

We have all known mechanics who have a gift for making things work, even if they have never worked on the item before. It doesn't matter whether they knew anything at all about what they were working on, because they could always figure it out. We could give them something that no one else could figure out and they would make it work. If they could not get the right part, they found a substitute.

There are a lot of really talented mechanics out there today. Mechanics have a very valuable skill and really good mechanics are hard to find. Poor mechanics are easier to find. Even if you never meet one of these mechanics, you will see the evidence of their work. You will see their poor wiring practices, parts worn beyond their useful life still being used, or maybe they just change out parts until they fix the problem and they don't keep records of any of it.

Good mechanics spend a lot of time learning, practicing and perfecting the skills that make them money. They invest in themselves with training programs. Many have taken vocational programs in high school. Some have taken college courses, some have learned on the job from more experienced mechanics and some have gone straight to the manufacturer for their training.

Although there are many types of programs out there to train mechanics, not many of these programs are specific to a particular product.

Mechanics need all the general skills that they can get. They also need specialized skills from the manufacturers that build specific products.

Mechanics that attend and successfully complete the Power Climber Service School training program receive the following benefits:

- Specialized skills for specific products
- The knowledge of how individual parts actually work as they relate to the whole hoist.
- Firm knowledge base of the hoists that they are working on.
- Product bulletins
- They are included in the product notification loop and are informed about current bulletins as they become available.
- With the knowledge that they receive at training, they are better able to understand the relationships between one part and another.
- They know when to retire parts, and how to make decisions about replace/repair.
- They meet and foster a relationship with the Power Climber Product Support personnel, which builds their comfort level when they need to get further support.

Troubleshooting

Mechanics that have been factory trained are better able to troubleshoot an individual hoist problem. Some problems may mimic one component or another when they are not operating properly.

For example an electric motor may sound as if it were bad, if the hoist is not working normally. The electric motor may sound bad to one mechanic and get replaced or rebuilt, only to find that this did not fix the problem.

Power Climber mechanics are trained to specifically isolate one component from another. They should be able to tell you within two minutes that your hoist does not have a bad motor, but that the brake circuit is not working. An untrained mechanic may inadvertently cost you and your company more money in the long run.

Training refines a mechanic's general skills and makes them product specific. This ultimately saves your company and your customers money in troubleshooting, repair time and parts replacements. Mechanics can make you money as well. The more efficient they are translates to more potential billable hours.

The Best Mechanics

An informal survey that I have done, shows that most of the mechanics in our industry have come from an auto mechanic background. They bring with them many general skills that are useful to our products. They have a pretty good feel for what they will be expected to do and come with excitement about learning something new.

New mechanics should not have a fear of heights, because at some point they may be asked to ride the equipment that they have serviced. A good mechanic for this industry will take this challenge as a source of pride. They will be willing to ride whatever they service to prove the excellent work that they have performed.

Experienced mechanics will be very good at troubleshooting. They understand the relationship of parts, and how the hoist will perform. When one part does not work well, they will know the symptoms and be able to isolate it quickly. On more difficult problems, they will look at the problem as a challenge and stick to it until it is resolved.

Good mechanics are very thorough and are able to communicate to the factory the problem they have encountered. They may have to bring another mechanic up to speed on what has already been done, in looking for a particular mystery problem.

The best mechanics will have an attitude that they can always learn. They will want to attend courses to better their skills and even initiate this process. Some will take courses on their own regardless of whether or not the company pays their expenses. The best mechanics will have at the core of their being the desire to be the best at what they do. This will be obvious in everything that they do. They will make personal commitments to always learn, they will invest in the tools of their trade, they will ask for help when they need it, they will try to work out problems on their own and they will always challenge themselves to be the best.

The Best Mechanics:

- Enjoy learning
- Will ride what they service
- Are good at troubleshooting
- Are very thorough
- Are willing to ask for help when necessary
- Pursue learning by taking the necessary courses
- Invest in themselves and their tools
- Follow up solid repair work with well-kept written records.

If you're a mechanic, ask yourself, "Are you one of the best?"

If you're a service manager, ask yourself, "Do you have the best mechanics working for you?"

Did You Know?

- Power Climber factory training courses are generally held in the fall and winter of every year when more people are able to attend.
- Some companies prefer to hire new mechanics with minimal experience. This helps prevent getting a mechanic with bad habits.
- According to the US Dept. of Labor website, auto mechanics in the 21st century should be taking math and science courses in high school. They should consider technical training outside of high school, including physics, math, and computer science. If an auto mechanic in the 21st century wants to advance to management or shop foreman, he should take some college business management courses.
<http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos181.htm>
- "On average, only 30% of a mechanics time on the job is actual wrench time..."- Ratcheting up wrench time (Joy LePree <http://www.impomag.com/1098rpt.htm>)

Tips and Tricks

- Save time by locating spare parts close to where you work. Going back and forth to a parts room eats up a lot of time.
- Save money on your parts by stocking commonly used parts. Overnight and Second day delivery charges can tremendously increase an individual parts' price.

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