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VOLUME 52 | NUMBER 5
MAY 2013



TECHNOLOGY

PLASTIC REPAIR NECESSITIES

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ASRW CHANGES KICK OFF THIS YEAR
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THE IDEA EXCHANGE
GET INSPIRATION FROM COMPETITION

COMMUNITY

CCC'S SEAM SEALER POSITION
MATERIALS NOT INCLUDED IN LABOR TIME

THE GROWING USE OF
PLASTICS IN
AUTOMOBILE
MANUFACTURING HAS
SPURRED THE NEED FOR
PLASTIC REPAIR SKILLS
IN THE SHOP

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SHOP PROFILE
Marshall's Auto Body
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FUTURE**

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I'm A Convert To PPG Waterborne

"My painters are very happy with the switch to PPG waterborne. Cycle times dramatically decreased, so they get vehicles in and out faster."

**Kyle Cripps
St. Laurent Collision Centers
Nashua, NH**

I'm A Convert



Convert with Confidence

"PPG waterborne is a mirror image to the factory, not a close facsimile. It's the difference between 'That looks nice' and 'Wow, that looks great!'"

**Phil Dinonno
B&B Auto
Fishkill, NY**

"Switching to PPG waterborne is a win-win situation. You get great color matches and it's environmentally friendly too."

**Don Glush
Waterford Collision
Waterford, MI**



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MAP ADDS CONSUMER RESOURCES TO WEBSITE

The Motorist Assurance Program added a new online resource to help track all automotive services performed.

[KEY: MAP resource]

AKZONOBEL'S STICKERFIX DIY PAINT SOLUTION POISED FOR TAKE-OFF

The industry's first coating and adhesive film technology touch-up solution readies for placement in distribution outlets.

[KEY: AkzoNobel stickerfix]

MONTANA MEETING BREAKS RECORDS

The Montana Collision Repair Specialists' Spring Meeting broke records with 105 attendees.

[KEY: Montana meeting]

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62 Maximize your gross profits by making sure the breakdown of your repair sales hits these targets: 30 percent body, frame and mechanical; 20 percent paint labor; and 10 percent paint materials.

READ IT ON abrn.com

PARTS 101, OR IS IT 401?

Fill rate goes hand in hand with obsolescence control. So clean up your unsold special orders and returns. The obsolescence will take care of itself.

[KEY: Phazeone]

FINDING PARTS FASTER WITH DAYCO APP

Dayco's app gives technicians and DIYers instant access to a complete list of Dayco parts that match a vehicle's year, make and model simply by scanning the VIN.

[KEY: BrianWheeler]

VISION HITECH TRAINING AND EXPO 2013

Shop owners close their doors and bring their staff to this annual event. With too many classes to list, they cover technical information across every range.

[KEY: Peter]

FEATURE

TAKING A LOOK AT CCC'S POSITION ON SEAM SEALERS

BY ART HARRIS | ABRN BLOGGER

Per CCC and others, materials are not included in any of the labor time components. In CCC, this can be found in G10 of the Collision Estimating Guide.

[COMMUNITY PULSE]

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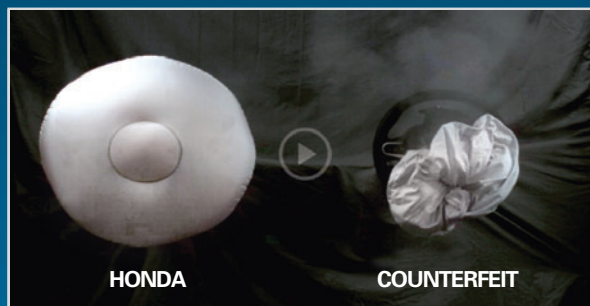
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THE IDEA EXCHANGE

BY JOHN YOSWICK | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Shop owners share 10 ideas they are trying at their shops that may work at yours. There is no better way to get great business ideas than paying a visit to one of your peers.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF ABRN

Learn more about working with waterborne and how to get the most out of your paint department.

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SHOP OWNERS RECOVER LOST AND FOUND FUNDS THROUGH UTILITY AUDITS

[KEY: Lost and found funds]

COLLISION BILLING ADDS DESK REVIEW TO PRODUCT OFFERINGS

[KEY: Collision Billing]

SUMMIT SOFTWARE, MARKETING SOLUTIONS RELEASE UPGRADE TO E-MARKETPLACE PLATFORM

[KEY: Summit Software]

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PLASTIC REPAIR NECESSITIES

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TECHNICAL TRAINING

BY AL THOMAS | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The growing use of plastics in automobile manufacturing has spurred the need for plastic repair skills in the shop.

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BY TIM SRAMCIK | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

56 Prepare to repair the coming generation of vehicle chassis.



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[KEY: I-CAR online courses]

NEW PPG DATA SHEET MATCHES POWDER COATINGS, AAMA PERFORMANCE SPECS

[KEY: PPG data sheet]

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[KEY: CAPA requirements]

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FROM ABRN CONTRIBUTING EDITOR AL THOMAS .

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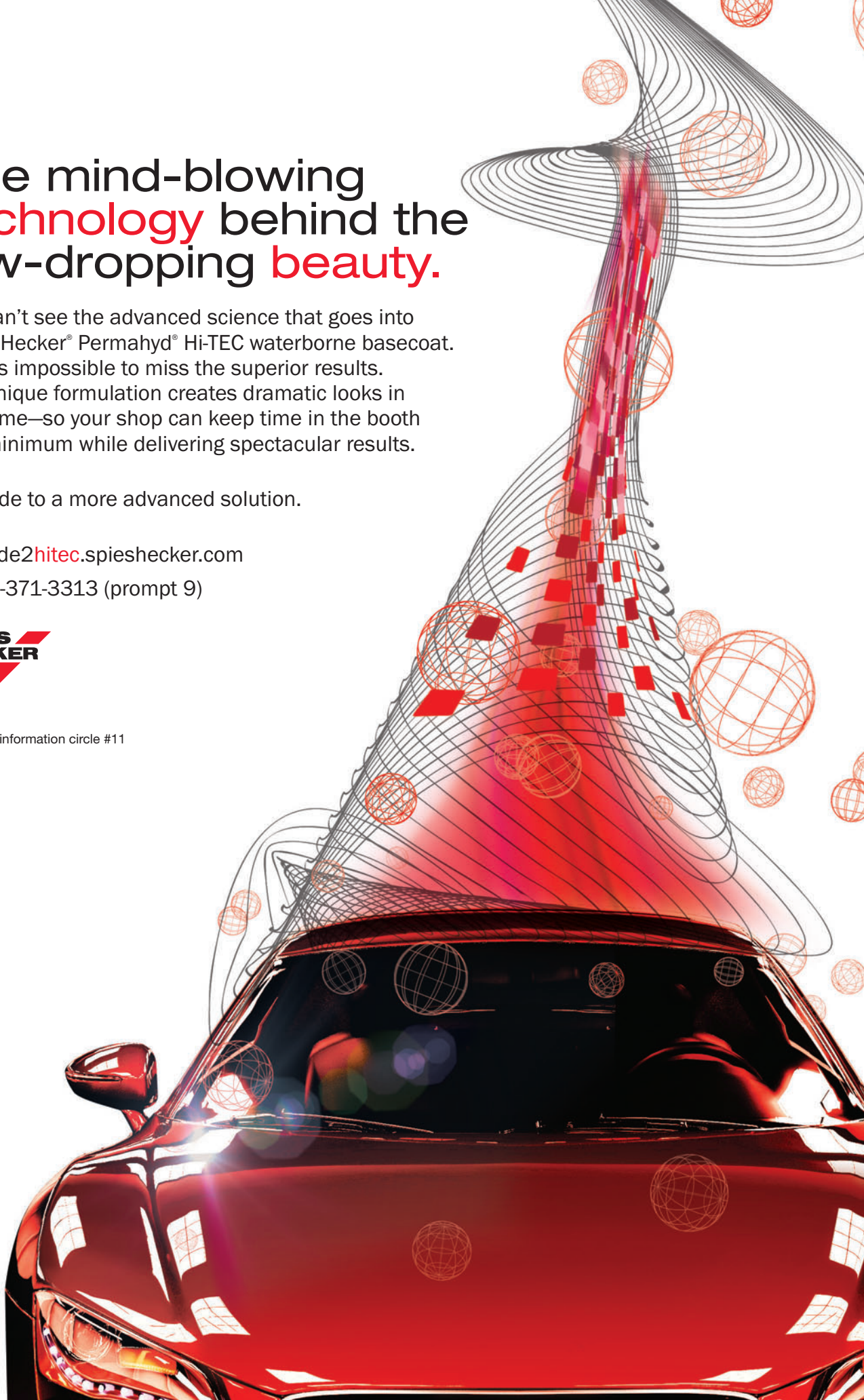
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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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WET/DRY VACUUM

Makita has released a 12-gallon wet/dry vacuum, the Xtract Vac Jobsite Vacuum.

[URL: ABRN.COM/Vacuum]

METALWORKING CATALOG

KLINGSPOR introduces its 2013 Metalworking Catalog, featuring a full range of abrasive and grinding materials.

[URL: ABRN.COM/Metalworking]

COLOR VARIANT SELECTORS

The second generation AccuShade Color Variant Selectors are available from Matrix System Automotive Finishes.

[URL: ABRN.COM/ColorVariant]

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BONUS ONLINE CONTENT

ABRN HOW2 VIDEO GALLERY



MAY'S FEATURED VIDEO
UNDERSTAND PROPER SPRAY GUN TECHNIQUES

VIDEO SPOTLIGHT

NABC RECYCLED Rides with Van Tuyl

The Van Tuyl group partnered with multiple vendors during their February Trade Show and meeting to give away 5 cars to needy families in the Dallas metro area.

[URL: ABRN.COM/RECYCLEDRIDES]



BLOG SPOTLIGHT

WE ALL have to learn that when the phone rings, there is someone on the other end of it who wants to spend money with us. That's right, money, so think of the phone as a cash register.

[URL: ABRN.COM/PHONESKILLS]

THERE IS a huge amount of eye-candy technology today, but it can hurt the selling process if you don't use it properly. Technology should be used for simple means of communicating between people. Why not get the best returns for your efforts?

[URL: ABRN.COM/WASTEDTECHNOLOGY]

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WD-40® Specialist® Impresses in the Shop

AT MEDFORD VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL, Collision Repair Instructor Joe Kinch has spent more than a decade teaching students lessons they can take directly from school to the workplace. One of their most valuable recent lessons involved the WD-40® Specialist® Line.

A Ford Explorer Sport model recently rolled into the school with a hood that was rusted shut. When students asked which tool would open the problem hood, Kinch directed them to WD-40® Specialist® Rust Release Penetrant Spray.

"They were shocked just how quickly the WD-40® Specialist® Rust Release Penetrant Spray let them pop the hood," said Kinch. The students then began spraying WD-40® Specialist® Rust Release Penetrant on the doors, the vehicle's rusty bolts and worked their way back to the tailgate, which was rusted in place.

"It didn't take long, and they had that entire truck lubricated. It worked like new," said Kinch.

When Medford students have to handle lubrication jobs, Kinch says they now have one question: "Where's the WD-40®?"



Joe Kinch Collision Technology Instructor | Medford Vocational Technical High School | 489 Winthrop Street, Medford, MA 02155



BRIAN GUERRERO manages Tucson, Arizona's O'Rielly Collision Center, a multi-award winning shop with a national reputation for running a cutting edge repair it continually upgrades with the industry's best tools and equipment.

Guerrero recently added the WD-40® Specialist® Line to those tools.

"We haven't found anything it doesn't work on," says Guerrero. "The techs raved about how it made removing everything from the rustiest fenders to frozen bolts easier than anyone expected."

The toughest job the WD-40® Specialist® Rust Release Penetrant Spray performed was earning the trust of the shop's tech that must be wary of using any lubricants on vehicles that need paint. Lubricants that miss the mark and end up in the finish produce expensive flaws that shops must fix by repainting a vehicle.

The WD-40® Specialist® Rust Release Penetrant Spray new dispenser put these worries to rest.

"The techs called the nozzle amazing," said Guerrero. "Our painters had no idea a lubricant had been sprayed on the vehicles."

O'Rielly Collision Center 6160 East Broadway Blvd. | Tucson, Arizona 85711 | Annual sales: \$5.4 million

PAUL HEMKER has run Dynamic Plastics for more than 35 years. At his business, precision is key, and time is everything. Finding a product that address each of these concerns is no small victory.

That's why Hemker has become a big fan of the WD-40® Specialist® line. Not only does Hemker appreciate the WD-40® Rust Release Penetrant Spray's ability to offer unparalleled lubrication, he says its ability to deliver this all-important industrial property is second to none.

"It's wonderful," says Hemker. "Our favorite aspect of the WD-40® Specialist® line is the new dispenser. We use WD-40® as an air tool lubricant and to lubricate small drilling holes, so we have to spray it in small places. The dispenser lets us do that like no other."

At Dynamic Plastics, Hemker says the Specialist® line has earned its place as an everyday tool.

Paul Hemker, President Hemker Finishing Division | Dynamic Plastics Inc. | New Paris, Ohio | Founded: 1977



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SHOPS' IMPACT TO GROW

Energy benchmarking on the rise

Body shop owners in Boston may soon have to provide energy use data for benchmarking as part of the city's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy efficiency.

Mayor Thomas Menino has proposed an ordinance that would require commercial and residential buildings to use the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Energy Star Portfolio Manager tool to track energy use. The energy performance ratings produced through this effort would be made available online, and building owners who failed to report would face fines. Owners of buildings with lower scores would be required to conduct audits every five years to identify upgrades that could reduce energy consumption.

If the measure passes, Boston will join seven other cities and two states in the U.S. that require benchmarking and disclosure of energy use in existing buildings. These policies, which are being phased in on a variety of schedules based on building size, will eventually cover roughly 4 billion square feet of floor space in major cities.

Why this focus on large, commercial buildings? Such buildings consume the bulk of energy in a given city (in Boston, that is estimated at some 70 percent to 80 percent), so measuring the efficiency of buildings and then trying to improve their scores could have a significant impact on energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in urban areas.

»» CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

BREAKING NEWS

A NEW ASRW FORMAT TO KICK OFF THIS YEAR

Beginning with the 2013 event, Automotive Service & Repair Week (ASRW) will become a two-day expo, with three days of educational forums.

The show floor will be open Thursday, Oct. 17 and Friday, Oct. 18 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. The ASRW Conference Program will take place Wednesday, Oct. 16, through Friday, Oct. 18, and the event remains at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas.

The change is in response to feedback gathered from loyal exhibiting companies as well as previous attendees, and will offer significant business and financial efficiencies for all ASRW participants.

With this updated schedule, participants will enjoy the same number of Expo hours as in

Photo: Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau

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>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

ENERGY BENCHMARKING ON THE RISE

According to Steven Schillinger of GRC-Pirk Management in Reno, Nev., who serves as the administrator for Energy Star Green Garage Challenge, benchmarking programs in many areas are tied to special tax credits for compliant buildings, and those that have made an effort to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. "And in many states and localities, you can't sell a building unless you have to have a rating on it," Schillinger says.

Right now, most cities that have adopted benchmarking requirements have started with very large buildings (50,000 square feet or more), but the ordinances will expand over time to include smaller and smaller building, which will have a direct affect on many body shops. The benchmarking process involves measuring energy use (based on data from utility providers), and then comparing it to other buildings of the same size that are being used for similar purposes. Building owners are typically on the hook for making sure the benchmarking is completed, but they may require tenants to actually gather the data and work with utilities.

Washington, D.C., was one of the first cities to require benchmarking, and requires owners to use the Energy Star tool to disclose their energy use annually. Starting in June 2014 Austin will require benchmarking for buildings over 10,000 square feet, along with mandatory energy audits for residential buildings. New York City, Seattle, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Minneapolis also have similar requirements.

In California, the benchmarking mandate affects buildings of larger than 50,000 square feet right now, but will eventually cover any building over 5,000 square feet by January 2014. Washington State passed a similar measure in 2009. In almost all cases, the benchmarking data must be disclosed to potential buyers if the owner wants to sell the building.

The Green Garage Challenge (www.findgreengarage.com) is an EPA Small Business Partnership program for improving energy efficiency in the auto service and repair industry. Shop owners can use the online tools on the site to provide data and receive a rating based on energy usage and emissions. "They have a measurement tool to compare their performance with other facilities," Schillinger says. Green Garage also includes waste and performance hours in its calculations, along with chemical usage and disposal. The Green Garage service can be used to fulfill the

requirements of the current benchmarking laws, since it is based on the Energy Star Portfolio Manager tool.

According to the most recent data, typical body shop energy efficiency ratings for new facilities range from 65 to 72 on a scale of 100, while a new facility with some energy efficiency improvements typically falls in the 73-79 range. An "energy efficient new facility" may be rated between 80 and 90.

Benchmarking can be a beneficial tool to shop owners. If you're building is not particularly energy efficient, then taking steps to improve your score can save money by reducing utility usage. A study by Lawrence Berkeley Labs on the benefits of energy performance assessments found that existing buildings could lower energy costs by as much as 16 percent, with a 1.1 year payback.

Owners of older buildings may worry that, because of the age of the facility, they will wind up with a low rating that could affect their resale value, or result in costly efficiency upgrades down the line. But just because a building is old doesn't necessarily mean that it is inefficient. New York City's benchmarking program revealed that the most efficient public building in the city dated from 1933. The city's data also indicated that just 2 percent of buildings were responsible for 45 percent of the city's greenhouse gas emissions, allowing officials to take a more targeted approach to emissions reduction.

Shops that may be impacted by these ordinances should work with utility providers and keep copies of their utility bills so that the data is easily available to be input into the online tool, and have a plan in place to implement energy (and cost) saving measures like ensuring lights are turned out when they aren't necessary, and that bay doors are closed to reduce heating and cooling costs. A third-party energy audit would be a good idea for any shops interested in boosting their scores and then touting their "green" credentials in their advertising. (The Federal Trade Commission updated its rules for green marketing last year. More information is available here: <http://www.ftc.gov/opa/reporter/advertising/greenguides.shtml>.)

Right now, receiving a poor rating doesn't carry any penalties, but Schillinger warns that as "time moves on, between now and 2020, I expect there will be penalties put in place for poor performers."

A NEW ASRW FORMAT TO KICK OFF THIS YEAR

the past, but streamlined into two action-packed days.

To deliver the maximum experience and value to ASRW attendees, several key events will evolve for 2013, including the ASRW Industry Forum panel discussion and the creation of a new on-floor networking event.

"After diligently compiling, researching and examining feedback from our loyal participants, these changes reflect the culmination of months of work, and we are so pleased to reveal our plans," stated Ron Pyle, ASA president. "This new show structure was carefully crafted to foster a deeper level of networking and community among attendees and within the industry, and provides a solution to a longtime industry need identified through our research."

New ASRW Expo Schedule for 2013

Thursday, October 17

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. – ASRW General Session

9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. – ASRW Expo

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. – ASRW Welcome Reception

Friday, October 18

9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. – ASRW Expo

The ASRW Conference Program will take place Wednesday, Oct. 16 through Friday, Oct. 18.

ASRW has also launched a new website combining NACE and CARS information at www.ASRWevents.com. Among many technical, aesthetic and graphic updates, highlighted features include a streamlined interface and easy-to-use navigation.

ASRW includes the International Autobody Congress & Exposition (NACE) and the Congress of Automotive Repair & Service (CARS), making it the industry's leading event for dedicated professionals to conduct business, network and engage in industry issues. The Tradeshow News Network recognized ASRW as a 2011 Top 250 U.S. trade show.

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COLLISION REPAIR INDUSTRY Stats & Trends

U.S. new vehicle registrations will climb to **15.3 million** units in 2013, bringing it close to its pre-recession long-term trend, says R.L. Polk & Co.



Taking a look at CCC's position on seam sealers

Per CCC and others, materials are not included in any of the labor time components.

BY DEGART | ABRN BLOGGER

I was looking at the DEG database recently www.degweb.org and it reminded me about CCC's position on seam sealer. If we look at the included operations for most weld on panels it shows Caulk/Seam sealer to be included. Now just to confirm this would be the labor ONLY and not the materials. Per CCC and the other information providers, materials are not included in any of the labor times for components. In CCC this can be found in G10 of the Collision Estimating Guide. I have pasted the not included items from the paragraph below.

- A/C System, evacuate and recharge
- Aftermarket & OEM accessories
- Alignment, check or straightening related parts
- Alignment check of front or rear suspension/steering

- Anticorrosion material restoration/application
- Battery D&R/recharge
- Brackets & braces transfer
- Broken glass removal or clean up



- Brakes, bleed and adjust
- Caulk (non-OEM), sound insulate or paint inner areas
- Clean up or detailing of vehicle prior to delivery
- Computer control module D&R/relearn
- Conversion vans (special components, equipment and trim)

- Cutting, pulling or pushing collision damaged parts for access
- Damaged or defective replacement parts
- Drain & refill fuel tank
- Drilling, modification or fabrication of mounting holes

abrn.com BEST OF THE BLOGS

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BEST OF THE BLOGS are articles written by bloggers on ABRN's community pages

ASA welcomes Risley AAGEDITOR

The Automotive Service Association (ASA) officially welcomed Dan Risley into his new position of executive vice president yesterday, and although 24 hours in, he said it is akin to "drinking from the fire hose," he remains optimistic about tackling the challenges of his new role.

Risley, who has served the industry in many roles throughout his career, comes to ASA from Allstate Insurance Co. where he was a market claims manager. Before that he was executive director of the Society of Collision Repair Specialists.

"We want to share how enthusiastic we are about having Dan join us," says Ron Pyle, ASA president and chief staff execu-

tive. "We are ready to get him out in front of our members and allow him to do what he does best, which is represent the industry in a very professional way."

Risley says both his experience with SCRS and his most recent position with Allstate will act as building blocks to help him lead ASA. His Allstate experience has given him the added benefit of understanding the insurer's perspective.

"The background information and the insight I got from an insurer perspective is certainly going to help me in understanding what motivates them, what's important to them. And as our members look to work with insurance companies, whether as a DRP or non-DRP, the fact is you are going to be working with insurance

companies. It's going to help us bridge some of those gaps that are out there," Risley says.

Main focuses currently include addressing NACE, CARS and ASRW, along with member priorities and needs. Risley says he is going to use upcoming industry events, such as the Collision Industry Conference (CIC) in Phoenix, to "get more exposure to what the concerns are. I have some cursory knowledge of that, but having been removed from that for the past six years. I am looking forward to getting more engrained and in tune with the industry. So priority number one is to get fully engaged. But as I get fully engaged, I think the focus is going to be on ASRW, membership growth and retention and just making sure we are responding to needs.

"One of the strengths that I think I can bring to the group is helping bring diverse groups together with very different objectives and opinions and help come up with a solution that is going to be a win-win for everybody," he says.

With experience more focused on the collision side, Risley said he does plan to learn more about the needs and challenges of ASA members on the mechanical side.

Based in Chicago, Risley will work remotely with the Texas-based ASA team, including Pyle. However, neither he nor Pyle anticipate this to be an issue.

Visit www.abrn.com/ASARisley to read more.



Tech Tip: Fuses That Won't Blo
From: Peter
Blog post
1 week ago
-968



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THE SHOP OWNER

CAMILLE EBER

Keeping your promises

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SHOP MANAGEMENT: PROFIT MOTIVE

TOM MCGEE

Accomplishing your goals

PAGE
62



MIKE ANDERSON

Following the 30-20-10 rule

- Fabricate templates, reinforcing inserts, sleeves or flanges
- Filling, plugging and finishing of unneeded holes in new parts
- Information label installation

Material costs

- Pinch weld clamp damage repair
- Refinishing

If you look at DEG inquiry number 3318, you will see that CCC includes the Caulk/Seam sealer time for WELDED ON PARTS ONLY and not bolted on parts. Coming from a shop I know several manufacturers that ship hoods and other parts that require the technician to apply the seam sealer so the labor for this process needs to be a manual entry. Continue reading at <http://tinyurl.com/clnzoto>.

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- **2013's top shop challenges**

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WEBCAST ARCHIVES

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OCTOBER 16-19

- **NACE/CARS Las Vegas, Nevada**

NOVEMBER 5-8

- **SEMA 2013 Las Vegas, Nevada**

NOVEMBER 6-7

- **Collision Industry Conference Las Vegas, Nevada**

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Noteworthy

READER FEEDBACK TO ONLINE ARTICLES

To the LinkedIn discussion started by Matthew, "Trying to become a DRP is harder than I thought. Can someone give me some insight?":

From James Sund: You aren't doing anything wrong. By all means apply to any insurance companies that have DRPs. They add shops depending on their need. Your shop must be fully equipped, trained, insured and professional. Being easy to work with, honest and producing a quality product are the key elements to getting on a program. Don't be too eager to sign an agreement unless you fully understand the agreement labor rates, paint thresholds, parts discounts, AM and recycled parts usage, and cycle time requirements. All of them will have these items. Above all make sure you can make a profit before you sign.

From Craig Ascue: Be mindful of what you ask for and count the cost of what you are doing right now versus the potential of being on a DRP. What I'm saying in plain body shop business language is to make sure your team is ready to be vetted each month on quality customer service and cycle time. Make sure that you

are managing your P&L and balance sheets on a weekly and monthly basis. Know your direct and indirect cost by heart. It takes time and a different type of in-house marketing to get DRPs interested in your shop. The inside out marketing I'm referring to are the basic KPIs that make your shop profitable or not. Be patient in your business pursuit and make sure you are going after a DRP that will benefit you and your business.

From Jeff Turner: Amazes me how so many shop owners rely on someone else filling their tech stalls. Then they wonder why our industry is in such a state of disarray. We would all be much better off if we realize that the owner of the vehicle, who is truly "our customer," is the only person whom we should be looking out for. All these DRPs are driven by one thing, GREED, not customer satisfaction, quality of work or safety of repairs. Focus on building a brand that sets you apart from all the other DRPs.

Diminished value is very real, especially "inherent" diminished value, which still exists even after a nearly perfect repair. We also have "insurer" and "repair" related diminished value, which can result from a bad repair process, inferior parts or inferior work. People have been collecting diminished value for years.



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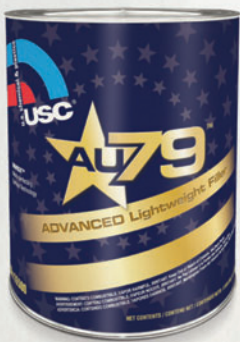
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For more information circle #36



Keeping your promises

Lessons learned during the process of bringing another generation into ownership

I made a promise about 10 years ago that took me much too long to fulfill (for a myriad of reasons). Anyone that knows me very well knows this story, but I'd like to share a few lessons learned that others may benefit from.

Early last year, I fulfilled the promise to make my nephew William a partner in the business. William started out hanging around the shop with me from the time he was about 10, worked part-time here while in school and full-time ever since, working his way up the ranks to production manager. During a particularly difficult time a while back for me, he stepped up and acted as general manager, and although I always knew he was bright and capable, even I was impressed by the scope of the potential he demonstrated.

I believe things happen as they do for a reason, and I think my delay in fulfilling my promise to William taught me some important things:

Give critical thought to the timeline you need to accomplish any promise.

In my case 10 years ago, William had given his notice and accepted a position with an MSO in our market. I took this personally and was angry, accusing him of betraying not only me, but also his grandparents (who owned the business before me). I did not respond professionally and ultimately gave my promise out of fear of going it alone and not having a family member for succession for the business. (Making him a partner had been part of my long-range plan, but I had yet to determine how and when this would occur.)

The longer you delay, the more likely the other party will become disenchanted and lose faith.

I kept putting William off because I couldn't get my hands wrapped around a plan. After talking with many colleagues and a couple of attorneys, I was overwhelmed with the amount of information I had and became a little paralyzed.

"I WAS OVERWHELMED WITH THE AMOUNT OF INFO I HAD, AND A LITTLE PARALYZED."

Do not over promise and under deliver. Just as with customers, this undermines your credibility. I fairly soon realized I'd over-promised on what I was psychologically able and willing to do.

Avoid procrastination by getting a trusted friend, colleague or consultant to act as your "accountability partner."

Two years before finally signing the partnership documents with William, I was a member of a DuPont Business Council group with Mike Anderson of CollisionAdvice.com as our facilitator. Fulfilling my promise to William became the main focus of my action plan while in this group, and Mike took it upon himself to be my accountability partner, regularly following up with me to make sure I was accomplishing the steps in the process. Mike had a handful of what he calls "come to Jesus" meetings with William and me to work through the mess we created. (I say "we" because at various points neither of us handled ourselves very honorably.)

If you're unable to fulfill a promise, or need more time to do so, be the first to initiate discussions, including truly credible things that are inhibiting your progress.

I did not proactively keep William informed of my progress (or lack thereof). Instead, he would ask periodically where I was with things, and often I took the anger I had towards myself about it out on him. In turn, his frustration with me was apparent in his performance at work (which impacted mine as well), and the lack of quality interaction between us at times vibrated negativity throughout our organization.

I realize now the value of having a consultant and attorney with experience with such things. They really can help you avoid a quagmire. I became stuck in the many options and details I had amassed. Had I sooner sought professional help that I was comfortable with, much of what we went through could have been avoided. A consultant or attorney can help keep business business, and family-stuff family.

I'm not proud of the way I handled things initially, but I am extremely proud of William for his forgiveness, stick-to-it-ness and drive to move our business forward.

Tell Me What YOU THINK



If there's a topic you'd like me to address, I'd love to hear from you.

Camille Eber

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Camille Eber is the second-generation owner of Fix Auto Portland East in Portland, Oregon.





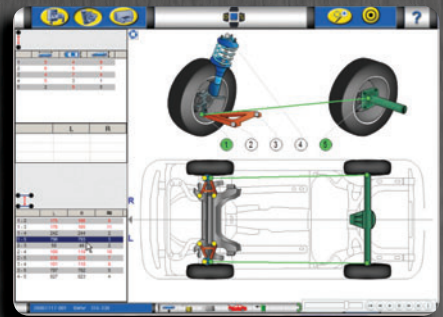
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IN THIS SECTION

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THE TAKE AWAY

THERE IS NO BETTER WAY TO GET GREAT IDEAS AND INSIGHT FOR YOUR BUSINESS THAN TO VISIT ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SHOP.

MINDING YOUR BUSINESS



THE IDEA EXCHANGE

SHOP OWNERS SHARE 10 THINGS THEY'RE TRYING AT THEIR SHOP – THAT MAY WORK AT YOURS

BY JOHN YOSWICK | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

ANYONE WHO has done it will tell you: There's no better way to get great ideas for your business than paying a visit to another successful shop.

Here's a sampling of 10 ideas you might pick up by taking some time to stop in and talk to a fellow shop owner.

1. One-day and even same-day repairs have become regular occurrences through a "rapid repair" system established at Top Finish Collision Center in Santa Ana, Calif.

"Insurance companies want us to improve the customer experience," shop owner Tony Bucio said. "I built that (rapid repair) area to have a team to do repairs that are typically small or medium. We don't have the heavy-frame machinery there. We don't slow down big jobs by asking our most experienced technicians to do the small jobs, and we don't slow down the small jobs because we're handling the big jobs."

2. Nearly every collision shop has a handful of online reviews from customers, but Canyon Road Auto Body in Portland, Ore., has more than 100 on one website alone, something Sabra Burge has made a priority.

"Every customer gets a hand-out with directions on how to go to that website and give us a review, good or bad," says Burge, who manages the shop for a group of dealerships.

Fortunately for the shop, the majority of those reviews are good, with nearly 96 percent giving the shop a 4- or 5-star rating. That genuine customer feedback is convincing others to bring their vehicles to the shop.

"We have a car in here from hundreds of miles away in New Mexico," Burge said. "The owners are in town visiting family and wrecked their car, and after they went online, they came here. That kind of marketing doesn't cost anything."

3. Mike Schoonover is quite frank about the downturn his two-shop business in Minnesota has been experiencing as the economy continues to sputter.

"We're taking 'lean' to an extreme," Schoonover said, citing a decrease in sales over an 8-10 month period earlier this year. "It's based on the weath-



Sabra Burge

er and other issues taking place within our local markets. So we're looking to cut different costs. We've reexamined everything and reinvented ourselves."

Schoonover, whose family has operated the business since 1938, said that while the changes have not been easy, he thinks his business is now better prepared to prosper.

4. Second-generation shop owner Mike Young of Atomic Auto Body in Richland, Wash., said his shop offers its customers a free detail of their repaired vehicle four times a year. The shop currently has more than 500 customers signed up on the service. Young pulls a small percentage of the shop's labor sales to help offset the cost of his detail department, which also does retail work, including added detail services for customers in for the free basic detail.

"The detail department generates about \$8,000 a month in sales, which isn't too bad for two stalls," Young said.

So does the free detail work pencil out for the business? Young said it can

be hard to gauge, but he prefers to spend marketing dollars in ways that benefit his existing customers and distinguish his shop from others.

5. John Borek has found some creative ways to generate publicity for his 22-employee shop, Autocraft Bodywerks in Austin, Texas, including converting a C4 Corvette into a working replica of the Batmobile. But he's also found some unique ways to generate revenue, including selling golf carts customized to look like a Hummer, an Escalade, a 1932 Ford, or a Bentley.

"I sold one to the woman married to (pro tennis player) Andy Roddick; to (American Idol winner) Kelly Clarkson; to (actress) Eva Longoria who bought it for Tony Parker (of the San Antonio Spurs)," Borek says.

Borek said he uses a website to market the carts, which are built by another company, but which his shop often customizes with special wheels or paint to match the buyer's regular vehicle.



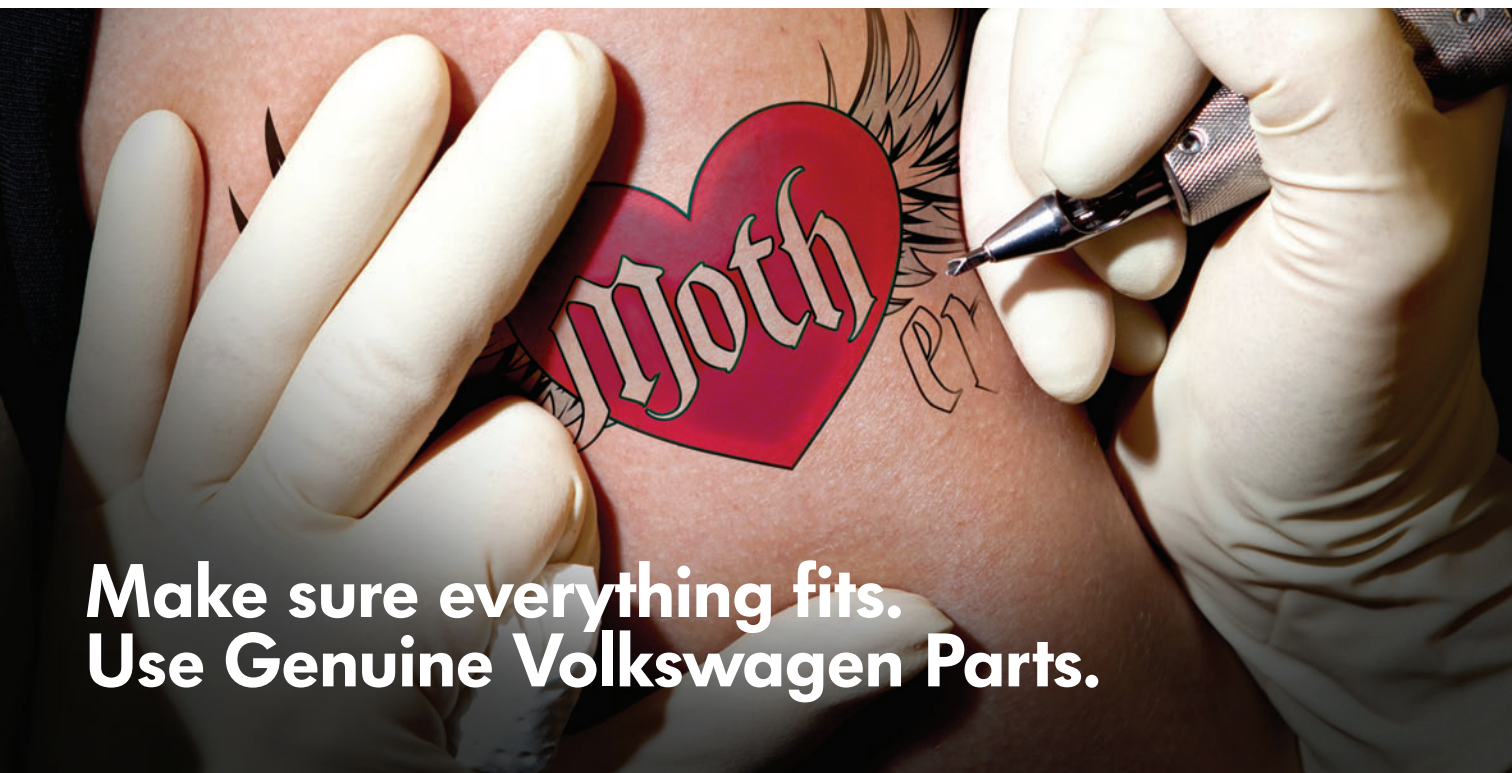
Darren Pierse

6. Darren Pierse, co-owner of Arizona Collision Specialists in Scottsdale, Ariz., said one way to improve his company's "touch time" on vehicles would

be an additional parts delivery so that his techs could hit the ground running the next morning.

A multi-line dealer proposed that in addition to its regular deliveries, all of its dealerships would make a late-in-the-day delivery of the shop's parts to a central hub; Arizona Collision Specialists uses a third party to pick up those parts overnight and deliver them to Pierse's shops by 6 a.m.

7. Will Latuff, manager of the fourth-generation Latuff Brothers collision repair business in St. Paul, Minn., said he "blueprints" every job, doing a complete tear-down in order to determine



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every part needed. When a vehicle is disassembled, for example, all fasteners are placed in a plastic box with numbered compartments and photos. This allows whoever is reassembling the vehicle to locate the needed fasteners quickly.

8. Doug Verdier of Active Auto Body wouldn't want to give up his



Doug Verdier

shop's great location in downtown Portland, Ore.; but like a lot of shops in urban areas, he struggles with a parking shortage. But he found one creative solution:

He worked out a deal with a nearby church to use its parking lot during the week in exchange for the church using his lot on Sundays.

9. Geralynn Kottschade said that she her husband Jerry try to teach their 22 employees at Jerry's Body Shop in Mankato, Minn., by example. They demonstrate the respect for others that they expect their employees to show not only to each other and customers, but also to other repairers in their market, and to insurers or desk auditors.

If the shop is re-repairing a vehicle from another shop, it is done confidentially, Kottschade said. "Our job is to fix it and make it right, and remember that someone else might someday be correcting a mistake we make."

Avoiding any such mistakes is part of the Kottschades' belief in the three Ts: training employees, tooling them and trusting them. Every employee knows they are empowered to stop a vehicle at any point in the process if they see something that's not right, she said.

"We created an environment for employees that at the end of the day, they can go home knowing they did the best job, not doing anything substandard or that compromises their morals," she said.

10. Rick Stoker, manager of the Dick Hannah Collision Center in Vancouver, Wash., said his shop was among the first in the state four years ago to switch to waterborne basecoats. He wants to make sure the shop uses vir-

tually every drop of the system's toners.

"Empty" containers are recapped and turned upside down overnight. The "remnants" of a given toner, which end up in the cap, are then poured into a corresponding toner container. Capful by capful, Stoker said, the shop can actually "rescue" as much as another full container of any particular toner.

Stoker said the system has actually helped get a job out when a painter realizes (too late for a same-day delivery from the shop's paint vendor) he doesn't have quite enough of a toner for a job – but can check the "back shelf" to pull what's been recaptured from previous "empty" containers of that toner.◻

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SHOP PROFILE

A snapshot of one of the industry's leading shops

MARSHALL'S AUTO BODY CARSTAR / BILLERICA, MASS.



Caught in the act

Treating people right steers path to prosperity for award-winning family business

BY JAMES E. GUYETTE | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Staying involved with community affairs while leveraging the benefits of widespread name recognition, a reputation for high quality repairs and extensive customer referrals helps Marshall's successful shop return.

Especially for James Marshall, owner of Marshall's Auto Body CARSTAR in Billerica, Mass. In business for 35 years, the family enterprise annually grosses \$2.7 million while delivering a most-impressive 99.14 percent CSI (Customer Service Index) score.

"Word of mouth is the greatest marketing tool," declares Marshall. "Our goals are to let the customer understand that we are there to assist, educate and listen attentively to their concerns and not to be complacent."

Reflecting on an unending quest for his own ongoing education, Marshall notes that "everyone is my mentor."



IMAGE: MARSHALL'S AUTO BODY CARSTAR

Jim Marshall

"It would take me forever to list everyone that has had some form of influence over the way I operate my business," he says. "I learn from all sorts of people: Being

a customer in other venues teaches you how to treat people. Being a parent teaches you to be patient, and reading books opens your thought process to know that all business operations share common denominators."

Marshall goes on to describe the entire company's empathetic attitude toward each customer by observing that "when our vehicles are involved in a car accident our entire lives are put on hold. It's a hassle to deal with auto repairs, rentals, insurance and estimates. You no longer feel in control, and the stress can be overwhelming."

Thus the 16-bay shop's focus "is always to get your car – and your life – back in order ASAP." A lifetime warranty from Marshall's and a 5-year limited warranty from the franchise reflect pride in the workmanship being delivered. "We don't just repair it quickly, we repair it right." The staff of 14 nets praise from the boss for being the best in the business, and the array of equipment is top-notch as well. "It's just part of our overall approach that gives you the ultimate peace of mind."

AT A GLANCE

Marshall's Auto Body CARSTAR

Name of shop

Billerica, Mass.

Location

James Marshall

owner

1

Number of shops

35

Years in business

14

Number of employees

None exist in state

Number of DRPs

\$2,175

Average repair order

10 days

Average cycle time

\$60,000

Average weekly volume

BASF

Paint supplier

Car-O-Liner, Brewco, Chissom

Frame machines used

CCC One, Autodex

Estimating system used

www.marshallsautobody.com

Internet site

Manager Jayce Mitchell has been with Marshall for 17 years, and he remains comfortable and confident in

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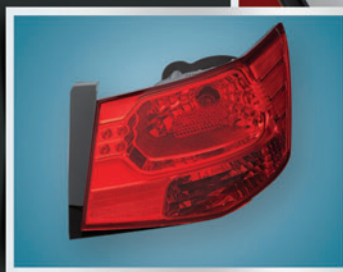
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Genuine Parts

Mitchell's ability "to keep the culture that we have embraced" by "protecting and maintaining" a philosophy of "There is No 'I' in Team."

"We work together to achieve a common goal," Marshall explains, adding that recruiting new hires is a thorough process to ensure a good fit. Depending on the skill levels being sought, candidates are gleaned from vocational schools, advertisements on Craigslist or in newspapers and, of course, personal references and recommendations from jobbers who know the region's workforce. I-CAR Gold and Platinum technicians are on board to further heighten production standards.

Bonus programs are in place for achieving performance goals. "We also have a program called 'Caught in the Act of Correctness.' If an employee is doing the craft with 10 percent more effort and/or super safely, I approach them with a gift card and yell out, 'Caught in the Act of Correctness!' We use a CSI card mailer and measure our results, and the staff is rewarded accordingly."

Always seeking solutions

Out of the shop floor, "we are 'leanish' – it is a work in progress," regarding lean production techniques. Every job is blueprinted using DFR, which stands for a set of "Design for Reliability" strategies that steer exceptional repair outcomes while driving stellar CSI tallies.

"We have SOPs in place for all repair processes, starting with a pre-wash and inspection, an in-process inspection check list and a post-inspection performed by two different people," he reports.

A 10-day average cycle time is always being addressed in an effort to move things along quicker. "I don't think anyone wants the cycle time to be more than one day," Marshall muses, adding that "we're working on cycle time all the time; that's on my bucket list."



IMAGE: MARSHALL'S AUTO BODY CARSTAR

JIM MARSHALL
p: 978.667.5000
f: 978.671.0818
jim@mabcarstar.com

128 Pond Street
Billerica, MA 01821
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The business' growth over the years has been augmented with the implementation of computerized and more strategic estimating. Laptop computers are utilized in the bays along with wireless cameras for direct uploading into a car's file, and the office staff has embarked upon a series of efficiencies to eventually become a paperless operation.

Waterborne paint was adopted eight years ago. "We thought we would be ahead of the curve and be eco-friendly, as well as taking advantage of BASF's training opportunities," says Marshall.

"We have made a major investment in the finest paint system available and constantly upgrade the technology and equipment to ensure that each vehicle's paint matches. We take special pride in our abil-

ity to match factory finishes as the final step in the restoration process."

Membership in a CARSTAR-sponsored 20 Group for the franchisees is another management plus. "We meet quarterly and discuss our financial positions, ways of improving our processes and general business operations and trends," he says. "The group is focused on the auto repair industry, and as a result we relate to each other on the same level, have the same issues and seek the same solutions."

When dealing with insurance carriers, "the first step is total transparency and trust, then we follow up with our performance and CSI," says Marshall, citing the shop's 99.14 score as evidence of the clientele's consistent appreciation for services rendered.



IMAGE: MARSHALL'S AUTO BODY CARSTAR

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IMAGE / MARSHALL'S AUTO BODY CARSTAR

A Hertz rental facility is onsite for customer convenience, and paintless dent repairs are offered for the more minor dings.

Massachusetts has no direct repair programs (DRPs). "Having the lowest labor rate in the nation puts a great challenge on being competitive in the market in hiring great technicians and compensating them in a proper fashion," he laments. For the most part, I-CAR isn't as recognized as it should be for the information to repair a car more safely and accurately, and shops should be classified for their level of training and performance."

Spreading the word

Advertising is accomplished via mailers, email referrals, a social media pres-

ence and supporting local athletics with team and banner sponsorships along with handbook ads. "It's great when the kids yell out, 'go Marshall's Auto,'" says Marshall.

"We implemented the "Donate to Educate" program in which we donate \$25 per repair to the PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) of the customer's choice," he continues. We use Facebook, both in business and personally, to promote name recognition and events. However, in a world of electronic saturation, we still believe in touching our customers and (insurance) agents personally through community organizations and agent recognition."

The company belongs to six civic organizations and contributes to numerous other endeavors, including the

Make a Wish carwash and other charities. Marshall travels to assist "the CARSTAR nation" as chairman of the iPods For Wounded Veterans program. "During the month of November we raised tens of thousands of dollars to bring to the severely injured troops in hospitals like Walter Reed and others like it across the United States."

Marshall also serves as chairman for local vocational school's auto body repair segment and sits on the institution's finance committee member. He was inducted into the Shawsheen Valley Technical High School Hall of Fame in 2012. In 2008 Marshall was named CARSTAR's "Rookie of the Year" as 2011 brought "Most Improved Shop" honors; last year he clinched the "Financial Focus Group Award."

Family business

The business was established at the family home in the latter part of the 1970s by his late father Malcom, who had four days off in a row due to his position as a fulltime firefighter. Subsequently outgrowing the home's garage, in 1978 they constructed a 1,400 square-foot building at the current location over on Pond Street. After five additions, the structure covered 5,000 sq. ft.; in 2005 they built and installed a new paint booth and prep station.

"The original shop was at our house, so after school it was an easy fit into the family mix. I attended a vocational high school and took automotive repair. This would allow me to know all ends of the automobile," Marshall recalls.

He started in the family business as a helper and then progressed to refinish prep. After serving in the U.S. Air Force, Marshall returned home and became a painter. Five years later he was shop foreman and a minor partner with Malcom. The younger Marshall bought the entire business in 1995.

Keeping the peace at Thanksgiving dinner amid a family in business together was easy, says Marshall, as Malcom left no doubt that "HE WAS THE BOSS." Marshall's wife Dawn is the company's bookkeeper. "We also brainstorm marketing ideas, discuss business strategies and attend financial focus group meetings and annual conferences together. I'm the boss at the shop, my wife is the boss at home." ❏



IMAGE / MARSHALL'S AUTO BODY CARSTAR



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ASK



PROFIT MOTIVE: YOUR COMPASS TO FINANCIAL SUCCESS

Accomplishing your goals

Six steps to ensure you are successful in your plans for 2013

BY TOM MCGEE | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

We are now well into the New Year. On New Year's Eve or New Year's Day, you probably told someone what your New Year's resolution was. The problem is that by now, most of us don't remember what our resolution was, or worse, have already given up!

For most people, they didn't take the time to write their goal down. The key to accomplishing your goals is simple: have a written plan.

Define areas of importance

Start with a few areas that are important to you. Some suggestions to consider are career, family and friends, business, personal development, health, volunteer, hobbies and financial.

Define your goals

Remember that you need to focus on a few goals that are measureable and attainable. If we list everything that we want to accomplish, we tend to become overwhelmed and find that our rate of success is low.

Visualize

I have always relied on my calendar, Word documents or mind-mapping software to help me stay on track with what I want to accomplish. When I joined ATI, I learned another way to keep focused on my objectives. ATI encourages the use of a goal poster — a picture you can keep on your desk that continuously reinforces your goals visually every day. I have also made

my goal poster a screen saver on my computer, again to keep my aims visible.

Create accessibility

When you have your goals, milestones and timeline completed, it's a good idea to send it to your smartphone, tablet or any device you use regularly, so you can scroll through your objectives every day.

Update it

By putting your goal plan on all your devices, you can review it anywhere! Standing in line for coffee, before your next meeting or any time you have a free minute. This regular review helps keep your goals front and center and allows you to note accomplishments that you have made toward your objectives.

Review your goals

Whether you actually review your goals on a daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly basis is entirely up to you. By creating a way to access them electronically and with the support of a goal poster, you make them portable and give yourself the opportunity to review them regularly wherever you are.

While I would like to share all my goals with you, I'll make things brief. I can tell you that I have two children in college and one in high school, and a retirement plan that I want to grow, so you can probably guess that I just need more money. I won't bore you with the details. However, I believe it is important to have some goals that are not business or career oriented, but are just for enjoyment. If you click atline.training.com/abrn1305, you can see part of a mind map that I have created to help me focus on spending some time doing something I enjoy, something that I have been thinking about and haven't started yet. And yes, with the kids in college, I'll probably quickly realize that the car will have to wait!

Now that you have the steps to defining measureable and attainable goals, it's time for you to sit down and create your goal plan so you can begin to accomplish everything that you want!

Tom McGee is Director of ATI Collision for the Automotive Training Institute, founded in 1974. ATI's 99 associates train and coach more than 1,150 shops across North America to drive profits and dreams home to their families. You can contact Tom at tmcgee@autotraining.net and visit their website at www.autotraining.net. Check out Profit Matters for Mechanical Repair Management tips in Motor Age by ATI's CEO Chris "Chubby" Frederick.



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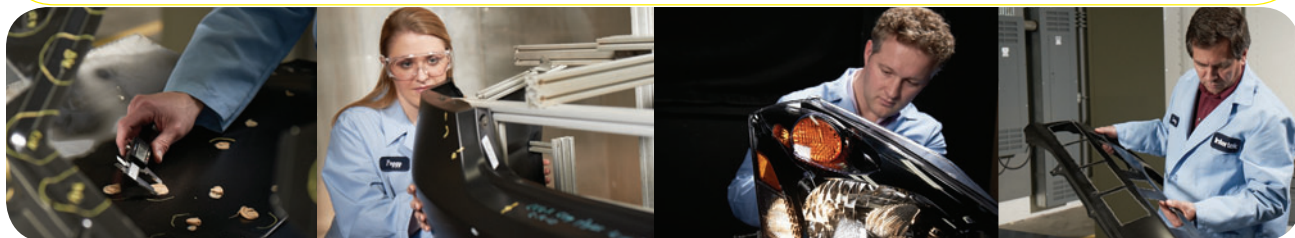
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TECHNOLOGY



IN THIS SECTION

- 50** The case for plastic repair
- 56** Your frame future



THE TAKE AWAY

BEING ABLE TO REPAIR VARIED TYPES OF PLASTIC PARTS HAS BECOME A NECESSARY SKILL FOR SHOPS AND TECHNICIANS.

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PLASTIC

REPAIR NECESSITIES

THE GROWING USE OF PLASTICS IN AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURING HAS SPURRED THE NEED FOR PLASTIC REPAIR SKILLS IN THE SHOP

BY AL THOMAS | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Doesn't it seem that more plastic is being used with each new automotive model year? We see plastic bumper covers, header panels, interior parts and other plastic and composite body parts. Being able to repair these varied types of plastic parts has become a necessary skill for shops and technicians. While a tech might doubt it at first, with some guidelines to help one identify and work with these different types of plastic, it is easy to develop the skills to repair them.

So what do we need to know about plastic? First, plastic comes in two basic categories, thermoset and thermoplastic. Thermoset is a polymer material that irreversibly cures through heat, chemical reaction or irradiation. Once hardened, a thermoset cannot be reheated and melted back into a liquid form.



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Thermoplastic is a polymer that becomes pliable or moldable after reaching a specific temperature and returns to a solid upon cooling.

Knowing if a plastic is a thermoset or a thermoplastic is necessary to choose the proper repair technique. A thermoset plastic does not melt when heated, and therefore cannot be repaired by welding. (Welding plastic will be covered later in this article.)

There are several other terms that refer to plastic types, such as rigid, flexible, reinforced plastic and composite. Rigid plastic (Fig 1), such that is used for interior door panels, holds its shape and cannot be flexed. It is often, but not always, made from a thermoset plastic and requires a specific repair procedure. Flexible plastic, used for parts such as front bumpers, is a polymer that can be flexed (Fig 2) and often repaired by welding or using adhesives.

Reinforced plastic is enhanced by high strength fibers embedded in the components. Fiberglass is a reinforced plastic, as is sheet moldable compound (SMC); however, the rosins needed for SMC are different than those required for repairing fiberglass.

A composite plastic (such as Kevlar) is formed when a combination of materials are bonded together to form an overlapping structure that is better than the individual components. Although the repair procedure for a composite is similar to the procedures for fiberglass and SMC, again the rosins used for its repair should be specifically designed to repair the composite material.

Safety

Repairing plastic parts is no different than working with other potentially hazardous materials, whether the parts are rigid or flexible and whether they

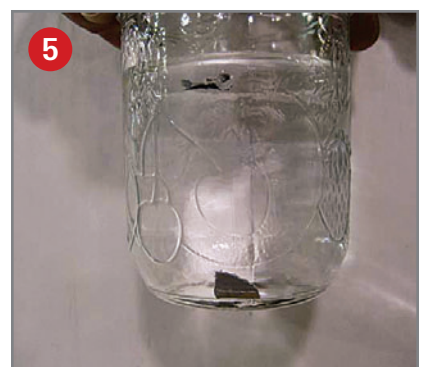
are made from thermoset or thermoplastic.

Therefore, as with other materials, the technician should be continually concerned with assuring personal, environmental and workplace safety. Common safety precautions include the following:

- Read, understand and follow all safety precautions set by the manufacturer.
- Read, understand and follow the MSDS related to the material being used.
- Wear safety glasses at all times.
- Wear the recommended respirator, gloves and other safety clothes and equipment as outlined in the MSDS.
- Always work in a well-ventilated area.

Plastic identification

With all these different types of plastic, how can one be sure which type it





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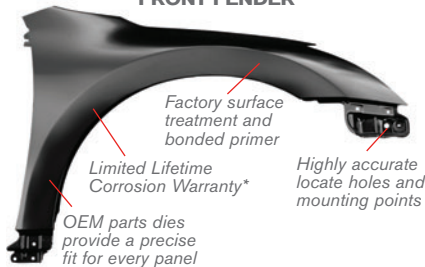
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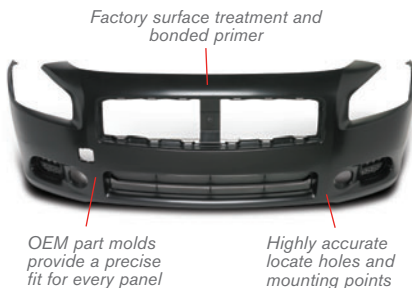
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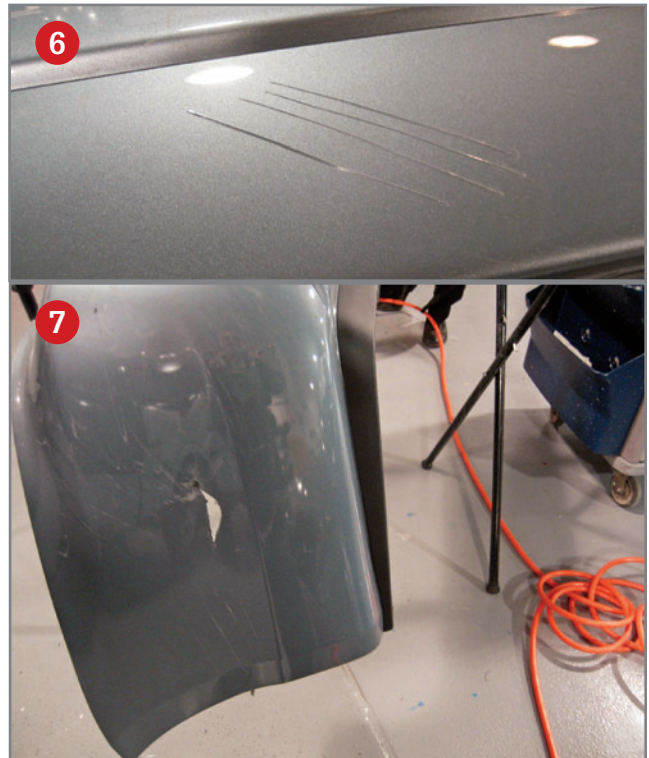
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is, so that he or she uses the proper repair procedure? The easiest and most accurate way is to identify the plastic by using its ISO code. This code should be stamped into each plastic part during manufacturing (Fig 3). Other ways of identifying plastic (although they are less accurate) are such tests as the sand test (Fig 4), in which an area is sanded. If the plastic smears, melts or gets waxy, it is likely not to be a polyolefin. If when sanded the plastic produces dust, it is likely that it is a polyolefin.

Another identification method, the float test, involves removing a small piece of the plastic in question and placing it in water. If the plastic part floats, it is likely to be a thermoplastic; if it sinks, it may not be a thermoplastic (Fig 5).

Repair techniques

Plastic repair may only require a single-side repair, such as a scratch or gouge (Fig 6); or it may need a two-sided repair if the damage has penetrated to the plastic or it has been ripped (Fig 7). A single-side repair means that the repairs are completed from one side only, generally the exposed side; and

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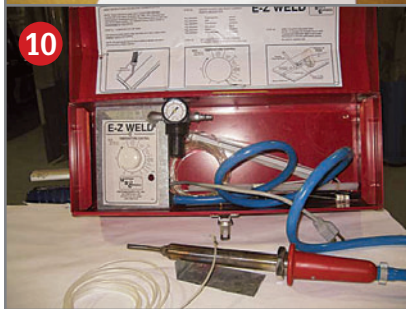
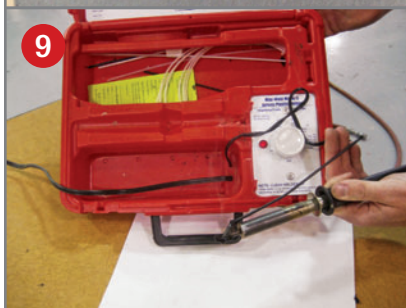
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the repair could be done with the part in place (Fig 8).

The two-sided repair involves first mending the back or inside of the part, and then cosmetically repairing the outside. This type of repair always requires that the part be removed from the ve-

hicle. Both single- and two-sided repairs can be performed using an adhesive or by using plastic weld.

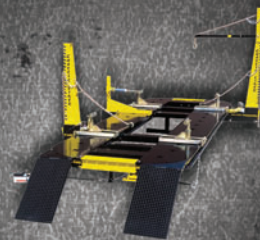
Plastic welding

Plastic welding can be accomplished by using either a hot air welder (Fig 9) or

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an airless welder (Fig 10). Both systems use a filler rod, which is matched to the type of plastic being repaired. The thermoplastic part softens and a softened filler rod is added (Fig 11). When the part cools, the fused repair becomes strong and can be sanded smooth and cosmetically repaired.

To properly perform this procedure, the part first must be thoroughly washed (Fig 12) with soap and water, and then cleaned with plastic, wax and grease remover (Fig 13). The area to be plastic



welded must then be ground into a V-shape (Fig 14) to accept the filler rod.

For a two-sided repair, the repair can be "tacked" into place to hold its shape as the filler rod is added on the opposite side (Fig 15). As with all types of welding, the filler should have full penetration.

Therefore, if a two-sided repair is the type being completed, filler rod may need to be applied to both sides to accomplish the proper penetration. After the weld has cooled, it can then be sanded and cosmetically repaired.

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Adhesive repair

When repairing plastic with adhesive, the part should first be washed with soap and water and then cleaned with the appropriate wax and grease remover. When raw plastic is cleaned and a standard wax and grease remover used, it may swell the plastic; therefore, only clean using a wax and grease remover specifically designed for raw plastic. First prepare the site by removing the paint and beveling



the edge (Fig 16) for a single-sided repair. The adhesive may be applied directly to the prepared site (Fig 17), smoothed, and allowed to cure (Fig 18). Then after the repair has cured, the site should be cosmetically sanded and repaired (Fig 19).

For a two-sided repair, a backing is applied. If the technician uses a self-adhesive backing pad, the repair surfaces should be cleaned and sanded. Then the backing pad is applied (Fig 20) according to the manufacturer's recommendation. The backing material

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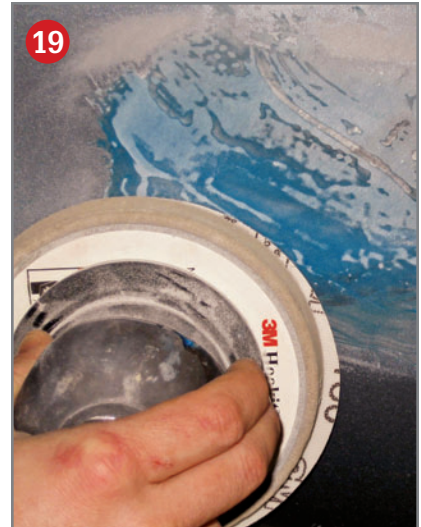


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that is used depends on the method of the repair. If an adhesive is used, the backing material could be (Fig 21) of various types: sheet plastic with adhe-

sives (red), fiber reinforcement (white and black), and steel reinforcement. Even aluminum tape with adhesive is sometimes used (Fig 22). If a patch is not

used, reinforcement must be added to the back side of the repair. A temporary patch such as aluminum tape is placed on the outside so the adhesive bond does not fall through. Then the adhesive is applied, and the reinforcing is applied into the soft adhesive bond.

Make sure that the bonding plastic comes through the mesh of the reinforcement (Fig 23). When the backside plastic has cured, the temporary patch should be removed. Then the front side can be repaired as described above for a single-sided repair.

Depending on the type of plastic that is being repaired, an adhesion promoter may be necessary. Polyolefin, a plastic commonly used in the manufacture of flexible bumpers, requires an adhesion promoter. This product often comes in a spray can, and should be applied according to manufacturer's recommendation, prior to applying adhesive bonds.

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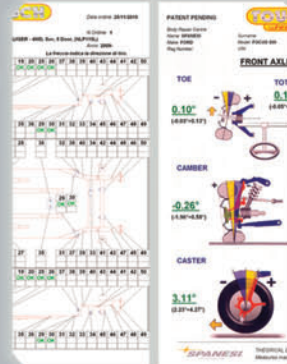






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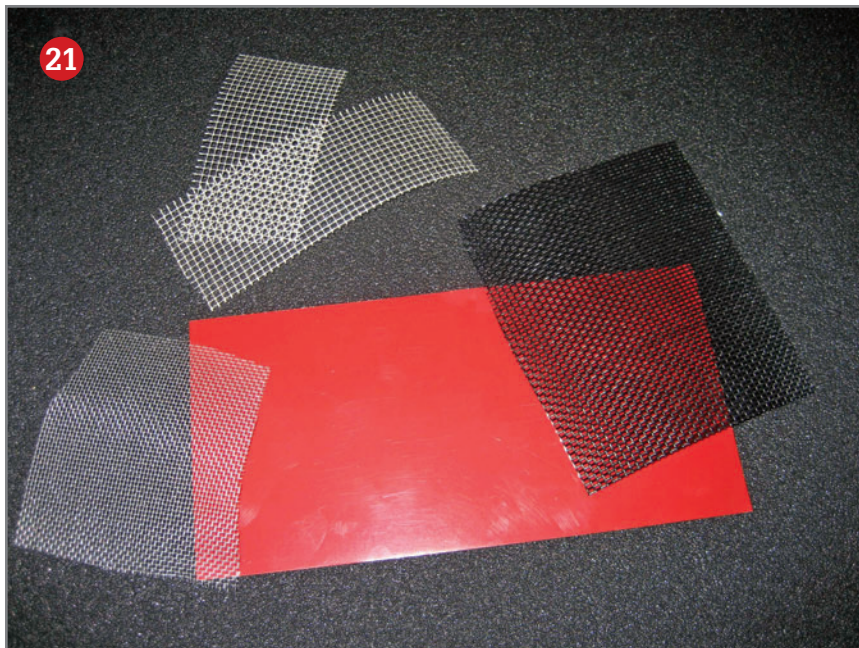


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Fiber-reinforced repair

As with other plastics, the damage to fiber-reinforced plastic can vary, as will the repair method. In some instances, the surface might be repaired using only shallow, one-sided cosmetic repairs. Or the job could require a more extensive two-sided repair procedure when the damage has penetrated the part. First, as with other plastic repairs, it's important to identify whether the part being repaired is a fiber-reinforced plastic, such as fiberglass, where a single filler has been used; or if it is an SMC, where more than one filler may have been used, in which case special rosins are required.

If it is a true composite repair, where multiple layers are involved, different rosins may be necessary than in either of the two previous situations.

Once the type of material to be repaired is identified and the correct repair rosins are selected, the procedure for single-side repair is:

- Wash with soap and water to remove water-soluble contaminants.
- Clean with the appropriate wax and grease remover to remove the non-water-soluble contaminants.
- Remove paint from the surrounding area with a DA and 80-grit sandpaper.



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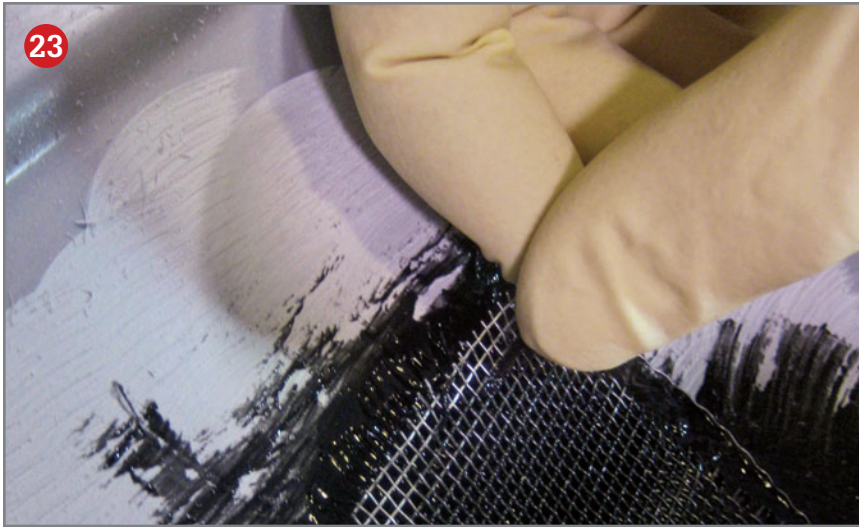
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- Bevel the damaged area, allowing for sufficient bonding of fiber agent.
 - Mix the filler and apply.
 - After a repair area has cured, level it by sanding, and then finish sand.
 - Apply primer filler as needed and block sand for proper contour.
- For two-sided repairs:

- Wash part with soap and water.
- Clean with a wax and grease remover.
- Remove paint with a grinder and 80-grit sandpaper. The paint should be removed to approximately 3 inches beyond the repair area on both sides.
- Remove sanding dust.
- Cut enough fiberglass matting to make three layers that are each slightly larger than the area to be repaired.
- Prepare and mix the rosin according to the manufacturer's directions.
- With a paint brush, saturate the first layer of fiberglass reinforcement with rosin. Paint rosin on the side of the FRP area to be repaired. Place the saturated reinforcement on the backside of the repair area and tap into place with a brush. The saturated reinforcement should make tight contact with the FRP.
- Repeat the process above until three layers of the reinforcement have been placed on the back of the area being repaired. Allow to catalyze.
- After the back has cured, grind the front of the reinforcement with 50-grit sandpaper, and then clean.
- Repair the front with polyester plastic body filler, sanded and primed as needed.

This repair can also be completed with chemical adhesives, which are designed for an FRP part. The adhesive is substituted for the rosin, but the process to follow is the same. The procedure for repairing sheet moldable compound (SMC) is also the same, although the adhesive used should be specifically designed for the repair of SMC.

The repair of plastic is no more difficult to master than other skills most techs have already developed. By properly identifying the substrate being repaired, the proper repair materials, and the appropriate techniques, techs will learn to accomplish relatively simple and quick repairs. Applying filler rod with plastic repair is no more difficult than applying filler rod when brazing or tape welding. Applying the adhesive is similar to the application of plastic body filler, and cosmetic repair uses the same skills used when applying plastic body filler. Many discarded plastic parts can easily and profitably be repaired. 



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The case for plastic repair

Repairing rather than replacing plastic automotive parts can increase profits and customer satisfaction



This photo shows a weighted bumper tab repair with adhesives.

IMAGE / LORD CORPORATION

BY **ED STAQUET** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Annually, thousands of plastic automotive parts can be repaired profitably rather than be replaced. There has been a stigma in the automotive repair industry that plastic car parts are not repairable and can only be replaced once they are damaged. While this might have been true many years ago, recent developments in repair materials and processes have made it simpler to choose repairing over replacement.

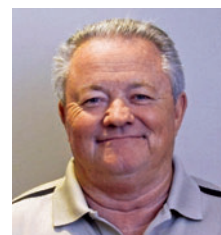
In the past, not only were some of the repair procedures very cumbersome, but the type of plastic material had to be correctly identified in order to determine which repair product to use on the damaged part. The technician had to ascertain if the plastic material was flexible or semi-flexible, rigid or semi-rigid – and often a consensus could not be reached among several technicians. Adding to this challenge was the lack of any useful repair products for plastic parts.

Repair vs. replace

Enter a new era of repair products – adhesives specifically formulated for repairing bumpers, bumper tabs, emblems,

headlamp modules, grilles, cladding and door trims. Now, the technician just chooses among a few products and only needs to know that the part is plastic – not the type of plastic material. Repairing a damaged car part is as simple as identifying the damaged part and choosing a repair adhesive.

The question of “repair vs. replace” can be profitably answered by using repair adhesives. Almost any plastic part can be effectively repaired with






Ed Staquet





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When repairing plastic automotive components apply the adhesive and spread it evenly to ensure the best adhesion.

IMAGE: LORD CORPORATION

an adhesive. When used properly, adhesives will repair a part to “like new condition” – rendering the repaired section as good as new.

Some of the points to consider when deciding on repair vs. replace include: cost of the new part, time and labor for repairing the broken part, age of the

vehicle, and the manufacturer and model of the vehicle. For a very simple repair on a less expensive vehicle, it might be worth it to replace the part. If the replacement procedure involves excessive disassembly work, it might also be more beneficial to use a repair adhesive. Customer satisfaction is always of prime importance and the customer should be reassured that a good, reliable repair can be made with quality repair adhesives.

Do it once

While making repairs with adhesives is relatively simple, it is important to understand the product being used and to carefully follow instructions to guarantee optimal results. Profitability comes from doing repairs properly – the first time. A good rule to follow is – “slow down to go faster!” You only want to make a repair once – there is no profit gained in having to redo a repair – especially since the second

repair might have to be done free-of-charge to gain customer satisfaction. Spend the time needed to make the repair properly and be sure to follow the procedures recommended by the adhesive supplier.

Here are some guidelines to follow when using adhesives to guarantee successful repairs:

Prepare

- Surface preparation – clean the front and back of the surface using the recommended cleaner
- Backing patch – a backing patch is required if the damage penetrates through the part, such as a bumper cover
- Sanding – for certain repairs use a sander or sandpaper to prepare the surface for proper adhesion

Apply

- Surface modifier or adhesion promoter – use the recommended surface

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modifier or adhesion promoter before applying the adhesive

- Equal mix – two component adhesives require leveling of the plungers. Typically, a bead of adhesive should be dispensed through the mixer before it is applied to the repair area.

Finish

- Curing times – follow the manufacturer's suggested curing times to guarantee optimal repair adhesion. In some instances, parts may require clamping or taping during the curing process, or the use of a heat gun.

- Sanding – follow the manufacturer's recommended sand times to finish sand the adhesive.

Timing is crucial

One of the biggest failure situations that occur in the automotive repair industry is not allowing the proper time for each procedure to reach its finishing point, before moving to the next step. This is where "slow down to go faster" can make a difference in the final outcome. Make sure that cleaning solvents and surface modifiers are allowed to dry for the recommended time. Rushing these procedures or steps may result in failure. If the repair adhesives are applied before the proper drying time is reached, the adhesive may not hold and the repair may fail.

Respect the written cure times before sanding or other finishing procedures. Do not rely on observation to determine if the adhesive is cured. Follow the recommended curing time before handling or completing work on the repaired part. When using primer or paint, follow the paint manufacturer's instructions for proper use.

Structural vs. cosmetic repairs

An automotive technician must decide if a damaged part requires a structural or a cosmetic repair. Appearance is one of the big determining factors when considering structural vs. cosmetic repairs. A structural repair is usually warranted when a part is broken off from another section, such as a headlamp mounting tab or torn bumper tab. A repair adhesive may be used

to bond the part together. For example, if the bumper cover is torn through (punctured) this is a structural repair requiring a backing patch. If the bumper cover sustained scratches only on the surface, this is a cosmetic repair requiring proper preparation, filling,

sanding and repainting. Parts such as bumper tabs and headlamp-mounting tabs can be easily repaired with adhesives.

Bottom-to-top repairs

When used properly, some manufactur-

"I use the time I save to take my daughter to cheerleading."

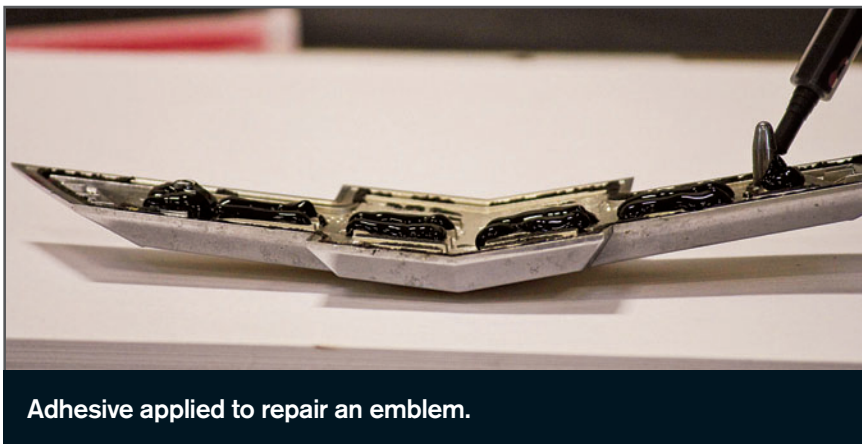
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Adhesive applied to repair an emblem.

IMAGE/LORD CORPORATION

Repair adhesives, specifically formulated for plastic components, are an ideal method for making sturdy repairs that also will increase the profitability of a repair shop. In the “repair vs. replace” question, repair adhesives can be the answer to making simple repairs that will assure customer satisfaction.

Editor's note: Ed Staquet has more than 40 years of experience in the auto body repair business. For the past 20 years, he has worked for Fusor Repair Systems and LORD Corporation and is now the senior staff technical support manager. He has been an instructor at I-CAR for 30 years. At I-CAR, he has been the recipient of I-CAR's Instructor of the Year several times and was awarded the I-CAR Founders Award. Staquet served two terms on the I-CAR Board of Directors, and has served on several auto body repair committees for the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE).

ers' repair adhesives carry a lifetime warranty. Repairing plastic car parts is both practical and profitable, and will garner customer satisfaction. It is crucial, though, to respect each adhesive manufacturer's product line to guarantee the best results. Do not combine repair products from different suppliers; they could be chemically incom-

patible and compromise the outcome of the repair or cause harm to repair personnel. Use the complete product line of repair products recommended from the repair product manufacturer. Not doing so could negate the warranty. Always stay within one manufacturer's process – bottom-to-top – from surface preparation to final finishing.

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The 2013 Mercedes-Benz SL roadster features an innovative sound system that incorporates part of the vehicle frame.

IMAGE / MERCEDES-BENZ

BY **TIM SRAMCIK** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

When *ABRN* was conducting its Top Shops research on contest finalist Car West Auto Body, owner Craig Moe presented his vision of the industry's future. Moe declared that shops would need OEM training, along with the next generation of tools and equipment to conduct more advanced repairs on the vehicles that soon would be passing through their doors.

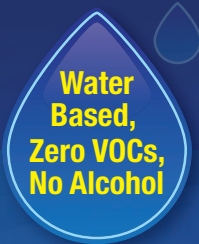
Of course, Moe isn't alone in his thinking. Many repairers are gearing up for these challenges. According to Carlton Hendricks, an automotive design engineer with more than 25 years in the industry and aftermarket, repairers would be wise to place most of their focus in one particular vehicle area he says will experience the biggest changes – the frame.

The driving reason behind Hendricks' declaration: It's time for the frame to go through the same evolution-

ary changes that have affected nearly every other part of a vehicle in the past two decades. If automakers are to meet new CAFÉ standards and make their vehicles appealing to consumers feeling a pinch at the pump, they have to offer even lighter vehicles and those that can sport revolutionary designs.

“Designers have made huge inroads cutting weight and incorporating less expensive materials in the panels, interior and engine. They've probably done as much as they can





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BMW's i3 city car utilizes a carbon fiber frame made from materials processed in a plant owned by the manufacturer.

IMAGE /BMW

for the foreseeable future," says Hendricks. "That leaves the frame. It's still responsible for more than 30 percent of vehicle weight. Before we can move even further in terms of revolutionary world changes in vehicle design, we have to rethink how we manufacture and use the frame."

Hendricks notes that automakers have known these facts for years but put off redesigning frames because of cost. It was quicker and more cost effective to focus on panels and electronics to shave off pounds and increase efficiency. Designers are taking the lessons learned from these developments to create frames that are quickly moving from drawing boards to planning stages.

Let's look at the most significant of these developments and how they'll affect your business.

Aluminum for everyone

Aluminum frames have been around for decades but because of their cost they are exclusive to high-end vehicles. The use of aluminum in other parts has grown steadily. A recent European study indicates the average aluminum content in vehicles has nearly tripled since 1990, rising from 110 lbs. to roughly 310 lbs. as of 2011.

As automakers continue to develop electric and alternative-fuel vehicles, look for this trend to continue and for more vehicles to incorporate these lightweight frames. Also driving their use is the development of manufacturing

technologies that can build aluminum frames more efficiently and cheaply than ever before.

Audi has led the way in this area. Its high-volume A8 model utilizes an aluminum frame assembly process that's almost fully automated. The process features 48 bonding machines, 106 machines for self-tapping screws, 215 robots, nearly 300 self-piercing rivet systems and a variety of MIG and other welders.

Carbon's day has come

Revolutionary manufacturing processes similarly are bringing nearer the day when carbon fiber will be a mainstay material in auto frames.

Like aluminum, carbon fiber has been used in other parts for years. The frame was considered off limits due to the cost of the material and the slow drying time for frame components, making them impractical for modern assembly lines.

BMW made major strides to address both these issues in 2011 when it partnered with SGL Carbon SE (SGL) to build its own carbon fiber factory. This enterprise was intended to help the automaker secure a steady supply of carbon fiber and cut costs through a refined production process.

Less than two years later, the enterprise is bearing fruit. The material produced by the plant is being used in the frame for BMW's i3 city car, which should be introduced later this year.

"The i3 could be really significant," says Hendricks. "It's electric, recyclable, has zero emissions, but the big news is that BMW is building it. It's going to be in cities everywhere. The rest of the industry will be watching it and producing their own if it's as popular as I'm guessing it will be."

Plastic perspective

Today, repairers worry about identifying the different types of high-strength steel and ultra high-strength steel they find throughout a frame. As designers rethink frames, they look at replacing all these different materials with other combinations of materials. Automakers already are experimenting with frames that incorporate both carbon fiber and alu-

minum, or other combinations using magnesium and plastic.

Plastic has shown promise as a frame material that manufacturers will look to. Its main advantage is that it is molded, instead of stamped, making it a better choice for smaller and niche vehicles. Car buyers are trending to these vehicles. The plastics industry has taken note and begun targeting the automotive market, says Hendricks.

While the thought of a frame constructed primarily or partially out of plastic may seem highly improbable, the idea has some history on its side. Henry Ford introduced the first plastic car (70 percent cellulose) in 1941. The car was dropped following WWII mainly due to the availability of inexpensive steel and cheap gas.

Frame power

While designers conceive of new ways to make frames lighter, Hendricks says they're also seeking alternative uses for it as well. One promising new technology he points to could help turn the frame into a battery.

BAE Systems has been working on technology that it says essentially creates "structural batteries" by merging battery chemicals into composite materials (typically carbon fiber) on the frame. The company already has tested the technology on a Lola-Drayson LeMans racecar. The vehicle utilizes energy stored in the frame going to juice up some of its on-board electronics (its electric drivetrain is fueled by more traditional fuel cells).

Hendricks notes its success helps provide a solution to a weight issue electric and hybrid vehicles face.

"These vehicles use electric power systems to improve fuel efficiency, but they create some of their own inefficiencies since their batteries add so much weight," he explains.

"Car makers are turning to lighter weight frames to compensate for the weight," he continues. "Carbon-fiber frames solve this problem, and they're an ideal fit for this technology. You end up solving two problems with one solution."





Audi is able to deliver significant numbers of its popular, aluminum-frame A8 model to market thanks to a fully automated frame assembly process.

IMAGE / AUDI

Your chassis sounds good

Mercedes-Benz is using a similar notion to boost the audio quality of its vehicles. The company has created new technology it calls FrontBass that involves shifting the woofer speakers from the door panels to the footwells where a vehicle's structural beams are used as enclosures behind the woofers.

The setup reduces baffle vibration, which can distort sound. It also shifts the woofers away from the legs of drivers and passenger legs where sounds are absorbed and blocked.

FrontBass will first appear in the 2013 SL roadsters, and then migrate to other Mercedes models.

Hendricks says this technology paves the way for other uses of the frame, particularly with the panoply of electronic devices motorists want in their vehicles. For repairers, it offers a number of potential headaches, particularly when it comes to addressing collision damages that can be traced to a bent or compromised frame.

Prepare now

Repairers may never see some of these new technologies. Hendricks cautions shops against believing that changes to the frame will come slowly. He says repairers should expect the speed at which these and others innovations hit the market to speed

up markedly due to the impact new players in the manufacturing sector – specifically upstart auto builders in India and China – are making in the auto industry.

Hendricks said that domestic and Asian manufacturers, like companies in many other industries, typically move very conservatively when implementing new technologies.

“They're all working on the same technology. They know how much they'll need to spend to develop it for production,” Hendricks explains. “They look at what their competition is doing before they spend that money because they want to hold onto those funds as long as they can. That's why you see manufacturers bring the same technology to market at the same time.”

Indian and Chinese manufacturers have shown they won't abide by

this same practice. It's not a part of their business culture, says Hendricks, who further explains that these manufacturers are more willing to take risks with innovations, especially new materials, since they're looking to grab market share any way they can.

“They're either going to force the people in Detroit, Tokyo and Seoul to move faster with changes or they'll open the door for others to offer the same upgrades in their vehicles,” says Hendricks.

Considering just how immense the impact on the repair community could be as frame innovations reach public roads at a rate never before seen, Hendricks says shops could be broken out in two types: Those prepared for the change who will therefore survive and those caught off guard who will never be able to catch up. ■

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THE LAST DETAIL 

Several months ago, I wrote about evaluating your estimators not by the total amount of their average repair order, but by looking at more specific numbers, such as the average body labor hours or paint labor hours per repair order.

The point was that an estimator writing a lot of sheets on high-end cars might have higher average repair orders than the estimator writing sheets on more common makes and models, but that's likely based more on higher parts prices rather than good estimating practices.

I suggested in that column that one rule of thumb to look for when evaluating an estimator's overall averages (or those of your entire shop) is what I call a 30-20-10 breakdown. Print a report of your shop's sales broken down into categories and look to see if your repair orders average 30 percent body, frame and mechanical labor (combined); 20 percent paint labor; and 10 percent paint materials. (The other 40 percent will be parts and sublet.)

The value of the 30-20-10 rule really hit home for me when I started to facilitate shop 20 groups for DuPont Performance Services a few years ago. In comparing shops' financial numbers at those meetings, it was clear some shops had better gross profit than others. I started to look for trends, and that's when it became obvious: If you want to earn a maximum gross profit, you want your average repair order to be 30 percent body, mechanical and frame labor, 20 percent paint labor and 10 percent (or more) paint materials. I found the shops that maximize gross profit are those that hit those targets.

Take a look at your shop's sales breakdown. As I always say, the data will tell you one of two things. It will tell you to celebrate, or it will tell you to "go look." If need be, go look for why the numbers aren't what they should be.

My experience is that most sales are between 26 percent and 30 percent body/frame/mechanical labor, so you may well find you're already hitting the 30 number. If not, it could be because your estimates are missing a lot of R&I operations. This is where the 100 percent teardown method of building your repair order is so valuable. It's easy to overlook necessary R&I operations while sitting at a desk. But a person who is actually doing a complete teardown of a vehicle to identify every needed part and process can annotate all the R&I needed and get it listed on the repair order.

“Look at your shop's sales. The data will tell you if you should celebrate, or look at why the numbers aren't what they should be.”

FOLLOWING THE 30-20-10 RULE

Maximize your gross profits by making sure the breakdown of your sales hits these targets

I also find a lot of shops are at only 13 percent to 15 percent in terms of paint labor sales, well below the 20 percent I recommend for maximum gross profit. These shops, I find, are often missing a lot of non-included refinish operations, such as weld burn damage. They also might be accepting basecoat reduction paint times. Or they're replacing a lot of parts versus repairing parts.

I'm not suggesting your estimates should include repairing parts that really should be replaced, but good estimators know when repair is the best option for the job.

I also have found that many shops come close to having 10 percent of sales attributable to paint materials, but some fall a point or two short. If you're only at 8 percent or 9 percent, it could be because you're accepting paint and material caps or thresholds. It could be because some paint labor is getting put into the body labor category and thus you're not being paid for materials on those operations.

I've also seen estimators use money from paint materials to help avoid having to supplement an insurance company. "I'm not going to call the insurance company for \$40, so I'll just lower the paint materials from \$300 to \$260," these estimators think. This could be preventing your shop from having paint materials account for 10 percent of your sales and thus could be negatively affecting your gross profit.

As I said earlier, the shops that I most likely see digging into their numbers and estimating practices in order to hit the 30-20-10 rule are those with the gross profit numbers to support it at the end of the month. ☺

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Mike Anderson, a former shop owner, currently operates COLLISIONADVICE.COM, a training and consulting firm. He also acts as a facilitator for DuPont Performance Services' Business Council 20-groups.

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