

FEBRUARY 2026

# MOBILE *magazine*

Plus  
2026 **NADASHOW**  
RECOMMENDATIONS

## MOBILE SUSTAINABILITY:

“Ok, you’ve launched...  
what’s your “chapter two?”

**Mark Mickens**

Director Retail Strategy, ES3

**EXCLUSIVE  
INTERVIEW!**

## HOWDY PARTNER!

Award-winning Automotive Consultancy teams up with  
NEXT>LEVEL to deliver best-in-class, FULL-STACK Mobile  
Service program support to OEMs and Dealer Groups.

**NEXT >  
LEVEL**

*And*



**ES3**



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## SUSTAINABILITY: WHAT'S YOUR CHAPTER TWO?

WOW. Has it already been 6 years since the dawn of modern Dealer Service?.... Uh, yes it has. So, what have we learned as an industry...well, we're getting pretty good at LAUNCHING Mobile Service. Now, growing and SUSTAINING Mobile Service success? Um, not so much. So, we are dedicating some space to explore this unfortunate phenomenon.

From our field experience, we have identified 3 major factors adversely affecting long-term Mobile Success.

1. Dealer's reluctance to make an ongoing investment in Mobile Service as a separate business.
2. Failure to evolve and implement a robust, effective, affordable sustainment training solution in OEM Mobile Service programs.
3. A lack of experienced Mobile Service Consultancies and Trainers SEASONED with real-world DEALER Mobile Service experience who have the chops to lead Dealers from chapter one basics to chapter 2 and beyond advanced strategies.

THIS is why we celebrate the ES3/NEXT>LEVEL partnership in our Feb issue. Our collective Dealer Fixed Ops experience and Dealer Mobile Service experience is absolutely unmatched in the space. Together, we bring a best-in-class full-stack Mobile support solution consisting of Coaching, Software and Upfitting. We are loaded for bear and ready to lead the very BEST OEM or Dealer Group Mobile Service program to unprecedented Dealer success levels.

If you are struggling to figure out this puzzle, we can help. With over 500 Mobile Service Dealer training events under our belts, we are well equipped to get you jump started or take you NEXT>LEVEL.

Let's go get 'em.

Cheers, js



*John Schmidt*

FOUNDER, MOBILE NEXT>LEVEL

john@mobilenextlevel.com

727 . 239 . 8920

## OUR DEALERS >

7 of the TOP 20 Volume Mobile Service Dealers in the U.S. chose GEO>TECH by NEXT>LEVEL as their Mobile Service Appointment Scheduler. **This collective group of Dealers averages over 1,000 Remote Service Repair orders per Dealer, per month.**



"THE ONLY THING  
THAT IS CONSTANT  
IS CHANGE."

*-Heraclitus*

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SOME THINK  
**OUTSIDE**  
OF THE BOX



SOME  
**SMASH**  
THE BOX



WE NEVER  
HAD A BOX

**THAT'S NEXT>LEVEL**

## NEXT>LEVEL BY THE NUMBERS

**1**

AND ONLY Automotive Consulting Agency dedicated *exclusively* to Remote Services

**1**

AND ONLY Consultant “behind the curtain” as a Dealer Performance Coach, Workshop Facilitator, and Program Content Provider to the two largest OEM Mobile Service Programs in America

**7**

OEM Brands served by NEXT>LEVEL as Mobile Service Subject Matter Expert

**500+**

Number of Mobile Service Dealer Training Events and Workshops delivered since 2020



# HOWDY PARTNER!



## THE MOBILE MASTERS

Mobile NEXT>LEVEL has teamed up with ES3, Inc., an award winning Automotive Consultancy and leader in OEM Dealer training programs, to provide best-in-class Mobile Service program full-stack support. This includes full OEM program management, on-site and virtual Dealer training, Mobile Service scheduling platform, and Mobile unit upfitting.

### Q + A *with* ES3'S MARK MICKENS



**Q: Mark, you're known as a very passionate, fiery guy. What drives you to push so hard?** I just have always had a passion for what I do. The automobile industry has been very good to my family and me. I have had three great mentors in my career and, at this point in my life, I would like to be that for as many people as I can. That's what drives me now.

**Q: Tell us about ES3 and what makes the Consultancy so unique?** A couple of key things that all successful businesses have - culture, a current buzzword in every industry, is actually practiced. We have such a talented group of people at every level who collaborate and support one another like I have never been a part of before - no egos, just getting the job done every day. We also look for and truly hire the best people in the industry. It's a true effort to have the best people at the top of their game. Lastly, whoever we are supporting, it all comes down to Dealers and their employees gaining knowledge to be more successful. We really care about the success of our Dealers every day.

This partnership unites proven industry leaders, giving us the strength, agility, and insight to dominate a competitive landscape and capitalize on emerging market opportunities.

# HOWDY PARTNER!

NEXT > LEVEL  
*and*  
 **ES3**



**Q: What are the factors that drove your decision to select NEXT>LEVEL as a strategic partner for Mobile Service support?** The fact that we have the same experiences in the space and can partner on solutions that really help the Dealers have a no hassle, no worry start-up and sustainment. Being like minded in our approach was the driving factor.

**Q: What does our partnership bring to the Mobile Service table that distinguishes us from the pack?** It brings a full stack solution to Mobile Service that few others can offer. As you know, the difference between our team and others is the practical, everyday experience we bring to the space. Our team has lived it as we have all operated Mobile Service businesses and have learned through doing (and sometimes failing) so we bring that unique expertise. All in all, the Dealers can rest assured we will guide them from the inception of their Mobile Service business and see them through the expansion and growth phases as well.

**Q: You speak a lot about advanced Mobile Service concepts, best practices, and tools. In short, what can we bring to elevate Dealer Mobile Service support?** We want to bring what works for the individual Dealer by providing the solution that best suits the operation. We bring a solid business planning process that will tell the story for each Dealer to be successful based on their operation instead of just using a cookie-cutter guide.



**MOBILE SERVICE**

**MARK MICKENS**  
MOBILE SERVICE

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# 2026 NADASHOW

## LAS VEGAS

EDUCATION & EVENTS • TUESDAY-FRIDAY • FEB. 3-6  
EXPO • WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY • FEB. 4-6

MOBILE  
*magazine*

## 2026 RECOMMENDATIONS



### Mobile Auto Repair: The New Gold Standard

#### Meet the Panel

Today's Host

Panelists



**BRIAN SCHEFF**  
VP of Retail Strategy, ESS



**BOB SULLIVAN**  
Service Director, Ziegler Automotive Group



**RYAN SOKOLOFF**  
Partner, Sunquhanna Ford & CDJR




**MEGAN SINCLAIR ROSSO**  
Dealer Principal, Dave Sinclair Lincoln



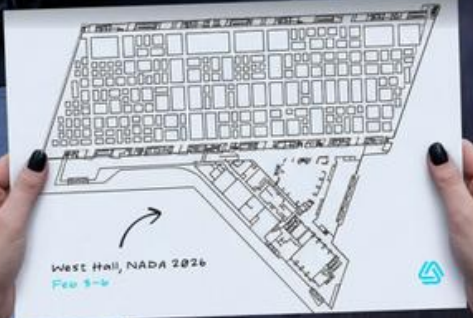
**MARK MICKENS**  
Director of Retail Strategy, ESS

### Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup> 2:30pm W311



### → Booth 2415W

AR,  
Live Podcasting,  
a Full F1 Experience.





### Fuel Fixed Operations Success with Human-Centered AI



**David Cerqueira**  
Service Director at  
Benzel-Busch Motor Car



**Kim Saylor**  
Sr. Director of Product  
Marketing, Fixed Ops at CDK  
Global



### Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup> 3:15pm 8233N

#NADASHOW

# 2026 NADASHOW

LAS VEGAS • TUESDAY-FRIDAY • FEB 3-6



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### BOOTH 6018N







*Mobile Mag Meet Up!*  
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5

# MOBILE SUSTAINABILITY

by John Schmidt

## WHEN THE HONEYMOON ENDS: THE REAL CHALLENGE OF GROWING AND SUSTAINING A SUCCESSFUL MOBILE SERVICE BUSINESS

By February 2026, Mobile Service is no longer a novelty. The launch banners are gone, the vans show wear, and the early excitement has faded. This is the moment when Mobile Service either matures into a profitable business...or quietly stalls.

Launching a Mobile Service program is relatively easy. Sustaining and growing it is where most Dealers struggle. Programs stall or quietly fail not because the concept is flawed, but because the commitment fades once the launch phase ends. **When Mobile Service becomes "business as usual", the real question emerges: How do Dealers continue to grow?**

*The honeymoon  
will always  
end. The  
winners are the  
Dealers who  
plan for what  
comes next.*

## DEALER MINDSET AND COMMITMENT: THE SILENT KILLER

One of the most common, and damaging, mistakes Dealers make is believing that the investment ends with the purchase of the Mobile Service van. A six-figure, fully upfitted Mobile unit feels like a finish line. In reality, it's only the starting block.

Too often, Dealers expect Mobile Service to immediately perform like the main shop without providing equivalent staffing, infrastructure, or marketing support. Mobile Service is treated as an extension of the shop instead of a separate business with its own operating model and growth strategy. Mobile Service is treated as an extension of the shop instead of what it truly is: **a separate business with its own operating model, resource needs, and growth strategy.**

*Mobile Service is not the "Field of Dreams." You can build a \$150,000 Mobile van and customers still won't come. Not unless the business is properly promoted, staffed, scheduled, and protected.*



# MOBILE SUSTAINABILITY

CONT'D

Another critical misstep is resource cannibalization. When main shop technician shortages arise, as they inevitably do, Mobile technicians are pulled back inside. The van gets parked. Appointments are canceled. Momentum is lost. Customers lose confidence. And, once Mobile Service becomes optional rather than sacred, the program begins to unravel.

## OEM MOBILE SERVICE PROGRAM SUPPORT: A GOOD START, BUT WE MUST EVOLVE!

The modern era of Dealer Mobile Service is still young and some OEM programs were launched without a long-term sustainment playbook. While launch support is generally solid with checklists, readiness calls, and two-day onsite training, the problem is what happens next.

**Dealerships operate in a constant state of controlled chaos.** Even excellent launch training fades quickly without reinforcement. Lessons must be revisited, refined, and reinforced over time. That's where most OEM programs fall short.

**REVIVE H<sub>2</sub>**  
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# MOBILE SUSTAINABILITY

CONT'D

## THE SUSTAINMENT TRAINING DILEMMA: WHERE SUCCESS IS WON OR LOST

After seven years, the industry still lacks an effective, affordable post-launch coaching model. Field experience has made several truths abundantly clear: **Frequency matters more than duration.** Monthly coaching beats quarterly or “as needed” support every time. Virtual sessions via Teams or Zoom dramatically reduce cost while increasing consistency, especially when Dealers from non-competing markets learn together. An annual in-person summit can reinforce momentum and best practices.

**Structure also matters:** informal check-in calls do not drive change. Effective sustainment requires forecasts, action plans with ownership, monthly KPI reviews, and continuous accountability.

## THE MISSING LINK: CERTIFICATION AND MEASURABILITY

Dealership turnover is a fact of life. Programs that rely on tribal knowledge and informal training are doomed to regress.

That’s why a formal **eLearning certification program** is essential.



**We have identified 20 core competency areas critical to Mobile Service success.** Staff must study each area and prove understanding through post-tests.

Certification creates measurability, accountability, and visibility for Dealer leadership, something informal coaching can never provide. **When staff changes occur, the program doesn’t reset. New hires simply enter the certification pipeline.**



## THE EXPERTISE GAP: NOT ALL CONSULTANTS ARE CREATED EQUAL

Finally, and critically, who delivers the training matters. Aftermarket Mobile Service experience does not translate to Dealer Mobile Service. Nor does dealership experience alone replace hands-on Mobile operations. Sustained success requires partners who have lived both. This is the difference between teaching elementary concepts and guiding advanced curriculum. **Without real-world scars, consultants simply can’t coach Dealers through Chapter Two.**

# MOBILE SUSTAINABILITY

CONT'D

## THE PATH FORWARD

To sustain and grow Mobile Service, Dealers and OEMs must rethink their approach:

- Build a **high-frequency virtual sustainment coaching model**
- Leverage **group learning** to reduce cost and increase engagement
- Implement a **structured certification program** for accountability and continuity
- Choose training partners with real Dealership and Mobile Service experience

Because Mobile Service success isn't built in the launch. It's earned in the grind that follows.

If you recently launched a Mobile program and are realizing this reality, PLEASE get in touch - we are here to help! [john@mobilenextlevel.com](mailto:john@mobilenextlevel.com)

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# FORECASTING & ACTION PLANNING 101

## MOBILE



Perform a **baseline breakeven and profitability study** using a Mobile Service ROI calculator.



Set sales and volume goals for the initial **6-month dynamic growth** crawl-walk-run with milestone KPIs at 30, 60, 90, 120, 150, 180 days.



Create a **business plan** with specific goals and action items to support **attainment of those goals**.



Create a **checklist** of all action items, including **recurring activities**. Prioritize the high-impact items.



Work on the checklist **DAILY**



At a minimum, Mobile Team and Leadership must conduct a **monthly meeting** to check progress on action item completion and a month-end performance-to-forecast **review**. Best practice is to conduct a brief weekly meeting and a more in-depth discussion once **per month**.



Be prepared to **adjust the service menu offerings**, scheduling and dispatch strategy, marketing and awareness strategy, and target clients, especially during **the dynamic first 90 days**.



**Quarterly review meeting** to look back on quarterly performance. Revisit successes, lessons, and existing roadblocks. Review forecast and adjust for next quarter as needed.

## RINSE and REPEAT!





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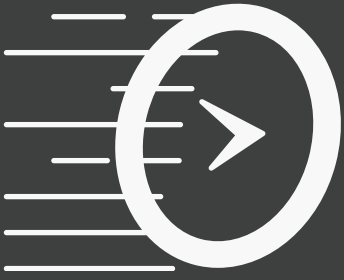
I WAS INSPIRED TO CREATE A SERIES OF LIGHT-HEARTED CARTOONS TO CAPTURE SOME OF THE EYEBROW RAISING MOMENTS I HAVE ENCOUNTERED OVER MY PAST 5 YEARS TRAINING MOBILE SERVICE DEALERS, AND PROVIDING SCHEDULING SOFTWARE AND UPFITTING TO THEM. I HOPE YOU ENJOY THEM AND GET A CHUCKLE!

-John Schmidt

# C'Mon Man!



MORE FUNNIES TO COME!



# RAPID > FIT

by NEXT > LEVEL

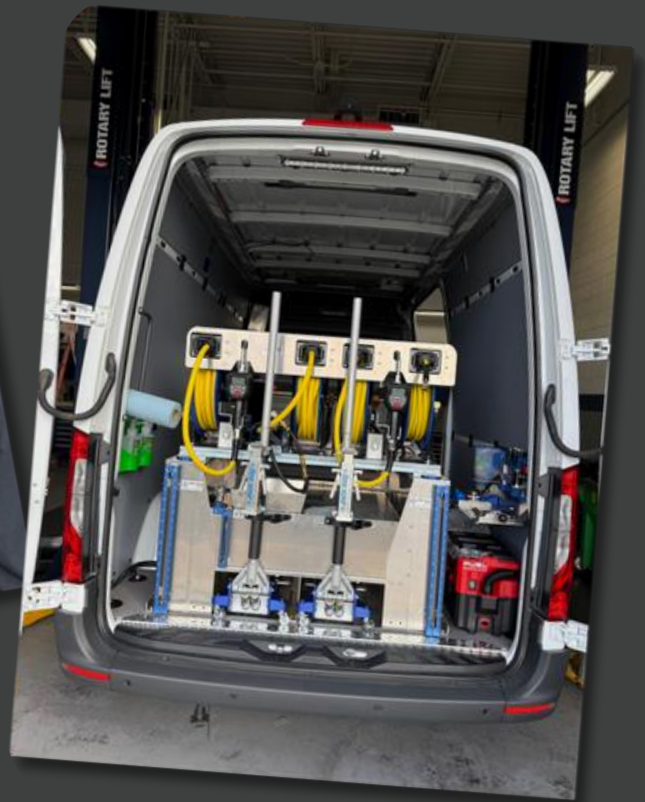
WE SMASHED THE OLD  
SCHOOL UPFITTER MODEL AND  
CHANGED THE GAME.



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AND SEE HOW WE DID IT.



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# DUMBEST IDEAS EVERRRR

## FANTASY FOOTBALL & FANDUEL 2009



### INITIAL PUBLIC RESPONSE

WOW what an accomplishment! A slew of savvy business people hired "BIG-LOBBY" to re-classify Fantasy Football betting as a "skill-based contest" effectively bypassing illegal gambling laws. Now, we have micro bets for those with Pathological Gambling Disorder, who can't afford to lose big amounts of cash on a single bet.

These fun-size wagers are great for kids too...they simply borrow their parents credentials and they're off to the races! Now, we can all bet on how many times we will see Taylor Swift in the box at a Chiefs game! WOOHOO!

Gone is the ridiculous notion you should cheer for your home team? Thinkin' I'll give up watching sports and binge on Gilligan's Island.

### SINCE THEN

The overall fantasy sports sector in the U.S. is valued around \$11 billion annually and attracting over 29 million players, driven by massive fan engagement and growth into a significant cultural phenomenon. BOOO! HISS!

## MOBILE SERVICE



### INITIAL PUBLIC RESPONSE

"Dumbest idea ever. I can't make any money in my shop on oil changes and recalls as it is. Why would I spend \$150K on a van to change oil in my customer's driveway? There is NO way this can make money, none of my customers are asking for it, and what about oil spills?"

### SINCE THEN

Dealers are realizing a substantial increase in parts and labor sales, capacity, throughput, CSI, commercial fleet business, recall penetration and maintenance retention. Additionally, they have slashed loaner expenses and shop carryovers. For the most advanced Dealers, Mobile Service repair orders account for as much as 30% of their total RO count. The sky is the limit!

**YOUR NEXT DUMB IDEA IS AT  
WWW.MOBILENEXTLEVEL.COM**

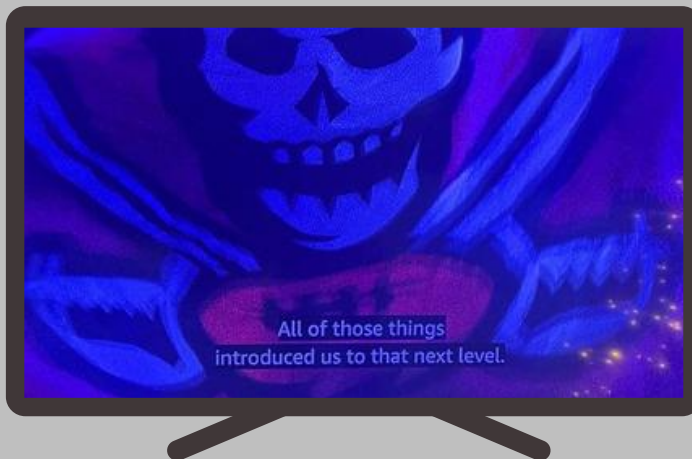
**"Every brilliant idea was once a dumb idea." - js**



## ANOTHER SHOUT OUT!

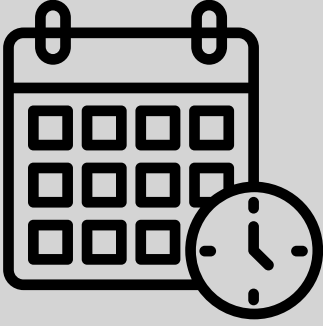


**Tampa Bay Buccaneers**



# ADVANCED MOBILE SERVICE PROGRAM STRATEGIES

## FULL-STACK MOBILE SERVICE SOLUTIONS



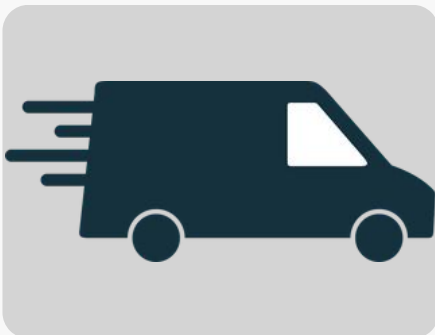
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We coach and train Mobile Service Coordinators, Technicians, and Leadership on how to launch and sustain a Mobile Service program. We share best practices established by the most successful Dealers and offer continuing post-launch support.



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