

TAKING BUSINESS TO SCHOOL:

Toyota T-TEN

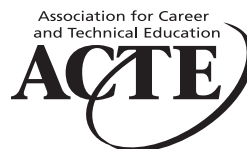
Launched in 1986 by Toyota Motor Sales (TMS), the Toyota Technician Training and Education Network (T-TEN) was established to prepare talented, career-minded, highly trained service technicians for its Toyota, Lexus, and Scion dealerships. T-TEN accomplishes this mission through its partnerships with 40 public and private institutions in the United States. Even in a slow economy and at a time of record unemployment, T-TEN continues to place thousands of certified technicians in the service departments of its 1,500 Toyota, Scion, and Lexus dealerships around the country.

The Story

Toyota Motor Sales is well known for maintaining high standards in all areas of its operations, from its associates and dealers to its suppliers and the service it provides to customers. Though the U.S. economy has been dour, Toyota motor vehicle sales have remained buoyant; maintenance of these vehicles is of paramount importance to owners, and a pipeline of factory-trained technicians is needed to provide premium maintenance and repair services.

How It Works

The T-TEN program—a partnership between Toyota, community colleges, career and technical education schools,



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STUDENT SUCCESS STORY

and dealerships—provides state-of-the-art automotive training in both a classroom and laboratory setting; this training is enhanced by supervised dealership internships. New partnerships are initiated at several levels: via a request from a school, dealer, a regional sales office, or from the national office. Once the request is made an assessment is conducted to determine the need, a program type is negotiated, and once program development is completed, the company conducts a comprehensive review and grants certification to confirm that the program meets all standards. Each individual training partner funds its program needs, with Toyota Motor Sales and Toyota Motor Corporation being the primary corporate funding sources.

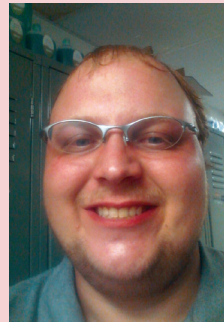
In order to enter the program, students must demonstrate a passion for the career and an aptitude to learn the skills necessary for career success. He or she must be employable in the field and be committed to the process. T-TEN requires a two-year commitment to training; the average certified school has a 1,200-hour program, or more. During their tenure in T-TEN training, students undergo both cognitive tests and an assessment of their technical skills. Students are required to participate in an internship before graduation, alternating between the classroom/lab and the dealership. Overall, participants learn while they earn as they receive instruction from factory-trained teachers and guidance from dealership mentors.

They work with the latest vehicle technology, tools and equipment and graduate with Toyota and industry certifications. Program options include a two-year associate degree wherein participants combine automotive technology instruction with general education courses to earn an associate degree, and a two-year certificate program that focuses on automotive technology skills and does not require general education courses.

The Business Case

Auto dealerships play a huge role in the U.S. economy. Total dealership sales are about \$609 billion a year, according to 2012 data from the National Automobile Dealers Association, with almost one out of every eight retail dollars spent at car dealerships. Dealerships employ more than 252,000 service technicians around the country and are always in need of talented workers to keep up with increasing demand. TMS's dealership service business is well-positioned to capture an increasingly larger piece of the after-sales service business, a major company focus. Maintaining a highly skilled technician workforce is integral if this goal is to be realized. So far, the outcomes

Sam Houston



Sam Houston, 29, is looking forward to a bright future doing what he loves. He took a detour before coming into the T-TEN program by working in hospitality and in the food and beverage industry.

“I had no automotive background,” he says. “I was an adult who decided to change my life and pursue a childhood dream of working on cars.”

What attracted him to the T-TEN program at Jefferson Community and Technical College in Louisville, Kentucky, was the mix of hands-on learning and training in an automotive shop that is up-to-date with the latest technology and the newest cars on the market. An average day in the program includes a 45 to 50 minute lecture, a discovery learning lab sheet with hands on application, and a skills assessment at the end of the class.. Houston notes that instructors are supportive and one of the program's benefits is that it prepares him to be work-ready.

“Upon completion, you are ready to enter the field and be productive,” he says. “In this day and age, it is hard to find educational opportunities that directly apply to your future career. Also, you get to meet and become friends with people who have similar interests as you do. I have made many friends for life while attending the program.”

Upon graduation Houston was classified as a Toyota-certified expert technician with two years work experience. He's also an ASE Master Technician and earned an associate of applied science in automotive technology degree, with high distinction. Qualified technicians like Houston will thrive in an industry that covets their experience and training. Houston plans to return to the classroom one day—as an instructor who will share with others what he has learned.

“Your education is an investment in your future so you should choose wisely and find something that suits you best,” he says. “The T-TEN program has changed my life forever, it has given me a career to be proud of and allows me to support my family in ways I only dreamed of before.”

are good for T-TEN participants: 19 percent of Toyota and Lexus dealerships' current technicians workforce are in a dealership as a result of the program; an average of 400 students graduate from the program every year; there is 85 percent to 90 percent placement in Toyota or Lexus dealerships upon completion of T-TEN; and there is a 65 percent retention rate after one year of employment.

T-TEN's business model is unique to the industry, is sustained by ongoing reviews and updates, and is supported by Toyota staff and the T-TEN instructor community. The T-TEN Instructor Community plays a key role in the successful outcomes of this partnership. The community collaborates directly with TMS to develop and update policies and standards for the program. The community also facilitates support of T-TEN programs across the United States in the areas of curriculum and operational updates.

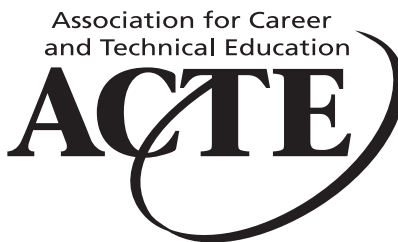
One T-TEN instructor at the Atlantic Technical Center in Coconut Creek, Florida, noted about T-TEN's business model, "The process has helped to bring instructors together and communicate with each other more than ever before. It has made everyone really look at what they are teaching and how they are delivering the information to their customers, the student and ultimately the dealers. This process has also helped with the success rate of passing Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) tests. I do know that the other OEMs are

looking at what we are doing and it would not surprise me if they start something for their own programs."

Automotive companies must continue to innovate in the manufacturing of their vehicles while at the same time providing the best after-sales services to their customers. The T-TEN program ensures customer satisfaction by getting vehicles fixed right the first time by technicians who are properly trained to diagnose and repair the vehicles. T-TEN provides a pathway for students with the ambition and aptitude to be successful auto technicians to enter the program, learn the skills necessary to become highly skilled workers, and be successfully placed in a dealership after graduation. T-TEN is good for Toyota's bottom line, but it's also sound practice in workforce development and good business for the American economy too.

LEARN MORE

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