



CASE STUDY

Accelerating Technician Development
and Sales with Mentor Mentee



OVERVIEW

Zimbrick Honda, a high-volume dealership in Madison, WI, turned to Mentor Mentee in early 2024 to bring structure and consistency to technician development. With a growing team, they needed a better way to track progress, reduce reliance on observation, and accelerate onboarding. One year in, they've seen major gains in proficiency, retention, and productivity—transforming their service department and increasing throughput and sales.

OBJECTIVES

ELIMINATE SUBJECTIVITY

Replace subjective evaluations with data-driven skill tracking

BUILD A SCALABLE TRAINING PATH

Create a structured, scalable training path for new technicians

BOOST ACCOUNTABILITY & RETENTION

Improve engagement, accountability, and retention across the service team

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

- No structured training or clear tracking
- Progress based on observation, not data
- Low visibility and accountability

SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

- **Skill Tracking & Structure:** Mentees now move through clearly defined tasks and skill sets at an accelerated pace.
- **Performance-Linked Rewards:** Raises are tied directly to the completion of key objectives, providing immediate motivation and recognition.
- **Mobile Accessibility:** Technicians access the platform easily on their devices—no desktops, no paperwork—leading to higher engagement and goal orientation.

OUTCOMES

- 72% mentee retention rate, 10% above industry average
- Increased labor rate, hours per repair, and work mix
- Reduced stall time and increased throughput & bay availability



ZIMBRICK HONDA ACCELERATES TECHNICIAN DEVELOPMENT AND SALES WITH MENTOR MENTEE

Executive Summary

Zimbrick Honda, a high-volume dealership based in Madison, Wisconsin, turned to Mentor Mentee in early 2024 to address a core operational challenge: technician development and training consistency. With a rapidly growing team, the need for structured training, measurable outcomes, and reduced reliance on observational learning became mission critical. After one year of using the Mentor Mentee platform, Zimbrick Honda has seen major gains in technician proficiency, productivity, and retention—transforming its service department into a model of modern automotive training and mentorship and increasing throughput and sales.



Client Background

Zimbrick Honda is a part of the larger Zimbrick Automotive Group and serves the greater Madison area with a focus on Honda service and repair. The dealership's Fixed Operations team includes:

- 58 team members in the service department
- 32 service stalls
- 18 full-time technicians
- 22 apprentices (mentees)

With a nearly 1:5 mentor-to-mentee ratio—one of the highest in the industry—Zimbrick Honda sought a way to provide structure and support for a growing pipeline of entry-level talent.

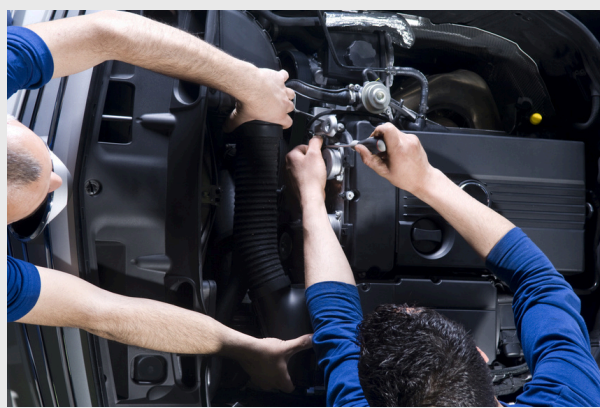


Scaling Without Structure: The Challenge and the Transformation

Before implementing Mentor Mentee, Zimbrick Honda's mentorship process relied heavily on manual tracking and anecdotal observation. Dean Baley, the Advanced Mentor, managed the program largely by himself using flag sheets and personal assessments to gauge technician progress. This system led to several challenges: a lack of measurable data, inconsistent tracking based on individual observations, and limited accountability for mentees. As a result, technicians had little visibility into their own development, and leadership had no standardized way to validate skill growth.

Recognizing these inefficiencies, Parts and Service Director Rich Baker spearheaded the search for a better solution.

“Our biggest goal was to remove personal bias and put the tracking responsibility back onto the mentees,” Rich explained. “We wanted data, structure, and accountability.”



That's exactly what Mentor Mentee delivered. The platform's core features quickly became indispensable:

- **Skill Tracking & Structure:** Mentees now move through clearly defined tasks and skill sets at an accelerated pace.
- **Performance-Linked Rewards:** Raises are tied directly to the completion of key objectives, providing immediate motivation and recognition.
- **Mobile Accessibility:** Technicians access the platform easily on their devices—no desktops, no paperwork—leading to higher engagement and goal orientation.

As Will Bowman, Express Service Manager, noted, *“The techs love that it's mobile. They're more engaged and goal oriented.”*



Implementation: A Phased Rollout with Custom Integration

The implementation process began with close collaboration between Zimbrick's leadership team and Mentor Mentee's Business Development Manager, Marc Brune. Starting with a basic version of the platform, the team gradually added layers of customization to align with Honda's existing training programs and internal workflows.

Within 2–3 months, Zimbrick Honda fully customized their Mentor Mentee instance to include:

- Task lists: Built around Honda-specific services and internal SOPs
- Pathways: Clear, step-by-step progression tied to technical skill development
- Skill objectives: Integrated with pay increases to incentivize completion

Adoption varied by experience level. For newer team members, Mentor Mentee was introduced as part of their onboarding, making the transition seamless. For long-time employees, the shift required more change management—but the payoff was immediate.



“Employee retention with the entry level staff is significantly improved.” said Baker. “There is high accountability of employee progress, initiative, and skill advancement.”

Bowman also shared that mentors appreciated the flexibility of the platform: *“Mentors love being able to find different things each week as the techs rotate with them. They’re setting goals and looking forward to progress.”*



Results: Measurable Growth Across the Board

In just one year, Zimbrick Honda has reduced stall time, improved throughput, and directly impacted sales by increasing service bay availability. Zimbrick Honda has seen quantifiable results that reflect both business and employee success:

- **Total training hours logged:** 5,557
- **Number of mentors:** 3 (2 in express, 1 in the main shop)
- **Number of mentees:** 15
- **Reps recorded:** 9403
- **Competencies earned:** 1044
- **Mentee retention rate:** 72% — 10% above industry average
- **Effective labor rate, hours per repair, and work mix:** All have increased
- **Mentor to mentee ratio:** 1:5 — among the highest and most efficient in comparable dealerships

“We’re running out of places to put technicians because they’re progressing so fast.” Bowman shared. “It’s easier than ever to identify standouts, and that’s changed how we develop and promote internally.”



He continued, *“When I came in, Mentor Mentee had just started. It’s had a clear, positive impact on early skill development. We can now track every mentee from day one—what they’ve done, what they haven’t, and where they’re headed. It’s been the most seamless addition to our processes.”*

Baker echoed the results, adding, *“Pays for itself if you do it correctly. If it isn’t working, the wrong person is running it. It’s extremely easy to use and understand.”*



Looking Ahead: Department-Wide Expansion

Zimbrick Honda plans to continue refining its use of Mentor Mentee by:

- Expanding the number of users across the dealership
- Updating tasks and skill sets as processes evolve
- Exploring cross-department implementation (other Zimbrick teams are already taking notice)

The structure and visibility that Mentor Mentee provides has become foundational to how Zimbrick Honda trains, develops, and retains its technicians. What started as a way to solve a tracking issue has become a strategic, competitive advantage.

With its structured onboarding, clear career pathways, and instant visibility into technician development, Zimbrick Honda has become a model for how modern dealerships can use Mentor Mentee to create a skilled, motivated, and high-performing technician team. The results speak for themselves—improved retention, faster onboarding, higher labor efficiency, and a new level of accountability at every stage of the technician journey.

