# ABRN
AUTO BODY REPAIR NETWORK

**COMMITMENT TO TRAINING**
GIRLS HAVE CHANGED — NOT ARE CHANGING — THE WORLD 58

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OCTOBER 2018
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EDUCATION

# CAREER INSTITUTE BRIDGES GAP BETWEEN CLASSROOM, SHOP

**CHELSEA FREY //**
Senior Associate Editor

With the technician shortage a continuous pressing issue, many collision repair shops, organizations and technical schools have put forth initiatives to help usher more talent into the industry.

Since vehicle and repair technology is advancing so quickly, one challenge has been training collision repair students adequately so that they are prepared to begin work in a shop once they graduate. Oftentimes students are taught with equipment or processes that are different from what they will experience once they

>> GAP CONTINUES ON PAGE 8

BREAKING NEWS

DIGITAL SECURITY

## NASTF WORKING TO STOP VSP CODE SHARING

Repairers trying to subscribe or renew their subscription to the Vehicle Security Professional (VSP) Registry this summer likely experienced a significant delay. In June the National Automotive Service Task Force shut down more than 1,300 VSP accounts for credential sharing as well as not having the proper positive ID paperwork on file. That effort will make the program more effective and safer, but resulted in a temporary suspension of new and renewal application processing.

The VSP registry was created as part of the NASTF Secure Data Release Model (SDRM). It allows aftermarket access to security sensitive information like key codes, PIN numbers, immobilizer reset information and other types of data for repairers like technicians and locksmiths.

Users who perform security system repairs have to subscribe to the registry to purchase security

>> CODE CONTINUES ON PAGE 14

TRENDING

### RECYCLED RIDES PRESENTS 5 VEHICLES TO VETERANS

A group of New Jersey military veterans were presented with a Recycled Rides vehicle during the 4th annual NABC Northeast Golf Fundraiser on Aug. 29 in Ewing Township, NJ.

*ABRN.COM/VETGIFT*

### PPG LAUNCHES STRUCTURAL BLUE TRAINING VIDEO

PPG's latest video assists technicians with refinishing Lexus automobiles sporting the OEM's Structural Blue finish to dispel rumors that complex colors need a complex refinish process.

*ABRN.COM/BLUEFINISH*

### FIND SPECIALTY SERVICES TO BOOST BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

An industry panel discusses the benefits of considering a specialty or niche service in your shop that can help improve service offerings to the customer and boost revenue.

*ABRN.COM/NICHE*

### WHY FOLLOWING OEM REPAIR PROCEDURES IS CRITICAL

You must check and follow the OEM repair procedures on all vehicles, says asTech. Your customers rely on your ability to deliver safe and proper repairs every time.

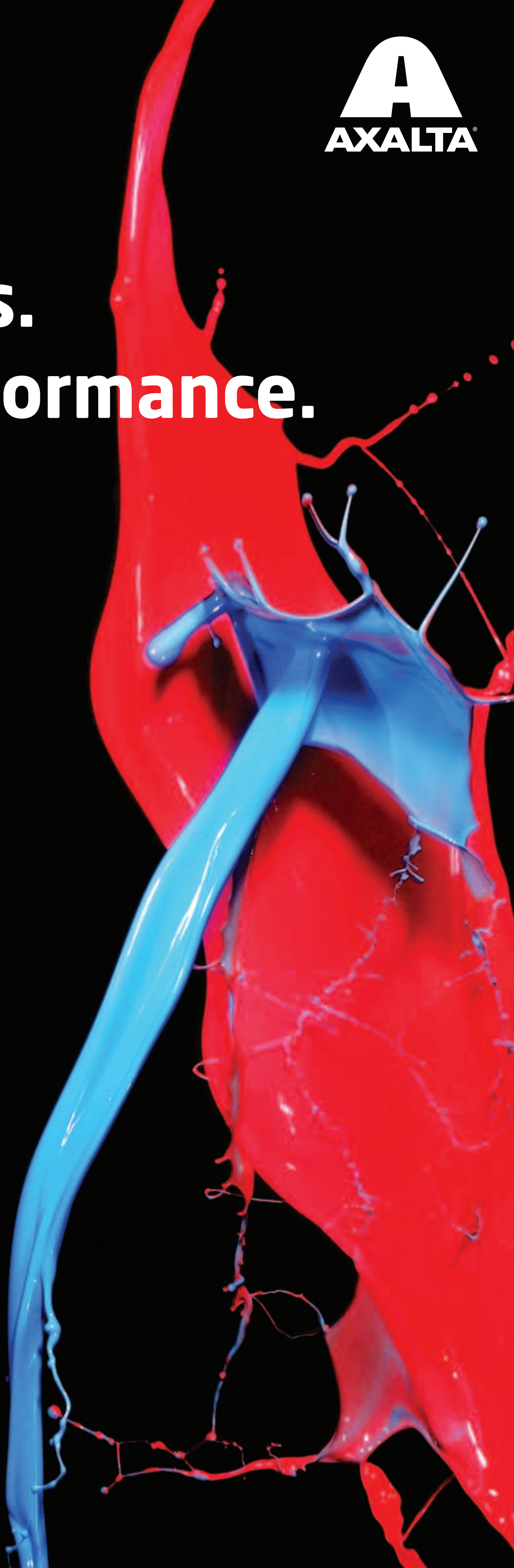
*ABRN.COM/OEMGUIDE*

### TARIFFS COULD RAISE COLLISION, MECHANICAL RATES

Existing and proposed tariffs could significantly raise the cost of cars and repairs, having an adverse impact on consumers, repair providers, insurers and businesses.

*ABRN.COM/TARIFFCHANGE*

PHOTO: MICHAELJUNG / GETTYIMAGES.COM



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find employment, and they face a sharp learning curve while acclimating to the shop's processes.

However, there's a new solution to this problem. In order to ease the transition from student to employee, Collision Career Institute (CCI) has created a unique program that connects industry-recognized education with hands-on learning through a paid apprenticeship program, thus bridging the gap between traditional vocational programs and on-the-job training.

CCI, based in California, was founded by Erick Bickett, CEO of FixAuto, and Charlie Robertson, a veteran collision repair education instructor, both bringing unique backgrounds and industry experience to find a solution to help solve the technician shortage.

Offering three different tracks — Painter, Body Technician and Repair Planner — CCI guides each trainee through the skills they need to be successful by combining online classes and webinars with on-the-job training. Each of the trainees are guided on the path from "eager-and-willing" to "skilled-and-employed" in 12-18 months.

Amber Ritter, Chief Operations Officer of CCI, recently responded to a series of questions posed by *ABRN*:

### How does the curriculum and experience for the student differ from a technical school experience?

**Ritter:** Each of CCI's Apprentices begin their education with a full-time job in a sponsoring shop. Our apprenticeship program blends knowledge-based learning with on-the-job skills training. We work with committed shops to manage the process in the best interest of the apprentice. CCI prepares and trains the shop on how to administer the on-the-job training. Apprentices are learning each skill in a real — not simulated — production environment. On graduation, shops don't have to retrain apprentices to work in their shops, because that is where they developed their skills. Our experience so far has taught us that by four months into the training, CCI apprentices are a valued member of the team. Apprentices are motivated to succeed for the company they know is investing in their future.

### How does CCI personalize the curriculum to fit the needs of each student?

**Ritter:** CCI understands that each apprentice comes to us with their unique strengths, weaknesses, personality and learning style. We measure each of these areas to maximize apprentice and shop success. We have a set of skills identified for each apprentice track, and we adapt the curriculum to help each apprentice attain those skills. We also prepare the on-the-job trainer to transfer their skills to the apprentice in an effective and results-driven manner.

### What has been the response from collision repair shops involved in the program?

**Ritter:** General Managers who were skeptical at first notice how much better prepared and motivated the CCI apprentices are. Now we hear from the General Managers, "Can you find me another apprentice just like the last one?"

CCI focuses on fundamental skills that can provide early successes for apprentices on the production floor. Our core mindset of simple-to-complex tasks, knowledge first and speed comes with repetition is embedded in all instruction. Shops have seen how CCI works hard to blend the needs of the shop with the needs of the apprentice, and have proven our method of skills-building works for both.

### How is CCI expanding outside of California and what are the goals for growth and expansion over the next 5 years?

**Ritter:** CCI's program requires all knowledge-based instruction be completed online at the apprentice's sponsoring body shop. This structure removes the physical barriers that exist for traditional brick-and-mortar schools. CCI is poised and ready to grow. We are a registered apprenticeship program in the state of California and have the ability to work with other states as well. We're looking forward to expanding into other states, connecting shops with the next generation of painters, body technicians and estimators.

Also of note is that the structure and outline of our program is a perfect fit for veterans looking for rewarding careers when getting out of the military. Veterans who are eligible for GI bill benefits can utilize them while going through our program.

### Real-world insight

CCI's first apprentice, Zach, who graduated from the program over two years ago, can speak to the success of the program. He shares, "Going through CCI has given me the opportunity to experience each position live in a shop. What I experienced in each position has given me tools to write a more thorough estimate and has made justification of labor significantly easier. The learning platform has allowed me to learn and grow at an accelerated rate, one of which I have never experienced in past careers.

"While I am mechanically inclined, collision repair never came to mind as a career option. My past consisted entirely of reptiles and retail. When the opportunity arose, I jumped in for the new experience. Fast forward four years and I am currently an Assistant Manager at a shop. CCI has not only benefited my career but has also greatly improved my life, giving me the opportunity to provide for my family in a way I have never been able to."

To learn more about CCI, go to www.collisioncareerinstitute.com/.

# ASA TARGETS SHOP DATA PRIVACY PRACTICES

**BRIAN ALBRIGHT //** Contributing Editor

As the automotive repair and service business becomes more heavily reliant on data and electronic communication, protecting customer information has become a more important concern in the industry. The Automotive Service Association (ASA) recently cautioned members that third-party vendors may be reselling customer data to other organizations, and has created a new Data Security Policy Agreement/Addendum for repairers who want to both protect that data and shield themselves from potential liability.

"The protection of personal information and proprietary technical data is a priority for consumers, regulators, legislators and class-action attorneys throughout the United States and abroad," says attorney Patrick J. McGuire of Patrick J. McGuire Law Offices, Mt. Prospect, Ill. "As an industry, everyone should be doing everything within their power to prohibit the unapproved/unsolicited sharing of estimates and repair data that goes beyond the scope of what is necessary during the normal course of doing business."

The new data security policy document states that all information (data) provided to outside vendors is "owned exclusively by the shop and provided for the sole purpose of conducting business." It does not grant the authority to share the data, sell it or repackage it without the express written consent of the shop.

The development of the policy was prompted both by the recent national focus on the security of vehicle and owner data (particularly for connected vehicles), and by a recent incident involving an ASA board member. In that case, estimate data made its way to CARFAX within 48 hours of an estimate being created. The customer was angry with the shop because the updated CARFAX report reduced the value of his vehicle (which he was about to trade in).

The shop was not aware the data had been shared, so ASA helped the shop follow up with CARFAX about the source of the data. CARFAX indicated that it gathered information from more than 34,000 sources. Without specifying the source of the information, CARFAX also stated that they did not get information from CCC Information Services, the estimating system used by the shop.

"We thought there ought to be a policy in place within a shop that clearly states to vendors that if you don't already have a transparent data privacy policy telling me how you are using the data, then

>> DATA CONTINUES ON PAGE 12

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>> DATA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

maybe I ought to have a form for you to sign," says Tony Molla, vice president of the Automotive Service Association.

"Shops need to take control of their data," adds Scott Benavidez, ASA's Collision Division Operations Committee director. "Situations like this aren't unique, and the potential for class-action lawsuits should cause everyone to lock down their data. Nobody should be profiting from the data we are generating on behalf of our customers."

According to Molla, it's still unclear what types of liability issues the sale of customer data could generate. If the data is hacked or stolen, the shop could be liable for any damages to consumers (like identify theft or vehicle theft). If the data is sold to a third party without permission, customers could potentially come back and sue the shop.

"These are the types of things we're thinking about," Molla says. "It can expose the shop if they haven't taken the steps or reasonable precautions to protect data and customer information that they collect in the course of a repair."

Shops that aren't sure about how their vendors are using customer data should take the first step and ask about data sharing and selling policies. "Most vendors that collect data generally have a privacy policy in place," Molla says. "They will tell you that they do not share data at all, or that they do share it, but in aggregated form so it can't be used to identify a particular customer. But ask the vendor; getting an answer to that question is a step in the right direction."

As more vehicles become connected, as more drivers connect their smartphones to their vehicles, and as OEMs and repairers wrangle over vehicle data pertaining to repairs, these data privacy issues will be even more important. An increasing number of companies also want to buy that vehicle data. McKinsey estimates that the market for automotive data could reach $750 billion by 2030.

"The reality is that data is being collected right now that you might not even be aware of," Molla says. "The ASA is partnering with other associations to define exactly what is being collected, what is being used, and who has access to it."

In addition, repair shops should take other security precautions like ensuring that their WiFi connections and network firewalls are properly secured. "Is your office or business network as robust as it should be?" Molla says. "If you don't know, you should be asking. It's time to take a look at all of your enterprise functions and see if there are security holes you have not anticipated, that may have been introduced by the advancement of technology."

For shops that want to utilize the new agreement with their own vendors or other partners, it can be downloaded at ABRN.com/datasecurity.

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codes and VIN-specific files from the OEMs.

After evaluating credential usage in the registry, NASTF discovered two critical problems – users were sharing credentials, and many lacked the proper documentation.

Key-code brokers were contacting repairers and indicating that they needed their locksmith identification (LSID) passcodes in order to continue receiving service.

Under terms of the VSP agreement, sharing those passcodes with anyone other than the OEM websites is grounds for suspension of the LSID license. In addition, those codes could conceivably be resold or used to steal vehicles. If the key code were traced back to a specific LSID passcode, that means the repairer could be subject to the theft investigation.

"We saw a pretty high number of members using code brokers," says Donny Seyfer, executive officer at the National Automotive Service Task Force (NASTF). "In some cases, those brokers got into websites in other parts of the world and scrubbed databases to get codes, and then they sold them."

One of the biggest code brokers is a site called AutoCode. "They give people the impression they are affiliated with NASTF," Seyfer says. "They tell them they are part of NASTF, and say 'All you have to do is tell us the LSID and password, and we will get the codes for you.'"

Some of the OEMs have also been working to shut down code brokers. "GM has been successful in this because they use regional databases," Seyfer says. "For a group like AutoCode to hack in and scrub a database in Asia does them no good because they can't sell those codes in the U.S."

NASTF also learned that many VSPs were sharing credentials with other co-workers.

"These credentials and IDs are a one-to-one item," Seyfer says. "We assign the ID to an individual. We do a background check on them. In many cases, a locksmith might be sharing a code with multiple people who knew all the login information. We had vehicles stolen that way. There was no accountability."

NASTF has developed some tools to help better identify code brokers and reduce credential sharing. According to Seyfer, NASTF now does more digging to confirm that phone number, emails and websites line up with a subscriber's identity.

"We also have a new piece of software coming out that will make it so that it is easier for the user and better for us when it comes to screening," Seyfer says. "The user will be able to enter their positive ID form (the D1), enter that online and sign it. They have to submit the complete form to proceed. It will also make it easier to tie the transaction to the OE. They can collect the information electronically rather than having a copy on hand."

The D1 form was at the heart of the second problem NASTF discovered: many accounts lacked complete D1 forms.

"Once we started auditing the accounts we found that subscribers were not providing the positive identification forms required by the terms and conditions," Seyfer says. "They either weren't doing them or were not doing them correctly."

Of the 6,000 subscribers in the program, roughly 1,300 were flagged for a problem. The campaign to stop credential sharing resulted in hundreds of VSP accounts being suspended. Moving forward, Seyfer says there may be some expansion of the use of VSP.

With so much new technology being added to vehicles, OEs are also thinking about securing some diagnostic data using the LSID. "We're talking about doing something that involves the security of the vehicle, or that is involved calibrating the radar or LIDAR or something like that," Seyfer says. "We have some OEs doing that now. Ford has it in their tool, and Audi has it in their tool. It's intended more to make it easier to use the tool when you have to do an immobilizer function."

## SP/2, CARS COOPERATIVE PARTNER TO HELP SHOPS FILL THE TECHNICIAN GAP

S/P2 and CARS Cooperative have partnered to provide CARS members with access to the S/P2 Careers database of entry-level technician candidates across the country. Each CARS member will receive $100 in S/P2 Careers credits that they can use to recruit students who are in or have recently graduated from automotive career tech programs.

"By giving our members access to S/P2 Careers, we're able to provide a benefit that can help them find the techs they need," said Matt Boyles, Executive Director of CARS Cooperative.

Of the students who have posted their resumes on S/P2 Careers so far, more than 30,000 are interested in automotive service, collision repair and heavy-duty/diesel career opportunities.

"This is a great partnership," said Kyle Holt, President of S/P2. "The CARS members add over 500 employers that can provide great career opportunities to entry-level technicians across the US."

CARS provides buying power, discounts, rebates and rewards to its member collision repair facilities in 29 states across the country.

"This is the No.1 issue our industry faces, and CARS is dedicated to helping our members find technicians. It's good for our members, and it's good for the industry," Boyles said.

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# SMALL VICTORIES

## TURN BUSINESS LOSSES INTO GAINS WITH THESE TIPS

TIM SRAMCIK // Contributing Editor

How often do you see the following scenario at your shop?

A vehicle with a big hit is towed in. After your estimator performs a damage analysis, she determines your shop can't do the work. Maybe the vehicle has damaged structural parts that can only be replaced by a shop in a repair network. Perhaps it qualifies as a total loss. Or it could be a brand-new luxury model or other vehicle you simply don't have the expertise, tools or training to fix.

In any case, you're watching money leave your business. Most often, shops look at these losses as simply part of the business. What they can't make on a vehicle being removed from their shop they hope to make up with other business. The truth, however, is that every lost business opportunity can be transformed into a potential win if you plan for it. Use these five steps to build revenue where once you only saw defeat.

### Step 1: Offer memorable customer service to everyone, all the time

If you think that once a prospective repair is towed out of your shop you've gained nothing, Randy Drury, owner of Full Service Auto Stop in Houston, says to think again. "You actually gained the most important think any business can collect — information," he says. That information starts with an owner's name and home address and possibly a phone number and email address.

From there, says Drury, shops can still go to work through education and guidance. "Our shop has email and snail mail templates that tell customers we lost, 'Sorry we couldn't be your repairer today, but we still want to help,'" he explains. "We attach a 'customer bill of rights' like a lot of shops post on their websites, along with other information on what to expect during a repair. And we ask that they remember us in the future." If the customer is on-site, service reps pass out copies of the same information and wish customers well while trying to alleviate their fears with helpful guidance.

This may seem like a lot of effort for a

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**THIS MAY BE A LONG SHOT**, but determine if the shop performing most of the work can sublet services like glass repair and detailing to you. Or consider partnering with dealers to do this work. In exchange, you can suggest their business to customers needing a replacement vehicle.

client you're losing, but Drury says shops need to keep in mind that most collision repair customers are genuinely frightened and concerned when seeking service. The greater the number of friendly industry faces and positive efforts they see the better.

"We don't know what a customer will face when dealing with another shop, but we wish the best for them," he says. "The key here is to offer folks a genuinely positive experience in the midst of a stressful event — and one they'll remember should they need help another time."

But does it work? Drury says "absolutely." He points to shop records that show customers from lost repairs returning for other services. He also says he has plenty of examples of customers pointing to a family member or friend who previously crossed paths with his business.

"Offering great customer service should be part of every shop's routine, and it's one of the most inexpensive services at your shop," Drury says. "Use it to turn every customer encounter into a business opportunity. Plus, it's also just the decent thing to do."

## Step 2: Swap services

If a vehicle is being moved to another shop, there's still a chance — though slight — you may be able to grab a piece of the repair pie. "Do you offer any specialized repairs, like airbag or glass replacement or something like spray-on bedliners?" says industry consultant Ben Bailey. "If the shop that gets the work needs any of those, don't hesitate to reach out to them." Bailey admits that this strategy may not reap rewards often, but it's worth a try.

If your business — like half of all collision repair shops — offers mechanical services, you may be in an even better position to grab some work. Bailey notes that most shops already have trusted businesses they sublet work to. "But they may be in the market for a new partner," he says. Bailey says repairers should regularly try to learn about and work with each other for several reasons.

One, there's currently plenty of work to go around, so shops shouldn't feel they're in a dog-eat-dog environment. Two, businesses that perform collision repairs typically are going to have a keener sense of what insurers and customers expect than other sublet businesses. Three, repairers have much to gain by working together. "You need to step outside your own workplace if you want learn," says Bailey. "Sometimes, gaining some valuable knowledge can be more important than what you'd make off of a single repair."

## Step 3: Salvage solutions

These days, you probably say goodbye to most of your lost work because of total loss declarations. But you can turn some of these situations around if you're willing to spend a little extra time with a customer, says Drury. He notes that if a vehicle crosses the total loss threshold by no more than \$500-\$800, shops can take a couple of steps to effectively diminish those numbers.

"If you can locate a good salvage part — maybe several— that you, the customer and the insurer trust, you can really trim those numbers down. Shipping times can slow down the repair times, which is going to raise the cost of a rental vehicle, but you may be able to negotiate with the customer and insurer to share some of those costs," he explains.

Shops also can ask customers to pitch in more money for the repair to bring costs under the total loss threshold. Drury says the that money may be far less than what a customer would have to put down to purchase a replacement vehicle. It too may be a significant savings over what a customer would pay on a new, more expensive car payment. Many customers are more willing to stick with a car they know and invest some money to keep it than roll the dice on a replacement, Drury adds.

If those options won't work and customers have to say "so long" to a once-reliable member of the family, be prepared to offer them another solution — a recommendation to a dealer you



trust. As noted earlier, customers need all the friends and solutions they can get following an accident. If you can point them to several dealers that will work with them to budget in a replacement vehicle, you've done the customer and the dealer a great favor.

Drury says this course offers one extra benefit — it paves the way to some potential business opportunities with dealers who may need a reliable repairer they can recommend to their customers. They possibly could need a shop to take care of dents, scratches, other repairs or high-quality detailing services. Partnerships like this help everyone involved.

## Step 4: Keep records

How much business did you lose last year and why? "If you can't answer that question, then you can't address this problem or plan for a workable solution," says Bailey. He notes that most shops pay little mind to lost work, but this can be a big problem if they want to stay in business a long time. "Two lost repairs a month can mean $14,000 being sent down the road. That's almost $170,000 a year," says Bailey. "Money like that can buy a lot of new equipment, improvements and training or can be put away for other investments."

"In a time when shops really need to think about raising their repair abilities to cope with more advanced vehicles, revenue like that is critical," he adds.

Bailey advises shops to keep a running total of estimates for lost work, along with the reason a vehicle had to leave. Then, repairers need to examine this data during shop meetings and yearly planning.

## Step 5: Take action

From there, shops must take a cold, hard look at why they're losing work now and what factors or trends could cost them business in the near future. Along with totals, Bailey says shops should be looking at the growing need


**KEEP RECORDS OF LOST WORK** and track why the vehicle had to go elsewhere. Then plan how you can address these situations better in the future.

to become certified with one or more repair networks: "This becomes a more serious issue with each year. If shops can't prove to insurers and customers they're capable of performing a high-quality, safe repair on a vehicle, they're not going to get work."

OEMs are doing their part to grow these networks as much as possible. Selling a repairable vehicle is central to their business, which has always been the driving force behind networks. Consultant Mike Anderson recently pointed to OEM efforts to guide more vehicles into certified shops — most notably with GM's ability to leverage its OnStar service to recommend customers use specific shops.

In fact, OnStar looks to be a key component of GM's new repair network that starts up in 2018. GM has stated that once it has certified its first network shops, it plans to place them in OnStar's shop locator service, along with performance scores for each, calculated using the network's KPIs. Higher scores mean a shop has done a better job adhering to network procedures, which could make those shops more attractive in the eyes of a consumer.

"The bottom line is that shops are going to have to raise their training and equipment standards if they truly want to get the work at their doors into their operations," says Bailey. "Right now, that's the single best way to ensure your shop gets to repair every fixable car it sees or at least make the most out of every repair opportunity."

Couple this effort with the steps listed here, and you'll have a solid plan that can transform what once would have been a loss into some kind of gain — almost all of the time.

An old saying declares, "Good business is where you find it." That's just part of the story. Good business also is where you make it. Now might be a good time for you to make your move and reclaim lost opportunities.

**TIM SRAMCIK** has written for *ABRN* and sister publications *Motor Age* and *Aftermarket Business World* for more than a decade.
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# DO YOU 20 GROUP?

## Get the most out of these peer organizations to improve yourself and your business

**JIM COMPTON //** Contributing Editor

There seem to be so many advantages to being involved in industry 20 groups; I am sometimes surprised when I realize that not every business owner or manager has found their way into a 20 group. I have had the good fortune to participate in several 20 groups in several industry segments. For those not familiar with the concept, there are a few common-ground rules that most groups seem to have:

- Must be in a similar business model. While this may sound like common sense, there is a little more to it. Being among your peers brings more value to the meetings. A shop owner with one location doesn't share all the same issues with a multi-location shop covering a couple of states, or a fleet/heavy duty shop.
- Must not compete directly with other group members. No one wants to share their financial information with a potential competitor or worse yet expose a perceived weakness.
- Must attend regular meetings (agendas should be shared in advance)
- Must participate openly in discussions and provide valid data
- Must be accepted (voted in) by the group to become a member. This is primarily to avoid direct competitors and insure that everyone is invested in the group's growth and improvement.

In addition, there are three main components to a 20 group meeting:

- The content, subjects, speakers and materials covered
- The participants
- The leader or facilitator

### Selecting the right 20 group

Twenty groups are not all the same. While most body shop 20 groups will likely cover similar topics, KPIs and financial comparisons, they each have their own tempo and dynamic. This will

PHOTO: GETTYIMAGES / CHRIS RYAN

be an investment in time, personal effort and should challenge you. If you're not challenged to improve and are not part of driving improvements for your group, why attend? Ask yourself what are my main goals of being part of a 20 group: Is it growth of financial acumen? Keeping up with technology? Finding a mentor or peers to work together with? Do you want to improve your numbers but are not making progress as fast as you would like? Do you want to be able to call on a fellow member and ask about specific reports from your management system? If you answered yes to several of these questions, and you're willing to invest the time and be part of the solution, then 20 groups are for you!

## The content

The content should include current industry issues and concerns, but it also needs to have a continued review and discussions about business basics. Right now, every body shop 20 group is or has spent time on ADAS, scanning, photo, estimating, etc. These are great topics and need to be part of the discussion, sharing and learning. Others include website presence (on all platforms, including mobile) as will other topics and issues that we may not even be aware of talking about...yet.

The comradery can't be overstated; being among peers and other business leaders either facing or having faced similar challenges can be a great support system.

Basic business practices that have been part of the discussion for many years are still relevant and worthy of continued improvement, review and sharing by members working towards best practices and the ever-evolving business models and environments. Groups that share and compare detailed financial information and KPIs can help drive even great businesses to higher levels. In-depth understanding of key financial ratios may be very critical especially for shops looking to expand, merge or grow through acquisitions. Performance-driven KPIs presented with actionable/improvable measurements are a must with the fast pace of modern business. When you find a group that doesn't lose sight of the basics (KPIs, financial ratios, etc.) you may have found the right group for you.

## The participants

The participants or group members need to encompass a broad group of business models and individuals. Twenty groups where each member brings and shares different viewpoints can often find new or unique tools or skills to deal with business dynamics. Selecting a 20 group focused on working together to help elevate everyone/member in the group is the best way to go. There are still a few 20 groups that serve more as a business deductible vacation than a true learning and growing environment. Fortunately, this is NOT the case with most 20 groups in our industry. While you want to get along with most of the members of your prospective 20 group, you will learn as much from those you disagree with as those you mostly agree with.

When a longtime member reaches out and welcomes the new members into the group, you may have found the right group for you.

I also like breakout sessions at the group meetings where smaller sub groups of members or tables breakout to discuss specific topics and solutions. This is where you can get to know other members and find some great out-of-the-box ideas.

When possible, I try and seat myself with different people or at different tables at the meetings. This helps me not only meet more people and share more ideas, but also takes me out of my comfort zone.

In years past, I (and others I have networked with) commented that these were the two main value points of group meetings. In recent years we have seen the emergence of dynamic, knowledgeable industry leaders. When your 20 group has one of these leaders, hold one tight, sharpen you pencil, take notes and get to the meeting on time; you won't want to miss anything.

## The leader

This third leg of the modern 20 group — the leader or facilitator — has grown in importance. This is no easy job. The leader needs to have a commanding presence, an in-depth knowledge of the industry and probably most important the ability to maintain the tempo, subject matter and overall flow of the meetings. Keeping industry professionals, owners and managers involved and getting the best out of all members is key to having a great 20 group. Leaders, just like the rest of us, have different styles and methods to build teamwork and ultimately build value. There is more than one good way to lead a group; I think a leader who inspires and motivates me to take action after the meeting is what I most appreciate.

These leaders will ask hard questions and make you squirm a little when you don't know the answer. They will also drive you to be a better leader in your own business. This may mean putting you on the spot, especially if you are not prepared or are not fully involved in the group.

When you find a leader/facilitator who inspires and challenges you to view things from new perspectives and makes you want to change and grow, you may have found the group for you.

I remember a large meeting I attended where I watched the heads bob, fending off naps, while the presenter droned on. This leader was very knowledgeable, but was not very captivating (to be kind).

Most meetings have very vocal members and members who need to be coaxed a little to get involved. A good leader keeps both involved. More than once I have been pleasantly surprised

by that seemingly quiet individual who, when called upon, provides very astute insights or new perspectives. And that very vocal individual opens the door for the shyer among us to speak up. When you find a group where most all members have input and are engaged, you may have found the group for you.

When you are attending a good 20 group meeting with a great dynamic meeting, you find yourself drawn in, even with content that is not the latest and greatest industry buzz. There are several leaders who come to mind who have this ability to command a room. Those who have had the good fortune of attending or listening to Mike Anderson at a 20 group meeting, trade show or other industry event know what I'm talking about. For those already involved in a Mike Anderson 20 group, congratulations, you are among the best. Mike is not only extremely knowledgeable, but he also drives every member of his groups to participate and work!

There are some cautions about some 20 group events. Attending 20 group meetings and being away from our businesses can be expensive. Some 20 groups seem to select meeting locations that are very expensive and trendy. A $400 per-night hotel added to all the other travel expenses can be a little overwhelming for some of us. Traveling to new places and seeing new sites is great, as is the comradery of networking with industry fellows. But I for one am there for the content, my fellow participants, the leader/facilitator, the motivation to improve and to learn something — not to be impressed with an overly expensive hotel/destination.

Groups that allow members to have selective attendance or selective participation are another pet peeve. If you aren't all in, it detracts from the whole group. The modern group leaders, for the most part, seem to weed these members out…eventually.

Meetings need to be managed (by the leader/facilitator), keeping the meeting focused and moving. Member input must be heard, but the meeting focus should not go down a rabbit hole. Again, this is a challenging balance managed by the leader/facilitator.

If you pay attention, take notes and network with your fellow members and most importantly go back to work and make changes, your membership costs will very likely be paid for several times over.

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# Finding the right people and the right place

Building a team of motivated employees requires the best people and environment

Last month ("It's not about the money — it's about great management," September 2018), I shared some of what I've learned about building a loyal, motivated team of employees from two East Coast shops that have done just that. Here are two more of their tips.

**Hire top performers.** This might sound like a no-brainer, but seeking out "top performers" doesn't mean that the only way to succeed is by hiring proven journeyman technicians. Shops with motivated employees look for those with what it takes to succeed whether they're hiring to fill an opening for a production team leader or an entry-level position.

"Some of our people we've hired over the past years had no automotive experience," said Paul Sgro of Lee's Garage in West Long Branch, N.J.. "They had a good attitude and a passion. We brought them in and showed them what we needed to get done. We've had people who worked at Best Buy that we turned into unbelievable customer service reps. They have the right attitude and they have that drive. They like working with people."

He said if someone in any type of company provides unbelievably great service, consider giving them a business card and invite them to call you if they're looking for a job or career change. Many people in the service industry, for example, would appreciate the more stable work hours available at a shop.

"You'll be surprised how these people can fit into your company," Paul said. "They will need training, of course, but they have those people skills."

He said before he ever posts job openings, he'll ask his employees if they know anyone who would be interested in working at the shop. He'll also meet with the leader of the team within the business with the job opening to discuss what their exact needs are.

"That team leader then will sit in on an interview to see if the person seems like a good fit," Paul said. "There's been times after a meeting that I thought the person was great, but the team leader said, 'No.' They saw something, they had some concerns, and said, 'Let's keep looking.'"

Hiring right is such a key to motivating because hiring wrong is so demotivating. I mentioned to Paul that one study I saw found that 93 percent of employees who work with a poor-performer decreased their own productivity. "I absolutely believe that," Paul said.

**CREATE THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT WITH A PROCESS TO ELIMINATE THE STRESS AND CHAOS SEEN IN MANY SHOPS.**

**Create the right environment.** Barry Jost of Jost Garage in Wall Township, N.J., has a number of employees who have been with the company for 15 years or more, and one who has been there more than 50 years. He said a key has been using the right process to eliminate the stress and chaos I see in many shops.

"This is a tough industry to make money in," Barry said. "I think that's why everybody pushes their people. We try to make them as comfortable as we can. We want to make sure they can still eat and breathe when they get home, spend time with their family without being passed-out tired after a day's work." He said daily release meetings help the staff know what's happening with every vehicle, getting any issues ironed out and staying ahead of customer communication.

Processes have all but eliminated the last-minute dashes out for a part just before a car is to be delivered. Vehicle deliveries to customers are staggered so it's not a madhouse on Friday afternoons. The Josts also have built an environment where employees know they can report mistakes without having to worry about getting browbeat or having their pay docked.

"When someone scratches or breaks something, we make it crystal clear that's not coming out of their pocket," Barry said. "That means they'll tell you about those issues so you can remedy the problem. The last thing you want to do is have something snap off for the customer because some guy glued it together after breaking it because he's afraid he's going to get screamed at. Unlike the old days, it's tough to motivate by discipline."

Watch for more on motivation tips from Paul and Barry in my next column.

**STEVE FELTOVICH** of SJF Business Consulting, LLC, works with dealers, MSOs and independent collision repair businesses to make improvements and achieve performace goals.
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PRICING
on Honda and Acura parts while
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# TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR BUSINESS

## Implementing non-negotiables can help to set standards for your shop

**JOHN SHOEMAKER //** Contributing Editor

I've read several articles lately debating who is in charge of a shop — the owner or the insurance company. I don't think it is just between those two entities. There are a lot of moving pieces in shop operations and taking charge of all of them is challenging at best. I hear shop owners say, "I've got control of this and this, but then a technician calls out and I'm back to square one." While some people would consider this drama, I would like you to start thinking about it as opportunity.

I learned years ago looking at things as opportunities is more beneficial than participating in the drama often found in our industry. One of the people who helped me learn that was Dave Dunn through his book *Liquid Amalgam*, a quick read that focuses on principles viewed as "unchangeables" or what I like to call non-negotiables. It doesn't matter which term you choose; what matters is you identify principles, develop them and then don't waver on them.

A few weeks ago, myself and a shop owner discussed how a certain insurance company wanted their estimates written differently than any others he writes. As we discussed it further, I learned that he had trained his estimators to write all estimates the same way using specific processes. He explained that everyone from the technician, to the painter, parts person and detailer knew what to expect when they received a repair order because they all looked the same. He added, "It upsets me that an insurance company can dictate how we write estimates."

Let's look at that for a minute.

If you have a process you expect your people to always follow, what kind of signal are you sending to them if you sometimes change the process for one insurance company. As we continued to talk, I shared my thoughts on the difference between sometimes and always, which I will share with you.

PHOTO: GETTYIMAGES / XIXINXING

Sometimes = Sporadic Obedience Makes Efforts Turn Into Mediocre Existence and Stagnation

Always = Accountability and Loyalty Will Accommodate Your Sustainability


INNOVATION
THAT WORKS...
SuperAssilex
by KOVAX
OFTEN
IMITATED
NEVER
DUPLICATED
SuperAssilex
• Fast Sanding Speed.
• No Deep Scratches.
• Extremely Uniform.
• Perfect for Blending, Light Scuffing and Primer Finishing.
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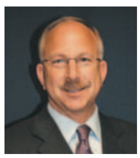
Just as the shop owner did, I am sure you appreciate the difference between sometimes and always and how wavering one time can make a difference in your success. The owner asked me how he could change what the insurance company wanted and eliminate the drama. One option is to explain his reasonings to the insurance company and define that it is non-negotiable. Taking the stand today will eliminate future drama because the insurance company will always know what to expect when they visit your shop.

Though this example is of just one shop and an estimate process, non-negotiables can work in all facets of your business, internally and externally. Defining your principles to your employees is just as important as to insurance companies or vendors. Policies like ensuring estimators always pull repair procedures for technicians, painters always mix liquid products on the scale for proper job costing or a repair technician always prints frame measurements when performing structural repairs are important to set in place and standardize.

Using non-negotiables only where they are needed without being arbitrary, too rigid or unreasonable will allow you to develop easy-to-follow processes and principles. Focusing solely on principles or processes that always need to be performed a certain way will prevent you from over-managing your operation. You will never be able to eliminate all the drama our industry provides, but you can reduce some of the unnecessary rules or policies by defining your business principles. You might even be able to see your next challenging situation as an opportunity rather than a burden.



**JOHN SHOEMAKER** is a business development manager for BASF North America Automotive Refinish Division and the former owner of JSE Consulting.
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# A NEW HIRE PROCESS

Properly acclimate new employees to your business to help ensure their success

JOHN BURKHAUSER // Contributing Editor

Recently writing articles on raising and hiring your "home grown" techs ("Grow your own technicians," May 2018 and "Onboarding new hires," June 2018), I discovered that many shops have no process for bringing a new employee onboard. Many individuals who I did reach out to to see what their process was didn't even understand my question. Mind you, I only have a small sample of shops I approached with these questions, but the lack of having a process in place leaves you and your shop open to liabilities and possibly the loss of a new employee, making this topic one we should all know.

The disclaimer: I don't have all the answers or even offer a complete onboarding process, because every shop is different and the labor laws in your local area may have their own requirements. I suggest that you investigate your local laws and requirements first, then put together your process based on what I offer here and what you determine is important for your business.

## The process

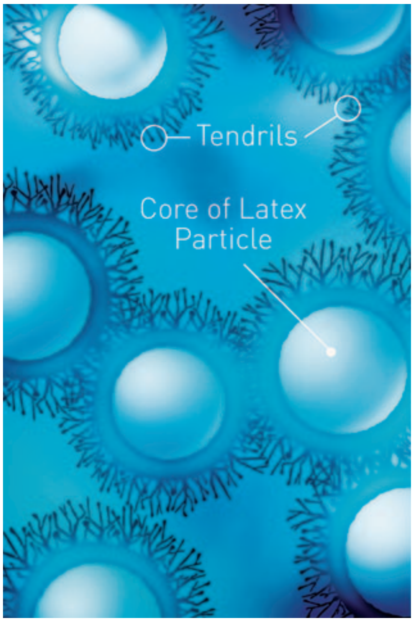
When you get a phone call about your help wanted posting, get some basic information about the individual such as name, phone number and where they live. Then search online using their name and location of where they live. With the internet "tracks" that most

PHOTO: GETTYIMAGES / TYLER OLSON

# Micro-gel toners, spectral gray undercoats are key to color-matching prowess of PPG's waterborne system

In today's world, automakers are increasingly using exotic colors to differentiate their brands in the market. Pigments in these colors are very vibrant, highly chromatic and often translucent; Toyota 3R3, Chrysler PB8 and Kia XMJ are a just few examples.

PPG says the growing popularity of its ENVIROBASE® High Performance waterborne system can be attributed greatly to how its micro-gel latex toners and innovative spectral gray process closely mimics the OEM approach to producing these colors.





## Micro-gel technology

"With PPG's waterborne toners, which contain the latest translucent and opaque pigments, the resins are made with latex particles with tendrils, or 'fingers,' that tangle with one another to bind the paint together," explains Gareth Hughes, PPG Refinish director of technology. "The way these 'fingers' tangle, it doesn't matter how quickly the water evaporates. They are able to orient the metallic flakes in just the right position to provide the appropriate color travel from face to flop.

"This is further enhanced by an orientation or final control coat applied at reduced pressure. So there's no blotchiness or color shift, which sometimes occurs with solvent-based paints when the solvent evaporates too slowly."

Charley Hutton, renowned painter in the custom car world, says that when he switched to the *Envirobase High Performance* system, he immediately recognized the difference. "The waterborne colors were so clean and clear compared to solvent paints. I was equally impressed with how much smoother the metallics lay down."

Color consistency from mix to mix is another advantage of micro-gel technology, explains Hughes. "The pigment doesn't settle in the toner bottle because the viscosity is so high. To untangle it, all you need to do is give it a shake. Therefore, no mixing machine is required, and this enhances color consistency."

## Matching OE translucent colors with spectral grays

In the factory process for creating highly chromatic, translucent colors, the color of the undercoat contributes to the final basecoat color. PPG's innovative spectral gray process mimics this OEM approach by combining the waterborne toners and translucent pigments with a scientifically proven spectral gray (SG) undercoat system. PPG has formulated five shades of spectral grays, giving collision repair technicians the complete range needed to match today's emerging translucent colors. All of PPG's waterborne color formulas specify the optimal SG shade of undercoat, which can be retrieved from any of PPG's color formula retrieval tools.

PPG says the color-matching technologies of the *Envirobase High Performance* system have been key reasons why some 11,000-plus collision centers in North America have switched from solvent to this waterborne system.

people have today, you can do a quick evaluation of the caller while they are on the phone. If their online behavior is questionable, you can end the process here. For candidates who look great online, invite them in for the interview.

On arrival, give the applicant a job application to fill out even if they have a resume. Matter of fact, you can send them a copy of the application via email, ask them to fill it out and bring it in when they agree to come in for an interview. (An application that suits your needs can be found online, downloaded and used.)

Read over the submission for a few minutes to see what the candidate has shared so that you can use this for some of your interview questions with them. Don't be afraid to mark up the application as you interview the individual for later consideration.

If the interview goes well, I suggest gathering some of the information that you will need to bring them on board. Give a copy of your state's Department of Transportation driver's license report to the individual and have them fill it out and sign it while you make a copy of their license. It would be good to also have the applicant fill out any tax and federal paperwork that is required at this time. But give the drug test before sending these items in to save money if they fail. Taking care of this paperwork now will help make the first day at your shop easier.

When the applicant has passed the drug tests and license checks you can either have them come in or talk on a phone call about the following:

- Finalize the compensation plan: Agree on the rate that they start at. Explain to the new employee the process of bringing them into your shop and that they are going to be in a 90-day period of observation. At the end of this time they will be evaluated and possibly given a raise and benefits.
- Arrange for their tool box delivery if needed.
- Confirm with the employee start date and time, dress code and any other information if need be.

Have a plan for your new employee's first day. Don't just wing it. When you make the plan, make sure that you set aside some time with your new employee. Here are some things to consider for the first day of employment:

Introduce your new person to all the staff in the shop pointing out who the employee should go to when they have questions and/or assigning them a shop "buddy." This is done to start building the social connection that they will need to work as part of your team. They have enough to learn. Get them to the people who will teach them right.

Give the new employee a copy of your Employee Manual to read and sign. Don't have an Employee Manual or at least document? Today you need one to provide the new hire with all the details of how your shop runs including sick days, medical coverage, information on harassment in the work place, how to handle a medical emergency and so on. Your shop's philosophy and beliefs in its mission should also be part of this manual.

There are many resources online that you can use to find or build an Employee Manual or document to use in your shop. Laying out all the basics of how your shop is run, and what is expected of every employee each day, in addition to clearly explaining the employee's compensation that they will get in pay, vacation and other benefits puts everyone on an even playing field. Having your new employee read the employee handbook and sign it leaves no doubt about what goes on in your shop, so they can focus on doing the job you hired them for. Additionally, this signed document can also help you if any issues or misunderstandings come up in the future.

Shop safety should be part of the Employee Manual, but is important enough to speak about separately. Implementing a safety orientation using video, an online source or other method is best and done as soon as possible. To find one that works for you, check with your insurance company first to see if they recommend one and possibly give you a discount on your rates. You will also find other sources online to help you in this situation. Whatever method you choose, be sure that it has a test or some other indicator that proves the employee has viewed and completed the training for your records.

## Orienting a new employee

The first day of a new job can be overwhelming for even a seasoned technician. I suggest that more of the day should be spent just watching how your shop operates rather than diving into repairing vehicles. Let the new employee get an overview of your systems.

You can use this to your advantage, too. Have the individual walk around your shop and note what they see. Fresh eyes will see what you don't see anymore because you've grown accustomed to it. They may notice that the building needs some work, the shop is dirty and so on. They will see your shop as a customer would. Tell them to be honest and have them write down what they find on a tablet. Take a good look at the results and make the necessary changes.

## Shadowing

I suggest that a newer, less experience tech shadow one of your better techs for a day or so. The new tech should be informed that they just watch and ask questions but not do any work at all. As the newbie becomes more acclimated to how your shop works, then the guiding tech can start them on some smaller jobs or assist in what they are already working on.

# TACKY NETTING

## THAT INSTALLS IN MINUTES

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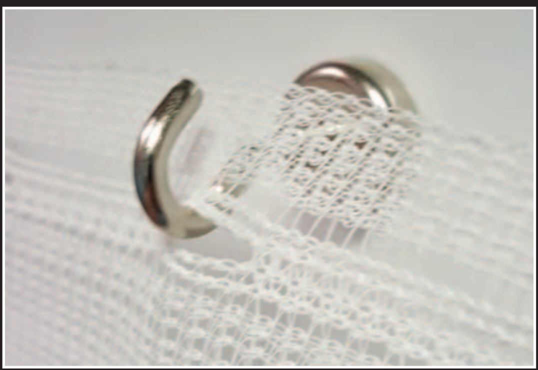
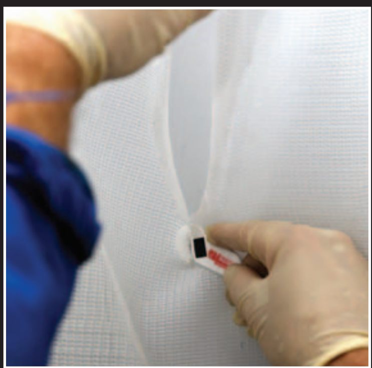
- Made of lint free monofilament nylon
- Open tack formulation stays tacky for months
- Contains flame retardant
- Size of roll 72"x160'
- AVAILABLE IN BLACK AND WHITE
- Eyelets on both top and bottom of roll
- Eyelets repeat every 2"

## NEW! TACKY NETTING TRAPS DIRT AND OVERSPRAY



Easy to install (like a shower curtain). Just hook netting thru eyelets.



Cutting the netting is easy. Just use the #555 RBL snippet cutter blade.

Bug trapped in netting.

## TESTIMONIALS

"Since we put up the netting my denibbing and polishing time is cut in half."
***- Alex Vega, Auto Firm***

"The Tacky netting is a fast and easy way to help eliminate dirt."
***- Ben C, Schottmillers Team***

"Took me 20 minutes to install. I immediately noticed a difference after the first job."
***- Rick A, Custom Colllison***

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The advantages of shadowing are many. You can prevent bad habits from starting, limit the damage that inexperience can cause and monitor their progress closely while better seeing what you need to focus on for this individual to grow into a top-tier tech.

### Checking in

At the end of the day, check in with your new tech and their guide and see how the day went. Have a discussion between the three of you and offer any observations and answers that are needed.

In the beginning, check in more often and over time, less often, unless there are behaviors or concerns that you have with the new tech that need to be addressed. You will find this is the most effective way to keep them on the right path.

### 90-day review

After 90 days, I recommend having a good one-on-one sit down session with your new hires. Go over everything from what concerns you may have, if any, and how well they have done in learning how your shop works and the quality of the work they have done. Reinforce your shop's beliefs and rules. Give them a chance to ask questions and tell you how they think they are doing. If you have a keeper, I recommend a raise and giving the person any benefits your shop might give to your employees at this time.

Another advantage of the last three steps of this process is you will be able to weed out any individual who shouldn't be working for you rather quickly and before they have a chance to do any real damage.

At this point you might be thinking that this is too much to do, that you don't have the time. Of course, you can pick and choose what will work for your shop and use it to your benefit. But with today's issues of finding good help, anytime you get a good individual, you want to do your best to keep them and train them to work like you want them to. You also want to protect yourself from any person who may not fit with your shop, eliminating them before they cause damage or cost money. Quality time spent up front with new employees will pay off in the long run, so put an onboarding process in place today for lots of better tomorrows.

**JOHN BURKHAUSER** is an auto repair specialist with more than 30 years of experience. As the Director of Education at BOLT ON TECHNOLOGY, John coaches independent and franchise repair facilities on how to grow their business using simple best practices and everyday technology, resulting in increased car count, repair order revenue and customer trust.
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# DO POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS KNOW YOUR DIFFERENCE?

## Check out your competitors to make your business stand out from the crowd

**JOHN SHOEMAKER //**
Contributing Editor

What is your difference? It is important to know your difference because that is what makes you stand out among competitors. I was recently talking with a customer about their website, comparing it to another dealership collision center in the same market. Through our discussion I found that my customer was certified and the other shop was not. Looking at their websites, I saw both had a collision tab on their dealer websites, which on the surface made them look the same. However, the difference was my customer was certified. Promoting this difference on the tab by adding the word "certified" to collision might direct more customers to my client's shop.

Maximizing your difference could result in someone driving past a competitor to go to your collision center. So, I ask again, what is your difference? Drive by a competitor's facility to see what stands out to you. Signage and building appearance makes a difference to customers; they must feel comfortable walking up to your facility. Look at their website to see what you notice in comparison to yours. There might only be subtle differences, but customers only need to recognize one thing better about you for them to choose you. It could be as simple as adding the word "Certified" to your webpage or adding an attractive picture. You just need to be different from your competitor. A friend of mine in the website business told me that wording on a website is a key factor when potential customers are making a decision, so it is important to check how your website is worded in comparison to your competitors.

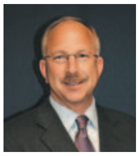
PHOTO: THINKSTOCK / DUSANVULIC

Where you advertise can be your difference, too. On a business trip, my hotel was next to a little league ball field. Since I had been in a car and shops all day, I thought it would be good to watch some baseball and get some fresh air. When I walked up to the snack bar to get a bottle of water, I saw a sign that said, “This snack bar is maintained by XXX Collision Repair Shop”. It was an average-size sign, but it was right next to the food pick-up window, exactly where people stand to wait. When I got back to the hotel I Googled the shop and found that the snack bar was painted exactly like his building. Not only did he draw attention to himself with the sign, but created immediate recognition by painting the snack bar exactly like his building and all the signage on the snack bar matched the signage on his shop in color and font.

How you market can also be your difference. I had the opportunity while attending a conference to listen to Kelly McDonald, president of McDonald Marketing, talk about her book *How to Market to People Not Like You.* Through her presentation she gave insight on how to market to those areas you are not reaching with your current methods. In her book she explains how to get to know the customer you’re not getting but should be in chapter two. In chapter five she describes how to communicate in their “language” by developing marketing messages based on their values. She continues to discuss Gen Ys, Xs and Zs and how to approach them. There are a variety of marketing books available; I enjoyed Kelly’s and believe you will, too. You can find out who you are reaching and who you are not by simply using a zip code map. Identify the zip codes your work is coming from through your management system and compare those to a zip code map of your area.

I hope you step back and take a look at your business to find that little difference you have in our industry and capitalize on it through your marketing techniques. Remember, it does not need to be anything big, just something people will notice as better, and in most cases just different.

I saw a commercial for a funeral home, and the closing statement was “We don’t want you now, we just want you to know we are here when you need us.” I think if you follow that idea in reviewing your marketing you will find a message that will help you showcase your difference.



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ASA INSIGHT

# U.S. EPA highlights today's refrigerant regulations

## Repairers must stay informed on requirements

ReceRecently the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) contacted the Automotive Service Association (ASA) regarding the importance of vehicle repairers staying informed about federal regulations governing mobile air-conditioning refrigerants. Section 609 of the Clean Air Act (CAA) governs the most important requirements affecting service technicians, shop owners, and refrigerant retailers.

EPA notes three general guidelines relative to refrigerant regulations:

**Refrigerant:** Must be approved by EPA and cannot be intentionally released (vented) to the environment.

**Servicing:** When payment of any kind is involved (including non-monetary), any person working on an MVAC (Motor Vehicle Air Conditioning) system must be certified under section 609 of the CAA and they must use approved refrigerant handling equipment.

**Reusing Refrigerant:** Refrigerant must be properly recycled or reclaimed before it can be reused, even if it is being returned to the vehicle from which it was removed.



EPA determines alternative refrigerants under its Significant New Alternatives Policy (SNAP) program. SNAP lists refrigerants as either "acceptable subject to use conditions" or "unacceptable."

In November 2016, the EPA issued a final rule updating its refrigerant management regulations. This regulation extended the sales restriction previously imposed on R-12 to other automotive refrigerants including R-134a and 1234yf. This sales restriction went into effect on Jan. 1 and applies to refrigerant containers 2 lbs and larger. Refrigerant sellers are responsible for determining that the buyer either is a certified technician or employs a certified technician.

In addition, the EPA included an exception for the DIY market to purchase small cans (less than 2 lbs) of MVAC refrigerant with self-sealing valves.

Sellers of refrigerant must maintain records indicating the name of the purchaser, date of the sale, and the quantity of the refrigerant sold. EPA notes that "these records are not required for the sale of the small cans of MVAC refrigerant with self-sealing valves." EPA also warns that "if someone other than the technician is completing the transaction, the seller must keep the documentation provided by the buyer that demonstrates that the buyer employs at least one certified technician. Selling refrigerant to someone who is not a certified technician or the technician's employer could result in enforcement action against the vendor."

EPA is planning to issue a proposed rule to "revisit aspects of the 2016's rule extension of the refrigerant management regulations to substitutes," as sales restrictions on R-134a and R-1234yf refrigerant (2 lbs or larger) remains contentious.

With regard to new vehicles, the EPA originally planned to end the use of R-134a refrigerant in new cars by the 2021 model year. This has recently been challenged in court under the argument about whether EPA has the regulatory authority to end the use of R-134a refrigerant in new cars. New products with a lower Global Warming Potential (GWP), such as R-1234yf, are already in use. We are likely to see legislation considered in the 116th Congress beginning in 2019.

Ignorance is never an acceptable excuse for non-compliance with regulations. Follow industry updates by joining industry associations, attending and fully participating in industry events, and building relationships with your industry peers. The knowledge gained is critical to the vehicle repairer's success and to the industry's credibility in the marketplace.

For more detailed information about current refrigerant regulations, go to https://www.epa.gov/mvac.

**ROBERT REDDING** is the Automotive Service Association's Washington, D.C. representative. He has served as a member of several federal and state advisory committees involved in the automotive industry. *rlredding@reddingfirm.com*

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# DRIVE EMPLOYEE INERTIA

## Keeping your staff focused, energized and productive

DAVID ROGERS // Contributing Editor

It's no secret that we're facing a technician shortage in our industry.

I could write an entire article on why we're facing this shortage and how to overcome it, but the truth is, finding and retaining quality employees has always been a challenge for shop owners.

While there are some amazing things shops are able to do using technology to make employees more effective and efficient, the keys to finding and keeping those employees is unchanged: we have to create a culture that quality employees want to be a part of, we have to hire and train the right way, and we have to empower and incentivize them to become a valuable part of our team.

These goals all work hand in hand. Building a culture of success and a team of winners both start with the same first step: finding employees who want your shop to succeed.

### Lay the groundwork early

This starts with the very first stage of the hiring process —effectively screen your candidates as thoroughly as possible. The biggest thing you're looking for? Character.

You can teach someone how to replace a bumper, but you can't teach an employee how to be a good person — an honest, hard-working person who will be an asset to you and your shop.

Quality people are an invaluable natural resource, and just like drilling for oil, you need to put in a good amount of time and effort to obtain them!

You should always use a set of written questions when conducting initial job interviews – you need to have consistency in what you're asking the various applicants you're sorting through. The more questions you can ask, and the more you're able to learn up front, the better.

In addition to learning about their work history and experience, you've got to look for red flags. Do they waver when you ask them about having an up-to-date ASE certification? Red flag. Are they reluctant to explain why they left their previous job? Red flag. Do they immediately ask about your recreational drug use policies? Red flag.

The more interviews you do, the better you'll get at identifying who will be a motivated, hard-working staff member and who will be a liability. Remember – be selective. You should be as picky as possible.

PHOTO: GETTYIMAGES / MICHAELJUNG



### Train, train, train!

Once you've hired a new employee, you should spend as much time possible training them during the first couple of weeks. A new employee needs to learn both the what and why of your processes and procedures.

You need to explain the reasons why your shop does things a certain way, especially if they're veterans of other shops and have picked up some bad habits at some point in their career.

For example, at our shop, we do a thorough inspection of every car we service, no matter what the car came in for. The reason? If that customer gets in an accident after leaving our shop, we could end up liable (the law has proven this time and time again).

Some techs don't want to do more work than they absolutely must, but this is a policy we insist on. Teaching that new tech why you have your policy, how that policy protects them, and even how that policy increases their paycheck are all critical parts of creating motivated team players.

For service writers, making sure they fully understand your shop's policies and procedures is even more important.

Having an advisor who works on the front lines of your business, not completely aware of your shop's procedures, will cost you customers and money. I've seen it in hundreds of shops.

Your shop's communication flow and policies need to be made crystal clear. What are the shop's hours? What time should employees clock in and out? What is your dress code? What is the policy on cell phone use during business hours? All these things need to be issued in writing and discussed with new staff members on their very first day.

Disciplinary guidelines should also be outlined early in an employee's tenure with your shop. How many strikes an employee receives, what the penalties are for various offenses – all these things should be clearly expressed.

Just as important is enforcing those policies and procedures. The second you see an employee breaking policy, it needs to be corrected. It helps your team understand that your policies aren't suggestions – they're a critical part of making sure your shop runs efficiently and safely and makes everyone money.

### (Em)power up!

In addition to having your policies and procedures outlined and explained meticulously, you need to establish a culture of employee empowerment that new hires can buy into once they've been trained properly.

Measurement is a key part of this. Measuring your team's performance helps you retain good employees, plain and simple.

Imagine playing football when you can't see the field and don't know the score. You probably wouldn't play, would you?

This is how winners think. They want to be measured. They want to be held accountable. In no small part, because measurement should go hand in hand with an incentive-based pay plan that rewards their achievements.

There's a big caveat here: incentive-based pay plans aren't something to play with lightly. Incentivizing the wrong number or using the wrong benchmark can ruin an employee and destroy a shop.

### Set a good example

If honesty, integrity and dedication are the traits you'd want your employees to have, you must show them yourself. Be open, direct and fair with your staff and they'll follow your lead.

If things do start to slide, take ownership of the cultural changes that are harming your shop's productivity. Recommit yourself to staying more on top of the day-to-day happenings of your business and make sure this is broadcast for all to know.

Good leadership, good hiring/training procedures and good measurement/incentive systems are the keys to finding, hiring and retaining a motivated team…now motivate yourself to make it happen!

**DAVID ROGERS** is chief operating officer of Keller Bros. Inc., president of Auto Profit Masters and president of Shop 4D, the industry's first Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled, self-learning system for proactively managing repairs, customers, marketing, profits and employees. *contact@shop4d.com*

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# GOING DOWN WITH A BOOM

## Baby Boomers are sinking your ship

CHRIS FREDERICK // Contributing Editor

I have been in the automotive industry for over 40 years now, and the one thing I can say that has never changed, is change itself. For example, cars are being built so much better. Consumers are more educated and more demanding than ever, as the internet has become the go-to for almost everything. Technology, hybrids and electric vehicles are totally changing the game. Following OEM repair standards has become vital for safe vehicle repairs. These are the obvious changes, but what about the not-so-obvious ones? The not-so-obvious changes are usually the most vital changes to focus on. Conversely, they are often the most difficult to overcome. I was listening to one of our 28 full-time coaches who helped me start ATI, Geoff Berman, share with a class he was teaching on interviewing technicians. I thought you would want to hear what he said.

### Stop technician recruiting frustration

According to Pew Research Center, Baby Boomers are retiring at a rate of 10,000 a day and have been since Jan. 1, 2011. This trend will continue until Dec. 31, 2030. In my 30-plus years in this business, I have never experienced a more difficult time than now to find good, qualified staff. The consensus from the shop owners I speak with is the same.

When I ask, I always get the same answers. "There aren't as many vo-tech schools out there." "No one wants to work in our industry." "The schools are pushing all the kids into college." "If they aren't headed to college they are going into the computer field." And the list goes on and on. My answer is always the same. These are the same challenges we have faced for the last 20-plus years. None of this is new. We are still seeing the same 5 percent coming into our industry that we always have. What has changed? What has created this giant hole in our labor pool? Most can't answer that question because the answer is not that obvious. Or is it?

Every blue-collar industry out there is facing the same challenges. They can't find good, qualified staff. This means plumbers, electricians, HVAC companies, truck drivers, machine operators, etc., all desperately need skilled laborers. We all have the same challenge and for the

PHOTO: GETTYIMAGES / GPOINTSTUDIO

same reason. Baby Boomers are retiring.

Now without doing the numbers, this may not seem as big a deal as it really is, so let's take a look. In January 2008 EveryCRSReport.com reported that 55.5 percent of the labor force for repair and maintenance business across the country was made up of Baby Boomers. Think about that. More than half of our industry is made up of Baby Boomers and over the next 12 years they will be gone. Ever wonder why the same people you don't want to hire keep answering your ads (the ones I call the leftovers). These are the ones no one will hire. There are so few good ones left you'll never get them, because their employers will do anything to keep them. Wouldn't you?

If you think it is tough to find people now, you ain't seen nothin' yet. From today on, this is a 20-year challenge. My guess is that up to 25 percent of the current shops out there will go out of business for no other reason than they can't find qualified staff. I bet if you give it some thought, you can think of one or two shops that have already closed for this same reason. Will you be next? The bulk of the rest will hang on by their fingernails and survive. But there will be a smattering of shops that see it coming and will do something about it. These are the shops that will thrive during this time because they have figured out they can't keep doing the same things they did 20 years ago to find staff. The world around them and their challenges have changed, and so must they.

There are many things that must change, but there are two very important things that any shop must consider if they want to be one of those shops that thrive, not just survive, during this mass exodus from our industry.

Most shop owners make the mistake of only advertising when they have a position to fill. You place an ad or two online, or in print. Maybe you talk to the tool guys or other industry people when it occurs to you. This may have worked in the past, but it is unlikely to work now. All it will do is attract the leftovers. The ones you don't want. Remember, the ones you want already have good jobs. They aren't looking at those ads. You need to find other ways to attract them.

## Recruiting vs. advertising

The first way is recruiting. There is a very big difference between advertising and recruiting. Recruiting is the act of attracting, engaging, assessing and onboarding talent. The key is in the attracting and engaging. This is time consuming, though. It is not one interaction. It could take months or even years of networking and staying in touch with any potential candidate before they decide to come onboard. I'm sure you have experienced something like this in your career already. Ask yourself, was it deliberate or did it happen by accident? I'm suggesting that you make this deliberate. Go look at qualified past applicants, call them up periodically, and stay in touch. One day, something will happen in his current position and he will think, "I'm out of here." When he does, who's he going to call?

The second thing is a big shift that is hard for most. You must learn to stop looking for people only when you need them, but to always be looking. If you have embraced recruiting in the manner I have suggested, then you will have many opportunities for interviews. Interview everyone, especially when you're not hiring. This gives you the opportunity to start the recruiting process and stay in touch with the ones you like. This also gives you another opportunity. If you're asking the right questions in your interview, you will also find other potential recruits through the relationships they have. If done right and done consistently, you will easily be able to grow your bench, and before you know it, the best of what is left will find themselves on your team.

## Help them get what they want

Now I must be clear about one very important thing. What I have suggested here will only take you so far. You must have a shop environment that attracts the people you want. These are good people who are fed up with the way their current employer runs his shop and the way they are treated. They are looking for something better. The money that has been thrown at them time and time again is no longer adequate, because nothing has really changed. Promises have been broken too many times in their current position. Promotions, raises, equipment and the lists go on! You must provide a path to what they are looking for and they will find it easier to make that change. You must discover what they really are looking for through the interview process and they need to see you as that solution. If they do, it is only a matter of time before they decide to come aboard.

## Technician recruiting questions to always ask

Many shop owners get frustrated with the interview process. One reason for that is the difficulty in knowing what questions to ask to get the person you really want. If you skip these questions you run the risk of hiring the wrong person, which will cost you more money in the long run than turning down work today. These questions will work for hiring advisors, managers, bookkeepers or technicians. Let's make it easy for you. Simply go to www.ationlinetraining.com/2018-10 for a limited time to receive the questions that make the difference in finding that "right" new employee.

**CHRIS "CHUBBY" FREDERICK** is the CEO and founder of the Automotive Training Institute. ATI's 130 full-time associates train and coach more than 1,500 shop owners every week across North America to drive profits and dreams home to their families. Our full-time coaches have helped our members earn over one billion dollars in a return on their coaching investment since ATI was founded. This month's article was written with the help of ATI Coach Eric Twiggs.
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SHOP PROFILE

# With a sense of urgency

## Pride in quality, adherence to repair efficiencies drive growth at Colorado shops

**JAMES E. GUYETTE** // Contributing Editor

### CARSTAR ALPINE AUTO BODY

Aurora, Colo. // www.alpinecarstar.com

**Gary Boesel**
Owner

**2**
No. of shops

**37**
Years in business

**54**
No. of employees

**18,000**
Total square footage of Alpine shop

**9.2 days**
Average cycle time at Alpine shop

**$2,500**
Average repair order

**85**
No. of customer vehicles per week

**$10 million**
Annual gross revenue

**Axalta**
Paint supplier

Maintaining a "sense of urgency" is a recurring theme throughout Gary Boesel's two Colorado CARSTAR outlets. "One of the things we take pride in is a sense of urgency with pride in quality," he points out. "The success of the company is built on our efficiencies, and if you don't have that sense of urgency in this business you're going to get left behind."

This focus on efficiencies is greatly enhanced through the shops' affiliation with a major collision repair organization. "The CARSTAR processes have allowed me to grow my business," says Boesel, generating income in a manner that "I wouldn't be able to do as an independent business. The networking opportunities have allowed me to be a part of a larger operation while still retaining independent ownership."

In business for 37-plus years, Boesel began to realize real success 26 years ago upon joining the CARSTAR ranks.

"By the late 1980s I had taken over the building next door and added another 1,500 square feet, and was quickly realizing I could fix cars – but I was lacking in the 'business' side of things," he recounts. "In late 1991 a man named Lirel Holt walked into my store, and that became a pivotal moment of my professional career."

Holt, CARSTAR's founder, "talked to me about the benefits of joining a relatively new concept of bringing stores together for networking and common systems, processes and training to better the industry. I knew that could help me run my business, and I joined in March 1992. I still speak with Lirel on occasion today and consider him my first true mentor. From that time forward I worked to improve my office systems and the company began to grow quickly."

CARSTAR's Margaret Ray, who is retired but still offers consulting advice, has been another important influence. "She taught me about the value of running the business by the numbers and about making business decisions based on real numbers. As Margaret would say, 'Numbers are your friend!'"

Ed Gapsch, who has retired from owning a CARSTAR store in St. Louis, was another source of support and wisdom, having connected with Boesel at the chain's Financial Focus Group meetings. "Ed and I became very good friends over the years, and he taught me many things about running a successful business."

Boesel says his shops are "customer-focused, but insurance-friendly." "My staff knows my philosophy that our top priority is to service our customers at a high level, so we have to maintain positive insurance relationships as working with the insurers is part of the path to customer satisfaction."

He notes that "we have all the same challenges in working in the insurance environment today that other stores have, but we work hard at open communication mixed with knowledge and documentation. As a whole we pride ourselves on our reputation as a shop that any insurance representative can walk into

PHOTOS: CARSTAR ALPINE AUTO BODY

and be treated respectfully while knowing that we represent our customers fairly while balancing insurance company or policyholder guidelines."

Cooperating with suppliers is another priority. "We have worked with many of our vendors for many years, so our service expectations of them – and them of us – create smoother interactions. Having good systems in place to provide accurate orders with good information has helped strengthen our parts relationships over the years as well. We have utilized Finishmaster for over 25 years to supply our paint and materials, so our relationship there is very strong."

Finishmaster's line of environmentally safe cleaning products is part of an overall pollution-reduction program designed to benefit employees and customers alike. Waterborne paints have been applied for many years, six Total Automotive Sanding Systems from 3M are on duty at both shops, and all paper and metal waste is diligently recycled.

"Our employees genuinely care about our customer safety and satisfaction. We work hard to follow proper repair procedures and provide high quality customer service," says Gary.

"The first thing I look for is character" when interviewing a potential new hire, who has to display the quality of being a team player and "be willing to accept the culture that we've built. If they have that, we'll improve their skills through training and give them room to grow."

## An ambitious schedule

It was Boesel's late father Wes who initially inspired him to enter the repair business. Wes was an auto racer who frequently tended to his competitive vehicles throughout Boesel's childhood. "By the time I was 14, I was doing bodywork and painting cars. I began racing cars and continued with my passion for cars until I landed my first job in a small body shop when I was 16 years old."

Here he set about to "learn the trade"


and "began to understand the 'retail' side of the industry," studying estimates and repair orders to better grasp the reasoning behind cycle times and how "repair versus replace" decisions are made.

"I worked at that shop until I was 21, and made the decision to try it on my own."

In 1981 he leased a 2,750 sq-ft. shop and in short order hired his brother-in-law Wayne Houston as his first employee, who went on to work with him for 35 years until retiring last year. Over the next decade, Boesel took over the neighboring building, expanding to 4,700 sq-ft. while bringing on 11 more employees and establishing productive relationships with insurance providers.

"I did the 'traditional' 12- to 14-hour days for many years as I grew and added staffing." His two sons followed a similar path; one now works in Boesel's parts department and the other owns a paintless dent repair operation, providing services to Alpine, Jordan Road and other area shops.

By 1999 annual sales had climbed to $1.7 million, marking a pattern of consistent growth that resulted in a relocation in 2000 to a 13,500 sq-ft facility along with continuing staffing increases.

As annual sales at Alpine — Boesel's original shop — rose to $4 million, "In 2007 I decided to open another location and purchased an existing 16,500 sq-ft shop that had large growth potential. That store has grown from a 10-employee operation to a 28-person operation and is doing well. I currently work between stores focusing on HR and administrative responsibilities while overseeing daily operations from the top level," he reports.

"While the recession of 2007-2008 was a difficult time to grow a new store, we worked hard to implement all of the CARSTAR systems and business began to grow. First-year sales exceeded $1.5 million, and by 2015 sales at that location had climbed to over $4 million," he says.

In 2016 an additional 5,000 sq-ft was purchased to expand the Alpine shop, which helped the company exceed $5 million in annual sales in 2016 and 2017. "The past three years have continued to show growth while stabilizing due to capacity," says Gary.

"Having been in business for over 37 years, I am fortunate to have a very supportive wife, Stacy, who helps me keep life balanced. She's my best friend and my rock – and my business partner," specializing in marketing the company and coordinating an ambitious schedule of charity events that the business presents to aid in the fight against cystic fibrosis.

During the summer of 2018, the shop raised $28,000 on behalf of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, including $15,000 in donations obtained through a single golf outing.

**JAMES E. GUYETTE** is a long-time contributing editor to *ABRN*, *Aftermarket Business World* and *Motor Age* magazines.
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# Girls have changed — not are changing — the world

## RECOGNIZING THE PROGRESS MADE TODAY KEEPS THE IMPACT OF WOMEN PRESENT, RATHER THAN SOMETHING WE WILL SEE SOMEDAY DOWN THE ROAD

**MIKE JONES** // Contributing Editor

Girls are going to change the world. And I invite you to not wait for this change to occur, but to deliberately drive it, welcome it and embrace that change.

As women begin to further close the gender gap in economics, education, politics, health and break through glass ceilings and limitations placed on them, you will become aware that the true insanity is in the sanity. The sanity, or normal thinking, would say that men are superior, stronger, smarter, the head of the house. When I am pointed to the source of these beliefs, my awareness is who the author is. All I need to do is check the author to figure out who is pushing the message and whether there is any bias.

One day my 9-year-old stepdaughter Sophia came downstairs with a T-shirt on that said, "Girls will change the world." Why is there a need for women to fight for equality? Who are they fighting against? Whose permission do they need for that equality to be a reality?

Girls are indeed changing the world, and it is a change that is long overdue, and it is occurring too slowly in the collision industry. Women only make up 9.6 percent of the people working in the automotive repair and maintenance industry. In 2018, only 16 women (8 percent) were executives in the top 20 motor vehicle and parts companies in the Fortune Global 500. This is a small change from 14 women (7 percent) in 2014.

Over half (56 percent) of C-Suite leaders in the global automotive industry point to women as a critical pool of underutilized talent.

The reality that we are experiencing needs to switch from "changing" to "changed" the world. As long as there is an "ing," the change remains a "someday" conversation. It is time for that change to occur today.

We don't need a presidential edict or laws from some legislative body to make this change happen. We do not need to sign off on some checklist that says X, Y and Z need to be done first. This is simply a matter of doing the right thing.

Many of us grew up learning and embracing the Golden Rule, which says: "Treat me the way you want to be treated." As we make a stronger commitment to do the right thing and eliminate the gender gap, I believe we should embrace the Platinum Rule: "Treat me the way I want to be treated."

It is time for us to stop pontificating about this change. It is time for us to stop making excuses. It is time for us to lose "wait," delaying change based on a false need to do things the right way. Clearly it is possible to do the wrong thing right because it is what we have done and continue to do as we:

- Wait for the right time
- Wait for the right resources
- Wait for the right person
- Wait for the right reason
- Wait for the right process

As we wait, a persistent global gap continues to exist. In fact, 36 percent of U.S. companies have zero women on their board of directors. In Canada, women have only 5.7 percent of the CEO positions; however, evidence has revealed that gender-mixed leadership teams actually produce higher profits.

According to one study that compared similar-sized businesses, those companies with women on their boards outperformed those with all-male boards by 26 percent.

Men believe themselves to be good providers; however, our best role model of an excellent provider is a woman. A woman provided you:

- with your first home
- with your first meal
- your first unconditional love
- your first nurturing relationship
- your first hug
- your first kiss
- your first safe place

Now it is time we provide women with a fair opportunity to a level playing field without a glass ceiling or other limitations and excuses. The world will be a better place as a result.

Regardless of your position, title, gender, education level or socio-economic status, what will you do today to bridge the gap?

**MIKE JONES** is the founder and president of Discover Leadership Training, a next-level leadership development solutions company in Houston, Texas. He encourages others to create a better version of themselves by realizing their untapped potential.
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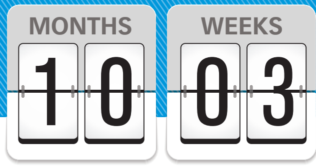
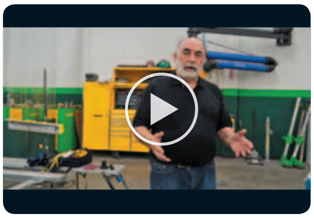
COUNTDOWN TO
**ATLANTA**




# WATCH + LEARN



Maintenance and setup for MIG/MAG welders

ABRN.COM/WeldMaintenance


What apprentice techs need to stay in the industry

ABRN.COM/Retain


What drives your parts buying decision?

ABRN.COM/PartsBuy

The importance of pre- and post-repair scanning

ABRN.COM/MustScan

# MECHANICAL MOMENT

**SERVICE REPAIR PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS THAT JUST MIGHT BENEFIT YOUR SHOP TECHNICIANS**

## JEEP REAR HATCH OPEN WHEN SHIFTED INTO REVERSE

**VEHICLE:** 2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee, 4WD, 3.6L V6

**MILEAGE** 38,602

**PROBLEM:** The power lift gate (hatch) will intermittently unlock and open when shifted into reverse.

**DETAILS:** First, the Tech-Assist consultant suggested using a scan tool to check the activation status in the power lift-gate module to confirm if module did receive a signal (from the handle switch, interior switch or key fob). It was receiving a signal to open the lift-gate from all sources.

Next, the consultant suggested checking the BCM trunk release PID data. It was switching from pressed to not pressed on its own. The next step was to unplug all the door switches. The BCM was still receiving a signal to open.

**CONFIRMED REPAIR:** The Tech-Assist consultant suggested opening the BCM for inspection. When he did, the tech found evidence of water intrusion and some corrosion on the circuit board.

Replacing the BCM fixed this one.

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***This tech tip and others come from ALLDATA Tech-Assist, a diagnostics hotline of ASE-certified Master Technicians.***

***Whatever technicians need — from creating alternative diagnostic strategies to providing step-by-step repair assistance — the Tech-Assist team can deliver.***

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# TRAINING EVENTS

**OCTOBER 3**
**I-CAR: Aluminum Exterior Panel Repair and Replacement**
***Stuart Career Center***
Baytown, Texas

**OCTOBER 12**
**ASA Illinois Leadership Summit**
***Westwood Tavern***
Schaumburg, Illinois

**OCTOBER 19-21**
**Management Success West**
***Sheraton Fairplex Hotel***
Pomona, California

**OCTOBER 29-NOVEMBER 2**
**Society of Collision Repair Specialists — Repairer Driven Education**
***Las Vegas Convention Center***
Las Vegas, Nevada

**OCTOBER 30**
**Collision Industry Conference**
***Renaissance Hotel***
Las Vegas, Nevada

**OCTOBER 30-NOVEMBER 2**
**SEMA 2018**
***Las Vegas Convention Center***
Las Vegas, Nevada

**JANUARY 16-17**
**Collision Industry Conference**
***Palm Springs Hilton***
Palm Springs, California

**APRIL 17-18**
**Collision Industry Conference**
***Gaylord Opryland Resort***
Nashville, Tennessee

# ADAS is not a four-letter word!

## ADVANCED DRIVER ASSISTANCE SYSTEMS REQUIRE BETTER EDUCATION AND UNDERSTANDING

**CHRIS CHESNEY** //Contributing Editor

Technology is being deployed rapidly in today's vehicles; capabilities such as sonar and radar have been prevalent for years, but with the introduction of forward-facing cameras and the fusion of sensor technologies, the chance you'll see one in your service bay is high. Many of you have experienced the sonar warning features that prevent you from bumping into the car behind you, or the vehicle next to you when parking. Located behind the bumper covers of millions of vehicles, these systems have become common place. Another common technology is the adaptive cruise control systems that use forward-facing short and long-range radar to keep a safe distance between you and the vehicles in front of you.

Then came the introduction of technologies like lane departure warning, autonomous park assist and autonomous emergency braking. These technologies are being adopted at a rapid pace led, by autonomous emergency braking, or AEB, which today numbers more than 18 million worldwide. It's interesting to note that the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) was poised to mandate AEB, but was approached by the OEMs with a proposal of voluntary commitment by 20 manufacturers to implement AEB on all vehicles sold in North America by September 2022. What does this mean for you? It means in order to be service ready for your customers, you must be able to service these systems properly before they arrive at your business.

This opportunity has presented itself to us many times before in the form of ABS, Stability Control, TPMS, etc. If you recall, these systems tended to be fairly robust and didn't cause too much stress for many years, giving us a chance to learn our way through them. But in the case of ADAS systems, we have a question of when to service or calibrate that must be answered. There is no doubt we as an industry can handle this technology just like we have with others in the past, however, this time we need to be better educated going in due to the passive nature of these systems. By passive I am referring to the fact that ADAS systems, while constantly monitoring and adjusting, are not reacting in a visible or noticeable way until there is a need to do so. This means if we have not adjusted or calibrated the technologies properly, there is a chance these systems will over-react or under-react to the situation at hand. Either of these conditions could result in an accident or harm to the motorist. While liability is in play here, the fact is the OEMs have invested tremendous capital to validate the technologies and to create robust failure modes that keep motorists safe. However, this means we need to follow the processes they have designed when servicing and calibrating ADAS systems.

In order to understand how to calibrate ADAS systems, it is best to start with the basics. In most all cases the first step in a calibration is to locate the centerline of the vehicle; how this is accomplished differs by OEM. Some use fixtures attached to alignment machines, while others use a simple plumb bob and tape measure coupled with some simple trigonometry. Remember when the teacher told you to pay attention during math class? This is why.

Now is a good time to make a statement about following OE process. I agree that it is important to follow the processes spelled out by the OEM. During many calibration or service procedures, the OEM first describes how to find the centerline of the vehicle followed by the placement of a target used to calibrate the technology; i.e. camera or radar, followed by the initiation of the calibration via the use of a scan tool. Essentially, three critical steps that must be accomplished with accuracy, however, let's take a look at what the OEM is asking us to do.

When asked to find the centerline of the vehicle it is critical to understand why; sensors are attached to the vehicle, so it should be obvious that they need to know which way the vehicle is pointed or traveling. Most calibrations are designed to use targets placed in a precise spot relative to the center line of the vehicle. But there are a couple caveats to consider. First is how does the Steering Angle Sensor (SAS) relate to the centerline? Answer; it is critical, which means if you adjust the SAS during an alignment, you may need to calibrate ADAS sensors as well. Second, the critical part of this step is to find the centerline of the vehicle. If you look at how Honda or Toyota define this process, you can quickly see that it is simple trigonometry. Toyota has you hold the string of a plumb bob on the center of the Toyota emblem on the hood or trunk of their vehicle to find the center of the front or rear, then snapping a chalk line between the two establishes the centerline. This is followed by measuring a prescribed distance from the front plumb bob point to find two center points where you use a string of a prescribed distance and a marker to scribe an arc. Where the two arcs intersect on either side of the centerline is the point you will place a target. Pretty simple, right? However, there are several aftermarket target solutions that use lasers, tape measures and fixtures to do the same but in a similar method for multiple makes of vehicles. Is one better than the other? The answer is no as long as the result is placing the target in the proper position relative to the centerline of the vehicle.

Next you need targets; the OEM prescribes a specific target of a particular size, shape and pattern to be placed in the spot we described above. The challenge is to find these targets; if you try to buy them from the OEM, you'll find there is a challenge in availability. Many manufacturers simply don't have them in stock. Or, you'll discover the OEM provides them in their technical information system with printing instructions. This makes it easy to access but comes with a word of warning; READ THE PRINTING INSTRUCTIONS!! You can search YouTube for examples of someone not reading the instructions, placing the printed target in the wrong location and still getting the controller to accept the calibration. There are several aftermarket target solutions on the market that are exact replicas of the OEM target. They are robust and come with the fixtures needed to place them in the proper position. Some will argue that you must use an OE target to be successful. The fact of the matter is the vehicle controller doesn't care as long is it is a target that is the same size, shape and pattern and it's placed in the proper position.

Finally, you will need to initiate the calibration. This is often accomplished by reading information displayed on the dash. Factory service information or the equivalent is a good source of this technique. However most require or can use a scan tool. It is critical to understand that the scan tool does not do the calibration of the sensor or technology; it is simply the messenger of the request you are sending to the onboard controller. This means that an aftermarket scan tool that implemented the requests it acquired from the OEM via either ETI or the OEM directly will work successfully. Of course, there are scan tools that won't implement properly, and the result will be no calibration.

At the end of the day, there are some unknowns regarding aftermarket tools and targets when calibrating ADAS technologies. The aftermarket needs to do a better job of providing information that gives shop owners and technicians confidence in the products, and the OEMs need to consider those situations where aftermarket tools, if implemented properly, will result in an accurate calibration by way of adding the statement "or equivalent" to their position statements. It is process that is king, and as long as you find the centerline of the vehicle, place the target that is the right size, shape and pattern in the proper position and initiate the calibration properly, the system will operate as designed. After all, we currently install aftermarket brake pads and ABS accumulators and Steering Angle Sensors and program immobilizer controllers and engine controllers using aftermarket scan tools. If we keep the fundamentals of the technologies in focus, we'll all be successful.

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## YOU NEED BATTERY SUPPORT WHEN SCANNING

**ASTECH //**
Contributing Company

When a vehicle is brought in for repairs, a pre-scan of the vehicle can identify all of the Diagnostic Trouble Codes (DTC) present. However; often due to the condition of the vehicle, the battery is showing a low voltage, which may not allow all of the modules to be read, thus affecting the quality of the scan and the accuracy of the report. Battery support is necessary when scanning a vehicle.

Provide proper battery support before beginning the scan process. A battery voltage maintainer is the best choice. Battery chargers or a jump box are not recommended. Battery chargers can overcharge and "cook" a battery, and jump boxes can go dead or lose their charge over time.

The car should be in "key on-engine off" (KOEO) mode, and the battery must be supported and kept at a constant voltage. If the battery voltage drops below certain levels, the battery will start to shut down non-essential modules to preserve the ability to start the car. The scan tool might not be able to read all of the available modules. Proper battery support will ensure that the battery will provide consistent voltage, which will allow the technician to provide the highest quality report and information for the repair facility.

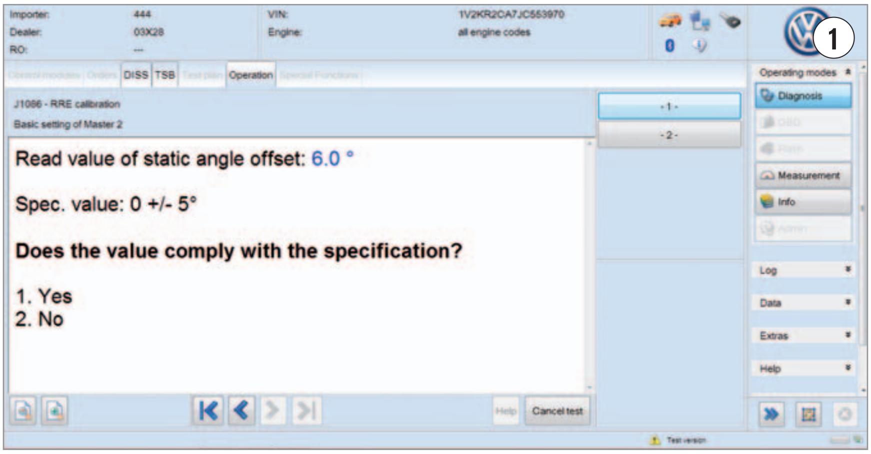
# A NEW REPAIR AGE

## SHOPS AND TECHNICIANS NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT YESTERDAY'S REPAIRS WON'T WORK ON TODAY'S VEHICLES

**BOB HEIPP // Contributing Editor**

There are many traditional repairs that are just not viable today. This is becoming more and more evident with ADAS (advanced driver support systems), especially as they evolve. Recently I was helping perform a blind spot calibration at the MAS (Mobile Auto Solutions) calibration center on a 2018 VW Atlas. The vehicle was damaged in the sensor area. The initial calibration showed the sensor to be at 6 degrees (Figure 1), the spec is +/-5 degrees. Needing to remove the bumper cover for inspection, we found that the quarter panel had obviously been repaired (Figure 2). This got me thinking about how many repairs we find today that were at one time acceptable to the shop and the insurance companies. With the onset of ADAS, all parties must understand that repair standards have to change. My goal in this article is to show examples of repairs that illustrate why body shops and insurance companies must adapt to the new higher standards set forth by the OEMs.

I'll start with the Atlas from above. The repairs already performed to the quarter panel were exceptional for a vehicle without any ADAS-type features; it was not sufficient for the calibration to pass. In this case, after the bumper cover was removed, the quarter panel was able to be adjusted enough, which brought the sensor into spec, using a mallet.

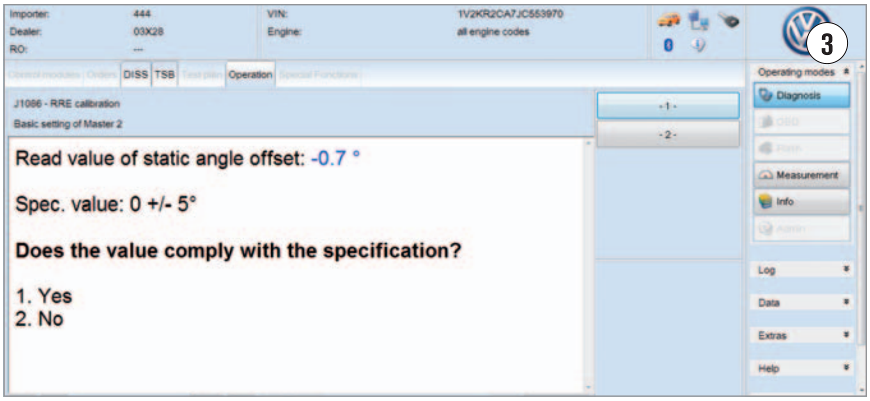



Normally blind spot calibrations performed by MAS are performed at the body shop location; however, due to the complexity of VW/Audi ADAS alignment systems, the calibration tools are not portable. This requires the vehicle to be brought to our calibration center. Everyone who works for us has worked in the mechanical repair field and all are highly skilled with electronics — we are not body techs. Since the vehicle is at our location, we are forced to become body techs, unless the vehicle is towed back and forth numerous times, which is not acceptable to us. Pulling a bumper cover is not that big of a deal, I've had to do that just to replace a timing belt years ago. The real trick is to bend metal without it looking unprofessional. I initially start tapping very carefully. After performing the calibration a couple times without any noticeable change, I start smacking the quarter panel like a lumberjack looking to take down a sequoia. In the end, this sensor is calibrated to .7 degrees (Figure 3).

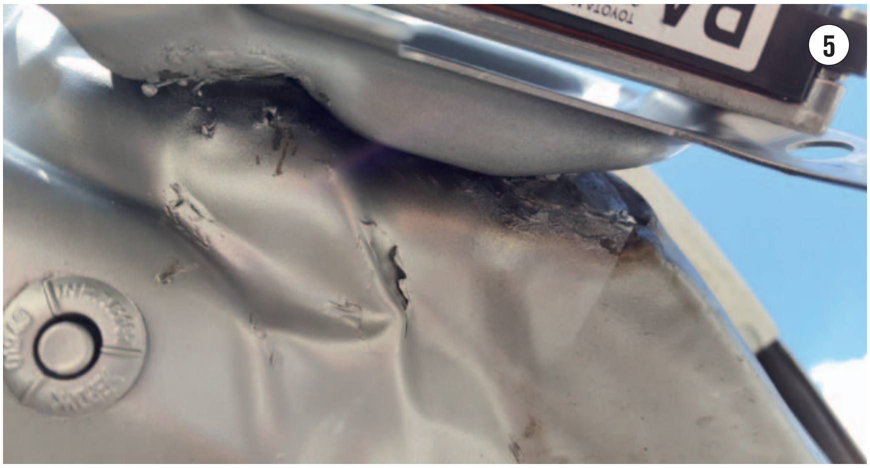

Another example of a vehicle MAS has worked on was a 2010 Toyota Rav4. We were called out to perform a BSM (blind spot monitor) calibration. The sensor was unable to find the target, resulting in the bumper being removed.

As shown in Figures 4 and 5, the quarter panel is still visibly damaged;

PHOTOS: BOB HEIPP









the sensor bracket was welded on but the area was never painted or completed. This is a case where we told the shop to repair the area properly and call us back when ready for the calibration.

Another Toyota that I looked at was a 2015 Rav4; the shop also requested a BSM calibration. The shop stated that it had been a year since they had performed repairs and were sure that this issue was not related. I set up and ran the calibration only to find that it failed. I instructed the shop to remove the bumper and once again found visible damage in the sensor area.

After looking at the estimate for the repairs, I noticed the vehicle had only been driven about 1,500 miles over the last year. These sensors are, from my understanding and codes that I've seen, in a constant state of self-test and self-calibration verification. I assured the shop that this was related damage, since many times calibration-related faults appear after the vehicle is driven for a while.

I assisted the body tech in straightening the quarter panel to a point that the calibration passed at .7 degrees, well within the published spec of +/- 3.6 degrees.

One shop called us out to perform a wiring repair on a 2017 Subaru Forester for the BSM connector. Before the wiring repair was made, I pointed out that the sensor appears to be visually out of place (Figure 6). If I had not paid attention, this vehicle would have been delivered and could have been potentially hazardous to a driver relying on this system.

The most recent ADAS calibration that MAS encountered was on a 2018 Honda Accord. The shop said that there were several ADAS warning messages displayed and requested an inspection. Upon an initial scan we found that the millimeter wave radar sensor was in need of a calibration. When the calibration failed, the tech asked that the bumper be removed so he could inspect or adjust the sensor. Once the bumper was removed, work stopped and the general manager was informed of the work that needed to be performed (Figure 7).

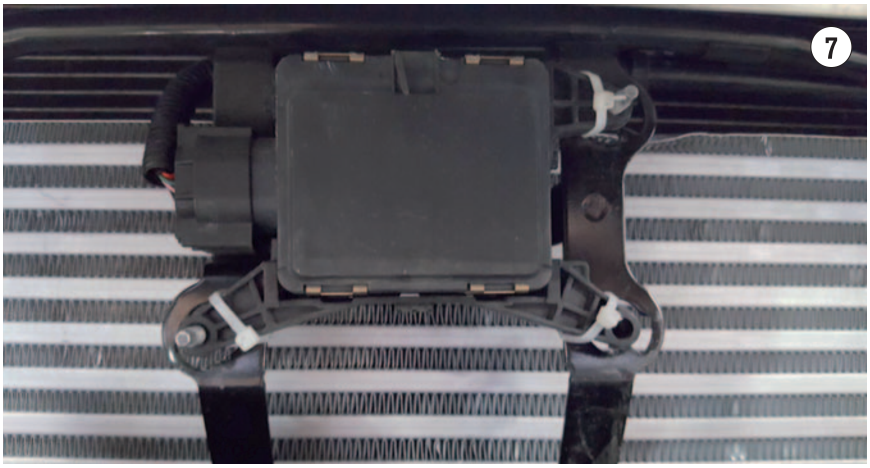
Those who follow us on Facebook have already seen this photo. This type of repair is completely unacceptable and should never be performed on a vehicle like this. These types of repairs and lack of proper inspections with OEM equipment and qualified personnel put people's lives in jeopardy.

What are some of the options that are available to shops so that these issues are avoided? First, a pre-scan of the vehicle would give an indication of a problem that needs further attention. Second, a tear-down process would ensure that the estimator is working with the body tech so these issues can be resolved during the repair process. We have a number of shops that will include MAS in the repair process to ensure that the calibration will pass without any disassembly after completion. This way of repairing the vehicle has proven to these shops to help drop cycle time, sometimes dramatically.

With the advent of ADAS systems, it is becoming more important than ever to change how we address vehicle repairs. We must be sure the vehicles are leaving with the proper OEM service procedures followed, including any required calibrations.

I have laid out a few examples of vehicles that appeared to be repaired properly but ended up having potentially life-threatening consequences. They illustrate how yesterday's repairs are not measuring up to today's requirements. As time goes on, we are going to see a need to slow the process down a little to ensure a properly repaired vehicle.

Take the time to verify the repair procedure with OEM service information before the start of the repair process. Someday in the near future, the use of new OEM parts will be a requirement, as well as having access to OEM scan tools and calibration tooling becoming the new normal. Finding the people to fill these needs has already become disturbingly difficult.





**ONE WAY TO ENSURE A PROPER REPAIR** is to employ a tool such as the Matrix Wand (in use above and below). It was a very easy process to determine how far out the quarter panel was. Once it is mapped out, the process to bring the BSM sensor into spec was rather quick. I've not seen the Spanesi Touch in action on one of these repairs, but I think it has the ability for similar end results.



**BOB HEIPP** is the Chicago Area Technician Manager for Mobile Auto Service, which services nearly 1,295 shops in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin. He is also an industry trainer and contributor to the Remarkable Results podcast.
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# RESONATION DIAGNOSTICS


## BE SURE POST-ACCIDENT REPAIRS ARE DONE CORRECTLY, AS THEY COULD COME BACK TO HAUNT YOU

**JOHN ANELLO** // Contributing Editor

I was called to a shop to calibrate the headlight control system on a 2016 Audi A3 with about 18,000 miles on it that was recently involved in a front-end crash (Figure 1).

This is not an uncommon practice on most vehicles today with advanced headlight control systems. The internal motors in the headlights will move the headlight beams vertically or horizontally while the car is in motion depending on the position of the steering angle or inclination sensors. This information is provided to the headlight control modules via the network bus from the

PHOTOS: JOHN ANELLO

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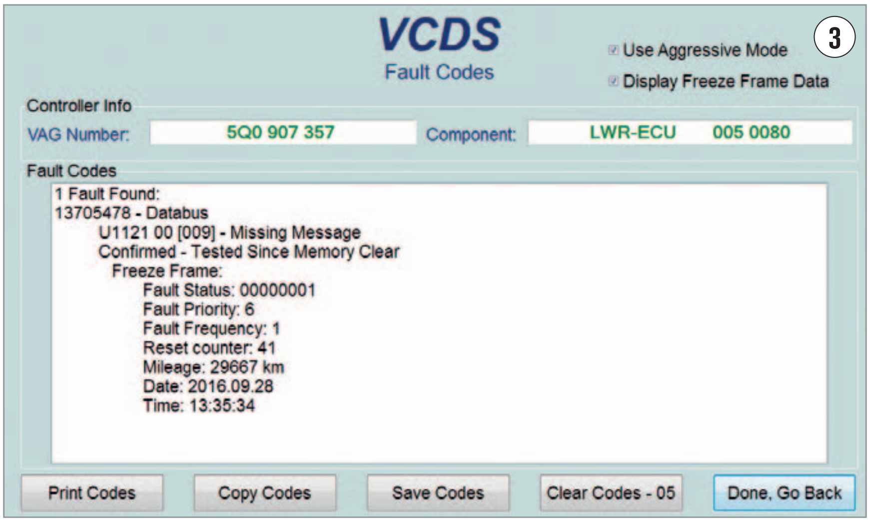
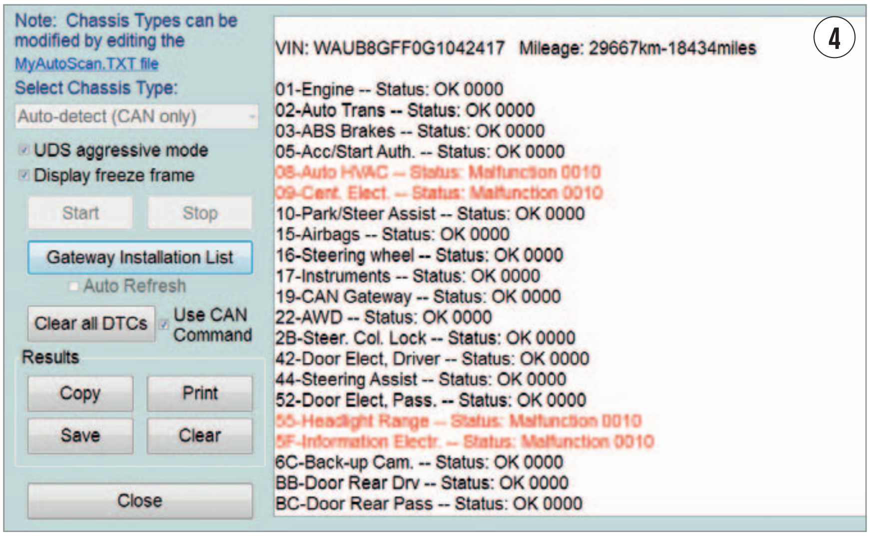



ABS or steering control modules. When these headlights are disturbed by removal or the vehicle battery goes very low, the base setting of these headlights is lost. The body shop had completed the vehicle but noticed an error message on the dash for "Automatic Headlight System Fault" (Figure 2) so as part of the post procedures, they needed to make sure that the headlight system was properly calibrated before releasing the vehicle to the customer.

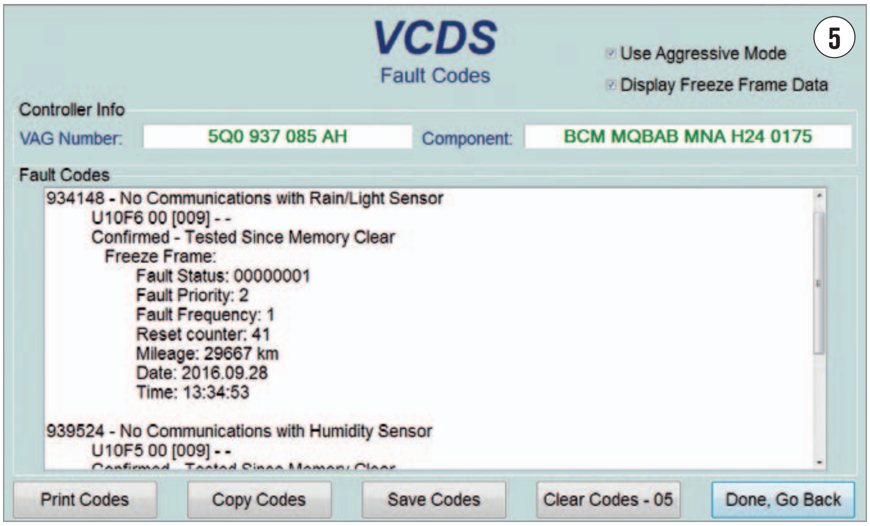
When I arrived at the shop, I hooked up my scan tool to validate the error message on the dash. But this time it was not what I was expecting. This vehicle had a problem with the Headlight Control System. I found an error message U1121 for "Missing Message" (Figure 3). This code was directing me away from the headlight system and pointing me back into the vehicle network. There was no direct component failure ID for this code, but it was definitely some type of information that the Headlight Control Module needed from the network system but was not getting.

I decided to scan the entire network of the vehicle to see if there were any other controllers that were complaining as well. Some vehicles will have as many as 60 control modules onboard, so it is not uncommon for one problem to resonate a failure into many different control modules that may share the same information needed. "U" codes are finger-pointing codes out into the network and are never codes generated by a controller to point to a problem within the controller you are communicating with. Therefore, it is very important that you are using a scan tool that can properly scan EVERY possible controller available on the vehicle you're working on so you can properly diagnose the problem.

When I completed my full scan, I found three other controllers with error codes in memory (Figure 4). The Information Electronics Control Module had a Code B11CF stored for "Tuner for Satellite Deactivated," but this had nothing to do with the problem I was having. Keep in mind that you may find many error codes in the network that may be stored from prior issues with the vehicle that could take you on a wild goose chase, but it is up to your experience to determine what codes are related to solve your diagnostic puzzle. The second control module was the Auto HVAC and it also stored the same code — U 1121 — as the Headlight Control Module and was pointing back out into the network for something it needed, but again without a specific component ID failure.

The third and final control module that had faults stored was Central Electronics — better known as the Body Control Module. This module held all the clues needed to put me on the right diagnostic track. There were two codes stored in memory: Code U10F6 for "No Communication with Rain/Light Sensor and Code U10F5 for "No Communication with Humidity Sensor" (Figure 5). These "U" codes were still pointing out to the network, but at least I finally had a Component ID failure to help me through this resonation journey. I now had to find the location of these two devices and find a diagram to put together a game plan of attack.

I went to my information system to find a diagram for these sensors and what I discovered was very interesting. These sensors were combined into one device and had only three wires feeding it. Pin 1 was Power Feed, Pin 2 was Ground Feed and Pin 3 was the Data Output. This vehicle actually had a talking sensor that communicated with the bus network to provide information to the Body Control Module about ambient lighting and humidity. The Body Module in turn relayed this information out into the network for any controller to have as part of information network sharing. So now that I had all



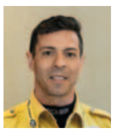


the information I needed, I grabbed my test light and voltmeter to start my test procedures.

This combo sensor was conveniently located at the base of the rear view mirror so I removed the cover and unplugged the three-pin connector (Figure 6). I turned the ignition switch on and tested the connector for both power and ground using my test light. Both circuits checked OK by illuminating my test light bulb that probably was able to load the circuit with about 300 milliamperes. Using an LED test light to illuminate a green or red light is not a valid test because it may only load a circuit with about 20 milliamperes and a weak power or ground feed could go undetected. The data line must NEVER be tested with a test light bulb because you could damage the computer circuit that feeds it by simply placing the test light on the positive terminal of a battery and touching the probing part or your test light to a sensor data line. This must be done with a voltmeter or even a scope to check for activity on the line.

When I placed my voltmeter on the data line, I did have voltage feedback on the line so this indicated that the wire going back to the Body Control Module was not shorted to ground or open circuit. I also checked the connector for collapsed or damaged terminals and all was OK. The only thing left would have to be a failed sensor that was mounted on the windshield, which was odd because the car was a low hit in the front of the vehicle far from the location of the sensor assembly. As I took the sensor out to get a closer look there was something that caught my eye. The #2 Pin was bent over in the sensor and the connector could not make contact with the pin (Figure 7). This was not from the accident but was caused by someone working on the car. I simply stood the pin up and plugged the connector back in and everything was working again with no error message on the dash. It was now time to go into full "Auto Interrogation" mode.


I walked over to the shop manager to explain my findings and he actually gave me the missing piece of the puzzle. The windshield did have a small crack in it from the impact so they hired a glass guy to come in to replace the windshield. My only guess was that he was in such a rush that he did not carefully plug the sensor connector back into place. So this problem had nothing to do with the accident and was caused by post repairs. I am sure these types of problems may occur on many vehicles during the repair process where components or wiring are damaged or not put properly back into place. These are the type of issues that will always resurface to come back to haunt you if you think you can just ignore them. It is too critical in our fast-pace repairs to fully be aware of what we are doing and try to avoid distraction. Rushing a job always has its downfall so make sure you exercise post inspections on every car you do so that you keep your customer base happy and avoid unwanted comebacks. My only hope is that this story hits home with a lot of my repair technicians out there.



**JOHN ANELLO** owns Auto Tech on Wheels in northern New Jersey, which is a mobile diagnostic service for 1,700 shops, providing technical assistance and remote programming. He is also a nationally known trainer.
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# DRIVING THE CONVERSATION: DIAGNOSTICS

*I-CAR continues to lead and drive the conversation on industry-wide topics, concerns, needs, solutions and advancements including diagnostics. This article comes from I-CAR and was first run in the I-CAR Collision Reporter publication.*

If there's one issue that's being bantered about at virtually every shop in the country, it's diagnostics.

In fact, diagnostics is considered to be one of the most pressing issues industry-wide, and gaining deeper traction with each passing day. I-CAR convened three of the most respected leaders in the collision repair industry to bring their knowledge and unique perspectives to a roundtable discussion.

The participants are:

- Mike Anderson, President/Owner of Collision Advice Consulting in Alexandria, Va.
- Gerry Poirer, National ADP Strategy Manager, ASE, I-CAR Platinum ProLevel 3, with Farmers Insurance in Atlanta, Ga.
- Jake Rodenroth, Director of Client Services with Collision Diagnostic Services in Plano, Texas

The following represents an edited highlight of I-CAR's one-on-one Skype interviews; full recordings and transcripts can be found at I-CAR.com/CollisionReporter, along with their bios.

### Never before has the industry buzz about diagnostics been louder. What's been the tipping point to accelerate the conversation?

***Anderson:*** I believe that having a panel discussion at NACE Automechanika in July 2016 where I facilitated a panel discussion with six OEM manufacturers and two insurers — I belive that really brought the topic of scanning to the forefront — with a very open dialogue, to debunk a lot of myths. I think this was very helpful and it's been great that that video was posted on YouTube with over 22,000 views, so I think that coupled with the fact that the OEM manufacturers have released a lot of position statements stating the importance of this, I think has really brought this [diagnostics issue] to the forefront of the industry.

MIKE ANDERSON

***Poirer:*** The tipping point came right around April 6, 2016 when the OEM position statements came out, and were followed by [more position statements] in June-July (2016). This is something new for the collision side; [the] mechanical side has been doing it for a long time. The biggest part are the visual indicators for determining whether the systems are damaged or not. In the past, visual indicators such as an airbag lamp or an ABS lamp came on. Now with multiple systems involved in the vehicle, you don't have all those lights anymore so the only way to properly find out is through scanning the vehicle.

GERRY POIRER

***Rodenroth:*** There are changes on multiple fronts.Our customers are changing; you're getting more millennials coming into the marketplace, and that generation is not intimidated by technology. In fact, they welcome it, so I think you're seeing a lot more consumer-facing electronics than we have ever before. The fuel economy and CAFE standards play another role: they're trying to make the engine systems and control systems as fuel efficient as possible and they're using technology to do so. There are lots of things changing not just on the diagnostics front, but also on the metals side and the substrates that the vehicles are made of. So I think that this is only the beginning and that there's going to be a lot more heading towards us.

JAKE RODENROTH

**On a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the highest, rank the importance of pre- and post scanning.**

***Anderson:*** I would say a 10++++.

***Poirier:*** Every situation is unique and the answer to this question will depend on the individual circumstance surrounding the collision of the vehicle. The answer could be a 10, really high on the scale, if you have a severe enough collision and there are a lot of safety systems involved or other systems that you may not have a visual indicator to signal there's an issue with the system. Or, it could be very little in the case of a scratch on the fender or a scratch on the hood where there would possibly be no reason to do a scan on the vehicle.

***Rodenroth:*** As a diagnostics guy, I would say it's probably an 11. I think that it's critical. When you're repair planning vehicles, whether you're measuring vehicles, scanning vehicles or performing alignments, finding out the issues sooner rather than later always benefits the shop and the insurer in the long run, so removing the variables in the repair plan is key.

**It's easy for repair shops to be overwhelmed with so many changes and recommendations related to diagnostics, and literally become paralyzed in not knowing where to turn/ what to do first. Any quick tips or thoughts?**

***Anderson:*** The first thing I would encourage you to do is [explore I-CAR's] resources on their website to educate collision repairers as to what needs to be done. Secondly, [check out] the OEM repair information; you learn how to navigate their OEM systems like Toyota, Chrysler, GM or Audi's OEM repair information. If you spend time to do the research, they absolutely have the information in the OEM repair procedures as to how to do these procedures. I would encourage shops to go to www.oemonestop.com. All of the OEMs have their position statements stating where their vehicles must be scanned before and after. In regards to the calibration processes that are required, reinitializations like on the pinch protection or a window or things of that nature, that's going to vary because the OEM information is not standardized. Meaning, where Audi places that [specification] in their OEM information may be different than Toyota, but again, that's where if you can't find something, I-CAR has a great resource called Ask I-CAR on its website that allows you to send a question in and the I-CAR team will get back to you in a timely manner. So better to be safe than sorry; reach to I-CAR if you're unsure.

***Poirier:*** Some of the technologies may be new [and] might help the repair shops to approach these repairs. Once again, if they have to research data to find out what the possibilities are within [a] specific vehicle that would be the first step. Similar to sectioning a frame rail or any other major repair, research it, blueprint the vehicle out first, [and] determine what needs to be done to bring it back to pre-loss condition and then proceed from there.

***Rodenroth:*** Absolutely. You'll never memorize it all, you'll never be able to keep it all in your head and that's something as repairers we have to remember. I think I could walk into any body shop in the United States and say, "Here's a collision-damaged vehicle. What are the repair operations that need to happen on that car?" Most of the professionals that we encounter would say: "It needs a quarter panel and a rear-body panel and a trunk lid and a bumper cover." Great. Go research each one of those procedures and you'll find the diagnostic steps along the way.

**What's the single most important message you want the industry to embrace right now about diagnostics?**

***Anderson:*** I think right now a lot of the concern is from the insurer's standpoint and that's not meant [to be] mean-spirited, it's just stating factually that there's a big concern about severity rising and the increase in severity. They have to pay to scan every car; what [will that] do to severity? As an industry, we have to ask ourselves, "What is the price of one life?" If we save someone's life by doing a safe and proper repair, you can't put a value on that. Number two; yes, you may spend "X" amount of dollars to scan a vehicle, but if it keeps that vehicle from being in an accident then we've saved some money. At the end of the day while I understand severity is a concern, we need to understand that when a consumer comes to us, they're saying, "I trust you to put my vehicle back together in a safe manner so my family will be safe," and what's the price of a life?.

***Poirer:*** I think the industry as a whole has to be patient. There's a lot of folks working on this within the industry to develop procedures surrounding it. I would take us back a little bit to the unibody vehicle. When that came out, there were a lot of issues surrounding the repairability of that vehicle. However, our great collision industry figured that out with new tooling, new procedures, new processes...to bring those cars back to pre-loss condition, and those are the cars we drive every day today, so I think scanning will be the same way.

***Rodenroth:*** It's here to stay. The sooner you develop an SOP or process within your repair center, the more successful with it you'll be. It will become a real pain point if it's something you choose to ignore or if you choose to act on it reactively. There are no silver bullets out there as far as tools go — that you can just point at the problem and expect it to repair itself. We really have to put our nose in the repair manuals, select the best solution for our business, make sure that we're perfoming safe and proper repairs.

**BECAUSE NITROGEN SPRAYS CONTAIN NO MOISTURE**, flash and bake times are reduced, which in turn cuts spray-booth costs such as maintenance and electrical use.

# NITROGEN NEWS

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SPRAYING FINISHES WITH NITROGEN

**TIM SRAMCIK //** Contributing Editor

At what point can we stop jumping on every efficiency effort and just get paid fairly? Why do we have to be the ones who are constantly expected to change?"

That was the lament a repairer confided in *ABRN* nearly a decade ago when one seemingly could not open an industry trade journal or talk business with a consultant without hearing about "lean processing" and "lean operations." The repairer had a point. Shops, especially those wanting to survive and expand, were under considerable pressure to expend resources to cut every last bit of waste while hoping the results showed up in their revenue columns. Sometimes, it seemed, their efforts didn't pay off or pay off enough.

Repairers can be excused if they are more than a bit skeptical of every new cost-cutting product that hits the market. But they also need to take a long, hard look at those that are proving their worth. Such is the case with nitrogen spraying systems. This technology has been around for more than a decade, steadily, though quietly, gaining converts.

Is it time you took the dive into what could be a better way for you to apply finishes? Consider the following responses to the most common and significant questions surrounding this product from both experienced repairers and spray manufacturers.

### Why nitrogen?

Due to its chemical properties, the

PHOTO: SHERWIN-WILLIAMS AUTOMOTIVE FINISHES nitrogen (N2) used for spraying offers a number of benefits over standard compressed air.

First, it's anhydrous, meaning it contains no water, so flash and bake times are reduced significantly. Some nitrogen spraying manufacturers says flash times can be eliminated altogether, allowing painters to move from one coat to another with no wait time.

Second, nitrogen is inert — its molecules don't contract or expand. More uniform molecules translate into more product transferred to the vehicle so there's less product waste. The uniformity also translates into more uniform distribution of the product onto the finish and fewer coats needed for a job.

Nitrogen sprays also are ionized so they aren't drawn away to static surfaces like the spray booth or painter. This factor further reduces product use and cuts spray booth filter maintenance costs. Additionally, the ionization prevents contaminates from being drawn to the new finish, cutting down the number of potential flaws that must be addressed later.

Solvent levels too are significantly reduced (manufacturer Eurosider says levels drop from 40 percent to seven percent to 10 percent). Shops not only benefit from having fewer harmful emissions in their work spaces, but a higher gloss finish is produced with fewer coats and less sagging and dripping. Moreover, using fewer solvents helps eliminate orange peel, saving considerable time spent fixing this flaw later.

Finally, nitrogen-enriched air (as much as 99.5 percent) is much cleaner than compressed air. Impurities from oil, oil fumes and dust are eliminated.


PHOTO: NITROHEAT

**NITROGEN SPRAYING SYSTEM** typically consist of technology that filters oxygen and trace gases out of atmospheric air that is already 78 percent nitrogen. Painters simply plug their guns into the system.


PHOTO: SHERWIN-WILLIAMS AUTOMOTIVE FINISHES

**COSTS FOR SANDPAPER AND OTHER MATERIALS** can be cut since nitrogen spraying typically produces more uniform coats and fewer flaws.

The overall result of moving to nitrogen is a much more efficient paint department that produces better finishes using less product with far less waste, reduced costs and improved cycle times. That's more money in the pockets of repairers.

## How does this technology work?

Most nitrogen systems utilize an in-line nitrogen source located between a shop's compressed air supply and its spray guns. The system pulls nitrogen out of the atmospheric air — which is 78 percent nitrogen, 21 percent oxygen and one percent trace gases. Air is pushed through a pre-filtration system and then through a nitrogen membrane separator before being heated in a hosing outlet. The process filters out oxygen and other elements leaving only nitrogen, which is then ionized and heated.

To use the system, painters simply connect their guns as they would with compressed air. No special spraying techniques are necessary, though painters should be aware they won't need to apply as much finish as they previously needed.

## What does spraying with nitrogen cost in 2018? What should shops expect to invest?

Derek Naidoo, CEO of NITROHEAT, reports his system costs $21,000, with annual maintenance running $600 to cover changing two sets of filters every six months.

## What kind of ROI should shops expect?

Naidoo says the system can pay for itself in 14 months if a shop adds just one more paint job a week (though he says on average most shops using nitrogen technology add one more job every day). The higher a shop's work volume, the more quickly the investment is recovered.

### Does nitrogen spraying deliver what it promises?

Apparently so. *ABRN* found plenty of dedicated fans of the technology. Naidoo alone has sold his product to more than 700 shops. Randy Drury, owner of Full Service Auto Stop in Houston says he moved to the technology 8 years ago and couldn't be happier. "It does everything it claims," he says. "My guys were skeptical, but that changed one day after they began using it. It really did change how we worked for the better."

### Considering all the benefits and ease of use, why hasn't spraying with nitrogen become far more popular over the past decade?

A number of factors have conspired against large-scale adoption of nitrogen sprays.

Consultant Ben Bailey points to three. The first is simple timing. "When nitrogen was becoming more affordable and practical, the industry was already focused on a more pressing issue — converting to waterborne finishes, "he says. "Shops were already being tasked with one significant change. Adding one more seemed excessive even for the best businesses."

Bailey says this reluctance to "pile changes" on paint departments is also a reflection of how most owners/managers prefer to follow their lead painters in making modifications to this part of a shop's operations. Painters, he says, like many other workers, tend to be creatures of habit. They prefer to go with what they know before investing in wholesale changes. "When you're dealing with finishes, you're taking in multiple considerations and processes at once: prepping, mixing, spray technique, bake times, etc. Why complicate it further with another technology even if it's an upgrade," Bailey explains. "You're already busy enough, so when are you supposed to find the time to experiment with something you may later decide not to adopt?"

PHOTO: SHERWIN-WILLIAMS AUTOMOTIVE FINISHES

**PAINTERS SPRAY** as they normally would, with no need to change application styles.

Third, many shops still have difficulty quantifying ROI. "A lot of people haven't been and still don't look at their numbers, so how can they get a real understanding of any benefits?" Bailey asks. "It can make more sense to keep working a certain way — even if it means fixing flaws and redoing work — since you're familiar with this process and getting by."

"Change, even good change, can be intimidating. If you're already making money, you have even less reason to do something different," he adds.

Naidoo points to a single cause — cost. He notes that shops pulling in $1million a year will see the system's ROI recovered in a year, which is a remarkable selling point. However, those shops make up a small percentage of the industry market. Most shops make less than $500,000 annually, so paying for the system could take an additional year. For those repairers, that's a big downside. "We've looked at lowering pricing every way we can, but it's a matter of simple volume," explains Naidoo. "If we sold 50 more a month, we could cut costs in half. That just isn't happening."

### Should you buy in?

Nitrogen spraying arguably has proven its value for some time. Shops making the transition, by all accounts, aren't going back to compressed air. Based on the factors Bailey and Naidoo point out, whether other repairers buy in will be based largely on how they measure improvement and if they're willing to wait for what might be 24 months to see a return on a $20,000 - $30,000 investment.

That's a tough call for many shops who are already struggling to keep their doors open or to find ways to afford other investments, such as certification. Ironically, cutting waste and building revenue in the paint department could be just the ticket to helping resolve both those issues.

Such is the dilemma repairers face as they review new technological solutions and ask, "What can I afford to invest or potentially risk losing by not buying in?" Once again, shops find themselves asking critical questions for which there are no easy answers, only the need to choose wisely and continue moving forward in some direction to survive.

**TIM SRAMCIK** has written for *ABRN* and sister publications *Motor Age* and *Aftermarket Business World* for more than a decade.

*tsramcik@yahoo.com*

# COLLISION PRODUCT GUIDE

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| C. Total Paid and /or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4)) | 41,808 | 39,572 |
| D. Non-requested Distribution | | |
| 1. Outside County Non-requested Copies Stated on PS Form 3541 | 1,053 | 1,426 |
| 2. In-County Non-requested Copies Stated on PS Form 3541 | 0 | 0 |
| 3. Non-requested Copies Distributed Through the USPS by Other Classes of Mail | 0 | 0 |
| 4. Non-requested Copies Distributed Outside the Mail | 258 | 169 |
| E. Total Non-requested Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4)) | 1,312 | 1,595 |
| F. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and e) | 43,120 | 41,167 |
| G. Copies not Distributed | 39 | 38 |
| H. Total (Sum of 15f and g) | 43,158 | 41,205 |
| I. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation | 96.96% | 96.13% |

16. ***Electronic Copy Circulation***
    ****If you are not claiming electronic copies, skip to line 17***
    ***a. Requested and Paid Electronic Copies***
    ***b. Total Requested and Paid Print Copies*** *(Line 15C)* ***+ Requested/Paid Electronic Copies***
    ***c. Total Requested Copy Distribution*** *(Line 15F)* ***+ Requested/Paid Electronic Copies***
    ***d. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation*** *(Both Print & Electronic Copies)*
    ☐ ***I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies*** *(electronic and print)* ***are legitimate requests or paid copies.***
17. ***Publication of Statement of Ownership for a Requester Publication is required and will be printed in the October issue of this publication.***

***Name and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner:***
Kristina Bildeaux, Senior Audience Development Strategy Director
***Signature:***

Kristina Bildeaux

***Date:*** 09/30/18
***I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.***

## AD INDEX



## PRODUCTS

# Daily planning can ensure optimum efficiency in the shop

## Part 2 of this series on time management gets specific on how to help your team

Last month in "Time management amid growing admin burdens" (August 2018), I discussed the ever-challenging issue of how to balance all of our shop's administrative demands while still managing overhead. Although the simple answer is always adding more staff, this is not always the best option when looking at the bottom line.

I stressed the importance of helping your employees prioritize their duties and learn where there may be wasted time and effort. This process should be done jointly with the manager and team member. One way that we have started the coaching process on time management is to have our teams track their days for a week time frame.

Document what they do by time blocks. This is a valuable exercise for everyone to do, no matter their role or position within the company. It is remarkable how much time can be wasted when we do not plan our days. Does that mean everything will go like clockwork? No, there will be times certain tasks take longer than others, and you adjust your day accordingly. Also, you must take into consideration the "people" factor and know that efficiency is the goal for tasks and effectiveness is the goal in dealing with people. We absolutely, positively do not want to "process" our customers, internal or external. Therefore, it is important to also be flexible in planning. For example, a drop-off appointment with one customer may take 20 minutes. However, another may take an hour. Be flexible, do not rush the customer and be willing to adapt your schedule and behavior to meet the needs of each customer.

When planning out your day, keep the end in mind. What is it that will make your day a success? For each position, that looks different. For our customer service and front-end estimators, that includes a certain amount of drop-off appointments each day, vehicle delivery appointments, customer update calls, emails and other administrative claims processing tasks. For our back-end estimating team, that would include managing the disassembly and repair process. To have a successful repair process, we must complete a 100-percent disassembly at the repair planning phase, we must research OEM repair procedures, complete a vehicle diagnostic pre-scan, pre-measure, confirm parts availability, parts prices, determine if any sublet work needs to be completed, sublet pricing and estimated time for parts to arrive. If any of that is rushed, skipped or missed during the repair planning process, it causes delays, frustrations and a negative customer experience. Therefore, planning the day and allotting time for each thing to be completed is critical in the overall success.

**HOW DO WE GET IT ALL DONE EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY? IT STARTS WITH PLANNING YOUR DAY AND WEEK.**

It is better to take more time on the front end and to formulate an accurate and complete repair plan than to rush too many cars through in one day.

The question is: how do we get it all done efficiently and effectively? It starts with planning your day and week. How long does it typically take to research OEM repair procedures? If you do not know, have your team complete time studies by documenting how long it takes them on a range of repairs. Subsequently, have your team begin time blocking and planning their days, allowing for outside variables. As with anything or any relationship, communication is the key. If you cannot get a complete repair plan completed within the blocked amount of time, extend the time block and communicate with everyone affected, including the person responsible for updating the customer, production manager, technician, etc.

In summary, plan, prioritize, organize and execute. Be flexible, communicate and always start with the end in mind. What does a successful day look like? Plan it accordingly.

**SHERYL DRIGGERS** is the owner of Universal Collision Center in Tallahassee, Fla. Through her career, she has gained specialized experience in marketing, management, public speaking, teaching and fiscal oversight. *sheryld@universalcollision.com*

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Customers are at the heart of everything we do. Our Vision+ suite and best-in-class products were created to focus on the solutions of tomorrow.

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> PART # I-MCWM
INNOVATIVE PAINTERS PREP CART WITH MASKER
> PART # SSPC-B
INNOVATIVE PARTS CART B
> PART # URPS
INNOVATIVE ULTRARACK
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT YOUR LOCAL JOBBER
OR FIND ONE ONLINE BY VISITING INNOVATIVETOOLS.COM :: 1.866.438.4884

# INNOVATIVE PARTS MANAGEMENT

**> *PART # SSPC-A***

INNOVATIVE PARTS CART A
(shown with optional shelf-mat SSPC-SM)

**> *PART # SSPC-B***

INNOVATIVE
PARTS CART B

**> *PART # SSPC-B/DB***
INNOVATIVE
PARTS CART B
WITH DEEP BASKET

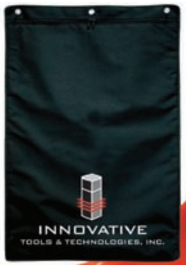
**> *PART # SSPC-C***
INNOVATIVE
PARTS CART C

# PARTS CART ACCESSORIES

**Innovative Panel Train™**
***Part # SSPC-PT***

*Parts Cart not included with Panel Train*

*SSPC-HB – 24″w x 38″h – Headlight Bag*
*SSPC-TB – 49″w x 38″h – Trim Panel Bag*


**Innovative Pan™**
***Part # I-PAN***
***Width: 22″ Length: 28″ Depth 5″***
**7 Dividers**

**Innovative Pan XL™**
***Part # I-PANXL***
***Width: 22″ Length: 48″ Depth 5″***
**10 Dividers**


**Innovative RO Holder™**
***Part # SSPC-RO***

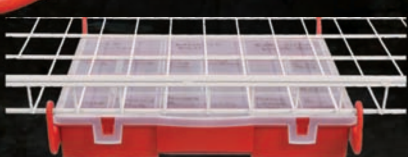
**Innovative Molding Holder™**
***Part # SSPC-MH***

**Innovative Parts Pan™**
***Part # SSPC-PP***


**Innovative Parts Cart B™**
***Fully Loaded***
***Part # SSPC-B/FL***

**Cart shown with the following available options:**

*> SSPC-B Parts Cart B*
*> SSPC-PT Panel Train*
*> SSPC-DB Deep Basket*
*> SSPC-HT Hardware Tray*
*> SSPC-PP Parts Pan*
*> SSPC-MH Molding Holder*
*> SSPC-RO RO Holder*



**Innovative Hardware Tray™**
***Part # SSPC-HT***

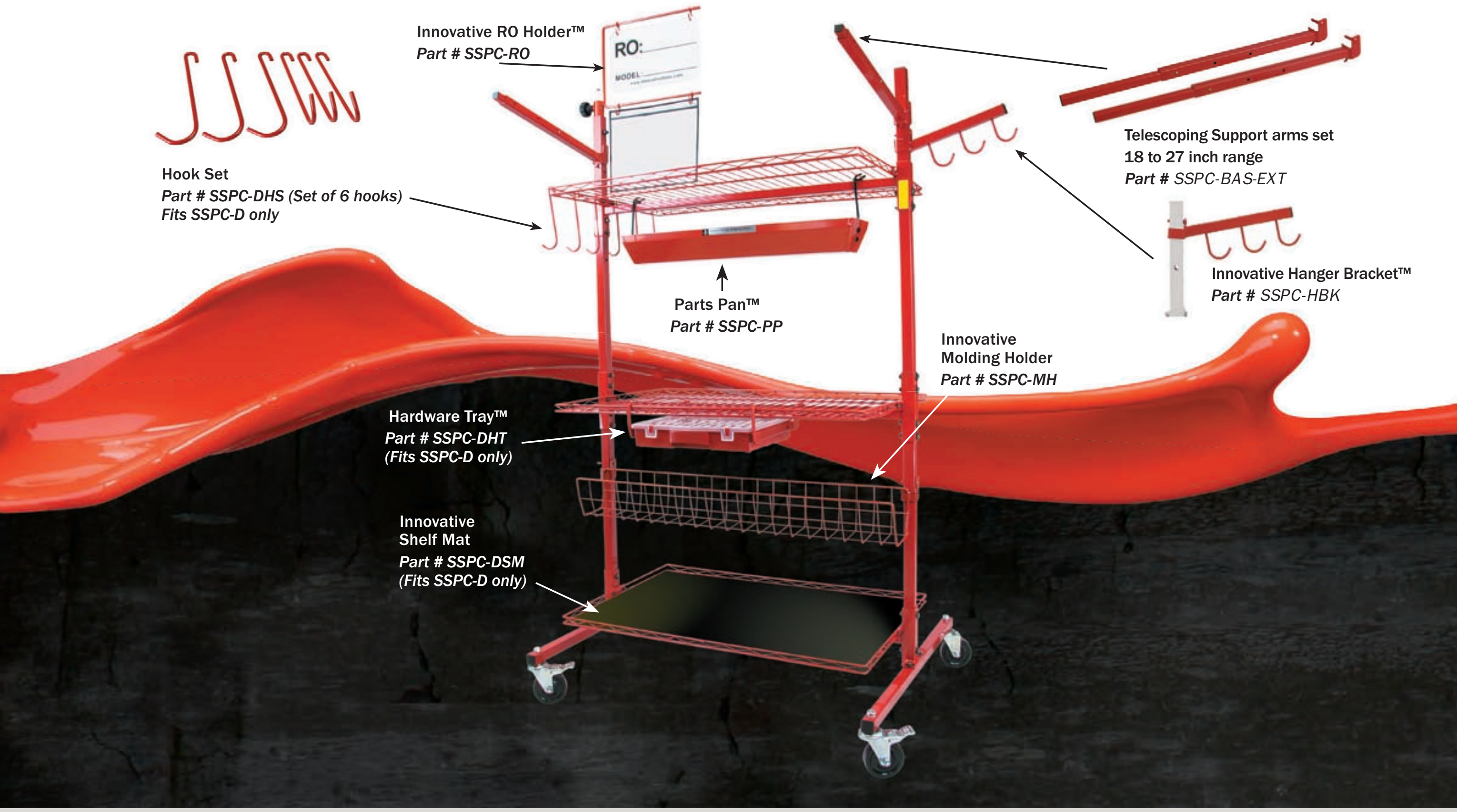
# NEW PARTS CART D SERIES

**Innovative Tools' NEW**
**Most Cost Effective Parts Cart**
*backed by our Lifetime Warranty*

*Parts Cart D*
*Shown loaded*

***> PART # SSPC-D***
INNOVATIVE
PARTS CART D

# PARTS CART D SERIES ACCESSORIES



# INNOVATIVE MATERIAL CONTROL



> ***PART # I-MCAC***
> INNOVATIVE
> ADHESIVE CART

> ***PART # I-MCWM***
> INNOVATIVE
> PAINT PREP CART
> W/MASKER

# MAKE YOUR SUPPLIES MOBILE & ORGANIZED

> ***PART # I-MCPC***
INNOVATIVE PAINT PREP CART

> ***PART # I-MCDC***
INNOVATIVE DETAIL CART

> ***PART # I-MCBM***
INNOVATIVE BODYMAN CART

# INNOVATIVE PAINT RACKS

> ***PART # URPS***
> INNOVATIVE ULTRARACK

***HOLDS HOODS, TAILGATES, DOORS, LIFT GATES, DECK LIDS, CARGO DOORS AND FENDERS***

***SEE WEBSITE FOR AVAILABLE OPTION TO PAINT WHEELS***

> ***PART # I-DF***
> INNOVATIVE
> DOOR-FENDER
> STAND

# INCREASE SPRAY BOOTH EFFICIENCY

> *PART # SS-II*
INNOVATIVE SUPERSTAND

> *PART # OPR*
INNOVATIVE OCTOPUS™

# INNOVATIVE MOBILE MASKERS

**> *PART # I-MMD***
INNOVATIVE MOBILE MASKER DELUXE

**> *PART # I-MM***
INNOVATIVE MOBILE MASKER

# HIGHEST QUALITY MASKERS & DISPENSERS MADE


> Upper and lower roll cups prevent plastic from dropping in vertical position

> Easily dispenses both paper & plastic from the vertical or horizontal position for longer paper tears

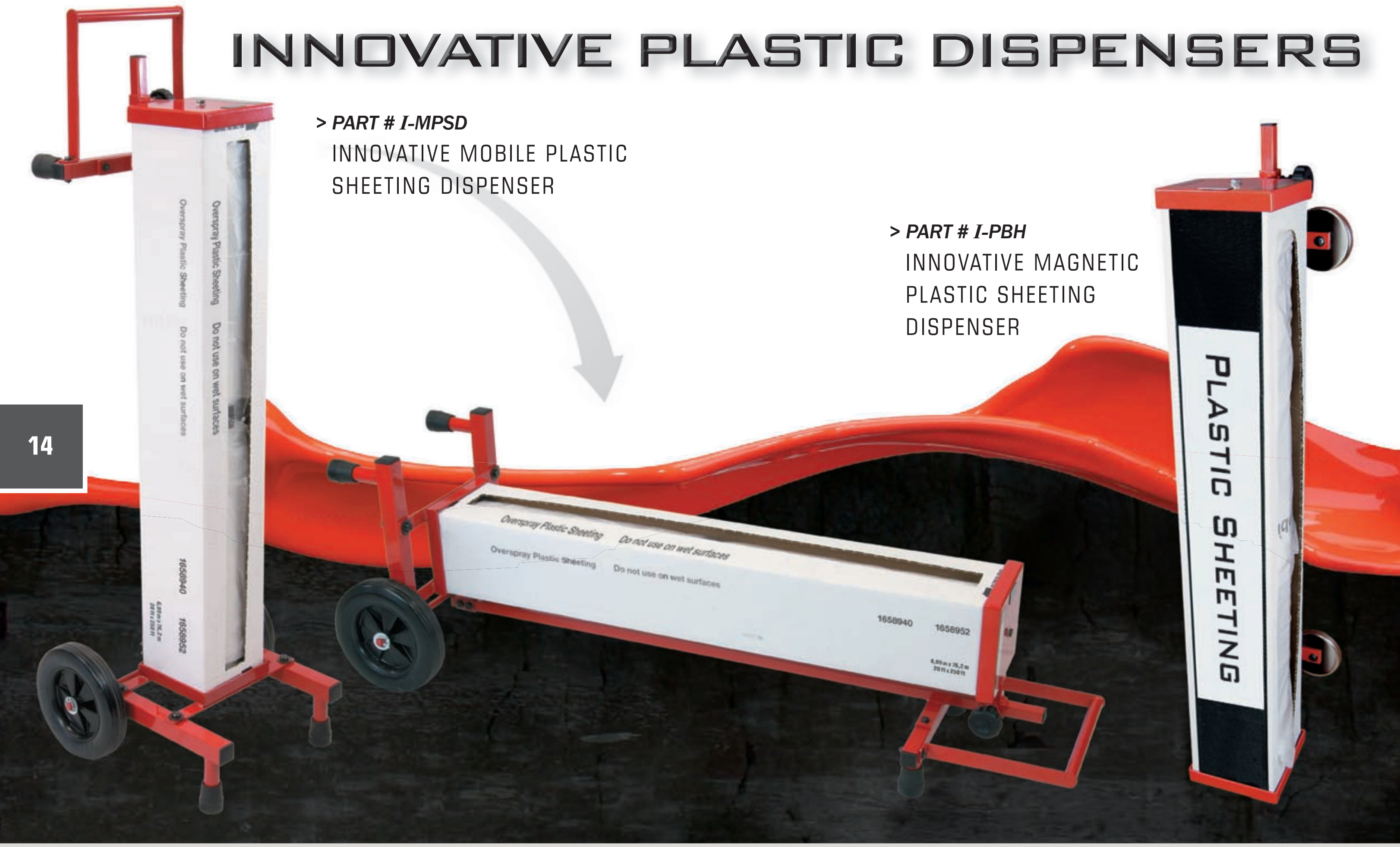
***> PART # I-PPD***

INNOVATIVE PAPER & PLASTIC DISPENSER

# INNOVATIVE PLASTIC DISPENSERS

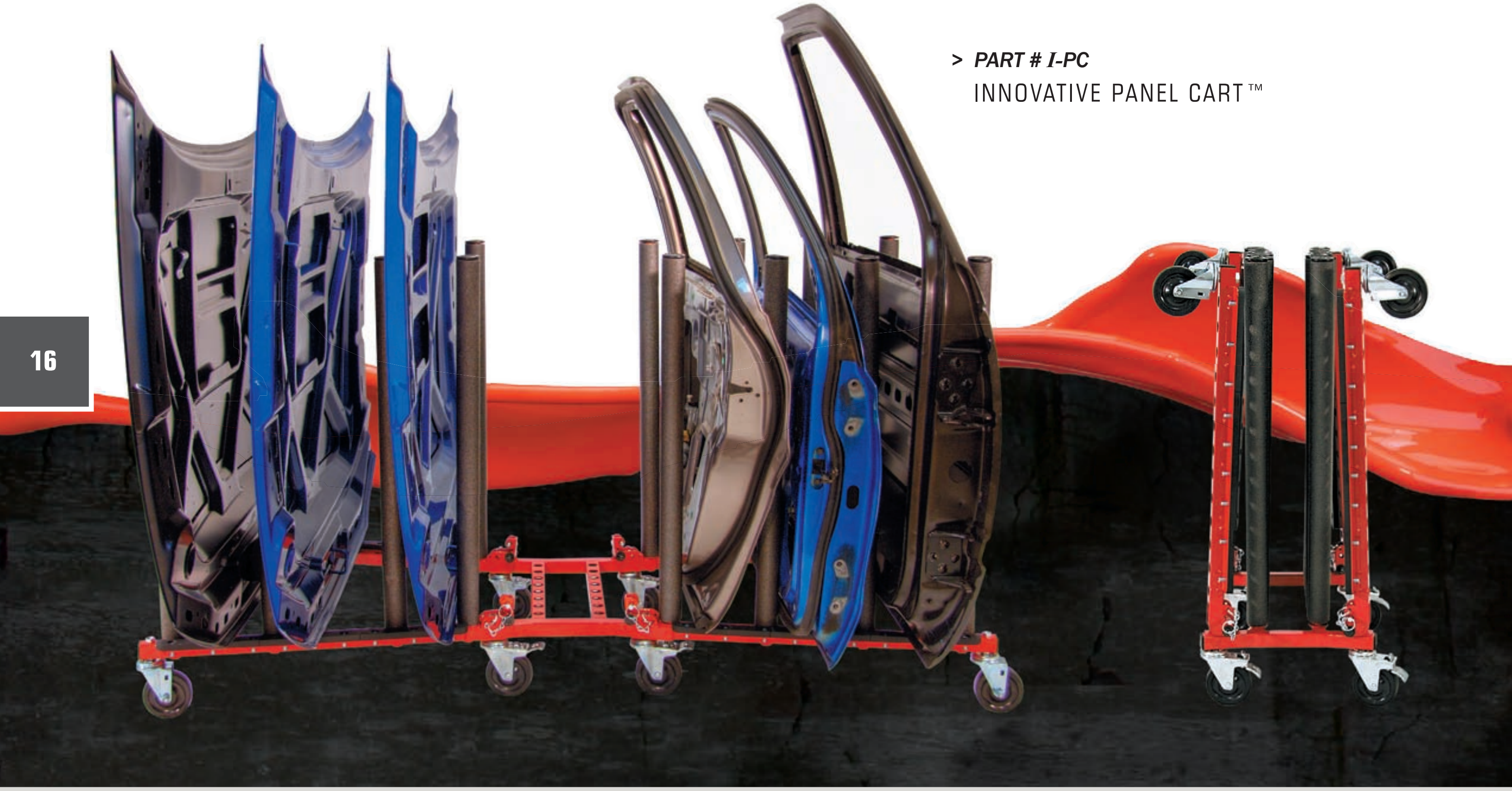
**> *PART # I-MPSD***
INNOVATIVE MOBILE PLASTIC SHEETING DISPENSER

**> *PART # I-PBH***
INNOVATIVE MAGNETIC PLASTIC SHEETING DISPENSER




> PART # I-DJ
INNOVATIVE
DOOR JACK
> PART # I-XS
INNOVATIVE X-STAND

# INNOVATIVE PANEL STORAGE



> ***PART # I-PC***
> INNOVATIVE PANEL CART™

# INNOVATIVE BUMPER STORAGE

> *PART # MBW*

INNOVATIVE WALL
BUMPER STORAGE

One Innovative Wall Bumper
holds 6 bumpers (as shown)

> *PART # MBM*

INNOVATIVE MOBILE
BUMPER STORAGE

# INNOVATIVE GLASS STORAGE

> PART # I-WGR

INNOVATIVE
WALL GLASS RACK™

> PART # I-MGR

INNOVATIVE
MOBILE GLASS RACK™

# LARGE PARTS HANDLING

> ***PART # I-BL***
> INNOVATIVE
> BED LIFT


> ***PART # I-TBD***
> INNOVATIVE
> TRUCK BED DOLLY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> PART # SG-MP
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ESTIMATING CART