Lex Brodie's Tire, Brake & Service Company

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Lex Brodie's Tire, Brake & Service Company has plenty to celebrate. In addition to being named a Top Shop Finalist — the fourth time the dealership has taken Top Shop honors, including winning the competition in 2016 — it also celebrated its 60th anniversary this year. e occasion marks six decades of sustaining success and growth by valuing its employees, striving to give maximum value to its customers, and giving back to its community.

e Hawaii-based shop, with ve locations in Kalihi, Aiea, Honolulu, Waipahu and Kaneohe, employs a sta of 105 full-time and two part-time workers. e dealership, which has a sales mix of 50/50 tires and vehicle service, became 100% employee owned in January 2021, giving those sta members a stake in the company's success.

A Strong Foundation

To appreciate where Lex Brodie's is today, it's important to take a look at the shop's humble beginnings. In 1958, Alexander "Lex" Brodie moved from managing the Dole Pineapple Cannery to owning a Chevron gas station in Kaneohe. Brodie became known for his legendary customer service. He founded Lex Brodie's Tire Company in 1961 and opened the Honolulu store on Queen Street in 1964. As the store grew in popularity, he expanded to Waipahu, opening a second location in 1972. Brodie's trademark slogan, " ank You...Very Much!" became legendary in the area.

Brodie sold the business in 1991 that led to the ownership group LBTC Holdings, which included employee-owners David Sands and Scott Williams. Since then there have been many growth milestones and accolades, including three additional locations and countless awards.

Today the company is overseen by a Management Advisory Committee made up of CEO David Sands, President Michael

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Currency points. Lex Brodie's Fixed Forever Repair Warranty covers both parts and labor for the covered repair. The shop also offers a four-year unlimited tire warranty and a lifetime tire service package.

To celebrate its 60th "Thank-You-Versary," the shop held a month-long promotional campaign in which Lex Rewards Members had the opportunity to receive up to $60 in Caveman Currency discounts.

Expert Staff

Caring for customers is a loyal staff, of which 86 percent of employees have more than 10 years of experience at the dealership, on average.

Lex Brodie's partners with automotive and tire industry leaders to provide its owner-employees with ongoing and up-to-date knowledge to better serve customers and to further their careers. The shop partners with TIA, Bridgestone Education Network, Michelin Learning Academy, Toyo Tires T3 Training, NAPA Autotech, Motorist Assurance Program and more. The Lex Brodie's Build-A-Tech Program utilizes NAPA's Autotech Training curriculums (brake, suspension/steering, A/C heating & cooling, and electrical) and is available for current team members who are interested in a career in automotive service and repair.

"Lex Brodie's standardized web-based training program brings consistency to our team's training and performance, and allows us to quantify and encourage our team's growth," Williams says.

The training system exposes staff members to departmental training using a combination of visual aids, testing and industry manufacturer resources with the purpose of transforming them into well-rounded employees.

"Training is delivered in a very specific and ordered way, so we can control and gauge the level of knowledge of our employees," Kelly says, adding the program is paired with hands-on training to cement knowledge by combining theory with practical instruction.

"We've developed a winning environment where our employees believe their presence and contribution makes a difference," he says. "Engaged employees work harder and treat customers better knowing what they do has value."

Evolving the Brand

Based on feedback, customers' two main concerns when it comes to car care decision-making are time and money, according to Williams.

"This helped streamline our marketing approach by funneling our efforts through our Marketing Mantra: Always value our customer's time and strive to deliver maximum value for our customer's money," he says. "This mantra is the navigation system which we plug into our high-powered marketing engine to keep goals on track."

The shop's branding and messages are ubiquitous — found on radio, TV, print and digital. Over the years, the marketing mix has changed, with a current emphasis on digital strategies including its own website, SEO and organic ranking, Google My Business Pages with Google Maps, social media, Yelp and Bing business pages, and Google AdWords with conquesting

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and retargeting.

Just because Lex Brodie's is one of the most iconic brands in Hawaii doesn't mean it will stay that way without putting in advertising effort, Williams notes. "Maintaining and evolving the Lex Brodie's brand is a vital component in our marketing efforts to keep us ahead of our competitors."

Well-known and easily recognizable branding campaigns include "Pothole Blues," "Lex Rocks!" and "Lex Get Real," a customer education campaign that identifies basic facts about car maintenance that can save people money.

As needed, the shop uses targeted campaigns to share specific messages. For example, one high-volume TV branding campaign targeted Sears customers as the Sears Oahu stores were closing. Lex Brodie's offered to honor Sears Hawaii repair and tire service warranties.

What makes the dealership stand out isn't just its far-reaching, in-depth marketing and advertising, however. Lex Brodie's has the process of quantifying its efforts down to a science. The shop's marketing optimization has resulted in up to 75% actual, trackable marketing leads.

"We use the wealth of digital data...to closely track and measure the effectiveness and return for our marketing initiatives," Williams says. "As a result, we have been able to make big and bold marketing budget shifts that have paid off."

Marketing data analysis includes Google Analytics, Google Search Console, Google My Business dashboards, Yelp Business Dashboard, Facebook Ads dashboard, YouTube Dashboard, Hawaii DOT traffic maps, Oahu Zip Code Maps with HH & Vehicle Data, and vendor dashboards (Kukui, AdTaxi).

"We track which platforms are working and if recent budget increases have had a solid ROI, as well as market trends to identify opportunities and weaknesses," Williams says.

Supporting Customers & Community

Part of the dealership's marketing efforts extend into a much broader purpose: relentlessly supporting the community.

Established in 2004 in honor of the shop's founder, the Lex Brodie's Tire Company Foundation continues Brodie's legacy of supporting the community that he serviced. Over the years, the foundation has supported many organizations, including Brown Bags to Stardom, Lemon Aid Alley, B.R.A.V.E. Hawaii, Driver's Education, BBB Students of Integrity Regional Scholarship, and Elevating & Celebrating Effective Teaching & Teachers.

Lex Brodie's "Love Hawaii — Share the Aloha" program was designed as an opportunity for the community to help contribute

funds to charities of their choice. Customers who are a part of the Lex Rewards Program can choose a local non-profit to receive a donation of up to 2% of their invoice.

Among its most well-known initiatives is the "Thank You...Very Much" Award program, which invites students in grades 4-12 to write a letter of appreciation to someone who has impacted their lives. Teachers submit students' letters each year, then a student's letter is selected and recognized with up to six winners a year.

The award has recognized more than 120 letters with participation from over 200 public and private schools. More than $200,000 in prizes has been awarded through class donations and non-profit donations (chosen by the winning students).

"Lex Brodie's embraces a business sustainability model which balances good business practices with giving back to the community," Williams says. "There is the PR motivation, but once you start doing it and you see how you're impacting and touching others' lives, the PR side disappears because you just become passionate about it. You see how you're making a difference."

Looking Ahead

In the future, Lex Brodie's will continue to uphold its values of honoring customers, community and owner-employees while adapting its business as needed to keep up with the changing times and staying ahead of the competition.

While the Management Advisory Committee always looks for opportunities to open new locations, in the next five to 10 years it plans to optimize the business by listening to customers, watching for opportunities, and considering new technologies to help streamline the customer experience.

"What differentiates Lex Brodie's from our competitors is that we've successfully created our own lane built upon a value-based culture," Sands says. "This is not just an inspirational poster we tack on the wall, but a real, where-the-rubber-meets-the-road business plan built with innovation and 60 years of experience. If being a Top Shop means sustaining success and growth by valuing our employees, striving to give maximum value to our customers, and giving back to our community, then yes, we are a Top Shop." **TR**

Every member of the Lex Brodie's team upholds the company's values of honoring customers, community and owner-employees, while adapting the business as needed to keep up with the changing times and staying ahead of the competition.