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AUGUST 2013



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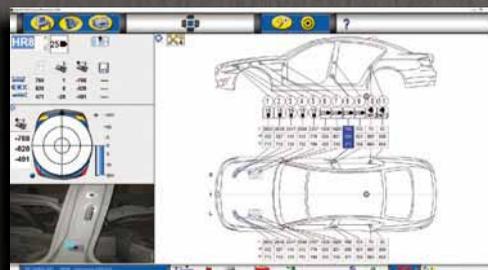
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May's Autopromotec in Bologna, Italy, brings opportunities for those companies ready to accept global challenges.

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**A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

BY JOHN YOSWICK | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Panel representing a cross-section of the industry discusses current and future issues.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF ABRN

**A**re you performing hybrid collision repairs safely in your shop?

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BY PETE MEIER | TECHNICAL EDITOR

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56 ESAB Welding & Cutting Products introduces the new Swift Arc series of pre-engineered, robotic welding cells, available in three models.

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[URL [ABRN.COM/SHOPJUGGLING](http://ABRN.COM/SHOPJUGGLING)]



**BLOG SPOTLIGHT**

**THE NORTHWEST** Automotive Traders Association released its survey of Oregon collision repair facilities, and State Farm and two other regional auto insurers topped the list, while GEICO, Safeco and Farmers received low rankings.

[URL [ABRN.COM/NATASURVEY](http://ABRN.COM/NATASURVEY)]

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»» [ABRN.COM/GEICOPAY](http://ABRN.COM/GEICOPAY)

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**U.S. COMMITTEE HOLDS INSURANCE HEARING**

House Committee on Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance held a hearing on the impact of international standards on the competitiveness of U.S. insurers.

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**NATA REPORT CARD RANKS INSURANCE COMPANIES**

State Farm, Oregon Mutual got top grades from Oregon body shop owners; Farmers ranked the lowest in the annual report.

»» [ABRN.COM/NATA](http://ABRN.COM/NATA)

**NORTH CAROLINA SHOP WINS ARBITRATION**

K&M Collision of Hickory was awarded short-pays in arbitration against Nationwide Insurance.

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Evercoat works to maintain a reputation of innovation by listening to customers' needs, continuously improving product quality and maximizing the efficiency of processes used by body repair professionals.

Founded in 1953, Evercoat (formerly Fibre Glass-Evercoat) began producing a fiberglass resin material to recover and repair wooden boats. By the mid 1970s, Evercoat entered the professional autobody repair market with polyester body fillers and putties.

In 1995, Evercoat was acquired by Illinois Tool Works Inc. (ITW) and became part of ITW's Automotive Aftermarket Group.

Today, Evercoat is a leading U.S. manufacturer of autobody repair fillers and putties in the automotive refinish industry and patch and repair products for the recreational marine market. The company has a global reach, providing products to distributors in all of North America, much of South America, Europe, Africa, Australia and several Asian countries.

Evercoat officials claim product innovation has always been an essential aspect of the business. Beginning in 1961, Evercoat has brought many technologically advanced products that the company claims were firsts in the industry.

The company is proud of its history and optimistic about the future. Evercoat looks forward to serving its customers for the next 60 years.

Evercoat is headquartered in Cincinnati and has distribution warehouses in Ohio, California and Spain.

Photo: ITW Evercoat

**BREAKING NEWS**
**LEADERSHIP**

## AUTEL NORTH AMERICA APPOINTS JACOBSEN CEO

Autel North America, a diagnostic tools, equipment and services provider, appointed Art Jacobsen chief executive officer.

"Mr. Jacobsen's credentials and expertise in business development, strategy and top line corporate growth uniquely qualify him to lead our business," said Hongjing Li, Autel board chairman.

Jacobsen will be responsible for all North American operations, including the launch of innovative new products. He will play a key role in building and developing relationships and partnerships to introduce Autel products and services to a larger marketplace.

"With an array of category leading products in place and a roster of new products in the pipeline, I couldn't be more pleased to lead Autel North America," said Jacobsen.

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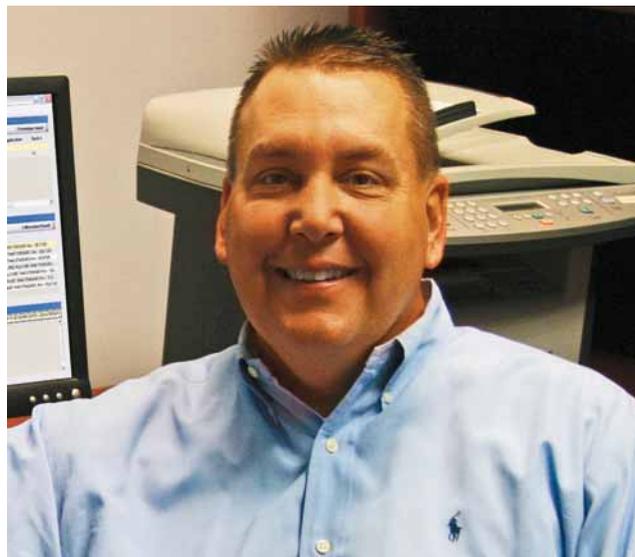
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# Q+A WITH DAVID BRUNORI

PRESIDENT,  
QUEST AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTS



## FOCUS ON HIGH QUALITY PRODUCTS, INTERNATIONAL GROWTH KEEP SUCCESS COMING FOR CHEMICAL MAGNATE

BY KRISTA MCNAMARA | MANAGING EDITOR

**Q**uest Specialty Chemicals (QSC) recently acquired U.S. Chemical & Plastics. David Brunori, president of Quest Automotive Products (QAP), spoke with *ABRN* about the move and impact it will have going forward.

### **ABRN:** Why is U.S. Chemical & Plastics a good fit for QAP?

**DB:** QAP, under the Matrix System brand, has been distributing high quality paints and coatings for over 30 years! Matrix System clearcoats and our intermix platforms are leaders in these categories. When the opportunity to acquire U.S. Chemical presented itself, we knew it would be a perfect fit. The USC body fillers and putties, in combination with the Pro Spray intermix products, are complementary brands that will position QAP to compete from substrate to clearcoat. U.S. Chemical has over 55 years' experience supplying high quality products to the industry. Not many organizations can say they have been around as long as QAP.

### **ABRN:** How will the acquisition help QAP expand its customer base?

**DB:** As with any acquisition, one of the

factors we consider is product line and customer overlap. Our seasoned management team will be searching for new relationships and opportunities as a blended organization. We believe our seasoned professionals in the field, our support staff, superior distribution network and the complete range of products we have to offer the market will intrigue others to join our team.

### **ABRN:** What benefits will the acquisition offer to your existing customers?

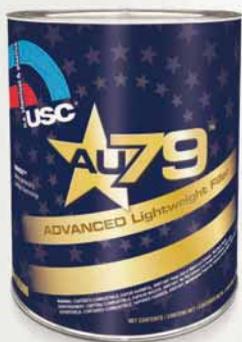
**DB:** QAP currently supplies products to our industry's largest distribution network. We are focused on offering value-added benefits centering around one-stop shopping, simplified order placement and logistics improvements. Our primary goal is to have a seamless integration with no change in service to our customers; that is our commitment. The addition of U.S. Chemical to our portfolio solidifies our commitment to the automotive refinish industry.

### **ABRN:** Excitement over both domestic and international growth continues. What markets are of particular interest? How does QAP



### plan to expand use of its product portfolio internationally?

**DB:** QAP has facilities in Walled Lake, Mich.; Massillon and Gnadenuhthen, Ohio; and Biggleswade, United Kingdom. All of our locations will continue to perform manufacturing operations, product development and on time shipments to our distribution network; and all four sites are strategically important to our business. Our product brands — Matrix System, U.S. Chemical and Pro Spray — all have a great reputation in the market. We believe our UK site offers additional opportunities for the EU and ROW markets. Our expertise in low VOC water and solvent technologies, clearcoat formulation and body fillers and putties will position QAP to gain substantial market share outside the United States. ☺



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# COLLISION REPAIR INDUSTRY Stats & Trends

Commercial vehicle registrations rose

4.7% in the first quarter of 2013, when compared to Q1 2012, according to Polk.



## Helping to foster a global industry connection

Autopromotec brings opportunities for those ready to accept global challenges

BY AUTOBIZGURU | ABRN BLOGGER

**G**iovanni Pisi speaks broken English with an engaging Italian accent. Well dressed and confident, he sits, hands folded at a table, hoping to find a U.S. distributor in the automotive sector. His 30-minute business-to-business meeting is not a make-or-break deal for his company, Fenice Care System S.p.A., but it's important. Like a speed dating event, the 30-minute B2B meeting is an opportunity to determine mutual interest, and you can see in Pisi's eyes a hope for expansion.

On the other side of the table is Guy Bargnes, vice president of sales and marketing for Painters Supply & Equipment. Headquartered in Taylor, Mich., his company services the states of Ohio, Indiana and Michigan.

Bargnes stares, listening intently as Pisi pitches the leather repair kit manufactured at his family's

business near Venice. He uses a standard pitch about "high quality" shared by most suppliers. He notes that his company already has plans to open offices this summer in North Carolina, to support products they sell to furniture builders. He adds that Fenice already supplies tanneries that support the automotive OEMs in Europe.



That's all fairly standard and run-of-the-mill. Then he hits a nerve.

"We have just made a whole new set of videos with a very detailed procedure on how to use the product," Pisi says. "The main thing is to provide some training, because people are a bit scared about leather." Collision repair shops that follow the training can become "authorized repair centers," which opens up new sales opportunities for them.

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##### Get your business organized

BOB SPITZ

"I'm too busy to get organized!"

I'm sure it was originally said in jest, but that's exactly what goes on in too many small businesses. The owner/manager is extremely good at what he or she does, but the idea of stopping long enough to organize the business seems impossible.

The result is management gets overwhelmed trying to get the machine (the business) to produce anything profitably. Too many times the real problem is the person responsible for running the business doesn't know how to organize. Here are some tips on how to tackle this problem.

Let's first look at what organization means: Organization is the action of lining things up in a logical

sequence to get something done, and done efficiently; in other words, getting it done in the most economical manner without wasted time or motion. Management means controlling some activity so that activity can operate smoothly and productively.

Management's job is to ensure the products of the company are being produced profitably. When we look at this explanation, it's easy to see why management can have a very difficult time. It's hard to manage an area and get things done when organization is lacking!

**Never organize for organization's sake.** When embarking on the task of getting organized, it's important first to look at what it is you're trying to produce or accomplish. What's your goal? It's easy to get lost in the woods if the destina-

tion isn't clearly defined and known. So the first step is to name what you want to accomplish. A complete understanding of what products the business produces or could produce is the starting point for any organization project.

**Make a list.** Start off with a list of, say, 10 things you'd like to improve about the business. Now narrow the list down to 3 items... and then pick one. Hopefully it will be the one that, if done now, will quickly improve the overall performance of the business.

**Name what you really want.** If you don't completely name what it is you want to accomplish, you can end up with weird, unworkable solutions.

**Example:** Doing it wrong

**Situation:** Production is being

slow ed down waiting for replacement parts.

**Improvement wanted:** Speed up the production line.

**Solution:** Keep a large inventory of parts on hand.

**Problem with this solution:** Ties up my money in inventory; drives up assets; drives up taxes. Parts are hard to control and start walking out of the shop; lost revenue.

**Solution to inventory problem:** Hire a parts person.

**Problem with this solution:** Hire Increases inventory and payroll.

See how nutty this can get?

Continue reading this blog at [ABRN.com/GetOrganized](http://ABRN.com/GetOrganized).





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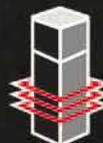


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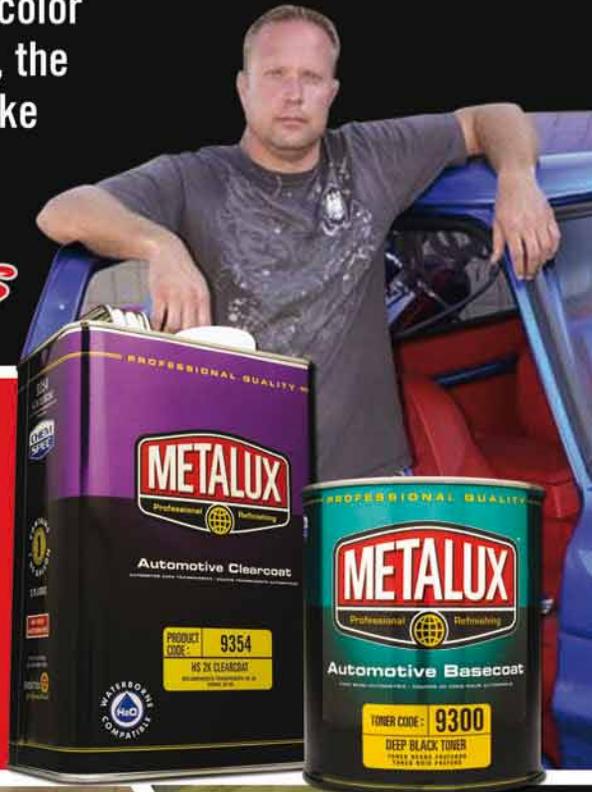
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Painter of 2011 - GoodGuys Nationals Dream Car Award Winner  
Best Fabricated Vehicle - Lincoln Electric at Piston Power Show 2011  
Best Paint - Dallas Truck Show 2009  
Ford's Excellence Award for Outstanding Project Vehicle - SEMA 2006

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1969 AMX before restoration

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# “With **METALUX**<sup>®</sup> our paint shop feels like it **runs on autopilot**”

- Tony Rivera, Owner of Hoffmantown Body Shop



Serviced by: Performance Tool & Equipment  
 Pictured L to R: Roger Garcia, Tony Rivera and Mike Sirignano  
 Shop Statistics: 60,000 square feet of Warehouse and  
 15,000 square feet of Offices and Customer Service



## THE PROBLEM

“Our paint shop was the bottleneck of our entire operation with frequent re-do’s, color-matching issues and product performance. Products were continuously changing which led to complications, confusion and more down time for training. These issues were drivers for slower cycle times.”

## THE SOLUTION

“I have always been fond of polyester basecoats and heard good things about Metalux<sup>®</sup> from its usage in other body shops. I visited other Metalux<sup>®</sup> shops and sprayed it for myself. Once I worked with the product and compared the pricing, I placed a Metalux<sup>®</sup> mix bank in my paint department. In the three years since, my worries of bottlenecks in the production line have been alleviated.”

## THE RESULTS

“With Metalux<sup>®</sup> our paint shop feels like it runs on autopilot!” The paint shop was the biggest culprit of downtime, the installation of Metalux<sup>®</sup> turned it all around. The improved cycle time has had a direct impact on customer service as well. **“We took our greatest weakness – downtime – and turned it into one of our greatest assets – MORE time!** Now we actually get to go home to our families on time without worrying about paint issues.”

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THE  
**SHOP OWNER**

CAMILLE EBER

*You are not the only one*

PAGE  
20



THE  
**FUTURIST**

GREG HORN

*Impact of accident avoidance*

PAGE  
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MIKE ANDERSON

*Customer objection overruled*

The words cause Bargnes to shift in his chair, realizing he may have something here.

“What interests me is bringing in new revenue opportunities for the body shops,” he says. “That’s a big value to the customer.”

**Connecting the U.S., world**

Business-to-business meetings connecting U.S. companies with foreign firms are a core value proposition for shows like Autopromo-

tec. Hosted in Bologna, Italy, last May, the show attracted more than 100,000 attendees from 52 different nations. Held bi-annually, Autopromotec showcased the wares of 1,512 exhibitors and covered roughly 1.7 million square feet of space, including a large outdoor section for car wash equipment.

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*Noteworthy*

READER FEEDBACK TO ONLINE ARTICLES

**LinkedIn discussion started by Mike: “Who should pay the labor and costs when insurance company proposed aftermarket parts don't fit?”**

**From Galen Carlson:** Even though we try to test fit everything we can, whether it is OEM, LKQ or aftermarket, we don't get paid. Maybe we could have a line item for test fit. Wishful thinking. Court could be the option, but who wants to take on that battle?

**From Joe Fisher:** There is a person who has showed us that it's possible to go to court and win — Ray Gunder in Florida. We should all like to do what he is doing.

**From Bruce Laidlaw:** Unless the P-Pages have changed recently, the R&R times state for new and undamaged parts on new and undamaged vehicles, the not included items “should” address non-standard parts and fit. The carriers use the same databases as we do, so they should abide by the P-Pages, too.

**From Anthony Ford:** The first thing I do if the part does not fit is take photos and show them to the appraiser. If the insurance company refuses to pay for OEM, I get the owner involved and tell them to file a complaint with the DMV (all this can be done on the computer). Once the insurance company gets a copy from the DMV, things get done.

**From Jim Pfau:** I have been getting paid by insurance companies. It depends on the adjustor and the negotiation process. We dry fit it, call for a supplement, put the repair to the side and move on. It dumps my cycle time, but I don't work for free.

**From Michael Pollak:** Aftermarket parts are going to be a bigger issue for all of us. The appraiser and shop owner/estimator should be able to reach a fair and reasonable cost to repair without acrimony. The final result should be a satisfied customer and a profit on the job. Then everyone is happy.

**From Louis Pope Jr.:** If a carrier wants to utilize aftermarket parts, then they should take the responsibility of dealing with the results.



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



2013 INDUSTRY CALENDAR



# You are not the only one

Take advantage of ways you can interact with other shop owners and affect change

**D**o you ever ask yourself, “Who is really running MY business?” Have you made business decisions based on fear? Do you ever feel like you’re the “only one?” Do you sometimes wonder how this industry came to operate the way it does?

These aren't new questions, observations or problems. Some of the catch phrases may have changed, but I recall my folks talking about these things back in the 1970s as they worked to build a state association to help shop owners address things like this.

A trade association is just one of the ways we as individual shop owners can nurture camaraderie, affect change and spur interaction with other forward-thinking and like-minded people within our profession. If you're not involved in something in the industry beyond your day-to-day shop operations, you are, in my opinion, contributing to the problems facing our trade.

I talked to Dan Risley shortly after he became the executive director of the Automotive Service Association earlier this year. Not surprisingly, Dan believes the best opportunity we as individual shop owners have to affect change in the industry is through membership in an association.

“As a national association, we have access to many of the decision-makers in the industry,” Risley points out. “When an issue arises, we have the relationships to express concerns, recommend change and be the voice of our members. And because of the number of members we represent, we are often in a position to influence change.”

The challenge, Risley said (and certainly one I've seen in more than 25 years of membership in state associations), is that not all associations are active and effective – perhaps in part because not enough of us belong and because some shop owners belong only with a “What can you do for me?” viewpoint.

“If you are going to support a state and/or national association, you will find that the more engaged you are, the more value you derive from the association,” Risley said. “You will help define the effectiveness and success of the association.”

Associations are just one of the ways to realize you're not “the only one,” and to make a difference in the industry. What if every shop in your market wrote estimates or repair plans as thoroughly as yours does? Wouldn't that help you get paid for operations that you're currently being told aren't “prevailing practice”? Wouldn't that reduce the chance you'll be told your severity is not competitive? I encourage you to work with other shops (or maybe a jobber) within your geographic market to bring in estimating or other training for all shops in your area.

If you don't belong to a 20 group or other type of networking group for shops, reread my earlier column on this topic at [www.abrn.com/20group](http://www.abrn.com/20group). You will quickly reap multiple benefits from this type of collaboration with peers.

Join an industry committee or board. You share your expertise and give back to the industry – and will just as often find you enhance your skills by doing so.

If you've ever been upset about missing or seemingly incorrect information in the estimating systems, you have a tool – the DEG ([www.DEGweb.org](http://www.DEGweb.org)) – to quickly address it. Take 3-5 minutes to enter an inquiry about a labor time or other aspect of the estimating database that seems wrong, and as you'll see, that inquiry can often result in dramatic improvements to the systems.

Lastly, there is a way to interact with others in the collision repair industry and help to affect change that I think should be resurrected. Have you ever caught yourself cursing the proprietary software that we use (often only because of insurer mandates) because it is clunky or sometimes glitchy? I think it is time to bring back “user groups” (like 3M had back when it had a shop management system) that allow shops using a system to collectively talk about it and call for changes that will enhance the way it functions. I know the information providers each have an advisory committee (I've served on one), but if there are effective “user groups” out there, I don't know about them.

Let's add these groups to the ways we as individual shop owners can interact with others and bring about change.

**“MEMBERSHIP  
IN A TRADE  
ASSOCIATION  
IS ONE WAY  
SHOP OWNERS  
CAN AFFECT  
CHANGE.”**

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*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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# Will accident avoidance systems drive us out of business?

In a recent presentation to a group of collision repair shops, I discussed the fascinating advances companies like Volvo, Cadillac and Mercedes are making in collision avoidance technology. It was hard not to notice the deflated look on the faces of my audience. One member of the crowd even asked, "Don't you have any good news?"

There is plenty of good news out there for collision repairers — there will always be car crashes, no matter how much technology we put on cars. Still, there seems to be a fear that technology will put us out of business. A closer look should help put those fears to rest.

It is important to understand what is currently offered in collision avoidance, what is coming and how quickly this technology will be included on the majority of U.S. cars. Let's examine the two basic types of accident avoidance technology and how quickly they will enter the U.S. car parc.

**"THERE WILL BE CAR CRASHES, NO MATTER HOW MUCH TECHNOLOGY WE PUT ON CARS."**

## Active and passive technology

Accident avoidance technology is either active or passive. Active means evasive action, like full braking or even steering, will be done automatically without driver input. Passive means the vehicle's technology will only perform a warning of an impending hazard and the driver will have to take it from there. Back-up cameras and blind spot warning systems are good examples of passive and far-from-foolproof technology. Let's take a look at what can go wrong:

- Back-up cameras are handy, but lack the ability to scan wide areas to the side of a backing vehicle. The cameras often are in areas that are susceptible to road grime, reducing image clarity.
- Next to back-up cameras, blind spot warning systems are the most common accident avoidance system today. But the system is so fraught with false alarms, dealer service writers say it is the most common item that vehicle owners want to disable.

Active systems like Volvo's Traffic Jam Assistance or Nissan's Autonomous

Emergency Steering System both provide autonomous braking and steering of a vehicle, but the goals are different. Traffic Jam Assistance, an outgrowth of Volvo's Adaptive Cruise Control and Lane Keep Aid technology, will allow a car to automatically follow the vehicle in front at low speeds. Both systems allow a car to act on its own in limited circumstances, but Traffic Jam Assistance will give the vehicle more control. Like Adaptive Cruise Control, Traffic Jam Assistance maintains a set distance from the car in front; however, the new system works at slower speeds (under 31 mph). When the system is used, a car can accelerate, steer and brake itself without any driver involvement by following the actions of the vehicle in front. At this point, I think: if everyone jumps off a cliff, would you do it, too? In other words, if you were following a car whose owner was having a really bad day and wanted to end it all, would your Volvo follow? To that, Volvo engineers insist the driver can take control at any time.

Nissan's Autonomous Emergency Steering System does what the name says. Cameras and a combination of radar and laser scanners capture a constantly evolving picture of the car's surroundings. An onboard computer processes the data, continuously searching for potential accidents and for safe, obstruction-free escape paths. When an accident is imminent and determined unavoidable by braking alone, the electric-assist power steering rack acts on its own. As with the Volvo, if a Nissan driver has a firm grip on the wheel, the resistance will be enough to override the autonomous avoidance maneuver.

The downsides? Because both rely on scanners and cameras, lens cleanliness is of utmost importance for the systems to work properly. And, just as with the human eye, the angle of the sun shining on the sensors can cause the system to fail. You can see it in action, and learn some interesting curse words in Swedish by Googling "Volvo crash fail."

## The collision repair industry is safe

The shortcomings of the systems demonstrate that when humans are involved, accidents will happen. But more important is how long it will take before these systems are found on a majority of vehicles in the U.S. The average age of a U.S. vehicle is more than 11 years, and none of these systems are mandatory nor are they standard equipment in most cases. The Highway Loss Data Institute predicts it will be decades before we see these systems on the majority of vehicles on the road. In other words, don't switch careers just yet. ☹



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**ABRN.COM/GREGHORN**

Greg Horn is vice president of industry relations for Mitchell International.

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ROUNDTABLE  
DISCUSSIONPANEL REPRESENTING  
A CROSS-SECTION OF THE  
INDUSTRY DISCUSSES CURRENT  
AND FUTURE ISSUES

BY JOHN YOSWICK | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**THE FOURTH** annual ABRN Industry Roundtable, a convening of representatives from a variety of backgrounds in the industry, spurred the participants to discuss some key issues facing the collision repair industry – and offer some predictions on what may lie ahead.

Here are some highlights of this “roundtable” discussion that brought together seven representatives from shops and associations – and even an insurer (see sidebar, “Who Was At The Table?”, page 26).

**ABRN: There’s been a lot of discussion about “industry standards.” How would you feel about some sort of certification criteria for shops, including requirements for equipment and training, with third-party inspections to ensure ongoing compliance?**

**Yeung:** We currently participate in five OEM certification programs, and each have a different criteria. The positive end of it is that when you deal with an OEM certification, you can assess the cost of participating and then calculate what type of rate of return is likely on your investment. With a general shop certification, that might not be the case. And if the insurers aren’t on board, then we have issues. If you put in a 4-wheel alignment machine and only get paid for a 2-wheel

alignment, it doesn’t make sense. Everybody has to be on board if the certification is going to work.

**Schulenburg:** Kye hits it on the head with the ROI element. I think there are insurers in the market today looking for and requesting top-tier training, yet they are only willing to remunerate shops for untrained level work. There needs to be an understanding that as we advance and hold ourselves to higher standards that an ROI is necessary if that is to continue.

**Gange:** It’s hard to argue with the fundamental desire for standards and the hope that they will create some comfort level that vehicles are being repaired properly. I think we should look at markets where standards have been implemented to try to understand the pros and the cons. Our organization has a sister group in the United Kingdom, and I spent a fair amount of time evaluating the standard in place there. There are certainly a lot of benefits to that, but there are a lot of drawbacks. It’s excruciatingly expensive. Just to give you a perspective, to implement (the standard) in the U.K. costs between \$40,000 to \$75,000 initially, and probably between \$7,500 and \$10,000 a year to maintain.



Aaron Schulenburg



*Schulenberg:* And the shame of it is that I think U.K. repairers face almost as much friction, if not more, over being paid for necessary documented operations as we do here in the U.S., despite the fact that the standard exists there.

*Risley:* The person who needs shop certification the most is the person not represented in this conversation: the consumer. We're far behind the curve as an industry in terms of being able to provide some assurance that where they've having their car repaired is a place that is qualified to do so. Just having a certification doesn't necessarily mean you are going to do a good repair, but at least it says you have everything in place to do so.

*Nagy:* I have to agree with Dan. It comes down to the consumer. Certification isn't the cure all, but it's a step in the right direction.

**ABRN: George, what's your take on shop certification from an insurer's perspective?**

*Avery:* We certainly have an interest in making sure cars are fixed right. But

I think it's a repairer-driven issue. Insurers need to be supportive; as Kye says; everybody's got to be in. You just can't have part of the stakeholders in and part out. I know that State Farm, for example, is very supportive and interested in seeing this move forward.



**George Avery**

**ABRN: Turning to another issue, what are some of your thoughts and concerns about the electronic parts procurement systems some insurers are mandating shops use?**

*Nagy:* We order everything electronically now. We are paperless. I have no problem implementing (the systems), but I think my biggest hang up is if I'm being told I have to use a particular product.

*Yeung:* My feeling is if these procurement programs were to stand out on their own, in the open market, they wouldn't



**Kye Yeung**

succeed. And they don't address the issues of getting wrong parts, getting damaged parts, payment of multiple vendors and the relationships you build with your parts vendors.

*Jones:* I agree with Kye. It's not fixing the other end of the problem. I'm all for technology. I'm all for efficiency. But if it's not benefiting me as a business owner, if it's not benefiting my customer, then I don't know if it's something that's going to be good or that's usable. And it doesn't solve the problem of wrong parts, or the salvage yard telling me it's a good part when it's not.

*Risley:* Insurance company mandates don't work. We went through a similar thing many years ago with the estimating systems, and we had shops paying for three different estimating platforms that all did the same thing. And whose to say that a product won't come out tomorrow that's three times better than one being mandated? So now I have to use an inferior product because



**Dan Risley**



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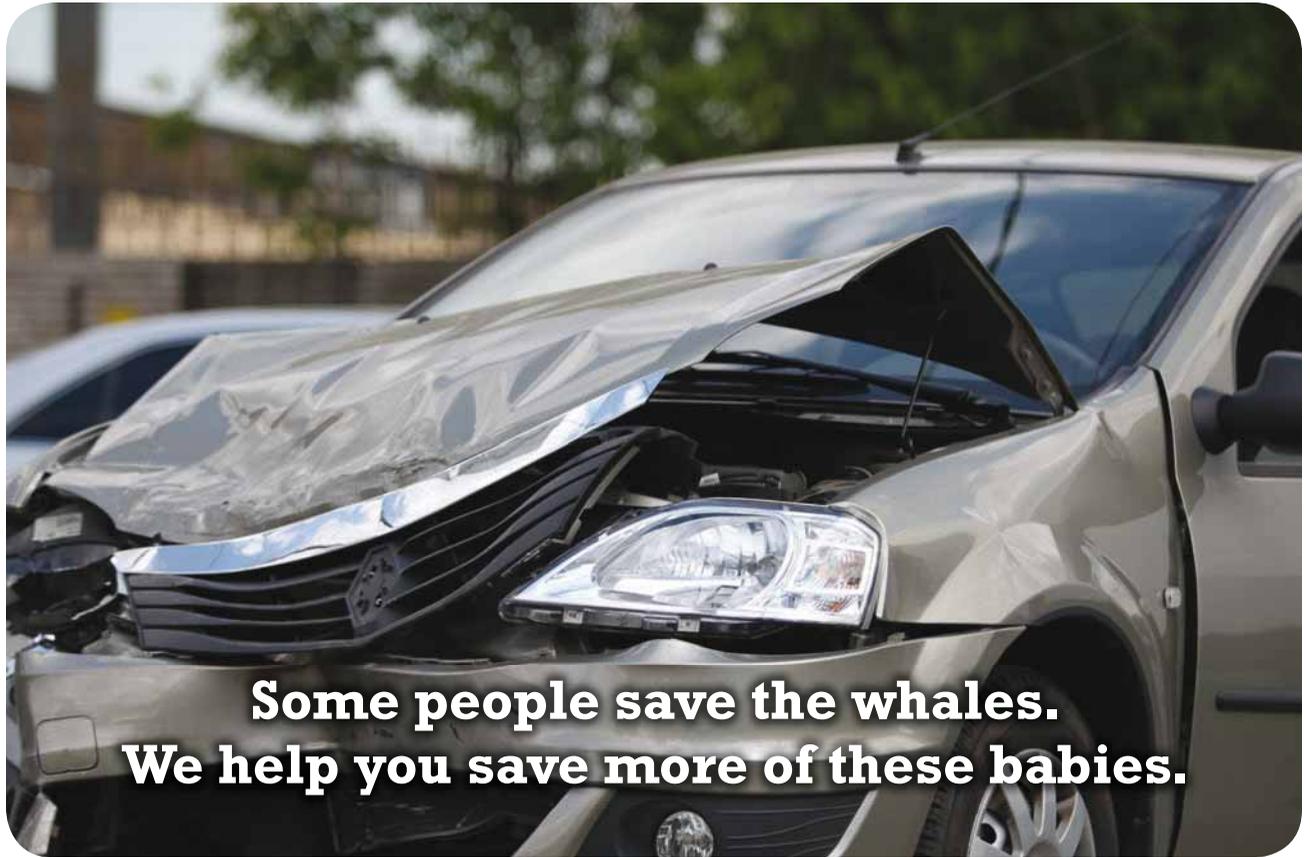
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## PARTICIPANTS BULLISH ON COLLISION REPAIR AS CAREER

If you had an 18-year-old relative thinking about a career as an autobody technician, what would you tell him or her? ABRN Roundtable participants were asked to choose one of six responses, ranging from "It's a good trade with good career options," to "Don't do it."

All seven said they would respond positively to the relative. Five of the seven chose the "It's a good trade," response.

"Though I'd say it a little differently, I'd say 'it's a great time to be a part of the collision repair industry'," Paul Gange, of Fix Auto USA, said.

Two of the multiple choice answers had the same wording ("That's why I did and look where I am today"), but participants had to indicate whether that would be said with "genuine enthusiasm" or "heavy sarcasm." The two participants who chose this wording said they would say it enthusiastically.

"I recently spoke to a graduating class of the Top 16 students out of 50 high schools in Arizona, and I basically told them it's a great career with endless opportunities," Dan Risley, of the Automotive Service Association, said.

of a mandate from an insurer? And when you sign these insurer agreements, there is a clause that says if there's a change in the program, you have to immediately adopt that change to continue on the program. I think that is unfair. I would like insurance carriers to consider what I'll call a grandfather clause where shops have six months to adopt the change in the program. At least then you have six months to start building a business model moving away from that program so that dropping it doesn't have such an immediate negative impact on your business.

**ABRN: George, your company is one that is rolling out mandated use of a particular parts procurement system.**

**Avery:** Dan has a good point. Business men and women need to have time to make decisions. As far as the other problems with parts, my sense is that a

level of transparency may help get some of those fixed. There's a vendor rating system with PartsTrader, for example. And what PartsTrader does do is introduce competition to the parts arena that frankly I don't believe has been there. Also, I don't think State Farm is the first one to mandate something. There's a lot of mandates that have been going

on for a lot of years that are not getting the attention that State Farm is getting. These are agreements that people signed. We are not forcing this on everybody, only on those who choose to be on our Select Service program.

**ABRN: Shop acquisitions are in the news nearly every day. What do you**

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### think the growth of MSOs will mean for the independent single-location shops?

*Jones:* Being a repair facility under \$2 million a year, we may not be the shop that MSOs are looking to purchase, but MSOs do offer an opportunity to sell our business. But something that concerns me is saturating the market with companies that may not be known in our community; we as independents may lose our identity and may lose business.

*Yeung:* I've been in the business for 38 years. We know the consumer wants choices. A lot of the MSOs have a business model that caters to insurers. I feel that's not what every consumer wants. I think you can have a specialty store to cater to those people who may be a little more finicky,

or who have a specialty vehicle that some of the MSOs don't want to touch. An independent store can survive by offering things that don't fall into the MSOs' business model.

*Risley:* I would tell the independent shop owner that they need to own the customer. Often at larger shops, because the sole proprietor isn't there, it becomes more transaction-based as opposed to owning that customer and having a relationship with them to get that repeat business. Most sole proprietors are good at that, but it's becoming even more critical for them to be experts at it. It's a competitive advantage that the MSOs have difficulty replicating. And insurance companies can't be the only people you market to.

*Gange:* When you think of who has been successful in business, whether a Fortune 500 company or a street cart vendor, it's those companies who have differentiated themselves. They've created an offering that is irresistible to their customer. I think repairers have a great opportunity to do that. I really don't think it has to do with how big you are. I think even the biggest can and will fail.

*Schulenberg:* I think there will always be a place for independent businesses. It just may mean they do need to change their strategies. It can't be business as usual. Define yourself differently within your market to your customer. I think shops have gotten away from grassroots community marketing. I also think OEM certifications can really differentiate your business.

### ABRN: George, you've said in the past that State Farm evaluates each location of an MSO as an individual shop. Still true?

*Avery:* This could change, but at this point we have found value in evaluating each store on its own merits. That serves us well. The single store operator can be very competitive. Having said that, the independent operator, compared to the MSOs, may not have the buying power or some of the benefits of a bigger number that an MSO has. But at the same time, an independent repairer may have some benefit in how they do business. At large MSOs, there is a lot of

management involved who don't fix cars. That's a necessary load, but it is a load on the enterprise.

### ABRN: Ron, with eight shops in one state, what's your strategy as an MSO?

*Nagy:* We have been pretty aggressive. We go after the towns with populations of 25,000 to 50,000 people and try to stake it and say, "This is ours" and hit it with all we have. We're not going to slow down. We're excited about it.



Ron Nagy

I think other MSOs might struggle in some of the small towns we're in. But there's opportunity for anyone out there.

### ABRN: We always end the Roundtable by asking you to look to the future, say five years from now, 2018. What do you think will look different at your business or for the industry?

*Gange:* It will surprise me if in the next 5-10 years we don't see large groups of shops specifically focused on non-structural repair, repairs under \$1,500. They may even set up shop in strip malls. On the insurance side, I think we'll see more consolidation among insurers, and we'll see some foreign insurers land in the U.S. We already have Mapfre, a very large Spanish insurer; I think we will see others from Canada or Europe.

*Jones:* I think you will see more shops that are OEM-specific, doing just GM work or just Toyota work.

*Risley:* I agree. I would expect in about five years that you're going to have 10 to 15 percent of the industry that is very (OEM) network specific. And I think five years out we'll have 3,000 to 5,000 fewer shops overall.

*Schulenberg:* I think for at least the past decade there's been predictions of massive consolidation of the market, and it's happening, but it's not happening as quickly as it was predicted. I really don't think our industry will shrink below 28,000 to 30,000 shops. Will that happen within the next five years? Probably not. I do think in the next five years we'll start to see some consolidation of the consolidators, some of the bigger groups purchasing others. We're seeing some of that already. ☺

#### WHO WAS AT THE TABLE?

- George Avery is a claims consultant with State Farm at the company's headquarters in Bloomington, Ill., part of a team that oversees the company's auto claims practices and procedures.
- Paul Gange is the president and chief operating officer for Fix Auto USA, a network of shops across the country including more than 50 branded franchise shops.
- Christy Jones is a collision repair concierge (and future second-generation owner) of R. Jones Collision 1 in Des Moines, Iowa, and is board secretary of the Iowa Collision Repair Association.
- Ron Nagy is a second-generation co-owner (along with his brother Dan) of Nagy's Collision Specialists, which operates eight shops in Ohio, and is the immediate past chairman of the Automotive Service Association (ASA) board of directors.
- Dan Risley is the executive director of the ASA.
- Aaron Schulenberg is the executive director of the Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS).
- Kye Yeung is the owner of European Motor Car Works in Santa Ana, Calif., and board secretary of SCRS.





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# SHOP PROFILE

A snapshot of one of the industry's leading shops

COMPANY NAME COMPANY NAME / LOCATION, N.N.



## On a mission

Colorado chain highlights quality and exceptional customer service

BY JAMES E. GUYETTE | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**E**stablished in 2003 and providing “obsessive customer care from a Ford to a Ferrari,” Colorado’s Global Collision Centers opened its ninth location in March.

Recognized as the fastest-growing independent multi-shop operation in the state, the company’s view that “we are only as good as our last repair” embodies a philosophy of “continual vigilance and commitment to perfect every aspect of the business from the first customer contact through delivery,” according to Alan Gomez, general manager of the 43-bay Boulder branch.

“When I see a customer walk in completely stressed, and then I see the worry melt off them as we demonstrate we will take care of everything,” says Gomez, “that’s still the best feeling.”

Formerly a sergeant with the 82nd Airborne who served in Iraq with Operation Desert Storm and the Joint Endeavor mission in Bosnia, Gomez points out that his military training brings added value to his management duties at the shop. “In the Army, you learn about leadership, responsibility, showing initiative, following procedure and working well under pressure. Those are all skills that transfer well to the collision repair industry.”



Alan Gomez

Running an automotive service

facility “in one of the most highly health and environmentally conscious communities in the U.S.,” Gomez takes seriously his goal of making his operation “the greenest in Colorado – if not the nation.” The shop was recently recognized with the state’s highest environmental accolade as part of the Colorado Department of Health and Environment’s Environmental Leadership Program for reducing volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions via its conversion to waterborne paints. The company is also a member of Partners for a Clean Environment (PACE).

The Boulder shop was purchased by the company in 2006, and since then has more than doubled in size due in part to a large increase in direct repair program (DRP) traffic. The facility has two new Garmat 3000 downdraft waterborne paint booths and is being further upgraded to include an aluminum clean room.

Gomez, who joined the firm as an estimator in 2007 and quickly moved up through the ranks, is part of a team working on an Environmental Management System being rolled out across all nine of the locations. He also manages pilot programs for a number of other company-wide initiatives. Based on his own experience, and supported by corporate policy, Gomez says he looks favorably on former armed forces applicants and is proud to assist in

### AT A GLANCE

#### Global Collision Centers

Name of shop

**Boulder, Colo.**

Location

**George Lilley**

CEO

**9**

Number of shops

**10**

Years in business

**160+**

Number of employees

**20+**

Number of DRPs

**250+**

Number of bays

**150,000+**

Square footage

#### Dupont Performance Coatings – Standex, Standoblu

Paint supplier

#### Car-O-Liner, Carbench, Global Jig

Frame machines used

**Audatex, CCC, Mitchell**

Estimating systems used

**www.globalcollision.com**

Internet site

their transition back to civilian life.

In addition to recruiting veterans, “We have developed strong relationships with local tech and training colleges and regularly invite their trainers and students to



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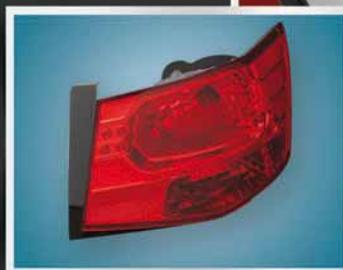
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visit our facilities and discuss our hiring needs," he reports. "We also run regular hiring open days and advertise positions in the trade press and online. To attract and retain the best people, we also ensure that our pay and benefits are highly competitive."

The company maintains a close relationship with the Thatcham Motor Insurance Research Centre in the United Kingdom, having sent several employees for training at its Thatcham Automotive Academy, which Gomez describes as "the most rigorous auto body training school in the world."

CFO Tim Bator notes that key components of the hiring process include "recruiting employees who have the skills and commitment to work to the quality standards we expect and retaining employees for as long as possible to maximize the return we get on our investment in their training and development. We have numerous incentives and benefits in place to facilitate these efforts and work closely with employees and local tech schools and training colleges, but the industry is still very mobile and the on-the-job learning curve is steep."

Management is wholly convinced of the value of manufacturer certifications. "Certifications give us the inside track on brand-specific training and technology. They offer customers greater security and often additional benefits like free towing," says Marketing Director Liza Milijasevic, adding that the company's amount of European and performance car certifications is unrivalled in the Rocky Mountain Region. It currently holds 11 repair certifications from Nissan, Volkswagen, Porsche, Aston Martin, Bentley, Jaguar, Land Rover/Range Rover, General Motors, Honda, Chrysler and Tesla.

### Above and beyond

Out on the shop floor, a team approach to teardown substantially improves cycle time and ensures that parts are ordered at the earliest possible stage, along with providing accurate estimates.

Cycle time is additionally reduced with a "flow line" shop design, invented by CEO George Lilley for his original shops in the UK, which locates the paint booth at the center of operations.

Gomez counts Lilley among his key industry mentors. "George's unwavering commitment to 'Right First Time' quality guides my work and that of all Global Collision employees," he says.

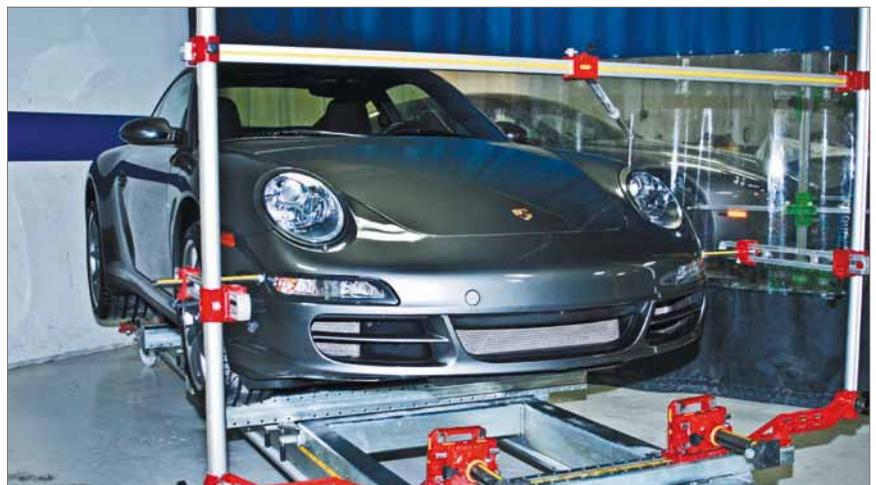
"Global Collision is a true learning organization; fully committed to the continuing education of all employees," says Milijasevic. "Employees' safety and job satisfaction is paramount, and they are incentivized financially as well as with specialized training and a commitment to career promotion from within. Training plays a key role in ensuring employees can deliver Global Collision quality and gain

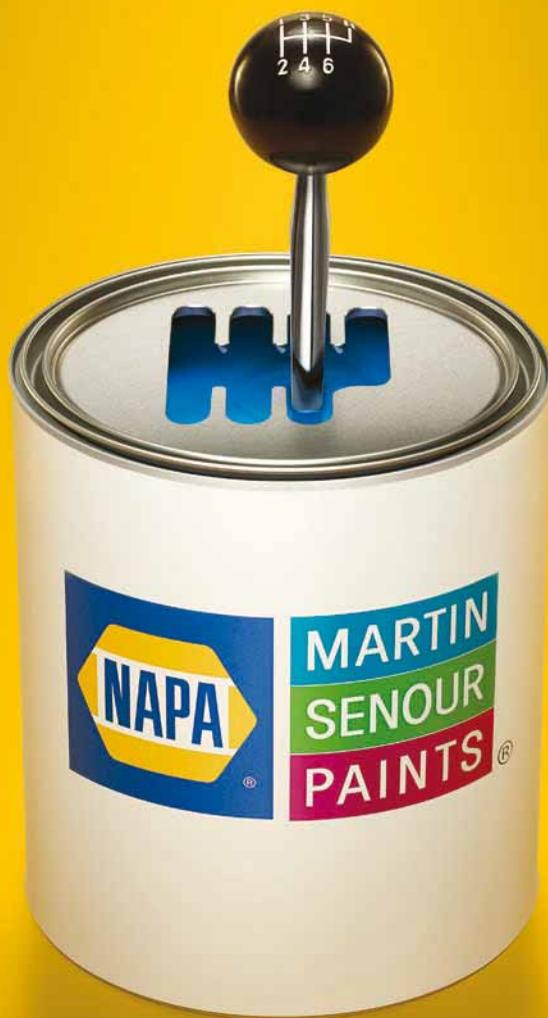
manufacturer certifications. We have a full-time training manager who sets training goals related to business priorities and changing technology. He pinpoints knowledge gaps and helps employees to select and schedule appropriate courses."

Along with tapping training expertise through I-CAR and ASE, the company embraces educational opportunities offered by OEMs and vendors. "Our senior team understands that employees in this profession can be under a high level of stress and require empathy as much as customers," Milijasevic says. "By showing understanding and commitment to our employees, Global Collision inspires loyalty and commitment from them. This translates to people who are prepared to go above and beyond to deliver promised results to our customers and alliance partners."

The general managers meet monthly to fine-tune quality controls and discuss best practices in customer relations, she reports. "A 'one call books all' call center offers statewide customer convenience. Customers are contacted as they prefer – phone, email, text – and internal customer surveys complement those of insurance companies."

Gomez describes a "high comfort" paperless greeting procedure for customers that has recently been implemented. "On arrival, they are welcomed by a customer coordinator who is trained to defuse any stress from the accident and convey that we will 'handle it from here.' At delivery, the estimator and customer coordinator are both present as points of contact to ensure a personal touch and that the customer is fully thrilled with the repairs."





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### 'Easy and pleasurable'

The company participates in more than 20 DRPs. "We try to make it as easy and pleasurable as possible for them to work with us. Two of our senior executives act as DRP contacts for all our facilities and are always available to answer DRP questions or deal with any issues," says Milijasevic.

"Being responsive to DRP needs and requests is a top priority for our senior team and for all our managers, technicians and estimators," she reports. "We regularly meet with our DRP contacts – either in one of our facilities or our corporate offices – and carry out our own CSI (customer service index) to complement their own CSI surveys. Our marketing department ensures that our insurers are kept up to date with all relevant news through emails, e-newsletters, our own Global Collision magazine and personal phone calls."

Bator, the CFO, explains that "our growing network is a substantial benefit to our customers and DRPs. It is a huge plus for DRPs to have a single point of contact for collision repair service anywhere in Colorado and for customers to only have to remember one name and number when they have an accident."

When pondering additional acquisitions, the company leverages the "strong

relationships with our DRP insurers, and we also carry out our own demographic research to identify gaps in our network and communities, which have the ingredients to make for a successful Global Collision location based on our knowledge of our most successful existing locations," says Milijasevic.

### Partners and relationships

In discussing parts procurement, Milijasevic declares, "Global Collision does not have suppliers."

"We have partners," she elaborates, "companies we can count on to deliver the level of quality we are proud to pass on to our customers and who are committed to a long-term and two-way relationship. A good example would be our relationship with DuPont and its distributor, National Coatings and Supplies. Convinced of the quality of their Standox paint brand, we were among the first shops in Colorado to introduce this premium European waterborne paint and offer our insurance company partners and customers the option of a truly 'green' MSO. Our parts philosophy is shaped by various factors including our many manufacturer certifications and individual insurance company policies. Above all, quality is never sacrificed for cost."

A dedicated marketing department conducts marketplace, media and competitor research; manages agencies; works directly with DRPs, partners and media; creates campaigns and promotions; and writes and manages the content.

"We recognize that collision repair is all about relationships," Milijasevic observes. "We are also aware that it is vital to develop brand recognition well before an accident situation, as well as

offering practical information in an accident. Key brand messages have been identified and targeted marketing vehicles developed," she adds, citing an array of advertising initiatives. "There are even tracking banners and YouTube videos on key websites. Recommendation is key, so review sites and social media have obvious value. Our Facebook page offers advice and a human touch."

Each shop "is a key member of their local community," according to Milijasevic. "We are Chamber of Commerce members and encourage each store to get involved with schools, charities and sports teams. For instance, our Denver location supports the Concours D'Elegance for Cerebral Palsy and CEO George Lilley judges the technical skills competitions at Warren Tech. We have recently launched a major 'Don't text and drive' campaign, which encourages customers to pledge on our website and at our locations. Global Collision works closely with the YoungLife organization, which inspires 'at risk' youth and recently donated a Dodge Caravan to transport members to YoungLife events safely.

Google Analytics has been applied to research into the company website's audience. "Customers are encouraged to post online reviews and we monitor and respond to their comments promptly," Milijasevic says. News and content are regularly updated. "We also recently used a form on our website and Facebook page to allow people to nominate deserving families for our Wheels4Heroes car donation program to military families. We have recently invested in a stunning new graphic design style for our printed and electronic materials. The design conveys our commitment to quality and exceptional customer service." ■



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**PROFIT MOTIVE: YOUR COMPASS TO FINANCIAL SUCCESS**

# Do you own your community?

Focused branding and marketing efforts can boost profitability

BY **TOM MCGEE** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

In the old days, cars just arrived at the shop and it didn't take much effort to keep the shop full. Today, if you are in the office waiting for cars to come to you, it may not be long before you look around your shop and discover you don't have any work.

You can no longer just expect vehicles to arrive at the shop. You have to devote time and effort to building your brand.

Today, the average consumer has a collision every seven to 10 years. With the increased availability of vehicle technology such as collision avoidance, stability control and lane departure warning systems, as well as changes in teen driving laws and other influences that change driving habits and reduce the number of miles driven, the frequency of a consumer being involved in a collision may continue to decrease in the future. As the interval between collisions increases, your shop's interaction with consumers becomes even more limited.

Always remember that no one wants to have their vehicle damaged, and few consumers know what to expect in the insurance claim and collision repair processes. However, when they are involved in a collision, they come to this experience the same way they come to any other experience — with expectations. These expectations may be that you will help guide them through the process, that you will fulfill your commitments to them, that you will properly repair their vehicle in a timely manner, and that you will create an overall positive experience.

For collision repair businesses, the challenge is to take the infrequent and unexpected negative experience of a collision and have the consumer immediately think of your shop as the place to go. If you want your shop to be perceived as the best shop in your area, you have to differentiate yourself from your competition and keep your name and brand in front of your customers and future prospects.

We see logos and slogans everyday that we easily relate to specific brands. Most of you can easily name a soda, fast food, smart phone or clothing brand either by their logo or a slogan. In most cases, we also think of these as quality products. For a collision repair business, we don't have the marketing budget to create the same level of familiarity, nor do you need national brand recognition. You do need to create a brand in your local community that your neighbors recognize and perceive as quality.

While important, your brand isn't limited to the sign on your building or what is on your business card. Your brand is everything that your business does, its appearance and your values.

The way your employees appear and conduct themselves is also a part of your overall brand: the uniforms they wear,

whether or not they look professional. Are they polite, courteous and helpful? A consumer will make a decision in seconds about whether they approve of the individual they are conducting business with. Brand and culture intertwine. You can't fake it. Your team must believe and display your brand at all times. It is very important that your employees live the brand and are not trying to be something they are not.

Today, collision repair business owners need to think like consumers. Very few use a phone book — today they use smart phones and tablets. It is critical to have a strong Internet presence that makes it easy for consumers to find you when using search engines such as Google. And when they find you, your site must display properly on the device they are using. In addition, look at how your business utilizes text messaging, email, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other media outlets.

Effective use of technology not only enables shops to meet consumer expectations, but can also increase the frequency that they see your brand and can deliver a personalized experience that exceeds your customer's expectations.

While it is not a short-term project and not always easy to measure the results, successful collision repair businesses take an active role in their communities. There are many different ways to create opportunities for keeping your brand in front of your neighbors and community. You can visit [www.atonlinetraining.com/abrn1308](http://www.atonlinetraining.com/abrn1308) to get a list of effective ways for a collision repair business to support their community. Your goal should be to have your brand own your local community! 📌

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GENUINE PARTS

## MINDING YOUR BUSINESS

AVOID  
ORDER  
GRIDLOCKSHOPS IMPLEMENT SYSTEMS TO KEEP PARTS  
PROCESSING TRAFFIC FLOWING SMOOTHLY

BY JOHN YOSWICK | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**JOHN BOREK** has developed a reputation for devising unique responses to shop issues during his nearly three decades as a shop owner. So when he couldn't find a parts cart that he felt met his needs, he built his own.

"I've traveled around, but I just couldn't find the parts cart I wanted," said Borek, owner of Autocraft Bodywerks in Austin, Texas. "There are a lot out there, but not one that will hold small parts, big parts, headlights, bumper covers." So Borek's shop built its own parts cart.

"It works for us," Borek said. "It has two 'goalposts' you can put bumper covers on, and rebars and absorbers can go in the rear. It has a drawer and also a dispenser for a box of sandwich baggies. Each one has a dry erase board and a marker chained to it, so you can put the vehicle and tech info with it, and anyone can locate the parts they need."



John Borek

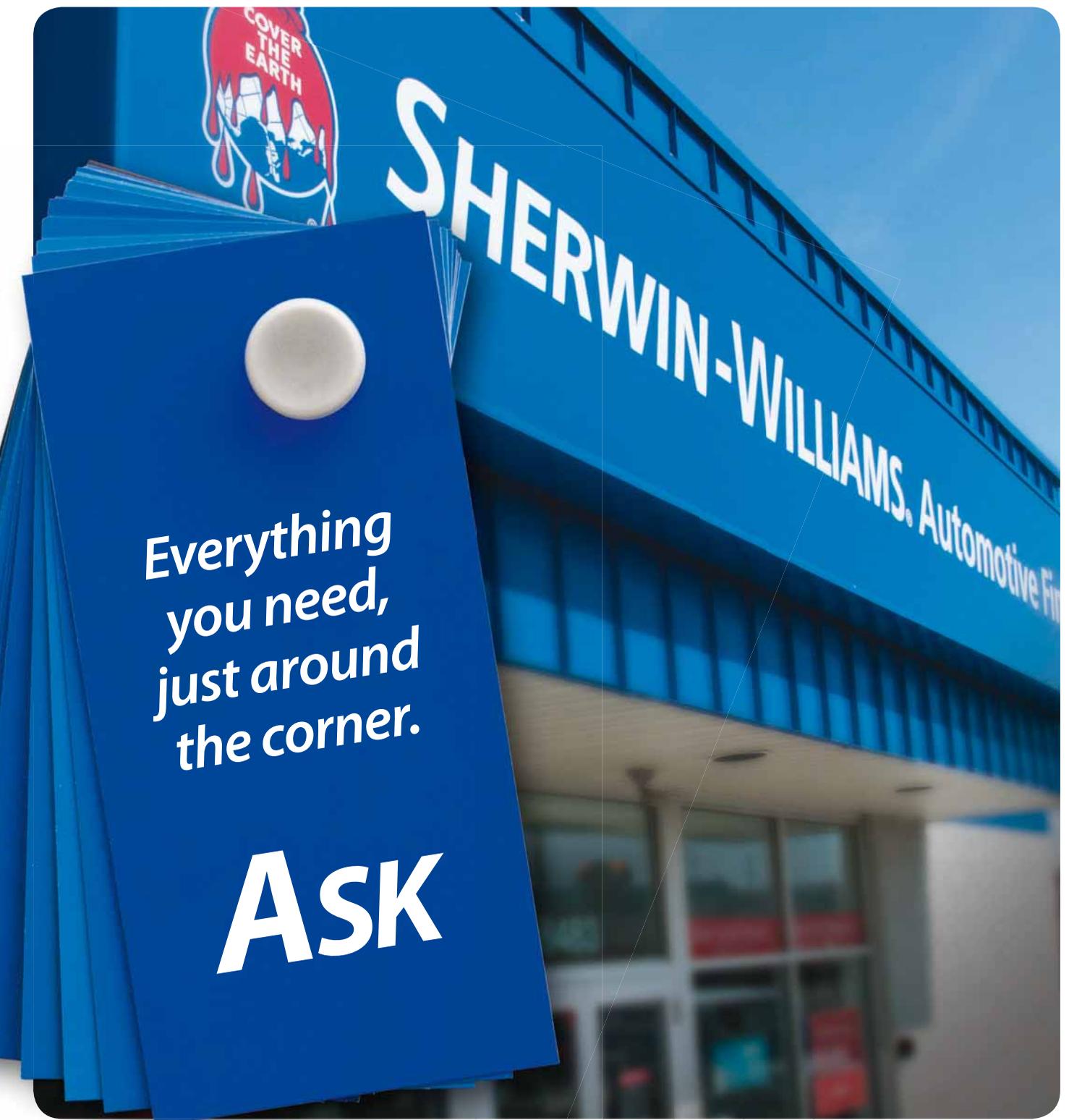
Parts continue to be a source of frustration – and much-needed profit – for shops. Borek is not alone in implementing solutions to improve his shop's performance through more accurate and efficient parts ordering and handling.

**Get all parts identified up front**

Sometimes parts process improvements result from having a fresh set of eyes look at your shop. Danny Panduro, second-generation owner of J & L Body Shop in Sun Valley, Calif., said a consultant recommendation led him to move his parts area from the back of the shop to a more centrally located bay, reducing time employees spend getting parts.

Panduro also implemented a system for 100 percent tear-down of every vehicle, to ensure all needed parts (and repairs) are documented before a vehicle moves into production. He recently posted a 9-minute YouTube video ([abrn.com/Panduro](http://abrn.com/Panduro)) explaining the process and the reasons behind it.

A key goal, he explains in the video, is to avoid those Friday afternoon parts emergencies when a technician realizes he doesn't have something he needs to put a vehicle back together.



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**ASK**



Danny Panduro

He also recommends providing a large, working-height table to allow whoever checks in parts to comfortably compare or “mirror match” the replacement parts to the damaged parts.

The video explains his shop’s system, which indicates on the parts cart when all parts for that job have been checked in and are ready to go.

“The goal is once we commit ourselves to putting that vehicle into production, it doesn’t stop and just moves through the process,” Panduro said.

### MORE PARTS QUICK TIPS

- Consider asking your parts vendors to deliver complete orders only, unless you request otherwise. This saves in-house processing time, such as dealing with multiple check-ins of deliveries, and multiple invoices for a single job.
- Establish and communicate a standard operating procedure (SOP) for parts delivery drivers, specifying where they are to park, where parts are to be delivered, how they are to check-in the parts with your staff, how they are to check for parts returns, etc.
- Mark all parts using labels (that often can be printed from a management system) that include the repair order number, the vehicle, technician, vendor name and invoice number.
- Prefer to use OEM parts? Check with your dealer about their ability to price-match if a customer’s insurer will only pay for non-OEM.
- Create written SOPs for all the parts processes to ensure consistency and make it easy for someone to fill in when the shop’s parts manager is not there. The SOPs should detail parts ordering; check-in and labeling; how parts carts are to be labeled and stored; and how parts returns and credits are to be handled.

### Find creative alternatives

Darren Pierse, co-owner of Arizona Collision Specialists in Scottsdale, Ariz., told attendees of a seminar on parts management at an industry event that improvements at his high-volume two-shop business began with his parts department. Like any shop owner who has tracked the causes for delays or late vehicle deliveries, Pierse knew the most common causes are parts related. One opportunity for improvement he saw would be an additional parts delivery, essentially overnight, so his shops could hit the ground running the next morning.

When he spoke with some of the dealerships his company had purchased parts from, he didn’t get the response he’d hoped. “We didn’t get any response,” he said. “And we’re a decent-sized player in our market.”

So he instead looked to consolidate some of his purchasing power through a multi-line dealer who proposed that in addition to their regular deliveries, all of their dealerships would make a late-in-the-day delivery of the shop’s parts to a central hub; Arizona Collision Specialists would use a third-party to pick up those parts overnight and deliver them to the shop by 6 a.m.

Pierse’s shops have a system so that parts are loaded onto carts in a consistent manner. The estimate is included on the carts in a color-coded pouch (red or green) to indicate whether the cart contains all the needed parts. Other shops use color coding to indicate which technician or team the job/cart is assigned.

### Handling clips and fasteners

Will Latuff, manager of the fourth-generation Latuff Brothers collision repair business in St. Paul, Minn., said his shop has a meticulous system related to clips and fasteners during the blueprinting process. When the blueprinter disassembles a vehicle, for example, all fasteners are placed in a plastic box with numbered compartments. A fastener box for a front bumper, for example, includes a generic photo of a front bumper, showing that the fasteners in compartment No. 1 are from the top center of the bumper cover, compartment No. 2 has the bolts going into the fenders, etc. This allows whoever is reassembling the vehicle to locate the needed fasteners quickly.

If the blueprinter can’t find necessary replacement fasteners within the shop’s supply, he can use the electronic parts catalog. He also puts a sample of the fastener in a plastic bag marked with a pink X (the shop’s visual cue for “replace”), along with the number that

### SMARTER PARTS RETURNS

Parts returns are a costly process for shops and vendors. But no matter how much you are able to reduce them, some returns are inevitable. Here are some ways to handle them efficiently:

Submit returns promptly. If you expect vendors to pick up and process your parts returns quickly, it’s only fair to do your part by getting parts returned to them in a timely manner.

Keep potential part returns in good condition. Painted, damaged or dirty parts, and parts that have obviously once been installed can result in delayed, denied or reduced credit. “If you’re sending a part back, think about if it’s in a condition you’d accept if we delivered that part the next time you ordered it,” one parts manager said. “If you wouldn’t accept it as a new part, you can’t expect to get full credit.”

Care for the packaging. The condition of the parts packaging has become every bit as important as the condition of the part. Don’t tear or crush boxes, don’t write on packaging (use removable labels to mark them as needed), and try to keep packaging reasonably free of dirt, dust, tape and paint.

Include some paperwork with returns. Parts vendors say they are amazed at the number of returned parts that arrive with little or no indication of what shop bought them or when. Processing credits for other returns will take priority over these “mystery parts.” So provide the vendor with a copy of the invoice. Alternatively, use a 2-part form to list the purchase order number and the parts being returned, having the parts driver sign the form when they pick up the returns; this will also help you track returns to ensure you get credits due.



# Are you on this map?

Well, you should be.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [collision.honda.com/locator/search](http://collision.honda.com/locator/search). The page title is "Body Shop Search Results". The navigation bar includes "Collision Information", "SEARCH", "ACCIDENT ASSISTANT", "COLLISION 101", and "BODY SHOP LOCATOR". Below the navigation bar, there is a search form with the following fields: "Find a Body Shop: 90001", "or STREET ADDRESS", "CITY", a distance dropdown set to "20 miles", and a "Search" button. The search results are displayed in a table with 15 matches found. The table has columns for "Body Shop", "Type", and "Distance". The first five results are listed below:

Body Shop	Type	Distance
1 ABC Honda 1234 First Avenue Inglewood, CA 90301-1214 (310) 555-2222 <a href="#">Get Directions</a>	Dealer Owned <b>ProFirst</b>	6.1 miles
2 Top Notch Body Shop 555 High Street Los Angeles, CA 90005-3535 (310) 555-6666 <a href="#">Get Directions</a>	Independently Owned <b>ProFirst</b>	7.8 miles
3 Collision Center 333 Repair Road Los Angeles, CA 90038-1408 (310) 555-4444 <a href="#">Get Directions</a>	Independently Owned <b>ProFirst</b>	9.4 miles
4 Reliable Body Shop 2221 Main Street Culver City, CA 90232-3150 (310) 555-5421 <a href="#">Get Directions</a>	Independently Owned <b>ProFirst</b>	10.4 miles
5 Collision Repair 7772 Lucky Street El Segundo, CA 90245-4327 (310) 555-7727 <a href="#">Get Directions</a>	Independently Owned <b>ProFirst</b>	12.1 miles

To the right of the table is a map of the Los Angeles area, showing various cities and highways. The map is centered on Los Angeles and includes a search bar at the top with "Bird's eye" view selected. The map shows the locations of the shops listed in the table, marked with numbered pins.

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are needed. When those parts arrive, the person mirror-matching the parts can compare them to the sample, ensure the correct number arrived, and put them with the rest of the parts for that job.

**Looking outside your market**

Gary Baugh has some unique parts-related challenges because Baugh Auto

Body in Richmond, Va., operates seven days a week. He grew disenchanted with the parts service he received from some local dealerships, and began driving 100 miles into Northern Virginia to see if, despite the traffic, he could get better service from dealers outside his market.

“People ask why I didn’t just send

a parts runner, but I knew that in order to do business outside my backyard that I had to build relationships and trust,” Baugh said. “That’s needed when you’re asking for parts service at odd times of the night and on Saturdays and Sundays.”

The payoff? Some of those parts managers he got to know were willing to bring parts to their home at night for Baugh to pick up, shaving a number of traffic-clogged miles off his parts run. Some dealers gave him nighttime access to a storage area to pick up parts. Others arranged to leave them for him with the dealership sales departments, which are open in the evenings. By clustering his parts purchases, he was able to secure added discounts that help offset his fuel costs.

Baugh said overnight shipping also can enable shops to quickly get parts like mouldings, mirrors or lights from anywhere in the country if they aren’t immediately available locally.

“I can order a part from a California dealer at 3 p.m. my time and have it at 9 a.m. the next day,” Baugh said. “In some cases, the local dealer told me it would be two days out from the warehouse.”

**Help vendors improve**



**Gary Baugh**

Industry consultant and *ABRN* columnist Mike Anderson of CollisionAdvice.com said Baugh’s examples demonstrate the need for shop estimators and parts

managers to think strategically. Will it pay to give up a discount in order to get a part more quickly? He recommends meeting with parts managers annually to ask, for example, that they let you know if they can get a part from another dealer but at less of a discount than your normally receive. That enables you to make that business decision.

“One of the principles of Toyota’s production system is to respect your suppliers by challenging them and helping them improve,” Anderson said. “Treat your parts vendors like you treat your employees. Challenge them to do better, and help them achieve it.”



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MECHANICAL



## A TALE OF TWO CIRCUITS

## DIAGNOSING AN ELECTRICAL PROBLEM WITH AN A/C COMPRESSOR, BLOWING OR COOLING FAN? THE FIRST STEP IS TO FIGURE OUT WHICH OF TWO CIRCUITS YOU NEED TO FOCUS ON.

BY PETER F. MEIER | TECHNICAL EDITOR

The automotive A/C system has several high current components that the electronic control units (ECU) manages, including the A/C compressor coil, blower motor and fan motors. Current flow through these components can run from three amps or so, to better than 20 amps. Current flow of that kind would spell almost certain death if it passed directly through the driver of a typical ECU, so a neat little electrical device known as the relay acts as an intermediary.

The current required to turn a relay on or off usually is no more than a few tenths of an amp, a level the controller can handle. While the use of relays to control high current devices is certainly not limited to the A/C system (fuel pumps and window motors jump to mind), because this is our A/C issue, we'll focus on those applications.

**One fault, two circuits?**

If you remember your electrical fundamentals, you know that every circuit has five basic elements: a source (typi-

cally the battery), a load (the component that the circuit is designed to operate), a circuit protection device (a fuse, circuit breaker or fusible link), a control (a means to open or close the electrical pathway and turn the load on or off) and a complete path that connects all of them together. When a load doesn't work the way it's supposed to, the fault has to lie in one of these five areas. Easy, right?

How does all this apply to a relay-controlled circuit? The relay is an electrically operated switch that closes and opens the current path to the primary component (the compressor coil, blower or fan motor) we're trying to operate, doesn't it? That makes it a control in the primary component's circuit.

But it is electrically controlled. Something else is turning the relay on (the electronic control unit that is managing the primary component). Doesn't that make the relay a load, too? That's another circuit entirely.

The first step in diagnosing a problem in a relay-controlled circuit is to figure out whether the problem is on the primary component side of the relay or the load side of the relay. Most

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(Left) You can quickly determine which of the two circuits needs your attention using a low amp current probe and your meter. (Right) The relay lies in the intersection of the circuits it is a part off and needs to be considered as a load AND a control.

To use current to isolate which of the two circuits to focus on, go back to the schematic for the component you want to troubleshoot and identify its relay control. Trace the two power feeds at the relay (one for the relay, one for the component) back to the battery. Along the way, you'll pass through at least one fuse, and that makes a great test point for your current measurement. Often, the same fuse will be protecting both power feeds to the relay, allowing you to identify the problem side with one measurement. (If not, you'll need to take a measurement at each fuse. For the purposes of this discussion, we'll assume that one fuse feeds both.)

Remove the fuse and replace with a fused jumper wire. Place your low amp current probe around it, turn the primary component "on" and read the current measurement. A reading of 0.0 amp tells you how the circuit where the relay is the load is working. No current is

of us understand this instinctively when we glance over the schematic. The relay marks an electrical crossroads of sorts. I know I'm not the only one who has stolen a relay from another section of the fuse box and swapped it with the suspect relay. If the primary component now works, though, does that mean it was the relay's fault? And what did we

learn if the component the relay is supposed to control still doesn't work?

### What's working?

If an electrical circuit is complete and operating, current will be flowing through it. Measuring the amount of current can provide a quick answer to what is working and what's not.

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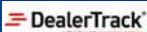
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flowing, so the relay is not on when it is supposed to be, and you need to diagnose why the circuit is open. There is either a physical "open" in the circuit or the control module in charge is not "closing" the circuit path on purpose.

To remove the relay itself as a possibility, swap it out with an identical relay and repeat the current test. If the

current reading remains 0.0 amp, verify power to the relay. Once power is verified, connect your scan tool to see if any circuit-related codes are stored. Are all the input parameters that the control module uses to decide when to issue the on command intact? Can you command the relay on with the scan tool? Is the circuit path to the control module intact and free of excessive voltage drop?

A reading of less than 0.5 amp or so tells you that the relay is on and that whatever parameters the control module needs to see to turn it on are all present and accounted for. The primary component, however, is not on, so focus instead on the circuit that uses the relay as a control. Again, you're looking for an open circuit condition, just this time it's focusing on the path where the primary component is the load. To isolate the relay as a cause, simply jumper the relay panel's terminals with a fused jumper wire to see if the primary component starts working. If not, verify the

integrity of the circuit paths on both the power and ground side of the primary component using the voltage drop testing method. If power and ground voltage drops are in specification, the fault has to lie in the component itself.

The last possible measurement will be in the whole amp range (1.0 to 20.0-plus, depending on the primary component type). That tells you that, electrically, all is well. If the primary



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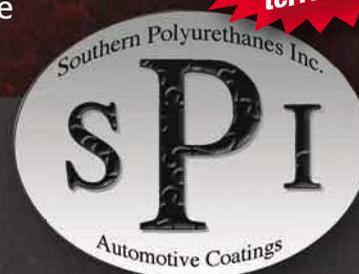
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## TESTING ELECTRONIC CONTROLLED VARIABLE COMPRESSORS

Ever-increasing fuel economy requirements as well as stricter emissions standards impact nearly every system on new cars. The automotive air conditioning system is certainly no exception. Today's mobile A/C systems provide better cabin cooling using smaller amounts of refrigerant in more tightly sealed systems, run by more efficient compressors; all leading to reduced emissions and better gas mileage.

Electronic Controlled variable displacement compressors (ECVs) are becoming more and more the norm for this very reason. Controlled by the Powertrain Control Module (PCM), compressor displacement (and pumping ability) can be precisely controlled to deliver the most efficient operation possible under any given combination of conditions. Unlike variable displacement units that are controlled as a direct result of the heat load on the evaporator (GM's V5 or V7, for example), ECVs are controlled through an electronic solenoid that receives a pulse width modulated command from the computer. Displacement on an ECV can be quickly and seamlessly controlled in a matter of milliseconds. And since most ECVs have no clutch, traditional methods of diagnostics may lead to unnecessary compressor replacement.

That's where the CLT1 ECV compressor driver tool (from Four Seasons, a Standard Motor Products company) comes in. This tool allows the user to command the compressor displacement up or down while monitoring system pressure and temperatures. The kit also includes a compressor solenoid simulator that plugs into the main harness to prevent the accidental setting of HVAC-related trouble codes.

component isn't working, it is likely a mechanical fault with the component and not an electrical one. Some examples are A/C compressor clutches that

have an excessive air gap, or blower motors that are mechanically seized.

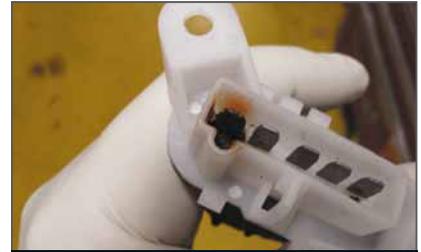
### Voltage what?

Using current is an easy, convenient way to isolate which circuit you need to focus on, but many of us don't own a low-amp current probe. And even if you do, you still will need to perform some traditional tests to pinpoint the exact problem. Let's start with the circuit where the primary component is the load, because that is the simpler of the two to troubleshoot.

With just three measurements, two taken as close to the load as you can get, you should be able to narrow the problem down very quickly. The main issue will be accessing the component. Some compressors are buried in the engine compartment, making access to the connector a little difficult. Ideally, you want to backprobe the wiring directly at the component's connector. If you must pierce the wiring, be sure to use some liquid electrical tape to seal any holes you made, or you will have set the stage for a future failure. One alternative I also have used successfully is to disconnect the harness from the primary component and reposition it for easier access and then substitute a different load (like a sealed beam headlight). This still allows you to test the circuit path for voltage drop issues. Just be sure to make up a jumper harness that uses the correct size terminals so you don't create any new problems while trying to solve the original one.

With the circuit on, measure the voltage directly at the battery and record your reading. Now measure the voltage available on the power side of the primary component, as close as you can get to the actual component itself. Keep the negative meter lead at the battery's negative terminal to insure you are testing as much of the circuit path as possible. Record your second reading. Last, measure the voltage available at the ground side of the component and record that reading.

Voltage available at the power side should be nearly equal to what you measured at the battery, while voltage measured on the ground side should be nearly non-existent. That is basic electrical theory. Voltage is used to



Excess resistance can be the cause of an inoperative component. Voltage drop tests will help discover where they are hiding.

overcome resistance and allow current to flow. Whichever side of the load isn't reading as it should is the side with the problem. Start backtracking along the circuit path towards the battery until your reading does return to normal. Your problem lies between those last two measurement points.

If the power side and ground side readings are OK, the problem lies between your first two test points or in the component itself.

No power to the component? Bypass the relay to eliminate it as the problem, being sure to use one identical to the one you're testing. If the relay is OK, you'll need to perform the same type of voltage drop tests on the relay control circuit. Make up a load substitute using an old turn signal bulb. Just be sure to use terminal ends that match up with the female relay connector sockets to avoid damaging them. You should see the bulb light when the control module turns the relay on. If not, command the relay on using your scan tool and perform the same two load-side voltage measurements you performed on the primary component earlier to identify which side of the circuit path has an issue. 



Pete Meier is an ASE certified Master Technician and sponsoring member of iATN. He has over 35 years practical experience as a technician and educator, covering a wide variety of makes and models. His primary goal is to bring working techs the information they need.

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**TECHNIQUES** # INF OCUS

# Making some elbow room

Expand your work area and profits



The opulent customer waiting areas that G & C AutoBody showcases are part of its business model and not for every shop.

IMAGE / G &amp; C AUTOBODY

BY **TIM SRAMCIK** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

New shop owner Tony Wise held a production meeting three years ago aimed at locating the worst work log jams at Wise's Expert Auto in Charlotte, NC, a business he had purchased just two months earlier. Wise was a 12-year industry veteran who had worked for seven years as a tech and five more in management. He also was a veteran of lean training. When he purchased his own shop, he envisioned using this training, and some innovative ideas of his own, to implement an operation free of the constraints he saw as holding back the success of other businesses where he had worked.

He admits being genuinely shocked when his production employees unanimously pointed to the single largest production inhibitor at his shop — space.

The shop utilized 22,000 sq. ft. of repair space and another 3,500 for its office and customer waiting areas. The issue was the shop's odd shape — an L-shaped building with long narrow workspaces.

"My employees constantly had to move vehicles and equipment as we pushed work through," says Wise.

"They also had to work around each other a little too close."

Wise didn't have the funds to invest in a complete renovation of his building. Fortunately, he and his staff discovered the solution to their problem didn't require square feet. Opening up just five or six inches in specific areas often was the key.

Working with a consultant from his paint vendor, Wise says he economically opened up an additional 920 sq. ft. of workspace, which now helps produce another \$5,800 a month in revenue.



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Wise's problem is one that small- to medium-size shops face every day. Wise's experience shows that with some professional help, shops can make relatively small modifications that add up to big changes in productivity. Let's look at five of the most significant changes your shop can turn over in just several days or hours.

**Clean sweep**

Getting organized is the first step in any effort to maximize space. It's key to a lean operation. Empty your shops of unnecessary materials, equipment, parts, etc. This is easier said than done, since shops often hold onto things out of a belief that they're valuable items.

Scott Elfsman, a design engineer in the service industry in Boston, says many businesses are bedeviled by this problem. "Americans could really take

a cue from European and Asian businesses where space has always been at a premium," he says. "They learned long ago that usable space is far more valuable than storage space."

Elfsman says many shops keep items that cost more in productivity than they hold in actual value. Wise's shop had three damaged welders, a tire changing machine, dozens of damaged parts the previous owner planned to repair, along with other tools that were either outdated or unused for years. They were neatly stored, so they didn't appear to be a problem. The consultant convinced him to part ways with most of them.

Wise sold most of them for scrap and made over \$300. The rest he placed in a rental bin. He opened up valuable processing real estate and instituted a business practice of focusing on process, not storage.



**Not every bay needs a lift. Consider opening up your bays and using movable equipment such as portable frame machines.**

IMAGE / MOODY'S COLLISION CENTER

"In some cases we may have only cleared a couple of square feet from a wall," says Wise. "That space was critical when it came to finding room for our techs to maneuver around vehicles."

**Go up top**

Elfsman says an international lesson shops should adopt is making use of the space above their work areas. With many shops' ceiling extending at least 20 ft., extensive space exists for necessary storage and other purposes.

Wise invested in shelving for parts and materials. He says the few extra minutes employees use to get a ladder and locate what they need is more than offset by the space made available.

More important, he says, was his decision to run his power lines above his work areas. Instead of utilizing wall outlets, employees now use overhead configurations. The setup helps prevent problems created by electric cords that run across shop floors and allows workers more options of where they can work.

Wise says this change was by far the most expensive of his search for space-saving solutions, but could pay the most dividends.

**Go mobile**

Shops often view the number of bays they showcase as a sign of their success.



**A more modest waiting area can be appealing and a better use of shop space.**

IMAGE / MOODY'S COLLISION CENTER

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Elfsman says this notion is somewhat flawed if shops believe that every bay must feature either an in-ground lift or frame machine.

“Shops need to consider usable space,” he explains. “If you have something occupying space that doesn’t justify the space taken or if the space could be better used, you have to make that change.”

In Wise’s case, he replaced an aging frame rack with a newer, portable model. This opened up space that helped him more easily maneuver vehicles through his facility.

His employees balked at the notion at first since they were more comfortable with a drive-on system, but the trade off in space, along with other benefits such as the ability to straighten frames anywhere in the building, convinced them the move was smart.



Damaged and old parts and equipment take up valuable room in many shops. Either move them outside (like here) or elsewhere or scrap them.

IMAGE / FORT WASHINGTON AUTO BODY

“Once they bought into this change, they began making suggestions of where else we could free up space or better use what we had,” he says.

### Slim your waiting room

For the past two years, G&C Auto Body has been an ABRN Top Shop. The business prides itself on opulent customer wait areas that is part of G&C’s unique business model and not necessarily the best financial choice for other shops.

Elfsman says wait space is probably wasted space for most collision repairers, better suited for mechanical repairers whose customers have shorter wait times. Collision work takes days. For most shops, a simple, but comfortable, area is all that’s needed for customers while they wait for an estimate or a vehicle to be delivered.

### Give at the office

Look for savings in your office space the same way you do in your service areas. Unused and out-of-date printers, computers, fax machines, along with filing cabinets packed with paperwork, take up valuable real estate that impedes administrative work.

Wise found an even better use for this space after he organized his office area, giving it back to repair areas.

After removing several aging filing cabinets and asking his estimators



Note that this space contains a frame and tire machine, along with other tools. The availability of just a few extra square feet of space allows the employee to work efficiently and comfortably.

IMAGE / MOODY’S COLLISION CENTER

and office staff to organize their work areas, Wise decided to downsize his cavern-like personal office.

“It was excessive,” he says. “All I really needed was a place for my desk and some extra room to meet with customers and insurance reps.”

Wise had the walls of his office moved in, opening up over 200 sq. ft. of space that eases the flow of vehicles through the facility and provides room for bumper work and other minor repairs.

Wise says the tradeoff has more than paid off financially. It also has provided one more benefit.

“It’s a reminder for me to spend more time on the shop floor,” he says. “You’re going to get a lot more from your business by concentrating on your processes instead of sitting behind a desk.”

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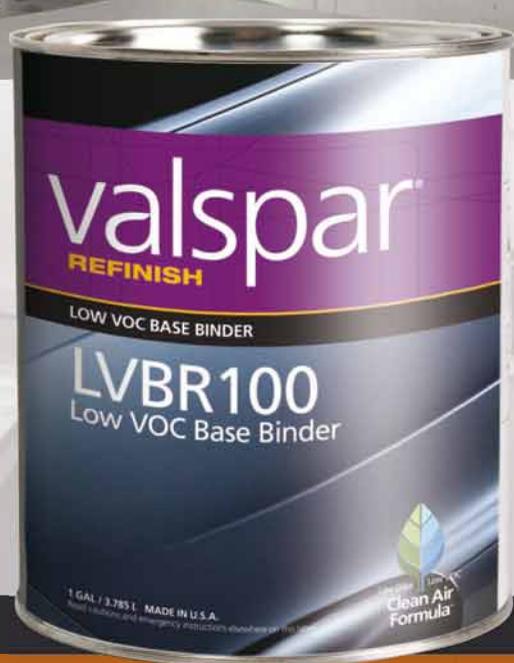


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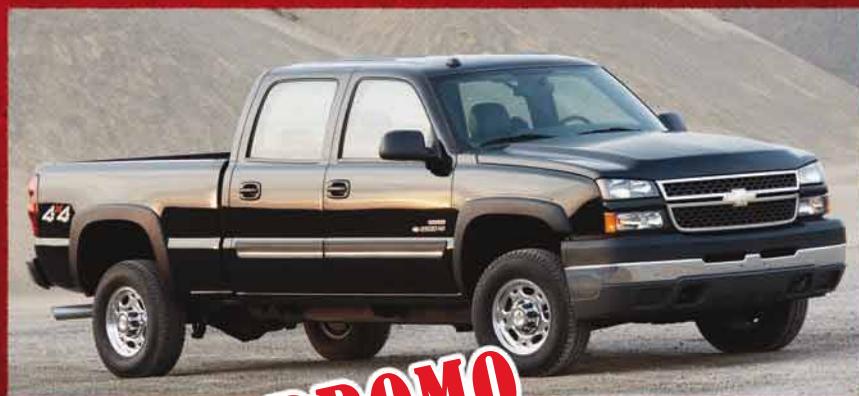


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## THE LAST DETAIL [✓]

In a previous column, I mentioned that whenever a shop approaches me looking for help with marketing, my first question is always, "What's your closing ratio?" Because before you try to attract more potential customers to the door, you need to make sure you're converting enough of the current "shoppers" coming to your door into "customers" who make an appointment to have their car repaired.

So if you aren't doing so already, track your closing ratio for 30 to 60 days. If you write 100 estimates and get 60 of those jobs, you have a 60 percent closing ratio. And if your closing ratio isn't 85 percent or better, you need to focus more on "selling" than on "marketing."

Think about it: Let's say you have a 65 percent closing ratio and you currently have annual sales of about \$1 million. You can quickly estimate that your potential sales from all your estimates is about \$1.53 million (\$1 million current sales divided by .65 closing ratio). If you could nudge up your closing ratio by capturing just 10 percent of those lost sales, you've added \$153,000 to your annual sales without spending a dime more on marketing.

But to do this, it's not enough to just know your closing ratio. You also need to know WHY people didn't schedule repairs with you. What was their reason, their objection?

It could be because they feel they need to get multiple estimates. It could be because they need to check with their spouse. It could be because they think your shop is too expensive, or because their insurer told them you are hard to work with. It could be because they need a loaner car or want their deductible waived. Most shop management systems will allow you to track these objections, but you can do it manually even if you don't have a management system.

Here's why: In my shop, we were determined to keep our closing ratio high, to let as few of the potential jobs that came to our door get away. So the first Thursday of each month, I'd bring the office staff together and we'd look at our closing ratio number. We'd also look at the reasons we weren't able to get potential customers to schedule appointments.

We'd then brainstorm what we could do as salespeople and as an organization to overcome the objections we were hearing from potential customers. How do we counter when they say their insurer told them we're "not on their list" or are "hard to deal

“Brainstorm with your team what you can do as salespeople to overcome the objections you are hearing from potential customers.”

## CUSTOMER OBJECTION: OVERRULED

### Increase your closing ratio and boost sales by countering customer concerns

with?" How do we get past their belief that they need to get three estimates? What if they say they want to find a shop that will waive their deductible?

We'd use those discussions to build sales scripts and training that address those objections, one at a time. Then we'd role-play the scenarios so they could practice and learn how to overcome those objections.

If the objection was that another shop has a loaner car, for example, we'd make sure the potential customer knew we offer them free pick-up and delivery within 10 miles of the shop (and estimators knew they could extend this range based on the job). We'd make sure they knew we could coordinate a rental they could pick up and drop off at the shop. We'd offer to contact their insurer if they weren't sure if they had rental car coverage. We could offer them some mass transit passes, or as appropriate, take advantage of some of the free rental days our rental car vendor offered us.

We built a whole series of these types of responses for a variety of different objections we encountered. While I think going through this process with your own staff is a valuable exercise, you can also download the "Overcoming Objections" document we developed at my shop by visiting [ABRN.com/OvercomingObjectives](http://ABRN.com/OvercomingObjectives).

So before you pour dollars or effort into marketing to get more potential business to the door, measure how much of that potential business you're capturing (your closing ratio). And if it's not 85 percent or better, put some effort into helping your team overcome the objections they're hearing. 📞

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**Mike Anderson**, a former shop owner, currently operates [COLLISIONADVICE.COM](http://COLLISIONADVICE.COM), a training and consulting firm. He also acts as a facilitator for DuPont Performance Services' Business Council 20-groups.

If you have an business issue or question you'd like Mike to address, email him. [mike@CollisionAdvice.com](mailto:mike@CollisionAdvice.com)



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## **Proper Adjustment**

Vehicle-specific maintenance

## **Refined Steering**

Replacing the intermediate steering shaft

## **Engine Protection**

Genuine Kia oil filters

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Genuine Parts

# New Model Launches Promise Continued Service Opportunities

**K**ia is on a hot streak with record-breaking new vehicle sales and fresh new designs for 2013. Kia Motors America (KMA) continues its mission to create an outstanding customer experience throughout the life of every vehicle—a value stream that extends all the way to maintenance and repair. Continued record-setting sales foreshadow increased future demand for maintenance and accessory sales.

Kia has rolled out what is arguably its best ever vehicle designs. Sleek, eye-catching and in tune with the market, the all-new 2014 Cadenza and Forte sedans joined the 2014 Sorento CUV as three of seven all-new or significantly redesigned vehicles scheduled to launch this calendar year. Each of these new products furthers Kia's efforts to advance value to new levels of sophistication by combining European-influenced styling with cutting-edge technology.



2014 Forte sedan

New product launches combined with strong demand for vehicles already in the line contributed to KMA's best ever April sales of 47,556 units. The Optima midsize sedan led Kia's sales for the 17th consecutive month with 14,678 units sold, and together with the Sorento CUV, accounted for nearly 50 percent of total sales for the month. The Soul urban passenger vehicle also recorded robust monthly sales of 11,311 units.

As the Kia brand continues to resonate well with consumers and create

record sales, Kia's success bodes well for maintenance and repair business now and down the road. And Kia makes it easy with Genuine Kia parts and expert technical advice from local Kia dealers.

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The same passion and dedication that drives our innovative vehicle design is also built in to every Genuine Kia Part. Look to your Authorized Kia Dealer for replacement parts to keep your customers satisfied mile after mile.

**Kia Motors America, Inc.**

## In This Issue

VOL. 8 | NO. 2 FALL 2013 | *Quality Connection* is published by Kia Motors America



### Proper Adjustment

Vehicle-specific maintenance for the 2009 Kia Rio



### Refined Steering

Replacing the intermediate steering shaft



### Engine Protection

Genuine Kia oil filters deliver premium performance

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# Proper Adjustment

Vehicle-specific technical information from your local Kia dealer offers opportunities to provide total customer satisfaction during maintenance.

When your customers bring their Kia Rio in for maintenance, it's the perfect time to check for issues that can help to ensure complete customer satisfaction. On 2009 Rio's built during production dates from 7/12/2008 to 9/10/2008, check the fuel door and rear door glass for minor adjustments, which may be needed. Quick and easy, the following procedures provide steps to ensure your customer's Rio is properly adjusted.

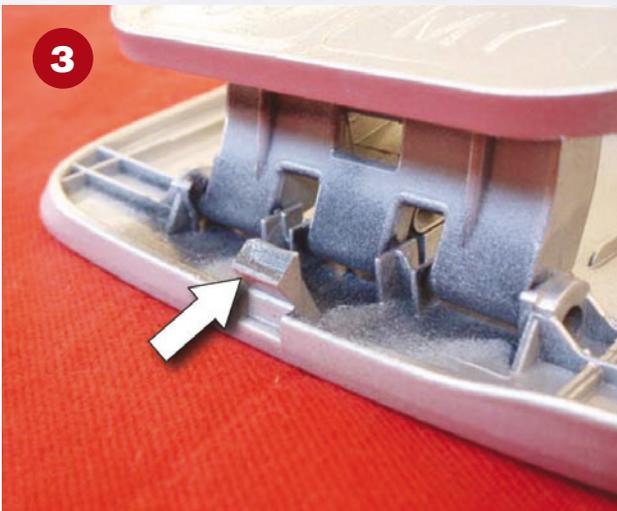
MODEL FEATURED:  
2009 Rio  
(4 door)

## Fuel Door Adjustment

Inspect the fuel door to ensure it remains in the open position for refueling. If it does not, the condition is easily remedied with a quick procedure to adjust the open door detent tab on the fuel door assembly. The adjustment decreases the detent height, enabling it to lock securely in place.



» See your local Kia dealership for model application and product availability.



**1.** Open the fuel filler door to gain access to the fuel door mounting bolts, and remove the fuel cap tether hook from the fuel filler cap.

**2.** Remove the fuel door mounting bolts from the body. Take care not to scratch the paint when removing the bolts.

**3.** Perform the procedure on a covered surface to prevent scratches to the painted fuel door surface.

**4.** Using a file, remove approximately 1 mm of plastic material from the end of the locking detent tab. Remove only enough material until the door has a slight noticeable detent.

**5.** Install the fuel door and tighten the retaining bolts to 35~44 inch lbs (4-5 Nm), and reattach the tether to the cap.

**6.** Check to make sure the fuel door is centered and adjusted properly.

— Rear door glass alignment begins on next page



» This and other technical information is available at [www.Kiatechinfo.com](http://www.Kiatechinfo.com).

## Door Glass Adjustment

A slight gap in the left rear quarter door glass may cause wind noise at high speeds. Inspect for a gap, and follow this quick procedure to set the door glass and weather strip in the proper position.



1. To determine if the condition exists, check for a 0.5 – 1.5 mm gap between the weather strip and window frame on the left door quarter glass.
2. Loosen and remove the upper quarter window track retaining screw, and partially remove the weather strip to gain access. Take care not to scratch the paint.
3. Pull the rear quarter glass assembly rearward, using the vertical window track as indicated. This will seat the glass run and eliminate the slight gap.
4. Align the vertical window track to the upper doorframe, and reinstall the screw, tightening to 35–44 inch lbs (4-5 Nm).
5. Reinstall the weather strip, and ensure it is properly routed into the channel and secured.
6. When complete, clean the window glass before returning the vehicle to your customer. **KIA**

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# ***Refined Steering***



Intermediate Steering Shaft - PN OK52Y 32550

The steering wheel is the place where a driver gets most of his feedback on the performance of a number of vehicle systems, including the tires, suspension and brakes. As simple as the steering column seems to be, issues may arise that require close investigation.

**I**n areas where heavy road salt is used, owners of some 2002-05 Kia Sedonas have identified increased steering effort and noise from the intermediate steering shaft. Initial signs of this condition present as noise or rattle at low speeds. This condition is remedied by replacing the intermediate steering shaft with Kia part number OK52Y 32550 and following the procedure detailed at below.

MODEL FEATURED:  
2002-2005  
Sedona



## Intermediate Steering Shaft Removal

**1** Prior to beginning the replacement procedure, road test the vehicle and establish that the steering wheel is centered while driving straight. If it is off-center, note the direction and the approximate number of degrees. A preexisting alignment issue must be addressed separately prior to performing replacement of the intermediate steering shaft.

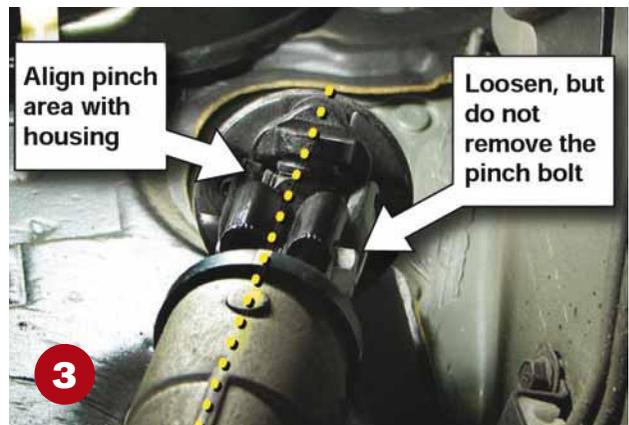
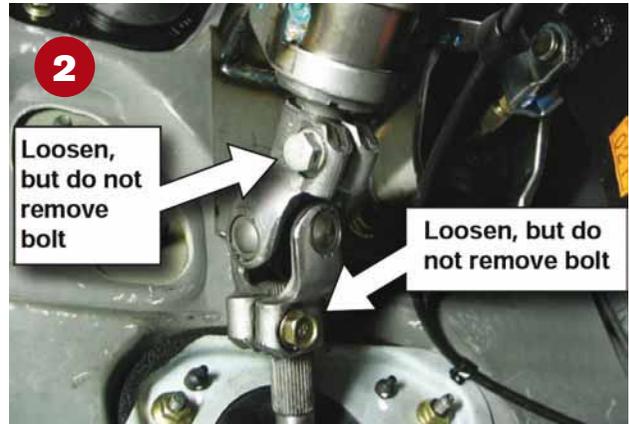
**2** Use the ignition key to unlock the steering column. It must remain unlocked throughout the procedure. Under the dash, loosen but do not remove the two upper joint pinch bolts that attach to the steering column and intermediate shaft. Ensure the pinch bolts grasp the shaft tight enough that no play is felt.

**3** Raise the vehicle on a lift, and loosen but do not remove the lower intermediate shaft pinch bolt. With the wheels pointing straight forward, center the pinch area of the lower intermediate shaft joint on the raised rib and/or circular reference point of the steering rack housing. You may need to clean and re-mark this area with a paint marker for reference.

**4** Lower the vehicle so the tires firmly contact the floor. Without moving the steering wheel, carefully install a steering wheel holding device.

*Note: For any number of reasons, the steering wheel may no longer be centered once the lower intermediate shaft joint is aligned to the steering rack as outlined in step three. The steering wheel must be locked in the position resulting from alignment of the lower intermediate shaft joint to the steering rack, and may not necessarily be centered. Do not allow the steering wheel to spin freely while replacing the intermediate steering shaft. This may cause damage to the clock spring and will affect centering of the steering wheel following replacement.*

**5** Remove the previously loosened upper intermediate shaft joint bolts. Slide the joint down onto the splines of the intermediate shaft. This will allow the joint to be removed from the bottom of the steering column shaft. Do not allow either the steering wheel and/or intermediate shaft to turn. Remove the upper intermediate shaft joint from the intermediate shaft and set aside for reinstallation.





**6** Raise the vehicle on the lift and remove the loosened pinch bolt from the lower intermediate shaft joint. Then remove the intermediate shaft from the steering gear shaft. Do not allow the joint to turn when removing the bolt and/or intermediate shaft.

### Intermediate Steering Shaft Installation

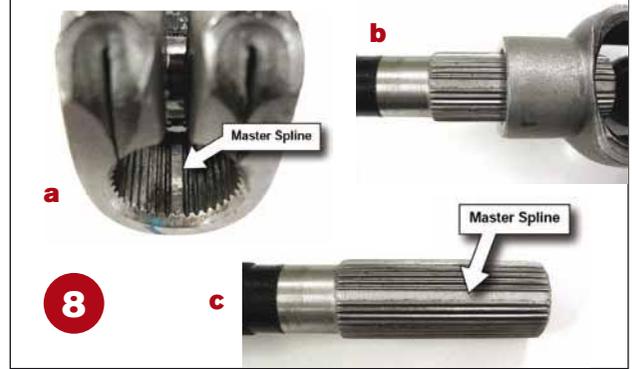
**7** Install the new intermediate shaft, aligning the pinched area of the lower joint with the raised rib and/or circular reference point of the steering gear housing. Lightly tighten the pinch bolt, making sure not to rotate the steering gear shaft. Do not fully tighten the pinch bolt. Lower the vehicle so the tires firmly contact the floor.

**8 A:** The shaft's upper joint has a master spline on its lower joint section that ensures proper phasing of the two joints of the intermediate shaft. Note that the upper section of the joint does not have a master spline.

**B:** The intermediate shaft has a master spline that ensures proper phasing of the two joints of the intermediate shaft.

**C:** The upper joint master spline must be aligned with the intermediate shaft master spline as indicated to ensure proper phasing of the two joints of the intermediate shaft. Only the bottom section of the upper joint has a master spline.

**9** Under the dash, reinstall the intermediate shaft upper joint, paying close attention to the master spline alignment between the joint's lower section and intermediate shaft.



**10** Fully install the upper intermediate shaft joint and tighten to 16 – 20 lb. ft.

**11** Raise the vehicle and tighten the joint at the steering gear shaft to 16 – 20 lb. ft. Lower the vehicle and remove the steering wheel holding device, then road test the vehicle to confirm that the customer concern has been addressed. Additionally, check that the steering wheel is still aligned as it was prior to shaft replacement. **KIA**

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