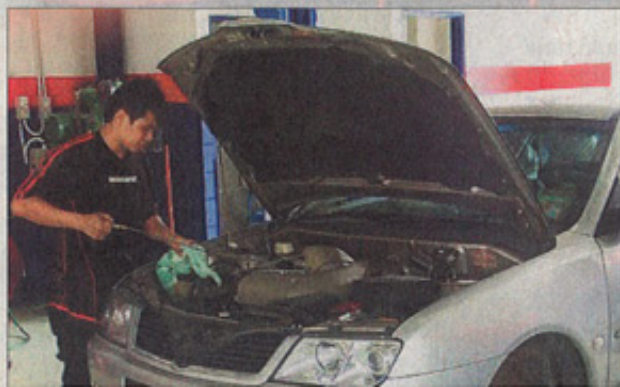




Autosaver — Promising Brand

Getting the thumbs up





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by douglas chew

AUTOSAVER has seen its business expand rapidly since it began in 2002 as a car service and repair workshop. From the beginning, its managing director, Mr Bobby Ong, understood the need to differentiate Autosaver from its competitors by creating a strong branding in the auto-maintenance industry.

Autosaver's brand strategy of "Thumbs up, peace of mind" has won them a loyal customer base that brings their cars back for regular servicing.

Mr Ong explains: "'Thumbs up' promises that we are committed to doing a good job every time according to the car owner's manual. This means we will do a thorough and meticulous job that is according to the standards set by the manufacturers so that the customer's car is kept in the best form possible."

Autosaver focuses on Japanese car models of Honda, Toyota and Nissan less than three years old, and has enjoyed a high rate of referrals through word of mouth. By strictly adhering to the service standards and procedures in the car owner's manual, it believes it is delivering a quality service.



Mr Ong adds: "Autosaver uses only 100 per cent genuine parts to replace any parts that need to be changed to ensure that the car will run like a new car every time.

"'Peace of mind' promises that whenever customers come to Autosaver, they will be treated fairly and with respect. To keep this promise to our customers, Autosaver offers service packages with a standard and transparent pricing scheme that customers can choose from. There are no hidden charges."

To add value, Autosaver launched a car care division in 2006 and has since developed in-house car care products, such as paint, battery and air-con savers. The company also offers service packages, including the installation of rear air-conditioning and automated door mirrors.

Mr Ong says: "To stay relevant to our customer's needs, Autosaver has to be ahead of our competitors by offering creative and fresh ideas in our service offerings. For the past eight years, Autosaver has progressively upgraded and updated our business values and this was well received by the public, overseas associates and franchisees. We feel that we are on the right track."

Autosaver plans to grow both locally and internationally. By 2013, they aim to have six franchise units in Singapore and double their domestic market share for car servicing, auto parts and car care.

With franchisees in Malaysia, Bangladesh and Tonga already, the company intends to extend their regional network to include Central Asia, the Pacific, China and the Middle East.

"We view international franchising as an important way to expand our business networks for better exposure and business revenue growth", says Mr Ong.

Growing so rapidly was not without its challenges.

He explains: "Our learning curve in brand management was steeper than other companies as we needed to put in place processes fairly quickly to manage our brand consistently, especially when it comes to overseas partners.

"As we cannot be stationed in these markets for prolonged periods, we have to be systematic in our approach in controlling the processes. For example, we developed the framework, objectives and materials for various marketing and branding initiatives on the ground in the respective markets. This gives us greater control and also achieves cost savings for the Autosaver network."

The company intends to embark on brand revitalisation and an intellectual property rights protection programme to strengthen the brand equity and strategically exploit intellectual property residing within their business.

On being named a Promising Brand, Mr Ong says: "Being one of the first in the automotive aftermarket to vie for the award, we hope to also be a beacon for others in the industry to work to-