

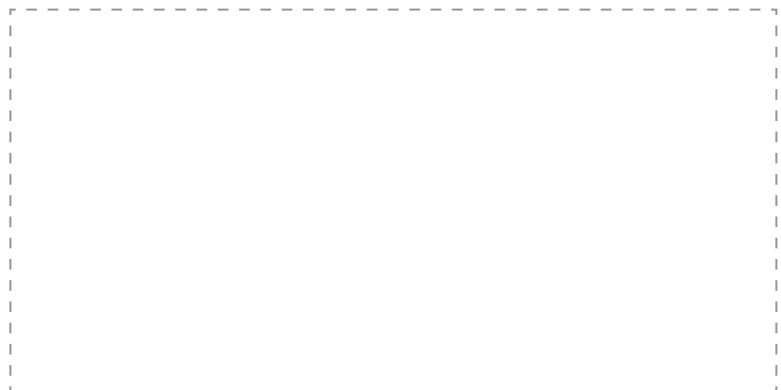
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Phone: (440) 243-8100 // Fax: (440) 891-2675

EDITORIAL

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

GROUP CONTENT DIRECTOR
michael.williams@ubm.com
(440) 891-2604

KRISTA MCNAMARA

CONTENT CHANNEL DIRECTOR
krista.mcnamara@ubm.com
(440) 891-2646

CHELSEA FREY

SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR
chelsea.frey@ubm.com
(440) 891-2645

STEPH JOHNSON-BENTZ

ART DIRECTOR

STALIN ANNADURAI

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

CONTRIBUTORS

BRIAN ALBRIGHT

b-albright@sbcglobal.net

JOHN ANELLO

atowscopeit@aol.com

STEVE FELTOVICH

sjfeltovich@gmail.com

JAMES E. GUYETTE

jimguyette2004@yahoo.com

WILL LATUFF

wlatuff@latuffbrothers.com

MARK OLSON

mark@vecoexperts.com

TIM SRAMCİK

tsramcik@yahoo.com

JOHN YOSWICK

info@crashnetwork.com

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

PAUL GAGE

PRO-CARE

JEFF POOLE

I-CAR

JAKE RODENROTH

COLLISION DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

BUSINESS

JIM SAVAS

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GROUP PUBLISHER

BALA VISHAL

DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL MARKETING

TSCHANEN BRANDYBERRY

SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR

JILLENE WILLIAMS

SALES COORDINATOR

DOMESTIC SALES

MIDWEST & WESTERN STATES/
CLASSIFIED SALES

MICHAEL PARRA

michael.parra@ubm.com
(704) 919-1931

ILLINOIS, EASTERN & SOUTHERN STATES

PAUL ROPSKI

paul.ropski@ubm.com

(312) 566-9885

Fax: (312) 566-9884

OHIO, MICHIGAN & CALIFORNIA

LISA MEND

lisa.mend@ubm.com
(773) 866-1514

PRODUCTION & ADMINISTRATION

KAREN LENZEN

SENIOR PRODUCTION MANAGER

TRACY WHITE

CIRCULATION MANAGER

DAVID PASQUILL

COMMERCIAL FINANCE PARTNER

SOFIA RENTERIA

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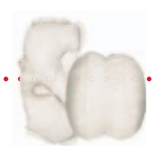


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NEW LEADERSHIP

ASA'S FISHER SPEAKS OUT ON WHAT'S TO COME IN 2019

KRISTA MCNAMARA // Content Channel Director

Improved communication, member representation and engagement and enhanced industry professionalism top the list of priorities for Ray Fisher — the newly appointed executive director of the Automotive Service Association.

Less than two weeks after officially beginning his duties, Fisher sat down with members of the industry press to discuss what we can expect to see from ASA in 2019 and beyond.

Fisher, AMAM, replaced Dan Risley, who left to pursue an opportunity in his home state of Illinois in July. Executive director of ASA's Michigan affiliate, Fisher will wear both hats until a replacement can be found at the state level.

"I'm really excited to be a part of ASA and bring some expertise from my past background and involvements to the national level. I'm honored to represent our membership," Fisher said. "I've been in the industry for quite a while, starting in the dealership environment managing a body shop and also a parts department. I am very grateful for this opportunity."



What are your goals for 2019?

FISHER: Not just for 2019, but for the road ahead, we want to engage membership more and listen to our membership. All facets of industry across the globe are caught in different demographics, different age groups, different mediums to reach their constituents. We are constantly improving that, and one of the biggest things that you will see in 2019 and beyond is the different mediums that we are going to use to reach out to our membership. The bottom line is we are really focused on our mission statement and what we can do for the industry and

>> CONTINUES ON PAGE 6

SAFETY SYSTEMS

WHAT DOES ADAS MEAN FOR REPAIR SHOPS?

The use of advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) can potentially reduce the overall number of accidents, but they can also make repairs more complex and costly because the cameras and sensors are embedded into panels and parts on the vehicle.

According to auto claims solution provider CCC, repair shops will need to retrain their staff and adopt new technology and processes in order to remain competitive in this evolving environment.

CCC's most recent Crash Course report found that while ADAS will reduce certain types of collisions, they won't eliminate them entirely. In addition, because the current fleet is a mix of vehicles that either don't have ADAS technology or have a variety of different systems, the effect on each vehicle when it comes to collisions can vary.

"In certain types of accidents, like front-to-rear collisions, the technology works really well," says Susanna Gotsch, industry analyst at

>> ADAS CONTINUES ON PAGE 10

TRENDING

ELITE BODY SHOP ACADEMY LAUNCHES MONTHLY LIVE TRAINING

David Luehr's Operations Monthly LIVE is specifically designed to help collision repairers receive interactive monthly training and support to reach their operational goals.

ABRN.COM/LIVE

MARTIN SENOUR PAINTS ANNOUNCE 2019 Q1 TRAINING

The Martin Senour Paints 2019 first quarter training schedule features seven different courses, running through March 26. Courses are led by industry professionals.

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AASP/NJ GEARING UP FOR NORTHEAST 2019

The Collision Professional Education Program (Collision P.R.E.P) again returns to the show, March 15-17, with a hefty slate of educational seminars featuring top industry names and topics.

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CCC INTRODUCES NEW SAFETY EXPERIENCE

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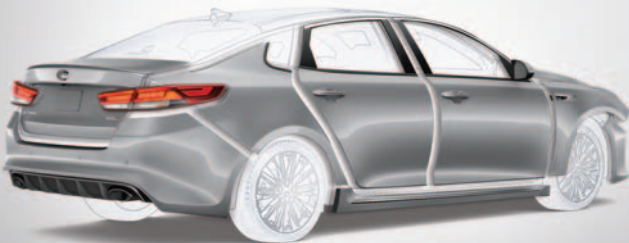
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>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

that is to enhance the professionalism of the repair industry. I'm all about that. I really believe our industry is made up of a bunch of professionals. We represent that professional group and are ecstatic to have that opportunity going forward. That was our foundation in 1951 and continues to be that today. We are going to listen to our membership and interact and communicate even stronger than we have before.

What have you learned through your prior experience that will best benefit you in this new role?

FISHER: After the dealership environment and management that I was in for over 20 years, I had the opportunity to go to go to ASA Michigan and represent the collision side. I became executive director of ASA Michigan in 2010. I did some legislative work very successfully over a six-year period where we updated the Motor Vehicle Service Repair Act, which is all about our licensing. We also got rid of sales tax on court charges, which had been going back to 1932. We also did a layer of protection for repair facilities who follow OEM procedures on autonomous vehicles. I plan to carry that passion forward working with Bob Redding (ASA Washington D.C. representative) and our mechanical ops and collision ops committees.

What is your main message for the association?

FISHER: My main message is that we are only going to be as successful as the engagement of our membership. Joining a tennis club doesn't make you a better player; you still have to be involved. But it provides the opportunity, and that is what ASA does. My passion is the automotive repair industry; it allowed me to raise a family, to where I'm blessed now with grandchildren, and I look forward to giving back to the industry. That is my focus. As we go forward, I don't have all the answers for where we are going over the long term, but everything will be based on our membership and their needs. I am a very proactive person. I use the windshield, not the rearview mirror. I like to be on the forefront of things.

What can attendees expect of the ASA annual meeting?

FISHER: When you look at our annual meeting coming up here, April 30, May 1 and May 2, we will have ADAS and calibration training and a live demonstration. We are very serious about preparing the industry going forward. Education training is what makes us all better, and that is going to be our theme going forward. We need to keep delivering that in the various mediums we have available to us to make sure we reach all age groups. And if you are thinking it is time to pass on or sell your business, we will help you with succession planning. That is something that we need to prepare for whether we are 22 years old, 55 years old or 70 years old.

How did you get involved with ASA national?

Fisher: As affiliates, we represent our constituents and work hard to bring local programs to the areas we are in, whether it is a state or region or chapter. None of them are not important;

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What are you working forward to?

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

they are all important. The quicker we can get the message out, the better we all are. Going forward that is what we are looking at with strategic planning: what can we do better to help the affiliates succeed? Our success has been based on affiliates representing their memberships as well.

What are ASA's current legislative focuses?

FISHER: That is where Bob Redding comes in. He is invaluable in Washington, D.C. It is not just about creating legislation but monitoring it to make sure it is in the best interest of industry, whether it is Environmental Protection Agency, OSHA or the IRS. It is important that we have that representation looking out for the industry, because sometimes when you don't have that voice at the table, the best intent for the goal is a common ground, but the path to that is not necessarily user-friendly. Bob does a great job of staying on top of things. Currently Bob is working on telematics and who owns the information, which is a very large concern for everyone right now. Bob is there representing our industry and making sure we are at the table.

We are working to get OEM procedures ratified as the proper source for information. We are also looking at all the aspects that go along with that. The new Congress is in place, and Bob is getting acquainted with them and talking through our issues. We have a wish list and goals, and right now Bob is taking that wish list and having those conversations to ensure that we have access to information for different technologies in telematics and OEM procedures and getting that information provided to you. Bob is making sure that going forward we are there at the table and having those conversations with the vehicle manufactures, with the aftermarket industry and with Congress as far as initiatives for 2019 and 2020.

What changes can members expect under your new leadership?

FISHER: We are working diligently to be more interactive and time friendly. Facebook Live is one new medium. But not everyone likes or uses Facebook, so we are also going to make those live feeds available as well. We want to make sure that is available to members and the industry.

I'm excited about the things we have coming. I like to use my passion and background to ask the challenging questions and prepare for the future. I'm really excited about that.

What are the plans for ASA Michigan's leadership?

FISHER: Right now we are in a transitional period. We want to make sure continuity is there going forward. For the next 90 days, I may be back and forth between Texas and Michigan. But I will ultimately be in Texas working on strategic planning. I will continue to represent both. I appreciate their support and look forward to the support nationally as well. It will also be part of the restructuring that we are looking at to help the affiliates.

How will your leadership be different from those in the past?

FISHER: I have one goal and that is to represent my customer. I come from the dealership environment, and one of the things we

learn in the repair industry is about the customer. In this situation, members are our customer. We are going to have times where we will agree to disagree, but the board of directors really feels our membership is important and we want to represent them well, and in the selection process they looked at that. My passion is about my industry. It provided for my family, and I want to give back. I want to represent our membership. It's not to say the others didn't; but perhaps their focuses were on other things. When we went through the most severe recession we ever had in the United States, there were a lot of things that hit everybody. And if you look at associations across the spectrum, they all had challenges. It is important as a trade that we have an organization that is structured in the proper way to deliver the messages and represent the industry like we do here at ASA. Sometimes you get in that mode where you are just trying to maintain, and those were some of the aftershocks we had going on after the recession. But again, I like to look out the windshield, not the rearview mirror.

What are the main training focuses for the next year?

FISHER: We will be delivering more content this year going forward. If you look at our Wednesday webinar line up that we have been offering and are continuing to offer this year, we are trying to hit every part of business, whether it is collision, mechanical, software or technical. You are going to see more of that coming about now and into the future. We are responding as quickly as we can to the various needs of the industry.

I am about training. When I was in the collision repair industry as a manager, I was one of the first to have an I-CAR Gold facility in my area. I was one of the first to having Welding Certified technicians in my area. I was the first to have a 5-Star Compliance with Chrysler Corporation. I don't like to be a follower; I like to be a leader. So that is going to carry forth going forward.

What other issues should be top of mind for members?

FISHER: Change is the biggest thing. The biggest challenge as an industry is making sure we don't bury our heads in the sand and instead that we look for that opportunity of what is next. And that is where we are going to be coming into play, and we are there already. We've got our Mechanical and Collision Ops committees that do a fantastic job and they are bringing those issues to us. We want to do some polls and surveys to get some things from the industry, and it is all about engaging the industry.

The biggest thing right now is preparing the industry for the changes coming at it. And I think we are going to have a tremendous opportunity to do that. We have the personnel in place and the right people focused on the right things to do it. You'll see much more after our annual meeting about that. If you look at the meeting (April 30-May 2) it is not a destination meeting; it is a business meeting here in Texas. I want to have a lot of continuity. I am all about goals and making sure our priorities are the right thing for the industry. You'll be seeing that in the coming months. For specifics, stay tuned. I don't mean to be vague, but we are dialing in. We are here for our industry. 📺



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>> ADAS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

CCC, noting that a number of organizations and OEMS have demonstrated the effectiveness of these solutions over the past several years. "However, very few cars actually have the technology, and you can't pick who rear-ends you."

CCC compared claims data between vehicles with and without ADAS systems. "What the data suggests is that when the vehicle is equipped with ADAS, you can expect to see some reduction of frequency, but you can also expect some reduction in severity depending on who hits who," Gotsch says.

If you are driving an ADAS-equipped car and can't avoid a collision, the technology will mitigate the damage because the system will slow the vehicle down before impact. That can reduce repair costs, even with the addition of cameras and sensors in the vehicle.

However, if you are driving an ADAS car and are rear-ended by someone who doesn't have the technology, then the repair can be much more expensive because of the velocity of impact combined with the expense of the technology systems. "In those cases, we're finding that repair costs are starting to trend higher because of all the parts that need replaced and lack of non-OE part alternatives," Gotsch says.

The technology can also result in additional labor for each repair. If the repair shop isn't familiar with the particular system, or doesn't have the right tooling, they may also have to outsource the repair to a dealership. "You not only lose control of your cycle times, but also end up with a hefty sublet bill," Gotsch says.

According to Mark Fincher, vice president of market solutions at CCC, shops can do a number of things to prepare for the coming influx of ADAS-equipped vehicles.

I-CAR training and OEM repair procedures are going to be even more important. Shops should stay current on repair procedures, in addition to using vehicle diagnostic tools as part of the assessment process. "Documentation will be more important," Fincher says. "Doing the diagnostics and checking repair procedures will have to be documented. We've seen from litigation in the industry that documentation will be even more important for shops to minimize liability and ensure that all the steps have been completed."

"Having a tool in place for looking up repair procedures is

critical," Fincher adds. "The same goes for documentation. Many shops use a checklist taped to the windshield. It will be important for shops to look at electronic documentation in the future."

In addition, Fincher says that repairers should use artificial intelligence (AI) solutions to help them streamline vehicle damage assessment, parts ordering and other processes in order to put more focus on repairing the vehicle.

Big data solutions can also be used to help analyze crash data, identify common accident types, and better anticipate what future repair needs might be in the market.


Another technology fix: using mobile technology, chatbots, or other digital tech to improve communication with customers and suppliers in order to further improve efficiencies in the repair process.

Fincher expects that more shops will specialize in particular nameplates moving forward, because the training and tooling will simply be too expensive if a shop tries to follow an all makes/models format.

"As vehicles get more complex and unique, there will be an increasing need to use those OEM diagnostic tools and calibration systems to get the vehicle back to pre-accident condition," Fincher says. "Each tool is different. Trying to train a technician across a dozen tools can be challenging, especially given the frequency with which they may see any one of those vehicles. You may see technicians become experts in specific vehicles within a shop."

Gotsch says that technology is also causing total loss figures to climb, but total losses have also been affected by the increasing age of the fleet (nearly 12 years old on average now) and higher salvage values for older vehicles caused by the dip in sales during the recession a decade ago.

"The values of individual vehicles are flattening, but repair costs are climbing," Gotsch says. "We're seeing more of those vehicles on the border of being totaled."

However, with ADAS technology on more newer vehicles, the severity of the collisions may decline enough to help depress the increase in total losses. "Cars that may have been traveling at 50 mph that veer into traffic, they may at least have some better opportunity to slow down or mitigate the accident," Gotsch says. "That may pull down repair costs enough to counter rising technology costs, but it's unknown right now." 

RECRUITMENT

REPORT REVEALS TECH SHORTAGE CONTINUES TO WORSEN

TechForce Foundation[®] released a Transportation Technician Supply & Demand Report that reveals the transportation


technician shortage continues to worsen.

The report reflects new research from the National Center for Education Statistics and TechForce's analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data. Citing both increasing demand for professional techs and a declining supply of new techs entering the industry, the update concludes that

the technician shortage is increasing in severity despite industry efforts to organize around the issue and a slight uptick in new post-secondary degrees and certificates for future diesel technicians.

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AGILITY IN THE FUTURE SHOP



To succeed in today's market, shops need to thrive in an environment of constant and unpredictable change

DAMAGE ANALYSIS IS A DEDICATED SPACE

in the future shop where careful disassembly and assessing vehicle damage is the only focus.

LEE RUSH // Contributing Editor

The collision repair industry landscape has changed in recent years due to increasing competitive challenges. OEMs have chosen to satisfy customer needs by increasing product variation and complexity. This complexity is felt in the “re-manufacturing” process we know as collision repair. Combined with new insurance company requirements and — most importantly — evolving consumer expectations, a new standard for how

collision shops operate is quickly taking over the industry. For a number of highly performing larger shops, it's already here.

As we transition into 2019, there are radical changes reshaping the collision industry landscape, including consolidation of many markets. Modern consumers have grown accustomed to personalized, on-demand experiences. Insurance companies (customers) want to be treated individually. Insurance companies are introducing more new claims products

more quickly and are focusing their marketing on specialized products, such as the Allstate® QuickFoto Claim. Our industry is on the cusp of the information age, and these changes are ushering in new challenges for collision repairers.

What is our best approach to these challenges? We must become agile.

Agility is the ability to thrive and prosper in an environment of constant and unpredictable change — does this sound like our production floors? A shop that



PROFITABILITY AND SURVIVABILITY are going to force us into a more flexible business model to thrive and prosper in an environment of constant and unpredictable change.



TO REDUCE WASTE and become a more agile facility, we recommend redesigning the production floor for continuous flow.

positions itself to adapt and adjust to the changing environment will not only navigate the challenges, it will thrive on new opportunities.

What does an agile shop look like? How does an agile shop operate?

Visual management

Facility design is a critical component of the agile shop. How we utilize and repurpose space within our collision centers will determine our level of productivity and profitability. A work environment can be structured in a way that makes it self-explaining, self-ordering and self-improving and can be managed visually. An out-of-standard situation is immediately obvious and can be easily and quickly corrected.

In order to reduce waste and become a more agile facility, we recommend redesigning the production floor for continuous flow. To accomplish this, we need to face the reality that we must serve customers within their expectations with perfect quality, on-time delivery and at a lower cost. To approach these demands requires that the shop is already using some improved production methods, such as damage analysis and parts correctness. This is a starting point. You can only build agility on a firm foundation. Only the innovative and agile companies

will be positioned to make the most of these changes.

Damage analysis

Damage analysis and blueprinting is a process to determine all the needs of the vehicle through complete disassembly and analysis. Components are analyzed carefully to determine need of repair or replacement. Instead of discovering additional operations halfway through the repair cycle, these requirements are identified in advance. The needs of the vehicle are documented within a repair order to ensure 100 percent accuracy. This work is done by a dedicated, experienced analyst — a Repair Process Manager (RPM), not a traditional estimator.

This is the opposite of the old “tear-down” process, which inevitably results in unforeseen issues delaying completion. This traditional process does not allow shops the agility needed to survive and thrive; and forward-thinking shops have created a new environment in which they are able to adapt and adjust to the changing environment.

Damage analysis is a dedicated space in the future shop. Carefully disassembling and assessing vehicle damage is the only focus. It is driven by a deliberate process utilizing a mobile (agile) estimating database workstation at the

vehicle, with a technician identifying and documenting each need of the vehicle in detail with an RPM. Capturing this data in the beginning of the repair cycle is ideal for ensuring accuracy, as the complexity of vehicles today call for extensive sectioning, scanning and manufacturer requirements.

Parts carts are equipped with a schematic outlining an exacting process for kits, designed to accommodate the repair and reassembly process. Damaged parts are placed on the parts cart, and new parts are mirror matched to the damaged parts as they are received. The mobile parts cart allows technicians access and flexibility to inventory on and off the production floor as needed. An agile shop does not cut corners on parts correctness. As new parts come in, they are unboxed and checked for correctness against the damaged part, and only added to the kit once verified as the correct part.

Agile remanufacturing

In an agile remanufacturing model, specific technicians are tasked with parts of the repair process with special attention to efficiency. In modern large collision centers, it's rare that a painter preps and paints his or her own work. Combotechnicians that do it all are even less common. In contrast, in an agile shop,



THE SHOPS THAT WILL MEET the challenges of the collision marketplace of the twenty-first century are those that are able to become agile in every aspect of their business.



AGILE REMANUFACTURING ALIGNS skill set to labor operations and the constantly changing labor demands.

it is just as rare for a highly-skilled structural technician to disassemble a vehicle, perform minor repairs and reassemble their own work.

Agile remanufacturing is a production trend moving away from the old ideas of large factories making huge quantities of standard products. Other industries will need a few more years before these changes begin to bite, but the collision industry has already been bitten. Only when everything is stable can a series of totally rigid standard operating procedures be successfully deployed. The collision repair industry is a low-volume, highly-variable environment not well suited to this standardized lean-type process. In fact, after 20 years of Lean in our industry, thousands of printed articles, presentations and training events, all the colored belts in the world have not moved our industry as a whole. Collision repair is a \$34 billion industry with 40,000-plus shops, and yet it still struggles to implement the “blocking and tackling” of Lean. Still, perfect quality and very high levels of service are expected and required of us every day. A major advantage of the agile model is that shops can identify any delays, stops or slowdowns in real time, adjust, and re-deploy labor where needed.

The average age of collision industry technicians is rising. Boomers are retir-

ing. And, the number of qualified, skilled technicians is declining. In this environment, the model of handing eight vehicles to one technician and expecting them to efficiently execute every piece of the repair cycle is a dying model. It’s flawed from the beginning because it does not address skill set nor the agility to deploy labor based on the constant change on our production floors. The skillset required to take apart a damaged bumper, damaged fender or broken headlight is different than that of a frame and unibody technician. Agile remanufacturing aligns skillset to labor operations and the constantly changing labor demands.

The future is now

One of the strongest advantages of agile remanufacturing is greater productivity. The agile shop, with a well-implemented remanufacturing system, will achieve touch time approaching 100 percent, as someone is always on a vehicle producing labor that is needed, as opposed to one technician having to dance around several vehicles at a time and building a flag sheet. It simply makes more sense from a productivity standpoint to task lower-skilled technicians with dismantling vehicles, higher-skilled technicians with structural repair, and mid-tier technicians with reassembly, each supported

by the guidance of a highly-skilled certified technician.

Agile is the future. It is inevitable that profitability and survivability are going to force us into a more flexible business model to thrive and prosper in an environment of constant and unpredictable change. Our production floors? The old model cannot sustain the evolving demands of our industry. Shops must acquire or develop the ability to effect change rapidly, adopt highly-flexible management structures and comprehensive methods of introducing change and prospering from it.

These changes are taking place rapidly in our industry. The shops that will meet the challenges of the ever-changing collision marketplace of the twenty-first century are those that are able to become agile in every aspect of their business. Agility is not a “magic wand” to solve all ills. It is built upon the firm foundation of lean methods, coupled with an organization that is physically, technologically, and managerially built for swift and unpredictable change. 📌

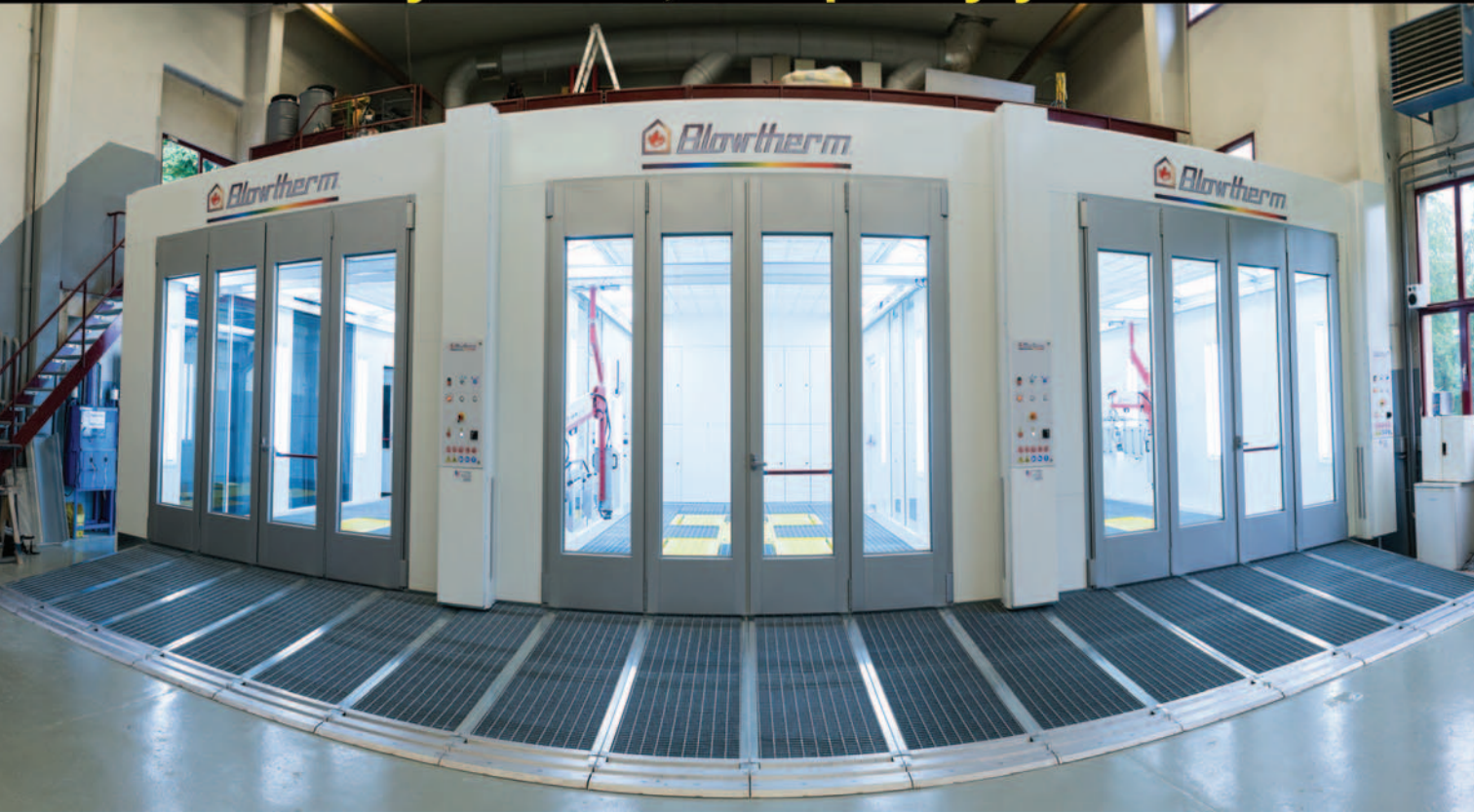


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CHANGING TRAJECTORY



Shop owners describe the X factors that transformed their businesses

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TIM SRAMCIK // Contributing Editor

Several years ago, *ABRN* profiled Warrensburg Collision and the steps manager Casey Lund took to turn around the fortunes of the once-floundering business. Lund took the reins of the Warrensburg, Mo. shop when his father fell ill. He quickly came up to speed on all the reasons his father warned him away from a career in collision repair. Money was difficult to make, and industry challenges created a bleak future.

In short, he woke up to the reality most shops face every day. For several years, he struggled mightily, and in 2012

realized he had to make drastic changes. He poured over books on business improvement (he already possessed an MBA) and decided lean was the way to go for himself and his entire team. In fact, he focused his entire organization on continuous improvement. Fixing processes became just as important as fixing cars. A turnaround began. In three years, the shop managed to triple its revenue.

The collision industry is full of many such stories. Many thriving shops have been born out of failing ones. Unfortunately, there are still many more stories of repairers who are more content to

tread water or make minor changes that keep their doors open for the time being (maybe until a consolidator makes an offer). That's a shame since there are so many good obtainable and available solutions that can revive a business. There also are many repairers who want to share their own success stories of how an "X factor" — a change or series of changes, — transformed their fortunes and keeps them riding high.

Here are three such examples from members of the Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS). Consider how their stories could be rewriting your own.

X Factor: Join industry groups and learn from your colleagues

Bruce Halcro, owner of Capital Collision Center in Helena, Mont., was already a successful shop owner with two decades of experience when he made a career- and life-changing decision 20 years ago. He became active in his local bodyshop association, the Montana Collision Repair Association, and then went nationwide with SCRS.

His motivation: “I decided I needed to get outside my shop and start training myself on the things I didn’t know,” he says.

The associations provided just that training, along with a network of shops and shop owners Halcro could consult with. The great takeaway from this experience was the need to get more training for his shop.

“At the local level, Montana isn’t exactly a big area, but they still managed to bring in someone like Mike Anderson who could speak to what we need to be doing in our shops,” Halcro explains.

At the national level, Halcro says SCRS gave him access to a clearer view of what changes the industry would be experiencing along with the opportunity to speak with some of the best brains in the collision repair industry.

These experiences helped Halcro redirect his business with a greater focus on training, which today includes annual training requirements. It also gave him a better perspective of what was going on in the industry and ways to address change. “Before I wasn’t sure how to handle what was going on, but now with so many folks I can consult with, I know I can do it,” he says.

That sort of confidence and change in thinking might be most important for transformations at the business. Halcro explains, “I remember my wife asking me what the value of SCRS was. I had to think about it. I couldn’t put a number on it since you can’t quantify it that way. I told her, ‘I know I’m better at what I do.’”

Have reservations about getting

involved with shop associations? Don’t. Halcro says drop any notion that these organizations are simply “good old boy” groups.

“They’re very inclusive,” he says. “There’s a lot of commonality out there. Other folks are hammering with the same things you are and are looking for the same answers.”

X Factor: Differentiate and then build on your changes

Current SCRS Chairman Kye Yeung, owner of European Motor Works in Costa Mesa, Calif., has 43 years in the business. During that time, there hasn’t been a single X factor that “catapulted” his business, but instead a series of decisions built around an effort to differentiate his shop from his competitors.

The following timeline outlines the changes he made to focus his shop’s work on British motorcars:

1982 – Took out a yellow page advertising that the shop worked only on British vehicles. Yeung said no one else was making such a claim.

2000 – Accepted an invitation by Aston Martin to join its certification program, one of the first manufacturer repair programs

2001 – Went from leasing to purchasing the shop building

2008 – Set a different rate for aluminum repair work

2009 – Became chairman of SCRS, giving Yeung access to a nationwide network of repairers

2016 – Changed shop’s focus to repairing aluminum composites on four vehicle brands

Why the focus on British models, and not, for example, German ones? Yeung says he wanted to capitalize on their reputation for being difficult to work on. By



OWNER TRACE COCCIMIGLIO came into the business with no collision repair experience but put his shop on the path to success by rethinking customer service.

giving customers a ready solution aimed squarely at that reputation he could build a steady stream of business in a one-of-a-kind shop.

Taking this path also had some other benefits, like giving him a business that was easier to manage. By concentrating on specific brand(s), he could better control the training employees needed for the work. It also made repairs easier since his staff was seeing the same kinds of work again and again. Knowing exactly what work his shop would be doing also allowed him to order parts in volume and stock hard-to-get items, which cut costs and increased work efficiency.

Such a business model isn’t going to be the proper fit for many shops — at least now. Yeung says those that are interested should research their markets to see if such an opportunity exists.

He also says there’s another important lesson here. Each decision he made, each stepping stone, made the next decision easier. Yeung says that’s what repairers need to keep in mind as they build their own businesses. They’re building a brand piece by piece, which means continually taking constructive steps. Sure, there’s some risk, but standing in place often is a bigger and more dangerous one.

X Factor: See through your customers’ eyes

Familiar with a ride-sharing business called Turo? It’s the Airbnb (room sharing enterprise) equivalent for cars. It’s also be-

come extremely popular. Not one to miss a trend, Trace Coccimiglio, owner of Valet Auto Body in Draper, Utah, has jumped right in. He owns a small car rental company with 30-40 vehicles that he fits with snow tires and ski racks, so tourists can pass through snowy Rocky Mountain canyons. He markets it through Turo, giving customers an option they couldn't find through major car rental companies.

Finding new ways to reach and please customers is something Coccimiglio has built his reputation on. Nine years ago, with no experience in collision repair, Coccimiglio joined a partnership to open Valet Auto Body. Four months later, the partnership dissolved, leaving Coccimiglio to run the business and looking for ways to build the shop.

He needed customers, so he set about seeing his business through their eyes. "I realized right away I didn't want my customers thinking about what I was doing. They needed to focus on getting back to their lives, which they couldn't do if they were having to do things like ask for rides or take the bus," he says.

Coccimiglio's answer was to buy some loaner cars and simply "give" them to customers if they gave his shop the repair work. With liability frequently an issue, he says customers can be reluctant to rent a car if they don't believe their insurer will cover the cost. If he offered them one up front he accomplished two tasks: He helped normalize the lives of his customers (building their satisfaction) and grabbed a job. The strategy cost Coccimiglio very little. He says nine times out of 10, the insurance company paid. If they didn't, the costs to him were little since he already owned the vehicles.

From there, he instituted other shop rules aimed at empowering customers and keeping the repair process as stress-free as possible:

- The phrase "Can I help you?" is banned at the shop. It should be pretty obvious why someone shows up at a shop, says Coccimiglio. He instructs his

staff to greet customers with, "Hi, how are you?" and "I'm sorry about the accident," (the latter is something he says they probably haven't heard from the police, insurer, etc.). Coccimiglio says when customers are greeted warmly and given the chance to explain what happened "you can practically see the stress leaving them".

- Also banned is the question "Is this going through insurance?" Coccimiglio says once the word "insurance" is uttered, customers feel they've lost control of the situation. "We take them out and look at the car and the damage. That tells us if insurance will be necessary," he explains.

- Connect with customers every way possible. Coccimiglio adopts the stance that once customers enter the shop, they're his. He and his staff then take every opportunity to speak with them, give them tours of the shop or engage them however possible. From there, the shop works as an advocate for customers, helping them navigate their way through the repair process and removing any stress or fears they may have.

Coccimiglio says these approaches paid off handsomely from the very beginning. He notes that his customers are extremely loyal and provide lots of word-of-mouth advertising. Just as important, they also leave plenty of positive online reviews on Yelp and Google. Coccimiglio realized the value of these reviews nine years ago and credits them for helping build his business. He says they're a "must-have" commodity for every shop.

Also vital, he says, is having a staff member who can assist insurance agents. He's had just such a person who addresses customer and insurer questions on towing, repair updates and other issues that would otherwise fall on the agent. By bringing real value to this position, agents are willing to recommend customers use the shop, sometimes over shops in their own DRPs. Coccimiglio's business isn't currently in any DRPs but manages to bring in DRP-type business because they've proven their value.



TAKING CUSTOMERS ON TOURS of your shop is a good way of familiarizing them with your work and letting them see the value of the work.

If you're curious if these X factors could benefit your shop, consider Coccimiglio's admission that he's made "lots of \$100,000 mistakes" while learning the business. His unique approach to customer service has carried the shop when it stumbled in other areas.

Final lessons

If the base of most of these X factors appears to be a fresh perspective, that's probably because it is. The only way to truly transform a business is with a fresh vision. That doesn't come from sitting in your office doing paperwork or concentrating on what's happening in your work bays.

Go outside. Step away from your work. Ask colleagues about their perspectives and experiences. Put yourself in the place of the people who walk through your doors. Then, do something! All of the repairers noted here realized they couldn't truly be successful if they did business like everyone else. By writing their own stories, they created something special. Maybe it's time to start your own story. 📖



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

tsramcik@yahoo.com

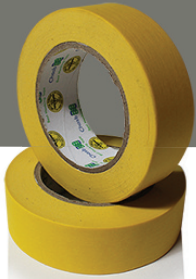


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Use a paint list, right vehicle prep to boost throughput

Use consistency in the shop to improve your profitability and performance

In “Track and improve these numbers in your refinish department,” December 2018, and “Maximize your paint shop performance,” January 2019, I discussed some of the factors you should be considering in terms of maximizing your paint shop performance. Here are a few more.

Start the day with a paint list

So often the key to better paint shop performance comes down to improving — and consistently using — better processes. One such process that I consider mandatory — yet often doesn’t happen in some shops — is the paint team starting every day with a to-do list.

The daily paint list tells them what they need to accomplish that day, and the priority of that work. Too often I see that being left to chance, with the paint department staff picking and choosing. But these decisions should be made collaboratively between the front office and the paint team, based on promised delivery dates and on maximized use of the booth and available labor.

Those decisions and that list have to be done by the time the work day begins. Taking a list out to the paint shop at noon or even 10 a.m. just doesn’t cut it. It’s better to know at the beginning of the day, for example, that not everything the office wants to be painted that day can be because of some issue management isn’t aware of. That enables any rescheduling and customer notification to be done early in the game versus at the last minute. You have time to recover. You don’t have time to recover halfway through the day if it’s only then that you find cars that you thought would be sprayed at the beginning of the day weren’t.

Nothing adds productivity more than just making sure a well-managed and communicated paint list happens at the start of each day. Shops tend to buy all the latest and greatest drying equipment and spray booths, but without an effective daily paint plan, they’ve likely wasted the capital investment in new equipment and may not get any added productivity. Your paint shop will always only be as good as your prioritized daily paint plan.



NOTHING ADDS PRODUCTIVITY MORE THAN MAKING SURE A WELL-MANAGED, COMMUNICATED PAINT LIST HAPPENS AT THE START OF EACH DAY.

Follow consistent prep processes

Where does 90 percent of the dirt inside the paint booth come from? It comes in from that car you just brought into the booth without it having been prepped correctly.

I recently worked on this with a client shop in Baltimore. Vehicles weren’t being blown off and washed adequately before going into the booth, so they had a dirt problem and were spending hours denibbing, sanding and buffing.

Fifteen more minutes on the front end prepping a car correctly can save you hours on the back end. Post-spraying sanding or denibbing will always be required. Perfect refinish work will never be a reality. But good prep processes can help reduce the amount of time it requires.

Improve your air quality

The quality and speed of the paint products you use definitely can be impacted by the quality of the air to your booth. Investing in and maintaining a system that deliver clean, dry air offers dividends in terms of the quality and quantity of work your paint shop delivers.

The moisture in your compressed air, for example, should be less than six percent, at a maximum. Lower is better — preferably more like one percent or two percent — but if it exceeds six percent, you’re in trouble.

That’s why regularly checking your oil and water separators and desiccant dryers needs to be on your maintenance schedule. A dedicated air system just for the spraybooth and paint department is ideal. In any case, the system should be looped so that the air circles back to the compressor and dryer.

When you visit a shop that has what I call hospital-type air coming through the line, you’ll see that the paint jobs look gorgeous. 📧

STEVE FELTOVICH of SJF Business Consulting, LLC, works with dealers, MSOs and independent collision repair businesses to make improvements and achieve performance goals. sjfeltovich@gmail.com

Work better “on” your business with this checklist

Learn what you should be doing during your “office time”

Many shop owners have an issue with spending time daily alone in their office to work *on* their business — they are consumed with working *in* their business. One reason for that is they may not know what to do with their time in the office.

“Office time” should be about “How do I make our business better and more productive than what it is today?” In order to answer that question fully, one must use another series of questions that help guide them to that ultimate answer(s).

Think about these questions to get you started. These are not questions that can be knocked off in one office session, but rather may take a couple of months to actually think about each and determine an answer that will truly move your business forward. Consider the following list as your business “audit” to ensure the future will be prosperous for the company and everyone working with you. Determine which questions could become a great staff meeting with the team so that there are encompassing solutions that everyone believes in and wants to be part of.

1. We face increased competition and/or shrinking margins. What should we do and what will be the effect on the business?
2. We need to better understand our target client — who they are, why they buy and what they really want. What is our game plan to build long-lasting, trustworthy relationships?
3. What do we need to do to create and deliver compelling client value and experiences that differentiate us and help grow our bottom line? And how will we do it?
4. We need to do more business with existing clients and attract new and profitable clients. Are we only measuring sales and car count or are we measuring billed hours per client?
5. We don’t charge as much as we should. Why is this and how are we going to fix that?
6. We need to find innovative and affordable ways to promote our business in a market with expensive traditional advertising. What is the right plan for our business?
7. We need to increase bottom-line profitability by at least X%. How can we achieve that result?
8. Our industry faces trust and image issues. What is our plan



OFFICE TIME SHOULD BE ABOUT “HOW DO I MAKE OUR BUSINESS BETTER AND MORE PRODUCTIVE THAN IT IS TODAY?”

to create client confidence?

9. We need to find, motivate and retain top performers at every level of our shop. How will we do that and what are the results we expect?

10. We need to improve our focus and productivity and create a culture of commitment and accountability. Do we believe in accountability as an important part of our business culture?

11. We need to train and develop our staff more effectively in order to grow the business and remain competitive. What courses are required and where and when are they going to be held?

12. We need more clarity and consistency from the top. Is management fully accountable?

13. We need to create true two-way communication throughout our organization to improve service, efficiency, innovation, profitability and employee satisfaction. What can be fixed with our current communication model?

14. We need a clear vision for the future of our business and a plan to get there. Will the plan have proper and accountable timelines?

15. We do not have the working capital needed to operate or grow the business effectively. What must we do to achieve that?

16. Our industry and our market are changing quickly. Thus, we need to redefine and/or reinvent some aspects of our business. Are there specific courses we must take to clarify our industry and business knowledge? When and where will they be?

17. There’s a lack of clarity about who will lead, manage and/or own our business in the future. Do we have a proper succession plan in place?

After dealing with the above questions thoroughly, you will be in a position to address the next level of thinking. Make yourself accountable and earn your paycheck just like the rest of your team earns theirs. 📧

BOB GREENWOOD, AMAM, is president and CEO of Automotive Aftermarket E-Learning Centre Ltd. (AAEC), which provides business management resources for the automotive aftermarket. Bob has more than 36 years of business management experience and is one of 150 worldwide AMi-approved instructors.
greenwood@aaec.ca

Government shutdown causing unfinished business

Lack of legislative and regulatory progress impact automotive industry

Embarking on the longest federal government shutdown to date, funding for Fiscal Year 2019 Transportation is just a small piece of the unfinished business that threatens all segments of the automotive and transportation industries. The standoff is between the Administration and Congressional Democratic leaders over funding for the wall versus FY 2019 funding for the seven remaining appropriations bills, including Transportation. This funding package is impacting states with highway and other projects in until there is an agreement reached.

The federal government shutdown is just part of the dilemma faced by the automotive industry. Prior to the end of the 115th Congress, the Senate failed to consider the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee's AV START Act, autonomous vehicle legislation. In addition to Congress not providing states a set of rules for research and implementation of vehicle technologies, more importantly for automotive repairers, the Senate bill addressed vehicle data access and cybersecurity. Without direction from Congress or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), states are left to address these issues on their own.

Although NHTSA — during both the Obama and Trump Administrations — issued guidelines for new vehicle technologies (i.e. the roles for states and the federal government), they are only guidelines. Numerous states have moved on research and deployment rules for new vehicle technologies, but the data access issue, critical to independent repairers, has been left in limbo. This will likely lead states to attempt to address data access and related cybersecurity issues on their own — as in Massachusetts, where legislation has been introduced expanding the scope of the 2013 state Motor Vehicle Right to Repair Law proposing several key changes:

- “Mechanical Vehicle Data,” any data in a vehicle related to the diagnosis, repair or maintenance of that vehicle
- Access to vehicle onboard diagnostic systems shall be



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standardized and not require the use of any authorization, directly or indirectly, by the manufacturer. Manufacturers may utilize an authorization system for access to vehicle networks and their onboard diagnostic systems that is standardized and is administered by an entity unaffiliated with a manufacturer.

Without specific guidance or an industry agreement, repairers could face a 50-state footprint of varying regulations. This will work against independent repairers and OEMs. Collision repairers face this regulatory model today with every state insurance commissioner and legislature having a shot at regulating how consumers, repairers and insurance companies interact.

The Automotive Service Association (ASA) inquired of NHTSA as to the possibility of addressing data access in the foreseeable future, and NHTSA was very clear that this would not occur without Congressional action.

Looking ahead at the federal level, Congress must first address U.S. Department of Transportation funding for FY 2019. The new Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, Peter DeFazio (D-OR), has made transportation infrastructure the Committee's most immediate priority. Some related new vehicle technology issues could arise in this debate.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee has jurisdiction over the data access and cybersecurity issues related to new vehicle technologies and Chairman Frank Pallone (D-NJ) has not indicated a committee agenda as of this writing, but there is increasing party pressure for climate change to be a priority. If a federal data access and cybersecurity policy is not implemented soon, states will move forward. Independent repairers can look for additional state and federal activity with Congress' inaction offering no clear data access policy path. 📧

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. rredding@reddingfirm.com



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DAVID ROGERS // Contributing Editor

The old saying “many hands make for light work” can sometimes go both ways.

Being shorthanded in any situation, especially in terms of staffing at a small business, can make it seem like you’re swimming against the current, and every day is a struggle just to make a dent in your to-do list.

In the auto repair industry, making do with a smaller staff is fast becoming a reality. As we’ve all noticed, the quantity of quality techs entering our field in recent years has dwindled significantly, and the average age of an ASE-certified tech is getting higher and higher, currently sitting right around 45.

There are several reasons for this trend, all of which seem to stem from societal factors and none of which can be remedied easily. While we can’t control how many techs are entering the industry or how many “hirable” techs are available in our given market, the one thing we can control is being proactive and putting ourselves in a position to do more with less by having good systems and policies in place. In my experience, the best way to accomplish this is to make sure your shop’s culture is the very best it can be and that your staff members are 1) educated, 2) energized and 3) efficient!

Knowledge is power

Training is an element of this industry that a lot of shop owners are guilty of ignoring or taking for granted. Your employees



need to constantly be on top of emerging trends, new technologies and modern equipment if you want to have a competi-

tive advantage in your market, and they need to understand precisely how things work in your shop and what is expected of

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them for things to run smoothly.

There is no substitute for giving clear expectations. Proper training provides an opportunity to get everyone on the same page and working together, towards the same goal.

Training removes any confusion or blurry lines from your process. It gives your culture a chance to grow in a direction that ownership can define and maintain influence on.

By choosing to constantly train, you quickly notice the chaos dissipating and the team engaging with customers and one another in a positive, confident manner. Training allows people to really shine as they begin to understand the parameters within which you wish them to operate. If knowledge equals power, then training is precisely what you need to fire up the engine of your shop and improve productivity no matter what your tech count might be!

Incentivize to energize

In order to properly motivate your staff and get the most out of your employees, having a good incentivized payment plan in place is an absolute must. Properly and positively rewarding good work and good workers who go the extra mile will ensure your staff is operating at an optimal level regardless of its size.

Many shops struggle with this concept. They fear that if they don't give the employees a salary or hourly pay, they will leave for a more stable situation. The truth is, only the lowest performing would prefer that over a great opportunity that is based upon their own production and effort.

There are many types of incentive pay plans in the industry. We have found that the vast majority of them have hidden disincentive traps built into them. You must test your incentives to make sure they do not become disincentives!

In my experience, improperly paying your employees can cause more problems for you than just about anything.

Expecting a poorly incentivized team member to reach the goals of management is quite simply impossible.

When you let the team win when your shop wins, it stands to reason the team will work harder and there will be more winning all around. If they get paid the same whether you are slow or whether your shop is slammed, what is their incentive to get the work out more quickly? Why would they make the extra effort to make the shop busy every day? People need a reason to put in the extra effort day in and day out. Whether ownership realizes it or not, the type of people and the level of effort they will achieve is all a matter of how well we incentivize those people and whether we provide them with enough of the right training (and accountability) on a consistent basis!

Adapt or fade away

When it comes to efficiency, I can't stress modernization enough. The first thing that comes to mind when I think of modernizing is the customer waiting area and conveniences. Whether it be a loaner car program or an espresso machine and snacks with free WiFi and charging stations for personal devices, these are things that can set us apart from the competition and provide a quantifiable difference that customers will use and appreciate.

The concept of "modernizing" in our industry also gives me visions of how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be utilized to improve shop efficiency. So many shops today are using five to 10 different computer programs to address each vehicle. They will sign the customer in on a POS program, look up diagnostic info on another, use yet another to order parts, and then possibly use another one or two programs to look up and compare labor times. Add to those another couple of CRM programs, plus another one for marketing, and you have a tangle of expensive and outdated processes.

All these programs have different passwords and hoops to jump through in order to get the job accomplished. Plus, none of these ancillary programs seem to talk to one another, or work in an integrated manner, no matter what claims are made to the contrary. This completely hamstring the processes and efficiencies and is the major obstacle to making progress and improving productivity via modernization.

The future is much more streamlined and doesn't include all that hopping around. AI will allow us to achieve much more work with less employees, even techs. We are experiencing that in our own shop (Keller Bros. in Littleton, Colo.) right now where we're producing well over \$3 million in annual revenue with only four techs in a smooth, stress-free manner thanks to the integrated management platform we use. We encourage our peers to jump on board with this idea and drop all the "standard" programs and processes that eat up so much time and profit and require multiple staff members to operate.

Staff shortages have certainly been known to cause headaches and heartburn. But if you have the right systems and the right personnel in place, being shorthanded won't be as big of a liability as you'd think. It may even teach you how to be more productive when fully staffed thanks to the lessons learned while doing more with less. An automotive shop is like an engine, and having a well-oiled machine complete with staff that's educated, energized and efficient is essential to keep your motor running no matter what! 🛠️

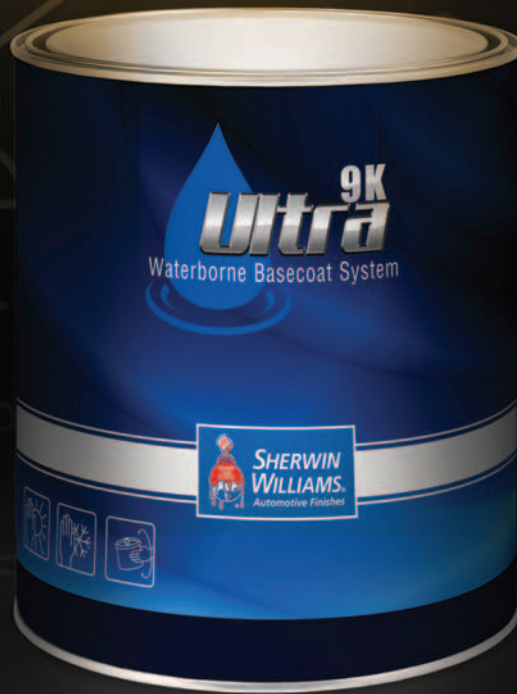


DAVID ROGERS is chief operating officer of Keller Bros. Inc., president of Auto Profit Masters and president of Shop 4D, the industry's first Artificial Intelligence (AI)-

enabled, self-learning system for proactively managing repairs, customers, marketing, profits and employees.

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NEW BOOTH OR BETTER PROCESSES

Review some key KPIs you must track for maximum paint shop efficiency

JOHN SHOEMAKER // Contributing Editor

Recently I was asked to help a shop find room for a second booth in their already crowded space. I was surprised because this shop was usually too busy to talk with me. But they were continually behind in the paint shop and knew a second booth was the answer to their problems.

As I looked around the shop, I didn't see space for a second booth, but I also didn't see a productive paint shop. While measuring the shop, I saw the booth flip off of bake, the lights came on, and there was only one bumper in the booth.

I showed this to the manager and said, "I don't think you need another booth; I think you need better processes." He replied, "I know you've been trying to talk to me for a year or so, but you can see I'm

jammed up here and now I need a quick solution." As the discussion continued, I gave him some price ideas of what it would cost for his quick solution and he was astounded. Paint booths are not cheap, and they cost more when you are using them as a band-aid for poor production processes. The more we talked, the more he understood that another paint booth was not going to give him immediate help with his problem; they are not quick fixes. It would take 30–45 days at a minimum to get one installed.

I questioned the manager about his booth cycle time, how many vehicles he was moving through the booth a day and how many days of work were backlogged in the paint shop. The only answer he really knew was that he had 10 cars that were not going to be painted that day,

and he needed help. We started talking about process solutions.

The first thing we talked about was ensuring the booth was full each cycle. With masking tape, I made a true-to-size outline of his booth right outside the booth door. I spent some time going through his 10 repair orders, moved some things around, and we filled that outline with parts from three cars. I stayed at the shop most of the day and by staging repairs in that outline to maximize the booth cycles, we were able to paint eight of the 10 cars.

We have all heard the adage, "Proper planning prevents poor performance," and all we did that day was properly plan the booth cycle. I am sure you are watching KPIs such as Cost per Paint Hour, P&M Gross Profit and Paint Hours per RO, but what about Booth Cycle Time and

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Number of Vehicles per Booth per Day? Those KPIs are just as important and can make a huge difference in your paint shop.

If you can improve your Booth Cycle Time and Number of Vehicles per Booth per Day, you will be well on your way to eliminating the common choke point of

the paint shop. The calculation for Booth Cycle Time is fairly simple:

(Daily booth operating hours X no. of workdays X no. of booths) ÷ no. of ROs completed

If you are outside of 1.5 – 1.8 hours per cycle, you are not being efficient with your current paint booth.

Booth Cycle Time has a direct relation to Vehicles per Booth per Day and the calculation is similar:

(No. of booths X no. of workdays) ÷ no. of ROs completed

This should be an average of 4–5 per day. This means that some days you might have 6, 7 or 8 like the example above, while on other days larger jobs could reduce the average to 3–4.

The key with any process improvement is to be better today than you were yesterday and plan today for a better tomorrow. Watch your paint booth cycles. How many times is there only one bum-

per in the booth? How often is the booth sitting empty? Do the baking times coincide with breaks, lunchtime and end of day? These are all ways to tell at a glance if your paint shop is being efficient, and it can be fixed very easily.

I will leave you with a favorite quote of mine from Glen B. Alleman, "A plan is the strategy for the successful completion of a project. Any project without a plan is a project wandering in the wilderness." Don't let your paint shop be the wilderness; buy a paint booth when you have grown to need it. In the meantime, pick one thing as your focus, fix it and move on to the next. 📧



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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Following the tradition of innovation

Shop's storied history lies in always staying on the cutting edge of repairs

JAMES E. GUYETTE // Contributing Editor

➔ Horsepower was still being compared to four-legged beasts of burden and motorists donned goggles, hats and trench coats when Benner's Auto Body first opened for business in 1910.

As you might expect from a shop that's been around for more than a century, the operation has a long history of embracing the latest vehicle innovations – and implementing the most up-to-date repair technologies for keeping them on the road.

This storied tradition lives on with the enterprise's modern-day owner, Joseph O'Neill Jr., who at age 32 has recently reached yet another milestone in achieving Tesla's OEM repair certification.

"We've been official since the beginning of 2018," says O'Neill, known to all as Joe. "We've always tried to stay ahead of the curve," and the prospect of working on Tesla's aluminum body components and electrical propulsion systems "fascinated me as an owner" when the EVs were introduced into the car parc.

Already certified by Ford for the F-150 and its aluminum content, O'Neill went ahead and bought the equipment needed to conduct Tesla repairs prior to meeting the OEM's rigorous training standards. "I just had a really good feeling about it," he explains. "We liked the young brand and we liked that we were working directly with Tesla," referring to the relative youthfulness of the respective staffs and a mutual cultural fit among them.

"A lot of the training we had previously done with I-CAR," along with instruction obtained through shop-equipment manufacturers. The technicians were able to further enhance their education through Tesla's online training programs. "We were on the second wave of Telsa-certified shops," Joe recounts, which meant that the virtual training aspect was now available without the crew having to travel across the country to the automaker's in-house instructional facility in California.

"They were selling hundreds of Teslas" in the region surrounding the shop's Cranford, N.J. location, "and we knew that would be good for us" regarding a consistent flow of customers.

"In three to five years from now you're going to see a lot of that technology on other cars," O'Neill observes, which positions the full-service shop for ongoing future revenues.



BENNER'S AUTO BODY Cranford, N.J. // www.bennersautobody.com		
Joseph O'Neill Jr. Owner	20,000 Total square footage of shops	45 No. of customer vehicles per week
1 No. of shops	28 No. of bays	\$6.5 million Annual gross revenue
100-plus Years in business	4 days Average cycle time	
22 No. of employees	\$2,800 Average repair order	

"We have always been on the forefront of technology in the auto body business," he says. "My father was one of the first shops in New Jersey to have downdraft spray booths, frame machines and computerized estimating. I carried on the tradition with being one of the first shops in New Jersey to go waterborne and be aluminum certified."

Leveraging a customer-centric marketing mantra known as *The Benner's Difference*, "Our drive to be technically better than everyone else – to be trained in all model vehicles we ser-



vice and to use the best quality products and tools to achieve superior results. We try and give our insurance partners and customers the feel of dealing with a small business with the size and expertise of a big MSO."

SOPs and certifications

Mastering the most recent OEM certification requirements is a continuing process, as is tapping into the knowledge of industry experts such as consultant (and *ABRN* contributor) Steven Feltovich and taking advantage of the expertise provided by the shop's lineup of vendors.

3M representative Jim Garripoli has been a particularly valuable mentor. "He was pivotal in helping me learn the business and setting up SOPs for every department," according to O'Neill. "When I wanted to overhaul the detail department, 3M brought in Dan Yaworski from Meguiar's to demo how to use all their products effectively and efficiently." 3M equipment and products are in regular use, with the processes augmented by readily available instruction.

"As we got into more OE-certified work, 3M has been with us hand-in-hand doing demos on the proper foams and adhesives to use for the repairs," he says. "All-in-all I am very fortunate to have the relationship I have with 3M in helping me grow my company."

"Vendor relationships are huge to me," adds O'Neill, looking back to his life-threatening battle with cancer. "When I

was going through my tough times it was certain vendors that stood with me the whole way and others that didn't. You need vendors that understand the pressure we are under and are willing to go the extra mile to help alleviate it," he says.

"One of the key lean principals is to have everyone involved in the repair in sync with each other," he elaborates. "My vendors know when I need them to deliver, and they do so more often than not. That is why I am not in love with programs that put parts out to bid. Where is the loyalty in that? And on top of it, who cares if something is cheaper but can't be delivered on time?"

A cooperative stance is applied to insurance carriers as well, and Joe has little use for the negativity that is often expressed throughout the industry. "I never once thought that the insurance companies were the enemies of the collision business. To me, greedy people are the enemy to the collision business," he asserts.

"As shop owners, we all have the right to not fix the car. If we feel that we can't do the right repair for what they are willing to pay, we have the right to refuse to fix the car. I have developed that philosophy for everyone who works for me," O'Neill continues. "This has allowed me to have an outstanding relationship with every insurance company that I have come in contact with. I will never fault an insurance company for not paying us for something we didn't have the proper evidence for."

Several of the staff members have

been with the company for more than 20 years, always keeping current with the latest techniques. "We have former employees who learned the business at Benner's and now have gone on to work for insurance companies or open a shop for themselves," he says.

"That is why education is key to running a profitable auto body shop. Resources such as ALLDATA are great for proving what it takes to fix a car." Employees, appraisers and discerning customers "have the confidence that we are using the most up-to-date equipment. They are more likely to believe our position when they are able to see it in front of their eyes."

Leveraging lean and green

Environmental consciousness is a top priority, along with maintaining a high level of production efficiencies.

"We were one of the first shops to use (the 3M) CRIMP tool to measure and properly bill for consumables," O'Neill reports. "After being extensively trained in lean process, I turned to 3M to help my technicians be more productive. In between every two techs we have a 3M cabinet to store all their consumables and a full Total Automotive Sanding System. This allows them to stay more productive without having to walk back and forth to a centralized cabinet. We monitor what they use and the techs have to come to parts with an empty container to get a new container."

Sitting on the National Auto Body

Council's Board of Directors, O'Neill is an enthusiastic proponent of giving back to the nation's military veterans and encouraging every shop owner to support the less fortunate in their respective markets through charitable contributions.

"Customers should also be proud to get their car fixed by a shop that gives over \$50K a year back to the community," he says. "We work with a lot of local and national charities, but our biggest relationship is with NABC. With our partnership with NABC we have committed to give two cars away every year to veterans."

Serving the public is mission-critical throughout the company. "Customers should feel comfortable about dealing with us from the first phone call to the delivery of the car. Everyone who works for Benner's is committed to delivering the total customer experience. They also aren't only incentivized to produce more hours, but are also graded on how they interact with both our insurance partners and customers," says O'Neill.

"Our goal as a company is to grow our knowledge to a point where the customer's car never has to leave our facility," he notes. "We now have a full-service mechanical, diagnostic, body, paint and detail department. Combined with having a satellite Enterprise location onsite, we are able to offer both the insurance companies and customers a full-service experience. We have been able to split the shop into being able to handle quick 24-hour repairs while still maintaining departments that can facilitate long major collision repairs."

As is common throughout the industry, recruiting competent staff members is an ongoing challenge that is continually addressed. "The job market for collision repair employees is tough, so we have had to have multiple strategies to be able to keep a full staff.

"First," O'Neill explains, "we have budgeted to offer a complete benefit package that includes 401K, health, disability and life insurance. Second, we have the ability



for employees to take classes in our interactive conference room or testing area inside the shop. Third, we have been able to prolong the lifespan of a technician by buying equipment that makes it easier on the body for them – such as training them to do more highly skilled labor. This allows them to get paid a higher rate without having to produce as many hours as when they were younger."

A life-changing experience

O'Neill's late father, Joseph O'Neill Sr., purchased the long-established business from the Benner family in the early 1980s after owning a pair of smaller shops for nearly 20 years. While attending a NACE conference, Joe Sr. connected with a Texas shop owner who had a 40,000-plus square-foot facility. Upon visiting this operation, "He knew that he wanted to turn Benner's into a large production shop," O'Neill Jr. recalls.

He started working with his father in his early 20s and formally assumed ownership in 2010 when O'Neill Sr. was diagnosed with cancer, succumbing to the disease a few years later. O'Neill Jr. has had his own struggle with cancer, an especially grim period that also brought an inspiring, life-changing "Make a Wish" phone call, gifts and an onstage "Dream On" shout-out from Steven Tyler of Aerosmith!

Prior to this encounter, "I never had any intentions of taking over the business

and in fact never worked at the shop," says O'Neill. "It was after surviving cancer that I went to work for my father to be closer with him. In the beginning it was only about spending time with my father and not about the business. I soon began to realize that there was a huge opportunity for me to help grow the business."

He started attending Sherwin Williams training classes, and later moved up into more advanced courses when O'Neill Sr. received his ultimately fatal cancer diagnosis.

"This time I had a different focus because I knew I would have to soon run the show by myself," according to O'Neill. "They (Sherwin Williams) were gracious enough to send me to classes, seminars and 20 Group meetings around the country. I was able to meet some of the founding owners of both Caliber and CARSTAR," he recounts with great gratitude.

"However, the person who really stood out, and I owe a lot to, was Steven Feltoovich (of SJF Business Consulting). Steven turned out to be a godsend because he was able to show me exactly what I needed to focus on. He didn't bother me with hypotheticals because he knew the timeframe I had to get up to speed." ■



JAMES E. GUYETTE is a long-time contributing editor to *ABRN*, *Aftermarket Business World* and *Motor Age* magazines. jimguyette2004@yahoo.com



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How to develop an unbreakable shop culture

DEFINE THE VALUES OF YOUR BUSINESS TO BUILD A FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

MIKE JONES // Contributing Editor

In order to develop an unbreakable culture in your business, we must first understand what “culture” is. Culture is typically defined as an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief and behavior — the outlook, attitudes, values, morals, goals and customs shared by a group of people.

Discover Leadership Training defines culture as the warm, living, breathing part of your business. It is the people in your business, their habits, beliefs, knowledge and interactions, both with each other and your customers. Your business culture is simply defined as “the way we do things around here.” It is the fundamental values that are the foundation of ALL of the decisions made in your business.

Let’s take a moment to compare the difference between a strong business culture and a weak business culture.

Strong business culture

- Positive environment
- Leader empowers & inspires
- Environment of excitement & enthusiasm
- Team members are empowered and encouraged to ask questions
- Team members are eager to learn & grow
- An attitude focused on the potential of success is created
- All team members are special & respected as individuals
- Team members are challenged to go

beyond the norms and create new possibilities

Weak business culture

- Negative environment
- The manager dictates
- Co-workers bad mouth leadership
- Employees are afraid to ask questions
- Employees make excuses & blame others
- Employees see NO future
- Judgements are made about individuals
- The standards are lowered

How can you know that you have an unbreakable culture? Listen to the conversation your internal customer (your team) and your external customer (your clients) are having about you. To paraphrase one of my favorite Bible verses, you will know them by their fruit. Said another way — action speaks louder than words. Taking an honest look at the culture that’s been created may be an eye-opening experience, or it may just reinforce what you already knew. Whatever the current state of affairs is, we all occupy the largest room in the house, and that is the room for improvement.


Ready to make some changes? Here are my top 10 ways to positively develop an unbreakable business culture.

10. Emphasize commitment rather than control. Do things *with* your team instead of *to* them.
9. Build trust, cooperation, support and cohesiveness.
8. Give feedback on more than production. You will not be able to separate

how your team feels about their work if ALL you talk about is productivity.

7. Innovate. Have a sense of what you want and commit to make it happen.
6. Avoid politics and employ teamwork.
5. Meet regularly to discuss quality.
4. Respect every individual. Treat each person as the main engine, rather than an interchangeable part.
3. Be open to suggestions; teach that the foundation of all wisdom comes from all levels of the culture.
2. Have clear cut outcomes and priorities and communicate them effectively.
1. Know your purpose and believe in it. Enroll your team into committing to incremental actions that are focused on the agreed-upon, shared vision of the organization. It is true that great organizations operate “on purpose.”

In order to develop an unbreakable business culture, you must practice behaviors that will help you to maintain that culture. These simple ideas will have a positive influence on developing that culture.

Developing an unbreakable culture will not happen overnight. It will only happen when deliberate choices are made to move toward an agreed-upon, shared vision of the outcome. 



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.

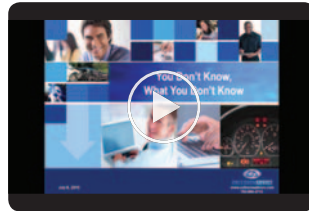
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How to engage youth in the automotive field

ABRN.COM/Youth



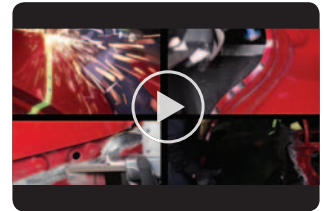
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MECHANICAL MOMENT

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

MINI COOPER LIGHTS & WIPERS INOPERATIVE — 27 DTCS

VEHICLE: 2008 Mini Cooper S (R56), L4-1.6L Turbo (N14), VIN WMWMF73518TV33661

MILEAGE: 114,261

PROBLEM: The exterior lights and windshield wipers were not working.

DETAILS: The customer mentioned that he regularly gets in the car with snow on his boots and the carpets get wet. When the technician connected his scan tool, he found 27 DTCS from numerous different modules: 12 from the FRM (Footwell Module), 4 from the DSC (Dynamic Stability Control) Module, 5 from the JBE (Junction Box Electronics) Module, 4 from the DME (Digital Motor Electronics) Module, 1 from the CAS (Car Access System) Module, and 1 from the ACSM (Advanced Crash Safety Module).

Armed with that information, the Tech-Assist consultant recommended that the technician inspect inside the FRM first.

Those modules have been notorious for having water infiltration issues. The technician removed the cover and found that water had gotten into the module and caused corrosion of the circuit board.

CONFIRMED REPAIR: Replacing the FRM and reprogramming it resolved all the problems and the DTCS did not return.

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Meadowlands Exposition Center
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MARCH 20-23
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MARCH 22-24
Automotive Training Expo (ATE)
Doubletree Hotel
Seatac, Washington

APRIL 2-3
HD Repair Forum
Hilton Fort Worth
Fort Worth, Texas

APRIL 14-16
PPG MVP Spring Conference
JW Marriott Camelback Inn Resort
Scottsdale, Arizona

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

APRIL 30-MAY 3
Automotive Body Parts Association (ABPA) 2019 Annual Convention
Westin Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

JUNE 22-24
SkillsUSA National Leadership & Skills Conference
Kentucky Exposition Center
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Preparing your team for the technology tidal wave

GETTING READY FOR THE FUTURE WILL NOT BE EASY – BUT IT IS NECESSARY

CHRIS CHESNEY // Contributing Editor

With the tidal wave of technology being installed on new vehicles, you need to prepare your team to be service ready when they arrive at your door. In this edition, we'll discuss how to go about preparing for the near future when your team will be servicing and repairing highly complex vehicles in your bays. Some of what I'm going to suggest is not going to be easy. It is going to require significant change in the way you do business, and this means you need to pay for the talent and skill required to solve problems with complex machines and systems. It also means you're going to have to invest in the right equipment and information, not the least expensive or the one-size-fits-all solution. You're going to need to not just raise your labor rate, but modify totally how you price and communicate value to your customers. In essence, we are moving from being mechanics to acting more as the technologists we are becoming.

We first need to accept the fact that we as an industry are woefully unprepared to be working on the vehicles in our bays today, let alone what we see on the showroom floor at the dealer down the street. Sure, we've attempted to stay abreast through training and have begun to discuss ADAS technologies. However, I fear we don't have enough skilled people who truly understand the foundations of electricity and physics of the technology in a way needed to provide confidence in the owner of the vehicle. This takes time to acquire and deploy, which is why we

haven't yet achieved the competence needed. So, let's look at three groups who we need to support in this effort: your technicians, your sales team and your business model.

The lack of foundation in electrical/electronic skills today is astonishing. Most of the vehicles in your bays today are equipped with a data network that requires a technician with a solid electronics foundation to understand and repair. So, the first step in becoming prepared for future technologies is to ensure anyone working on these technologies has a deep understanding of foundation electrical/electronics and is fluent in data network analysis and diagnosis. These skills include the ability to effectively use a factory wiring diagram and a digital storage oscilloscope; it means being able to read with full comprehension the service information provided for the system being serviced. It also means that not only can the technician understand and apply what they read, but that they have the ability to teach these skills to others. Proof of skill is a critical step in moving toward our goal of being competent in serving our customers. If you do not have a person like this on staff, then you need to find a diagnostics partner that you can rely on.

For your service sales team, the challenge is massive because we have such a gap in understanding of technology that allows easy explanation of the service or analysis process to the customer. To close this gap, you need to require your sales team to attend technical classes. The goal is not to make diagnostic technicians out of them, but to immerse them in the

terminology, diagnostic process, calibrations and complexity involved so they can begin to create the word tracks they will use to help motorists understand not only how the technology works, but how it must be repaired, why it takes time to do so, the significant skill needed to service it correctly, and most importantly, the risk involved in cutting corners or skipping steps. By including your sales team in the technical classes, your mentors will have the ability to influence their understanding and ability to communicate effectively.

Finally, your business model must be updated to provide for the margins needed to pay for talent in a way that attracts young people to our industry, retains existing talent and provides a great return on investment. You need to charge enough and pay enough. You need to change the way you acquire and retain customers. It means considering where you actually do the work. The owners of these technology-laden vehicles don't communicate like our older customers. They expect you to provide exceptional service that makes them go "Wow!" It means you need to be different, but most importantly, it means you have to be perfect in your ability to service their technologies right the first time. Because you are only going to get one chance before they decide you aren't the right choice. 📌



CHRIS CHESNEY is the Senior Director of Customer Training for Carquest Technical Institute (CTI) and Advance Professional.

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POST SYNDROME

PERFORMING A POST-REPAIR SCAN TO ENSURE A VEHICLE IS READY TO BE RETURNED TO A CUSTOMER MAY BECOME MORE COMPLICATED THAN IT SOUNDS

JOHN ANELLO // Contributing Editor

I was called to a shop to do a post-repair scan on a 2019 VW Golf (Figure 1) that was all finished and ready for delivery. This shop is a high-volume shop, and they move many cars in and out of the door and they make it their policy to scan all cars when they are done just to get peace of mind knowing that vehicles are safe and free of any issues prior to releasing the car to the customer. The shop may not always get paid by certain insurance companies for doing post-repair scans, but it is to their benefit to prevent a comeback and an inconvenienced customer that may give bad feedback on the shop's services.

When I arrived at the shop, the car started up fine and the only warning light that I noticed on was the yellow triangle caution sign (Figure 2). This was because I did not have my seatbelt

latched while I was sitting in the driver seat. This caution triangle is commonly used by manufacturers to alert the driver to view the instrument cluster to look for issues with the vehicle prior to driving off down the road. As I performed the vehicle scan, I came across 10 control modules with about 32 faults combined (Figure 3). Most of these faults were no longer present and were generated from the accident or during the repair of the vehicle. It is highly important to record all of these faults in your post-scan prior to clearing the entire vehicle. It is equally important to put the vehicle through three key cycles to see if any of these codes return. After another full vehicle scan, there were four control modules with active "U" codes in memory for a module not responding on the network. It is not uncommon for other controllers

within the network to not report an issue such as this because they may not rely on the missing controller for network data for them to function.

The Gateway Control Module is the main control module that oversees network communications, and this was the only module of the four control modules that actually specified the module at fault. The Gateway Control Module stored an active code U104500 that failed the Lane Change Assistance module for not responding on the network. This was odd because there was nothing reported to the instrument cluster to alert the driver of the vehicle at start up. This is very important to know because if there is a control module that is low on the totem pole, the network doesn't have to report a failure of the module back to the instrument cluster. Therefore, many

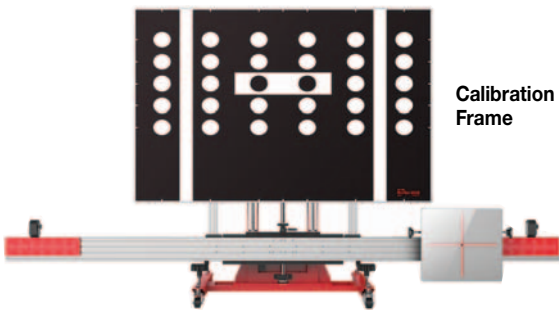
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onboard issues may go unnoticed until a customer comes back with an operating issue. A lot of vehicles will use a tier-rated priority to qualify if the instrument cluster needs to report a failure in the network. So as a quick check of the Lane Change or Side Obstacle System, shops need to view both warning lights on the side-view mirrors at start up. If the LEDs do not light up or both go on and stay on, then there is a problem with the system. At this point, I went ahead and started the vehicle and sure enough the Lane Change icons in both mirrors were inoperative (**Figure 4**). This definitely indicated to me that the system was not operating at all. I now instructed the shop to pull the rear bumper so I could examine both rear Lane Change modules and the harness for issues. The left rear module was the master module and controlled the slave module on the right side of the vehicle, so I was more concerned with checking the left rear module first.

The shop quickly pulled the bumper assembly off of the vehicle (**Figure 5**). I visually inspected the connector on the left side and verified the wiring identifications using a diagram from my information system. There were seven wires of which two were power and ground feed, one LED control to the left side mirror, two CAN lines for the network and two dedicated CAN lines routed to the right Lane Change module to communicate with the left Lane Change module (**Figure 6**). I went to remove the connector from the left module and it basically slid off very easily without pressing in the connector lock. The connector was never fully seated and locked in place, and this was the whole problem. I pulled off the connector and closely inspected the lock to make sure it was not damaged. This was a newly installed harness, and it was the spring action of the new grommet in the connector that made it hard to click in place (**Figure 7**).

I reinstalled the connector and started the vehicle and could see that the indicator on the side-view mirror was now working (**Figure 8**). But I had a new problem. The LED in both side-view mirrors were staying on constant without shutting off. It seemed odd that this vehicle would have a second problem when I had already found the problem. I instructed the shop to leave the bumper off until I scanned the vehicle again to check for further issues. I went back to my scan tool and scanned the entire vehicle again

Status report		
System name	DTC content	Status
01 - Engine Control Module 1	2	Fault
02 - Transmission Control Module	0	Pass
03 - Brakes 1	3	Fault
08 - Air Conditioning	1	Fault
09 - Central Electrics	12	Fault
13 - Adaptive Cruise Control	0	Pass
15 - Airbag	1	Fault
17 - Dash Board	2	Fault
19 - Gateway	4	Fault
42 - Door Electronics Driver Side	3	Fault
44 - Steering Assistance	0	Pass
52 - Door Electronics Passenger Side	1	Fault
5F - Information Control Unit 1	3	Fault



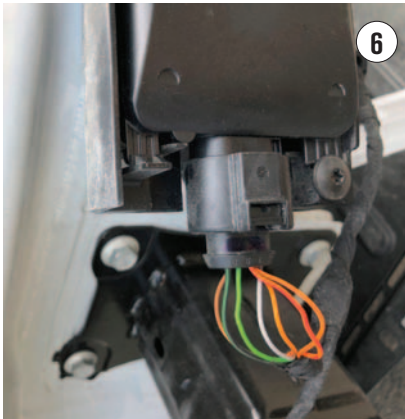
and was able to pull two codes out of the Lane Change control module. The codes stored were 1310721 and 1572868, but there were no code definitions for these codes other than "Unknown Error" (**Figure 9**). The code number is always stored in the vehicle, but it is the job of the scan tool to provide the definition of it. This fault basically was unidentified because the code library in the tool was not updated yet with the 2019 code list, so it could not properly tag a definition to the code number.

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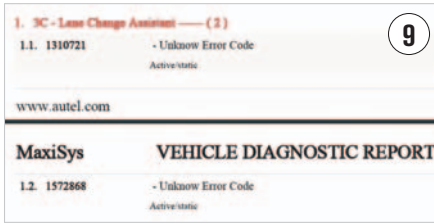
Luckily for me, I have the dealer tool and made the investment to register myself with VW/Audi as an aftermarket dealer tech, and I am registered through their security professional database. I placed my VW/Audi ODIS System on the vehicle and pulled codes out of the Lane Change module. These codes were for a



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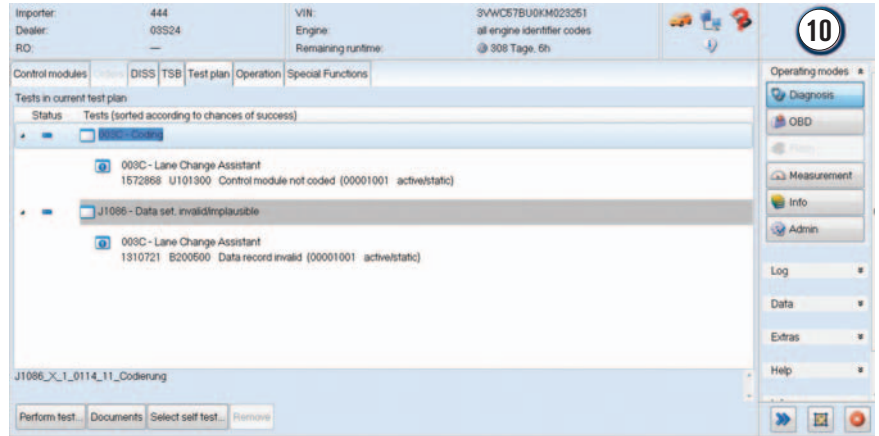
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control module not programmed and parameterized (Figure 10). These were two separate procedures that had to be done with my dealer-level tool. The shop had replaced the left rear Lane Change module with a new one and thought it was just a plug-and-play module, and they were unaware if there were post-repair procedures to be performed on the new module. So I now I had to perform the task of setting up the new control module to finish this vehicle and get it delivered once and for all.

There are many lessons to be learned with this post-syndrome vehicle. There



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is no guarantee that any vehicle is in perfect order just because there are no lights on the dash. You may want to think twice about post-repair scanning your vehicles for your own investment whether you get paid or not, because there may be many unforeseen issues

that may not arise until the vehicle is in the owner's hands. A lot of control modules on these vehicles today may be plug and play, but it is your duty to find out for sure before the vehicle is released. Some of these replaced modules may just need post-repair procedures performed without programming software once they are changed, and this can be solely done with a scan tool through simple set ups such as calibrations.

Last and most importantly, you need to really use your five-sense diagnostics and just make sure things are properly put back in place. Use your eyes for visual inspections, use your hands to feel things as they slide in place for binding, use your ears to listen for clicks when things lock in place, use your nose to smell for burnt components or fluids leaking. This may help you to prevent unnecessary comebacks down the road. Don't be that guy plugged into a smartphone with a headset while working on a vehicle, because you will lose all of these human sensors at your own disposal. Hope this story has enhanced what you know or didn't know and possibly hit home with a lot of the readers 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. atowscopeit@aol.com

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MATCHING TODAY'S VIBRANT FACTORY-ORIGINAL COLORS

REFINISH COATINGS MANUFACTURERS ADDRESS THE CHALLENGE

JENNIFER BOROS // Contributing Editor

In today's highly competitive world, automakers are always looking for ways to distinguish their brands in the marketplace. Offering exotic and striking exterior colors is one tactic to attract new car buyers and make an impression. Savvy OEMs are moving to ever more glamorous, diverse and creative color palettes, and car stylists are challenged to create imaginative new finishes.

The result is that exceptional color is the new norm. A glance at the latest paint finishes confirms that current colors are light years ahead of what was available as recently as five years ago. Many of today's factory colors are highly chromatic, translucent and sparkling with remarkable depth, brilliance and clarity. OEMs are employing new nano-pigments with improved dispersion capabilities as well as tinted clearcoats, mica, aluminum and glass flakes, and other technologies to generate a remarkable spectrum of finishes. Tri-coats, quad-coats, mattes, liquid metal and tinted clears are seen more often. Candy colors and special effects on everyday cars are no longer rarities. The Chrysler Velvet Red (tinted clear), Mercedes-Benz Alubeam, Mazda 46G Machine Gray Metallic (aluminum

flakes) and Ford Orange Fury (mica flakes) are just a few examples of finishes that advanced technology allows.

These colorful strides forward have had their impact on the automotive refinish industry. As OEMs develop new color technologies, automotive refinish coatings manufacturers are challenged to develop accurate and reliable color-matching proficiencies. Refinish manufacturers have to be ready with the right products and processes whenever a new color comes to market. This requires following trends and technologies, as closely as the factories do, to provide the appropriate solutions and simplify the overall refinish process. At times it means that OEMs and refinish companies work together in developing colors.

Mirroring the OEMs

In order for collision repair centers to accurately match today's colors, it's helpful to understand the factory application process and the progressive pigment technologies involved in creating the more exotic finishes. For example, an OEM color like Toyota's 3R1 Matador Red is a tri-coat finish with an abundance of sparkle and depth. Its sister color, 3R3 Barcelona Red, has an even brighter, richer red appearance, but its brilliance



is achieved through a combination of translucent pigments and red pearls in a basecoat/clearcoat application.

These vibrant colors can create challenges in repairing the finishes properly. All OEMs do not use the same application process to get the same effect. Some use standard gray undercoats for

all colors; others employ different shades of gray, while still others apply colored ground coats. Whichever approach is used, the color of the undercoat distinctly contributes to the final basecoat color, and the outcome is essentially the same — the translucent nature of the intense color pigments works with the undercoat color and clearcoat to produce the impressive final color.

Sometimes in the refinish process, the required undercoat will be a different color than what the OEM used on the vehicle. Repairers may hesitate in applying a different-looking undercoat, even though the manufacturer has recommended it as the only way to achieve the refinish color match. In such situations, the collision repair technician has two critical objectives: 1) achieve an accurate color match and 2) ensure that it is invisible to the naked eye. Refinish manufacturers seek a process that matches the color while delivering the easiest application process possible. It's a balancing act between making the painter's work easier and achieving the original OEM appearance. It requires a new approach to the color-matching repair process.

Matching complex OEM finishes requires the latest products. The growing popularity of waterborne systems can be attributed to how closely they mimic the OEM approach to producing these colors and mitigate the challenge that technicians face. Refinish companies have proprietary approaches to address the task. One example is a spectral gray process that incorporates the latest vibrant waterborne toners and translucent pigments with a scientifically proven spectral gray (SG) undercoat system.

Color formulas specify the optimal SG undercoat shade for the intended finish. Once the recommended gray undercoat is applied, coats of color can be applied to "perceived hiding," allowing the sealer to play its role in the final match. This is especially true for translucent colors. Using a colored undercoat can create a color shift that compromises the color match, often resulting in more time and material



COMPLEX OEM FINISHES call for sophisticated refinish capabilities.

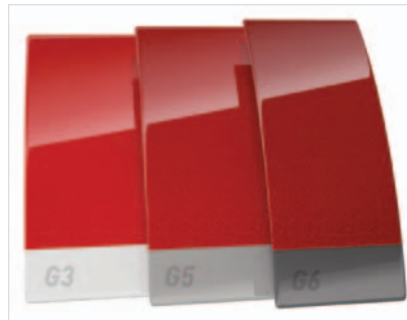
used for the repair. Sticking to the recommended spectral gray sealer helps attain the proper color and create an invisible repair.

A new approach for new finishes

"Spray to full hiding" has long been the maxim for any paint technician applying color coats over primer to accurately match a vehicle color. This is no longer the norm when repairing the newer translucent OEM finishes with an advanced waterborne color-matching process. Once the recommended SG undercoat is applied, coats of the waterborne translucent color are sprayed to "perceived hiding." Typically, this "spray to color, not coverage" technique requires two to four coats of color, plus a lower-pressure control coat to create a smooth metallic orientation.

As Frank Jemiola, PPG global technical manager points out, "Waterborne toners, combined with blended SG undercoats, enable the painter to achieve a gradual blend that vanishes into the adjacent OEM finish. This easy blending technique for spot repairs is often touted by collision centers as one of the major reasons why they converted to waterborne technology."

Across the board, there's a lot of "Wow!" coming out of OEM color studios these days. As OEMs introduce new, complex finishes, competitive refinish companies must develop the appropriate products, supported by technician training, to deliver accurate color matches. By working directly with the OEMs and using the same pigments they do, refin-



G5 IS THE RECOMMENDED PPG SPECTRAL GRAY for matching Toyota's Barcelona Red, code 3R3. Notice how each shade of gray influences the final color.



ishers are able to develop accurate and reliable color-matching proficiencies. Given the never-ending quest to advance the art and science of color matching, it is apparent that expert automotive refinish capabilities must keep pace with OEM color styling as it continues to evolve. 📖



JENNIFER BOROS is PPG director of marketing, collision segment, and oversees product and branding strategy for 12 popular automotive refinish brands.

In her 20+ year tenure at PPG, she has used her management skills and chemistry background to lead cross-functional teams in bringing products to market.

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We are professionals! I repeat: We are professionals!

We must continue to learn and advance to keep the industry relevant

The automotive repair industry has been undervalued for too long. We are often seen by the customer as someone who just makes their vehicle look good again. We are professionals in our trade. There is so much that goes into repairs that the customer is not aware of. It is not taking a dent out of a car or painting over a scratch. It is understanding all the idiosyncrasies of the vehicle. It is scanning, recalibrations, initializations and programming. We need to remember to always pull procedures on every vehicle we repair. This is a must if you, as a responsible and viable collision repair facility, want to provide a complete, safe and quality repair. If you do not follow these procedures provided by manufacturers, you should stop reading at this point. When I work with customers, I often use the analogy that we are the physicians of their vehicles. Just as a physician takes care of our human body, we take care of the internal and external components of the vehicle's body. Please do not undervalue the profession we have chosen. Take pride in your work. Go above and beyond for your customers by providing them with knowledge about their vehicle. We are the professionals. Repeat after me: We are professionals! When you are getting ready for the workday, stand in front of the mirror and tell yourself that. Do not let anyone undermine you and tell you differently.

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts," said Winston Churchill.

What does this quote mean to the collision industry? As professionals in our trade, we must grow and re-learn what was once standard. Procedures we used to do may no longer be viable due to the advancements in technology. The past 10 years have turned our industry on its side and upside down to the point that if you are not keeping up with everything, you will be irrelevant. Relevancy in the collision repair industry is such that the manufacturers have stepped up in



THE PAST 10 YEARS HAVE CHANGED OUR INDUSTRY TO THE POINT THAT IF YOU ARE NOT KEEPING UP WITH EVERYTHING, YOU WILL BE IRRELEVANT.

the right direction to help in this learning gap. Do the manufacturers have more to do? Yes, I do believe they do, but it has gotten better than it was. When I am not managing my shop, I teach for I-CAR to broaden my own knowledge and to give back to the industry. While I-CAR is probably one of the best-known training options in the industry, several consultants offer many opportunities for learning. It is our responsibility as managers and owners to research what fits the needs of our organization. Do not be afraid to change. Be courageous to continue down a learning path. If this is not our goal, then my question to you is, "What is our goal?"

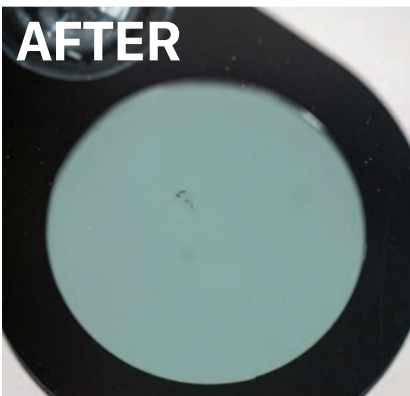
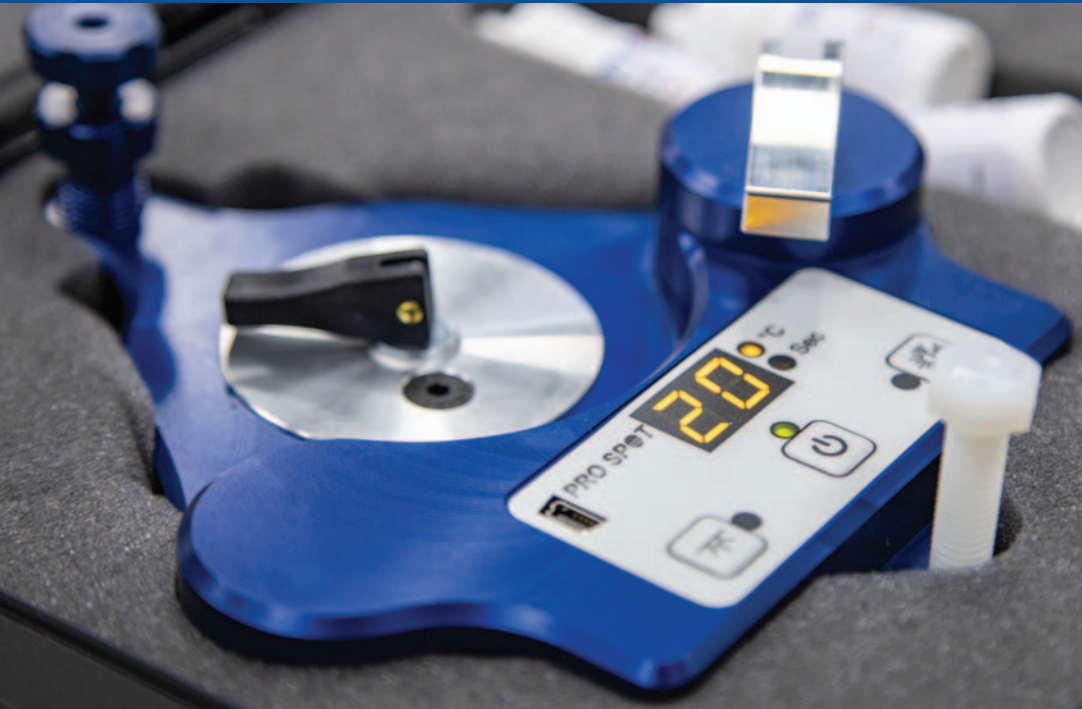
I am grateful to work in a wonderful industry that has a diverse cast of characters. Customers, jobbers, parts vendors and even insurance companies all bring something unique to this industry. From customers providing situations for us to learn from to technicians embracing a learning culture, we need to lead them so that everyone is at the same level of knowledge. Insurance companies as well need to take a step forward and make sure they have processes in

place where all employees understand and follow manufacturing procedures and p-pages. We need to have open lines of communication with our jobbers and parts vendors so we can be efficient. Striving for all this will not be easy, but taking small steps will help bring our industry the relevancy that is needed.

We have an obligation as collision repairers to be the professionals we are. We must provide a complete, safe and quality repair to all of our customers. We must remember this obligation not only protects our customers, but it also protects us. Let's make 2019 the best ever. 📧

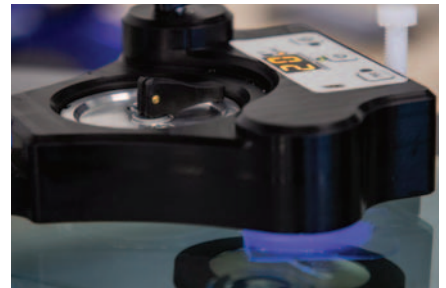
PATRICK PORTER is a 3rd generation shop owner at Porter's Body Shop in Brookhaven, Miss. He is an I-CAR instructor and has his AMi Accredited Automotive Management and Collision Repair Estimator Certificates. patrickdporter@gmail.com

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