZONA AUTO & RADIATOR REPAIR

Location: Sierra Vista, AZ
Size: 10,000 square feet
Staff: 14
Average Monthly Foot Count: 225








AnnMarie Aristigue believes that the automotive industry is one into which many should venture. As the co-owner of Arizona Auto & Radiator Repair in Sierra Vista, AZ, Aristigue tackles the business side of the shop while co-owner and husband, Darryl, can be found on the shop floor working side-by-side training technicians.

Although the shop first opened its doors in 1997, Aristigue came into the business later.

"I pretty much came aboard in 2008," she says. "I did most of the bookkeeping and, as time went on, and the business started to grow, I saw that he was in need of assistance."

She moved into a service advisor role and then later transferred into a new job that puts full emphasis on today coaching and training staff members, as well as overseeing the financials. For Aristigue, the automotive industry is a place of opportunity where employees can grow once they've set on the right path.

"I want to change the perception of the industry," she says. "The 'mechanic' terminology is long gone—we are now transitioning into technicians who now need to become highly skilled and trained."

"I want to try to make [customers] understand why they pay for the services and why they pay for the diagnostics. Like to do a lot of educating."

For Aristigue, showing customers the professionalism that auto shops possess means putting a focus on training and education within the business. Today, Aristigue focuses on ways to create local career opportunities as well as create strong, successful leaders from within her staff.

As I walk through the door, I'm saying "good morning" to every single one of my staff members. I like to see how their positivity is for the day and make sure everyone is greeted. After I'm finished greeting, I look over the schedule for the day before checking in with my service advisors to see if they see anything challenging lined up for my job. For a coach, we're always looking to help our my team when they need guidance.

On Wednesday mornings, we have a morning staff meeting for around 15-20 minutes. We use AutoVitals at our business, so we cover how everyone on the team is doing with our crews, as well as who is producing what, and what needs to be adjusted and worked on. That has made our job as business owners much easier as we're able to address immediate changes from wherever we are.

We have had meetings for those years ago and generally try to keep the meetings as positive as possible. The meetings became a process we wanted to implement after we started attending events with automotive organizations; we learned to always sharing feedback with one another, and we heard that holding a team meeting once per week was beneficial. Outside of our weekly meeting, the technicians will get together with the shop foreman for a brief morning meeting. The meetings really taught us how to communicate.

I also work on mentoring for the business throughout the day, but we're looking to hire someone in the future to assist with such a position with and coach the team.

Throughout the day, I look for coaching opportunities with my staff. I always try to catch staff in the moment so I can walk them through how to make the process easier and more efficient the next time. When you address a situation head-on, then it's top of mind and they grasp it quicker. I've asked all of my staff members how they would like me to approach a situation, and I've found that if you let them know about a mistake later, it's not as effective.

We have a lot of young staff members at our shop—two of whom are right out of automotive school, and we also have my younger son, 19, and older, 23, working with us. I have a service advisor who has been with us for two years, and he went through an Elite training course and is doing a phenomenal job. We have a lot of fun and I think having our children in the business with younger kids is a great mistake. Our staff acts like a family; we're serious when we need to be, but we do have fun in the shop.

We're extremely lucky to have a team that wants to assist in educating our younger staff members. We have an employee that has been with us since the start of the business in 1997 and he's actually our oldest employee at the shop today. He works with the younger kids and helps train and educate them. It's been really beneficial because they look up to him and they're always willing to learn. Putting two generations together has been such a positive experience for our shop.

AS TOLD TO KILEY WELLENDORF

96 18 / 6/16 / 6/16

