

THE OFFICE HIRE AUDIT

Five questions to find out whether you are one hire away from needing an office.

THIRD GEAR SHOP

You are the owner, the tech, the service writer and the bookkeeper. At some point the paperwork grows past what the four of you can carry, and the usual next move is to hire someone part time to handle the office side.

Before you post that listing, spend five minutes here. Answer each question yes or no, honestly, about how your shop actually ran last week rather than how it runs on a good week. Count your yes answers and read the verdict on the back.

Nothing is collected. Nobody sees your answers. Score it on paper and keep it.

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- 1 Can you answer "what have I spent on this build?" in under 60 seconds, without leaving the conversation?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

The test is the customer standing in front of you, not you at the desk after hours. If the answer is a shoebox of receipts, a text thread, and a callback tomorrow, mark yes.

How to check: the next time a customer asks, time yourself. Do not prepare.

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- 2 Do you know your open job count right now, and what is blocking each one, without walking the floor?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Not roughly. The number, and the reason each car is not moving.

How to check: write down the number from memory, then walk the floor and compare. If you were off by more than one, mark yes.

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- 3 Have you priced out a part-time office hire in the last six months?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Not whether you can afford one. Whether you have gone as far as finding out what one costs.

How to check: we are not going to quote you a number. Wages for a part-time shop admin swing hard by region, by hours, and by whether they touch payroll, and any figure we printed here would be a guess dressed up as data. Look at two current local postings, or ask a shop owner you know what they pay. That number has to come from your own market.

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- 4 Do you retype the same customer or vehicle information more than once a week?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

Same name, same VIN, same plate, typed again into an estimate, an invoice, a text, a spreadsheet.

How to check: count it for one week. Most owners guess low.

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- 5 Could someone else in your shop find last month's invoices without asking you?** ☐ YES ☐ NO

If you were out for a week, does the office side stop?

How to check: ask one person to try, right now, without helping them.

0 to 2 yes

You are fine for now. The admin load is still inside what one person can carry. Come back to this when your open job count jumps or when you add a bay, whichever happens first.

3 to 4 yes

You are at the threshold. This is the point where most owners start writing the job listing, and it is also the point where the honest question is whether the work needs a person or a system. A system is the cheaper of the two things to try first, and the one you can stop paying for next month if it does not help.

5 yes

You are already doing the office job on top of the shop job, and have been for a while. Whether you solve it with a hire or a system, the thing to avoid is another six months of solving it with your evenings.

WHAT A SYSTEM ACTUALLY REPLACES, AND WHAT IT DOES NOT

One shop owner already running Third Gear Shop told us it replaces the need to hire a part-time office assistant. That is a single owner's experience, not a survey, and we are not going to attach a dollar figure to it, because we do not have one that came from a customer rather than from us.

What it will not do: answer the phone, chase a supplier, or talk to a walk-in. If the reason you want to hire is that nobody is covering the front counter, hire.

What it does do is take the part of the office job that is really just information moving from one place to another: what a build has cost, which jobs are open, what a customer was quoted, where last month's invoices are.

No card to start. Fourteen days. Export everything you put in, any time.

thirdgearshop.com