

**A NEW LOOK:
ABRN GETS A FACELIFT!
CHECK IT OUT INSIDE**

59

BRING IN QUICK CASH

Top off a repair or attract new customers with express work.

52

3 EXPERTS WEIGH IN TO GIVE YOU INSIGHT ON BUMPER FASCIA SLOT TAB REPAIRS

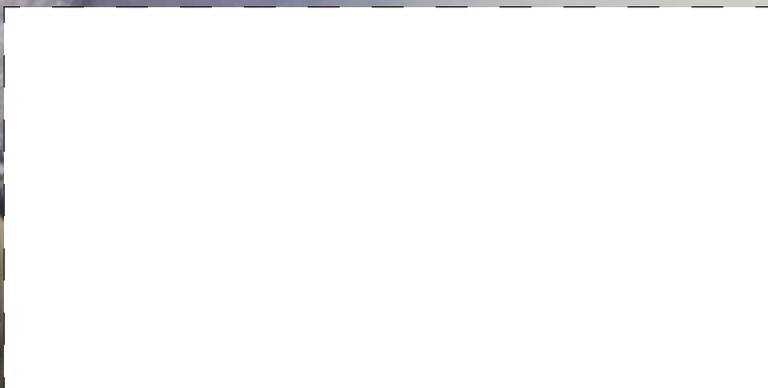
PARTS BEST PRACTICES

12

From vendor selection to ordering, receiving and coding, here's how to master the parts process.

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12 PARTS BEST PRACTICES

From vendor selection to ordering, receiving and coding, here's how to master the parts process.

JOHN YOSWICK // Contributing Editor

20 BECOME A MASTER OF IMPLEMENTATION

Learn the modern leadership and influence skills necessary to be successful when launching radical change.

DAVID LUEHR // Contributing Editor

30 THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN SUCCESS

Your shop has a culture, and it is determining your operation's profitability, efficiency and employee retention.

JEFF PEEVY // Contributing Editor

38 THE PROFIT MOTIVE

A NEW COLLISION BLUEPRINT FOR PRICING, PAYMENT REFORM

Turn to your customers for service payment when insurers aren't up to par.

JIM YOUNG // Contributing Editor

44 THE COLLISION EXECUTIVE

SECURE EMPLOYEE BUY-IN

Switch from a flat-rate pay plan in your shop without losing a single employee.

RYAN CROPPER // Contributing Editor

45 THE SHOP PROFILE

WHALEY PAINT & BODY SHOP INC.; NASHVILLE, TENN.

This independent Nashville shop sounds all the right notes in shifting to lean processes.

JAMES E. GUYETTE // Contributing Editor



TECHNICAL



52 THREE PERSPECTIVES ON BUMPER FASCIA SLOT TAB REPAIRS

Overcome repair challenges with tips from three experts.

SCOTT BIXLER, SHAWN COLLINS AND DOUGLAS CRAIG // Contributing Editors

59 OE CORNER

GET YOUR EPOXY PRIMER KNOWLEDGE UP TO SPEED

Embrace benefits of epoxy, DTM primers and work them into your repair process.

JAMES MEYER // Contributing Editor

61 BRING IN QUICK CASH

Top off a repair or attract new customers with express work.

TIM SRAMCIK // Contributing Editor

automechanika
CHICAGO

COMMITMENT TO TRAINING

47 LIVE LIFE OUTSIDE THE GREY

Commit to deliver action and go beyond mediocrity.

MIKE JONES // Contributing Editor

49 CONNECTING TECHS, VEHICLES

Michigan colleges prepare techs for new technology.

TSCHANEN BRANDYBERRY // Special Projects Editor

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IN EVERY ISSUE

CELEBRATION

150



SINCE 1866

The Sherwin-Williams Company

10

10 INDUSTRY NEWS

SHERWIN-WILLIAMS CELEBRATES 150 YEARS

Company ideals from the past stand strong today and into the future

KRISTA MCNAMARA // Content Channel Director

I-CAR NAMES FOUNDER'S AWARD RECIPIENT

CARSTAR's Bob Keith takes the honors

NORTHEAST ATTENDANCE SETS RECORD

More than 5,000 attended New Jersey show

75 PRODUCTS

76 AD INDEX

WEB EXCLUSIVES // ABRN.COM

COMPARING YOUR BUSINESS TO THE MAJORS

Following large public companies in the collision repair industry provides insight into the drivers of profitability.

ABRN.COM/MAJORCOMPARE

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The Sherwin-Williams Company



TOM HABLITZEL

COMPANY MILESTONE

SHERWIN-WILLIAMS CELEBRATES 150 YEARS, LONGSTANDING IDEALS

BY KRISTA MCNAMARA // Content Channel Director

From its founding in 1866, The Sherwin-Williams Company has strived to focus on seven ideals: integrity, people, service, quality, performance, innovation and growth. Today, not much has changed. As Sherwin-Williams celebrates its 150th anniversary, it looks to the values of its founding fathers, which have endured through the years in driving company success and strength in an oftentimes unpredictable market.

The Sherwin-Williams Automotive

Finishes (SWAF) division embraces company values in its customer interactions, daily business dealings and forward progression. President Tom Hablitzel, an 11-year veteran of the company, spoke with *ABRN* about the company's anniversary, what has kept it successful and what is to come in the future of automotive coatings.

ABRN: What has kept the company going strong throughout its 150 years?

Hablitzel: "We still have the same values and strategy. We are 150 years in, and the company is only on its ninth CEO, which is a testament to our commitment

to employees, promoting from within and a positive and retentive culture.

"We are a very stable organization. We really pace ourselves and adjust to the environment around us. We never veer from our values; our strategy is sound and stable."

ABRN: As Sherwin-Williams prepared for its 150th anniversary, what did you learn about the company?

Hablitzel: "We reflected on our company history, values and principles and reinforce that they still work today.

"We face challenges as we grow globally, and we want to make sure we have the leadership to continuously reinforce our values. Every year we are facing a more global game and becoming a more global company. We really follow the edict of Henry Sherwin, who said, 'What's worth doing is worth doing well.'"

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After a devastating hailstorm in March, Enterprise Rent-A-Car is working with the insurance industry and collision repair centers to meet transportation needs.

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SHERWIN-WILLIAMS LAUNCHES WEBSITES FOCUSED ON COLOR EXPERTISE

These websites provide an inside look at industry partnerships, visuals of color and application tips designed to improve a tech's knowledge.

ABRN.COM/COLOR

NORTHEAST SETS NEW STANDARD WITH RECORD ATTENDANCE

A who's who of automotive repair industry representatives, vendors, speakers and educators joined over 5,000 attendees at AASP/NJ's NORTHEAST 2016 Show.

ABRN.COM/NORTHEAST2016

AFTERMARKET PARTS BILL WITHDRAWN IN MARYLAND

The sponsor of a bill targeted at limiting insurer's ability to require uncertified aftermarket parts has withdrawn the bill from the Maryland House of Delegates.

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Sherwin-Williams has no plans to slow its growth.

ABRN: What can we expect going forward?

Hablitzel: “We are focused on growth, global expansion and remaining profitable for and beneficial to our shareholders. We are constantly working on new products, environmentally responsible capabilities and speedy processes. Everyone is looking for cycle time improvements, and we have been focused on how to help a shop do more with less.”

ABRN: How has SWAF embraced the company focus on speed, specifically with the Formula Express 2.0 color matching tool? What are the benefits this has offered to customers?

Hablitzel: “We are helping shops and techs get good color retrieval faster. The whole objective is speed of process, to do the most in the shortest amount of time.

“Overall, we aim to help our customers with anything that can speed their process. Recently, there has been an explosion of new color trends from the OEs. This is an opportunity to help shops match those colors and replicate them with ease and speed.”

ABRN: How else is SWAF working to help its customers better manage their businesses?

Hablitzel: “We are focusing on growing our company and our customers. They want to drive efficiency and synergy in their businesses, and they expect paint suppliers to help with that. With our direct distribution model, we provide “hands-on” support through Sherwin-Williams employees. We are able to not only provide direct, in-shop support, but also repeatable, consistent performance that regional and national multiple shop operators (MSOs) need to standardize their processes.

“As consolidation continues, we embrace the challenges and opportunities that our MSO customers will bring. MSOs are rapidly evolving and are strategically important to all of us, but we still focus on individual shops.”

ABRN: What sets SWAF apart from its competitors?

Hablitzel: “The service piece — we have a consistent offering, branch by branch. Our employees provide knowledge, training and product support direct to the shop. We offer access to motorsports, and that relationship has really helped our brand because it is all about relationship building in our business.”

ABRN: And speaking of motorsports, SWAF continued its partnership with NASCAR.

Hablitzel: “This is our third year as the official paint of NASCAR. NASCAR is also a great learning tool for our customers. NASCAR teams are concerned about wasted seconds in changing tires and the difference ounces in weight of paint can have on speed. We use it as an opportunity to be an excellent example of extreme lean practices.”

ABRN: How important is continued education to the success of your customers?

Hablitzel: “It is extremely important for us to help shops train

their employees. Our EcoLean training courses work to help shops understand lean concepts and also give them practical things to take back to their shop that they can put in play. We make sure they understand the importance of estimating, eliminating waste and practical solutions. Our EcoLean workshops provide different opportunities and also the chance to not only teach them lean processes, but also take them to a location where they can see lean practices in motion and burn them into their senses for application in their own businesses.”

ABRN: How do you see the market changing in the future?

Hablitzel: “We are always trying to make paintwork easy and make processes easy. The trend is moving toward a less skilled painter and technician, and we are really trying to make it easy for that person to be trained and effective in their respective role.

“Fewer shops are doing a lot more repairs. There is more volume, but the labor pool is deskilling a bit. The industry is looking for suppliers to make it easy and to make it trainable. Because of the talent situation in our industry today, we aim to make products that are more adaptable.

“Overall, our company knows what it is skilled at. We are in constant study, and we focus on our commitment to the customer. These are ideals that we have carried from our founding fathers through to today.”

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From vendor selection to ordering, receiving and coding, here's how to master the parts process

BY JOHN YOSWICK // Contributing Editor

Parts can account for the single largest portion of a shop's sales and a significant portion of gross profit. Parts play a key role in cycle time and even customer satisfaction. That's why it makes good sense to keep striving to improve all the processes related to parts: from choosing vendors and ordering, to how parts are received and handled and entered into the shop's management and accounting systems.

We asked collision repairers, parts suppliers and other industry experts about the "hidden" costs they see related to the parts procurement portion of the collision repair process, and for the best practices they've found to improve shop performance related to parts.

Electronic options, mandates

Much has been written about the battle over various insurers requiring their direct repair shops to use a particular electronic parts ordering system. But many shops using such systems say that at a minimum, it has the potential to streamline a lot of the parts-related processes. Yet parts vendors say they are often surprised by the industry's slow adoption of electronic parts ordering.

"While some of us may consider faxing 20th century, the fax is still very much alive," said John Bosin, a Collision Industry Conference (CIC) committee chairman, when moderating a panel discussion on the topic. "When you talk to parts suppliers, ask them how many

faxes they get a day with orders. Not only is the fax machine still being used, but the phone is being used and a lot of parts salespeople and delivery people are carrying orders back into the office."

Part of the problem is that there are about a dozen different electronic systems working to automate some aspects of parts procurement, and each has both strengths and weaknesses. They vary in how well they integrate with shop estimating and management systems, and some focus more on alternative parts while others are more OEM-focused.

"The reason you might use OPSTRAX or PartsTrader or OEConnection is because each one of them solves a different piece of the problem," said Jeff Schroeder



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of yet another system — Car-Part.com — during a CIC panel earlier this year. “If you integrate together, you get more and more pieces solved. But no one has really solved all pieces of the problem yet.”

JUST SOME OF THE ELECTRONIC PARTS PROCUREMENT OPTIONS

- uParts (uparts.com)
- OPSTRAX (opstrax.com)
- Car-Part.com (car-part.com)
- PartsTrader (partstrader.us.com)
- NuGen IT (nugenit.com)
- APU Solutions (apusolutions.com)
- CCC TRUE Parts Network (cccis.com/parts-suppliers)
- OEConnection (oeconnection.com)

The panelists say it's probably unlikely that shops will ever be able to use a single electronic parts system that meets their needs and those of all their potential trading partners. So shops should consider, the vendors say, which one or combination of the systems best meets their needs.

Working with vendors

John Kallen of Champion Collision in Sandy, Ore., keeps 14 employees busy in his 15,000-square-foot shop, despite not having a single DRP agreement. He was free to select the electronic parts ordering system of his choice, a choice he says was influenced by the OEM parts departments from which the shop buys parts. That includes nearby dealerships that refer work to Champion.

Kallen said the shop uses OEConnection's CollisionLink program to order many of the shop's parts, in part because

it enables ordering even when the vendors are closed.

“It's a great tool for scrubbing the VIN, and it has a lot of note features that help streamline the process,” Kallen said. “But one of the biggest factors for me was asking the vendors what they like, what they embrace, what works on their end as far as a program and a process. So we put the time and effort in on our end, because if it's easier for them, it makes things more fluid.”



JOHN KALLEN

Parts choice and handling processes

Ask Lorenzo Avila and Norberto Salas about parts practices within their business, and they first want to explain that they see themselves as in the safety business as much as the collision repair business.

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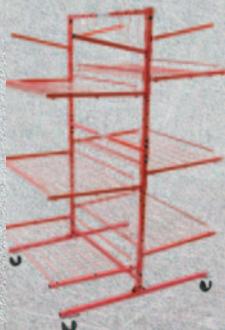
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"You have to do a repair thinking about the safety of the passengers," said Avila, who along with Salas, operates two Luxe Collision locations in the San Francisco Bay area. "I don't make the cars. The insurers don't make the cars, either. There is someone in the middle that I call the referee — the ones who

build the cars. They're the ones who are going to tell us how to do a proper repair."

He said that's why, for example, their company is very selective when it comes to the use of non-OEM parts.

"I know on the OEM side we're safe," Avila said. "How am I guaranteeing that the passenger is going to be safe after I've

replaced with non-OEM parts? So we do test fits. If it doesn't fit, we document it, and put new [OEM] parts on. The insurance companies pretty much respect that as long as you document it."

"It's all about the client and their safety," Salas agreed. "It's a battle we fight every day."

It's easy to see evidence of the parts-related organizational and process improvements the two have brought to the business. In the shop's parts department, for example, all damaged parts are mirror-matched against their replacements when they are delivered to ensure they are correct. Every job is

assigned a parts cart for both the removed and replacement parts, with the cart number included with other information written on the vehicle's windshield.



LORENZO AVILA



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Industry trainer Mike Anderson of Collision Advice said any discussion of parts management and profitability shouldn't exclude "stock parts," such as clips and fasteners. More than a half-dozen companies offer easy-to-use systems that allow shops to quickly track the number and types of these parts in order to produce an invoice that can be added to the final bill, much like any other part for the car.

"Your paint jobber can help you get set up with one of these systems," Anderson said. "I was surprised when one of our quarterly 'Who Pays for What?' surveys found that fewer than 60 percent of shops reported using a system to track and bill for stock parts. Those are legitimate and sometimes significant expenses you have into repairing that car."

Shop owners using the systems often agree it's something they should have started using earlier than they did.

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ROGER FOWLER

“That’s \$500 a month at least that we had never charged,” Roger Fowler of J&W CAR-STAR in McMinnville, Ore., said of his shop’s addition of stock part billing through an invoicing system.

Look for waste in the process

A CIC committee last year worked to quantify some of the costs for shops, insurers and parts vendors associated with various inefficiencies related to the parts procurement process. Committee member Amjad Farah of AkzoNobel Coatings acknowledged that the entire parts ordering process is non-value added.

“No one is paying us to order parts,” Farah said. “We get paid to paint them or put them on, but we’re not getting paid to order the parts. So the process in and of itself is non-value added. But we still have to do it. So the objective is to look at the entire process [to figure out how to] make it as efficient as possible given that it has to be done.”

Farah suggested that a process map showing all the steps in traditional parts ordering can pinpoint wasted steps and the costs these steps add to the process. Shops, for example, sometimes order both OEM and non-OEM versions of the same parts at the same time in order to save time if the non-OEM version proves unusable. But receiving multiple parts and returning one adds costs for both the shop and parts vendors, Farah pointed out.

Choosing only parts offered by the “best vendor” identified by the shop can offer some efficiencies, he noted, but can raise the total cost of the parts used, or — if the shop can’t pass those costs along — reduce the shop’s profits.

Similarly, if a shop’s parts ordering decision is based on price alone, one risk could be poor service from the vendor, resulting in delays.

Ordering parts from multiple vendors for the same job results in multiple

FOUR MORE PARTS-RELATED BEST PRACTICES

Anderson offers simple tips for parts process improvements based on what he has seen through client experiences



Use the OEM parts

diagrams. Anderson said the estimating databases are not always as current and complete as the OEM information. He recommends that estimators have dual monitors so they can view the OEM parts graphics while they are preparing estimates or repair plans.

Mirror-match every part, every time. Although Anderson has for years recommended that shops check new parts as they are received against the damaged parts they will be replacing, he said this step has become even more critical. He cites an example of a shop that ordered a grille and emblem based on an insurance estimate. The insurer had chosen the least expensive emblem option, but the vehicle was equipped with accident-avoidance systems that required a significantly more expensive clear grille emblem in order for sensors to work properly. Anderson said the shop would have caught the mistake had the parts been mirror-matched once received.

Be proactive.

Shop management systems can produce a report showing what parts have been ordered but not received. Anderson recommends checking this three days in advance, to see on Monday, for example, what parts will be needed on Thursday but have not yet arrived. “That way you can be much more proactive than reactive,” Anderson said.

Code parts properly.

Anderson said he finds a lot of accounting problems in shops based on how parts are coded within management and accounting systems. If a shop gets an OEM price match for a non-OEM part, for example, that change should be made within the management system when the invoice is entered. Otherwise, the sale may be registered in the accounting system as non-OEM, but the cost (generally driven by the vendor name) is attributed to OEM. Even just a few of these errors can throw off a shop’s accounting numbers significantly, Anderson said.

invoices to be paid. If it costs you \$25 to receive a part and process that invoice, Farah said, and that happens on 75 percent of your repair orders, that can quickly add up to thousands of dollars in costs.

When you look at the process as a whole, Farah said, you quickly “come to the realization that as an industry we need to find a way to make the whole process more efficient for all parties involved.”

That’s why CIC Chairman Randy Stabler has said he’d like to see more research into parts best practices and how the electronic parts procurement systems measure and track inefficiencies

so they can be reduced.

“We may have electronic parts procurement models that do a good job sourcing by price, but do they look at all those other factors that can reduce the overall internal cost of operation?” Stabler asked. “Suppliers, repairers, consumers and insurers all pay for these inefficiencies.”

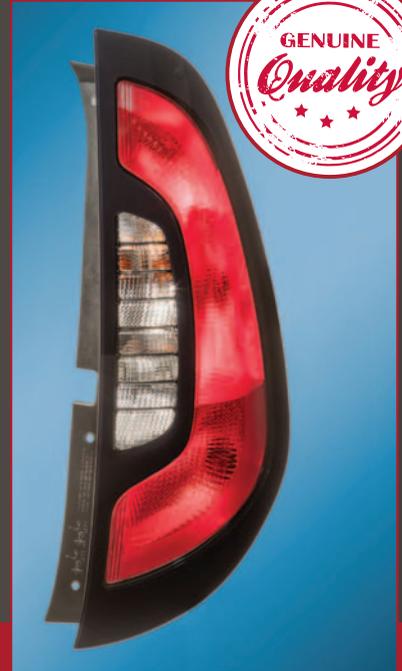


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BECOME A MASTER OF IMPLEMENTATION

DAVID LUEHR during a repair planning workshop.

Learn the modern leadership and influence skills necessary to be successful when launching radical change.

BY DAVID LUEHR // Contributing Editor

Recently I was contacted by the owner of a collision repair shop that was attempting to implement a repair planning department at their shop. The owner — we'll call him Frank — was clearly beyond frustrated. I listened intently for nearly an hour as he explained his experiences over the last several months while implementing the new program.

He and several members of his leadership team had been to formal lean and blueprint training, and I was impressed with the depth of Frank's knowledge about the process.

I said, "Well, Frank, it sounds like you have it all figured out, so how can I help you?" In an exasperated tone, he replied, "None of it is working!"

Frank explained that there are more missed parts on the estimates than ever before, he was getting a lot of push back and complaints from the body techs and morale is at an all time low. Furthermore, several people were threatening to quit because they didn't like all the changes taking place. Frank understandably felt like he was in over



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his head and was ready to give up.

I agreed to work with him and set up a day to come visit his shop.

Frank's problem, as it is with so many other leaders in business and in life, was that despite being very well educated in the collision repair business, he was lacking the modern leadership and influence skills necessary to be successful when implementing such radical change. You see, Frank had grown up in the industry and was taught how to manage people and processes by his father many years ago. Despite being a decent person, unfortunately, Frank was more of a ruler than a leader.

The six sources of influence

Like Frank, most of us learn only one method of getting people to do what we want them to do. This one source is our mouth. The mouth is actually a very ef-

fective influence tool for the easy stuff. All we have to do is tell the person what we want them to do, right? The problem is that for pervasive problems and radical change — initiatives such as a blueprinting, a.k.a. the repair planning department — the mouth rarely works! If you want to be a successful implementer, you are going to need to learn to use six sources of influence instead of only one. The six sources were introduced to me in a book called *Influencer* by authors and behavioral scientists Grenny, Patterson, Maxfield, McMillan, and Switzler. I recommend you give it a read some time.

When it comes right down to it, we usually all want the same things. We may have opposing views of how to achieve it, but when it comes to the final result of the change initiative, we usually all agree. The problem, when

it comes to ordinary verbal persuasion methods, is that the whole time we are talking and forming arguments, the resistant audience is not really listening to you because they are busy unconsciously forming their own counter arguments. When you say, "Hey guys, I figured out a way we can streamline our processes and make more money doing it!" They instead hear, "Hey indentured servant, I have figured out how to make you do a bunch of extra free stuff in another weak attempt to make the owner rich!"

When people create an implementation plan that engages at least four of the six sources of influence, you are almost guaranteed a favorable outcome. Even if you don't create a formal implementation plan, it really helps to understand the forces that are working for you and also against you.

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Source No. 1: Personal motivation

How do you get people to love what they currently hate or perceive they will hate doing? Most of the time, we use verbal persuasion as a means of changing someone's mind, but as I mentioned a moment ago, you may need to engage other forces if you want to reach someone's intrinsic motivation and help them enjoy the activity. One method I like to use to accomplish this is to attempt to get the person or team that is resisting the activity to try it. Often things aren't as bad as they thought! Another technique is to make mundane tasks into a game. Things are much more fun when you get to keep score. Think of the social media game "Candy Crush." Do you think millions of people would waste their time playing that game if there was no scoreboard?

Source No. 2: Personal ability

Great implementers will always provide lots of training. Nobody likes to admit to you that they don't understand what it is you are asking them to do. Do everyone a favor and over-invest in training to ensure they have all the skills necessary to perform the vital behaviors required to make your process a success.

Source No. 3: Social motivation

Probably the most powerful source that is working for you or against you is the social "culture" that exists in your business. A leader who has a vision and shares it with the team stands the best chance of winning. I like to engage the team to help create the processes that will be implemented. People want to feel like they are contributing toward the vision, not just showing up for a paycheck.

Source No. 4: Social ability

Invest in providing training for your team, not just technical skills, but also social skills. Giving the team the interpersonal skills to help one another and also hold one another accountable in a safe way will go a long way toward implementing anything.

Source No. 5: Structural motivation

I believe the best way to provide structural motivation begins with everyone working toward a known standard. When vital behaviors and standards are met, you have to reward people! Often praise is enough. Sometimes money is an appropriate structural motivator, but never as a replacement for correctly providing a good social structure first. In other words, if you are not skilled as a leader, throwing money at people in

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hopes of keeping them motivated usually doesn't work for long. In fact, it usually backfires!

Source No. 6: Structural ability

People rarely think about how their environment affects behaviors. The things that are around us all day, every day can have a huge impact on our lives. Things like how the shop is laid out, how far people have to walk to get things, etc. For example, if you were trying to abide by your diet, would you want to place a box of donuts on your desk? Probably not. Occasionally take a look at your environment like it was the first time you walked into the building. You might be surprised how "things" are keeping us from being successful. If you want vital behaviors enacted, you must make it easy for people to accomplish them.

Upon meeting with Frank and his team, it became apparent quickly that they had put a lot of work into their new blueprinting department. They purchased parts carts, painted lines on the floor, and had even placed new signage above their "Repair Planning Department." Everything on the surface looked great, but as is often the case, when you pull back the curtain, the problems become exposed!

Working with Frank, we interviewed everyone working at the shop and were soon able to discover the root cause of most of the problems. Usually what I find while working with shops is that employees are bombarded with symp-



FRANK'S REPAIR planning department

	MOTIVATION	ABILITY
PERSONAL	Personal Motivation: Do they want to engage in the behavior? MAKE THE UNDESIRABLE DESIRABLE	Personal Ability: Do they have the right skills and strengths to do the right thing? HELP THEM SURPASS THEIR LIMITS
SOCIAL	Social Motivation: Are other people encouraging and/or discouraging behaviors? HARNESS PEER PRESSURE	Social Ability: Do others provide the help, information and resources required at particular times? FIND STRENGTH IN NUMBERS
STRUCTURAL	Structural Motivation: Are systems rewarding the right behavior and discouraging ineffective actions? DESIGN REWARDS AND DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY	Structural Ability: Are there systems that keep people in place and on progress? CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT

From Influencer: The Power to Change Anything

tomatic problems that are caused by only a small handful of root problems. Typically, these root problems are a result of critical process steps being skipped. In Frank's case, most of the missed parts and wrong parts that were discovered during vehicle reassembly were a result of two vital behaviors being performed poorly and inconsistently far upstream: 1) sequenced analysis of the damage and 2) mirror-matching parts.

We discovered that the employee who was analyzing most of the damage out in the shop as the "repair planner" was also the shop's production manager. This guy was constantly being interrupted and pulled off his job of repair planning, and when he would get back to repair planning, he would forget where he left off, thereby leaving off necessary parts and labor from his estimates.

The shop did have a parts guy who was supposed to be opening new parts boxes and checking them against the old, damaged part for correctness, but he had long ago given up on the idea. It turns out most of the time, he couldn't even find the old parts to compare them to.

Because of these problems, the technicians in the shop felt like the whole repair planning department idea was a joke.

By the end of my visit with Frank and his team, we had created a written

action plan using all six of the sources of influence. We spent precious time working with the technicians to ask for their input and support. We got agreements to assist the repair planner and the parts managers and to encourage good decision-making during those critical moments when the pressure of the real world causes many to skip critical steps. We implemented a better system for organizing the old, damaged parts so that they would be easy to locate during mirror matching.

In the months since introducing the written six-source implementation plan, things have been much better for Frank. By understanding that true leadership is much more than barking out commands, Frank has learned and embraced many new ways of connecting with his team in a highly effective way. He also mentioned that his new skills have helped him in many other facets of his life, and he is excited to continue his leadership education.

For more information on influence strategies and leadership education for your business, visit www.elitebodyshop-solutions.com. 



DAVID LUEHR owns consulting company Elite Body Shop Solutions and is a trainer with the Automotive Management Institute.
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THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN SUCCESS

Your shop has a culture, and it is determining your operation's profitability, efficiency and employee retention.

BY JEFF PEEVY // Contributing Editor

In the last few years the reference to culture in business within our industry speaks to heightened awareness of it. I have traveled the country speaking on the topic of culture within businesses for several years and have had shop owners come up to me saying they were not sure if their business has a culture. My answer is simple and straightforward: you do. And it is determining your operation's profitability, efficiency and even employee retention.

A famous psychologist once said, "The range of what we think and do is limited by what we fail to notice." I believe this is true of the culture within a business. Mark

Fields of Ford gave Peter Drucker credit for saying, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." If you have ever seen repair businesses that attempted to implement Lean or Five "S" initiatives and a year later you find them back to the way they always did things, it is likely the culture of the shop that caused them to abandon the effort to improve and change.

The learning culture

In the book *Creating a Learning Culture*, Marcia Connor and James Clawson define culture by the following statement: "Culture can be defined as a pattern of learned assumptions that has worked

well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to the problems of survival and integration." This definition gets to the heart of how a culture develops within a business, and I believe uncovers looming performance killers that can exist. The idea is that our employees are operating under a pattern of learned assumptions and that these assumptions are considered to be so correct in the way someone should think and act that they are taught to new members as the way to operate and act. Keep in mind that these assumptions most likely set in



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motion are, at a minimum, encouraged by the business' leadership. Whether a business has a formal training program that teaches their pattern of assumptions or not, you can bet they are being taught informally. As the definition states, being accepted or integrated into the business as an employee is determined by how well one accepts these assumptions as

the correct way to perceive, think and feel. If these patterns of learned assumptions are indeed correct, the business will be profitable, efficient, have better-than-average employee retention and keep up with the changes required to sustain it. If the assumptions are not correct, the business will continue to struggle and typically look externally for the reasons for it.

Culture, good or bad, starts with leadership. It can't be changed overnight, but starts by realizing it exists and is founded on a pattern of assumptions. Since staff take their cues from the leadership of the business they work in, owners and managers must accept that they own the culture within their business. This means they also have the ability to start the process of testing and changing their culture and should at least work to integrate better, more grounded assumptions.

One of the things I have personally seen in the very best performing repair businesses is that with their pattern of learned assumptions they have engrained an understanding of the role learning plays in maintaining success. We refer to this pattern as a "learning culture." The learning culture sets the stage for a sustainable competitive advantage. Businesses with such a culture maximize every effort to improve. They get the most out of every tool or piece of equipment. They tend to continuously improve shop flow and facility design. Their businesses are never caught "flat-footed" or unprepared when new technology rolls in their door. Learning is without a doubt the only source of a sustainable competitive advantage — accept it and start the process of adopting a learning culture today.

Lead the way to learning

To begin, understand that it is a process and that it begins with you. It should start with leadership, but anyone within a business can be the catalyst for adopting a culture of learning. First, believe the principle that "knowledge equals competitiveness; learning then is the only source of a sustainable competitive advantage." Knowledge has a shelf life, and it is getting shorter and shorter as things change more rapidly. Learning and the ability to learn quickly, overcomes this shelf life and keeps knowledge fresh and relevant.

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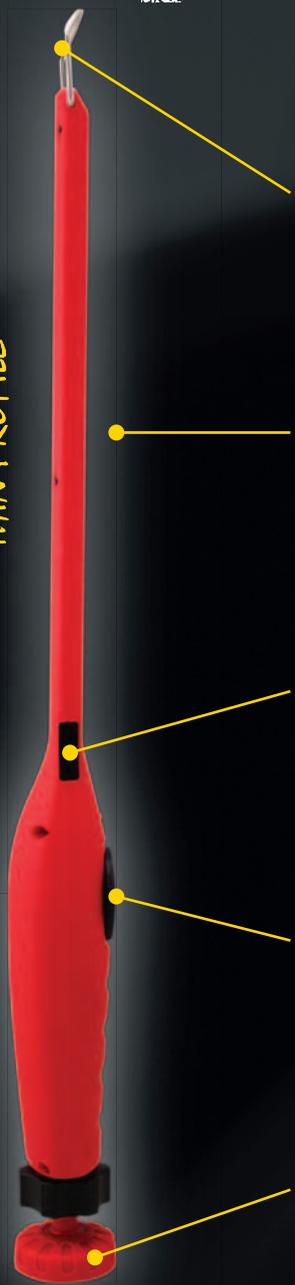
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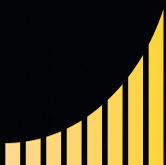
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do it. Just reading and saying the phrase “knowledge equals competitiveness, and learning is the only source of a sustainable competitive advantage” is not enough; it must be sincerely accepted and implemented as a personal core belief. Once it becomes a personal core belief, it will be acted on, and as a leader you will begin to set a series of expectations for yourself and your staff. If you are not a leader within a business, you should know that accepting this belief is infectious and will influence those around you. If it doesn’t, find another place to work, because the business’s inability to sustain success is just not present in their culture and your career potential is limited there.

As a leader, set an expectation for everyone in the business to learn everything they can and in every way possible. Begin to discuss things you have recently learned and engage your staff to

do the same. When you send someone to a training class or require them to take an online class, frame it as an opportunity to learn and explain why learning is important for the employee personally and for the business. Set an expectation for the employee to take what they have learned and share it. Recently acquired knowledge is maximized when it is shared. When learning is expected, employees tend to sit up front, take notes and ask questions. When it is not, the employee tends to sit in the back and only does what they have to just to get through the class.

Share knowledge

This leads to the next important element of a learning culture: the expectation to share knowledge. Consider even establishing a quick meeting on a regular schedule that is focused solely on what the team members have learned since

the last meeting. In a healthy way this drives the point home and places a bit of pressure on learning something between meetings until it becomes a habit. Start the habit also of simply asking “what have we learned?” as a conversation starter. As you move into this phase of adopting a culture of learning, be sensitive to individuals who perceive themselves as knowing everything and lack the respect of coworkers — commonly referred to as a “know-it-all.” This individual will work against advancing the idea of knowledge sharing, as they see it as a license to spend even more of their time trying to convince everyone how smart they are instead of productively participating in the learning opportunity. If you are serious about growing into a modern, successful learning culture, terminate their employment. Find team members who “get it” and can embrace and accept that they must learn, be open

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to accepting knowledge from their coworkers and share “real” knowledge that helps everyone.

Make a commitment to expertise

Another important element in your quest to grow a learning culture within your business is to establish the need for

all employees to make a personal commitment to expertise. This seems simple enough, but most of us never stop and sincerely make that commitment. We do what we have to do to get through the day and never make the commitment to ourselves and to our boss and coworkers that we will intentionally

learn and develop in every way possible within the role we have, within the business we work in. Do it. Do it in a meeting as an example to everyone, and as you do, explain how it benefits the business and everyone in it if everyone works to become all they can be. This makes for a healthy, prosperous place to work and ultimately is personally rewarding.

Recruiting the right employees

In the research I have been involved in, we found an interesting phenomenon that I am convinced drives future success to its fullest. When recruiting, highlight the need to learn, grow and share knowledge as the very first thing used to describe what the candidate must have in order to be successful within your business. We found this attracts a younger, more educated individual — someone the repair business has likely never seen in its recruitment efforts. The typical repair businesses all state similar things they are seeking in a help-wanted ad: “must have experience,” “must have tools,” “high production capabilities” and finally, “I-CAR training/ASE certification a plus.” It is not that these things aren’t important, but they should be secondary or in addition to “willingness to learn and willing to share knowledge.” Someone with experience who is attracted to the mention of a willingness to learn and share knowledge will typically have extensive training and certifications, because they have an interest in expertise.

As soon as you accept and adopt a culture of learning, you will see how this all comes together and how it will make a difference in your business now and set the stage for sustainable success and competitive advantage. 



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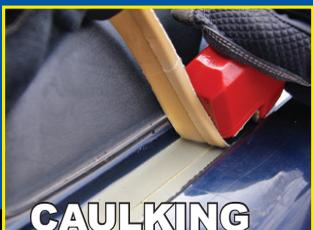
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A new collision blueprint for pricing and payment reform

Turn to your customers for service payment when insurers aren't up to par

The insurance industry has been very successful at controlling its own costs in the automotive and healthcare industries, in part due to the suppression of rates. In healthcare, this continuing and ever-increasing third-party suppression of rates, other new costs and billing allowances have in most cases led hospitals to shift costs to private patients because of inadequate payments from insurers. The share of physicians' revenue that comes from patients, rather than insurers, is growing due to health plans that are requiring higher deductibles and other out-of-pocket charges.

The collision industry is faced with these same low reimbursement rates. Repairers may be put in a position where they perform "free" work to ensure a vehicle is repaired properly. But it's critical that you get paid for every operation your shop performs. Hopefully, you are prepared to assist in the proper handling of a claim, from the first customer contact through vehicle disassembly and repair. Performing a 100 percent damage analysis in your shop and learning how to negotiate effectively are keys to your success.

But how much preventive care are you taking with your collision center assets after the insurance company states, "that's all we allow?" Inserting pre-emptive processes into your operations can prevent absolute denials, increase efficiency and allow you to increase your employees' pay rate, while also allowing you to make a more reasonable profit when compared to your costs. There are preventive measures you can take to keep payments — and customers — moving smoothly through your office. Customers often have little understanding of what the process of billing the insurer entails; small issues can escalate into frustration when they're left in the dark. Lift the lid on the situation by sharing any billing issues with customers as soon as possible. This transparency may help you and the insurance company reach a fair agreement faster.

When facing third-party price suppression tactics by insurers, we have as an industry not typically charged the difference back to the customer. Shouldn't we start to consider dropping the stigma we have historically attached to simply charging the vehicle owner

fair market prices for our rates and the operations that need to be performed to return a vehicle to a safe working condition? We are responsible for bringing the vehicle back to pre-accident function and performance. We need to be getting paid for the required services. As the repair experts, we are entitled to make a fair profit for our labor and services.

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING THE VEHICLE BACK TO PRE-ACCIDENT CONDITION. WE NEED TO GET PAID FOR THE REQUIRED SERVICES.

Why do we continue to accept the practice of simply taking what's offered by an insurance company to repair a vehicle, knowing that it's not profitable enough? Could our industry's acceptance of being undervalued daily be the real reason why we as an industry are facing a technician crisis? Even with the best shop negotiation skills, are you constantly challenged to pay your technicians a fair rate and remain profitable? Is it possible that we are not seeing the large pink elephant in the room?

In recent years, an increasing gap has developed between the actual cost of providing services to an insurance customer and the reimbursement a collision repair facility can expect from an insurance company for the services provided. This makes it more difficult to be profitable and also pay a fair wage to our production employees. The insurers fail to consider even the most common overhead business costs that would allow for proper equipment, adequate training budgets to meet increasing vehicle repair complexities, and other associated expenses. Furthermore, even the direct costs of meeting shop needs such as sublet charges, labor rates and materials, which are needed to perform these repairs, aren't being reimbursed by insurance companies. Or if they are, the rates fall well short of fulfilling true sustainable margins of profit.

For example, in most markets insurance companies will pay collision repair businesses only for the sublet costs based on a sublet's original invoice cost, and refuse to pay even a standard markup. Insurance companies typically justify these gaps between actual total costs and reimbursements by insisting that it is only

JIM YOUNG is an ATI collision coach and creator of the iTechnician and iPainter apps for the industry. Contact him with your questions at jyoung@autotraining.net.

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doing what any prudent purchaser would do — namely, it is paying the shop owners only for the costs strictly and directly attributable to serving their customer. This prudent purchaser argument — that a payer should not pay for any unnecessary costs generated — appears reasonable to the average consumer. Unfortunately, we as an industry have let our business, our family, our technicians and their families suffer by continuing to accept what is offered as the final bill versus what the final bill should actually be if paid correctly. So it raises the troublesome question of “who will pay a fair and reasonable percent of profit on our costs of doing business?”

I contend that the collision industry, like the medical industry, is deeply affected by insurance company or third-party influences and price suppression. It is time that collision repairers adopt similar counter-measures and business tactics that enable our industry to effectively build and sustain fair profit margins.

The third-party payer system — insurers — continually causes losses to collision repair shops. Some are absorbed as “DRP discounts” and some are forced on the industry by the “we don’t pay for that” mantra. This isn’t sustainable for our industry. We operate on slim margins and when the third party tries to make them slimmer, collision shops lose. Insurers are using the MSO model as an example of pricing performance. But a 250-shop MSO will or should be able to negotiate better agreements than an independent store. The third-party payer can’t force those types of discount requirements on an independent, especially given repair performance.

Let’s expand the scope of analysis of this article by attempting to compare the efficiency and equity of our industry’s typical cost absorptions in several other ways. Not shifting the costs back to the consumer leaves three other alternatives: searching for ever higher and sometimes elusive technician production efficiencies, a lowering

of technician hourly rates or longer work weeks and hours worked. These alternatives are intended to relieve underlying problems of rising collision repair costs and return the collision industry to fair profit margins and salary expectations, rather than merely continuing to absorb the burden experienced by the underpricing from insurance companies.

Here then is a blueprint for reform. A suggestion to bring about a change of the current collision shop cost absorption practice. Consider offering customers a financing system to pay their insurance company short-pay amounts. This added revenue from insurance companies’ short-pay policies could be used in many ways — better employee benefits, higher tech salaries, larger estimator compensation plans, a more adequate or improved pay structure for administrative staff, facility improvement, equipment purchases, designing and implementing a training budget, an advertising budget, or improving

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net profit for the business. The intent here is not to overanalyze all of the possible options and alternatives, but rather to focus on the lost profit on this pricing aspect of your business. Most shop owners have spent countless hours trying to achieve operational excellence each month and year, all in an attempt to produce enough revenue to pay themselves, their technicians and staff a reasonable wage.

Reaction to and accounting for the industry-wide magnitude of this cost-absorbing phenomenon is receiving more attention. For those who cannot afford an "insurer-imposed discount" from the total cost of repair, it may eventually require identifying and implementing a set of controls that block providers from passing the forced discount on to them. As an industry we must realize that most insurance cost-shifting tactics are unrestrained and uncontrolled. The third-party payers will continue to force this revenue reduc-

tion tool on the entire collision industry. This includes DRP shops as well as non-DRP shops. The continued pressure to reduce severity, material allowances and labor hours, and suppress labor rates effectively will continue to reduce the real income of all employed in the collision repair industry. The greater the push by repairers to have insurers pay fair and reasonable costs to have a vehicle properly repaired, the more the industry can spend on innovation, updating and training.

As repairers, we need to be focused on profitability, retaining our customers and being a supplier of labor — not being the discount arm of the insurance companies. Deciding on the merits of adopting pricing or discount reforms is up to the collision industry. A lack of change can only lead to ever-shrinking profits and decreasing cash flow, as has been experienced in recent years. If market-oriented reforms go unchanged, a combination of increased

tightened insurance industry controls and continued pressure for reductions in automotive claim severity is the likely consequence.

These competing objectives could force us to alter our industry's historical "social contract" with our customers. Repairers are forced to continually absorb the difference between what is paid by an insurance company and the actual repair price that should allow for a fair and reasonable profit. Repairers need to capitalize on the fact that their repair contract is with the car owner and not with insurers. Your staff will need to proactively start the conversation and inform the customer that they are responsible for any differences, which can be uncomfortable, but will be necessary as the price differences occur. Give the same notification as a medical office billing person will and make payment arrangements BEFORE a repair is performed. 

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Securing employee buy-in

Think you can't switch from a flat-rate pay plan in your shop without losing employees? It is time to think again.

Talk to shop owners who have shifted their business away from a flat-rate pay plan, and they likely will have one thing in common: they all probably experienced significant turnover during the transition. Many see that as inevitable. But let me assure you it doesn't have to be. I know, because our business did it without losing a single technician.

Before I explain how we did that, let me introduce myself as one of *ABRN's* new shop-owner columnists. In 2002, after just four years working as a technician, I purchased an established business, Able Body Shop, in Anchorage, Ala. We now have two locations with about 40 employees and annual sales of about \$6 million, as well as a truck accessories shop.

I can't say I've done everything right nor that we are necessarily among the most successful businesses in the industry by every measure. But I can (like you, I presume) point to some things that we've done very well, and that's what I hope to focus on in these columns.

So how did I switch from a well-entrenched flat-rate pay plan to a team payment plan that still promotes technicians to excel without losing a single employee? The key was employee buy-in — letting them see how it would benefit them and giving them a voice in the change.

First, they trusted that I wasn't out just to cut my costs. My intention was only to create a better environment that allowed us to fix cars faster and more efficiently; I knew that would improve things for all of us.

Second, I let them take a look at what the change could look like. On two separate occasions, I took four employees down to Arizona to visit a shop owned by a friend who had switched to the type of pay plan I was considering. My employees had some say in deciding who would go on these trips. I told them that what they would see might not be exactly what we implemented here,



THE KEY WAS EMPLOYEE BUY-IN — LETTING THEM SEE HOW IT WOULD BENEFIT THEM AND GIVING THEM A VOICE IN THE CHANGE.

but that I wanted them to see what a change might look like.

On each trip, we spent a day at the shop with no formal presentations — just my techs talking with the techs and the owner at that shop, seeing how things worked there. Both times on the flight home I heard the same thing from my employees: We've got to do this, and we've got to do it now. They were amazed at how much work flowed through the shop without the chaos that the one-man-one-car flat-rate system often creates.

After those trips, we ran the numbers side by side for employees for a few months, so they could see what it might look like for them. Then we did a trial with a group of the employees who volunteered to try it.

Getting their input and buy-in kept us from losing a single technician. As a matter of fact, now a few years later, if I were to tell them we were switching back, that actually might make some employees quit.

I'll explain more about the details of the pay plan in a future column, but here's why it can work for both your employees and for your business. Before the switch, we averaged about 1,000 to 1,100 production hours every two weeks at our main shop. Now, with the same number of employees, we average 1,500 or 1,600 hours and sometimes hit 1,700. We've boosted production and improved cycle time, and everyone makes more money.

Is it the right pay plan for your shop? Only you and your team can decide that. We've had some people come on board after we made the switch who decided it wasn't for them and who found a flat-rate job elsewhere. But if someone tells you it's not possible to change pay plans without losing people, tell them you know a collision repair business that has done it. 

RYAN CROPPER owns Able Body Shops, with two locations in Anchorage, Ala., as well as Total Truck Accessory Center. Email Ryan at rcropper@ablebodyshop.com

Homegrown success

Independent Nashville shop sounds all the right notes in shifting to lean

JAMES E. GUYETTE // Contributing Editor

➔ A thriving “shop local” movement is humming within the West Nashville neighborhood that’s home to the Whaley Paint & Body Shop, and residents nearby and throughout the Music City are very much in tune with patronizing the independent enterprise.

“I have an up-and-coming, informed Yuppie crowd here,” reports owner Linda Whaley, reflecting on her efforts to challenge a proliferation of MSO locations and leverage a lucrative demographic. Potential customers do their research, read the positive online reviews, and “they’ll go to a homegrown business before they’ll go to a chain.”

Citing a widely held belief that women “are a little attuned to detail,” she elaborates that “when they find out we’re woman-owned they’re even more eager” to bring their wrecked vehicles into the 20,000-square-foot Alabama Avenue shop.

Although the Middle Tennessee region’s insurance carriers tend to be mindful about avoiding any semblance of steering, “If the customer asks they’ll say, ‘This is not a chain, and this is a local company.’ And the customer will say, ‘That’s a no-brainer.’”

With weekly car counts of 40 to 50 vehicles and annual gross revenues of \$3.6 million, Whaley’s has implemented an ongoing lean production program to boost shop floor efficiencies and deliver word-of-mouth-worthy customer satisfaction rates.

“It makes you a better shop when you have standard operating procedures and you have a set way of doing things,” Whaley says.

“We are a very lean operation that approaches service as a cooperative process. We understand it starts with the first initial call to the pickup of the vehicle, and that all pieces of this process are connected and need to be supported,” she explains. “Following our standard operation procedures 100 percent of the time is our goal — from teardown to blueprinting to ordering and mirroring parts — which keeps our jobs on track and gets us to our main goal of meeting our delivery promise date.”

Established 58 years ago, the shop’s footprint and structure is “landlocked” with no room for expansion, a situation that mandates precise engineering of the production practices to keep pace with the competition.

“It’s all about volumes, so you have to learn to be more efficient to get more vehicles through,” says Whaley, stressing the benefits of being a lean operation. Consultant David Luehr of



WHALEY PAINT & BODY SHOP INC.
Nashville, Tenn. // www.whaleybodyshop.com



Linda Whaley,
Owner

19
No. of employees

\$1,829
Average repair order

20,000
Total square footage of shop

40-50
No. of customer vehicles per week

1
No. of shops

13
No. of bays

58
Years in business

2.8 days
Average cycle time

\$3.6 M
Annual gross revenue

Elite Body Shop Solutions and a trainer with the Automotive Management Institute was enlisted via mutual friends in the industry to assist in developing the various techniques.

“It was an old family business,” Luehr recounts, “and before we dove into ‘process’ a whole lot we wanted to make sure we did some leadership development with her and her management team. She inspired me, so it was a fun project to work on.”

“I embraced it,” says Whaley of her lean journey. “I am passionate about the collision repair business. I have a strong work ethic, and I feel like we have a highly skilled and qualified team of collision repair staff and support staff.”

The workforce is stable. “I retain my employees; I pay them

better, and I have a good crew." When an opening does become available, careful attention is directed towards interviewing the candidate to ensure that he or she is a good fit with the company culture. "I like to hire people who haven't been jumping around from one job to the next." Another aspect involves determining if the recruit lives within close proximity to the neighborhood or is relaxed about bumper-to-bumper driving. Whaley says Nashville's traffic is so congested that commuters can easily become frustrated with their work lives if they start the day in a fuming mood.

Whaley places significant importance on maintaining a happy and pleasant atmosphere, believing that it has direct impact on getting the job done correctly, pleasing the clientele, attracting repeat business and encouraging referrals to friends and relatives.

"We are a family-owned and operated shop that emphasizes a family culture producing a quality product, fair price and exceptional service. We'll meet with you and learn about the history of your car. Our technicians will then prepare a detailed estimate of what they will do to restore your car to pre-accident condition," she says.

"We feel our reputation speaks for itself. Satisfied customers are our best marketing tool. I don't do a lot of advertising at all. We are still 'old school,'" says Whaley. "Each customer gets a hand-written thank you note from me, the owner, along with a few little surprises reminding them of their Whaley experience."

"As a small business owner myself trying to attain a 'WOW' experience with my clients, I was duly impressed," observes pleased patron M. Stinson of Nashville. "I expect excellent body work. What I didn't expect was the unbelievable service that went with it."

Nashville resident N. Parsons is another enthusiastic online reviewer: "Your people genuinely care about doing the job right the first time. You work quickly and carefully. Looking at my car now,

you couldn't tell that anything was ever wrong with it."

"The entire staff always goes the extra mile to make sure a vehicle looks factory new," according to Whaley. "Many body shops today skip some of the final detailing services like wet sanding and buffing, but not us. Our experience shows in your results."

Much attention is directed towards delivering an experience and product that meets or exceeds the expectations of the customer — we treat their vehicle with the love and care that we treat our own vehicles," she says. "We have an open-door philosophy, and that means we stand behind what we write, repair and promise as we follow all guidelines, policies, procedures and protocol."

Doing the dance

The business was established in 1958 by a partnership that included John Thomas "JT" Whaley, who went on to become Linda Whaley's father-in-law. Having married into the operation in 1980, in 1982 JT retired and passed the business along to the second generation. "I worked with and assisted my husband during his first independent operational years," and after leaving the collision industry for several years, Linda returned and purchased the business in 2011 to become the primary owner and operator.

"JT's business reputation was to give you a quality product for a fair price. He was known not only for providing a quality product, but he would go that extra mile for a customer in need. JT was my first mentor, and as I have taken ownership of this business I feel I have been able to continue his tradition," says Whaley.

"I was familiar with the industry and nuances," she continues, but upon coming back from her hiatus she was a bit taken aback by the complexities of "doing the dance that you do" with insurance carriers.

"Our insurance providers are key to the whole process; we are in the process together," Whaley attests. However, wrinkles in the relationships still surface.

If the insurance company doesn't budge, often citing the wording in the driver's policy, "we try to fill in the customer" on the available avenues such as self-paying or pursuing an acceptable remedy up through the insurer's chain of command. "It's not an easy process, but if the customer raises enough Cain... Well, they want a happy customer too."

Maintaining win-win transactions with suppliers is an equally important goal. "Since we approach our repair process as a collaborative relationship with multiple moving pieces, our parts and materials vendors are essential and a very important key to our success in the repair process," she explains. "These providers are part of our family, and we treat them as such. You have to give respect to get respect: Open communication, following standard operational procedures, and we say thank you. They are key in helping us meet our promise to our customer."

Whaley goes on to extol the value of bringing consultant Luehr on board, a necessity that became apparent as she reviewed the shop's internal operations and the looming presence of chain-based competitors.

"It wasn't uncommon to have a car sit here for a couple of weeks without a wrench being turned," Whaley recalls. "I needed to be more lean with less interruptions and to be more efficient." Luehr's arrival and his collaborative guidance in the lean towards lean has resulted in an average cycle time of just 2.8 days.

That's not to say that the implementation process didn't meet with initial reluctance among some of the technicians. "They were skeptical at first, but it didn't take them long to realize that it starts with the blueprinting and being prepared," she notes. "It's like a surgeon doing heart surgery; you want the doctor to be prepared before starting the operation." ■



JAMES E. GUYETTE is a long-time contributing editor to *ABRN*, *Aftermarket Business* and *Motor Age* magazines.

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Live your life outside the grey and commit to deliver action

GET YOURSELF OUTSIDE THE ZONE OF NEUTRALITY AND BEYOND MEDIOCRITY

MIKE JONES // Contributing Editor

Whenever I work with individuals or teams, it is my coaching style to be all in or all out. Hanging out in the middle means that you have no commitment to deliver anything. Hanging out in the grey allows you to wait for permission to perform a task or to take the appropriate action now required to get the job done.

I was reminded of the above coaching that I have given to so many when this incident occurred a few months ago.

I was setting up my classroom to conduct a Game Changer Leadership Program for some college students and staff at Texas A&M University. A young woman walked into the classroom about 20 minutes before class was scheduled to start and let out a big gasp. I asked her what was wrong and she asked, "Am I the first person here?" I responded to her question with, "Why do you ask?" When someone asks me a question, and I don't know the context of the question, I typically ask before assuming I know. Quite often we reply to the questions that others ask us, assuming we know what they are asking. She said, "I never want to be

first, and I never want to be last."

I asked her if being first or last was a problem, and she said, "YES!"

When I inquired why it was a problem, she replied, "When you are first or last, you draw attention to yourself, and you never want to do that." She went on to say that she would rather be invisible by arriving somewhere in the middle.

I made her aware that she was not first. As she left the room for coffee, I stood in complete shock of her uttering those words so confidently and with so much conviction. I began processing what she was saying and was not shocked by what she said; I was shocked by the conviction that young woman had about living in the grey. She was committed to hanging out in the zone of neutrality. She clearly saw value in "toeing the line" and "sliding in under the radar." She did not realize that what she was committed to was mediocrity, or just doing good enough.

This was a belief that led to behaviors that she learned from the people in her life. These were people she gave value; they were her role models. I also recognized that her attitude about living in the grey represents a large population of humans on the planet. Most people would

rather blend in than stand out, whether positively or negatively.

"Toe the line" is an idiom meaning to conform, to follow the rules, to stay within the comfort zone, to follow a universal paradigm, to live in the grey. Many see it as safe; however, you will risk everything if you choose to risk nothing. You risk having amazing relationships, experiencing happiness from the inside out, having the career you want, and being fulfilled in life. You risk experiencing greatness and inspiring others to greatness.

I tell my four sons often, "Do something special today." I assure them that special, meaningful or inspiring things will never be created by living in the grey. Making the choice to be first, to play full out, to do things that others are unwilling to do will be scary; however, the most successful people on the planet are those who are willing to do what others are unwilling to do.

As you push through your fears, there is a chance that you may fall flat on your face — a possible result from playing full out. Falling flat on your face could be a possibility as a result of choosing to be first. Please be aware there is a big difference between living life and just existing. 📧

SUPPORTERS



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— VINCENT LADUCA, LADUCA AUTO SERVICE, AMC 2015 ATTENDEE

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SOCIAL INSIGHTS



AUTOMECHANIKA CHICAGO ANNOUNCES FREE TRAINING EVENTS

Automechanika Chicago has launched a series of single-day training programs in cooperation with leading technical colleges. The free training events begin this month as part of the "Commitment to Training" initiative supported by industry sponsors. Learn more and sign up today!

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YOUR COMMITMENT TO TRAINING

The Commitment to Training initiative gives you the chance to connect with other automotive professionals who share your passion for training. By joining our community, you'll get access to the latest industry news, cutting-edge resources, expert tips and free training events. Visit the page below for more information.

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WHAT TO KNOW WHEN REPAIRING PLASTIC ANYWHERE ON A VEHICLE

When application instructions are carefully followed, plastic repair products can produce a Class-A finish on all automotive plastics. 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. Contributor Douglas Craig covers everything you need to know when making plastic repairs.

ABRN.com/plasticfix

CALIFORNIA'S CAR CULTURE STEERS ROUTE TO CAREER IN HIGH-END BODY REPAIRS

Measuring 16,000 sq. ft. with 14 bays and 16 employees, the Santa Ana facility of European Motor Car Works annually grosses \$4.5 million. The shop, owned by Kye Yeung, does no advertising and currently has a two-month waiting list. Read more to find out why.

ABRN.com/europeanmotor

YOUR CUSTOMERS USE AND TRUST ONLINE REVIEWS

Repair shops should consider a marketing strategy for online reviews because consumers use and trust them. Contributor Frank Terlep presents research demonstrating how reviews can lead to more online sales leads, referrals, phone calls and better customer engagement.

ABRN.com/getonline

TRAINING EVENTS

MAY 14

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

MAY 16

Color Adjustment & Blending;
Martin Senour
Chicago, Illinois

MAY 17

Color Adjustment and Blending;
Sherwin-Williams Automotive Finishes
Atlanta, Georgia

MAY 23-25

IBIS Global Summit 2016
Barcelona, Spain

JUNE 21-22

Tri-Coat & Specialty Finishes;
PPG
Toronto, Canada

AUGUST 9-13

2016 NACE/CARS Expo;
Anaheim Convention Center
Anaheim, California

OCTOBER 15

Automechanika Chicago — LIVE Training Event;
Fox Valley Technical College
Appleton, Wisconsin

NOVEMBER 19

Automechanika Chicago —LIVE Training Event;
Joliet Junior College
Joliet, Illinois

Connecting current technicians to connected vehicles

INNOVATIVE COLLEGE CENTERS PREPARE TECHS TO MASTER VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY

TSCHANEN BRANDYBERRY //

Special Projects Editor

Conconnected vehicles are becoming more commonplace, as current model year vehicles roll off the line with smart braking and lane departure technology already in place. Technicians around

Ann Arbor, Mich., are getting a first-hand education on how the new technology works, and problem solving the issues on these vehicles and beyond.

Students, faculty and researchers at Washtenaw Community College (WCC) in Ann Arbor conduct their studies, lessons and hands-on experiences at the college's Advanced Transportation Cen-

ter. WCC also partners with the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) and the Mcity collaborative to take these experiences to the street. Mcity is the life-like urban setting and testing ground for connected vehicles and corresponding infrastructure, a part in which WCC plays a large role. Al

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Tolecut The Most Effective Touch-Up System Available !

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>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 49

Lecz, director of the Advanced Transportation Center, says the center is defining the roles of both transportation workers and automotive professionals, outlining core competencies from installation through maintenance in the infrastructure and on the vehicle.

“We forecast that there will be a lot of public demand for aftermarket devices on older vehicles that would be getting some of the new OE equipment installed. People want the warning and safety messages in an aftermarket installation,” Lecz says. “Our automotive program is in the heart of that, teaching technicians how to install and how to make them work properly. Our faculty are working to up-skill and integrate those new skills into our current programs.”

Students enrolled in these advanced transportation courses and similarly in computer programming courses are immersed in the technology both in today’s and future vehicles as well as what goes into urban infrastructure. The Advanced Transportation Center at WCC consists of three areas: Intelligent Transportation Systems focused on safety, Advanced Manufacturing focused on what the vehicle is made of and how it’s built and Automotive Transportation Servicing fo-



WASHTENAW COMMUNITY COLLEGE works with others in the area on connected vehicle technology, such as stopping for objects or people in the road.

ocusing on repair and maintenance. It combines expertise from WCC and the University of Michigan to provide a deep understanding of current technology and where the possibilities could lead.

“Key WCC faculty and program managers have been working with UMTRI and Mcity for some time now,” Lecz said. “UMTRI leadership have keenly understood that implementation of Intelligence Transportation Systems technologies require not only transportation systems engineers, but also skilled technicians to install, maintain, diagnose and repair these systems. This common understanding of the roles of engineers and technicians in this field has been a big part of fostering the partnering relationship.”

The Mcity test facility comprises 32 acres and simulates a plethora of situations vehicles encounter in urban and suburban environments. The life-like R&D facility features nearly five lanes of roads with intersections, traffic signs and signals, sidewalks, benches, simulated buildings, streetlights and obstacles such as construction barriers.

Learning, research and education occur at multiple locations between WCC, the University of Michigan, UMTRI and more. At WCC itself, technician students are able to learn and work on current model year vehicles equipped with the technology. This intra-school partnership also allows students to take additional courses that will benefit them later.

“Mcity is testing this in the highest areas of development to really understand road conditions, buildings,



WASHTENAW COMMUNITY COLLEGE experts work with Mcity, a 32-acre life-like urban setting and testing ground for connected vehicles and corresponding infrastructure.

proximity of curbs and roads, traffic signals, communication of the status of those things to the vehicle so the vehicle is informing the driver of what is coming up next. This data information is allowing Mcity, UMTRI and our programming people to understand how programming will occur in those vehicle systems,” says Lecz.

The current automotive program will begin integrating key connected vehicle technologies as appropriate to provide students with an understanding of the inter-relationships between the many subsystems in the vehicle.

“Our Automotive Service Technologies faculty have been identifying new technician skills emerging in the field, and holding Automotive Industry Advisory meetings with dealerships and vehicle manufacturers to learn of their service workplace skill needs. In addition, on the infrastructure side of the system, the Workforce Development area has been defining the skills and competencies required to meet emerging Intelligent Transportation Worker occupational requirements. All of this is still work in-process,” Lecz notes. “At the appropriate time, training will be created and released to up-skill technicians in the field.”

>> CONTINUES ON PAGE 51

PPG Refinish continues its commitment to training

MORE THAN 16,600 STUDENTS TRAINED IN 2015

PPG Automotive Refinish continues to intensify its dedication to professional training in the automotive refinish industry. While over 16,600 students participated in PPG's product, distributor and MVP training courses in 2015 — more than those trained by any other automotive paint company — PPG foresees an ongoing need to keep its customers and business partners up to date in all matters concerning collision refinish and commercial coatings. To address the challenge, the company will offer an expanded array of classes throughout 2016, with subjects ranging from basic and advanced product line training to custom painting techniques, business management, shop operations and customer service.

"PPG's commitment to training is the strongest in the industry," said Randy Cremeans, PPG director of training. "We understand that training is a continuous process; it's never complete, especially with the ongoing changes we see in this

industry. And it's absolutely critical to our customers' success. Everyone associated with a PPG collision center or distributorship has access to our training; that training ensures we all stay at the forefront of our industry."

Courses will be available in 16 state-of-the-art PPG Business Development Centers in the United States and Canada. Specific locations are being upgraded with new equipment and remodeled to accommodate the increased demand. PPG trainers will also travel to numerous vocational schools, PPG distributors and other PPG-affiliated locations across North America.

"The refinish industry is ever-changing — and changing faster than ever," added Cremeans. "Our classes have to reflect that. Technicians need to know how to work with the latest finishes; managers need to know the latest productivity processes and techniques. There's also increased interest in custom and restoration work, and we're covering that as well. Training is a large part

of our investment in our customers; it's an investment we're happy to make."

PPG intends to increase training opportunities with more courses at more locations. Classes are offered in:

- Collision refinish — new products, color theory and application of new three- and four-stage finishes, coating systems certification and paint shop productivity training;
- Commercial coatings — fleet refinishing and repair, protective and marine coatings, commercial truck estimating and commercial performance coatings;
- Distributor operations;
- MVP Green Belt and business training;
- Custom painting, restoration, air-brushing and pinstriping.

Class schedules will continue to be announced throughout the year.

For more information about PPG Automotive Refinish training classes, schedules, locations and course descriptions, call (800) 647-6050 or visit www.ppgrefinish.com. 

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 50

Local businesses recognize the potential these students offer their businesses and the automotive industry as a whole, with many dealership and shops offering professional services and time to advisory committees at WCC.

"The benefits for area shop owners and technicians include the ability to provide the proper diagnosis and repair to assure a satisfied customer," said Mike Duff, Professional Faculty Member, Automotive Service Technologies. "The

program will also assure that the ongoing personnel training and specialized equipment necessary to diagnose highly technical and ever-evolving vehicles is on a continuum, not a one-time training. The profitability of trained technicians, working on the proper equipment, equates to higher profit margins for shop owners."

WCC's Advanced Transportation Center and Mcity are providing the technicians the leading education on these new systems, but in the end playing a vital role in the future of transportation.

Learning goes beyond the research and will have long-lasting results in society, the service bays but on the road.

"Messages sent to the vehicle might tell it to maintain its speed to get through the light on green. It's a waste to society to sit at a light and idle," he notes. "That's part of the equation and system. These intelligent systems are all recognizing how this interplay is going to work."

And these students and faculty all are on the leading edge of this new wave of vehicles, technology and service. 



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

THREE PERSPECTIVES ON BUMPER FASCIA SLOT TAB REPAIRS

OVERCOME REPAIR CHALLENGES WITH TIPS FROM THREE EXPERTS

BY SHAWN COLLINS // Contributing Editor

As a technical service engineer with 3M, I receive many inquiries in regards to repairing the “slot tabs” (FIG 1) that snap into a bracket to secure the bumper to the vehicle. These thin tabs can be challenging for technicians for several reasons, some of which are:

- Typically there is very little plastic to work with.
- The plastic can be very thin and flimsy.
- The entire tab may be broken away and missing.
- The tab must fit into a bracket and may need to be able to be snapped in and removed without breaking.
- Technician may not have extensive experience with repairs of this complexity. Plastic repairs require orderly, methodical steps, and it is vital that the technician follow the steps carefully and be familiar with the adhesive directions for use. Visit www.3mcollision.com for a standard operating procedure for

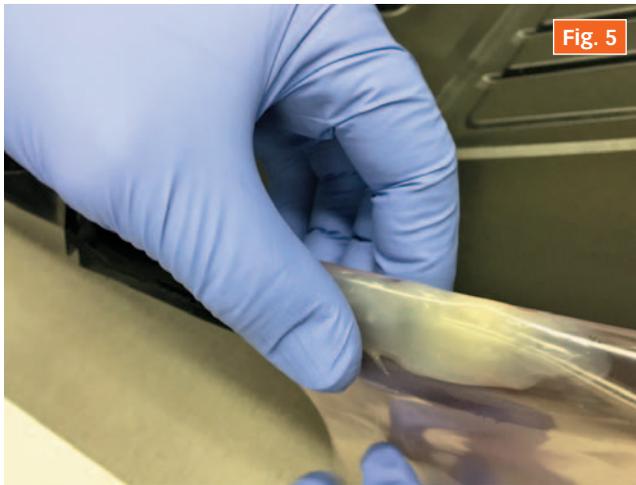


Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

plastic tab repair, which can be found under the Libraries tab. A video can be viewed at 3mcollision.com/how-to/bumper-repair.

Step 1: Cleaning

In order to get optimal adhesion with plastic repair adhesives, it is vital to apply adhesives to clean plastic. Begin by washing the surface with soap and water to remove water soluble contaminants. Follow the soap and water wash with an appropriate VOC-compliant product for removal of surface contaminants. It's always good practice to wash the entire bumper and inspect for hidden damage such as spider cracks, missing tabs or paint defects.

Step 2: Substrate preparation

Initially, it must be determined whether to repair or rebuild the remaining tab material or remove it and create an entirely new tab. If the existing tab is damaged but in sound condition, it may be repairable; the following steps can be applied either way. As with any repair process, preparation is the key to a successful repair. Grind the area surrounding the missing tab with a grade 80 File Belt or Roloc® Disc, concentrating on tapering the edges to a paper thin, knife edge. This will allow adequate surface-area for a good bond and also allow the tab to be ground back to its original thickness without compromising strength. Adhe-

sives will not bond well to melted plastic from grinding, so for optimal surface adhesion, sand the abraded plastic with a small D.A. sander and a grade 80 abrasive to create a rough surface. Drill several 1/8" holes in the tapered area near the edge of the plastic where the tab will be attached (FIG 2). This will provide extra strength and perform like an adhesive rivet, allowing the adhesive to bond to itself through the hole, making it virtually impossible to pull the tab off without first breaking the plastic. Blow off the repair area (do not use liquid or solvent cleaners on bare plastic) then spray with 3M™ Polyolefin Adhesion Promoter #05907 and allow it to flash for 10 minutes.

Step 3: Apply adhesive

Prepare all materials to apply adhesive. The adhesive has a very fast reaction time and will begin to solidify in 20 seconds. Cut a generous strip of 3M Plastic Contouring Sheet #04903 (FIG 3) to be used to form the shape of the tab and release from the adhesive when cured. Drawing the shape of the tab with a marker on the

contouring plastic or tracing the shape of an identical tab from the opposite side of the bumper will help when shaping in subsequent steps because the marker image will transfer to the adhesive (FIG 4). Apply the adhesive to the plastic part and the contouring plastic and fold the plastic over, applying enough pressure to achieve the desired thickness (FIG 5). It is helpful to use two plastic spreaders to lightly squeeze the adhesive to the desired thickness before it cures. Allow the adhesive to cure for a minute or two and remove the plastic film.

Step 4: Shape the tab

Shape the tab with a grade 80 File Belt or Roloc Disc, taking care not to over-grind (FIG 6). A drill bit or small Dremel® bit works well to make the slot or hole in

>> CONTINUES ON PAGE 55

SIMPLE, FAST SLOT TAB REPAIRS WITH ADHESIVES

DOUGLAS CRAIG // Contributing Editor



Slot tab repairs on bumpers can be done quickly and effectively with LORD Fusor 132/140/142/152 Plastic Repair Systems. As with any repair, the keys to a successful result are cleanliness and attention to detail, and carefully following the standard operating procedures (SOPs).

When using LORD Fusor adhesives for slot tab repair, there is no need to identify the plastic or substrate. If the proper repair procedures are followed, the adhesives will adhere extremely well to materials commonly used in the manufacture of automobile bumper components and trim. Adhesives also offer the advantages of being exceptionally quick and easy to work with, and offer robust performance when the preparatory steps are followed.

Slot tab repairs are very simple, structural repairs to a fascia or other part of a vehicle. Repairs can be made to torn-off mountings, missing tabs, fascia tears or headlight tabs. Anytime there is a tear or missing piece of plastic, it is considered to be a structural repair.

There are two general steps to rebuilding any type of tab: First,

rebuild the broken part; second, final “dressing” (making the part look as good as the original). To make a slot tab repair you will need: LORD Fusor 703 Plastic & Rubber Cleaner, LORD Fusor 602EZ Plastic Surface Modifier, LORD 700 Fusor Bumper Reinforcing Mesh and LORD Fusor Plastic Repair Adhesives (132/140/142/152).

When starting a tab repair procedure, remember — you always want to work with clean. Remove the broken component from the vehicle and thoroughly wash it. A clean part simplifies the repair and finishing process. Clean the area to be repaired with the plastic and rubber cleaner. Tape off any exposed substrate to eliminate the possibility of the plastic soaking up any of the cleaner.

The next step involves tapering the fascia for attachment of the structural repair. This can be done by grinding or sanding the area to eliminate any hard edges. Apply the surface modifier and let it dry for 10 to 15 minutes.

After applying the surface modifier, you can begin to create a new slot tab by using a combination of the mesh and adhesive, allowing 10 to 15 minutes for cure time. Once the adhesive has cured, the new part can be sanded or shaped to its original design. Holes or slots can be added with a die grinder, drill bits or files. Fusor 140, a clear adhesive, allows for precise drilling/location of a new slot or tab.



The slot tab repair is then complete except for final finishing. If the slot tab is on an exposed surface, it will have to be repainted to match the vehicle. If the repair is hidden — an invisible repair — no further finishing is required.

Since slot tabs are usually small parts (about 2 in. long x 1/2 in. to 3/4 in. wide), a fast-curing adhesive is ideal for making repairs. The LORD Fusor 132 plastic repair adhesive cures very quickly, offering approximately 10 minutes between steps, rather than having to wait an hour or more for an adhesive to cure. You can shape, modify and complete a repair in a short amount of time.



DOUGLAS CRAIG is the Technical Application Engineer & Collision Industry Liaison, Structural Adhesives Tech Service, with LORD Corporation. douglas_craig@lord.com



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>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53

the tab. The marker tracing transferred from the plastic film to the adhesive can be used as a guide to make the correct shape. If the marker is not visible, a template can be made with masking tape, using an identical, undamaged tab. If the tab is in an area where an invisible cosmetic appearance is required, re-apply 3M Polyolefin Adhesion Promoter, fol-

lowed by a skim coat of 3M EZ Sand Multi-Purpose Repair Material, and finish-sand when cured.

This procedure will produce an extremely durable tab that will duplicate OEM appearance and strength. 



SHAWN COLLINS is the 3M Senior Technical Service Engineer. Contact him at smcollins2@mmm.com.

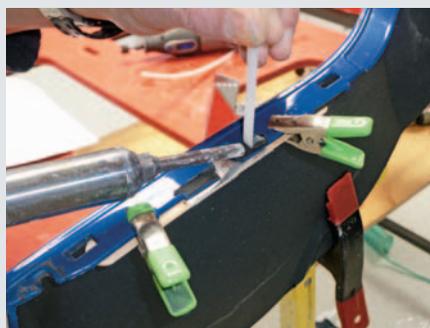
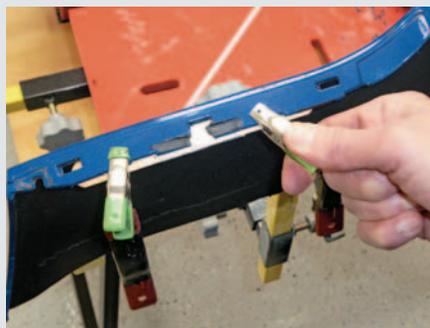
REPAIRING SLOT WITH A NITROGEN WELDER

SCOTT BIXLER // Contributing Editor

 Anyone who does crash repair will recognize a slot tab when they see it. They will also be familiar with how easy it makes installing a bumper when the tab is in good condition and how difficult they are to repair when they are broken. Some shops will discard a bumper if one of these tabs is broken simply because they consider it too difficult to repair effectively. With a Polyvance 6059-C Nitrogen Welding System, slot tab repairs are simple and fast, and the results are extremely strong.

The first step with any plastic repair is to clean the part with 1000-A Super Clean Plastic Cleaner or 1001-4 EcoClean plastic cleaner. Working with plastic is similar to working with metal — prep is a very important step to help keep contaminants from degrading the strength of the weld.

Once the repair area has been cleaned, bevel the edge where you plan to apply the filler rod. A Dremel tool with a drum sander works well for this, as does a die grinder with round burr. The taper should be gradual so there is not an abrupt transition between the filler rod and the base



>> CONTINUES ON PAGE 56



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material. If the flange edge of the tab is wide as in the pictures, a wide groove needs to be cut to accommodate the width of wider welding rod. The rod used is Polyvance part number R02-04-03-NT; it's 3/8" wide by 1/6" thick. If the flange side of the tab is very narrow, a 1/8" diameter round rod (R02-01-03-NT) should be used and a v-shaped groove should bridge the gap.

In order to support the melted plastic and give some structure under the repair to absorb the downward force of welding, a piece of wood or metal should be clamped under the area to be welded. For most repairs like this, a paint paddle or tongue depressor coated with foil tape works great.

The welding process is fairly straight forward. On your nitrogen welder, set the airflow to about 12 liters per minute and use a temperature setting that will melt the surface of the plas-

tic when heat is applied for approximately two to three seconds. The setting on the 6057 through 6059 welders is almost to the one o'clock position, but each welder is slightly different, so some adjustment may be needed.

Begin welding where the plastic is the thickest and work your way down the slope, across the gap and up the other slope. Be sure to melt the base material and the welding rod equally as you push them together. When bridging the gap, be sure to melt the rod as though you are welding it to the paint paddle.

To match the thickness of the repair to the flange thickness, a hand seamer should be used. Go back over the

welded area with the welder until the filler rod is very glossy and very soft over the length and thickness of the entire weld. While the plastic is melted, use the hand seamer to squeeze the repair to the thickness of the rest of the flange. As long as you didn't melt too far out, the unmelted part of the flange will act as a stop and the result will be a repair that is the exact same thickness as the original part.

Sometimes a second pass with the welder will be needed to build up more material to reach the original thickness. If this is the case, just add filler rod where it's needed and repeat the hand seamer treatment.

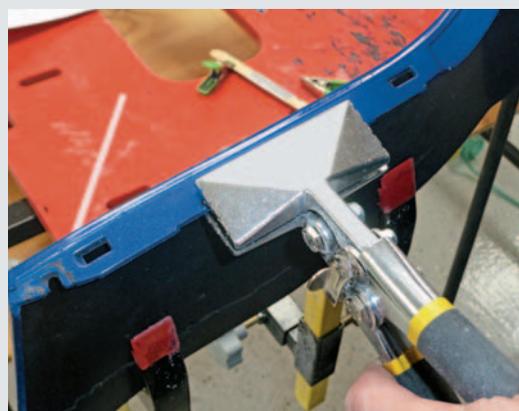


The final step of the process is to trim away excess material on the outside edge and inside the hole. A Die grinder or Dremel tool with a straight bit makes quick work of the inside hole and a Roloc disk is perfect for trimming the outside. After trimming away the excess material, the area can be primed and painted using normal bumper refinishing techniques. If the torn tab was the only problem with the bumper, it can simply be re-installed on the car because slot tabs are typically hidden from view when installed on the car.

For hands-on training for the nitrogen plastic welder, consider taking Polyvance's I-CAR® Industry Training Alliance® course. Call 800-633-3047 or go to polyvance.com/plastic-repair-training for more information.



SCOTT BIXLER is the Product Development Manager for Polyvance. Contact him at scott@urethanesupply.com.



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Get your epoxy primer knowledge up to speed

Embrace benefits of Epoxy, DTM Primers and work them into your repair process

Epoxy and Direct-To-Metal Primers (DTMs) can help to prevent corrosion and promote bonding of materials. They are the closest match in the aftermarket to the Electrophoretic-Deposition Primer — or E-coat — that is applied during Toyota's manufacturing process. So let's tackle when they should be used and uncomplicated ways to apply them.

When to use Epoxy, DTM Primers

The easy answer is every time you plan on applying paint coatings or body filler to bare metal. However, it isn't always that clear cut. Exposed metal is susceptible to rust over time. Epoxy and DTM primers help prevent this by sealing the metal and protecting it from corrosive elements.

When we repair frames and unibody structures on pulling racks, clamping witness marks and repair areas can expose bare metal. These need to be primed and coated to match the surrounding area. Epoxy and DTM primers ensure a solid base for corrosion protection and that your topcoats will adhere as well.

During welding operations, the heat from GMAW/MIG (Gas Metal Arc Welding/Metal Inert Gas) welding will burn and vaporize the zinc-rich weld-through primer at the weld location. These areas should be properly cleaned and coated with Epoxy or DTM primer to provide corrosion resistance to heat-affected metal.

On exposed metal that will not be welded, Epoxy and DTM primers provide a higher level of corrosion protection and adhesion than weld-through primers. Zinc-rich primer coatings will protect against corrosion between Squeeze-Type Resistant Spot Welding (STRSW) welded flanges, but they can also compromise adhesion of subsequent adhesive, seam sealer and paint coatings if applied unnecessarily.

Replacing bonded glass may also require priming. For example, when bonding a back glass because a quarter panel has been replaced, bare metal will be exposed at the welded bond flange. Prepare the bond flange surface properly and under no condition should you apply body filler or refinish the bonding

surfaces. Use an Epoxy or DTM primer on these surfaces to ensure proper adhesion of the glass bonding material.

For common body filler repairs, it is recommended to apply epoxy primer to the metal first, and then apply the body filler. Toyota body panels have zinc coatings that get damaged and removed during metal work. These zinc-rich coatings protect against corrosion, but tend to resist paint adhesion. It is also important to be familiar with your body filler's chemicals. Most filler hardeners have a high peroxide (oxygen generator) content that

can react with environmental factors and cause rust to develop in minute voids under the filler. Without an epoxy primer foundation, it is possible for the metal to be vulnerable to corrosion.

Proper application

Epoxy and DTM primer is simple to use and apply. First, check the manufacturer's Technical Data Sheet (TDS), which will give you the proper safety information, mix ratios and expected drying times. Once it is mixed, you can brush or roll it on to large surfaces or use a dauber or acid brush to apply it to small areas and flanges. You could use a spray gun, but that tends to make the process more complicated. There are some two-component aerosol-can versions on the market, but airborne overspray and masking can complicate the use of these products as well.

The more you embrace the fact that Epoxy and DTM primers can bolster your corrosion prevention and adhesion efforts, the fewer excuses you will find to not make them part of your repair procedures.

Toyota's Collision Repair Information Bulletin #186, titled "Corrosion Prevention for Collision Repair" provides more in-depth information about the use of Epoxy and DTM Primers. 

James Meyer, with the Toyota Collision Repair Trainers, contributed this column.

EPOXY AND DTM PRIMERS ENSURE A SOLID BASE FOR CORROSION PROTECTION AND THAT YOUR TOPCOATS WILL ADHERE AS WELL.

TOYOTA COLLISION REPAIR TRAINERS are dedicated to enhancing the ability of collision technicians to productively and efficiently repair Toyota, Lexus and Scion vehicles. Contact them at info@collisionprosmagazine.com





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BRING IN QUICK CASH

TOP OFF A REPAIR OR ATTRACT NEW CUSTOMERS WITH EXPRESS WORK

BY TIM SRAMCIK // Contributing Editor

In an industry where success is increasingly gauged on growth in locations, adding express services may seem counterintuitive. Why spend time on a modest revenue stream when your efforts could be better spent bringing in high-dollar repairs or a greater stream of work? That's the conventional wisdom, anyhow.

Such thinking is way too general and ignores some wider truths in collision repair. Not every shop wants or needs to be

an MSO to survive. Some of those shops that do can grow big, at some point, using small steps. Perhaps most importantly, there is a market for this work, as vehicle owners search for affordable options to bring fresh life to cars and trucks with minor battle scars that can be removed conveniently in a day or less. Express services are a great way to introduce your shop to a new customer pool or can be upsold during a more intensive repair to fully restore a vehicle.

WHEN THE TEXTURE FILLERS CURE, sand with 600 grit to remove loose texture and even out the appearance. Use the white nibs as a guide coat to check for evenness of sanding.

In the past, some shops experimented with express repair lanes with varying degrees of success. That shouldn't scare off your shop from considering this work. Manufacturers have brought a number of products, procedures and tools to market specifically for express work. Consider these repairs from Polyvance and 3M as quick, money-making complements to the services your hard-work business already is providing.

Photos: Polyvance

Profit bump

Bumper covers have always been prime candidates for express repairs since they absorb so much damage, much of it relative minor cosmetic issues that can be remedied without a significant investment in time. Still, given the availability of aftermarket replacements, many shops and insurers tend to be more willing than ever to dispense with an old part and install a new one — even if the cost of doing so is greater than performing a repair.

That may not be a big issue if the repair is part of an insurance claim, but when customers are paying out of their own pocket, a more affordable express job is just the ticket. Products that allow shops to repair textured bumpers and reduce time on other work add to these attractive savings.

Textured bumper repair

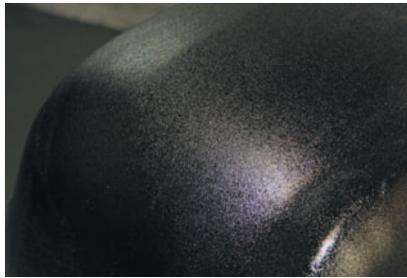
Step 1. Thoroughly clean the bumper first using a prep soap, scuff pad and water. Wash and rinse the bumper inside and out.

Step 2. After the bumper dries, clean it once more using a plastic cleaner. Spray on a heavy wet coat in a small area and let it sit for a few seconds to dissolve any contamination. Wipe in one direction with a clean paper towel, exposing a clean surface with every wipe. Repeat over the entire bumper.

Step 3. Remove any dents by heating the bumper with a heat gun. Heat from one side only until the plastic is too hot to touch on the other side. This ensures that the plastic is heated all the way through. Reshape the plastic to remove dents and stretched areas.

Step 4. If necessary, fill in any low areas with epoxy filler. First sand the area with a DA and 180 grit paper. Apply a filler prep adhesion promoter. Prepare the epoxy on a mixing board and apply. When the epoxy cures, sand with 180 grit. (Do NOT use 80 grit on this soft TPO plastic, since doing so leaves swirl marks.)

Step 5. Use 180 grit to sand down any



EXPRESS REPAIRS allow shops to bring even textured bumpers like this back to life quickly.

marred areas. When all the rough areas are smooth, sand again with 320 grit. Next, quickly sand the entire bumper with 320 grit. Be careful not to sand off all of the texture. Just remove the tops to create a more uniform appearance.

Step 6. Using compressed air, blow the bumper dust free. Spray a medium wet coat of plastic adhesion promoter over the entire bumper. Allow to dry.

Step 7. Apply the texture material (in this case, Microtex waterborne texture material). First catalyze the material 5 percent by weight.

Step 8. Using a 1.3 mm basecoat gun, apply a medium wet coat of Microtex to the bumper. After the first coat flashes completely, apply a full second medium wet coat.

Step 9. Once the Microtex has dried completely, sand with 600 grit to remove loose texture and even out the appearance. Use the white nibs as a guide coat to check for evenness of sanding.

Step 10. To finish the bumper, apply a bumper and cladding coat paint to match the original color. You should be able to match the original unfaded bumper color using the color chip chart on the back of the bumper. This may take some guesswork. Choose the color that matches most closely.

Step 11. Mix the color according to the formula. Using a 1.3 mm basecoat gun, apply two medium wet coats.

Flexible patch

Non-structural bumper repairs arguably would be far more popular if not for one thing — the curved shape of the bumper cover. Manufacturers have answered this problem with flexible patches that allow shops to recreate the curve and therefore salvage the cover. Refer to the following steps to use a flexible patch.

Step 1. Clean the front and back of the repair area with soap and water, followed by a VOC-compliant surface cleaner.

Step 2. Be especially thorough on the back and remove any overspray from



BEGIN REPAIRS BY THOROUGHLY CLEANING the repair areas with soap and water before applying a low-VOC cleaning agent.



FOR TEXTURED BUMPER REPAIRS,

apply several layers of texture fillers like Microtex to reproduce the bumper's original look.

the repair area. For stubborn areas, use a scuffing pad.

Step 3. Grind the front of the repair using a 3-in. grade 60 disc. Grind at a low speed to create a "Dish Out" area that is 3 in. wide and that tapers to the bottom of the damage.

Step 4. Sand the "Dish Out" area using an abrasive disc on a DA sander, removing any melted plastic. Keep the abrasive scratches within the "Dish Out" area. Using P180 abrasive, feather edge 2–4 in. from the "Dish Out" area.

Step 5. Apply the reinforcement patch. On the back side of the repair area, apply the flexible patch adhesion promoter. Firmly apply the flexible reinforcement patch so that it overlaps the damaged area by 1-1/2 in. on all sides of the repair.

Step 6. Apply adhesion promoter to the front side of the repair and allow to dry for 5 minutes. Mix and apply flexible filler with a "tight coat" followed by additional coats to fill in all low areas. Be certain to follow the curing instructions, which typically recommend 15 minutes at 75 degrees F.

Step 7. DA sand the flexible filler material with an abrasive disc. Block sand the repair area with an abrasive sheet.

Step 8. Using a DA sander with an abrasive disc, sand the repair and surrounding area. Blow off the area and inspect for quality. Repeat Step 7 and this step as necessary to create the best finish.

Note: The bumper is now ready to be

painted. Refer to your paint company's recommended paint adhesion promoter to avoid any compatibility issues.

Plastic tab repair

At one time, broken tabs practically guaranteed a bumper cover would need replaced. This is the case no longer as new films and adhesives can rebuild tabs. Note these repair steps and check out "Three perspectives on bumper fascia slot tab repairs," page 52.

Step 1. Clean the repair area with soap and water. Next apply a VOC-compliant surface cleaner.

Step 2. Perform initial prep sand. Grind the broken tab using a 3-in. 60 grit disc to create a tapered edge. Using a DA sander, sand the repair area with a 3-in. abrasive disc to remove any melted plastic.

Step 3. Prepare the tab. Drill 1/8 in. pinning holes in the damaged area, 1/4 in. from the tapered edge and 1/4 in. apart. Apply aerosol adhesion promoter. Wait 5–10 minutes for the product to dry.

Step 4. Apply the repair material. Cut the contour film three times the length of the tab. Mix then apply the adhesive to the contour sheet and apply to the damaged tab. Shape the contour sheet as you work. Allow 5–10 minutes to cure. Remove the contour film.

Step 5. Shape the damaged tab. Rough shape the repaired tab area with a 3-in. 60 grit disc. Using a DA sander, sand the repair area with a 3-in. abrasive disc to restore original tab dimensions. Re-drill mounting holes as necessary.

Step 6. Use a DA sander to finish sand the repair area and the surrounding area with a 3-in. abrasive disc. Use compressed air to blow off the repair area and inspect for quality.

Non-structural steel repair

The following steps provide directions to repair small damage areas in non-structural steel. Note that the steel can be repaired similarly to bumper covers.

Step 1. Clean the repair area with

soap and water. Once again, follow up by cleaning with a VOC-compliant surface cleaner.

Step 2. Perform an initial prep sanding using a DA and 3-in. disc. Be careful to not sand through the clearcoat. Use clean, dry air to blow off the area and re-clean with a surface cleaner.

Step 3. Mix and apply polyester glaze per manufacturer's recommendation. Recommended cure typically is 15–20 minutes at 75 degrees F.

Step 4. Apply a dry guide coat over cured glaze. Re-apply as necessary during sanding process.

Step 5. Using an abrasive disc/sheet, hand block or DA the sand glaze to completely remove the dry guide coat.

Step 6. Use the clean, dry air again to blow off the repair area. Re-apply the dry guide coat. Finish sanding the repair area and the surrounding area using an abrasive disc. Inspect the repair for quality. Repeat the process if necessary.

Final note: Pricing

How much should you charge for express services? This area can be a bit tricky since you want to make these services attractive, but they also need to be as profitable as possible. Start by investigating prices in your market. Keep in mind the fact of the reduced labor times and material costs that are part of express repairs. From there, work in a non-insurance labor time you believe is fair.

Ultimately, you'll need some price structure that appeals to customers. Revenue numbers might not seem appealing to your business at first. The key here is the bigger repair picture that can include more customers and the possibility that you might add as much as several hundred dollars per repair. 📌



TIM SRANCIK has written for *ABRN* and sister publications *Motor Age* and *Aftermarket Business World* for more than a decade.
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WORK ON YOUR BUSINESS, NOT IN IT!

For more than three decades, the AkzoNobel Acoat Selected program has been the solution to help grow your business and improve your company's day-to-day operations. Everything Acoat Selected does is about making sure their members thrive in the future, not just survive. The result? Business sustainability. Instructional classes and consulting engagements are facilitated by world-class Services Consultants throughout North America in the areas of Process Improvement, Marketing, Sales, Talent Development and Finance.

Process Improvement

Repairing crashed vehicles is a long series of sometimes complex steps. The efficiency by which a shop conducts each process step is the key to profitability. The number of process steps, the organization of the steps, the standardization of steps, and the interrelationships between steps all play a part in how efficient the overall body shop machine operates.

AkzoNobel is at the forefront of process improvement with our Process Centered Environment (PCE) program. Incorporating tried and true concepts from our own Programmed System Technique (PST) along with collision repair applicable components of Lean, Theory of Constraints, and Six Sigma, PCE delivers profound process improvement throughout the entire value chain.

From documented processes, to re-engineering the flow of a collision repair facility with our Facility Layout & Design services, AkzoNobel helps Acoat Selected members remove waste from their processes to improve productivity, cycle-time, customer satisfaction, and profitability.

Marketing

When you mention marketing, many collision repair owners and managers immediately think of advertising. While advertising is a component, marketing is so much more. Marketing generates the strategy that underlies sales techniques, business communication, and business developments. It is an integrated process through which companies build strong customer relationships and create value for their customers and for themselves.

Sales

Turning prospects into customers and then finally into raving fans does not automatically happen just because their car was fixed properly in a timely manner. With a variety of training classes and onsite consulting packages, we help our members turn all their employees into customer-focused selling machines.

Talent Development

Clearly, people are the most valuable asset of any business. Without those highly trained, motivated, self-directing employees; no amount of management effort will produce a successful business. From employee engagement to coaching techniques, Acoat Selected members learn how to develop their people and manage them effectively.

Financial Services

Acoat Selected understands the importance of measuring the performance of your business in order to properly manage it. Acoat Selected members have access to a variety of tools, training and consulting



packages to help them benchmark their financial performance and identify opportunities for improvement.

In addition to the numerous classes held throughout the year, Acoat Selected members in North America meet biannually for Performance Group meetings. During these 3-day events, like-minded body shop owners share successes, find solutions to problems, and make new relationships. The wealth of knowledge and experience presented at these meetings is nothing short of awe inspiring.

Acoat Selected business services are available to all AkzoNobel Sikkens customers. To learn more about the valuable options available, visit <http://www.acoatna.com/>. To register for an Acoat Selected Business Services class, visit www.akzonobeltraining.com.

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Chief University updates hands-on training classes

Training is the key to collision repair success, especially with material changes and new OEM recommended repair procedures being introduced at an unprecedented rate. To stay current, Chief University, the training arm of leading collision repair equipment manufacturer Chief, has devoted significant time and resources to improve and update its curriculum for 2016.

Chief University updates continue to reflect the company's unique, interactive "hands-on" training approach, with many of the classes involving the repair of an actual collision-damaged vehicle. Students are actively involved in visually inspecting and measuring the vehicle, putting together a damage analysis or blueprint, and developing and then executing the repair plan.

Chief University's newest course, Aluminum Damage Analysis and Repair Technology, covers aluminum forming methods and metal characteristics, as well as damage analysis, repair decisions and techniques for working with aluminum. Chief University's popular Design Based Repair course features instruction on the proper metal identification and subsequent repair methods required due to the advanced high-strength steels and structural aluminum introduced by the manufacturers. Both courses have been updated to cover the most current 2016 and 2017 advanced metals and construction methods used by OEMs, so trainees are prepared for any vehicle that may come to their shops in the next couple years.

Significant upgrades have been made to Chief University's Computer-

CHIEF UNIVERSITY SCHEDULE 2016

Training for the Technician

Computerized Measuring Training		
April 26-27	Sandy	UT
May 3-4	Morrisville	NY
May 10-11	Birmingham	AL
June 21-22	Portland	OR
June 28-29	Altoona	PA
July 19-20	St. Louis	MO
July 19-20	Butler	PA
July 26-27	Rosemount	MN
Aug. 2-3	Mountlake Terrac	WA
Aug. 2-3	Pennsauken	NJ
Aug. 16-17	Wheeling	IL
Aug. 30-31	Inkster	MI
Sep. 27-28	Indianapolis	IN
Oct. 11-12	Greenville	SC
Nov. 15-16	Charlottesville	VA

Unitized Body Analysis and Repair Planning		
April 21-22	Calgary	AB
May 5-6	Morrisville	NY
June 30 - July 1	Altoona	PA
Sep. 22-23	Clearwater	FL
Sep. 29-30	Indianapolis	IN
Oct. 27-28	Birmingham	AL
Nov. 8-9	Sandy	UT
Nov. 17-18	Charlottesville	VA

Full Frame Analysis and Repair Planning		
July 28-29	Rosemount	MN
Oct. 13-14	Greenville	SC
Oct. 25-26	Birmingham	AL
Nov. 10-11	Sandy	UT

Training for Appraiser and Estimator

Structural Damage Analysis		
April 12-14	Long Beach	CA
June 14-16	Mesa	AZ
Sep. 20-22	Portland	OR
Oct. 11-13	Chamblee	GA
Oct. 18-20	Nashville	TN
Nov. 15-17	St. Louis	MO
Dec. 6-8	Wichita	KS

Advanced Frame Analysis		
June 14-15	Houston	TX
July 19-20	Arlington	TX
Sep. 13-14	Sacramento	CA
Sep. 27-28	Long Beach	CA
Nov. 29-30	Mesa	AZ

Advanced Steering and Suspension Analysis		
June 16-17	Houston	TX
July 21-22	Arlington	TX
Sep. 15-16	Sacramento	CA
Sep. 29-30	Long Beach	CA
Dec. 1-2	Mesa	AZ

For Technician, Estimator, or Appraiser

Aluminum Damage Analysis and Repair Technology		
April 15	Long Beach	CA
April 28	Sandy	UT
May 19	Ankeny	IA
June 17	Mesa	AZ
July 21	St. Louis	MO
July 21	Butler	PA
Aug 4	Mountlake Terrac	WA
Sep. 15	Morrisville	NY
Sep. 23	Portland	OR
Oct. 14	Chamblee	GA
Oct. 21	Nashville	TN
Dec. 9	Wichita	KS

Design Based Repair		
May 12-13	Birmingham	AL
June 23-24	Portland	OR
Aug. 4-5	Pennsauken	NJ
Aug. 18-19	Wheeling	IL
Sep. 1-2	Inkster	MI
Sep. 13-14	Morrisville	NY



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ized Measuring Training class to make it more user-friendly for technicians. In this class, technicians learn how to properly use Chief's LaserLock laser-mapping and Vector computerized measuring systems to identify structural misalignment and maximize both repair quality and profitability.

Chief training has been certified by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) for compliance with the Continuing Automotive Service Education (CASE) Standards. Most Chief University classes are approved for I-CAR credit hours through the I-CAR Industry Training Alliance program.

Over the last three decades, more than 50,000 collision repair professionals have attended courses offered by Chief University. That number will continue to grow this year, as more than 60 classes have been scheduled at convenient locations across the country.

Many of the Chief University classes scheduled for 2016 are shown here. For a complete schedule and to register, visit www.chiefautomotive.com/Chief-University.

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Free Training for GFS' REVO Speed

Global Finishing Solutions is offering a free 3-day training course with the purchase of a REVO Speed Accelerated Curing System. We will go to your shop and provide a one-on-one training course with your equipment. This training course will cover the revolutionary REVO Repair Process and how to operate the REVO Speed, as well as show you how this process shortens cycle times and provides a better, longer-lasting repair.

REVO Speed Accelerated Curing System

Global Finishing Solutions' REVO Accelerated Curing Systems were developed to meet the demand for faster repairs. Using short wave, electric IR technology, REVO Speed offers the fastest curing time in the industry for both prep and paint processes. It can increase your paint shop throughput by up to 80% and significantly reduces rework. Plus, it easily installs within existing shop footprints.

The REVO Repair Process

The REVO Repair Process is a departure from the standard repair process used in most collision centers and body shops in America. It was developed to shorten the overall repair cycle time, while still providing a quality repair. The REVO Repair Process has been proven to not only decrease cycle time, but also yields a sturdier, longer-lasting repair.

This hands-on training will be heavily focused on training your technicians on the 13-step REVO Repair Process. We will go through each step of the process — from prepping the panels to applying and curing clear coat.

Operating REVO Speed

As part of the REVO Repair Process, we

will show your technicians how to operate the REVO Speed. The PLC controls for the REVO Speed take the guesswork out of the curing process, so you can achieve the same results time after time.

In this in-depth controls training, we will walk you through each cure mode setting from start to finish, including:

- Body Filler
- Etch Primer
- Primer/Surfacers
- Wet-on-Wet Sealer
- Base Coat – Waterborne & Solvent
- Clear Coat

Proper Product Selection & Usage

We will ensure your technicians are using the correct product(s) for each step in the REVO Repair Process. Using the correct products will allow you to achieve a faster, fully cured, more durable repair.

We will also train your technicians on the proper usage of these products, according to the paint manufacturers' recommended procedures and Global Finishing Solutions' guidelines, set by testing. These procedures and guidelines ensure a repeatable process every time.

GFS' Center for Excellence

As part of our commitment to training, GFS is building a new Center for Excellence at our Osseo, Wisconsin headquarters. The 80,000 sq. ft. facility will house a state-of-the-art training and product R&D center with additional space for expansion. Construction will be completed by August 2016.

To make certain that the hands-on training experience accurately reflects



field experience, GFS meticulously designed the facility with full preparation and paint areas to closely mirror a working collision repair facility. State-of-the-art training will be offered in a dual-bay downdraft GFS Ultra XR CTOF paint booth integrated with the REVO Rapid OR2 curing system. Configured for single stall repair, this new equipment combination will allow users to see how REVO Systems significantly reduce cycle time and allow shop technicians to complete each stage of an auto body repair in one spot, without having to move the vehicle.

Additionally, GFS will install an Ultra XR downdraft paint booth integrated with the REVO Speed for hands-on practice. Two Ultra XD paint mix rooms will complete the Training Center floor plan.



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How to safely remove a corroded nut near fuel lines

Have you ever been faced with the problem of removing a rusted, corroded nut in an inaccessible space, near a fuel line? The traditional approach of using an Oxy-Acetylene torch is obviously out of the question as its use in a confined space vastly increases the consequential fire risk - plastics, wiring, trim and fumes around the part to be removed can catch fire, causing potentially costly damage.

Safely remove inaccessible corroded nuts with Invisible Heat®

Good news, help is at hand. The innovative Mini-Ductor® Induction Heating tool uses Invisible Heat® to quickly heat ferrous and some non-ferrous metal, providing a safe and viable alternative to using a torch. Some parts can be also be reused as the Invisible Heat® is localized on the part and not the surrounding area, with less collateral damage.

Bendable coils provide access to hard-to-reach nuts near fuel lines

The Mini-Ductor is supplied with 3 bendable coils, ideal for getting into awkward areas and thin enough to wrap round the nut and heat it in seconds for easy removal. For example, a 19mm nut is heated red hot in 15 seconds. The heat expands the nut and breaks down any corrosion bonds.

Before use - Equipment needed: Heat resistant gloves, overalls, goggles and a respirator mask (if smoke will be produced from heating).

Knowledge required: A well-reviewed proficiency of the tools safety and operating instructions.

Step 1 : Make sure fuel lines are not leaking or creating a vapor.



Step 2: Select the correct Coil. Coils come in various sizes. Bend Coil to the correct shape for ease of use. Warning: Do not use Coils with breaches in the insulation.



Step 3: Tighten preformed Coil.



Step 4: Only heat the nut enough to

expand and loosen. Red hot is too hot!



Step 5: Select correct tools, such as a wrench, to loosen nut. Caution: Remove nut while still hot.



Step 6: The nut is safely removed.

The Mini-Ductor is available in 110V and, portable 12V (MD-500) version, which works off a 12-volt battery pack, or off a car, van or truck battery. It's designed and manufactured by leading US manufacturer Induction Innovations, Inc. the trusted market leader for induction heating tools worldwide.



Orio introduces the Saab Academy

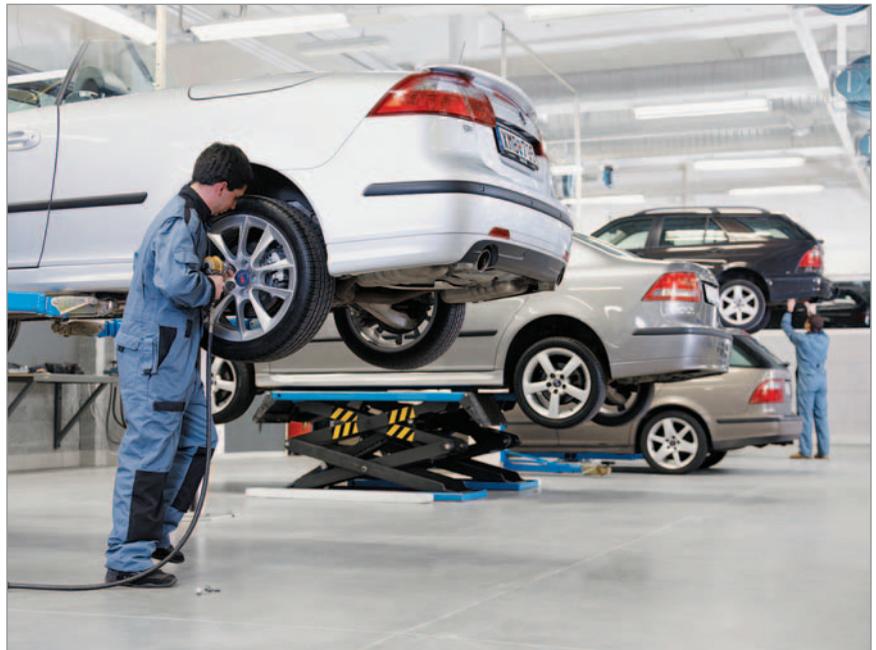
Orio Auto Parts North America is pleased to introduce the Saab Academy. The Saab Academy utilizes our Global Learning Management System that is designed for easy access to Saab specific designed training courses. The Saab Academy features curriculum that is tailor made to each employee's discipline and level of experience.

Saab courses will be delivered online as Web Based Training Courses (WBT). This is to ensure we use the most effective and efficient form of training to maximize learning and minimize the amount of down time.

General product training and specialized technical training is available. The training will include general product knowledge courses for Service and Parts personnel as well as specialized training for Service Technicians.

Our Product Overview training courses we have available are Saab 9-3 & Saab 9-5 < MY2010, Saab 9-5 MY 2010 – and Saab 9-4X. These 3 courses describe the different technical functions in the Saab models and help your technicians (and anyone else) learn the basics of Saab vehicles. These courses concentrate on how the driver can operate the individual functions and are a great resource for anyone seeking to learn more about Saab vehicles.

Orio's most valuable training is our Saab Technical Courses. We have multiple training paths to fit each individual shop's needs, they are Technician, Associate, Qualified and Master. The courses are laid out in such a way as to mimic the technician's development from a brand



new technician to seasoned veterans; everyone will find something to fit their level of experience.

Beginning with the Technician/Associate training path there are eight courses designed to teach the student the basics of Saab vehicles. Starting with the WIS (Workshop Information System) course, there are two separate Tech2/TIS2Web/GDS courses, 2 technical courses specific to the new 2010-11 9-5, one for the 9-4x and 2 key programming courses on the old (1999-09) /new (2010-11) 9-5.

The Qualified path is next with seven separate courses. Beginning with the Body Electrical courses there are two CAN Buss courses, a technical news course, a Convertible top course and a XWD system course.

Our Master level courses provide users with the much desired new 9-5 and 9-4X courses. The master level has

the new 9-5 and 9-4x Technical News and three other courses featuring the new 9-5. They 9-5 courses offered are Diagnostic Tools & Programming Practical Edition, Diagnostic Tools & Programming Web course, Saab 9-5 Technical News MY2010-2011 - Practical Edition.

Our Saab Academy is another example of initiatives we continue to roll out as an independent organization, bringing you learning modules designed specifically for your OSC personnel from Orio Auto Parts North America. We are excited to roll out the Saab Academy and we are confident you will see the value in the training curriculum.



PPG bolsters commitment to training

With a record number of 16,600 painter technicians, distributors and collision repair professionals taking advantage of PPG's product and business development courses last year, the automotive refinish group continues to expand its training programs in order to help meet the challenges of an ever-changing industry.

"Staying on top of industry trends, new products and shifts in technology is essential to staying competitive," said Randy Cremeans, PPG director of training. "So our overriding goal is to ensure PPG training is up to date, convenient and readily available for everyone using PPG refinish products."

To keep up with demand, the company has renovated two key Business Development Centers in its network of 16 locations across North America, and is offering an increased number of training classes in 2016.

Updated training centers

Two state-of-the-art Business Development Centers — PPG's Allison Park, Pa., facility near Pittsburgh, and the Baltimore center — have undergone extensive renovations that feature equipment upgrades and more.

The newly-enlarged 9,000 sq. ft. Allison Park location accommodates students in two classrooms and is equipped with two new GFS downdraft spray booths, an 18' x 30' mixing room and a downdraft prep deck. The Baltimore facility was expanded to over 7,000 sq. ft. and has been upgraded with a new GFS downdraft spray booth and twin 20 hp Kaeser compressors.

In terms of curriculum, Cremeans says the company will offer an expanded array of classes throughout 2016, with subjects ranging from basic and advanced product training to custom painting techniques, business management, shop operations and customer service.



Waterborne conversion training

Responding to the growing number of collision centers seeking to upgrade to PPG's waterborne basecoat technology, Cremeans says the company is enhancing its Convert with Confidence® training program to ensure a smooth transition to waterborne. The comprehensive program provides owners and managers with expert guidance on planning a successful conversion and provides both off-site and on-site training for refinish technicians.

Technician certification training

Given that PPG introduces product innovations for multiple paint brands every year, Cremeans says it's important that technicians attend their recertification course every two years. Certification is a key component of PPG's commitment to keeping painters informed about new products, evolving application procedures and equipment use, as well as environmental, health and safety updates.

New Custom Restoration Class

PPG is also expanding its custom painting courses designed for professional custom builders, hobbyists and vocational technology students. One example is the Custom Restoration Class. The 2-day course covers everything from rec-

ommended processes for stripping substrates to color identification to proper paint application and much more.

Business development training

PPG's popular MVP Business Solutions program offers training and support for the practical application of Lean Six Sigma tailored to collision repair, as well as courses on collision business fundamentals and peer-to-peer conferences. According to Jim Berkey, program director, PPG continues to update the MVP curriculum and the course schedule is being expanded in response to the program's growing popularity with collision center owners and managers.

Summarizing PPG's training initiatives for 2016, Cremeans stated, "Our comprehensive program is PPG's investment in ensuring the success of our customers. It's an investment we're happy to make."



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Pro Spot's Weld Simulator is another tool in our commitment to training. The Weld Simulator is an augmented reality simulator that lets the user practice welding while being evaluated on crucial elements that create a quality weld. The user will learn to assess & control their travel angles, speed, stickout and more without the cost of consumables.

Pro Spot is constantly striving to improve our customer support methods and techniques. Whether that means implementing new and cutting edge technical support web technologies or further improving our already extensive training programs, Pro Spot is always looking for ways to better our customer's experiences.

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Mission Statement: The Valspar Automotive Training Department is dedicated to providing the most comprehensive Valspar paint and process instruction possible. Instruction that provides our customers with the skills necessary to enhance the quality and productivity of their refinish operations.

EDUCATIONAL EXPERTS

When you choose Valspar Automotive, you get more than high quality products and outstanding performance. You get all of our committed expertise backing you up in what you do every day—with every product and every brand we offer.

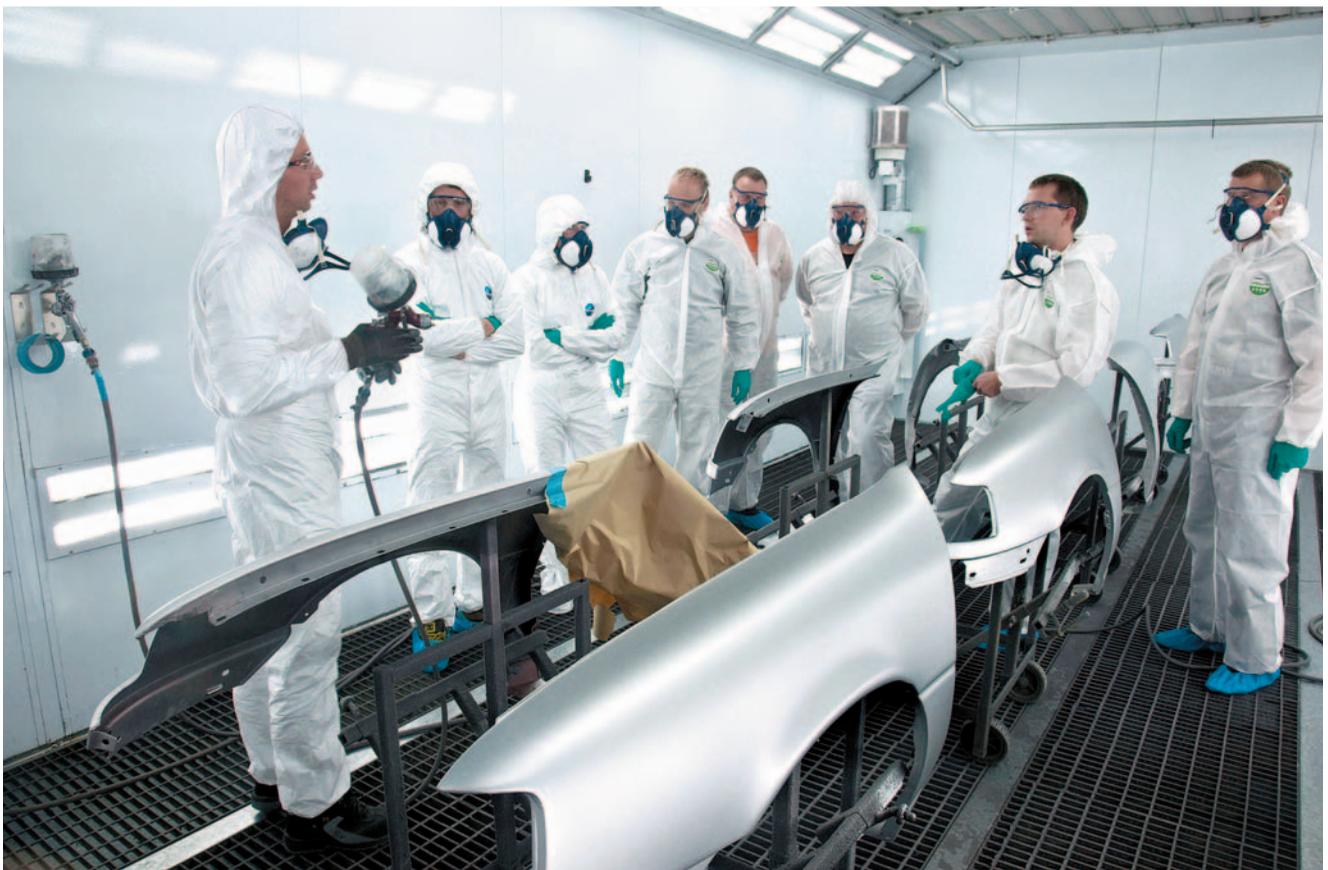
Valspar Automotive Training Centers are located in Grand Prairie (Texas, US), Massillon (Ohio, US), Detroit (Michigan, US), Kincumber (Australia), Rome (Italy), Lyon (France), and Lelystad (The Netherlands). They have been host to thousands of painters from all segments of the industry—painters looking

to improve their craft. Collision repair specialists, color-match experts, custom painters, and airbrush artists have all benefited from Valspar Automotive training, regardless of the VOC restrictions in their home towns. Our highly skilled training staff members possess expertise in every facet of finish applications, enabling us to offer a wide range of instructional courses from our state-of-the-art facilities.

Busy shops love the support they get from Valspar Automotive. Valspar recognizes the importance of time when it comes to shops. We give you two options to excel – one of our Training facilities or your shop!

EXTENSIVE UPGRADES TO OUR VALSPAR AUTOMOTIVE TRAINING CENTER MAKE LEARNING EVEN EASIER NOW

Auto refinish technicians and distributors who attend classes at Valspar's Automotive Training Center in Grand Prairie, Texas will benefit from a state-of-the-art learning environment thanks to an



extensive renovation. The facility received a complete makeover, with remodeled classrooms, expanded color mixing room, upgraded spray booth, a new cafeteria, and the latest in digital media.

“Our goal is to provide the best training in the industry, and this ultra-modern facility gives us the learning environment to deliver that along with our expert staff,” said Pete Willman, sales director - Branded Coatings, Valspar Automotive North America. “Students will come away with a comprehensive education on the Valspar paint process, giving them the skills necessary to enhance the quality and productivity of their refinish operations.”

The center’s training curriculum, which is approved by the I-CAR Industry Training Alliance*, includes both theory and practical workshops and gives students hands-on experience in the preparation booth, spray booth, and state-of-the-art color mixing room. Courses cover a wide range of skills, from basic workshop and color skills to advanced programs, using Valspar’s trusted brands — Valspar Refinish*, DeBeer Refinish*, Prospray*, Matrix*, and House of Kolor*.

Gene Cook of Cook’s Collision in Florida, co-owner of three shops, knows the importance of training in a controlled environment at a training facility. Although he has used the help of Technical Representatives coming out to his shops and providing training, it doesn’t replace the knowledge and skillset that is learned in the training center.

“Even though training in the field is a good option, it is a little tougher because our painters don’t get the classroom environment that presents the full benefits of the product and all the ins and outs of using it,” said Cook. “You are able to pick up more information in the classroom setting and still get the hands-on experience with the paint booth to apply that knowledge and work on their issues at hand to make their application better.”

Valspar’s trusted brands all have presence here at the center — Valspar Refinish*, DeBeer Refinish*, Prospray*, Matrix*, and House of Kolor*. Valspar Automotive offers a vast array of different training courses including Valspar Refinish Basic, Valspar Refinish Low VOC, Prospray National Rule, Prospray Low VOC, Prospray Color Theory, Matrix Jobber Product, Matrix Painter Product Certification, Matrix Color Theory, DeBeer Color Theory, DeBeer 500 Series, and DeBeer 900+ WaterBase Series. Each of these courses are two-day courses at one of our Valspar Automotive Training Centers. The course offers an ideal environment that provides training methods in both the classroom and in the paint booth for hands-on training.

The Valspar Automotive Training Department is dedicated to providing the most comprehensive Valspar paint and process introduction that will educate our customers with the necessary skills to enhance the quality and productivity of their refinish operations.

“We had a very good experience when we went to the training center. It offered a comfortable learning environment, in an

intimate space that is perfect for learning,” said Cook. “When you are able to get out of the shop and into the classroom, the results are amazing because you are able to go through the book and PowerPoint presentations, ask questions and see the process that has been put in place to make it a successful product.”

At Valspar, classroom sizes are kept small to give customers more one-on-one training opportunities to cater more to the individual’s needs, while still offering a better understanding of the products as a whole. Whether you are an experienced painter who’s painted thousands of cars or if you are just starting up in the business and painting your first car, Valspar’s training benefits everyone.

“We had about 10 of us in the classroom, which helped hone in on each individual painter more and work on what they needed improvements on. It has helped better yourself and your business. I sent my top painter to training and even though he had a lot of training in the field, he learned a lot in the training class. Since training, he has increased his productivity by about a 10% margin as well as helping increase our overall consumption control. I can’t recommend it enough for someone who wants to take the product that they are already using and learn how to get more out of it and have a better understanding of how it works!”

According to Cook, the experience that his painters had at the training center not only helped the individual painters, but also the company. “We are now monitoring our consumption in our shops and the classes have helped our painters with their application by learning how to cut consumption. Through their experience in the classroom, they came away with a better understanding of how to apply the product other than just a demo in the paint shop. They now have a better understanding of the total process from A to B, that you can’t get when you are out there in the field or trying to show somebody how to use it from a demo.”

Whether you choose onsite at your shop or coming to one of our state-of-the-art training centers, you can be assured you are getting the finest in training available. For more information about Valspar Automotive and class schedules, visit www.valsparauto.com.

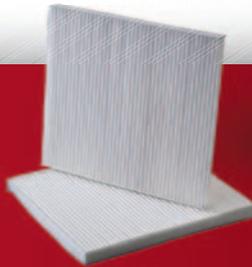


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AD INDEX

ADVERTISER	PAGE #
5 STAR XTREME AUTOBODY PRODUCTS	22
ADVANCED MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS INC.	14
AKZONOBEL	CV4, 64
AMI.....	54
AXALTA COATING SYSTEMS.....	7, 60
BENDPAK INC	23, 24, 57, 58
CERTIFIED AUTO PARTS ASSOCIATION.....	5, 65
CHIEF AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGIES	21, 32, 66
CJ INC	25
DENT FIX.....	33
EAGLE ABRASIVES	49
EUROVAC	11
FINANCIAL COLLISION SERVICES	40
GLOBAL FINISHING SOLUTIONS	17, 67
IBIS	75
INDUCTION INNOVATIONS INC.....	37, 68
INFINITY 3D LASER MEASURING.....	34

PRODUCT INDEX

PRODUCT	PAGE #
BENDPAK	75
CHIEF	75

ADVERTISER	PAGE #
INNOVATIVE TOOLS	15
KIA.....	19, 41, 55, 74, OUTSERT
MARTIN-SENOUR AUTOMOTIVE FINISHES	16
MATRIX AUTOMOTIVE FINISHES	27
MERCEDES-BENZ CORP	13
MOTOR GUARD CORP	40
ORIO NORTH AMERICA	28, 29, 69
PPG INDUSTRIES	CV2-03, 70
PRIMA SRL INC.....	42
PRO SPOT INTL INC	CV3, 71
PROSPRAY AUTOMOTIVE FINISHES	39, 72
REPAIR SHOP LOANS	8, 9
SHERWIN-WILLIAMS.....	36
SOUTHERN POLYURETHANES INC	31
U.S. CHEMICAL & PLASTICS	43
VALSPAR AUTOMOTIVE	35, 73

PRODUCT	PAGE #
GARMAT	75
SEM PRODUCTS	75

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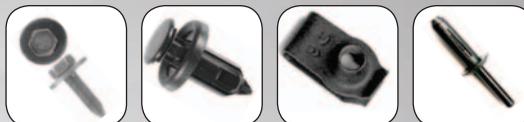


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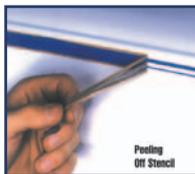
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The inspiring story of Douglas Sebowa

Great things happen when you let people unleash their potential

This story begins with the daughter of our dealer partner's attorney, who was fortunate to travel with a mission group to Uganda last year. During the trip, she spent some quality time in the small suburb of Kampala, where many don't have the simple things we take for granted every day.

She happened to meet a young Ugandan named Douglas Sebowa who, at age 28, told her of his aspirations to somehow get to the United States and live the "American dream." Through her direction, some extensive research and Douglas' ingenuity, his journey to America began.

In December 2015, Douglas found himself living in temporary housing in Miami, funded through the government's refugee program. That's when our dealer partner, David, who owns property in South Florida, decided to visit Douglas and take him out to lunch.

"You couldn't help but like the guy," David told me. "He had a smile a mile wide and seemed to absorb any information I could give him — just like a sponge."

David was so taken with Douglas that he contacted me with an interesting offer. "I'll supply Douglas with an apartment in Boston if you give him a job, Michael," he said. And with that, Douglas moved north and began working in our accident repair center in Boston.

That got me thinking. What kind of cold-weather clothing could a guy from Uganda possibly own? I couldn't let our new team member freeze in the Northeast in his first week on the job, so, with the help of my wife, we supplied him with additional clothing and furnishings for his new apartment.

You wouldn't believe the gratitude Douglas displayed when he received his care package of shirts, jeans, shoes, jackets and other items that had been shipped to Boston. "I feel blessed, like tears of Heaven are raining on me," he kept saying.

Meanwhile, in our Boston store, Douglas was starting to show his aptitude on the shop floor. At one point in January, Tim, our store manager, called me and wanted to know why we were only paying Douglas starting wages. "Why?" I asked. "Is there a problem?"

"Yeah!" she said. "Douglas is worth so much more than that! In



SURE, OUR COMPANY GAVE DOUGLAS A START, BUT HE'S RECIPROCATED BY GIVING OUR STORE SO MUCH MORE IN RETURN.

just a few weeks he's become a very proficient, hard-working refinish prep tech, and one of the best I've ever seen!"

It was a pleasant surprise for sure, so we agreed to increase Douglas's rate significantly, and by February he was excelling to some spray booth operations, working on single panel jobs, bumpers and the like.

In March, Douglas was flown to our headquarters in Cleveland for advanced paint training. He's expanding his spraying skills and learning the thinking behind our flow line. And while he's sponging up everything he can on the job, he continues to express his gratitude to everyone around him.

It's amazing the effect that Douglas has had on our Boston store. In a rough-and-tumble market like Boston, it's easy for soft personalities to become intimidated by the hard-shell (but soft core!) team. But Douglas has received heartfelt acceptance from the team. One of our Master Techs even picks him up every morning, not wanting Douglas to ride his bike to work on the busy thoroughfares that lead to the store.

Another employee gives him a ride to church every Sunday.

Sure, our company gave Douglas a start, but he's reciprocated by giving our store so much more in return. He's fostered a sincere sense of camaraderie within the four walls of our business, and he's turned into one of the most promising refinish technicians within our entire organization. Before the end of this year, I predict that he'll reach near Master level because of his quick acceptance and acquisition of skills, like roll-on primer application, waterborne spraying techniques and his tremendous understanding of advanced production flow.

Our veteran team members keep asking how we can clone Douglas — his work ethic, kind heart and keen interest in learning. Great things happen when you let people unleash their human potential. And when you experience that potential, it seems to bring such great purpose to leading an organization. 📌

MICHAEL GIARRIZZO, JR. is founder and president of DCR Systems (www.DCRsystems.net) and a pioneer in the utilization of lean production principles on the shop floor. Questions or comments can be sent to Michael at mgjarrizzo@dcrsystems.net



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