If knowledge is power, then sharing it is a superpower

By Roy Bardowell, CDDC

If you are a technician with the skills to successfully troubleshoot a commercial door operator, you are an exceptional individual. In the world of commercial door operators, knowledge truly is powerful, and I applaud those who have spent countless hours developing their skills to rise to an expert level.

Being an expert on door operators gives you the freedom to decide where you want to work and the power to do well in our industry. However, with this superpower comes super responsibility. Experts must be willing to share their knowledge and train the younger, more novice technicians in order for companies and the industry as a whole to progress.

The "Top Gun"

I have visited over 300 door dealers in the United States and Canada. Throughout my more than 50 years in the industry, I have noticed one consistent trend: Service-oriented companies always have one expert technician with decades of experience with doors and door operators. This person is typically the oldest technician within the company and likes being considered the "Top Gun."

During my visits, I would always try and identify the resident "Top Gun" and ask, "Do you assist with training the younger techs?" To my dismay, many would respond with "no."

Pay it forward, reap the rewards

Many experts think that hoarding their knowledge gives them a leg-up. The reality is that sharing your knowledge gives you even more of an advantage.

For example, many company owners want to expand their service business. To accomplish this, they need several knowledgeable technicians on staff. That's where an expert can help.

When a "Top Gun" offers to train employees and share their knowledge, the company now has the potential to offer more services, grow sales, and build revenues. As a result, the expert becomes even more valuable to the company.

Shortcuts are not available

Technicians often ask how they can reach the expert level faster. There is no easy answer, but being passionate about door operators helps. Another key to success is being diligent about doing research.

Google information about the products you're working with and read everything you can on the subject. Utilize the valuable information offered on industry websites and attend as many training webinars as you can. It takes time to rise to the level of expert, but having a focused and dedicated commitment to expanding your knowledge will help expedite the process.

Learn from the best

Another way to gain knowledge is to ask the more experienced technicians to mentor you. Some may be reluctant to share their knowledge, but it can't hurt to ask. In my experience, there are a lot of technicians out there who would be happy to help the more novice technicians develop their skills.

Consider asking the owner if you can shadow and/or ride in the same truck as the "Top Gun" or other experienced technicians. Shadowing demonstrates your eagerness to learn and provides a way for the experts to easily share their knowledge and troubleshooting skills.

Sharing troubleshooting knowledge about door operators with fellow technicians is ultimately a win for the expert, the novice, the business owner, and the industry as a whole. What are you waiting for? Let's get training! ■

10 STEPS TO EXPAND YOUR DOOR OPERATOR KNOWLEDGE

1) Pick a relevant college major and stick with it. Changing your major may require additional coursework and prolong the completion of your degree.
2) Develop a passion for your major.
3) Visit websites and read as much as you can on relevant subjects.
4) Purchase an inexpensive multimeter; learn how to read and use it.
5) Seek out and attend webinars.
6) Ask to attend the IDAExpo so you can participate in the free training seminars the show offerss.
7) Befriend the "Top Gun" at your company. If you develop a bond, they may be more likely to help you develop your skills and knowledge.
8) Consider IDEA or Accrediation and Certification Institute certification.
9) Join the "Garage Door Techs" Facebook group. The group features many educational and helpful posts, photos, and comments.
10) Go all in! Focus on your learning journey. Take notes and keep a journal of your experiences and review it every week.