

Karen Poffley, marketing manager, of Autologic, and Kevin Hardy, Autologic Mercedes support technician, have some invaluable advice for technicians...

It is an accepted fact that vehicles of today are complex beasts with more and more electronics at the very heart of their operation and so it naturally follows that the days of a quick diagnosis when something goes wrong with a vehicle are something of the past.

However, when presented with a problem on a vehicle, according to diagnostic manufacturer Autologic Diagnostics Ltd, there are three main practical applications all vehicle technicians should remember to apply; namely the three Cs – complaint, cause, cure.

STEP 1 – COMPLAINT

In the first instance, the nature of the actual complaint should be verified. That may sound like stating the obvious, but it is an element often overlooked beyond the initial 'my car's making a funny noise' type general statement.

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The best way to achieve this is to ask the customer themselves:

- ▶ when and under what circumstances did the problem occur?
- ▶ were there any prior indications which were recognisable?
- ▶ have any repairs been carried out on the vehicle recently?
- ▶ has any fitting/conversion work been carried out in the vehicle, or equipment retro-fitted?
- ▶ is the fault always apparent or does it only occur intermittently?

Sometimes it is very difficult to distinguish

between mechanical and electrical faults, but it is important to differentiate between these at an early stage in order to save time later on. The objective in asking questions is to create a starting point for diagnosis and obtain the maximum information possible regarding the complaint. The more questions asked, the more information received and the clearer picture becomes of the problem, leading to a more accurate diagnosis from the outset.

For example, a customer claims vibration in the car happens at speed. If you can thus establish that the vibration happens at approximately 65 to 80mph and is felt through the seat and not through the steering wheel, this information enables you to gauge that the fault is likely to be that the rear wheels are out of balance, saving you valuable time spent checking out other areas of the vehicle system.

Another way to verify the fault is to check it yourself. Just because the customer notices the dash lights are not working, for example, this does not necessarily mean the side lights are working. Check all the systems before you decide on your diagnosis start point. Road tests are also useful as is testing the function yourself so you can experience the complaint first-hand.

STEP 2 – CAUSE

Once the complaint has been verified, the next step is to deal with the cause.



Autologic: leader in diagnostics

with the vehicle operating systems, the fault codes that are subsequently displayed on the diagnostic tool can be easily dismissed or attributed to the complaint – in the latter instance allowing the technician to focus solely on the area of concern, without wasting any further time or resource investigating other possible reasons behind the complaint.

However, if the technician is unfamiliar with the particular vehicle in question, then it's time to read up! Information can be obtained from the vehicle handbook, the manufacturer's own literature and via technical support centres. Autologic offer an invaluable technical support service manned by specialist Master Technicians with years of experience for their given brand. They are able to provide assistance, advice and even talk the technician through any complex procedures plus, can even write necessary software to enable the repair to be carried out.

STEP 3 – CURE

Once steps one and two have been followed through to fruition, the final step is to undertake the cure, be it replacing a faulty part or re-encoding the existing part in the event of a simple coding error having been discovered.

This is where the investment in a quality diagnostic tool such as Autologic pays dividends for the independent garage. Autologic will enable the garage to complete the job without needing to involve the main dealer, ensuring that the garage which has done all of the ground work retains all of the financial rewards and the customer has their car fixed with the minimum of disruption and delay.

So next time you're faced with a customer's complaint about their car, just remember the three Cs to get you and the customer swiftly on the road to recovery!

Quick Test: Results		
• OCP	Ok	➤
• UCP	Ok	➤
• SAM-F	Ok	➤
• SAM-R	2 Fault(s)	➤
• ICM	Ok	➤
• SCM	Ok	➤
• AAC	Ok	➤
• DCM-FL	Ok	➤
• DCM-FR	Ok	➤

SCREEN CAPTURE REFRESH BACK NEXT

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Assuming that the complaint is electrical, this is where a workshop's diagnostic equipment really comes into play. With Autologic, a simple 'Quick Test' can be run which interrogates all of the vehicle's ECUs and displays any fault codes found – also commonly known as diagnostic trouble codes (DTC).

Providing the technician is familiar

A simple quick test can be run

ENQUIRY NO.

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