

JANUARY 2026

# MOBILE

## magazine

President - Global Ford Customer Service Division, Retired



## CATCHING UP WITH FREDERIEK TONEY

A Founding Father of  Mobile Service

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Dedicated EXCLUSIVELY to the  
Advancement of  
**Mobile Service and Pick-Up & Delivery**



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## MOBILE SERVICE: What's YOUR End Game?



*John Schmidt*

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Since 2020, I have launched hundreds of new Mobile Service Dealers, re-launched quite a few due to personnel changes, and delivered tons of sustainment training. Often times, I am struck by the Dealer's hesitance to commit to a growth trajectory forecast and supporting action plan. This is astounding to me and quite ironic given the fact that every Dealership department manager is held accountable to provide a growth forecast and supporting action plan as their number one responsibility.

Why is this? Do they feel that Mobile Service is a passing fad? Have they just checked the box to appease their OEM? Perhaps they fear failure and don't want to stick their necks out? Whatever the "reason", we all need to toss aside that losing mindset for 2026.

In this issue, I included self-assessments for Mobile Service Dealers and Non-Mobile Dealers considering Mobile. This is the starting point... an honest analysis of your current performance and needs. Next month, I will outline some very effective forecasting and action plan basics. My hope is that Dealers will look back on 2026 and say "that's the year we turned the corner to Mobile profitability".

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

## 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.**



"Begin with the end in mind."

*-Dr. Stephen Covey*

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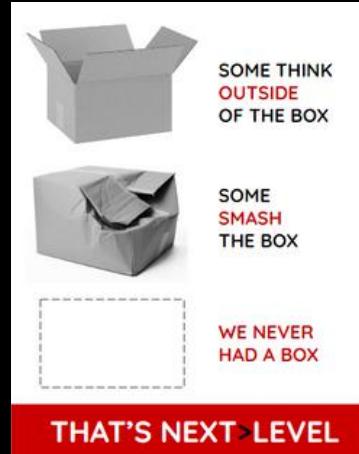
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## NEXT>LEVEL BY THE NUMBERS

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

# CATCHING UP *with* FREDERIEK TONEY



**Editors Note:** In the industry, the name Frederiek Toney is synonymous with Mobile Service. Toney is a trailblazing pioneer and the Founding Father of Ford Mobile Service - the largest, most successful OEM Mobile Service program in the world. I recently had the unique opportunity to capture his reflections on the journey from the initial inception of Ford Mobile Service through six full years of growth. It was a true honor to learn insights from the original architect of Mobile Service!

*John Schmidt*

## PAST + PRESENT: FREDERIEK TONEY BIO

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 2023 - Present | CEO, <b><i>Toney Consulting, LLC</i></b>   |
| 2009 - 2022    | President, Global Ford Customer Service, <b><i>Ford Motor Company</i></b>                |
| 2005 - 2009    | Executive Director, Material Planning & Logistics, <b><i>Ford Motor Company</i></b>      |
| 2003 - 2005    | Director, Global Parts Supply & Logistics, <b><i>Ford Motor Company</i></b>              |
| 2003           | Director, North American Material Planning & Logistics, <b><i>Ford Motor Company</i></b> |
| 2000 - 2003    | Director, North American Parts Supply & Logistics, <b><i>Ford Motor Company</i></b>      |
| 1999 - 2000    | Assistant Vice President, Parts Division, <b><i>American Honda Motor Company</i></b>     |

### BOARD MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

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Development Centers of Detroit  
FR1ENDS of the CH1LDREN Detroit  
Percepta, LLC  
National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering  
UAH Business School External Advisory Council  
Living Faith Church  
Mobile Next Level Executive Advisory Board

**RECIPIENT OF NUMEROUS AWARDS & HONORS**

# CATCHING UP *with* FREDERIEK TONEY

CONT'D

## Q: WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL VISION FOR FORD MOBILE SERVICE AND, SPECIFICALLY, WHAT WERE THE KEY OBJECTIVES?

A: The original vision for Ford Mobile Service was essentially what we're now on track to deliver - bringing convenient, high-quality service directly to both commercial and retail customers. We wanted to create a better, more seamless experience that would build stronger customer satisfaction and loyalty.

For our commercial and retail clients, the objectives included reducing downtime and improving overall operational efficiency. Internally, we saw Mobile Service as a way to accelerate recall completion, free up dealer shop capacity, and shorten service times - all of which support stronger Fixed Ops performance.

## Q: SIX YEARS IN, HOW DO YOU FEEL THE DIRECTION OF TODAY'S FORD MOBILE SERVICE PROGRAM COMPARES AND CONTRASTS TO THE ORIGINAL VISION?

A: Six years in, many of the original goals are clearly taking shape. Customers love the convenience of Mobile Service and commercial clients are increasingly willing to adjust their operations to make vehicle availability easier.

Of course, the real world rarely mirrors the theoretical model. Matching available services with vehicles that are ready and accessible almost never lines up perfectly and it requires ongoing collaboration between providers and customers. We've also learned that large-scale programs really benefit from strong local management that uses data to design profitable routes and routines.

We're also seeing more innovation than originally planned - everything from tire replacement to emissions-related services. On the other hand, some of the tools we expected to be farther along, like routing software, still have room to grow. Overall, I'd give the program a solid B-, with some areas performing at an A level and others still developing.

## Q: WOULD YOU SAY THAT FMS CREATED THE MARKET DISRUPTION THAT WAS INTENDED?

A: I'd say Mobile Service is absolutely moving in the right direction, but we haven't fully reached the level of disruption we originally envisioned. The challenges around designing efficient, profitable routes and the amount of coordination required have slowed the pace a bit.

"Disruption" might still be a stretch today, but the impact is meaningful and the potential to evolve into something truly disruptive is very real. It's simply going to take more time to mature.

## Q: LOOKING BACK, WHAT WAS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT STRATEGIC CONTRIBUTION AT FORD AND WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

# CATCHING UP *with* FREDERIEK TONEY

CONT'D

A: One of my most significant contributions was helping build a stronger consumer- and Dealer-centric culture. Programs like Quick Lane and Mobile Service reflect that shift. On the operational side, we put in place a modern distribution network that enabled consistent, sustainable service delivery and raised the standard for Dealer support. That foundation continues to create long-term benefit.

The biggest missed opportunity, in my view, was not being able to get ahead of the technician shortage. We invested heavily in grassroots programs, but the gap kept widening. Even now, I believe OEMs and Dealers need to create true in-house apprenticeship pipelines. That's the fastest and most realistic way to develop technicians at scale.

This challenge is solvable, but it requires collaboration across the industry. The positive news is that we're finally seeing competitors work together and deepen partnerships with vocational schools, but Dealer-driven apprenticeship programs remain the key.

## Q: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF STARTING OUT IN THE INDUSTRY?

A: I'd tell my younger self to stay curious and pay close attention to emerging customer needs. Technology evolves constantly, and embracing it early rather than reacting to it makes all the difference.

I'd also challenge myself to be an even stronger advocate for the After-Sales business. Designing and selling vehicles tends to get the spotlight, but After-Sales is where customer relationships are built and sustained. I would have pushed even harder to elevate the perception of that part of the business and highlight its essential role in the industry.

## Q: BEYOND FINANCIAL METRICS, HOW DO YOU MEASURE THE SUCCESS OR LEGACY OF YOUR CAREER?

A: For me, success goes far beyond financial metrics. It's reflected in the positive and lasting impact I've had on people. The most rewarding part of my career has been seeing individuals grow and succeed because of something I helped them with, whether guidance, opportunity, or support.

That's the legacy that matters to me: the people whose development I was privileged to influence.

## Q: WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT BEING RETIRED AND WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU?

A: What I enjoy most about my retirement is having complete control over my time. It allows me to be fully present with my family, especially my grandkids, which is something I deeply value.

As for what's next, I'm currently serving as a senior advisor to several clients and sitting on five boards, including three nonprofits. I enjoy sharing what I've learned over the years and I expect to continue that work for the foreseeable future.



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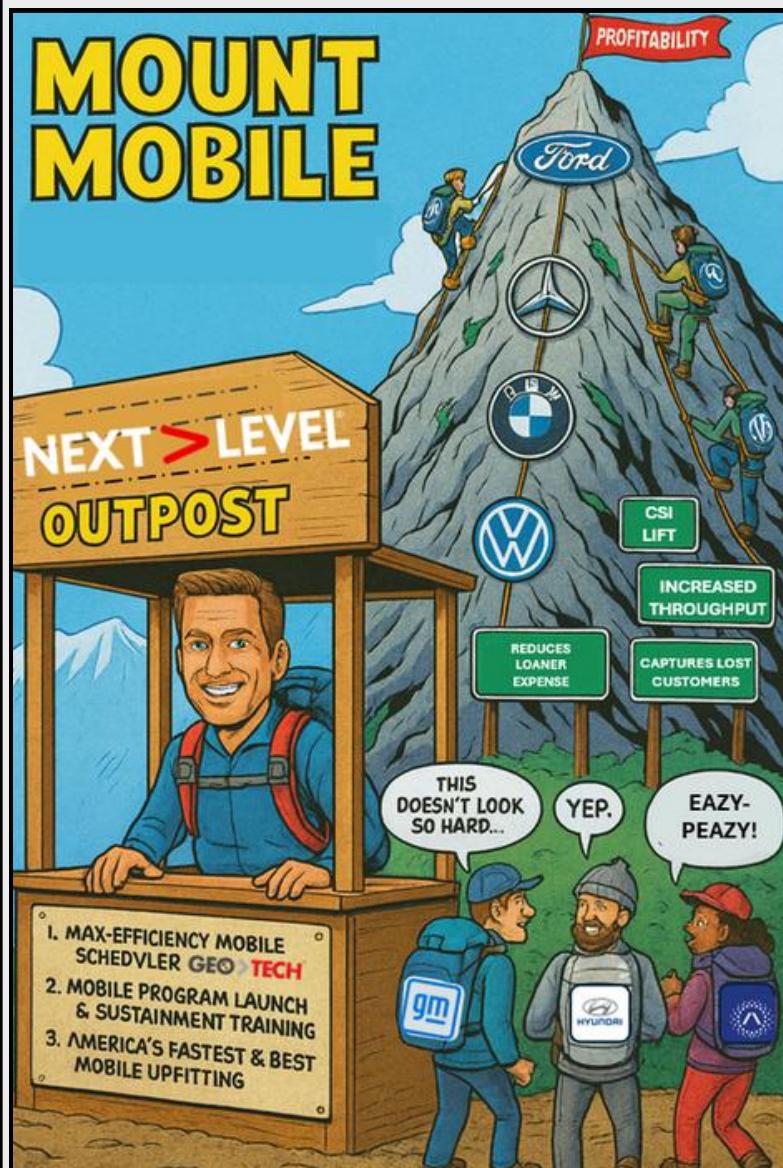
Contact David Puterbaugh PH: 704-763-4256

# THE FUNNY PAPERS



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



YOU CAN'T WIN THE GAME WITHOUT A GAME PLAN AND A SCOREBOARD!

"We are going to CRUSH it with Mobile Service" they said. They also said they don't need a forecast and supporting action plan...



MORE FUNNIES TO COME!

# DEALER SUCCESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Can your clients schedule and receive CONFIRMED Mobile Service appointment (not request) online through your company web site?

**NO****YES**

2. Do you have a DEDICATED Mobile Service Program Leader/Coordinator? It cannot be the Service Manager. This person may wear multiple hats as long as filling the Mobile Service schedule daily and overseeing the success of the program is their first priority.

**NO****YES**

3. Do you have a DEDICATED full-time Mobile Service Technician? If so, do you pull them to work in the shop and park the van when you are short-handed?

**NO****YES**

4. Do you have a scheduling and routing software tool that groups your appointments together in clusters (zones) by day of the week, automatic dispatch to Tech, Tech location tracking, auto-notifications to customers with ETA?

**NO****YES**

5. Are you averaging 6 Mobile appointments per day or more?

**NO****YES**

6. Do you have consistent and effective outreach programs for outstanding recalls, Mobile-friendly missed shop appointments, unused expiring PPM, lost customers, aging special order parts, declined services, commercial fleets, and connected car leads?

**NO****YES**

7. Do you know what your breakeven threshold is?

**NO****YES**

8. Do you have growth goals and supporting action plans?

**NO****YES**

9. Do you set the client's first maintenance appointments as a Mobile appointment?

**NO****YES**

10. Are all personnel handling incoming phone calls trained to convert qualifying appointments to Mobile? Do they have a printed or digital "Mobile Friendly Menu" at their fingertips?

**NO****YES**

# SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR DEALERS CONSIDERING MOBILE SERVICE

1. Are you attaining your service sales objectives?

**NO****YES**

2. Are you attaining your service retention % objectives?

**NO****YES**

3. How many days out are you for a client requesting an appointment with a loaner? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many days out are you for scheduling a maintenance only appointment? How about diag? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you satisfied with your CSI/NPS score?

**NO****YES**

6. Is your RO count increasing or decreasing from the prior year?

**NO****YES**

7. Does your Team effectively harvest recalls, unused PPM, connected vehicle leads, missed appointments, and declined services?

**NO****YES**

8. Are you satisfied with your maintenance/repair mix?

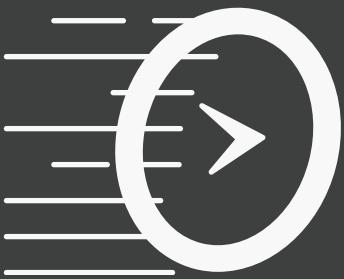
**NO****YES**

9. Are your high-level Techs frequently interrupted with small, lower skill jobs?

**NO****YES**

10. Are you growing your fleet service business? (light truck and van Dealers)

**NO****YES**



# RAPID>FIT

by NEXT>LEVEL

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



CHECK OUT THIS SHORT VIDEO  
AND SEE HOW WE DID IT.



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# DUMBEST IDEAS EVERRR

## LULULEMON 1998



### INITIAL PUBLIC RESPONSE

Congrats to Founder Chip Wilson! You have accomplished the unthinkable! You sell yoga pants for \$100 in spite of the fact that... **A:** Walmart sells scarcely indistinguishable "Lululemon Dupes" for \$14.13. **B:** Your yoga pants were recalled in 2013 because they were so sheer you could see the wearer's butt crack. **C:** You doubled down by saying women's chubby thighs are what wears them to become so sheer. **D:** You poked fun at a particular group of people that struggled to pronounce "Lululemon". **E:** You were ousted as CEO due to the aforementioned outlandish behavior. And yet, in spite of all this, miraculously you are worth over \$6 billion dollars and there is a stack of your products under my Christmas tree every year. This is true insanity and perhaps a sign of the apocalypse.

### SINCE THEN

Lululemon Athletica Inc. (NASDAQ: LULU) reported second-quarter fiscal 2025 net revenue of \$2.5 billion...  
INSULTINGLY DUMB.

## 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](http://WWW.MOBILENEXTLEVEL.COM)

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



**ANOTHER SHOUT OUT!**



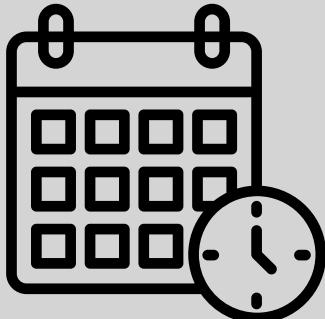
**Barry Bonds**



And-- And I'm trying to think of,  
what next level can I get to?

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### MOBILE SERVICE COACHING

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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We are a boutique van Upfitter. We **only** build Mobile Service units and **only** for Dealers **ONE** unit at a time. We're the **only** Upfitter in the USA building Mobile units **onsite** at the Dealership.

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