

A nationally recognized tool sales company has an advertisement that asks, "When did you first learn the value of a good mechanic?" The photo shows a young boy in a broken down red wagon, which was being pulled by a golden retriever. The dog is now sitting down and the boy is looking at the wheel that just fell off his wagon.

I can only guess that the boy may be several blocks away from his house and dinner is going to be served up soon. He may also be wondering how to get the wagon home and will he be on time for dinner?

In the ad that is just one picture and reminds me of a Norman Rockwell painting, everything will work out just fine for the boy and his dog. You can almost see the friendly neighbor coming out the front door of his little rambler style house with a bowl of fresh water for the dog and his toolbox. While the boy tells of his misfortune to the neighbor, the neighbor repairs the boy's wagon.

The ad suggests that at the moment of the crisis, a good mechanic comes along to the rescue. Many mechanics are put to the test when crises occur, most strive to never let a crisis happen at all.

Ideally a crisis will never have to occur before companies realize the value of good mechanics. Since good mechanics strive to never let a crisis occur you may never know all the little things they do.

Many of the jobs that mechanics perform are routine preventative maintenance in nature. They are servicing equipment with the goal that whoever uses this equipment will be safe above the ground. They try to make sure that the equipment will not experience any breakdowns. Because of this work ethic, you may not have many occasions to have to see what a mechanic actually does.

The Nature of the Work in our Industry

Mechanics typically work within well-ventilated shops throughout all seasons of the year. Depending on the region of the country, many of the shops are cooled by fans or heated by propane in the harsher seasons of the year.

Mechanics receive in equipment for service on a regular basis. Much of this equipment comes to them in varying stages of repair and cleanliness. The word "box job" may strike fear into the minds of lesser mechanics, but ours see it at as a challenge. A box job occurs when some people undertake a mechanics job without the skill. They take apart their own equipment and by the time they get it all apart, they realize that they do not know how to put it together again. They take all the parts and put it in a box and deliver it to the mechanic. Some mechanics view this as a jigsaw puzzle just waiting to be completed.

Many of the hoists come back to the mechanic covered in grease, oil, caulking, paint in all varieties including epoxy and even expanding foam. The mechanic has to remove whatever has adhered itself to the hoist before they can even test the hoist.

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After the cleaning comes the troubleshooting and repairing. Much of this work comes with a time limit that has already elapsed.

Minor scratches, burns, bumps and bruises occur from time to time. Major injuries are rare in well-kept shops. The cleanest mechanic's hands seem to be permanently stained by the greases that they handle on a regular basis. Despite and sometimes because of all of this, mechanics thrive and get the job done before any crisis.

Responsibilities of the Mechanic

Depending on the organizational structure of your company the mechanic may have more or less responsibilities than the word mechanic usually signifies. On top of service, preventative maintenance and repair, many mechanics are consulted for their opinions. Customers will frequently ask the mechanic which hoist they prefer, which hoist is easiest to repair and which is the least expensive to repair. Owners of their companies consult with mechanics for the same questions as their customers.

Many mechanics in smaller shops wear many hats. They no longer work at one location throughout the day. Mechanics respond to service calls as they occur throughout their city. Sometimes they perform on the spot repairs to minimize the inconvenience to the customer.

Some mechanics are called in to offer operator training to rental customers on site.

Some mechanics also rig and inspect equipment on job sites in their local areas.

Mechanics are called in from time to time to justify the charges with upset customers.

Depending on the shop's organization some mechanics drive tractor-trailer rigs which require a Class A license. These big trucks are delivering equipment that is not within their normal scope of work and yet they are well versed in how to explain safe operation of this equipment as well.

Today's suspended scaffold mechanic uses digital meters and other tools to assist them in their job. The tools they bring with them can cost thousands of dollars, which they pay for themselves. They are required to be excellent in their skill level, level headed, and knowledgeable about many aspects of suspended scaffolding. These mechanics are organized, able to communicate with many different types of people and committed to doing the best job possible. To top it all off they are a skilled, valuable and a necessity to doing our business well.

Many times these mechanics are the ones that show up late for dinner, while they make sure that others don't.

For questions or comments, contact Customer Service at 1-800-560-CLIMB (2546) or customerservice@safeworks.com.