

The ultimate car maintenance checklist

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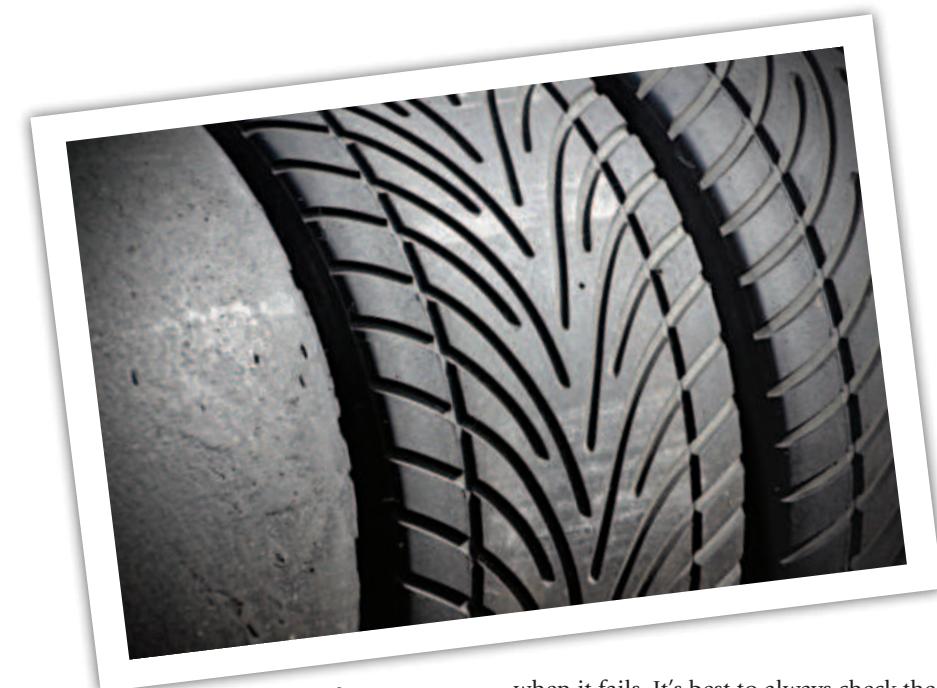
overheating or permanently damaging the engine.

Air filter

The air filter is an essential component of a car that regulates the air that flows into the engine and keeps out debris that can damage the engine. Air filters enhance fuel efficiency, lower emissions and keep the engine life span longer during proper airflow. These parts can easily be checked at home by taking out the air filter and seeing through it by pointing at the sunlight. If it's thick, dirty and nothing can be seen through, the air filter needs to be replaced.

Transmission fluid

Much like the oil and coolant, transmission fluid lubricates the transmission, making sure the parts are



functioning correctly. Whether you are driving a manual or an automatic transmission, it's essential to check it in order to avoid a pricey transmission damage replacement every two years or so.



Spark plugs

Spark plugs ignite the fuel and air mixture in the engine to power the car. If they are not functioning correctly, the engine will misfire, losing power and efficiency. The incomplete combustion can damage the catalytic converter. When you hear the engine sounding weird or losing power, it's best to have it checked or replaced by a mechanic.

Tires

Tires are one of the most crucial elements in a car and it is the only part touching the road. Your car is also balanced on top of them, which of course makes them important components. Well-maintained tires are the most important part of safety. Try to make it a habit of checking your tires every day, since bad tires can lead to dangerous accidents. Always ensure that



the tires are properly inflated, not cracked or enough threads are there for traction. While at it, you must make sure that there is a spare tire available along with all the necessary tools in the car at all times.

Brakes and brake fluid

Everyone knows the importance of brakes since it's the only way a car can be stopped and can lead to fatal accidents.

when it fails. It's best to always check the brake fluid level as it runs through the brake lines that go to all four wheels. When the brake pedal is pressed down, it allows force to be applied and ultimately slows down your car. Watch out for leaks, low brake fluid and how thin the brake



pads get over time. Brake fluid can be easy to check when the brake is applied. If it's loose or doesn't engage immediately, it means it's time to get a replacement

Battery

A car battery provides power for starting your vehicle, thus it is very important to watch out for battery performance. The battery must be checked for a clean and corrosion-free connection. Check the battery fluid level and add distilled water if it's low and clean the terminals with water and baking soda. Also, make sure to tighten it in place to avoid excess rattling

Serpentine belt

This simple piece of rubber belt keeps the car running by powering outlying devices such as the power steering pump, alternator and air conditioner compressor. It must be inspected once in a while for

COVER STORY

More countries are moving to four-day workweeks, can we ever?

ESRAT SADIA

A four-day or a 32-hour workweek is a compressed arrangement where employees are offered a four-day workweek instead of the more customary five. It ensures that productivity, work benefits or employee payment are not compromised while increasing holidays. The schedule is flexible based on company priority. Generally, some companies go for a time range from Monday to Thursday. Other companies let the employees choose their extra day off on Monday or Wednesday.

Nordic countries are continuously experimenting to improve traditional economic systems. The proof of this is the trials of four-day workweeks conducted between 2015 to 2019. In Iceland, the experiment achieved overwhelming success with similar or improved productivity. The Finnish prime minister Sanna Martin is also considering four-day workweeks. Can Bangladesh do the same?

Why is it gaining traction during the great resignation in the post-Covid era?

In the post-Covid era, the four-day workweek is gaining extraordinary traction as people have adapted to work-from-home or remote work. Even though there will be challenges, the four-day workweek will result in more satisfied, more engaged employees with better productivity. At the time of the great resignation, ensuring customer satisfaction with lesser work hours and the same compensation will work wonders, as it has already proved in several countries around the globe.

Countries that are adopting four-day workweeks

While countries like New Zealand, Japan, Ireland and Scotland are making moves to shift their work direction and settle with four-day workweeks, the United Arab Emirates

has

already reduced their working hours for their federal employees.

Ireland went through a four-day workweek campaign advocating for a steady, managed and gradual transition to a shorter workweek for workers of private and public sectors. Similarly, Japan is also opting for flexible work hours, remote working facilities and growing interconnectedness in their workplaces after the pandemic and health crisis. The country also unveiled an economic policy stating that companies can permit employees to work four days a week without any decrease in payment. Now skilled and experienced workers do not need to leave work to maintain or raise their families.

Similarly, the United Arab Emirates announced that all government entities must adapt to the new four and a half-day workweek. It came into effect from the beginning of the year 2022. It intends to improve work-life balance, boost social wellbeing and increase performance to enhance UAE's overall economic competitiveness.

Companies that are opting for a four-day workweek

The Japanese conglomerate Panasonic has offered their employees an option to take a four-day workweek to minimize workplace stress. They took the initiative to free their employees to take other jobs, volunteer or relax.

Moreover, Microsoft Japan experimented on 2300 employees with its 'Work-Life Choice Challenge 2019 Summer' program to figure out the impact of flexible work styles on them. The employees were offered a variety of work styles, including four-day workweeks. According to The Guardian, the outcome was

outstanding. A 40% gain in employee satisfaction and productivity resulted.

Bolt, a payment and checkout startup, conducted a three-month pilot program and recently switched to four-day workweeks. Throughout the process, managers and employees figured out that they were more efficient, productive, and passionate about achieving the work objectives. It is because they are satisfied with their work, getting time to rest, think creatively and engage with loved ones, according to Forbes.

Ryan Breslow, the founder and the CEO of Bolt, tweeted that 94% of the workers wanted to continue with a four-day workweek. Among them, 86% think their productivity and efficiency increased. Furthermore, 84% of them believe four-day workweeks enhanced their work-life balance. He tweeted, "4 days isn't an 'if' for most companies, it's a 'when'! We are never going back."

Pros and cons of four-day workweeks

Four-day workweeks are beneficial to reduce costs, ensure greater employee satisfaction, better productivity, fewer health problems and better employee retention.

On the contrary, it is not a one-size-fits-all model, and as the workdays decrease, the working hour will naturally increase to level the work schedule.

The blurred boundaries between the new and traditional systems are more likely to create worker burnout. Besides, this can keep the company understaffed when employees take off days. However, from a long-term perspective, considering the advancement of technology and the popularity of remote work, four-day workweeks are crucial for better productivity and employee retention in the post-Covid era.

Is a four-day workweek feasible locally?

Implementing four-day workweeks in urban institutions or multi-national companies, MNCs is not that challenging locally.

However, for low-wage activities, is the model feasible? If banks operate in this way, it will be nearly impossible to meet

public demands and satisfy their needs for financial services. The same goes for the RMG (ready-made garments) industry. The complete mismatch of supply and demand will create further chaos due to reduced workdays. Hence, the production might shift to other countries.

Md. Danial Rafi, currently working in a private commercial bank, says, "The most pressing argument for agnostics is that it might hamper productivity in low-wage sectors and disrupt the supply chain in service sectors. However, this is addressed by increasing daily hours on the proposed four working days."

On that note, is it possible to meet customer demands by implementing four-day workweeks in banks, especially in local private commercial banks? According to him, the discrepancies between supply and demand due to a four-day workweek can be adjusted by automation.

He adds that the number of banks and branches across the country is higher than required. Hence, a four-work week will act as an equalizer on the supply and demand of banking services. He, being a Relationship Manager (RM) with exposure to different industries, thinks the future benefits of four-day workweeks are lucrative enough for low-wage sectors like RMG as well.

While Md. Danial Rafi is advocating for four-day workweeks, Ahmad Abdullah Tommoy, Management Trainee Officer (MTO), RMG Division, currently working in another private commercial bank says, "I am not quite the supporter of the four-day workweek model, rather I think casual off-days should be promoted more in our workplaces." According to him, if all of the parts in the supply chain can maintain the four-day workweek model, then it might ensure better workplace productivity for sectors like banking or RMG. He adds, "But in the context of our country, do they really can? I don't think so."

With payment remaining the same, working for lesser days can be motivating for some, especially for higher-income workers. On the contrary, others think working extra hours in fewer days cannot improve their productivity, let alone workplace productivity in lower-middle-income countries like Bangladesh.

Even though it might be challenging to gradually shift to four-day workweeks in Bangladesh, is it necessary to upgrade the traditional economic systems of Bangladesh? Only time will tell.

ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

