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AUTOPRO
WORKSHOP

VOLUME 55 | NUMBER 3
MARCH 2016



NEW ADVANCED MATERIALS

THE BMW 7 SERIES AND CADILLAC CT6 PRESENT NEW DESIGNS AND REPAIR CHALLENGES

SHOP PROFILE

📍 CARSTAR John Hine Collision;
Mission Valley, California

TECHNICAL TRAINING

REMOVING DENTS

Tackle damage on
plastic bumpers

TECHNICAL TRAINING

FIX PLASTIC

Extend beyond
bumpers for all-over
vehicle repair



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INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS

DOMINIC BRUSCO LEADS NABC TO FURTHER INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

BY **CHELSEA FREY** | SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR

As the newly elected chairman of the National Auto Body Council, Brusco seeks to increase program awareness and expand initiatives.

COMMUNITY

automechanika
CHICAGO

COMMITMENT TO TRAINING

MANAGEMENT TRAINING

FOCUS ON THE 8 BEFORE 8 STRATEGY FOR BETTER DAYS

BY **MIKE JONES** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Having a morning routine will create positive new possibilities for you. I call my routine "eight before eight." These are eight things I make a commitment to do before 8 a.m. that set the stage for a more productive, positive, energetic and focused day — without relying on coffee alone!

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 FIND MORE PRODUCTS ONLINE ABRN.COM/PRODUCTS

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MANAGEMENT TRAINING

A HOW-TO FOR ONLINE REVIEWS

BY FRANK TERLEP | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

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CREATE ACCOUNTABLE EMPLOYEES

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TECHNICAL TRAINING

BY LARRY MONTANEZ | CONTRIBUTING TECHNICAL EDITOR

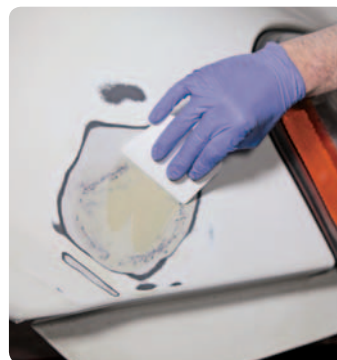
The BMW 7 Series and Cadillac CT6 — both new versions of cars as we know them — present new designs and repair challenges to come over the next few years.

TECHNICAL TRAINING

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BY JOHN WILBURN | CONTRIBUTOR

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TECHNICAL TRAINING

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BY DOUGLAS CRAIG | CONTRIBUTOR

44 Now, almost 50 years after the first plastic bumpers originated, both non-structural and structural reinforced plastics are used almost everywhere in car body design. Make sure you know all you need to when repairing plastic anywhere on a vehicle.

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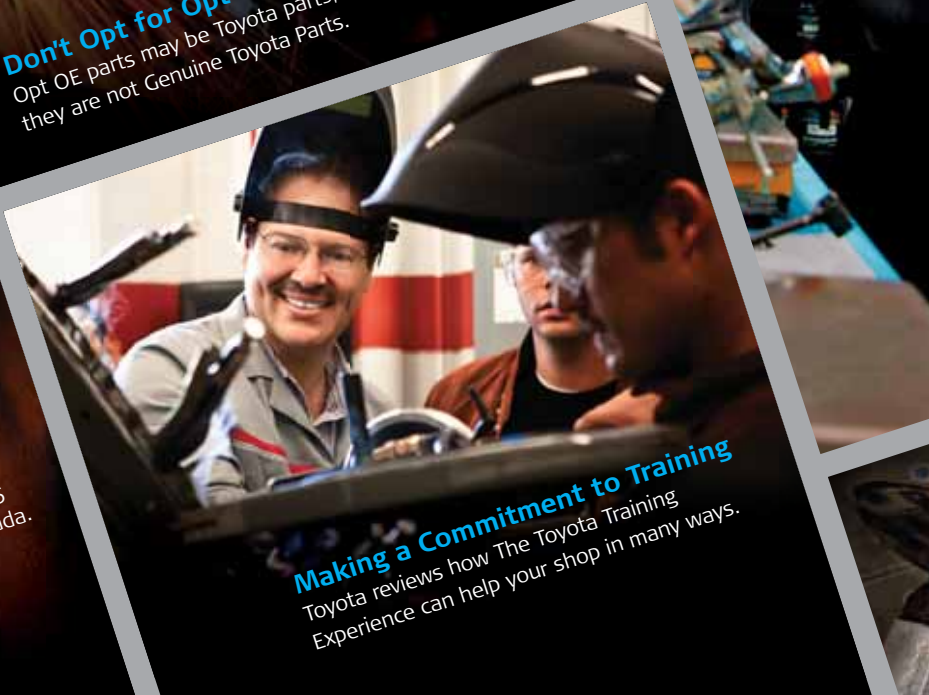
Winter 2016



Don't Opt for Opt OE Parts
Opt OE parts may be Toyota parts, but
they are not Genuine Toyota Parts.



OPS Steals the Show at SEMA
The star of the Toyota booth at the 2015
SEMA show Nov. 3-6 in Las Vegas, Nevada.



Making a Commitment to Training
Toyota reviews how The Toyota Training
Experience can help your shop in many ways.

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Top Notch Tools

Tools are a common topic in the collision repair industry. The caliber of your tools and how suited they are to the job you are doing can have a big impact on both the quality and the efficiency of the work that goes on in a collision center. In this issue of *Collision Pros* magazine, we cover a variety of tools that can boost your business.

Having the right tools for your shop is about more than having the right welder. Planning and procurement tools can also help you maximize your business. In the article on OPSTRAX we talk about the success of the OPS Technology Suite demonstrations at the SEMA show and how a parts procurements system like OPS can help increase efficiency and customer satisfaction at your collision center. In this issue's article on the value of Toyota's Collision Repair & Refinish training, we discuss one of the most valuable tools you can have in your shop—knowledge of Toyota recommended repair procedures. If you're curious about what the real value of Toyota training is, check out this article for insight.

The start of the new year is always a good time to refresh and re-evaluate. Maybe it's time to take stock of the tools you use in your shop and consider what works and what can be improved upon. If there is one thing that I've learned in this business, it's that there is always room for improvement and always an opportunity to do better. And, the process of improvement is often when you have the opportunity to learn the most and have the most fun!

Kathy Capozza
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Having the right tools for your shop is about more than having the right welder. Planning and procurement tools can also help you maximize your business."

– Kathy Capozza



TELL US YOUR IDEAS—email us at info@collisionprosmagazine.com

→ DID YOU KNOW: For some systems, a scan tool is the only tool capable of calibrating many of the sensitive sensors that modern vehicles are equipped with.

Scan Fan

WHY A SCAN TOOL CAN BE ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE TOOLS IN YOUR SHOP

THERE ARE CERTAIN TOOLS THAT NO SHOP SHOULD LIVE WITHOUT AND A SCAN TOOL IS ONE OF THEM! Every collision center should have a scan tool in its arsenal. Scan tools play many important roles throughout the inspection, repair, and quality confirmation portions of working on a vehicle in a collision repair shop. If you're wondering why your shop should make the investment in one of these valuable tools, read on to learn more about why scan tools are important for your shop and what to look for when purchasing one.

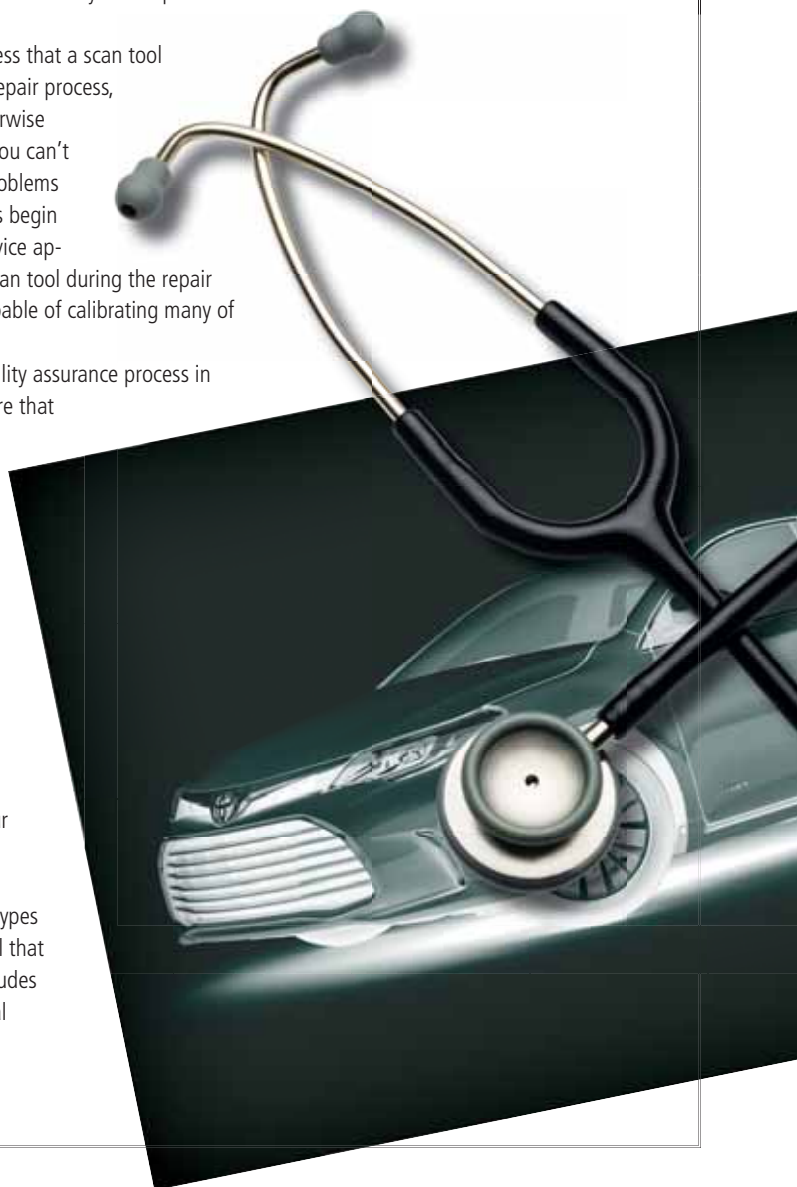
There are a number of times during the collision repair process that a scan tool proves to be very valuable. The first is at the beginning of the repair process, when it can be used to perform a pre-repair health check, otherwise known as a diagnostic scan. This can help identify issues that you can't see with a visual inspection and also can reveal pre-existing problems that the vehicle might have. Identifying problems before repairs begin will allow you to create an accurate estimate and schedule service appointments early to reduce cycle time. You can also rely on a scan tool during the repair process itself. For some systems, a scan tool is the only tool capable of calibrating many of the sensitive sensors that modern vehicles are equipped with.

Finally, a scan tool is an essential part of the post-repair quality assurance process in collision repair shops. A post-repair scan can help you make sure that there are no issues with the computers that may go undetected because they are not triggering a service light to display on the dashboard. Identifying problems that can't be found during a light check will ensure that your customers return to say thanks...not to complain about the light that popped on in the days following your repair.

SCAN TOOL REQUIREMENTS

There are a variety of different scan tools on the market and shops should consider their needs and working environment when deciding which tool to purchase. Ensure that the tool you purchase has the ability to interface with all of the control modules on the vehicle models that you work on in your shop. Also, check that the scan tool has the ability to perform calibrations on all systems that require them.

Toyota offers two scan tools to meet the needs of different types of collision repair shops. Techstream is an all-inclusive scan tool that is built on a durable, tough book platform. Techstream Lite includes software and a diagnostic cable that runs on most conventional laptops. For more information, visit Techinfo.toyota.com. 📄



UNDERSTANDING NON-REUSABLE PARTS



Non-reusable parts—sometimes referred to as one-time-use parts—are parts that are designed to be installed only once.”

—Eric Mendoza, Assistant Manager, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.

Toyota does not recommend that you reinstall non-reusable parts. Items such as glass, fasteners, gaskets, emblems, clips, grommets, garnishes and decals are often designated as non-reusable parts because of how they are designed. This means that if you are repairing a vehicle and you remove any of the above mentioned parts, you must replace them if they are specified as non-reusable in the vehicle repair manual.

“Non-reusable parts shouldn’t be reinstalled because they won’t operate as they were originally designed to upon second use,” explains Mendoza. “Reusing these parts can lead to customer dissatisfaction and a failed repair. It can cause water or air leakage, rattling, or can accidentally damage other nearby parts.”

FIRST TIME’S THE CHARM

Toyota one-time-use parts can be identified by checking the Toyota Service Repair Manual for the vehicle you are working on. The parts are called out in the components section. Non-reusable parts have a black dot next to them and the key for the diagram will indicate that the black dot means the part is non-reusable. Estimators and technicians should review this material before work begins on any vehicle. This will ensure that all necessary work is captured in the estimate and that you have all parts needed to complete the repair.



For more information on non-reusable parts, reference Collision Repair Information Bulletin (CRIB) #188. Toyota repair manuals can be found on the Toyota Technical Information System (TIS) at techinfo.toyota.com.





Non-reusable Parts

Non-reusable parts come in all shapes and sizes and the reason for their non-reusable designation varies. Here are some examples of common non-reusable parts:

- **Headlight Washer Nozzles**—These parts are usually made of plastic that has spring to it. They are designed so that when they are installed, the plastic bends in, then bends back out again. The part will be squeezed and bent again during the removal process for a repair. However, the part is not built to withstand being squeezed during removal and reinsertion. If so, the plastic will lose its springiness and may fail to perform as originally intended. The part may then rattle around, break, or even fall out.
- **Tail Light Gasket**—The gasket in the tail light is an important component because it creates a seal that keeps water from entering the vehicle and prevents wind noise. The tail light gasket is commonly made of foam material that is designed to squish together to form the seal. Once crushed, the material will not bounce back and therefore cannot be reused to create another seal. A good rule of thumb for all gaskets is to check to see if they are one-time-use and always replace them if they are designated non-reusable by Toyota.
- **Moisture Barrier**—The moisture barrier is a plastic barrier that you will find when you remove a vehicle's interior door trim panel. This piece is intended to protect the interior of the door from moisture. When the moisture barrier is removed it becomes deformed and can no longer perform its function properly. Moisture barriers should be replaced every time they are removed.
- **Emblems**—During the course of a repair your shop may be asked to clean and re-tape vehicle emblems. In the factory, emblems are precision-made. It is almost impossible to recreate this process in the shop and if you attempt to re-tape emblems you most likely will not get the same fit and finish as the original decals. Technicians are advised to replace rather than re-tape all emblems.

COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE

As with any collision repair related issue, it is important to be transparent with your customer/bill payer about the work necessary to deliver a high-quality repair. If customers question the necessity of replacing rather than reinstalling a non-reusable part, help them to understand that replacing one-time-use parts is part of the manufacturer's recommendation for the repair you are carrying out and provide them with OEM supporting documentation. 📄



Opt OE parts can be an issue for safety, fit and function. Using these parts can be more trouble than it's worth for a collision center. These parts may not be designed specifically for the vehicle you are working on and this can be a big cause for concern for items that are integral for safety, such as headlights and airbags."

—Rick Leos

Marketing Division/Collision Program Developer
Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.

DON'T OPT FOR OPT OE PARTS

OPT OE PARTS CAN SEEM LIKE THE REAL DEAL. They appear to be Toyota parts, but for a less expensive price than a collision center would normally pay when ordering parts through a Toyota dealer. However, Opt OE parts may come with a hefty cost that isn't reflected in the price tag of the parts.

"The problem with Opt OE parts is that there is no way to be certain about where these parts are sourced from," says Rick Leos, Marketing Division/Collision Program Developer, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. "It is very likely they are not designed for use in the vehicle a collision center might be intending to use them in."

Opt OE is short for Option OE. These parts are also sometimes referred to as OEM surplus parts. Opt OE parts are any parts that come from a vendor that is not a Toyota dealer. Though these parts may be Toyota parts, they are not Genuine Toyota Parts that have been designed to be distributed in the North American market.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The important thing to understand about these parts is that Toyota does not have an Opt OE or surplus program. Any parts marketed as such are not part of a Toyota program and are not sanctioned by Toyota for use in vehicles sold in North America. Even though parts classified as Opt OE might appear in various estimating systems or parts ordering documentation, collision centers should be aware that they are not considered to be legitimate by Toyota.

The issue with these parts is that they are of unknown origin. Most of the time, they are parts that have been sourced from foreign countries and so they are not necessarily designed to be compatible with Toyota vehicles sold in the United States of America.

"Opt OE parts can be an issue for safety, fit and function," explains Leos. "Using these parts can be more trouble than it's worth for a collision center. These parts may not be designed specifically for the vehicle you are working on and this can be a big cause for concern for items that are integral for safety, such as headlights and airbags."

Genuine Toyota Parts are engineered to function properly within the entire system of the vehicle. Especially when it comes to safety functions, these parts are designed with precise requirements in mind so that they can perform properly in the event that something goes wrong. For example, an Opt OE part might not trigger a warning light to appear on the dashboard because the part is not designed to communicate adequately with the vehicle.

"These parts can cause everyone a lot of grief and cost time and money," Leos cautions. "The fit and function might not be quite right, causing the collision center to spend extra time trying to make the part work or causing the customer to be unhappy with the quality of the repair."

In addition, if an Opt OE part is used in a vehicle repair, this may cause warranty issues with the dealer for your customer at some point down the line.

If a collision center is being encouraged to use Opt OE parts, they should communicate clearly as to why these parts are not recommended for use in Toyota vehicles. 📌



Only buy OEM parts
from a Toyota dealer.



OPS Steals the Show at SEMA

OVERALL PARTS SOLUTION (OPS) WAS THE STAR OF THE TOYOTA BOOTH AT THE 2015 SEMA SHOW NOV. 3-6 IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA. Toyota's booth included OPS representatives, who were on hand to demonstrate the OPS Technology software for attendees. But the main draw of the booth was a 12-foot toy race track featuring a nail-biting race between two box trucks. The race track showed how OPS DELIVERYTRAX creates efficiencies and improves parts ordering and delivery processes. DELIVERYTRAX provides electronic driver dispatching, live-tracking and accountability for wholesale logistics operations and is part of the OPS Technology Suite.

"Who doesn't like racing a truck or car around a track—it brings the kid out in everyone," says Kathy Capozza, Wholesale Marketing Administrator Senior, Toyota Sales and Marketing, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. "But the main excitement of the track was the fact that the audience could experience for themselves how the OPS DELIVERYTRAX system works. They were able to see firsthand the most efficient delivery route versus the non-efficient route."

The race track proved to be a fun, interactive way to teach people more about the system. Many who visited Toyota's booth were able to take a turn on the track. There were even several professional race car drivers, Antron Brown, NHRA Top Fuel driver, and Ryan Millen, an Off-Road and Rally racer, who tried their hands at

racing the trucks around.

"I was in the booth for the duration of the SEMA show and the response was fantastic!" said Eddie Knaus, Vice President of Operations, Overall Parts Solutions. "The track was a huge success! Everyone just had to get their hands on the controls. When we explained we were demonstrating how efficient, cost-saving and time-saving our DELIVERYTRAX software would make a dealer's parts delivery process, they were very intrigued."

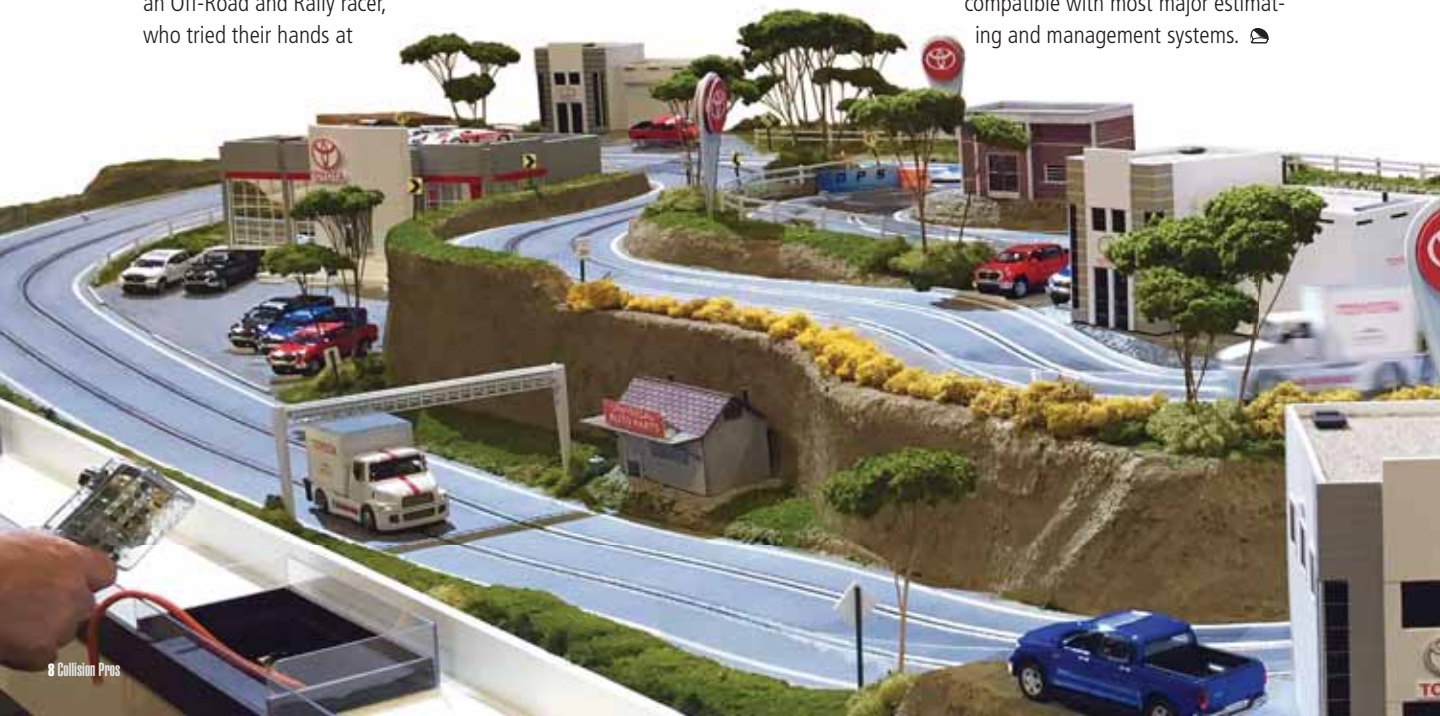
OPTIMIZE WITH OPS

The OPS Technology Suite is designed to streamline the parts ordering and procurement process for dealers and collision centers. One of the huge ben-

efits of OPS is that it helps provide quick, easy access to Genuine Toyota Parts. One of the ways it does this is by offering users competitive pricing on Genuine Toyota Parts.

Another huge advantage of the OPS technology suite is that it provides a logistical framework for efficiently ordering and delivering parts. This helps the parts procurement process run smoothly and can help improve cycle time and customer satisfaction in dealerships. OPS helps you to return your customers' vehicles to them more quickly. And, your customers can have confidence in the repairs because Genuine Toyota Parts have been used.

Additionally, OPS is designed to be easily integrated into your shop. It is compatible with most major estimating and management systems. 📄





The OPS Technology Suite is available to Toyota dealers and collision centers. For more information about software offerings from OPS, visit www.OPSTRAX.com

The OPS Technology suite includes the following pieces:

OPSTRAX allows users to submit and track parts orders electronically. Dealers can also view all orders in one centralized location.

VALUTRAX gives users the ability to order Genuine parts at competitive prices.

DELIVERYTRAX provides users with the ability to track all parts orders electronically in real time.

TRAXPOD helps you stay in touch by providing shipping notifications, and informs you of deals and discounts from your Toyota dealership.



The track was a huge success! Everyone just had to get their hands on the controls. When we explained we were demonstrating how efficient, cost-saving and time-saving our DELIVERY-TRAX software would make a dealer's parts delivery process, they were very intrigued."

—Eddie Knaus
Vice President of Operations
Overall Parts Solutions

MAKING A Commitment to Training

FOR ANY COLLISION CENTER, sending staff to instructor-led training is a huge investment in time and money. There are the expenses of travel, accommodations, the training itself, not to mention the lost production time when the employee is out of the shop. This can raise the question—is the expense of time and money worth the ultimate goal of being trained by Toyota? The answer, according to many professionals in the business, is **absolutely**. Being Toyota trained provides so many benefits to a shop's efficiency, customer satisfaction and ability to perform correct, high-quality repairs that the cost of training is negligible in comparison. The cost of sending a technician to training can pay off in many ways. It helps to reduce cycle time and repair mistakes, and ultimately helps to fix the vehicle correctly the first time.

"Training provides owners, managers, and customers with the peace of mind that cars are being repaired correctly," says Robert DeBarr, Longo Toyota/Lexus Certified Collision Center Manager. "Toyota training provides so much detail about how to carry out specific repairs that it would be difficult to get elsewhere. Even when a technician with years of experience goes to training, that technician still comes back having learned something valuable, such as doing something in a more efficient way."

INCREASE PROFIT, REDUCE CYCLE TIME

Ensuring that your staff is Toyota trained can go a long way to help increase profit and reduce cycle time in your collision center.

"At training, my employees and I are able to learn repair processes according to Toyota guidelines," says Chris Hui, Owner of *Insurance Collision Center*. "The tips offered in the training class help ensure our repair methods are efficient and confirm that we are repairing vehicles accurately."

Even just the confidence of knowing that they are doing the job right can help technicians perform better in the shop. While you might think that this type of training is important just for technicians who are working on vehicles, having a Toyota-trained staff can help increase efficiency across the board in your shop.

"For estimators, training is a huge opportunity—normally they might accidentally miss important steps, but training helps them understand the full scope of a project so they are less likely to miss things," explains DeBarr. "They are also able to explain to bill payers what needs to be done to the car and why."

Confirming the importance of training for estimators, Hui says, "As a result of the training, our estimators have been able to write a more detailed and accurate estimate as well as order the parts in advance. This actually brings down the cycle time in our shop 15%."

As many who work in collision centers know, when an estimator misses something in the original estimate, it can have a large impact on the overall repair. It can extend the length of the repair time, because technicians might not have all of the parts and information they need to complete the repair at the beginning of the process. This can lead to customer dissatisfaction and profit loss. For collision centers, omitting something from the original estimate may also be a lost opportunity to charge for work that is being done to the car.

THE TOYOTA TRAINING EXPERIENCE

Collision repair professionals who have attended Toyota training report that it provides students with the unique opportunity to practice the techniques they are learning under the guidance of an experienced instructor.

"What's really nice about the class is that you spend half the time in lecture and the rest of the time in the lab, so you are actually out there practicing what you have learned in a hands-on environment," says DeBarr. "If you take a paint class, you actually get to go into a paint booth with a paint gun, regardless of your position. Whether you're an estimator, manager or painter, you're out there so you can actually get an idea of what it takes to do that job."

Students who attend Toyota courses are learning directly from manufacturer information and receiving recommendations about how to properly repair Toyota, Lexus and Scion vehicles.

"Toyota takes a lot of pride in the quality of its vehicles and Toyota is among the few car manufacturers that provide complete collision repairs and refinish hands-on training that is open to all collision repair shops," says Agustin Diaz, Collision Repair and Refinish Training Administrator, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. "If a shop wants to increase their profits, reduce cycle time, and have satisfied customers, they should enroll their technicians in our training program. It is affordable and it is open to all shops through a relationship with a dealer."

To learn more about Toyota, Lexus and Scion training and to sign up for classes, visit www.crrtraining.com. 📞



As a result of the training, our estimators have been able to write a more detailed and accurate estimate as well as order the parts in advance. This actually brings down the cycle time in our shop 15%.”

—Chris Hui, Owner of Insurance Collision Center

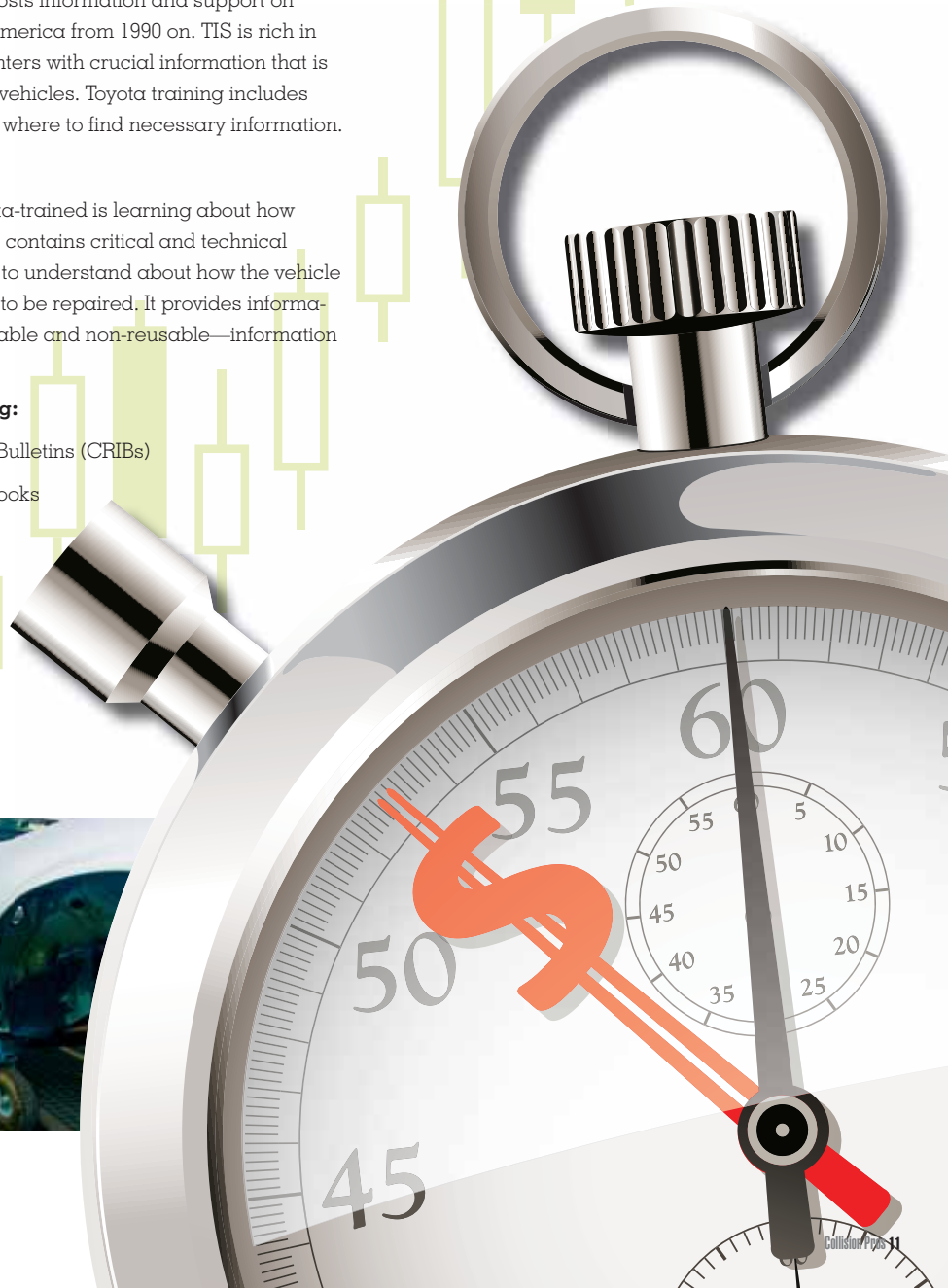
TIS Tips

Part of Toyota, Lexus and Scion training is learning how to effectively and efficiently use the Toyota Technical Information System (TIS). TIS is a web-based service that hosts information and support on all Toyota vehicles sold in North America from 1990 on. TIS is rich in content and provides collision centers with crucial information that is needed to properly service these vehicles. Toyota training includes instruction on how to use TIS and where to find necessary information.

“A huge advantage of being Toyota-trained is learning about how to use TIS,” explains DeBarr. “TIS contains critical and technical information that you are required to understand about how the vehicle you’re working on actually needs to be repaired. It provides information such as which parts are reusable and non-reusable—information that is key to every repair.”

TIS access includes the following:

- Collision Repair Information Bulletins (CRIBs)
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- 03/10 602 Advanced Hybrid Collision Repair
- 03/22 250 Advanced Painting Techniques
- 04/05 300 Welding Techniques for Collision Repair
- 04/06 601 Hybrid Collision Repair
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- 04/20 602 Advanced Hybrid Collision Repair

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- 03/07 601 Hybrid Collision Repair
- 03/08 300 Welding Techniques for Collision Repair
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THERE'S MORE ONLINE:**"WHO PAYS FOR WHAT?" SURVEY COVERS REFINISH LABOR BILLING, INSURER PAYMENT PRACTICES**

The first of four "Who Pays for What?" surveys in 2016, which gathered information from participants through the end of February, focused on more than two dozen not-included refinish-related operations, asking shops how frequently they were paid for each by the eight largest auto insurers in the country.

»» ABRN.COM/2016Q1SURVEY**ASA TESTIFIES ON PARTS ACT LEGISLATION**

In early February, Dan Risley, president and executive director of the Automotive Service Association, testified on behalf of the automotive repair industry during a U.S. House Subcommittee hearing on H.R. 1057, better known as the PARTS Act, which aims to limit the term of protection for patented designs of automotive repair parts.

»» ABRN.COM/PARTSTESTIMONY**ASSURED PERFORMANCE LAUNCHES OEM REPAIR COMPLIANCE APP**

Assured Performance Network has launched the OEM Repair Procedure Compliance app for its network of certified shops. The app automatically transforms the shop's estimate repair line information onto an interactive checklist and delivers it to the tech electronically, who can then take photos and provide other documentation as they follow OEM repair procedures.

»» ABRN.COM/OEMAPP**INDUSTRY NEWS****Domenic Brusco leads NABC to further industry engagement**BY **CHELSEA FREY** | SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR

As the newly elected Chairman of the National Auto Body Council (NABC), Domenic Brusco, Senior Manager of Industry Relations for PPG Automotive Refinish, seeks to increase awareness of NABC and to continue to improve how others view the collision industry with further expansion of the Recycled Rides program and other initiatives.

Brusco's excitement to lead NABC in 2016 is fueled by his passion for the industry. "I have a 35-year career in the collision industry of which the last six and a half years I've spent engaged in NABC either as a committee member, chair or on the executive team. My passion for this industry and all that it has offered me is what drives me to give back. I am honored and privileged to be part of an industry that can help improve the lives of people who have challenges that we take for granted," Brusco shared.

To further the collision industry's influence, Brusco is striving to increase awareness of NABC and grow its membership. He states, "One of my main goals is for anyone in our industry to be able to answer the question 'Who is the National Auto Body Council and what do they do?' And after hearing about NABC, the individual asking the question is driven to join our mission."

Brusco also aims to increase communication within the membership base and with the industry at large. He notes, "I would like to engage more of our member-

>> CONTINUES ON PAGE 8

BREAKING NEWS**TRAINING****THE NEED FOR ALUMINUM PROFICIENCY TRAINING**BY **JAMES E. GUYETTE** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

More than an elemental knowledge of aluminum is becoming necessary for aftermarket businesses as increasing amounts of the metal are being applied to vehicle construction with more aluminum content to come.

"It's always wise to be educated on what your customers are dealing with. It's very important because you should be able to speak intelligently to your customers," says Darrell Amberson, immediate past chairman of the Automotive Service Association (ASA).

"There's every indication that there's going to be more," says Amberson, operations director at LaMettry's Collision in Minneapolis. "All indica-

>> CONTINUES ON PAGE 10

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DOMENIC BRUSCO LEADS NABC TO FURTHER INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

ship in our existing programs, and share their ideas on how we as an organization can more effectively carry out our mission to develop community initiatives that exemplify the professionalism and integrity of the collision repair industry.”

NABC’s membership has increased significantly in the past year. Brusco attributes the rise in membership and the success of the council to the influence of NABC programs such as Recycled Rides. “The programs are infectious—they encourage people to become involved. People want to be a part of rewarding experiences.”

Indicative of the success of Recycled Rides, which commenced in 2007, NABC recently celebrated its 1,000th Recycled Ride donation in Palm Springs in January. The recipient of the vehicle was a family of six who had been struggling with transportation.

“We often don’t realize how much economic power having a suitable means of transportation gives us,” Brusco observes. “Recycled Rides donations have made it possible for countless families to have transportation for basic necessities such as employment, education, grocery shopping and medical visits.

“If you consider that 1,000 vehicle donations equate to positively affecting around 4,000 lives, the industry attaches itself to the idea that the work we do can change lives. In turn, people view the collision industry in a more positive light, as a group of admired professionals,” Brusco adds.

The Recycled Rides program also provides the opportunity for shops to connect with their local communities and other groups within the industry. “Recycled Rides allows different facets of our industry to collaborate through the process of donating vehicles — insurers, rental car, salvage and auction companies, parts, paint and material suppliers. It gives techs and shops

the opportunity to use their skills to give back.”

The Recycled Rides program has been developed to make it an easy, smooth process for shops. Partnering with the nonprofit 1-800 Charity Cars, powered by AudaExplore, a Solera company, helps NABC members manage all the necessary licensing transfers between donors and recipients.

In addition to increasing the amount of cars NABC donates through Recycled Rides, Brusco’s plans for 2016 include engaging members to host more First Responder Emergency Extrication (FREE) events. In order to reach that goal, NABC has partnered with Holmatro, a rescue equipment manufacturer, which has committed to provide instructors and help organize and deliver more events around the country. Finally, Brusco aims to take NABC’s Distracted Driving Initiative to the next level. NABC has partnered with AT&T in their campaign to create awareness of the dangers of texting while driving.

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ALUMINUM PROFICIENCY TRAINING

tions are that we have a lot more aluminum components coming. Prepare for it!”

“It’s very different than what you do with steel,” advises Doug Richman, technical committee chairman for the Aluminum Association’s Aluminum Transportation Group and Kaiser’s vice president of engineering and technology.

Just as repair technicians and other industry professionals are obligated to learn the proper procedures for working with steel, “there’s a different set of skills for aluminum; when you heat up steel it will turn red — if you heat up aluminum you’ll have a puddle of it,” he says, stressing the need for specialized training.

“It’s not really complex,” Richman says, “it’s just different. If you’re not trained in aluminum don’t jump in and make repairs like you do with steel.”

Obtaining OEM certification is the only way to go, he urges. Automakers with aluminum content offer certification programs, and some of these are coordinated through expert instructors at I-CAR, the Inter-Industry Conference on Auto Collision Repair. Training is also available via sessions conducted at industry trade shows.

“If the shop’s not certified, that technician may or may not have the proper training,” says Richman. “If they haven’t had the proper training they should not touch an aluminum body part — period! Word of mouth can be devastating” for your business if a repair is bungled. “I’d rather see them say, ‘Gee, I’m not certified in aluminum.’ It’s not fair to you, and it’s not fair to the customer. With that certificate on the wall, they will have the expectation that it will be done right.”

OEMs often refuse to even sell aluminum structural components to non-certified installers. And while parts such as aluminum radiators have been marketed for years by distributors, retailers and repairers without serious incident, the ongoing influx of vehicular aluminum necessitates that sales personnel be proficient in discussing the product lines and characteristics with DIFM providers and DIYers alike.

Given the wrinkles of working with

aluminum versus steel, spirited yet unknowledgeable shade tree mechanics are especially susceptible for running into unforeseen difficulties. Says Richman, “I’d like to see counter people say, ‘Gee, are you sure that you know how to deal with aluminum?’”

Although many suppliers provide complete aluminum parts kits containing instructions, fasteners and adhesives, etc., some do not, which in turn generates sales opportunities for up-to-speed marketing representatives. “Make sure you sell the whole package to somebody,” says Richman. “If it’s not serviced as a kit, get them all the parts to get the job done properly.”

Specialized adhesives are needed, for example, and non-coated or previously used fasteners can create corrosion.

PREPARATION COSTS

The work area, dust vacuums and tools utilized for aluminum repairs must be segregated from the equipment applied to steel repairs. Tending to proper dust extraction can be a safety issue due to inhalation hazards and the risk of an explosion or fire, as aluminum dust is used as an ingredient in fireworks for white sparkles and overall flash ignition.

“It’s easy to spend \$50,000 to \$100,000 to prepare a collision shop for aluminum,” says the ASA’s Amberson. The cost can rise with OEM certification requirements that include separate benches, offsite training and other aspects.

The techniques for pulling dents and dings from aluminum panels can be problematic as well. Responding to questions raised by the National Alliance of Paintless Dent Repair Technicians (NAPDRT), ASA is currently preparing a set of procedures for this industry segment.

“Our goal is to provide an impartial review of the aluminum repair process as it relates to hail damage to dispel any misconceptions that may still exist,” explains collision division director Scott Benavidez.

“ASA has a role to play in being the voice of the collision repair industry,” says Vice President Tony Molla, “and helping to keep our members and the industry at large abreast of the latest changes in technology and materials that impact the collision repair pro-

cess. This study will add to the body of knowledge ASA makes available free to the industry to advance our common knowledge for all stakeholders.”

Molla points out that the project will compile research information from existing industry sources to clearly define all the necessary procedures to repair aluminum panels and provide a quick reference for use in writing a complete estimate. Input from collision repair professionals, industry organizations, manufacturers and training providers will establish “an impartial baseline” and address any questions or misconceptions that may exist regarding aluminum repairs.

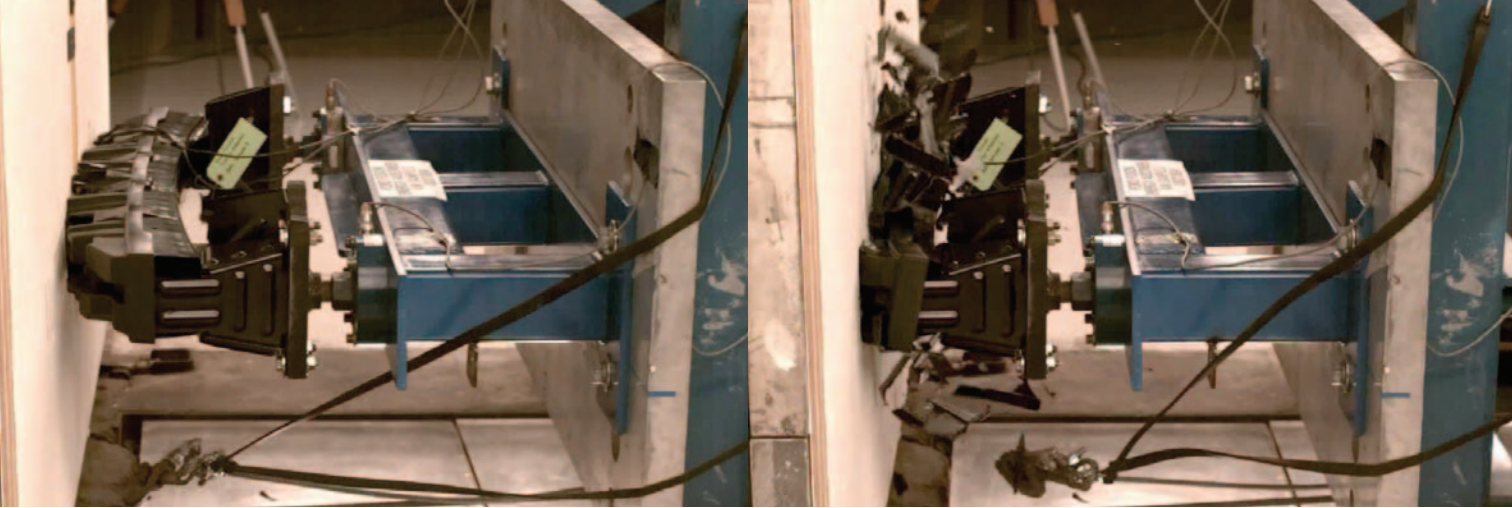
GAINING MARKET SHARE

By 2025, more than 75 percent of all new pickup trucks produced in North America will be aluminum-bodied, according to a survey of automakers conducted by Ducker Worldwide. The study, which confirms a major breakthrough for automotive aluminum into high-volume vehicles, surveyed all major automakers, noting that Ford, General Motors and Fiat Chrysler will become the biggest users of aluminum sheet in the next decade.

It forecasts that the number of vehicles with complete aluminum body structures will reach 18 percent of North American production, up from less than 1 percent in 2014. Vehicle segments revealed as emerging aluminum content leaders are pickup trucks, SUVs and both mid-sized and full-size sedans.

The study also finds that every leading automaker will have numerous aluminum body and closure programs by 2025. As the material mix for body and closure parts continues to change dramatically in the years to come, use of aluminum sheet for vehicle bodies will increase to 4 billion pounds by 2025, up from 200 million pounds in 2012.

“The numbers tell a powerful story of aluminum’s explosive growth across the automotive sector,” says Tom Boney, chairman of the Aluminum Association’s Aluminum Transportation Group and vice president and general manager of automotive for Novelis in North America. “Within the next 10 years, seven out of 10 new pickups produced in North America will be aluminum-bodied.” To continue reading go to ABRN.com/AluminumIndustry.



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MINDING YOUR BUSINESS

A HOW-TO FOR ONLINE REVIEWS

LEARN HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THESE POWERFUL MARKETING RESOURCES

BY **FRANK TERLEP** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

WHILE old-fashioned word-of-mouth referrals are still an important component of an auto body repair shop's consumer marketing strategy, shop owners and those in management must quickly learn to embrace today's electronic word-of-mouth solution: online reviews.

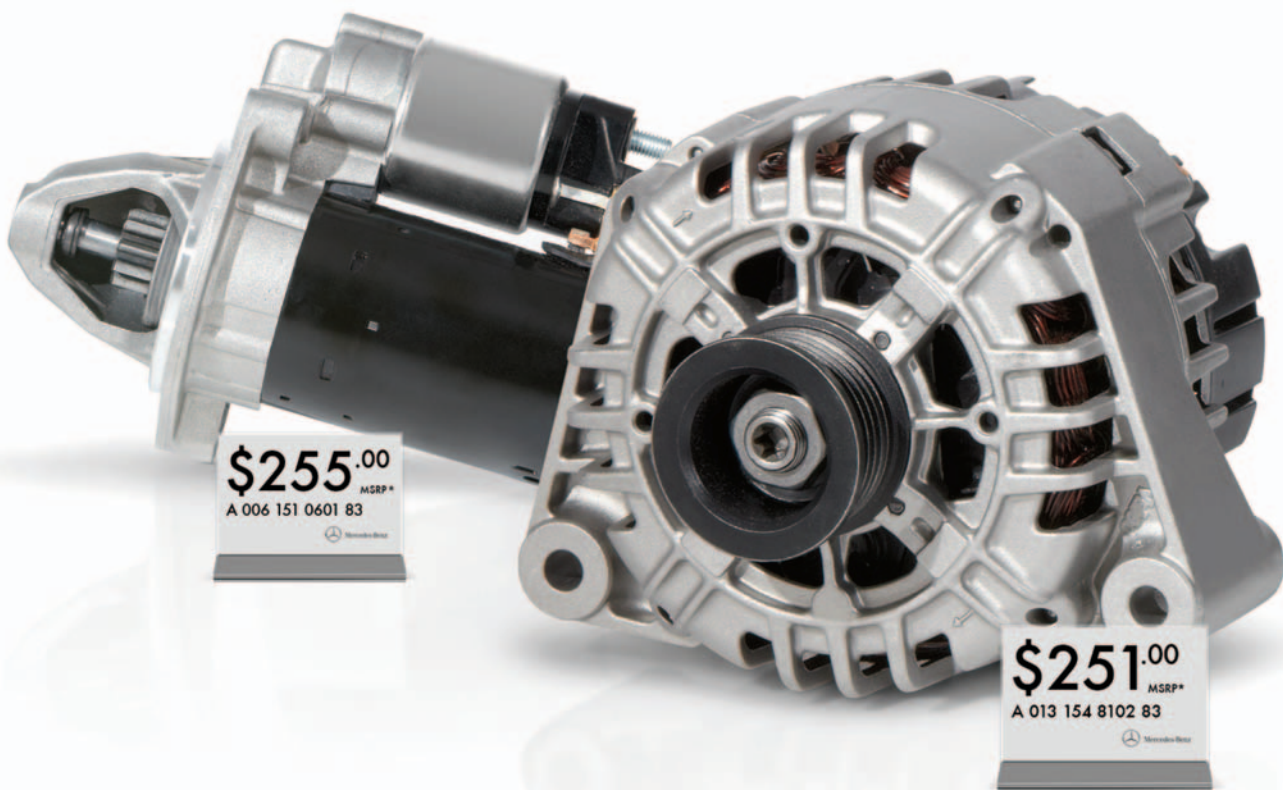
Auto body repair shops must consider an online review marketing strategy because consumers use them regularly and trust them to give insight into a shop's character. More and better online reviews lead to better search engine performance. Positive reviews instill consumer confidence and help auto body repair shops stand out from their competition, ultimately leading to more online sales leads, more online referrals, more phone calls, better customer engagement and a better overall reputation!

Online reviews affect local search engine performance

Having several good reviews on sites like YELP, Google, YAHOO, Facebook, CitySearch, Yellow Pages and other consumer review sites is critical when it comes to getting



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found by consumers on the first page of a Google, BING or YAHOO search engine. Why is being on the first page of a search so important? Google tells us that 91.5 percent of consumers do not continue on to the second page to find a company or product.

Based on search engine research we performed in more than 50 cities

in North America, our team found Google, BING and YAHOO all present online reviews on the first search page right below their ads.

More importantly, our research found that 40 percent to 80 percent of all listings in the first search engine page on Google, YAHOO and BING are being driven by online re-

view sites like YELP, Angie's List, AutoMD, Yellow Pages and other review sites.

This means if local auto body and repair shops don't incorporate an online review request, capture, share and management process, their chances of being found by the 7.5 million consumers who performed a monthly online search in 2015 for auto body repair shops are severely diminished.

How to generate more online reviews

Online reviews can really tell customers about your company's strengths as compared to your competition. Remember that 87 percent of your competition is not asking for reviews. By taking a few simple actions, you will be ahead of most of your competition in the industry.

The second thing you need to remember is to make it easy for your customers to give your business an online review. What does "easy" mean? Make it convenient and give them lots of options.

There are many simple things your business can do to increase the number of online reviews it receives on Google, YELP, YAHOO, Facebook and other consumer review sites. First and foremost, you need to make sure everyone in your company understands reviews are important to your business.

Once you communicate the importance of online reviews to your employees, the next step you want to take is to place signage around your business showing the consumer how important online reviews are to your organization.

We suggest businesses focus on the top three online review sites: Google, YELP and Facebook. Signage representing these sites should be placed in your company's lobby or waiting room, on your counter, walls or entrance door.

Now that your employees and customers understand how important reviews are to your business, how you ask your customers for reviews is very important. We suggest multiple techniques to request, capture, share and manage their online reviews.

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Verbal review requests

When you or your employees ask for a review, always consider the following:

- Always get permission before sending a review request.
- Ask at the peak of your customer's happiness with your service.
- Let your customer know that you're asking for a "favor."
- Let your customer know how long it will take.
- Let your customer know how you benefit from their favor.
- Get your customer's primary email address.
- Tell your customer how much their offering to write a review means to you.
- Tell them that you're looking forward to reading their review.

Request review handout

A "review request handout" should be included as part of a shop's vehicle delivery process. The handout form should include:

- Your company brand
- Directions on how to give your company a review on different review sites
- Shortened URL links to make it easy for your customers to access your review sites
- A QR code that links consumers to a web page where they can select a review site.

Your company website

Statistics show that websites that present online reviews on their home page keep visitors on their sites for 30 seconds more than sites without reviews. Providing your customers with the ability to post reviews on your website will increase traffic to your site.

Social media, mobile apps and in-house kiosks

Your business should also consider using your existing social media sites, mobile apps and in-house kiosks to request and capture online reviews. When it comes to social media, we suggest adding a review request app to your company's existing Facebook page. By doing so you are making it easy and convenient for Facebook users to give you reviews on Facebook and other online review sites. Remember, there are more than 1.5 billion active Facebook users!

Last but not least, you can utilize an in-house kiosk to request and capture online reviews. Let me start by saying do not allow consumers to provide your business reviews on any of the major online review sites via an in-house kiosk by linking a computer in your lobby to these sites. Google, YELP, YAHOO and other sites are "smart enough" to know that the reviews are coming from a single computer (IP address), and they will consider reviews generated from this computer fake.

Diversify your reviews

Another important concept when it comes to online review success is diversity. Don't get all of your reviews on



Some in-house kiosks, like this one from AutoShopKiosk system, allow a consumer to read your reviews on a kiosk and send review request links to the consumer's smart phone.

ONLINE REVIEWS: QUICK TIPS

- If you are going to implement an online review marketing strategy, your company's review sites need to be complete and professional.
- Make sure you claim your YELP, Google My Business, YAHOO, Facebook and other online review sites and populate this with as much information as the profile allows.
- Be sure to include the address in exactly the same format each time you reference your company online.
- You should also include images, industry keywords and other content that makes your review site stand out.

a single review site, especially proprietary sites. Remember, Google, YELP, Yellow Pages, YAHOO and BING are also important to your online review marketing strategy because of "review syndication" and local search engine performance.

Review syndication occurs when one review site shares their reviews on others sites. Those review sites that syndicate their reviews to other sites (including Google) are also more valuable than those that keep their reviews to themselves. Not only do you get the benefit of potential customers seeing your reviews on more websites, but Google may actually count these reviews multiple times in its ranking algorithm.

Share good reviews as posts

If your business is active on social media, you probably want to share your online reviews on social media. If you get a good review you can share it as a post. For example, say your company gets a review from Stephen who said, "I had a great experience." And

Sites that syndicate their reviews

Review site	Citysearch	YELP	InsiderPages	YAHOO
Syndicates to:	BING YAHOO Insiderpages Kudzu MerchantCircle YP.com	BING Apple YAHOO	Superpages Judysbook	Superpages YELP

then he shares that as a post on his Google+ or other social media pages. Repost Stephen's review with a response — for example, "Thanks, Stephen. I'm really glad you liked it." You are getting this extra benefit from that review. You got a review, and now it's actually feeding your Google+ social profile.

How to respond to negative reviews

While businesses never want a nega-

tive review, we all know we can't satisfy everyone. Understanding how to respond to a negative review is important. Here are a few tips on how to respond to negative reviews.

- Don't get defensive.
- Own the issue. Demonstrate that you are paying attention to their problem!
- Describe how future customers are not going to have this problem, "We're really sorry you had this experience. We're putting x, y and z in place to make sure that it is not going to happen again."
- Offer to fix their issue and then make sure you fix it!
 - o You might want to refund them.
 - o Make sure you fix whatever their complaint was.

If you effectively deal with the customer's complaint and show that you care, you can sometimes turn an angry customer into a brand advocate, and they might even take that review down. After they have left a negative review online, if you really show them you care

and you solve the problem —that's the only way to get a negative review taken off unless it is obviously bogus.

The best online review marketing strategy

So you are probably wondering what the absolute best review request, capture, management and sharing strategy is. Here is what we know: the businesses that are succeeding when it comes to review requests and capture use a pretty simple process — they make sure that every single customer got asked to write a review without exception.

GET 5 GOOGLE REVIEWS, GET THE STARS

If your business gets five reviews on Google, it gets the little stars in the search results.

The five stars really draw attention to your company listing, drawing potential clients to read, click and even call your business, especially if your competition doesn't have them. It is key that you get those five Google reviews.



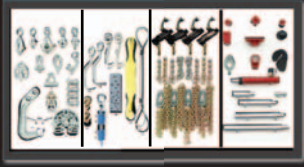
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MINDING YOUR BUSINESS


 BUY VS. LEASE

BREAKING DOWN THE FUNDAMENTALS OF EQUIPMENT LEASING

BY BRAD MEWES | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

THE collision industry is evolving. OEMs are becoming more involved in enforcing repair standards. Additionally, the tooling, training and equipment required to fix cars continue to increase. In short, the cost of operating a collision repair business is on the rise.

The evolution of the industry

Historically, the industry has not had a high level of capital intensity. Capital refers to things like spray booths, prep stations, frame racks, etc. Generally, the costs related to purchasing a long-term asset can be thought of as a capital cost. In the past, assets that were purchased had long-term lives.

However, as the industry continues to evolve, capital intensity is increasing. The introduction of advanced repair ma-

terials requires significant investments in new tooling and training. Changing technologies renders even recently purchased equipment obsolete, and increasing OEM involvement requires continual investment in new tools and technologies.

Further complicating matters, many of the new technologies and equipment required have a limited return over the short term. The aluminum F-150 is just beginning to enter the vehicle fleet. According to data from Assured Performance, approximately 1,200 repair facilities were Ford Aluminum Certified at the end of 2015. With an average cost of \$50,000 in new tools, equipment and facility upgrades per facility, the industry has invested approximately \$60 million for aluminum repairs. But according to a newsletter from Assured

Performance, only \$500,000 of aluminum F-150 repairs were completed in the first half of 2015.

Aluminum is increasingly the substrate of choice for a number of manufacturers. Even so, it takes time for the aluminum vehicle fleet to ramp up. This presents a frustrating dilemma to shop owners who want to invest now but who will not see a return for potentially a number of years. Purchasing expensive equipment to watch it sit idle for months is a difficult and often frustrating decision.

What is equipment financing?

While many of us were raised with the notion that debt is bad, the reality is that debt is simply one tool of business finance when prudently used. A core tenant of corporate finance is that the



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liabilities of the firm ought to match the assets of the firm. If a business acquires an asset with a projected 15-year life, the business is well served to finance the asset over the course of 15 years. In that way, the expense and cash flows related to the asset are appropriately spread over the useful life of the asset.

Take, for example, the investment required in tooling and facility upgrades

to become Ford Aluminum Certified. A \$50,000 investment to complete a few thousand dollars of repairs annually seems absurd on the surface. However, when the cost is spread over the useful life of the assets acquired, say 15 years, the expense appears much more reasonable. While the business may still recognize an initial loss in the first few years of the investment, it is likely the business will recognize a re-

turn in later years that will more than offset the initial investment.

Benefits of equipment leasing

There are a number of advantages leasing brings to a business — all of them revolving around improved cash flow and flexibility. Equipment financing is more than merely moving numbers around on a spreadsheet. Appropriately managed, equipment financing will actually help reduce the risk of your firm and increase the stability of your cash flows.

Tax Advantages: Depending on the structure of the lease, lease payments can reduce taxable income in a more appropriate manner than depreciation alone. Seek out the counsel of a licensed tax advisor to discuss your specific situation. But generally speaking, operating lease expenses can be fully deducted when incurred for tax purposes.

100 Percent Financing: When leasing equipment, most equipment lenders will lease up to 100 percent of hard equipment costs, and many will also finance the soft delivery and installation costs as well. In traditional bank financing, there is often a down payment required and banks are less willing to finance soft costs.

Balance Sheet: When you lease an asset, you pay for the right of use, not the right of ownership. As such, items that are leased do not appear on your balance sheet as an asset. And a lease does not appear on your balance sheet as a liability. Because there is no liability on the balance sheet there is no collateral required to offset the liability and your business assets remain unencumbered — a very important aspect if you are considering future sale. If you are looking to grow, utilizing leases will also make your asset base appear more productive, important if you are seeking financing for acquisitions.

Flexibility and Obsolescence: Another key advantage of leasing rather than owning equipment is avoiding equipment obsolescence risk. Many companies opt to lease computer equipment and software to stay up to date with rapidly changing technology. Lease terms can be for a few months or for the entire expected life of an asset, depending on the need of the business.

Common types of financing

The following are the most common



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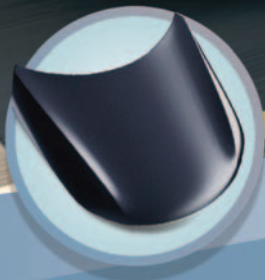
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ways to lease or finance equipment:

- Operating Lease (Fair Market Value Lease)
- Capital Lease (Dollar Buy-Out Lease)
- Vendor Financing
- Bank Financing

Operating Lease: An operating lease allows for the use of an asset without owning the asset. Operating leases are often structured to have a “fair market value” purchase option at the end of the lease term where the lessee has the option, but not the obligation, to purchase the asset at the current market value. A vehicle lease is an example of a common fair market value lease.

As mentioned above, the expenses associated with an operating lease are generally fully deductible for tax purposes. Check with you tax preparer regarding your specific situation.

Capital Lease: Whereas an operating lease transfers the risk of ownership to the lessor, a capital lease more closely resembles a traditional loan, but without actual ownership. The lease term tends to be longer than operation leases. Capital leases include a “dollar buy

out” clause at the end of the term whereby the asset is transferred to the lessee. Because capital leases very closely resemble ownership, they also have different tax treatment than operating leases. Again, check with you tax advisor to get specifics on your exact situation.

While capital leases and traditional financing are very similar, capital leases have two main benefits over bank financing. First is the ability to finance 100 percent of the asset. Second is the ownership and collateral. In a capital lease, the lessor owns the asset until the lessee purchases the asset at the end of the lease term. Because the lessor owns the asset, no collateral is needed by the lender.

Bank Financing: Your commercial bank likely provides general equipment and/or expansion loans. These loans are structured as traditional fully amortized notes, meaning the interest and principal is spread out over the full term of the note. Depending on the bank, a down payment is often required.

Bank loans are secured by a UCC filing. Many banks file a blanked assign-

ment where all the business assets are pledged as collateral. These pledges of collateral may seem innocuous, but can become very onerous in the event the business seeks additional financing for growth or there is a change in control due to a sale.

Vendor Financing: Rather than carrying the note, most vendors partner with a financial institution to provide credit to the purchaser. These loans tend to resemble a line of credit, similar to a credit card. The initial terms can be quite attractive but can quickly become onerous if the principal is not repaid within the teaser time frame. ☺



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PROFIT MOTIVE: YOUR COMPASS TO FINANCIAL SUCCESS

Create accountable employees

Decide what tasks they should tackle and order of importance in SOPs

BY KEITH MANICH | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

In all operations within the shop, tasks have to be identified and placed in an order of importance. Why? Because some tasks have significantly more importance to the operation than others. Some are critical while some are routine.

The ideal way to start is by identifying each employee's job description. All aspects of the job must be considered — the time-frame to perform work tasks, the degree of importance of each task and how each task relates to sales and customer service.

Let's look at a specific job that has significant impact on the customer. Counter person, service advisor, customer service rep — pick a name, but this is the person who is responsible for setting the customer expectations for your shop. This is the first contact with the customer and represents the shop in their eyes. This person is the customer "moment of truth."

The below tasks are typically associated with this job description:

The greeting

- How it's delivered, tone
- Speak with a smile, eye contact

Answer incoming calls

- First contact with customer
- Number of rings before call pickup
- Communicate next steps

Make outgoing calls to customers

- Customer steps for claims/repairs
- Document call content in repair order
- Identify repair chain of events

In some cases, act as liaison between the shop and a third-party payer

- Answer third party's questions
- Handle supplements
- Address repair order questions or concerns

Identify scheduling opportunities

- Ensure promised dates are acceptable
- Provide updates to schedules and production flow

Schedule work into the store

- Make sure promised in and out dates can be kept and any changes are updated at least 24 hours in advance

Help bring vehicles into production

- Make drop-off arrangements
- Maintain schedule to ensure correct production sequence by day, week, month

Handle form supply and filing

- Order needed forms, office supplies
- Place forms into repair order folder
- Have a ready supply of presorted folders with direction of pay, inspection, photo and other necessary paperwork prepared for customers

Create repair order document

- Use pre-supplied information from third-party payer or customer to preload the repair order worksheets to reduce time spent on this process with the customer

Complete vehicle check-ins

- Complete vehicle check-in form
- If using a scheduling visual, make sure it is completed

Complete vehicle walk-around

- Do a vehicle walk around and upsell any unrelated prior damage
- Point out all damage so that there is a record that it was there when the vehicle is delivered in the event that the customer doesn't want it fixed

Take necessary photos

- Photograph all vehicle damage, even if unrelated to the current loss
- Photograph any areas that show a paint mismatch
- Photograph the dashboard while the seven-second test burn is occurring, as well as once the test burn has cycled through in the event there are fault codes not related to the current loss

Process file for the estimator/blueprinter

- Forward only completed repair order paperwork to the estimating/blueprinting staff to minimize questions
- Provide a supplement repair check sheet with the RO in the event that damage is missed during the disassembly process

Document the in-process repair order and arrange for a rental car

- Ensure daily updates are made
- Assist as needed with follow-up calls

Close the file

- ARs and APs finalized
- All parts listed
- Supplements complete

Continue reading next month to learn how to prioritize these tasks and how to build the corresponding SOPs to implement in your shop. 📖

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SHOP PROFILE

A snapshot of one of the industry's leading shops

CARSTAR JOHN HINE COLLISION /
MISSION VALLEY, CALIF.



Dealer-shop partnership

Dealership collision center leverages one-stop shop appeal to keep customers coming back for all needs

BY **JAMES E. GUYETTE** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

A huge sign towering above the John Hine auto dealership complex serves as a beacon, beckoning the 300,000 motorists who travel along Interstate 8 each day, and many of these drivers are in need of body shop work.

Car-sales personnel in the showroom and on the used-car lot collaboratively work with the entire staff to integrate the shop's expertise into the entire vehicle purchasing process.

"That keeps the customer bought-in to us. When they leave our dealership they know that we have a service department, they know that we have a body shop, and they know that we work with the insurance companies," says Steve Ranck, manager of John Hine's collision repair center.

Buyers are given a tour of the facility, often pausing to have a brief conversation with Ranck about the shop's attributes should the need ever arise.

Each glove box contains a branded what-to-do-in-case-of-an-accident brochure to further drive home the company's commitment to complete customer care throughout the vehicle's lifespan. And even if your vehicle is totaled, a coupon good for a discount on a new or used car is included.

Because the Hine dealership is set into a San Diego hillside on three levels,

the resulting layout entices with easy access to the collision center. "We're located in front of the dealership with our own driveway, and you don't have to walk through the service department" when seeking to discuss body work.

"They're not just buying a car," says Ranck, "they're buying into our family."

In totality the John Hine dealership is a large corporate entity known throughout the region, yet a friendly and family-oriented atmosphere prevails among staff and management.

Ranck, general manager Dave Miller and John Hine himself all maintain an open-door policy to address ideas or concerns. "John is here every day, and the employees see that. I know my guys very well, and I lead by example."

The result is a stable workforce eager to provide the best customer service. "We have 318 years of experience in our collision center with 21 fulltime employees," says Hine, who is the operation's second-generation owner. The body shop aspect was established in 1957 and Hine

CARSTAR JOHN HINE COLLISION

Mission Valley, Calif.

Location

John Hine

Owner

1

No. of shops

58

Years in business

21

No. of employees

35,000

Total square-footage

27

No. of bays

7 days

Average cycle time

\$2,228

Average repair order

\$55,700

Average weekly volume

26

No. of customer vehicles per week

\$2.7 million

Annual gross revenue

Axalta

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CCC, Mitchell

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saw future opportunity amid the region's increasing development.

"With the expansion of the interstate freeway system's I-8 and the presumed rapid growth of Mission Valley, we relocated our collision repair center to Mission Valley in 1965, where we remain today," Hine recounts.

The initial body shop manager was

Earl See, and upon being promoted to upper management he brought onboard the legendary Don Dragani, who managed the collision center until his death in 1986. In keeping with the Hine tradition of family loyalty, Dragani had announced his pending retirement prior to becoming seriously ill; it was then decided that he would remain on the

payroll with full benefits as Ranck assumed greater responsibilities.

"Don Dragani was not only a great supervisor, but a wonderful friend and mentor who gave me great advice when it came to dealing with customers and co-workers," says Ranck. "He told me that when I had a disagreement with an adjuster or insurance company, it was important to educate them about what it takes to repair the vehicle properly. He also told me to never take it personally because you will most likely be working with them in the future, and it's important to keep a good working relationship."

Ranck goes on to relate how "that's where I get a lot of my passion — that's the way Don Dragani was. If we did something wrong we had to make it right, and if you're honest with people it builds loyalty."

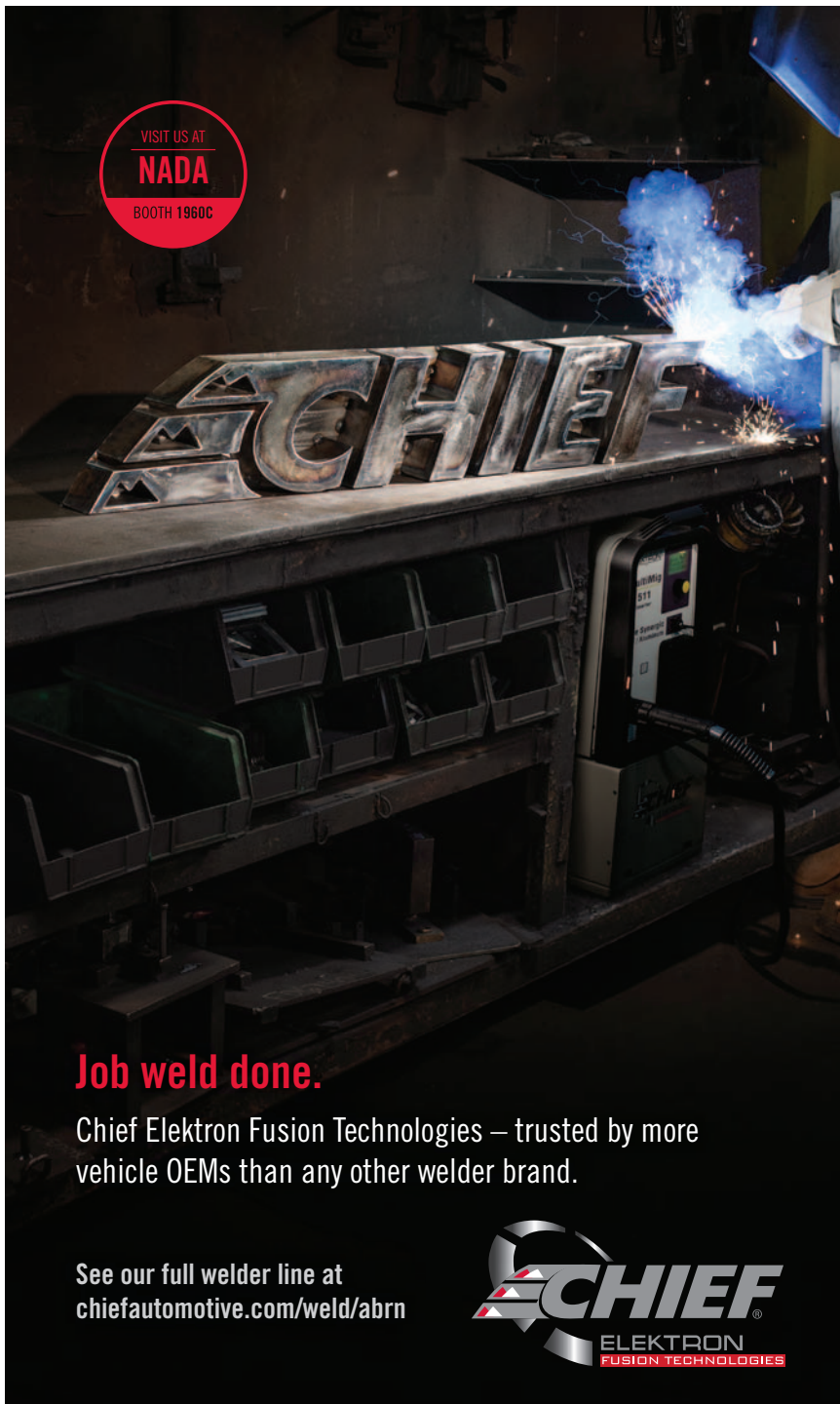
Hine echoes similar sentiments: "I have been here for 36 years, and I want customers to know that myself and my crew care about doing the best job for them and their vehicle, and if there is a problem I will be there to make it right."

"Our body and paint technicians are very skilled at what they do," says Ranck. "They care about every vehicle that they work on. They understand that there is a person and family inside every vehicle, and it is important that every vehicle looks great and drives better than it did before it came in for repairs."

Having been interested in cars since childhood, at age 21 a professionally inexperienced Ranck applied — and was turned down — for an opening on the Hine service center's parts counter. "But the parts manager must have liked me because he called me back and offered me the position of special orders clerk. Within five years, I was promoted to a counter person and then eventually moved into the body shop office. During the day, Don Dragani taught me the body shop business. At night I went to school and within two years earned a BA in Business. With a college degree and hands-on training, I was offered the position of body shop manager."

"We act like we're family; we have fun on the job," Ranck emphasizes. Barbecues and other social events are melded into the company culture.


And at Hine, all of these factors culminate in a pattern of staff longevity that delivers efficient repairs, a highly



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satisfied clientele, and a pleasant workplace. "I've had people leave — they think the grass is greener — and they come back."

Multi-state operators

In April 2015 the Hine body shop became affiliated with CARSTAR. Ranck says fewer dealerships are hosting in-house collision repair facilities, and those that still do have a competitive advantage if they form partnerships.

Improvements in Hine's efficiency came at a quick clip. "When we first started with CARSTAR we weren't lean," Ranck recalls. "When CARSTAR came in with their procedures, our cycle time went from twelve days down to seven days."

Out on the shop floor, "we have production meetings twice a day" in regard to meeting repair completion goals. The atmosphere of these meetings and other interactions is positive. "We let people know that they're doing a good job," says Ranck.

The Hine shop's ability to consistently come through with standout customer service results in five or six rave reviews on a daily basis. Morale-boosting rewards such as lottery tickets and the like are issued just as frequently to "everyone involved with that car, from the back end to the front end."

A team approach is present throughout the entire operation to steer every job toward a positive outcome. "We put red strobe lights on the cars targeted to leave on that day," Ranck reports, citing yet another lean innovation that came through CARSTAR's input. "If you see a red light, you know that somebody should be working on that car."

If a customer expresses unhappiness, every effort is made to promptly rectify the situation. The strategy pays off in that people who have voiced initial complaints often become repeat customers who are glad to refer friends and family.

Taking heed of lessons learned from Don Dragani, Ranck is intent on maintaining positive relationships with insurance providers. "You can't be their enemy. You're in a partnership, and you can't put the customer in the middle," he asserts.

"A lot of insurance companies use aftermarket parts," Ranck continues, noting that the requirements are duly spelled out in the customer's paperwork. "A lot of people don't read their policies until they're in an accident." That said, "We make sure that the aftermarket parts fit like an OEM part." Few alterations are made to force meeting the shop's insistence on proper fit, form and function.

"We come to an understanding — we're not going to do something that's not right for the car. The insurance companies don't want to use an inferior part; they also want to make sure the customer is happy. If you show the insurance company that there's a problem," says Ranck, "they'll do it right."

Procedures are additionally in place to maintain strong relationships with the shop's array of vendors. "You represent your-

self as a business partner, and you need to treat them fairly," he says. "Don't be over demanding. One of most important things to them is being paid on time, and our payments are prompt." 📧



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TACKLING THE 8 BEFORE 8 STRATEGY FOR BETTER DAYS

Focus on creating positive mornings each day that set the stage for a positive day

BY MIKE JONES | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Over the past 30 years, I have come to see mornings as the foundation upon which I build my entire day. I also came to recognize, during the past 30 years, how I feel mentally, physically and spiritually all day is directly connected to how I start my day.

I have found that when I begin my day by utilizing the concepts and principles I will share with you in this article, I am more productive, happier, more energetic, more positive and more focused during my entire day — without coffee, Red Bull or any other type of energy drink.

Having a morning routine will create positive new possibilities for you. I like to call my routine “eight before eight.” These are eight things I make a commitment to do before 8 a.m. Take a look at a scenario of two different mornings.

Morning No. 1:

You need to be at work by 8 a.m., and you need to be out of the house by 7:15 a.m. due to your commute. The alarm sounds at 6 a.m., and you push the snooze button. By pushing the snooze button, you have already begun your day with negativity, because you were likely having a negative conversation

with yourself, and now it is 6:15 a.m. and the alarm sounds again. You begrudgingly turn it off and drag yourself out of bed as you continue the negative conversation with yourself about all of the things you must get done before and after you get to work.

Then, as many other people do, you turn on the news or read the newspaper, which is also likely negative.

You recognize that you need to speed up this process to be out the door by 7:15 a.m. You wake up the kids, and they are dragging out of bed and because you are in a hurry now, you get frustrated at them, never recognizing that you have likely been the creator of the negative chaos you are experiencing in the mornings.

You rush off to shower, grab a bite to eat, get the kids out the door and then rush to work and arrive in that funky energy.

Morning No. 2:

You need to be at work by 8 a.m., and you need to be out the door by 7:15 a.m. due to your commute. You deliberately have moved the alarm clock across the room, with a commitment to yourself that when the alarm goes off, you will get up and turn it off, never hitting the snooze button again. You deliberately set the alarm to sound 15 minutes earlier than you normally get up.

The next thing you do is deliberately read something positive. You have created your list of eight specific tasks that you will perform before 8 a.m. At this point, two of them have already been accomplished. The eight tasks should be focused on having a positive start to your day because of you, rather than waiting on life to happen to you.

The other six tasks that show up on your list of eight before eight should be specific tasks that allow you, in your specific situation, to create calm and effective communication with the people in your home and at work.

This second scenario is a story only you can write for your situation. Some of the things that have appeared on my list were spending time talking to my significant other about ways to positively improve our relationship, listening to motivational music, meditating and drinking a specific amount of water each morning before 8 a.m.

I encourage you to create your list of eight before eight and make a commitment to do them daily. The list for your weekend morning routine will likely be different from the one you develop for the work week.

Establishing a deliberate morning routine will ensure that you start the day in a positive attitude, which will allow you to produce new positive opportunities at work and at home. ☺

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6 KPIs that increase the value of your business

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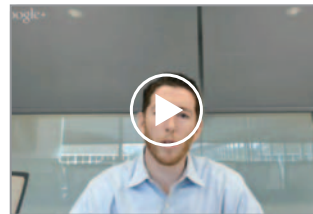
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Mike Anderson on "virtual steering"

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SOCIAL INSIGHTS



• 5 simple ways to increase the value of your business

A common approach to business valuation is to use comps, which look at the selling prices of other businesses that are in your peer group. To use comps effectively to generate a valuation that is meaningful requires access to good data. But you need more than just comps to determine your value. You also need to take a good, hard look at your financials. And the primary way to increase the value of your business is to improve your financials, posted *ABRN* on our Facebook page. Brad Mewes, financial blogger and industry consultant, shares his article, "5 simple ways to increase the value of your business." His five strategies are to 1) focus on gross profit; 2) keep your overhead and SGA in check; 3) merge your WIP and inventory; 4) dive into working capital; and 5) use a dashboard. Continue reading to learn more about Brad's suggestions.

ABRN.com/valueboost

• Cycle time formula and the need for revamp

On LinkedIn, Bob Andreassen with Insurance Grade Estimating Software, posted "Is this a big issue you see today?" in reference to *ABRN*'s February article, "Collision Industry Conference committee working on new 'cycle time' formula." "I would love any insight on whether this is a real issue, and if you see this helping with transparency with the client. I would like to think the more accurate the data, the better off everyone is. I appreciate any insight! Share your thoughts today!"

ABRN.com/cycleformula

• Headlight restoration made easy

Headlight lenses yellow over time. They don't just look bad, they can also severely reduce nighttime visibility, making it harder for your customers to see or be seen at night, posted 3M Auto on their YouTube channel. For all degrees of lens restoration, 3M has a variety of solutions for you. For light yellowing, the two-step 3M Quick Headlight Renewal brings light back to headlight lenses. It includes the 3M proprietary technology Trizact abrasives. For regular lens maintenance, turn to lighter duty

3M Headlight Renewal. With the help of 3M, you can improve headlight brightness and nighttime visibility yourself. Watch the video now!

ABRN.com/3Mheadlights

• Are you hitting the requirements of a "good" auto body repair shop?

Carwise, a blog that helps to guide consumers in need of auto body repair services, recently posted an article, "What to look for in a good auto body repair shop." How does your shop measure up next to their suggested ideals? Some of the suggestions to consumers are to evaluate a shop's reputation, look for technical certifications and a professional and courteous staff. Keep reading to find out if your shop would make the grade with a consumer in need of service.

ABRN.com/consumertips

• Get the information you need today

Every issue of *ABRN* provides news and in-depth analysis on collision repair topics, we posted on our Facebook page. Make sure you subscribe today to ensure you and your technicians are getting the information, news and training you need to remain relevant and educated in today's ever-changing and evolving market. Training is the key to longterm success and *ABRN* wants to be your partner in helping your shop achieve high quality service and stable profits. Sign up for the magazine today.

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• Mike Anderson returns to NORTHEAST 2016

Industry consultant Mike Anderson with Collision Advice will shed light on some of the most important topics affecting shop owners today in two informative seminars at the 39th annual NORTHEAST 2016 Automotive Service Show, *ABRN* posted on Facebook. He will present, "Positioning yourself in the collision repair industry" on March 18, and "Who pays for what" survey results" on March 19. Get more information on the event here.

ABRN.com/Andersontrain

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• **AASP-NJ Northeast**
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MARCH 22

• **Refinish Technician Assistant Training; PPG**
San Francisco, California

APRIL 20-21

• **Collision Industry Conference**
Seattle, Washington

MAY 2-4

• **WIN 2016 Educational Conference**
Tampa, Florida

MAY 14

• **Automechanika Chicago — LIVE Training Event;**
Washtenaw Community College
Ann Arbor, Michigan

MAY 23-25

• **International Body Shop Symposium (IBIS) Global Summit 2016**
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NEW ADVANCED MATERIALS

THE BMW 7 SERIES AND CADILLAC CT6 PRESENT NEW DESIGNS AND REPAIR CHALLENGES

Cadillac CT6 A-pillar wheel well extrication

BY **LARRY MONTANEZ** | CONTRIBUTING TECHNICAL EDITOR

Let's take a look at two specific vehicles that will set the standard for the future of vehicle design in the next few years. We are all aware of the all-aluminum-bodied 2015 Ford F-150, which introduced aluminum to the masses. While the Ford was a shock to the collision repair industry as a whole, it was not the first. The Audi A8 in 1994 is considered the first mass-

produced aluminum intensive vehicle, and the 1995 BMW 5 Series (E60) with its front monocoque aluminum structure and rear monocoque steel structure was the first hybrid-construction vehicle, followed by the 2007 Audi TT (8J) and 2010 Porsche Panamera (970) hybrid construction vehicles. The BMW E60, Audi 8J and the Porsche 970 set up the future of vehicle design we are

seeing now on two mass-produced vehicles and eventually on even more vehicles.

As we all know, OEMs are being forced to meet very tough safety and fuel mileage standards, and they must design vehicles with lighter materials. The designs from BMW, Audi and Porsche set the stage for everyone else in the automotive business, and we



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will see these advanced designs in the next few years.

2016 BMW 750i (G11) and 750iL (G12)

These vehicles are not cars as we know them. It is as if BMW took your home entertainment system, put it inside a space shuttle and threw it on wheels. Yes, you can drive it like any other vehicle, or, if you like, it can drive itself. It will automatically perfume the air you breathe and draw the sun shades if it is too bright inside the vehicle. Ap-

proach the vehicle and it'll roll out what BMW calls a "Light Carpet," an LED-projected runway welcoming you to your vehicle. It also reminds you of speed limits and road conditions. And when you reach your destination, it will park for you, or just act as spotter if you prefer to do it yourself. All these features are pretty cool, but they are nothing compared to the vehicle's advanced structural design. Few vehicle designs have ever had such a diverse, high-tech construction as the new 7 Series. The 2016 model represents the auto indus-

try's most mainstream application yet of structural carbon fiber. BMW put the 7 Series on a diet and trimmed 88 pounds from the 7's unibody structure, which now weighs in at 4,883 pounds, almost 100 pounds lighter than the previous generation 750i. All of the major suspension components are adjustable by computer-controlled systems. Air springs tweak the ride height based on load, speed and driver vehicle setting. Adjustable dampers and anti-roll bars vary the ride between soft (luxury) and firm (sport). The newly available Active Comfort Drive with Road Preview adjusts chassis systems according to data drawn from the navigation system. Not even the rear-wheel toe angle is fixed, as BMW's rear steering is available for the first time with four-wheel drive. Wheel alignments on this vehicle will require BMW software, and damage analysis will require multiple measurements with electronic three-dimensional measuring equipment, and in some cases a pre-wheel alignment or wheel alignment check will be required.



The BMW Display Key



The BMW 7 Series has a multi-material construction.



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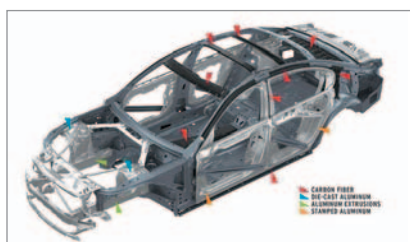
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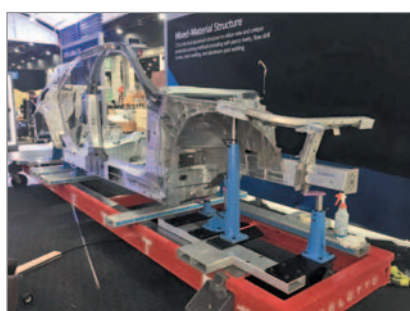
And shops will need to be careful with the optional Display Key (\$250). The key incorporates a small screen on which the driver can check to see if the doors were left unlocked, the windows down or sunroof open, and it will even inform you how long until the next scheduled oil change.

OEMs must live in a material world to meet the high mpg fuel mileage requirements. They must choose advanced lightweight metals and composites capable of delivering light, stiff vehicle bodies, and at a reasonable cost of profit. We can all safely assume that BMW studied and dissected the aluminum-intensive precedents set by Audi, Jaguar, Mercedes-Benz and Porsche, and even the E60 design. BMW pushed the new structural concept it calls "Carbon Core" for the i3 and i8, and now it expanded that concept on its sixth-generation 7 Series sedan.

The 7 Series is BMW's new flagship's unibody, and it is composed mainly of resistance-welded high-strength steel stampings of various tensile strengths. Even though BMW says it is 88 pounds lighter, it is notably stiffer and has more torsional rigidity than its predecessor. Lessons learned from the i3 and i8 carbon fiber concept projects are behind the 15 carbon-fiber-reinforced moldings applied to high-stress areas. Tubular



The material make up of the BMW 7 Series



The Cadillac CT6 structure

arches and reinforcements are utilized inside the A-Pillar and door-opening framework and under the upper outer roof rail panel/upper uniside panel. Additionally, BMW strategically placed aluminum structural components into the monocoque. These include extruded longitudinal chassis members, the die-cast strut towers, and the stampings for the hood and decklid panels, and doors assemblies. A magnesium space frame supports the instrument panel and steering column, and the front fenders are plastic composite. At press time, not a lot of repair information was available for publication, and we will revisit this topic. It is unknown if BMW will restrict structural components for sale.

2016 Cadillac CT6

The CT6 is slotted above the ATS and CTS in the Cadillac lineup. Cadillac engineers concentrated their focus for the CT6 to avoid unnecessary weight. Its exterior dimensions and interior spaciousness put the CT6 roughly even with BMW's short-wheelbase 7 Series, but the CT6 claims the body in white is both lighter and stiffer than those of the smaller BMW 5 Series and Audi A6. Conversely, its main competition will be with full-size luxury flagship sedans such as the BMW 7 Series, Mercedes-Benz S Class, Audi AS/S8 and Lexus LS. Cadillac claims the CT6 will weigh in at just less than 3,700 pounds, roughly the same as the current CTS, despite the fact that the CT6 is 8.5 inches longer than the CTS.

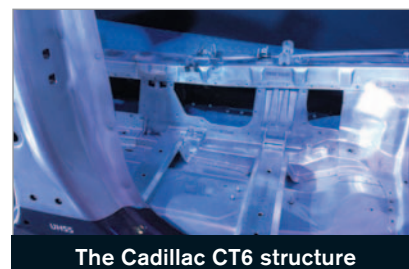
Hybrid body design

The main weight-saving mission was bolstered by an extensive use of aluminum. Cadillac is using aluminum for all exterior body panels, as well as numerous structural castings. Like the Audi TT (8J), mixed-material engineering (hybrid construction) was utilized in the CT6's monocoque architecture. Advanced laser welding and aeronautic-type structural bonding adhesives were utilized for joining methods all in the name of reduced mass (weight). Reports say Cadillac has stated a weight savings of 218 pounds over an identical structure made mostly of steel.

The CT6 is the first production vehicle to utilize GM's new Omega plat-



The Cadillac CT6 mixed material structure uses advanced aluminum and steel to save 218 pounds.



The Cadillac CT6 structure

form. The suspension design is an aluminum-intensive multilink front suspension and a multilink rear, as well as GM's magnetorheological Magnetic Ride Control dampers and optional Active Chassis System, which includes rear steering. This will also require extensive analysis after a collision event, much like the procedures mentioned previously for the BMW.

GM states that state-of-the-art monocoque architecture is the foundation for its benchmark-establishing agility and vault-like solidity and quietness — every panel of the structure is optimized with innovative joining techniques. These joining techniques provide the best balance of strength, lightness and refinement. Thirteen high-pressure aluminum die castings in the lower body construction reduce complexity and are significant contributors to the architecture's low mass. Additionally, there are reinforced areas of advanced high-strength steels (AHSS) affixed to the aluminum components. GM was able to accomplish this through advanced manufacturing techniques. GM's most advanced body manufacturing methods are used to fabricate the monocoque structure, including proprietary aluminum spot welding technology — a first in the industry — that is more efficient and helps reduce weight. Laser welding, flow drill screw fasten-

ers (FDS) and self-piercing rivets with adhesives are also utilized in many areas where steel and aluminum are joined. GM claims roughly 591 feet of advanced structural adhesives are used on the vehicle structure.

What we know as of now is that the fire wall, floor pans, floor cross members, inner passenger compartment panels, upper roof rail reinforcements and B-Pillar reinforcements and inner panels are all different strengths of steel. The remaining components are aluminum stampings, including all outer panels, and closure panels and cast components are used for the strut towers and upper rail components (aprons).


Training

GM states that about 25,000 units will be produced for the 2016 model year. The certified repair network will “probably more closely align” with luxury car programs like Audi and Mercedes, meaning parts will be restricted to only those shops that are certified by Cadillac and meet all the

requirements. Additionally, repair facilities will be required to purchase specific tools and equipment and meet the training requirements. GM says that the specific training for the high-strength steel and aluminum vehicle will be “primarily web based” and offered through a GM partnership with I-CAR. These training offerings include 22046.20W1, “GM Body Structural Fastening Systems 1” and 22046.20W2, “GM Body Structural Fastening Systems 2,” according to the Cadillac Aluminum Repair Network manual. Other I-CAR aluminum courses might also be necessary if staff hasn’t yet taken them.

To be eligible for the program, the repair facility must be I-CAR Gold or VeriFacts VQ, have I-CAR technical training certificates, estimator training certificates and be current on aluminum structural certification with another OEM program, according to the shop participation agreement. Cadillac is not stating how many technicians must be trained in aluminum collision repair to be on the program. But

the company has stated that each participating facility will be expected to have the necessary number and type of technicians properly trained for aluminum collision repairs. It is at Cadillac’s sole discretion to determine the training requirements acceptable for program criteria.

As we have said, aluminum is here and so are advanced construction vehicles. Repair facilities will have to invest in equipment and training to stay current, and many of these vehicles may not be able to be repaired in your facility due to the parts restrictions. 



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REMOVING DENTS FROM PLASTIC BUMPERS

A vehicle dent before repair

BY JOHN WILBURN | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Over the years, automakers have made numerous manufacturing changes to plastic bumper covers. In the beginning, they used urethane-coated steel, then progressed to using only thermoset urethane. To save cost, there was a shift away from using high-priced urethane to less expensive thermoplastics like polycarbonate, TPO and polypropylene. As time passed, TPO and polypropylene became the clear leading materials because of cost and durability.

Some OEMs like Chevrolet, Mercedes-Benz and Dodge still use polyurethane on lower production models. The new Dodge Challenger and Charger originally used urethane bumpers, but even those models on the 2014 and 2015s have switched to polypropylene. The current trend is to make more bumper covers out of polypropylene and

make the covers progressively thinner, saving even more material cost. While this may sound like a bad thing for durability, the benefit to the technician is that 95 percent of the cars in the shop will use the same type of polypropylene bumper covers and all of them use the same repair techniques and materials.

A common repair to polypropylene bumpers is dent removal. While some say it's impossible to do perfectly, it is not. Heating the bumper to the correct temperature is the key to dent removal. It's very important to know that overheating or under-heating the plastic will make dent removal much more difficult. When a plastic bumper is dented, the plastic becomes very stressed. Not only is it stressed in the dented area, but all around it, too. All of the stresses need to be released in order to remove

the dent correctly; the only way to do this is with the correct amount of heat and pressure in the right areas.

By using the correct amount of heat and pressure, it is possible to reshape the bumper without causing more damage to it. Applying the correct amount of heat in the right area makes all the difference. While focusing the majority of the heat on the dent itself, you will also need to heat 4 to 6 inches around the dent. In doing so, you are relaxing the plastic, releasing the tension and pressure on the surrounding area caused by the impact.

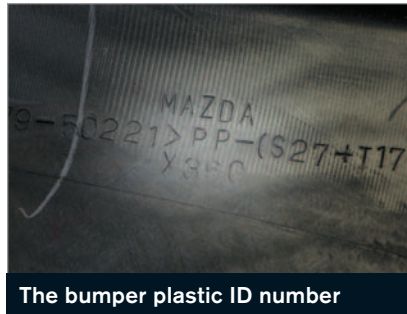
When heating the area using a heat gun, keep the nozzle close to the surface to maintain control of what is heated and what isn't. Be sure to keep the gun moving steadily at a moderate pace to allow the plastic to heat thoroughly without melting the surface or causing



the paint to bubble. It is important to make sure you get the plastic very hot to the touch, but not so hot that it begins to sag. You will know you've reached the right temperature when it is too hot to touch with your bare hand for more than a second or two. At this temperature, the plastic can be reshaped with moderate pressure.

On one end of the spectrum, if the plastic isn't hot enough, the damaged area can't relax and it will tend to spring back to its damaged form. On the other hand, if you overheat the plastic, it will become much more difficult to repair due to distortion and will tend to overstretch when being reshaped. With that being said, you would much rather work on the cool side than overheat it. You can always reheat the bumper to achieve the temperature needed, but once it has been overheated, there is no going back.

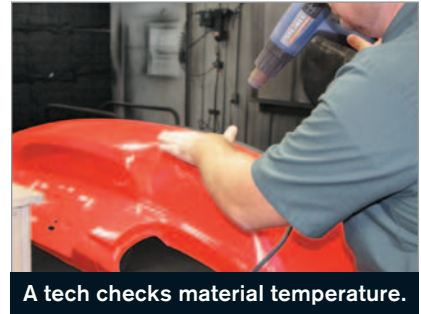
Overheating the plastic is the single worst thing you can do when trying to remove dents. Once the plastic has been overheated, the strength and flexibility have been compromised, making it much



more difficult to reshape. Also, once it melts and cools back down, it becomes brittle compared to the rest of the bumper. Working a dent in hardened, brittle plastic can cause it to crack and split easily, making more damage than you had to begin with, which reduces the profitability of an otherwise easy repair.

There are cases where overheating a bumper may be necessary in order to remove creases or kinks, so more care must be taken while reshaping it to minimize the amount of time and the amount of filler needed.

Once you have reached the temper-



ature you feel is needed to reshape the damaged area, it is a simple matter of choosing the right tool to do the manipulating. For larger dents and to fix

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some minor waves, the palm of a gloved hand works well. For sharper dents, or to recreate body lines, a block of wood or the handle of a utility knife may be the best tool. Popping the dent sometimes requires straight and steady pressure; other times firm lateral movement with a tool work the best. How you remove a dent is as complex or as simple as you make it.

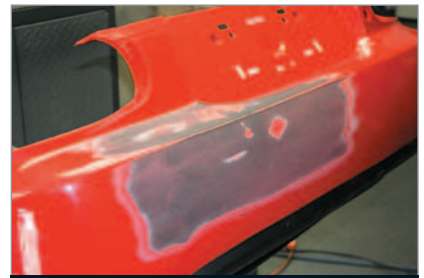
When pushing a dent out, it helps to know where to start. It's best to start at the outer area of the dent and work your way in towards the deepest part. This will release the pressure evenly, helping the worst part of the dent release easier.

Of course, some dents are easier to remove than others and some will require very little sanding and no filler before going to paint; others require a bit more work. When it comes to sanding, don't be afraid to use aggressive sandpaper — 80 grit or lower — to remove the paint and sand down the high spots. Save the fine grit paper, like 180 and 320, for getting rid of the coarse sand scratches and fuzz that the aggressive sandpaper left behind. Being shy with the sandpaper will make removing high and low spots difficult. Once contoured and sanded with fine-grit sandpaper, you can use a butane torch to get rid of the last little bit of fuzz. When using a torch to remove fuzz off raw plastic, keep it moving quickly while being careful to not overheat the bumper.

If you keep these few things in mind while removing a dent in a plastic bumper, you should be able to make a high-quality repair quickly, without causing additional damage to the bumper. Be aware of the thickness of the plastic




The sanded bumper



A second look at the sanded bumper

before you begin and take that into account when heating the dented area. Make sure you heat all around the dent, relieving all the stress to the entire area and not just to the dent. Remember to start removing a dent from the outside edges working toward the center and don't be afraid to use aggressive sandpaper. Getting rid of pesky sand scratches and fuzz is a small price to pay to be able to get the job done quickly.

Don't be afraid to try different tools and techniques; be creative. The worst that can happen is that the customer will need a new bumper cover, which is what they would need if you didn't make the attempt. You will find that most dents can be repaired and repairing bumpers will make the shop more money than replacing a bumper. Repairing dents will keep the repair dollars in house. The best way to learn is to not be intimidated by the process and to get out and try it. In no time, you will be an expert with the ability to generate more money for your shop. 



Dent removed, ready for finishing



Final sanding of the bumper



Heating around the dent



A second look at final sanding



Pushing the dent out



Flame treating to remove fuzz



Pushing down the high spots



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John is the Manager of Urethane Supply Company's Encore Bumpers. He has more than 15 years of bumper repair experience.

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WHAT TO
KNOW WHEN
REPAIRING
PLASTIC
ANYWHERE
ON A VEHICLE

When repairing a fiber-reinforced part, it is necessary to use a plastic repair process that integrates reinforcing fibers to ensure a proper repair.

BY **DOUGLAS CRAIG** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The first appearance of plastic in car design can be attributed to Pontiac's Endura bumper that was introduced in the late 1960s. This innovative bumper featured a plastic-coated steel frame that was integrated into the design of the car. The bumper was strong and impact resistant, and launched the use of plastics in car manufacture.

Within a few years of the Endura bumper introduction, the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued its first passenger car bumper safety standards in the early 1970s. These standards called for car bumpers that could better absorb shock and prevent serious accidents. The increased use of plastics, as a less ex-

pensive method for providing bumper safety, was pushed along by further NHTSA regulations in the late 1970s and early 80s.

Now, almost 50 years after the first plastic bumpers originated, both non-structural and structural reinforced plastics are used almost everywhere in car body design. Some car parts,



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such as door-panel trims and body molding, are made with unreinforced plastics; and other parts, where strength is needed, are made of materials with added fibers such as fiberglass, Kevlar® and carbon fiber. As more plastics were used in automobile design, epoxy and urethane repair products were developed to repair the plastics. These products were simple to use and provided superior repairs.

Repairing all plastics

Plastic repair products are not just for bumper covers. Plastic repair products can be used for repairing any plastic part in a vehicle; however, there are several important aspects to know when using plastic repair products, such as the plastic composition of the part, how to make the best repair, and how to work with the product supplier.

While many plastic repair products can be used on both non-structural and reinforced plastics, how does a repair technician know where to use them? The first step is to identify the substrate that is being repaired. Molded plastic



Damaged fibers in reinforced plastic before repair.

parts should have an "identifier," which can usually be found on the back or inside of the part. This identifier is an abbreviation of the plastic used in manufacturing, such as PP for polypropylene and PO for polyolefin. (Earlier plastic parts were not identified, as this is a recent implementation.)

The markings are designated by the International Standards Organiza-

tion (ISO) to assist with plastics recycling and are used globally. Additionally, they are useful for identifying plastics for any number of reasons, including car repair.

Along with PP for polypropylene and PO for polyolefin, there are several other naming structures that are common to vehicle repair: ABS (acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene); PC (polycarbonate); PE

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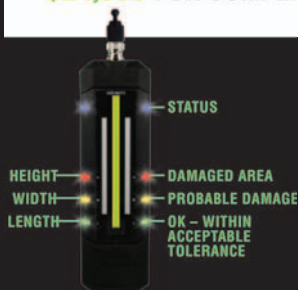
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(polyethylene); and PVC (polyvinylchloride). There may be polymer blends used in parts manufacture as well, and these are marked with both plastics, such as PC+ABS (polycarbonate and acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene).

If you cannot find the identifying mark on a part, check with the OEM for help in classifying the type of plastic used. While many plastic repair products are formulated to work with any plastic, a technician still needs to know if the plastic is fiber-reinforced, otherwise the repair could fail. Knowing if the substrate is fiber-reinforced or non-reinforced has more to do with the repair procedure than with the particular repair product.

Making plastic repairs

Plastic repair adhesives can be used for cosmetic repairs and/or internal restorations. Cosmetic damage refers to nicks, gouges and other minor surface defects that do not penetrate the material. Damage to the fibers or damage through the composite panel can also be repaired, but with a different procedure than a cosmetic repair.

Interior repair refers to any repairs that are not on the surface of the vehicle. These parts can be visible or totally concealed, such as headlight mounting tabs or mounting bosses on door trim panels. Urethane adhesives can be used to “build” new mounting tabs that are as strong and robust as the original piece.

A significant cost savings can be realized when using plastic repair products. A repair done with a plastic repair product can be considerably less costly than purchasing a new part. Moreover, if done correctly, the repair could be

undetected. Besides the cost savings advantage, there is also a time-savings benefit, since a repair can be made almost immediately versus waiting for a new part to arrive. Taking into account time, cost and labor savings, using plastic repair products can be a big boost to a collision repair shop's bottom line. Customer satisfaction should not be overlooked either, since a fast, guaranteed repair can get a vehicle back on the road more quickly.

Knowing the procedure

While there is some basic training required to understand how to use plastic repair products, repairs can be done fairly quickly by following the standard operating procedures (SOPs) provided by the product's supplier. Skill and precision are important points to remember when using urethane products. It's not just pumping in a product to glue parts together and the job is done. If the repair procedure is done properly the first time, the repair will last.

It's crucial to follow the instructions given with the repair product. Some products will require an adhesion promoter/surface modifier for bond strength, but there are also products available that will bond directly to the substrate and, in some instances, will eliminate a step. Although getting a vehicle repaired quickly is certainly a goal for meeting customer needs, skipping steps in the repair procedure is not the answer. If you skip steps, you may not have the perfect solution to a repair and you could have a customer dissatisfied when the repair fails.

One of the most important steps in the repair process is cleanliness. Make

sure that all the plastic parts that will be repaired are thoroughly cleaned before starting the repair. Cleaning can be done with prep/cleaner products specially formulated to remove all waxes, silicones, dirt and road oils. Dust and debris can be removed with compressed air.

Know the differences

As noted earlier, although it can be helpful to identify the type of plastic used in a part, many repair products only require that the technician recognize if the plastic is reinforced or non-reinforced. While the repair process is different for reinforced or non-reinforced plastics, the key points for making a repair are the same.

Repairing fiber-reinforced plastic parts, such as hoods and fenders, will take you down a different repair path than non-reinforced plastic parts. The fibers contained in the plastic change the plastic's density. Sometimes, a part is not 100 percent plastic; it might be 80 percent plastic and 20 percent of another material (added for strength).

When a repair is made on a fiber-reinforced part, the repair process must simulate the same basic panel construction or density. It's important to use a plastic repair process that integrates fiberglass to ensure a proper repair. If you use a repair process that is not fiber reinforced, at some point the repair will show read-through. The dissimilar materials (repair product and substrate) move around at different rates through heat and cold cycles, and eventually the repair may become noticeable as a shadow or crack.

The best way to understand and learn how to use plastic repair products is to



When application instructions are carefully followed, plastic repair products will produce a Class-A finish on all automotive plastics.



Structural damage to unreinforced substrate.

work with a reputable supplier. Select an adhesive that takes the guesswork out of plastic substrate identification. There are products on the market that can be used on all plastic parts whether they are flexible, semi-rigid or rigid. Having to use just one product for all types of plastics reduces the complexity of a repair and reduces inventory.

A supplier's representatives should also be able to provide documentation SOPs, instructions and hands-on training, so that all the technicians in a collision repair shop use the same procedures for repairs. Training is critical to obtain long-lasting repairs that are quick and cost-effective.

Repair vs. replace

Some collision repair shop technicians are hesitant to fix plastics — they may believe that it is complicated to use plastic repair products, or they may think the repair will not hold. Neither of these circumstances is true, and if technicians experience problems with using plastic repair products, it is usually because a

technician is not properly trained and is not using the product correctly.

So, instead of repairing a plastic part, the collision repair shop will replace the part. But this is an unnecessary and costly solution, and certainly will not save time in getting the vehicle back to the customer. Used parts are not the answer either, since they can be more costly than using a plastic repair product. More often than not, a broken plastic part that is fixed with a plastic product actually provides a better and stronger repair than using a non-OEM replacement part.

Again, always follow the SOPs and keep these key points in mind when performing a repair procedure with plastic repair adhesives:

- Cleanliness is paramount. Use soap and water first on the damaged area, and then a cleaner to remove silicone and other contaminants.
- Taper all repair edges to avoid read-through.
- Use surface modifiers/adhesion promoters where directed.

▪ Install reinforcing fiber when repairing fiber-reinforced plastics, and use reinforcing mesh when making structural repairs to non-fiber-reinforced plastics such as bumper covers or plastic tabs.

▪ If you're uncertain on how to make a proper repair, contact the manufacturer or contact the manufacturer's representative.

When application instructions are carefully followed, plastic repair products can produce a Class-A finish on all automotive plastics. They are easy to use, cost-effective and can return a damaged vehicle to as-new condition in a short amount of time. ☺



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**GET THE MOST OUT OF INTERIOR
DETAILING WITH THESE TIPS**

BY **TIM SRAMCIK** | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

While you're putting the final touches on an outstanding exterior detailing job, don't forget the interior needs the same special attention.

Detailers can be excused if they have a slightly different take on pre-accident condition than the rest of your staff. With vehicles being left in service longer, and motorists using them as improvised eateries, kid and pet haulers, and impromptu business offices, interiors — even in newer rides — take a beating. Complicating this further, busy owners tend to neglect spills and wear marks that need to be quickly attended to and fail to use protection products that can head off some of the worst damage. The result is an uptick in the number of interiors needing serious attention well beyond a basic cleaning.

No shop wants to return a vehicle with a shiny new outside and a clean, though flawed, interior. That means

repairers need to up their game when it comes to restoring a vehicle's inside. Use the following tips to handle your toughest detailing chores and put an extra coat of excellence on your work.

Vacuum and brush first

Attacking the worst stains first before targeting the interior as a whole is a mistake, as some of the worst damage is often covered up by collision debris or other grit, leaving the detailer to jump from one task to another rather than working in an organized manner that saves time.

Always start with a thorough vacuuming after removing any debris and stowing the owner's possessions. If nec-

essary, vacuum several times if the interior is particularly dirty. No dirt or debris should appear from anywhere when the vehicle is returned.

In hard-to-reach places, don't vacuum. Blow out these places instead by rapidly toggling the power switch between "on" and "off." Blowing at reduced power transfers dirt far enough so it can then be vacuumed up.

Next, brush out the seats and floors. This is key since oftentimes much dirt is embedded but gets churned up quickly later through wear. Some detailers recommend vacuuming as you brush.

If any of the vehicle glass has been broken, use the sticky side of shop tape to pat down the interior and remove any remaining particles. Even the most pow-

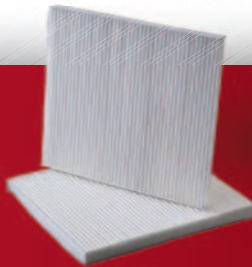


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erful shop vacuums can miss sharp particles that are embedded in fabric (particularly leather). Next, vacuum one more time to pick up any remaining dirt or grit that may have been stirred up.

Identify stains

Different stain sources require different cleaning approaches. There are methods detailers can use to identify stains on their own (to be described shortly), but the best way is to ask the

vehicle owner. Before a vehicle goes into the detailing department (ideally during damage analysis), shops should speak with the owner about the source of any large or particularly bad stains. This helps remove any guesswork and is a good opportunity to forewarn a customer about a stain that cannot be fully removed.

Most stains can be broken down into two different types: protein or tannin. As their name suggests, protein

stains come from products containing proteins, usually dairy or other food items. Tannin stains tend to be darker since they're the product of vegetable dyes and colors from coffee and tea beverages. They can be particularly difficult to thoroughly remove — especially coffee stains — and have a greater tendency to resurface if only the top layers are removed.

Most other serious stains fall under the category of chemical — grease, paint and oil are good examples. Surprisingly, these often respond the best to all-purpose cleaners. Tannin and protein stains are best targeted with specialized cleaners.

Using the proper cleaner is vital since that's the best way to thoroughly break up and remove a stain. Even though some stains may be permanent (typically because the owner didn't properly remove them immediately after they were created), shops can remove the majority of them when they are targeted in the right manner. Stains that aren't completely removed can sometimes be drawn up to the top of the fabric and reappear — sometimes just days after a detailer performs a job.

Which products should you use? Hold this conversation with your vendors. Detailing companies regularly upgrade their products. There can be tremendous differences from one product to the next or between versions. If you haven't had this talk for some time or have been relying on the same products for years, it's a good idea to contact a vendor as soon as possible. Your shop could be missing out on opportunities to raise its game significantly.

Always tamp first

Before using the cleaner, stains should first be tamped to avoid spreading. Place a clean towel over the stain, and lightly tamp (tap) the entire area with a brush. This can draw much of the stain up, especially the fluids that would otherwise spread when hit with water and cleaner or when brushed vigorously. This might seem like a waste of time on older, dried stains, but it actually isn't. Tamping can break up dried fluid that can then be picked away. Also, even stains that look dry may still have moist layers that can be pulled up.



Note the organized vacuuming motions. Always thoroughly vacuum, brush and vacuum again the interior before moving on to other tasks.

Photo: Chesapeake Family Detailing



Pay special attention to steering wheels, shifters, controls and cup holders — anywhere motorists regularly touch or might spill something. Don't hesitate to clean these spots multiple times to remove any residue.

Photo: Meagan Rose

Getting into hot water

With automakers turning to an ever-growing number of new materials, shops must remain more vigilant than ever that they handle them correctly. This is particularly true of interiors. Just as aluminum can be damaged with traditional repair methods, so can the host of fabrics being used to cover seats, floors and other areas. This can be especially true with higher-end vehicles that utilize special materials that don't react well with harsh chemicals.

The cleaner that does a fine job scrubbing away stains in a \$15,000 vehicle might wreak havoc on one costing more than \$60,000. Play it safe, again, by always speaking with your detailing vendors about their products. You can also follow this suggestion from some of the industry's best know experts: stick with hot water as much as possible. Hot water extraction isn't hazardous and usually can break down the toughest stains and kill the bacteria that create lingering odors.

Hot water extraction, though, comes with its own cautionary advice. Extraction will leave the interior wet for a while. You'll need to keep the vehicle in an area where it has time to dry thoroughly to avoid having mold grow or returning the vehicle with damp seats and floors to an angry customer. You'll also want to make sure your detailers are properly trained to use extraction equipment. The water itself isn't damaging (if controlled), but the equipment can damage delicate newer fabrics.

Special handling

After the vehicle fabrics have been attended to, target those areas that most often come into contact with the hands of drivers and occupants: steering wheel, shifters, controls and cup holders. The oil and sweat coming off hands, coupled with sticky residue from food and beverages, make these areas particular problems — even if they don't immediately appear to be. Spend extra time spraying down these spots with cleaner. If necessary, especially with a sticky cup holder, allow the cleaner time to soak in and break up dried, gooey messes.

Don't hesitate performing several rounds of cleaning. The best cleaners might need to be applied several times on the worst messes. The final result

should make the extra effort worthwhile. Always finish these chores by wiping down the spots with a damp terry towel and then drying.

Pet smarts

Even the best behaved pets can leave their mark in a vehicle interior. Hair collects everywhere. Short-hair breeds

sometimes are the most trouble since sharp, short shards of hair can become imbedded in seats where powerful shops vacs can't extrude them.

There are other effective tactics detailers can turn to. Vendors now offer special brushes made for pet hair. These can remove both long and short hair from most spaces. For any remaining



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hair, try this old trick. Put on a pair of latex gloves and rub your hand over the carpet. Static electricity created by the glove will help bring up the hair from the carpet surface where it can be picked up or vacuumed.

Think ahead

After cleaning, always follow up with some steps to prevent future issues. If the vehicle had deep stains or an odor problem, apply an odor neutralizer. Also apply a protective agent on any leather or other fabrics and throughout the interior. Avoid those that tend to attract dust and lint. These steps are important because customers are going to be in direct contact with your work for months to come. If they notice how clean their vehicles remain, you've just made a good argument for them to bring you business again someday, if only just for further detailing.

Seeing clearly

Make sure to go all-in on the windows. Windows might be the most important and most neglected part of a vehicle. It doesn't take long for layers of dirt to slowly build on the inside and exterior. Motorists just get used to the dingy appearance and rarely do more than give windshields and back windows a cursory cleaning using a household window cleaner.

You can do far better taking a little extra time and using the professional products available to shops. Add these additional tips to your arsenal.

Only use lint-free cloths that are used exclusively on windows. Cleaners and products used on other areas can collect in the material and create smears (even after they've been laundered). Also, wipe interior windows in vertical motions and exterior ones with horizontal swipes, or vice versa. Doing

so helps identify which side of the window has any streaks, allow them to be erased more efficiently.

Finally, take one final inspection of the window, making sure all are clean and clear as possible. This can make a significant difference in customer satisfaction. Shops sometimes spend so much time checking the paint, they overlook the part of the vehicle motorists will spend much more time peering at and through.

Final step: Pushing profits

Considering the time put into a superior detailing job, especially on a vehicle chock full of pre-accident issues, you'll want to make sure you're fully compensated. This starts during the estimate. Ask your detailers and estimators to spend time together analyzing how much work needs to be done, along with extra tasks (and charges) the customer may want.

Insurer reimbursement for detailing work — especially when tackling stains — may only be approved when directly related to an accident claim.

However, many customers may be willing to pay out of pocket for these services, or add-ons to what may be approved. Don't underestimate the power of being able to confidently bring an interior back to life for an additional \$100-\$200 on a \$3,500 repair.


Many customers that might consider professional detailing a luxury can be convinced otherwise if shops point out its value and note the convenience — the car is already being worked on by professionals, why not add an extra service? The expertise, tools and products are already available. Throw in a bit of salesmanship, and you could be growing a valuable extra revenue stream that benefits everyone. 

Photo: Auto Detail Doctor




Invest in a hot water extractor. Hot water is still the safest cleaner available and goes a long way in thoroughly removing stains so they don't resurface.

Photo: Auto Detail Doctor




Spend extra time and use shop-grade products cleaning the windows. This is the part of any job that customers will end up spending the most time looking at.



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Tim Sramcik has written for *ABRN*, *Motor Age* and *Aftermarket Business World* for more than a decade. He has produced numerous news, technical and feature articles covering every aspect of the collision repair market. In 2004, he was recognized for his work by the American Society of Business Publication Editors.

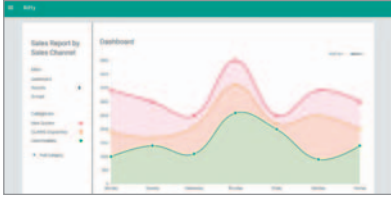
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THE LAST DETAIL [✓]

Remember "MacGyver," that TV genius who saved the world every week using little more than the paper clip and duct tape he carried in his pocket? That guy had a solution for everything. The collision repair industry immortalizes MacGyver in nearly every repair job. Armed with boxes, drawers and pails of leftover clips, fasteners and other items saved from past jobs, repair technicians consistently turn to their "MacGyver buckets" when small hardware isn't readily available and they're in a time crunch to complete the job.

It may seem miniscule in the grand scheme of things, but that MacGyver bucket is a security blanket that is keeping your business from vast improvement.

Relying on the MacGyver bucket is telltale of a repair process that wasn't planned out correctly from the start. And because of that, your tech is now scrambling to meet the pressure of on-time delivery. That small act is symptomatic of a faulty production process that is unfair to the customer and is masking the inefficiencies in your business that result in wasted time and missed revenue related to the new hardware that the vehicle deserved.

Simply put, if you're not accurately preparing that vehicle up front, you risk adding a boatload of additional variables down the pike and piling on even more randomness to an already highly random work environment. If you're not planning up front, then everything else in the repair process is affected and you end up working in a reactive, supplement-consuming mode.

The diagnostic and planning process enables a shop to create an accurate, complete work order, which involves a dead-on parts order, a fully-constructed repair kit, a detailed reconstruction plan and a properly planned refinish strategy, all fueled by proper support documentation.

Now this may sound like simple "makes sense" stuff, but you wouldn't believe the percentage of shops around the country that fail to properly prepare a work order for a vehicle repair on the first go-around. According to my colleague Bob Gilbert, a noted process consultant for AkzoNobel Automotive and Aerospace Coatings, not too many shops in the industry get that planning piece 100 percent accurate.

"I would say that there are only a handful of shops — maybe two dozen — across the country that get it close to 90 percent accurate up front," he tells me. "And in return, their work process is much faster."

Bob says all he has to do is check out a repair folder to measure how accurate a shop is pre-planning. "I'll look at a closed job file and see if there are multiple orders to the same vendor on different days," he says. "Typically, less than one out of 10 times the shop has an accurate repair assessment."

Collision shops that are interested in boosting their pre-planning process need to start by getting buy-in from technicians working on the shop floor. Get your techs together in a room to start a dialogue on pre-work diagnosis. Host a lunch-and-learn pizza session and bring out the whiteboard to map out the definition of a stellar preparation process.

“If you're not accurately preparing a vehicle up front, you risk adding a boatload of additional variables down the pike.”

A MACGYVER BUCKET IS NOT THE ANSWER

Even MacGyver can't fix shop inefficiency — but you can

Challenge your team to think about what it takes to achieve an accurate estimate and the resources needed to attain that accuracy. What are the job folders telling you about weak points in the pre-planning process? What about parts? What will it take to achieve a 100-percent correct verified parts order? What are all the components needed to construct a fully prepared repair kit? Is it possible utilizing your current work plan?

I'm always amazed by shops in Hawaii and how they operate. There are no parts warehouses remotely close to these shops, so planning is critical. If they miss a component up front, that repair process could wait several days or even weeks for the supplement order to arrive.

If your shop didn't have ready access to parts, how would you change your up-front process? My guess is that you'd put a lot of time into accurate preparation up front and attack that task with a mindset that you'll exhaust every effort to get the work order perfect before the vehicle enters the workflow.

I'd bet that you'd stop making assumptions or judgment calls up front that we all know normally lead to waste downstream.

That's what the up-front planning stage means to a process-centered environment. And if it's done correctly — if you throw away those MacGyver buckets — you'll reduce supplements, improve cycle times and touch time, boost customer satisfaction and achieve great results in your overall performance.

Next month we'll talk about the two critical factors that are keeping you from achieving 100 percent accuracy in your shop. ☺

ABRN.COM/GIARRIZZO



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Questions or comments can be sent to Michael at mgiarrizzo@dcrsystems.net





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