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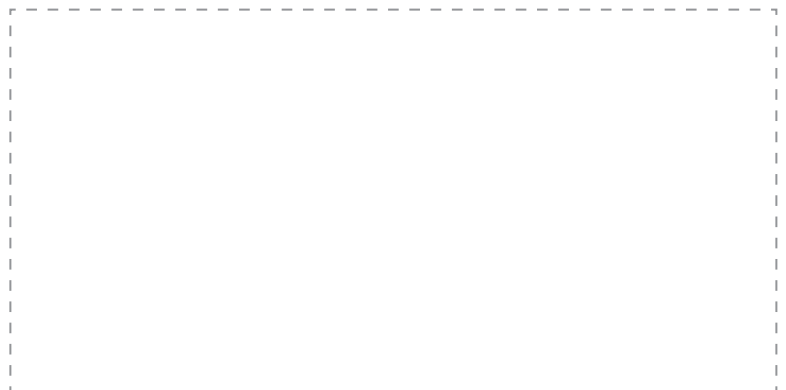
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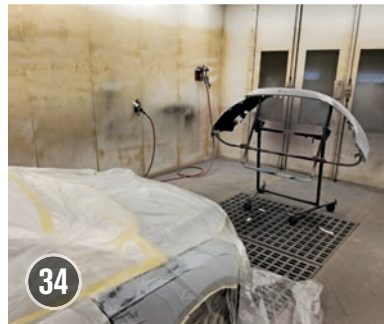
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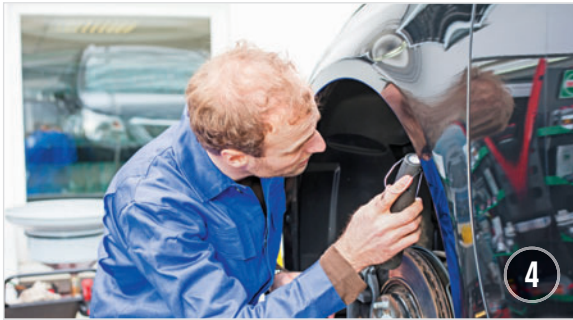
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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

TOYOTA COLLISION PROS

Read the Spring 2019 edition of the Toyota Collision Pros magazine by going to:
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MAKE PAINTING EASIER IN YOUR SHOP

SATA Rapid Preparation System (RPS) multipurpose cups are great for mixing, spraying and, when the job is complete, storage. Watch four short videos, each outlining a benefit your painters want to help them do a better, more efficient job. Plus, see a bonus video featuring trick shots your painters likely can do, too!

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IMPROVE EFFICIENCY IN YOUR SHOP

"Using Paint Booth Technology to Increase Efficiency" is the new strictly informational webinar from Jason Garfoot, senior technical advisor at Global Finishing Solutions that shows you equipment setup tips, local distributor roles, financial boost of one more car in the booth, a painter's perspective of booth cycles and much more.

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TRENDING

LYFT TO OPEN COLLISION, MECHANICAL REPAIR CENTERS

BRIAN ALBRIGHT //
Contributing Editor

➔ Ride-hailing company Lyft is getting into the auto repair business, at least for its own contract drivers. In March, the company announced Lyft Driver Services, a set of new services that the company says will help save time and money for its drivers. As part of the new service, Lyft plans to open several dozen mechanical and collision repair shops across the country.

The first such repair site opened in San Francisco in March.

The company is trying to provide ways to make life easier for its fleet of roughly 2 million drivers while also reducing their expenses, said a company spokesperson.

The programs include a new no-fee debit card (Lyft Direct) that allows direct payment to the driver's account, and also provides other benefits. The company is also expanding its Express Drive service,

>> **LYFT CONTINUES ON PAGE 8**

BREAKING NEWS

ASSOCIATIONS

ASA MEETING FOCUSES ON TECHNOLOGY, LEADERSHIP, TRAINING

➔ The Automotive Service Association (ASA) had a successful and exciting Annual Business Meeting & Conference April 30-May 2 in Hurst, Texas.

With a focus on technology and training, ASA offered a variety of classes to bring service professionals up to speed on changes taking place in the industry.

The association also launched its mobile app. Available to download on iPhone and Android devices, the app was created by MobileSoft, a global leader in mobile app technology.

During the ASA Annual Meeting, ASA Executive Director Ray Fisher, AMAM, installed the 2019-2020 Board of Directors.

They include: Chairman Bob Wills, AMAM, owner of Wills Auto Service in Battle Creek, Mich.; Chairman Elect Fred Hules, AMAM, owner of Tech 1 Auto in Peoria, Ariz.; Secretary/Treasurer Scott Benavidez, AAM, owner of Mr. B's Paint & Body Shop, Albuquerque,

>> **ASA CONTINUES ON PAGE 8**

TRENDING

ASA SUPPORTS NEW HAMPSHIRE OEM REPAIR LEGISLATION

New Hampshire House Bill 664 addresses original equipment manufacturer (OEM) repair procedures for collision repairs and encourages following outlined methods.

ABRN.COM/NHBILL

I-CAR ANNOUNCES UPDATED STRUCTURE

The I-CAR Board of Directors announced innovations to the organization's Governance Model that are designed to provide a stronger, more robust and modern framework.

ABRN.COM/GOVERNANCE

WIN SELECTS SEVEN NEW BOARD MEMBERS

WIN announced the appointment of seven new members to its Board of Directors, who promote women in the collision repair industry, support professional development and provide education tools.

ABRN.COM/NEWSEVEN

LIFT, CAR SEEK TO OPTIMIZE JOINING METHODS

Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow (LIFT) and the Center for Automotive Research announced a new project to test and evaluate mixed-material joining technologies.

ABRN.COM/JOINING

MOBILE APP LAUNCHED AT ASA ANNUAL MEETING

ASA unveiled a new app at its Annual Business Meeting & Conference, providing a way to reach its members and others — with important industry news and vital association information — more quickly than ever.

ABRN.COM/ASAAPP

“Before I had a good painter, now I have a great painter.”

~ Scott McDaniel,
Scott's Custom Colors Inc.



(Scott's has two Blowtherm Extra Spray Booths with Air Speed, Solvent-Waterborne Flash-Off Systems and a Blowtherm Mix Room.)



Scott McDaniel, Owner,
Scott's Custom Colors Inc,
Terre Haute, IN
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Owner Scott McDaniel explains, “The fact is I went with Blowtherm because of the sheer quality, performance and overall construction of these spray booths. Our painter is getting more production and up to 50% more efficiency out of the Blowtherm booths. Our cure time and energy use is down considerably.”

Mr. McDaniel continues, “After reviewing different paint booths, I was impressed with the fit and finish in materials and manufacturing of the Blowtherm systems. They were definitely worth the few extra dollars and are ten times better than the competition.”

“These booths are equipped with Air Speed control that directs air straight down quickly without stirring up any dust so we're getting a much cleaner finish. The VFD's and auto balance keeps dirt down, while the pre- & post-filtration system boosts longevity of the equipment. These booths were an integral part of our paint shop expansion. We built our new paint shop with these booths and mix room in the original plans.”

“Our distributor, Ron Baylor of Tri State Spray Booths (812) 347-0423, is a straight shooter. He is thorough, the process was seamless from order to delivery, the installation crew is extremely professional and they stand behind their product. That's the type of organization Blowtherm is - top notch.”



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BILL CRACKS DOWN ON DATA ACCESS, SECURITY

KRISTA MCNAMARA //
Content Channel Director

NASHVILLE — Consumer privacy rights just got a lot more serious in California, so shop owners need to step up for the protection of their customers, employees and businesses as a whole.

Following in the footsteps of privacy laws seen in Europe and Canada, the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) — or House Bill 375 — was approved in June 2018, and is set to go into effect on Jan. 1, 2020, said Frank Terlep at the Collision Industry Conference (CIC) in Nashville, Tenn., in April. The law mandates that consumers have three main rights: the right to know what is being collected, the right to tell a business not to sell their information, and the right to hold a business accountable to keep the consumer's information safe.

Affected businesses will need to enhance their data management practices, expand their individual rights processes and update their privacy practices by the January 2020 deadline. This applies to “consumers” — and includes both customers of a shop and also the employees of those businesses, Terlep said.

Businesses worldwide must comply if they receive personal information from California residents either directly or indirectly and either have an annual revenue that exceeds \$25 million or annually receive the personal information of 50,000 or more individuals.

The bill outlines 12 areas of accountability; Terlep delved into specifics to consider for several of the areas of accountability.

Access — Individuals may request disclosure of the specific data elements of personal information collected about them, categories of personal information collected, categories of sources, purposes for collecting or selling, and categories of recipients with whom the personal infor-

mation has been shared, he said.

Data portability — If the specific elements of personal information are provided to the requestor electronically, they must be provided a readily transferable electronic format.

Data deletion — Individuals may request to have personal information deleted.

Disclosures about sharing/sales — Individuals may request an accounting of the disclosures, including sale, of personal information made to third parties.

Non-discrimination and financial incentives — Businesses may not discriminate against consumers for opting out of the sale of their personal information. Businesses may not deny products or services or offer differential pricing or rates, unless directly related to the value of the data to the consumer.

Transparency — The online privacy policy or other web-based notice must disclose the categories of data collected, sources from which data is collected, purposes for which the data is used, categories of third parties with whom data is shared, information about individual rights and how to exercise them, as well as the data collected, sold or disclosed within the prior 12 months.

Where applicable, a clear and conspicuous link titled “Do Not Sell My Personal Information” must be included on the business's homepage and link to a form where requests can be submitted.

According to the bill, penalties range from \$100-\$750 per incident, Terlep said.

Changes may come

While set to go into effect in January, the bill still remains in a state of flux. California Attorney General Xavier Becerra and Senator Hannah Beth Jackson introduced legislation to strengthen and clarify the CCPA. The new additions would no longer require the Office of the Attorney General to provide businesses and private parties individual CCPA-compliance advice.



Other states

Not to be outdone by California, 11 other states — including Maryland, New Jersey and Washington — have recently introduced similar legislation.

Among other things, the bills include their own versions of opt-out rights and require new disclosure requirements that are slightly different than the CCPA.

Business considerations

Businesses in California— including shops, insurers, information providers and third-party providers in the automotive industry, among others — have many items they should consider adding to their compliance project plans for the remainder of the year, Terlep said. These include:

- Revise your website privacy policy to meet new data disclosure, consent and opt-out requirements;
- Deliver training for a new employee privacy notice that complies with the new laws;
- Roll out new processes and train key internal teams that would intake and respond to privacy inquiries and complaints;
- Test incident response plans that prepare the organization to respond effectively;
- Document all entities with whom you trade electronic data with;
- Revise any previously agreed EULAs/Terms and conditions that do not comply with new requirements; and
- Review and roll out master service agreements with restrictions for data use by service providers that are required under the new state laws. ■

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FACEBOOK

>> LYFT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

which provides rental cars to drivers who either don't have a vehicle or don't have one that is up to Lyft's standards. The company is expanding the number of participating locations, as well as increasing the number of "green" rentals in order to reduce fuel costs.

The new driver service centers are an extension of the existing Lyft hubs, which are currently focused more on community engagement and technical support for drivers.

In a blog post announcing the services, Lyft COO Jon McNeill said, "Drivers will be served by Lyft team members, including certified mechanics, selected for their expertise and passion for helping our community."

McNeill added that the locations will also include community space so that drivers can get in-person support with taxes, hospitality education, language learning, and other services. "This builds on a successful pilot with Intuit in our existing local Hubs," McNeill said.

"The whole goal is to turn this into more of a community atmosphere," said a company spokesperson.


According to Lyft, the company hopes to have 35 repair centers up and running by the end of 2019. So far, the company has launched a prototype repair center in San Francisco

as well as a test center in Philadelphia. Zoning requirements may limit what types of repairs are conducted at the centers (the San Francisco location, for example, is not currently zoned for collision repair), but the plan is to provide oil changes, car washes, autobody repair, brake service and other basic repairs.

Each center will have 12 to 14 full-time mechanics and technicians. The company has posted a few job listings for these sites.

Lyft is also launching a mobile repair service for drivers who aren't located near a repair center. "They can call the service center and have things like their brake pads changed by the mobile service," the Lyft spokesperson said. "There are other smaller repairs that can be done that way, too, including windshield repair."


Lyft also indicated that the company plans to provide repairs at as much as 50 percent less than market cost, and to have repairs completed in half the time of a typical shop since the locations will focus exclusively on Lyft drivers. The San Francisco location currently charges \$95 per hour. There will also be packaged deals for drivers, such as getting an oil change, car wash and tire rotation for \$70.

The spokesperson said that more details about the service centers would be announced over the next several months. Lyft launched its initial public offering (IPO) at the end of March. 

>> ASA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

N.M.,; General Director Elissa Larremore, owner of CBS 1 Collision, based in Shreveport, La.; General Director Todd Black, AMAM, owner of Unlimited Service, Bellingham, Wash.; Mechanical Division Director Tom Piippo, AMAM, owner of Tri-County Motors, Rudyard, Mich.; Collision Division Director: Mike LeVasseur, director of business development, Caliber Collision, Clifton Heights, Pa.; Immediate Past Chairman Roy Schnepfer, AAM, Butler's Collision, Roseville, Mich.; and Ray Fisher, AMAM, ASA president/executive director.

"The quality of the content and the education that our attendees received was first rate," said Fisher, commenting on the courses offered at this year's meeting. "Our theme was to not only acknowledge the challenges of today, but we also wanted to provide solutions that result in future opportunities. The attendees received great takeaways that we know that they will implement in their shops!"

As the new chairman, Wills looks forward to building on ASA's mission during his term. "While the ASA Annual Meeting represents a change in leadership, we never changed our mission," Wills said. "We will concentrate on strengthening our education focus with AMi so the industry can benefit from the quality shop management training it provides." 

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COMPETITION

CREF LAUNCHES TOP TECH COMPETITION FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES


The Collision Repair Education Foundation announced the launch of a new technician competition for entry-level collision technicians and their mentors. The goal of the competition is to recognize the performance of the next generation of collision technicians and their mentors on critical skills necessary to repair today's high-tech vehicles. The Foundation also wants to help develop more mentoring programs within the industry and foster industry relationships with collision programs across the country.

"Each year, the collision industry faces a critical shortage in the number of new

technicians entering the industry. Worse, many repair facilities have been challenged in delivering effective mentoring programs for these new technicians to grow their abilities and prosper in the industry. As a result, too many new technicians leave the industry after just a few years, exacerbating the shortage," said Christen Battaglia, director of strategic partnerships for the Collision Repair Education Foundation. "This new competition is designed to recognize the accomplishments of successful mentors and technicians, and also highlight how it is a strategy for employee retention."

The one-day event will take place

Sept. 28, 2019 at Ranken Technical College in St. Louis, Mo. Companies and repair facilities with mentoring programs will enter their mentor and mentee team to compete against other industry businesses. The mentor/mentee teams will compete on competencies the industry has deemed necessary for an entry-level technician.

Industry individuals interested in participating in the competition as a mentor/mentee team, or who would like to participating in the committees organizing the event can contact Battaglia via email at Christen.Battaglia@ed-foundation.org for more information. 

“What I really love about GFS Ultra Paint Booths is that they look very **neat, clean and presentable**, and they're easy to take care of. Since we upgraded to GFS paint booths, we've noticed a huge difference. **The consistency in heating and the curing times have been awesome.**”

- Dave Kindig,
Kindig-It Design



Monitoring shop metrics in real time

Shop uses KPIs to spot and correct weaknesses in company's performance

In my last column ("Fixing your business — by the numbers," May 2019) I talked about the importance of shop owners tracking not just the key performance indicators (KPIs) that others — such as insurance companies or automaker certification programs — are watching, but also the ones that are most important to your business and bottom line.

Now I want to share how some actual collision repairers improved their business performance by using KPIs. Let's start out in Idaho, where Cory Donenfeld and his brother own and operate Northwest Auto Body. It's a second-generation business, founded by their father more than 40 years ago, now with two locations.

Cory took a class I taught on KPIs last year. He felt he was tracking the company's performance "by the numbers," but that largely meant just the profit and loss statement. By the time he'd notice a number didn't look right, he said, it was often from a problem caused three or even six months earlier.

Using the KPI tracking tool from the class, however, he now spends about half an hour each month plugging in some key numbers. That produces a multi-page report with numbers, charts and graphs that allow him to really drill down to understand what's happening in his business — and make changes to improve it.

"It also tells me what the industry standards are for each of these KPIs so we can compare where we are," Cory said. "I'm able to identify any problem within a month, as opposed to six months from now, when it's been an issue for a while and we've been bleeding money. Now I can correct the issue pretty fast."

In one of the early KPI reports the shop ran, Cory found the shop appeared to lose money on paint supplies for the month. Part of the issue was his paint supplier hadn't yet reimbursed the shop for materials used on an internal job. But he also found that some paint supplies entered under a certain category in the shop's estimating system would, when transferred into the shop's accounting system, show as a cost rather than revenue.

"That had been an issue for years, and this finally shed light



I'M ABLE TO IDENTIFY ANY PROBLEM WITHIN A MONTH, AS OPPOSED TO SIX MONTHS FROM NOW, WHEN IT'S BEEN AN ISSUE AND WE'VE BEEN BLEEDING MONEY.

on it," Cory said.

The process also helped him discover that some other items, when transferred into the accounting system, showed as something that should have been taxed. "So we were paying out those taxes, but not collecting the tax," Cory said. "That didn't include a ton of things, but we were literally losing that money for no reason."

KPI tracking also helped Cory see how little profit the company is making on sublet work. "Knowing that, we're looking for ways to sublet out less," he said. "We are bringing things in-house, if possible."

That is what's powerful about tracking KPIs: It makes you aware of things you might never consider until you have the data in front of you. Knowing you're not making much money on sublet work makes you consider benefits to buying an alignment machine or training to do more glass work in-house.

The KPI tracking system is helping Cory's business improve beyond just P&L line items as well. He now is watching, for example, each location's "capture rate" (or "closing ratio"), the percentage of estimates written that get converted into repair orders.

Another item he's working on is the shop's effective labor rate. Like most shops, Northwest Auto Body has different labor rates for body, mechanical, frame and aluminum work. The effective labor rate is the total revenue from all the types of labor divided by the total number of labor hours.

"In our case, that number was pretty close to the lowest of our labor rates even though we have higher rates for some other types of work," Cory said. "So KPIs have helped me see that's something I need to work on."

In upcoming columns, I'll share how Cory is using KPIs as an effective management tool, and how the owner of an even bigger collision repair business used KPIs to keep an eye on his shop locations without a need to set foot into each of them. ■

STEVE FELTOVICH of SJF Business Consulting, LLC, works with dealers, MSOs and independent collision repair businesses to make improvements and achieve performance goals.
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FOCUS ON THREE IMPROVEMENTS



Prioritizing our tasks will provide quality time to accomplish them while also leaving room for the unexpected

JIM COMPTON // Contributing Editor

For most everyone in business, there is far too much to do and too much information to reasonably digest. Both suppliers and shops generate and receive an overwhelming amount of information daily. There is always the latest innovation, critical concern or alarming piece of information.

If that first paragraph sounds familiar, it is from a previous article (“Avoid Rab-

bit Holes,” March 2019), and this article follows along similar lines. With all the changes and the avalanche of information and things that need to be done or improved or implemented, there is simply too much to do for most of us mere mortals to get done. There needs to be ways or methods to get all the important things addressed.

Managing and prioritizing our time seem to be a critical consideration every

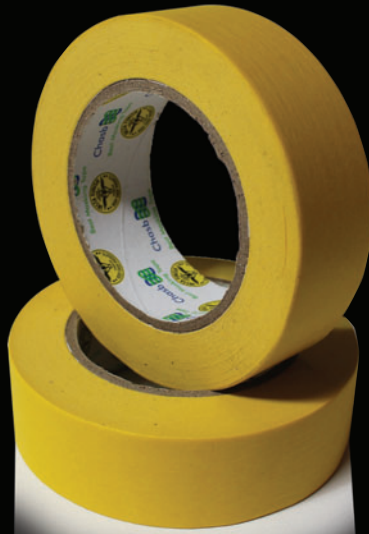
day. The old rule of A, B and C priorities still works, where the A priorities are those things on your list that absolutely need to get done; the B items are things you want to get done, but might be done at least partially by others; and the C items on your list would be nice to get done but are not mission critical.

Taking the ABC priority list a little further along with a little introspection, we need to face the fact that despite how



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great of multi-taskers we all think we are, there is a limit to how many things we can be working on at the same time. Priority tasks need priority time. Limiting your priorities to three each day not only provides quality time, it still allows for the inevitable flow of interruptions that pry their way into our day.

Focusing on three improvements may be even more important for making progress with improvements in the body shop environment. With all the changes in materials, methods, training needs and technology, improvements can seem overwhelming. Breaking them down into bite-size pieces and strategically working on the highest priorities first will ensure we are much more likely to get more things done.

In the morning when you're reviewing (and maybe adjusting) your written A-B-C tasks for the day, consider this. Pick the top three A priorities and focus on them. Dedicating yourself to those top three is the most likely way to ensure you make the most progress possible.

Why three? Some of us believe we are great multi-taskers or jugglers and can easily handle more than three A priorities at any given time. This is often not true for most people. Our main job as a business leader is to communicate with co-workers, business allies, subordinates and customers. Our audience will most always be able to hear, remember and act on three tasks or concepts. Consider how often the rule of three shows up in memorable ways throughout our lives.

Thomas Jefferson used the rule of three when he wrote that every American had an inalienable right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Steve Jobs applied the rule of three in his presentations, three models and three core devices. Lisa B. Marshall states, "The rule of three is a very general rule in speaking, in writing, and in music, that states that concepts or ideas presented in threes are inherently more interesting, more enjoyable and more memorable."

Brian Tracy speaking about time management suggests asking yourself three "magic questions:"

1. "If I could only do one thing on this list, all day long, which one activity would contribute the greatest value to my business?"
2. "If I could only do two things on this list, all day long what would be the second activity that would make the greatest contribution to my business?"
3. "If I could only do three things on this list, all day long what would be the third activity that would contribute the most value to my business?"

J.D. Meier from the book, "Getting Results the Agile Way," says the rule is simple:

1. "First, write down three things you want to accomplish today."
2. "Second, write three things you want to accomplish this week."
3. "Third, write three things you want to achieve this year."

A manager with three priorities is likely to make progress on three priorities. A manager with 10 priorities is not likely to make significant progress on any of them.

We have all likely attended NACE, SEMA and other industry events for years, often taking pages of notes at meetings, training sessions and presentations. Upon getting back to work, we are often pumped up and want to start projects, make changes, grow our businesses and improve our work life and work culture.

Remembering the rule of three can enhance the experience by adding some select items to our to-do lists, adding them to our A, B and C priorities and then evaluating them along with other priorities. They may or may not be among your top three priorities on the first day, or even the first week. But by adding them to your written lists, they become goals, not just ideas.

Anyone talking about prioritizing and time management will surely agree that the act of writing these down takes ideas

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and makes them actionable goals. Your priorities will evolve, and you may adjust each day's priorities. Please consider the rule of three as a tool to help get the most progress on your priorities every day.

As a leader or manager, the time management and priorities that you utilize will set the pace, set the example and set goals for your staff. Communicating your time management and utilizing the rule of three provides a clear, measurable tool for your staff.

Those other A and B priorities may need a little effort as well; consider relegating those to other members of your team, at the least you will have some help, get some additional insight and quite possibly raise someone's self-value and awareness of their potential contribution.

Don't spend any time on the C priorities. Delegate these to others wherever possible. The rest of these C priorities will either go away or they will move themselves up to B priorities. 📌



JIM COMPTON is the owner of J. Hunter & Associates, a consulting business that specializes in lean material management. jhcompton@att.net

A 1,000-shop chain is just the beginning

Independents can't be asleep at the wheel as the pace of industry change ramps up

I was at an industry event earlier this year, in the weeks right after Caliber Collision's merger with Abra Auto Body Repair of America closed, and it was a topic that I presumed would be weighing heavily on the minds of the independent shops at the event. So I was surprised when I brought it up in conversation how far off their radar it was.

"Oh no, we're fine," they would say when I asked if they were thinking about what a 1,000-shop MSO could mean for their business.

"It doesn't affect us," I heard multiple times.

Now, granted, this event was taking place in a state where the combined Caliber-Abra currently had just a handful of locations, not even in the state's largest population center.

But still, the fact that independent shops weren't thinking about a future in which they likely will be competing with a large MSO — all of which have seemed to be ramping up their growth efforts — baffled me. It made me wonder how much independent hardware stores were looking ahead before there was both a Home Depot and a Lowe's in town, along with a couple of other independents who had become Ace Hardware franchises.

In the weeks since, I've been looking out at all the moving pieces of this industry and thinking about some of the scenarios that I could see happening. I don't have any inside information on any of this, so feel free to consider this nothing more than the ramblings from inside my brain.

But are you really not thinking about the challenge of trying to continue to fix nearly all makes and models? Even if you're doing that today, chances are good that you're not doing all of them right. There's just too much individualized information to know it all. How will you compete when an MSO comes in and can easily specialize in a few brands at each of its locations to cover the market?

So maybe you think OEM certification will be the ticket for your business. It doesn't make economic sense to be certified by every automaker, so again, specialization seems inevitable.



HOW WILL YOU COMPETE WHEN AN MSO COMES IN AND CAN EASILY SPECIALIZE IN A FEW BRANDS AT EACH OF ITS LOCATIONS TO COVER THE MARKET?

And have you got the certifications you do want finalized? Because some automakers, like Honda, have said they pretty much already have the number of shops they need in their network in most markets. Nissan a few months ago said that between the shops already certified and the ones that have applied, they probably have more than they need. And if a large MSO plunks down the money to get dozens (or hundreds) of their locations OEM-certified — as I know at least one has — that could further close down that pool of openings.

So maybe you're still not worried, knowing your direct repair agreements will keep you supplied with work. But what happens to those when telematics give automakers, rather than insurance companies, the first notice that an accident has occurred?

Even more scary: ABC Insurance knows the average cost of repairs it had for the tens of thousands of vehicles repaired at one of Mega-Collision's locations last year. Let's say it was \$2,900. What if ABC Insurance said, "Hey, Mega-Collision, let's eliminate a lot of the unproductive administrative costs. We'll sell a discounted policy to customers who agree to use a shop on our list. We'll send you all our work and

you fix them all for \$2,900 each. If your other KPIs are good, we'll give you \$2,950 each, but if they're bad, we'll give you \$2,850 each."

How will you compete with that? Especially when Mega-Collision can call a manufacturer and buy 300 welders without a distributor's mark-up, or get sandpaper and paint at a discount you won't ever see.

Now don't get me wrong — I'm not a doom-and-gloom guy, even for independents. I just see some shop owners who seem to not realize what's happening around them. You've got to be looking at specialization, OEM certification, getting out ahead of some of this, even if you don't have a large MSO in your market. Because they're coming, perhaps faster than you think. ■

MARK OLSON is the founder of Vehicle Collision Experts, LLC (VECO Experts), a consulting firm that takes a holistic approach to working with shops on repair quality and business performance. mark@vecoexperts.com



THE STORY BEHIND TOUCH AND CYCLE TIMES

Learn how these KPIs work together, and what they can teach you about shop performance

JOHN SHOEMAKER // Contributing Editor

Steady production is what makes a collision center successful. When I am called into a shop to help with production, the first thing I look at is the shop's touch and cycle times. While shop managers know that touch time is a metric they need to hit, getting there is sometimes evasive for them. For me, a shop's touch and cycle times tell a story about how effective a manager is in running their business. Low touch time can be

caused by poor estimating, poor production management (technicians working on multiple vehicles) or poor scheduling. Generally, low touch time creates high cycle time, so I will show you how those two numbers relate to each other.

To define the relation, I dive into other key performance indicators (KPIs) to see how their sales per RO and paint hours per RO match up to the benchmarks. If those two numbers are low, I head to the office to review initial estimates and the

number of supplements per RO. If I see low initial estimates and multiple supplements, it tells me a poor estimate was written, and the repair was probably put into production without a complete disassembly. Putting a repair into production without a complete disassembly creates situations where technicians work on a repair until more damage is found. That repair is then idled until a supplement is approved and repairs can proceed, all while adding to the touch and cycle time.

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SEVERITY BREAKDOWN — LAST 30 DAYS

Before

| Severity Description | % of Ros | RO Count | Net Sales | Cycle Time (keys to keys) | Touch Time (keys to keys) | Cycle Time (start-comp) | Touch Time (start-comp) | Labor Hours/ RO | Parts to Labor Ratio |
|----------------------|----------|----------|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Severity 0 -1500 | 43% | 69 | \$60,159 | 7.2 | 1.7 | 8.4 | 1.6 | 12.1 | 40% |

SEVERITY BREAKDOWN — LAST 30 DAYS

After

| Severity Description | % of Ros | RO Count | Net Sales | Cycle Time (keys to keys) | Touch Time (keys to keys) | Cycle Time (start-comp) | Touch Time (start-comp) | Labor Hours/ RO | Parts to Labor Ratio |
|----------------------|----------|----------|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Severity 0 -1500 | 37% | 55 | \$43,563 | 4.3 | 2.5 | 5.5 | 2.3 | 10.7 | 44% |

If sales per RO and paint hours per RO are at benchmark, I start looking at the production side of the shop reviewing the following: productivity — overall, booth cycle time and vehicles per day per booth, looking for an indication of a choke point. I always explain to shop managers that you can have high productivity overall yet still have low touch time and high cycle time. This is because a technician can account for hours on several vehicles to stay productive, all while not moving any one vehicle completely through the production process. A technician works on a vehicle until a repair issue creates a stopping point and then to ensure he stays productive, he will pull in another vehicle to start the cycle all over again.

When that happens, you will see higher booth cycle time and lower vehicles per day per booth because workflow to the paint shop is not steady. When a technician works on multiple vehicles at once, generally they will all move to the paint shop one right after another, causing ebbs and flows in paint shop production. If all those KPIs look good, I turn to scheduling.

Poor scheduling can create too high of volume, which results in repairs not started on the day the vehicle arrives, adversely affecting touch and cycle time. This also causes the next day's input to be delayed, which leads to a choke point in body repair. To illustrate how poor scheduling can affect touch and cycle time, I'll use a chart from BASF Vision+

Online (**Before chart, above**).

Reviewing the report, you will see that only repairs \$0-\$1,500 were focused on because it accounted for 43 percent of this shop's workload, which was also their highest category. You will notice that touch and cycle times were both off target on these repairs, according to the national average of 4.0 hours per day for touch time and 6 days for cycle time.

To understand the problem, I scheduled a visit arriving at the shop at 8 a.m. on a Monday morning to watch the vehicle intake process. There were 15 repairs scheduled for the day, and those repairs were being processed by one person. At the end of the day only 11 of the 15 repairs were processed, leaving four to be held over until the next day. This automatically added one day to the touch and cycle time calculations.

To help with this, I coached them on scheduling and identifying Fast Track repairs. Together we decided to bring the Fast Track repairs in on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to prevent them from getting mixed in with the larger repairs being dropped off on Monday. This allowed for faster processing for both categories of repair. Some simple process changes initiated by checking the shop's touch and cycle times resulted in the improvement shown in **After chart, also above**.

The numbers above reflect an increase of almost one full day in touch

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time and a reduction in cycle time by almost three days, moving them closer to the national average. This was accomplished over a 90-day period where the corrective actions were employed. Additionally, with the improvements made in the \$0-\$1500 repair category — nearing half of the shops volume — it created a positive ripple effect on their total touch and cycle time production.

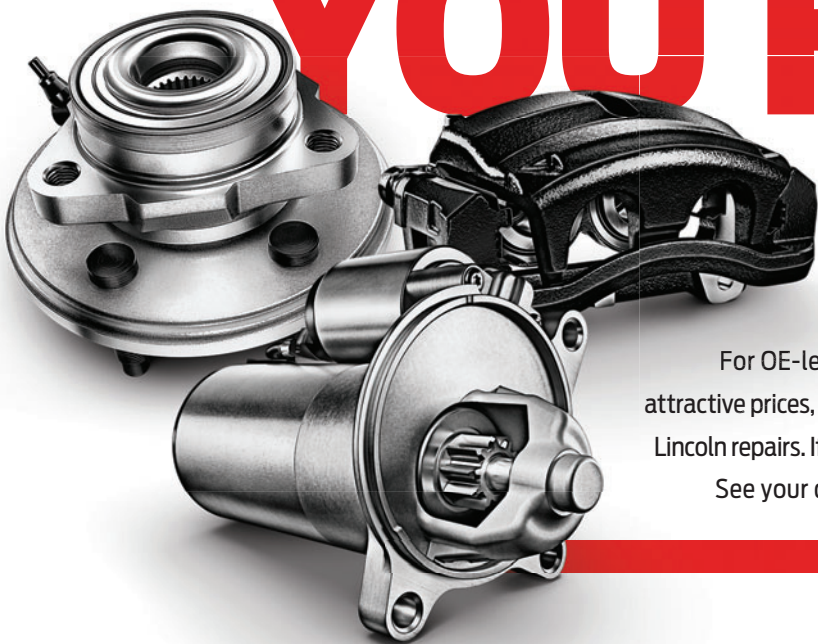
Examining your shop processes like I did will tell you the story behind your touch and cycle times. Understanding the pieces of your shop operations that affect steady shop production is a major step in resolving low touch time and high cycle time. As you walk through your shop, ask yourself "why?" as many times as necessary to learn what is causing production to stop on a particular repair. Doing that will allow you to drill down to the root cause and determine if it is poor estimating, lack of production control or inefficient scheduling that is causing you to miss the touch and cycle time metrics. 📌



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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Most Favored Nation clauses are still a collision industry problem

They are harmful to both consumers and repairers

While the term Most Favored Nation (MFN) clause may appear to refer to some international trade agreement, these clauses do have an important meaning for the collision industry. MFN clauses in direct repair agreements (DRP) between insurers and collision repair facilities guarantee an insurer that it will receive prices that are at least as favorable as those provided to other carriers doing business with the collision repair facility for the same products or services. MFN clauses can, under certain circumstances, present competitive concerns. One instance is when the MFN clause is used by a dominant buyer of intermediate goods, raising other buyers' costs or foreclosing would-be competitors from accessing the market.

Insurer MFN clause Example: Provider agrees that if it gives a bottom line discount, rebate or other estimate discount on the overall repair costs to any insurer, such discount constitutes an estimate and bill for repairs for purposes of this section. In that event, pricing provided to the insurer and its customers by Provider shall include the bottom line discount given to any other such insurer.

Examples of the negative impact of MFN clauses

Collision shops: If the largest or a larger insurer insists on an MFN clause, shops are forced to make decisions as to whether to participate with other insurers that may have smaller market share but require higher discount(s). This could negatively impact the collision shop as well as limit the repair choices of the vehicle owner (consumer).

Consumers: Shops are pressured to reduce direct repair program participation with carriers that require discounts yet have a smaller market share. Consumers may not be allowed to have their vehicle repaired where they prefer to have it repaired. The cost to repair a vehicle could increase with smaller insurer discounts becoming problematic for collision repairers.



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Insurers: Smaller carriers, and some larger carriers that require discounts, are at a disadvantage due to shops having to drop their programs in order to avoid the financial pressure of providing all these same discounts to an insurer(s) that is dominant in the marketplace.

The Obama Administration did not look favorably on MFN clauses relative to health care. Unfortunately, their interest did not include property and casualty. In 2012, Michigan prohibited the use and enforcement of MFN clauses in health insurer contracts. In the fall of 2012, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Antitrust Division of the U.S. Department of Justice held a joint public workshop on MFN clauses.

The Automotive Service Association (ASA) wrote the U.S. DOJ Assistant Attorney General for the Antitrust Division following the workshop. In the letter, ASA stated: "An increasing number of our collision repair shop owners are faced with direct repair agreements, offered by insurance companies, which include Most Favored Nation (MFN) clauses. For the large majority of collision repairers, not participating in insurer direct repair programs is not a viable option.

The Department has raised concerns about MFN clauses in recent litigation as well as in testimony on Capitol Hill. ASA encourages the Department to continue to pursue the MFN clause issue. The anti-competitive nature of these clauses ensures both our members and consumers are at a disadvantage."

Although at least one major insurer has dropped the use of MFN clauses, they are still included in some insurer DRP agreements. Many repairers view these clauses as harmful to their businesses. This Administration and the new 116th Congress may want to take another look at the impact these MFN clauses have on consumers and repairers. 📧

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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|--|----------|------------------------|
| LAUNCH ROXIE | | |
| Vehicle Information | | |
| VIN: 1FTWW31P86B01636 Vehicle manufacturer/model: Ford/F-350 Year of manufacture: 2005 Mileage: 235871 KM | | |
| Inspection organization | | |
| Name: LaunchTechUSA Address: 1820 S Milliken Ave Ontario CA Contact Number: 05624831880 SN: 98876002023 Time and date of inspection: 10/09/2018 11:58:57 Inspection Location: 2495 Anselmo Dr, Corona, CA 92678, USA | | |
| Inspection result | | |
| There are 2 issues for Power system: 1 On-Board Diagnostic (OBD) Systems Readiness Test Incomplete 2 Too Low RPM - Engine Cranking | | |
| There are 2 issues for Safety and Security system: 1 CAN Communication Bus Error - Reception Error 2 FR Wheel Speed Sensor Input Circuit Fault | | |
| There are 7 issues for Vehicle body system: 1 Brake On/Off Switch Circuit Fault 2 Transfer Case (2WD (Two Wheel Drive) Solenoid Circuit Open Or Short To Ground 3 Ignition Run/Accessory Circuit Fault 4 Transmission Transfer Case (4WD (Four Wheel Drive) Solenoid Circuit Fault 5 Ignition Key In Circuit Error 6 CAN Communication Bus Error - Reception Error 7 Ignition Switch Circuit Open | | |
| Inspections are normal for Power system 1.TCM (Transmission Control Module) | | |
| Inspections are normal for Safety and Security system 1.PAM (Parking Aid Module) 2.TBC (Trailer Brake Control Module) 3.PCM (Restraint Control Module) 4.VSM (Vehicle Security Module) | | |
| Professional Report | | |
| GEM (Generic Electronic Module) | Abnormal | ⚠ |
| ABS (Anti-Lock Braking System) | Abnormal | ⚠ |
| IC (Instrument Cluster) | Abnormal | ⚠ |
| PAM (Parking Aid Module) | Normal | ✅ |
| PCM (Powertrain Control Module) | Abnormal | ⚠ |
| TBC (Trailer Brake Control Module) | Normal | ✅ |
| TCM (Transmission Control Module) | Normal | ✅ |
| RCM (Restraint Control Module) | Normal | ✅ |
| VSM (Vehicle Security Module) | Normal | ✅ |

- PRE & POST REPORT -
WILL AUTOMATICALLY SEND UP TO 5 EMAIL ADDRESSES

In their element

Alaska collision center thrives with teamwork-based production strategy

JAMES E. GUYETTE // Contributing Editor

 Anchored in Anchorage, dealing with Alaska's rugged climate conditions is a constant operational challenge at the three Midtown, Downtown and Southside Able Body Shop locations in the state's largest city.

"It impacts every aspect of the business — you name it," according to owner Ryan Cropper. "We have snow from October to April," with temperatures averaging in the teens to low 20s.

The cold and snow routinely results in non-starting vehicles with dead batteries, melting snow that drips onto the technicians and down their wet and chilly backs as cars sit atop the racks, plus the deeply snow-covered parking lots make pushing a major drag.

Huge mounds of snow can accumulate despite frequent plowing. "At times we have to rent equipment to pile it up even higher so we don't take up too many parking spaces," says Cropper.

"But the darkness affects us just as much as anything," he adds. Lack of sun prevails throughout much of the year. Dec. 21, for example, brings just 4 hours of daylight; June 21, in contrast, stays sunny for 24 hours.

"As a kid we lived in Utah, and my father was looking for an adventure. He wanted to go hunting and fishing." And so north to Alaska they did go.

"I can't say I adapted right away, but I can't imagine living anywhere else — in the winter, maybe — but no, I can't imagine living anywhere else," says Cropper.

Among the shops in the area, though, "nobody has enough employees," making recruiting a constant endeavor.

"We focus on the culture of the shop and creating a team atmosphere. Our goal is to recruit entry-level individuals who want to be a part of something bigger. We look for up-and-coming people in the industry with positive attitudes who are looking for longevity in the collision industry," he explains.

"Team members thrive at Able because they are empowered to make their own decisions. Working on a team gives them the freedom to make their own choices while being held accountable by their teammates. We also like to reward them with fun, team-building activities such as company cook-offs, barbecues and parties."

Cropper notes that "balancing high performance with quality of life" is a key goal. "We complete a high volume of work while still maintaining a healthy work environment. We have found that the shop thrives when employees are happy and feel important."

He continues by pointing out how "we are committed to safe



ABLE BODY SHOP

Anchorage, Alaska // www.ablebodyshop.com

Ryan Cropper
Owner

10 days
Average cycle time

3
No. of shops

\$3,500
Average repair order

50+
Years in business

\$250,000
Average weekly volume

75
No. of employees

\$13 million
Annual gross revenue

8
No. of DRPs

Axalta
Paint supplier

and proper repairs while not caving to the pressures of the industry. We care about our community; we value giving back and encourage our employees to give back as well."

Along with serving on the Board of Directors for the Dimond West Little League, Cropper is a member of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce and the Rhino Lining Dealer Advisory Committee, plus he is a longtime director at the King Career Center, where for more than a decade the shop has been sponsoring a successful internship program. He has won numerous honors for his civic involvement.

"Our philosophy has become that we only spend marketing money when it directly impacts our community," he elaborates.



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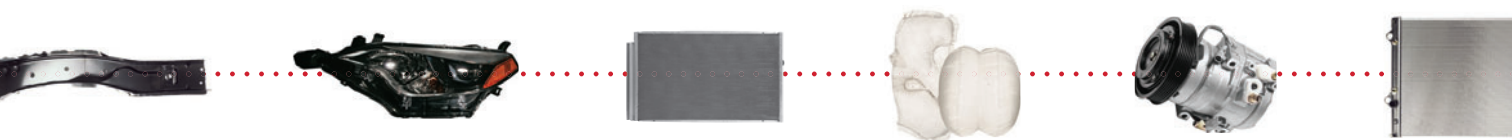


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“We have found great success in showing Anchorage residents that we care about our city. We support a lot of local youth organizations and non-profits in order to get our name out in the community.”

Deploying a management style that Cropper describes as “democratic,” he emphasizes that “we encourage informal communication of knowledge and experience. We support dialog that builds positive relationships and we give our employees a reputation to live up to. We value our customers and go the extra mile to provide excellent customer service.”

Cropper reports that “we really work with our vendors to assist in high level training for our staff. 3M is a great example of that. We really like training with 3M because it is hands-on with a focus on fixing vehicles correctly.”

This close and productive relationship assures that every employee has a thorough education in the finer points of auto repair. “It supports my priorities — we’ve sent several to 3M headquarters for advanced training in adhesives and welding,” he says.

“They’ve done several classes up here onsite on how to use their products the correct way. They’re one of the only vendors that give us that level of training. It’s tough to get that type of training from vendors.”

In dealing with suppliers, “We have clear expectations and we manage our relationships by commitments. As long as we have open communication and hold each other accountable for the commitments we make, vendor relationships are easy,” Cropper observes.

Relationships with insurance carriers,



which Cropper terms as excellent, also revolve around mutual recognition. “We realize we are all there to serve a purpose and to do our job. We treat them with respect. We know that they have rules to follow, and as long as the end result is a safe and proper repair, we can work with anyone. Our state-of-the-art estimating technology initiates seamless transactions,” he asserts. “Our estimating process is efficient, timely and hassle-free.”

Finding a career path

Although owning a trio of body shops requires plenty of management expertise in putting out fires, initially Cropper really did aspire to a career of extinguishing conflagrations.

“Growing up I always wanted to be a firefighter; however, I also had a love for vehicles and engine repair,” he recalls. “When I was a senior in high school I went to King Career Center and took a class called Body and Fender where I learned collision repair. My teacher, Chris Yelverton, was a big part of my success.”

Following graduation Cropper moved to Salem, Ore., for college, where he still pursued becoming a firefighter. In the meantime, though, he landed a job at Capital Collision and worked there while putting himself through college.

“When I returned to Anchorage in the summer of 2001 I saw there was a body shop for sale. After some soul-searching and realizing firefighting wasn’t the career path I was happy with, I decided to purchase Able Body Shop.”

The operation had started in the late 1960s in a Quonset hut on the current property. By the late ‘70s it had expanded



to a couple of structures under the direction of the previous owner.

“I purchased the original Able Body Shop, now called Able Midtown, in 2002 when the original owner was ready to retire. In 2006 I purchased another shop that, at the time, was the oldest operating body shop in Anchorage,” Cropper recounts.

“We changed the name to Able Downtown and made it our second location. At that point we re-branded as a multi-shop business and focused on growing and thriving in Anchorage. In 2018, after realizing we had maxed out both locations, we added our third and largest Able location — called Able Southside.”



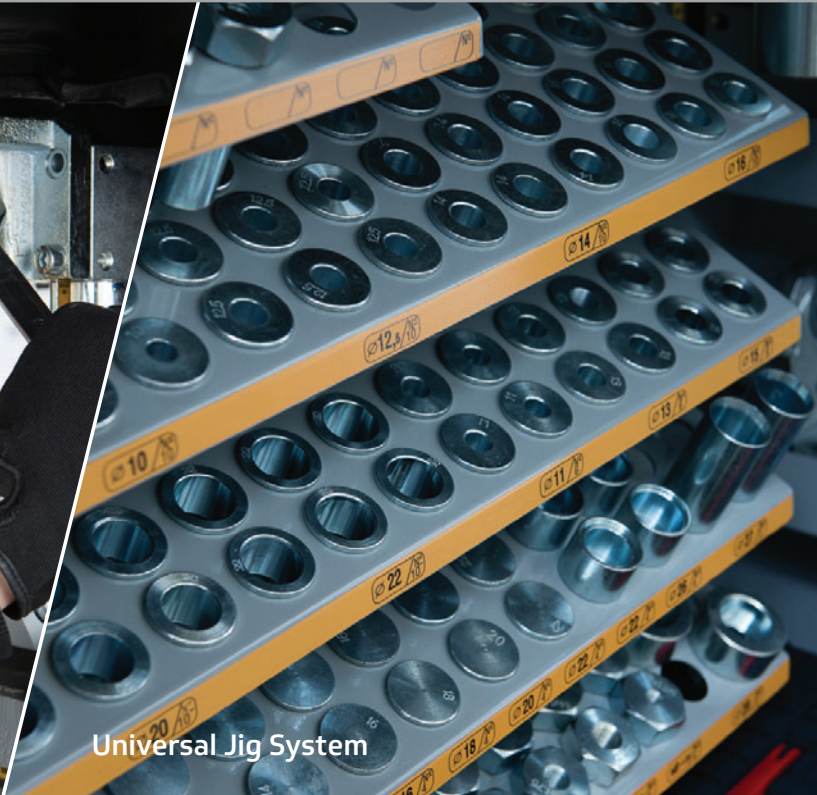
JAMES E. GUYETTE is a long-time contributing editor to *ABRN*, *Aftermarket Business World* and *Motor Age* magazines.
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New auto repair association focuses on education

NYCARA AIMS TO HELP SHOP FACILITIES IMPROVE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

BRIAN ALBRIGHT // Contributing Editor

Owners of independent mechanical and collision repair shops are busy — they are typically hands-on owner-operators who are heavily involved in day-to-day operations. However, because they spend a good part of their day working on cars, they often aren't as focused as they should be on the "business" side of operating their business.

That's a situation that a new association in New York City hopes to remedy. The New York City Auto Repair Association (NYCARA), which launched at the beginning of the year, is a non-profit group that wants to create a community of repair professionals, while also providing educational resources to help owners run their businesses better.

The group was formed by Paul Stern, owner of auto equipment distributor LIFTNOW, and Paul Stern, Jr., head of marketing and business development at the company.

The association grew out of conversations that LIFTNOW had with its customers in the region. "Especially in the independent repair world, we're seeing a gap between the increasing complexity of vehicles and the increasingly competitive landscape as dealerships beef up their service offerings, and the need for knowledge and education among independent repairers," Stern Jr. says.

"Independent shops want to catch up to the rest of the world and remain com-

petitive so they can service these new vehicles and bring in new customers," Stern Jr. added.

Stern, Jr. says that the group hopes to bring together professionals from every segment of the independent repair market, including professionals, students and technicians. The primary focus of the group will be mechanical shops, but they are also targeting collision shops for membership as well.

"As insurance companies begin to pay for different repair services, and as new procedures are established that weren't there a few years ago, the line between mechanical and collision continues to get blurred," Stern Jr. says. "We are mechanical first, though. The collision shops are well served by the collision associations in our area, but there isn't an association for the independent and mechanical world that is auto-repair first."

NYCARA will serve New York's five boroughs, as well as Long Island and Westchester. The group will provide educational content (including events and seminars) targeted at management, space and lease constraints, competitive issues and insurance laws.

"We had an interest meeting in early January," Stern Jr. says. "A lot of mechanical guys are owner-operators and are overloaded with work, so getting them away from the shop to demonstrate the value of an association is the first hurdle we're facing. We've reached out to other associations in the area, and we're try-

ing to model our membership efforts after what they've done. The mechanical world is different, and there seems to be less of a wealth of knowledge out there than there is in the collision sector. That's where we see the opportunity for the association."

The group is working with other local repair organizations (including the Alliance of Automotive Service Providers and the Long Island Auto Body Repairmen's Association) to build membership, learn best practices and establish its niche in providing resources for underserved segments of the repair industry in the region.

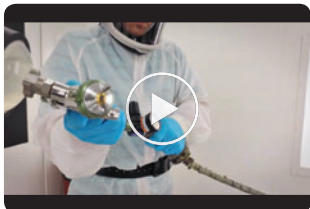
"Our mission is to empower these auto repairers to run their businesses better, and in my mind that starts with education, events and resources and extends to putting together a good benefits package and establishing industry partners," Stern Jr. says. "We also want to provide marketing assistance and hiring assistance. The most common thing we hear as an equipment distributor is that these shops are struggling to find and retain good help, and there are no resources out there to help them with that." 



BRIAN ALBRIGHT

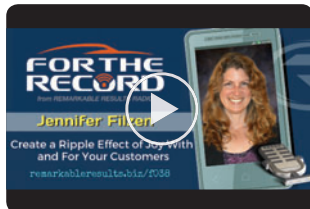
is a freelance journalist based in Cleveland who has been writing about manufacturing, technology and automotive issues since 1997. He is a regular contributor to *ABRN*, *Motor Age* and *Aftermarket Business World*. b-albright@sbcglobal.net

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MECHANICAL MOMENT

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

NEON STUCK IN SECOND GEAR — DTC P0750

VEHICLE: 2004 Dodge Neon, L4-2.0L, VIN C, Automatic Transmission

MILEAGE: 176,335

PROBLEM: The vehicle will not shift and is stuck in second gear. The MIL is on.

DETAILS: When the tech connected a scan tool, he found a DTC P0750 (LR Solenoid Circuit). The first step was to check the fluid level and condition. It was full and looked/smelled normal. Next, he tested the resistance of the solenoid pack. They were all in specifications so he tested for power and grounds to the solenoid pack. He found that the solenoid pack red wire was intermittently getting power. After looking at the wiring diagram, he tested the power and ground circuits for the transmission control relay. The circuits tested good so the relay was determined to be faulty.

CONFIRMED REPAIR: He replaced the transmission control relay, cleared

the code and test drove the vehicle. The transmission shifted correctly again and the MIL remained off.

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

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New Orleans, Louisiana

JUNE 24-28

SkillsUSA and National Leadership and Skills Conference

Kentucky Exposition Center

Louisville, Kentucky

JULY 23

Society of Collision Repair Specialists Directors Open Meeting

Indianapolis Hilton Hotel

Indianapolis, Indiana

JULY 24-25

Collision Industry Conference

Indianapolis Hilton Hotel

Indianapolis, Indiana

JULY 25

Automotive Service Association MSO Symposium

Indianapolis Hilton Hotel

Indianapolis, Indiana

SEPTEMBER 5-7

Mobile Tech Expo

South Point Hotel & Casino

Las Vegas, Nevada

NOVEMBER 5-8

SEMA 2019

Las Vegas Convention Center

Las Vegas, Nevada



AUTOMOTIVE ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS (OEM) are now beginning to view themselves as mobility providers — instead of just as vehicle manufacturers — as autonomous vehicle (AV) technology continues to advance.

THE VEHICLE OF THE FUTURE

AS AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY CONTINUES TO DEVELOP, TECHNICIANS MUST CONTINUE TO UNDERGO EXTENSIVE TRAINING AND ALIGN THEMSELVES WITH AUTOMAKERS.

DOUGLAS CRAIG AND LISA LOFTON // Contributing Editors

This is the first part in a two-part series on autonomous vehicles (AVs) and the collision repair industry. See Part Two in an upcoming issue of ABRN to learn more about AVs, their challenges and what collision repair shops should consider to prepare for the future.

As automotive technology continues to evolve — despite naysayers — autonomous vehicles (AVs) and connected vehicles are on the horizon to become more mainstream, and the collision repair industry may already be feeling some of the impact.

Close to 60 million vehicles in the United States alone are equipped with Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems (ADAS), such as blind-spot detection, adaptive cruise control and crash-avoidance systems, according to a March 2019 Frost & Sullivan report. Big changes towards full autonomy are expected within the next few years, but technology, regulations, infrastructure, societal acceptance, as well as other factors, all need to align.

Many original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) have said they plan to sell self-driving vehicles between 2020 and 2025.

Each automaker has its own amalgamated sensor suite — a combination of the three main groups of sensor systems: Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR), radar and camera systems — supplemented by other sensors such as ultrasonic and other source inputs for its AV designs. That means there is currently no industry standard.

Several technological hurdles also still must be cleared, including the ability to test a wide range of both software and hardware solutions in various operating environments. There are also myriad regulatory and infrastructure obstacles.

The most advanced AVs (also referred to as self-driving or driverless vehicles) are expected to be completely electric, defined as Autonomous, Connected, Electrified and Shared (ACES). Other terms used in the industry to define AVs include Shared Autonomous Electric Vehicles (SAEV) and Connected Autonomous Shared Electric Vehicles (CASE).

Other important issues beyond technical considerations also have to be addressed — such as cybersecurity concerns, who will be liable if the vehicle crashes, how it will be insured, etc. — before completely self-driving vehicles will be available for sale

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NVH AND LIGHTWEIGHTING IN AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

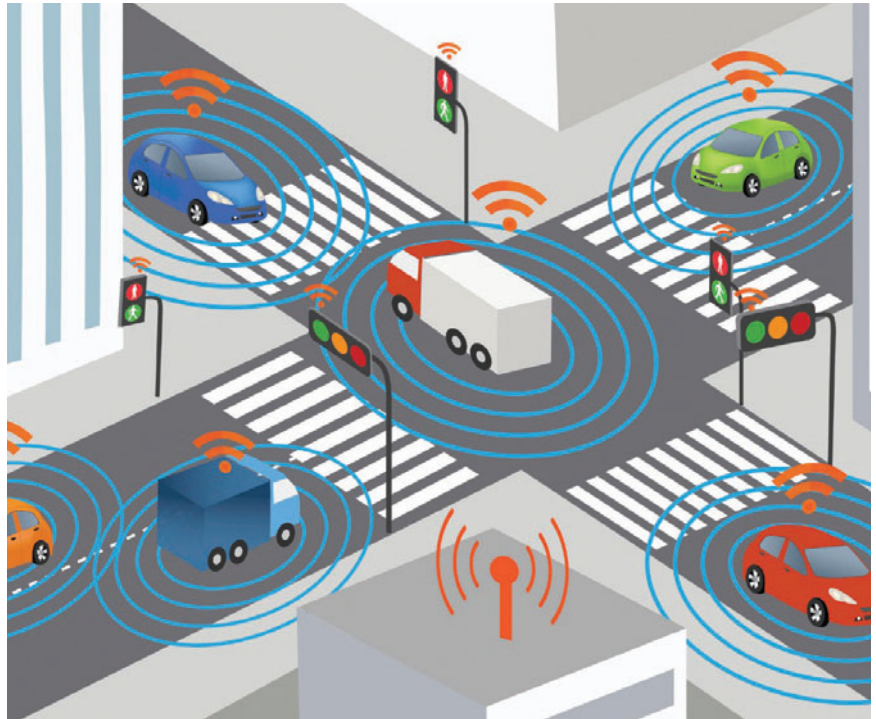
Noise, vibration and harshness (NVH) control are already an important part of the collision repair process, but are expected to play an even larger role as AV development progresses.

Automakers already spend significant time focusing on NVH because it is one of the most important attributes to reflect the quality perception of a vehicle. As autonomous driving evolves, sensitivity to NVH will continue to increase as drivers become passengers and will no longer be focused on traffic and the external environment.

New alloys and the combination of materials with new materials also increases the sensitivity of a vehicle body to the vibrational and acoustical responses.

Forecasts indicate that the need for lightweighting will affect the material mix strategy for developing vehicles. As a lightweighting strategy — which will also affect NVH — the material focus will shift to aluminum, magnesium and carbon fiber reinforced plastic (CFRP). Composites and plastic body panels reinforced with metal door structures are expected to be present in vehicles, similar to the Dendrobium hypercar, for drastic weight savings.

To learn more about NVH, see “The Art and Craft of Seam Sealer, Foam Repairs” (November 2018) and “New Technologies in Sound Dampening” (March 2019).



CLOSE TO 60 MILLION VEHICLES in the United States alone are equipped with Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems (ADAS) such as blind-spot detection, adaptive cruise control and crash-avoidance systems

in the United States to the general public.

Despite this, automakers, tech giants and specialty startups have invested at least \$50 billion during the last few years to develop AV technology. To that end, automotive original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are increasingly looking at themselves as mobility providers rather than simply as a vehicle manufacturer, causing manufacturers and suppliers to revamp their business models.

There are already early adopters of AVs, and Toyota predicts that in 2020, 42 percent of U.S. vehicles will be equipped with some type of “cooperative automated driving” technology tied to 5G or Dedicated Short Range Communications (DSRC) — an open-source protocol for wireless communication intended for highly secure, high-speed wireless communication between vehicles and infrastructure. Forecasts expect that number to increase 68 percent by 2030 with sales of more than \$30 million.

The total number of ADAS-enabled and autonomous cars on the road is ex-

pected to increase from 9 percent of the total Vehicles in Operation (VIO) in 2017 to 82 percent in 2030. The number of light-duty vehicles — i.e. passenger cars and light trucks — in the United States in 2018 was 276.1 million, and Hedges & Co. has projected it to be 281.3 million this year.

The increasing adoption of ADAS and AVs is attributable to a greater emphasis on both safety and green technology. Growing adoption of ADAS-enabled and autonomous cars may lead to more stable driving, resulting in less wear and tear.

An impact on collision repair

The potential effect AVs will have on the collision repair industry is recognized, but it's also a trend that the industry says may be somewhat hard to predict. It's a fact that the number of repairs will decrease. However, as cars are built with more and more sensors, the way vehicles are repaired will become more complex. The frequency of repairs may decline — particularly in AVs that are fully autonomous — because they will be “talking” to



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the infrastructure and will take immediate corrective action to avoid a collision. However, this is still in the distant future.

The goal of vehicle repair is obviously always proper repair, but it is more important than ever with AVs to have it done right because they will be driving themselves. Maintenance trends are anticipated to evolve as these vehicles will require less but more advanced maintenance such as Over-the-Air (OTA) updates. Repairs not only need to be done to OEM specifications, but by well-educated certified technicians using correct materials. This focus on OEM-approved materials is imperative.

Using approved structural adhesives and following OEM repair procedures is already important in automotive repair, but it must continue to recognize the critical role its products play and ensure it stays continually connected to OEM teams.

Preparing for the future

The move toward fully autonomous vehicles means that human input in driving would become obsolete. The car interior is already a complex environment. AVs will ultimately change the way drivers and passengers use the interior of a car, particularly with a demand for an enhanced driving experience. Passenger comfort is a key decision influencer.

With less focus on actively operating a vehicle, passenger comfort will become even more important including higher sensitivity to the acoustic environment, new aesthetic requirements and innovative materials developed for door trims, carpet and displays. (See sidebar, "NVH and lightweighting in autonomous vehicles," page 30, for more information.)

AVs will also change how repair facilities write estimates. This is a major part of preparing for the inevitable changes

to come. Determine whether you have technicians who are able to write estimates and understand role changes. Do you have someone in a role who is dedicated to looking up the correct OEM procedures and someone who functions in more of an IT type of role and conducting research on repairs? These are not typical autobody shop roles, but now these types of skills are needed.

Repairs will become more and more complex and electronic-based than they are now — from pre-scan and post-scan to ensuring the estimate is complete, especially for any sensors in need of repair. Scan tools will be crucial to make sure the vehicle is functioning properly, especially because vehicle repairs will be heavily electronic based.

Technicians of these future vehicles will need to have training aligned with coming changes and have the right peo-

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A CHEAT SHEET TO THE SIX LEVELS OF DRIVER ASSISTANCE TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENTS

The road from the current vehicles with driver assistance functions (systems that support the driver with steering, acceleration and braking either separately or in combination, but where the driver is ultimately in control) and clearly responsible to fully autonomous vehicles (systems that can take full control of the driving task for parts of a journey under restricted conditions of in all conditions) is long and complex, with many technological and regulatory hurdles along the way. The Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) has developed these levels to describe the various stages of vehicle automation.

- **Level 0:** No Automation – The driver performs all driving tasks. The vehicle has zero autonomy.
- **Level 1:** Driver Assistance – The vehicle is controlled by the driver, but some driving assist features may be included in the vehicle’s design.
- **Level 2:** Partial Automation – The vehicle has combined automated functions such as acceleration and steering, but the driver has to remain engaged with driving and monitor the environment at all times.
- **Level 3:** Conditional Automation – A driver is a necessity but not required to monitor the environment. The driver needs to be ready to take control of the vehicle at all times with notice.
- **Level 4:** High Automation – The vehicle is able to perform all driving functions under certain conditions. There may be an option for the driver to control the vehicle.
- **Level 5:** Full Automation – The vehicle is capable of performing all driving functions under all conditions. There may be an option for the driver to control the vehicle.

With Level 5 vehicles, there won’t be a need for pedals or steering wheels because they will be fully autonomous. Although there are predictions that this level of automation could be possible further down the line — circa 2030-2035 — some experts and pundits say we will never truly reach a Level 5.

Sources: *National Highway and Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) and LORD Corporation*

ple in place to be competitive in the market. They will need to consult OEM procedures while knowing whether a sensor is able to be repaired or if it should be replaced instead. Data will become the new gold. Nearly 70 percent of automotive service is being performed outside the dealer network, so independent repairers and shops and multi-shop organizations (MSOs) must be just as diligent and vigilant about staying on top of the rapidly changing technology.

There are big changes to come and a lot of questions — but we don’t yet have all the answers. The technology currently available on vehicles is bringing us closer to self-driving vehicles, but there’s still a great deal of work to be done before fully automated vehicles are part of mainstream transportation. ❏



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LISA LOFTON is a member of the LORD Corporation Commercial Excellence team. With more than 20 years experience in manufacturing, she brings the business perspective to engineering, market trends and understanding customer needs.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER BOOTH MAINTENANCE

Repair process efficiency, quality and profitability are driven by the booth

DANNY RICHARDSON // Contributing Editor

Taking steps to properly maintain the paint booth inside of a body shop is crucial. Not only does this process make the booth a safer environment to work in, but it also increases throughput by consistently producing higher quality finishes versus painting in uncontrolled environments. Without a well-maintained paint booth, body shops run the risk of an inefficient repair process that results with a poor finish quality and decreased bottom line. By following a series of sim-

ple steps, you can ensure that your paint booth continues performing optimally.

The first step of the process is checking the filters. It is not uncommon to see shops with downdraft ceiling filters that are over one year old. Depending on usage, this might be acceptable. However, if you are painting a lot of cars every week, you may have reached capacity and are losing airflow. Airflow measurement readings throughout the booth should be at a minimum of 80 feet per minute; anything less could indicate

poor filter performance.

Another area to check are the pre-filters. Most modern booths have them, but they are frequently overlooked. Look for any access panels with hinges or latches and you will likely find pre-filters or other serviceable items inside. These filters protect your main ceiling filters and need to be changed more often. If they are not maintained properly, you will have a much shorter life for your ceiling filters.

Floor filters or exhaust filters must be changed more frequently, as often as once

a week for booths that are in constant use. Clogged floor filters can quickly cause a major loss in air movement, which will reduce production, quality and hinder the performance of paint materials — ultimately reducing profits. Overly-clogged or missing exhaust filters can lead to overspray build-up in the stacks, which restrict air flow, damage components within the stack such as fan blades and bearings, and significantly increase the risk of a fire.

Booth usage plays a role in how often filters should be changed. When they are ignored, several problems arise that result from poor air movement:

- Increased flash-times and poor curing
- Excess dirt found in topcoats and clearcoats
- Reduced air exchange, increasing the potential for solvent-pop
- Overspray contaminating other panels
- Overspray covering the walls and lights in the booth
- Reduced cycle time

Think about how you are controlling the dust build-up on the booth floor. Wetting the floor is the age-old way of keeping dust on the floor, leading to rework when the hose splashes water on the freshly cleared quarter. Additionally, introducing humidity in waterborne paint processes drastically affects performance. Dust control products designed to specifically address this issue are more efficient. Some are sprayed on the floor while others are fabric that are rolled. These solutions reduce time spent buffing and/or reworking panels. They vary in maintenance intervals, but all will increase consistency and quality. If you have a cross flow or side extraction downdraft, these floor coatings are even more important, as your floor provides a major source of dust in the topcoat.

Compressed air filtration systems have another set of filters that affect booth operation and tend to be one of the more overlooked items in booth maintenance. Desiccant filters must be changed out as soon as the indicator changes

color; if not, they allow moisture — and many times, broken pieces of desiccant — into the air hose and onto your paint job. Oil separation filters and air valves are items that will eventually deteriorate and fall apart and must be included on your booth maintenance checklist. These filters filter the air but do not dry it. Once the filters are full, moisture and contamination will bypass them.

Overspray is another important thing to keep under control. There are products specifically designed to reduce the build-up and dirt that collect on the walls over time. Multiple options are available such as spray-on films that can be washed off with water, spray-on films that can be peeled off, and adhesive backed fabrics that trap the dirt and overspray. Painters should position panels in the booth so they can spray towards the exhaust versus the walls and lights to extend the time between cleaning operations. This also helps with flash-off of the material by keeping panels exposed to proper air flow.


Air compressor maintenance is critical in extending your filter life by reducing contaminants that are leaving the compressor, such as moisture and oil particulates. Proper maintenance hinders contaminants from reaching the air lines, gun cleaners and booth air filters. When compressors produce large amounts of moisture and oil, rework costs will rise and production will slow. The cost of one reworked finish is often greater than the cost of replacing filters.

Your last line of defense to avoid paint job contamination is examining your hoses. They should be high quality and immediately replaced when they are covered with overspray, cracked, leaking or have reached an age limitation. Having a clearly defined change-out schedule and back-ups on hand will mitigate the risk of contamination and/or downtime due to failure. Be sure to put them off to the side of the booth when moving vehicles in and out. This is because they can break down on the inside when driven over, causing

areas that typically attract dirt to release it onto the painted surface. Ideally, hoses would not be in the booth during a bake cycle, as the constant fluctuation and exposure to extreme temperatures can cause them to breakdown prematurely. If an air hose specifically states it is not for use in a booth, don't use it.

Lighting is another area often overlooked. This can happen as easily as using the wrong type of bulb or ignoring burnt-out bulbs. Painters must have the right spectrum of light to ensure they achieve proper coverage and color match. Remember that the cost of one rework will typically exceed the cost of proactive maintenance.

Deteriorated door seals and/or missing or malfunctioning latches can allow dirt to enter the spray area, as well as overspray into the shop, and increase the workload on the booth's components to maintain proper pressure. These issues can also increase labor times for denibbing, polishing and/or reworking panels.

Following the recommendations above will help your collision center remain productive and profitable. Whether it is a simple bulb or hose change that is needed, the little things eventually add up to something more complex that can ultimately affect the business. By being proactive and going through a complete maintenance checklist at appropriate time intervals, your shop will benefit by helping to keep pace and reduce wasted time, materials, resources and money. 



DANNY RICHARDSON

has been involved in the collision repair industry for over 30 years, 26 of them spent working for BASF as a field rep. Highlights of his

career include leading the early adoption of waterborne basecoats beginning in the mid-90s and working with UV primers from early testing to body shop utilization. Danny is always looking for innovative ways to help shops operate more efficiently, deliver higher quality work, and continue increasing their profitability.

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FRESH FINISHES

CHECK OUT THE LATEST COATINGS AND OTHER PRODUCTS FROM PAINT SUPPLIERS

TIM SRAMCIK // Contributing Editor

Do you have a little time to talk about what we can do for your business?"

Sound familiar? No doubt a lot of your vendors ask this kind of question. While investing your valuable time in a discussion with a company rep may seem inconvenient, these talks can prove quite productive. Take your paint supplier. Odds are you're content with the vendor you've chosen. But have you considered how much more a vendor could be doing for you?

Paint companies invest millions annually into developing new products and services to ensure your shop stays profitable so they can keep your business. Yet, if you're simply sticking to the same few products there's a great chance you're only scratching the surface of where their offerings could take your work and revenue.

Don't miss out. Consider what these new products from paint manufacturers could be doing for your shop.

AkzoNobel

If your shop sees its share of fleet work, restoration projects or concentrates on commercial vehicles, AkzoNobel has three new products you might want to consider.

Sikkens Autocoat BT LV262 Multi-Substrate Epoxy Primer is a two-component, high solids, 3.5 VOC product designed for commercial vehicle manufacturers, builders and fleet refinish markets. It can be used as a high-build surfacer or sealer and requires no pre-



PHOTO: SHERWIN-WILLIAMS AUTOMOTIVE FINISHES

YOUR PAINT DEPARTMENT IS THE BIGGEST REVENUE-creating part of your operation. By incorporating new products, you can maximize its throughput even further.

treatment (making for a faster and simpler application process). The primer also provides patented corrosion resistance technology effective on aluminum and multiple types of steel substrates, including galvanized and stainless. AkzoNobel says LV262 provides consistent performance in a wide range of environmental conditions, along with excellent flow, hold out and first-rate adhesion and durability.

Next up is Sikkens Autocoat BT LV151 DTM, a new generation 3.5 VOC emission direct-to-metal topcoat designed for OE builders, fleet repairer and refurbishing application businesses looking for coatings engineered to be simple to use and cost efficient. A straightforward 5:1 mix ratio helps minimize the risk of errors and allows the product to be mixed for three standard gloss levels: 30, 50 and 70 gloss. Since there's no need to apply

primers, material costs and application times are both reduced. For further time savings, LV151 offers an air-dry additive to accelerate room temperature drying.

In addition, the product utilizes Sikkens Autocoat BT solid color toner palette for a large range of existing color formulas and is free from lead, chromate and cobalt to protect the health of your employees and business.

Looking for an easy-to-apply clear coat? Sikkens Autocoat BT LV651 Glamour Clear promises easy sanding and polishing up to 72 hours after application. Improved sag resistance on large objects makes it suitable for commercial vehicle applications and can reduce defects on rivets, style lines and decals. AkzoNobel says LV651 Glamour Clear works with VOC accelerator for a wide range of applications and drying conditions.



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Axalta

Axalta offers repair and prep products formulated to work specifically with their finishes.

The company says its Cromax ChromaPremier Pro 36004S Ultra Performance Primer Filler is based on a new chemistry. It's formulated to be easy to use with no flash-off between coats and offers a pot life longer than many competitors (30 minutes – 1 hour at 70 degrees Fahrenheit or 21 degrees Celsius).

Axalta PS4000 Metal Pretreatment Wipes are based on a special acid chemistry, come ready-to-use and are designed to make the metal pretreatment process very fast and easy. The wipes provide both adhesion and corrosion protection for the subsequent paint process. They work with Axalta brands that include Cromax, Spies Hecker, Standox and Nason.

To prepare a surface and apply the Pro 36004S Ultra Performance Primer Filler:

1. Clean painted surface thoroughly with mild detergent and water.
2. When using the product as a primer, sand and featheredge with P180/P240/P320 grit paper.
3. Remove sanding sludge with suitable surface cleaners.
4. For bare metal substrates, PS4000 Metal Pretreatment Wipes are mandatory. Non-use can be detected analytically.
5. For substrates other than unprimed plastic or fiberglass, wipe surface with suitable cleaner. Do not use etch primer under 3600XS Ultra Performance Primer Filler.
6. For unprimed plastic and fiberglass, refer to the plastic repair procedure.
7. Apply 2-4 medium wet coats. Apply flat after the first coat.

To prepare surfaces and use the PS4000 Metal Pretreatment Wipes:

1. Sand and clean any bare steel sanded, galvanized steel or soft aluminum.
2. Substrates must be dry and free from grease, oil and other foreign matter

before pretreatment with PS4000. (PS4000 is not a cleaning wipe.)

3. Apply even and thoroughly in a cross-wipe application method. Ensure the surface remains wet for at least one minute.
4. Only apply on bare metal areas. The same wipe should not be used for different types of metal surfaces.

BASF

If you're interested in a low-VOC cleaner, BASF's 151 Limco Cleaner is its economy line's first waterborne cleaner and is compliant in all regions. This product was developed to clean light-duty and water-soluble contaminants from:

- existing paint films,
- clean, sanded OEM finishes,
- most unpainted plastic parts, and
- gel-coated fiberglass.

BASF says 151 Limco Cleaner improves adhesion of subsequent coats. The company also touts the cleaner for doing a better job cleaning water-soluble contaminants than existing solvent-borne cleaners. 151 Limco Cleaner possesses antistatic properties, can be used as a pre-paint cleaner and works under all Limco solvent-borne undercoats and topcoats.

To use, wipe on with a clean towel and dry off with a clean towel. Note that BASF says the product can be used on bare metal but should not be allowed to pool or sit for more than 15 seconds to avoid oxidation. If the bare metal begins to haze, scuff it until shiny and re-clean.

PPG

Do you have the need — the need for speed? If you're looking for an end-to-end solution for quick repairs, check out PPG's Deltron Speed Repair System. Built for economical spot and panel repairs or air-drying scenarios, the system addresses scratches, dings and small dents, as well as dimples resulting from hailstorms. The three-component system features PPG's:



PHOTO: AKZONOBEL

PRODUCTS LIKE SIKKENS AUTOCOAT BT LV151 DTM direct-to-metal topcoat are formulated to be easier to use, cutting time and reducing potential mistakes. They also can be used with other products to further reduce work times by accelerating drying.

CONTACT A PAINT SUPPLIER

AkzoNobel - www.akzonobel.com

Axalta - www.axalta.com/us

BASF - www.refinish.basf.us

PPG - www.ppgrefinish.com

Sherwin-Williams Automotive Finishes - www.sherwin-automotive.com

Martin Senour - www.martinsenour-autopaint.com/home

- DPS3105 V-Prime Quick Prime Urethane Surfacer, featuring dry-to-sand times in as little as 30 minutes. The product is rollable and promises to dry to a gloss-like finish, providing the benefits of a built-in guide coat.
- Deltron DBC basecoat, the recommended topcoat for the speed prime repair. It can be applied directly to the urethane surfacer and requires 15 minutes to air dry. (In some cases, painters may choose to apply DBC 500 color blender as a "wet bed" be-



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fore applying the basecoat.)

- DC2000 Ultra Velocity Clearcoat, which requires no flash between coats and is designed to air dry, ready to polish, in 25 to 30 minutes.

A sample application for moderate damage requiring body filler involves the following steps:

1. Thoroughly wash entire vehicle with soap and water.
2. Clean areas to be repaired with SWX350 H2O-So-Clean followed by SX330 or SXA330 Acryli-Clean Wax and Grease remover.
3. Sand damaged area with P180 grit by hand or by using a dual action sander. A 3-inch disk may be used to keep the area as small as possible.
4. After sanding blow off surface with compressed air and re-clean with SX330 or SXA330, followed by SWX350.
5. Mix and apply DF705 TECHNIFILL Plus lightweight body filler to areas where filler is needed.
6. Sand and block filler with P180 grit paper, followed by P320 grit in preparation for primer surfacer.
7. Thoroughly scuff panel edges with a scotch brite pad then finish sand the entire panel with P600 dual action sander.
8. Blow off surface with compressed air and re-clean with SX330 or SXA330 followed by SWX350.
9. Mix and apply 2 coats of OneChoice SX1071 Ecobase or SXA1031 Etch Prime - Gray to any bare metal areas and allow to dry.
10. Mix and apply up to 3 coats of DPS3105 V-Prime Quick Prime Urethane Surfacer using a reverse priming technique and allow to dry for 30 to 45 minutes.
11. Block sand primer surfacer with P320 grit paper until flat and finish with P600 grit.
12. Re-clean one final time and continue with recommended PPG Deltron Premium topcoat systems.



SPEED, SPEED AND MORE SPEED. Companies like PPG regularly update their offerings with solutions, like the Deltron Speed Repair System, to help shops perform quick repairs that can make a big impact on a business's bottom line.

Sherwin-Williams Automotive Finishes

Sherwin-Williams Automotive Finishes (SWAF) is on its own mission to bundle production and quality in a cost-cutting package. The company recently added CC250 Dynamic+ Clearcoat to its line of premium speed glamour coatings. SWAF says it features fast application and quick, low-temp bake cycle times that are capable of consistently delivering excellent gloss, hold out and appearance. CC250+ also can be "short-baked" for increased productivity and features SWAF's Ure-Flex technology that eliminates any need for a flex additive for flexible substrates (creating additional savings).

It's designed for use over Ultra 9K Basecoat, Ultra 7000 Basecoat and AWW Performance Plus Basecoat colors.

SWAF also has added Martin Senour PRO Filler Body Filler to its line of lightweight filler, fiberglass reinforced filler and putty. SWAF says the filler provides professional-grade adhesion and sanding properties, eliminates micro-pinholes and is versatile enough for any repair job.

Martin Senour Product Manager Nick Dowling says the PRO Filler line "allows for seamless repair and will be

"an asset in any job that requires a product with strong adhesion and smooth application."

Note that the complete PRO Filler product line (listed below) is available exclusively at NAPA Auto Parts:

- PRO Lite Lightweight Body Filler
- PRO Grip Premium Lightweight Body Filler
- PRO Strand Short Strand Fiberglass Reinforced
- PRO Strand XL Long Strand Fiberglass Reinforced
- PRO Gold Finishing Glaze & Putty, and
- PRO Spot 1k Air Dry Putty.

From cleaners, surfacers, primers and fillers to repair kits and paint systems, your paint suppliers have solutions that can save you time and put more money into your pockets. A call or email is all that's necessary to set up a discussion that can transform your paint department with a host of available products that may be sitting right under your nose. 📧



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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GETTING IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME

AN ARRAY OF RESOURCES AND INNOVATIVE TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE TO ENSURE AN ACCURATE REFINISH COLOR MATCH

NICOLE SINCLAIR // Contributing Editor

These are exciting times in the automotive refinish industry. Dramatic advances in color technology combined with familiar and reliable resources have created a diverse array of digital and print tools that make accurate refinish color matching faster and easier than ever. And since accurate color matching saves time and money, boosts productivity and increases customer satisfaction, everyone involved — paint manufacturers and distributors, OEMs, collision centers and consumers — is eager for refinish colors to match the first time.

Whether a painter is working with the latest spectrophotometer or using traditional color decks and tint charts, the key to getting the right color match is having access to a comprehensive database with robust reflectance data and algorithms, which lead to the right color formula and help ensure an invisible repair.

Identifying colors and variants

With new, sophisticated colors being introduced every year, along with a significant number of variants, it's critical that a paint manufacturer keep up with all the changes. To ensure a database stays current, paint manufacturers gather color information from numerous places. Automotive OEMs are a key source, since they regularly work with paint companies when developing new colors. However, as painters know, a vehicle's actual color does not always match an OEM's prime formula. Two cars painted the identical OEM silver may have slight variations even if they were painted at the same plant. Variants that appear frequently are cataloged in a paint company's database along with the original OEM prime.

Parts programs also provide color information. If a color match can't be found in the database, or if a painter needs a specific manufacturer color in the database, a car part can be sent to the paint company for analysis. A "special" can be produced for a particular instance, and if a color is deemed popular enough, a variant is born.

U.S. ports of entry are also a source of variants. If a paint company monitors incoming auto shipments at ports, field



COLOR VARIANT DECKS continue to be a staple in color-matching tools. Chromatically arranged chip decks help painters quickly choose a color that most closely matches the vehicle's paint.



TODAY'S SOPHISTICATED spectrophotometers measure multiple angles and texture of the vehicle's paint color to find the best match.

color experts are often the first to see the real-world version of a new vehicle color when they perform on-the-spot color audits against OEM information. If the field experts identify a color deviation, they alert the paint company's color lab and, if warranted, a variant is developed.

The digital path to the database

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long way to deliver information to painters. Software advancements now provide Google-like color search capability, incorporate spray-out libraries, personalized mix sessions, volume estimators, job management, customized settings and advanced reporting. The PPG database, as an example, can be accessed by a software program that, with its customizable search options, allows a paint technician to quickly locate the latest color variants for exteriors, bumpers, and accent and underhood colors all in one system. Digital software technology opens the database for painters to obtain better-than-ever accuracy in color formula retrieval, matching and mixing of paint.

Another effective digital tool is a software-supported spectrophotometer that is designed to identify colors and retrieve formulas. This sophisticated instrument allows a close look at a vehicle's surface and is extremely helpful in identifying color through the reading of color angles and texture. Technicians benefit from the captured images in two ways: 1) by taking measurements of an unblemished surface and 2) by looking at the images for the best blendable color match. The basis for any spectrophotometer's color matching capability lies in an extensive color formula database containing reflectance and image characteristics along with high-level mathematics that efficiently and accurately deliver "target to match" returns to the end user. A spectrophotometer with these advanced capabilities can dramatically increase a collision shop's throughput and minimize costly redos.

Print tool fundamentals are better than ever

For collision centers that prefer print tools for identifying color formulas, highly efficient, industry-leading solutions are available. Major paint companies offer color variant decks with chips that are chromatically arranged for speedy reference, giving the painter the ability to choose a color that comes closest to matching the vehicle. Colors are updated regularly with OEM prime colors and the latest variants.

Tinting guides are an additional component in a well-stocked color-match toolbox. Through written descriptions and large, graphic color chips, the charts provide toner information and help guide painters through the tinting process. Painters can determine what specific toners will do to adjust a color to achieve the desired results.

Going the extra step with support

While not every paint company offers this asset, color librarians are great sources for identifying historic and hard-to-find colors. Color librarians use an old-school technique: searching through reference books, old color guides, even car magazines to match colors. Color libraries are a treasure trove of information. Customer support to help with the use of color tool hardware and software is also a resource to draw upon.




A COMPREHENSIVE COLOR FORMULA DATABASE is the key to getting the right color match for an invisible repair.



PPG'S COLOR SUPPORT TEAM is a knowledgeable resource for finding historic or hard-to-match colors, as well as answering questions about color retrieval hardware and software.

Which path for you?

There are multiple paths to refinish color accuracy. The digital, print and support tools are all there. Which are right for your operation? Facility size, number of employees, production numbers and, of course, budget are all considerations in the approach selected. The leading paint manufacturers offer a variety of color-matching resources, and your paint distributor can help you choose what is right for your particular situation. In fact, it's always a good idea to check with your distributor to make sure you have all the latest information and the tools you need to get color matches right the first time. 



NICOLE SINCLAIR is PPG senior manager, color solutions for Automotive Refinish, North America. She oversees market need and develops strategy for color innovation, including digital, print and support tools. With more than 20 years of experience in marketing, including 10 years in the professional coatings industry, she drives understanding of end user needs and delivers solutions that differentiate PPG in the marketplace.

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WATER VS. SOLVENT

UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCES, ADVANTAGES OF EACH PAINT SYSTEM

JEREMY WINTERS // Contributing Editor

In a world that is continually changing and evolving, it seems that if you don't get with the modern era, it will pass you by before you even realize it. Tomorrow's iPhone 6 is yesterday's iPhone 5. Technology is advancing at a rate that most have a hard time comprehending, which for us runs parallel to the equipment and development of newer vehicles and repair processes.

With these modern times comes new ideas in paint technology. If you take a moment and do a search for the process of making the new Lexus color Structural Blue, it's quite fascinating to say the least. We are seeing more translucent colors coming available, more chromatic colors becoming available and quad stage colors coming from the factory, with no slowing down in sight. Yet, for some reason we have a collision repair industry that holds back and is reluctant to change — all over what can be quite simply the easiest thing they will do — converting from solvent to waterborne. Why is that? Let's talk about.

For many shop owners and even painters, it seems that they are hellbent on holding onto solvent for their collision work. With excuses such as "there's nothing wrong with it," "I don't have any paint issues," or "I don't want to slow down waiting for it to dry," tends to sound much like the same thing heard by the previous generation when the introduction of basecoat/clearcoat systems came into the market and the old days of lacquer and enamel were being phased out. Most times the biggest issue tends to be not the swap itself, but education about the dif-

ferences and actually understanding the advantages of a water system.

About 10 years ago, most of the OEMs had made the transition to waterborne, and vehicles in production were now coming with waterborne paint jobs. Those still spraying solvent began to start having more issues in matching the colors (Myself included here!). Waterborne can give a lot cleaner, more vibrant color than the solvents. I remember having a hard time working some of the solid blacks from Toyota because the newer water version of the color tended to have a brown cast on the side. Many of the colors I came across were becoming harder to match in solvent, but the one thing I had continually heard was about the color match being so much better in water. And it wasn't just in the line I was spraying; I was hearing that from users of all paint lines. The color match tools available today in the water systems are far superior to what was/is available in solvent lines today. For the longest time the deck of color chips seemed to be a waste, as it was a representation of the color and not an actual sprayout. Or the color that was sprayed out for one line was actually another line. As absurd as that sounds, it was a not-so-quiet secret that many paint reps would tell you. The spectrophotometers are more adapted to water technology and are being updated and fine-tuned each year for helping in color match. As with anything, these are TOOLS and not a crutch, folks. Know



TOOLS HAVE IMPROVED GREATLY over the past decade, but in my experience, I had a harder time matching solvents than waterborne.

your basics first, and use the tools provided to add value to your worth.

So here's the skinny. For those of you who are holdouts for the reasons listed earlier, let's look at what is actually needed in order to swap successfully to water. First is the understanding of humidity and temperature. You no longer are looking solely at the temperature of the panel for a reducer selection. Now you're mainly looking at the humidity levels in the booth and basing your reduction on that. "But how am I going to get water to dry if it's humid?" you may be asking. AIR MOVEMENT. Waterborne paints are dried by air movement, plain and simple. The more air

you can get moving, the better for flash times. Many spray gun companies offer several styles of blowers, both fan style and dryer style. I personally have found the dryer style blowers move more volume of air and tend to do the trick pretty fast. Some booth manufacturers also have fans that attach to the ceiling with variable speed that can seriously get the air moving more. Something to keep in the back of your mind is the amount of air volume that is needed for these blower setups and how quickly they can drain an air compressor and find the flaws in a system. There are all sorts of mounting options for fixed blowers and fans out there that all you have to do is look. You can add the ceiling fans with adjustable speeds, add the stands with blowers on them, or stand there with a blower in hand, but the air needs to be flowing, and it needs to be clean.

Speaking of clean air, let's talk filtration. We all know the benefits of clean air, yet there are still shops that run a cheap water/oil filter and call it good. This is a whole different topic with painter safety and the need for Grade D breathable air in the booth, but that I'll save for another day. Yet, filtration can be the most commonly overlooked setup in a paint shop when trying to diagnose a problem. By ensuring good, clean air with a quality 3-stage filtration unit, you are ensuring that nothing is going to be contaminating the waterborne system. Not only should you have proper filtration in place, but the filters should be changed on a regular basis. I have come across many shop owners who actually believe that since the filter is in place, it will continually do its job and should be changed once a year. That's not a misprint — that is something I have actually seen and heard with my own eyes and ears. Let's all think back to 5th grade science class now, water and oil...they don't mix.

One of the biggest things that I've heard first-hand about why some shops won't switch is actually such a small piece of the puzzle. Yet, it's one of the most important — and that is training. For many shops, it seems to be the old-school mentality of just going in the booth and pulling the trigger that has worked for years. The difference is with water, there are other factors to take into consideration rather than walking into the booth. Water is a whole different animal. Yet most painters, when trained on the basics of mixing and application, can make the transition with minimal speed bumps. I personally found the transition to water in the collision environment to be much easier than expected, and in all honesty, easier than swapping paint lines for another solvent line. The main thing to understand here is that application is key. Just like any other paint, if you don't understand how it's meant to be used and the tricks with it, you can have a very bad day rather quickly. Being trained by the paint manufacturer on their system is crucial to your success in the transition. Most techs that I have spoken with find that the only issue in application that they have is just getting in the mindset that you are spraying something different from what they had sprayed before. It became repetition for one painter I spoke with as he



SOME SHOPS ARE HESITANT to switch to waterborne; yet most painters, when trained on the basics of mixing and application, can make the transition with minimal speed bumps.



SPECTROPHOTOMETERS ARE MORE ADAPTED to water technology and are being updated and fine-tuned each year for helping in color match. But these are tools and not a crutch. Know your basics first, and use the tools provided to add value to your skills.

would say, "I just had to remind myself as I walked in the booth with my gun that it's water, it's water, it's water." Of course like with anything, systems are designed much different from each other with many varying application techniques. Find a system that works for you and capitalize on the training available.

At the end of the day, making the swap isn't horrible. Know that going in, it's going to be a strange feeling swapping to something completely new. Know that it will be different. Know that with training and a few days, it's going to be much simpler than you think. And know that at the end of the day, you're going to be able to match colors quicker, have faster cycle times and up production, which in turn puts more money in your pocket. 📡



JEREMY WINTERS has been a painter for more than 16 years at Butler Collision North in Macon, Ga. He hosts the BoothTalk livestream and podcast on Instagram, the BoothTalk tech group on Facebook and is an advisory board member for his local technical college. boothtalkradio@yahoo.com

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Auto Magic, ITW Evercoat's brand of professional car care products, announces the launch of its PC 1-2-3 Paint Correction System, an advanced three-step system incorporating micro-abrasive technology that cuts through paint imperfections and defects and restores the painted surfaces to like-new condition. Each of the three steps in the system include materials and pads engineered to address different surface issues like sand scratches, acid rain, oxidation and swirl marks.

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A BLIND-SIDED JEEP

A DUAL PLACEMENT OPTION LEAVES THIS VEHICLE STRUGGLING TO CLEARLY SEE WHAT IS AROUND IT

JOHN ANELLO // Contributing Editor

I was called to a shop for a complaint of a Blind Spot Monitoring issue on a 2015 Jeep Grand Cherokee (**Figure 1**). The Jeep was recently repaired after a rear-end collision and was delivered to the customer, who drove the vehicle for about a week. There were no telltale signs that anything was wrong with the vehicle, but while driving on the highway, the Blind Spot indicators would come on at random while no vehicles were near the rear quarter panels and if

there were vehicles present, the system would not alert you.

My first thoughts were possibly of some type of electrical failure so I decided that I would perform a quick operational check on the system. When I arrived at the shop, I got in the Jeep and started up the engine. I did not see any warning signs on the dash directing me to an onboard problem, so this was a good thing (**Figure 2**). My next move was to shut the vehicle off and wait a few seconds and again start

the vehicle, while quickly looking at both Blind Spot indicators in the side-view mirrors to make sure they were following system strategy. This vehicle used a triangular orange indicator in the side-view mirrors to alert the driver (**Figure 3**). These lights should come on momentarily and then go out. If they don't come on, then the icon circuit is open or the Blind Spot Module on the affected side is inoperative. If the icon stays on constantly, then the icon circuit is shorted to ground or there is a



failure of the Blind Spot Module operation on the affected side. In this case, the lights both came on momentarily and then they both went out. The vehicle passed this quick integrity check, so now it was time to do some intrusive testing.

I next hooked up my scan tool and did a full vehicle scan (**Figure 4**). There were no codes in the entire network of computers except for a Code B259B01 stored in the Radio Frequency Hub Control Module for a right front door handle sensing circuit that was no longer present. This code can be easily set by a body tech who might have removed the right front door handle of the vehicle and then turned the ignition key on, so this code I basically ignored. Both the right and left Blind Spot modules were free of trouble codes and they seemed to be functioning properly in the key on mode in the service bay. When driving on the road, it becomes a different set of rules because the radar control unit will not look for objects near its location until the vehicle is moving at a certain speed. It is hard to test this system without driving the vehicle and testing its response on the roadway.

This particular vehicle did not have radar units mounted to the car body itself with a bracket, so if the car was damaged, the possibility of a bent mounting bracket or a rear quarter panel not structurally correct was out of the equation. This I was told by the body assembler who worked on the Jeep. He also told me that the bumper was new and that the radar control modules were both secured into the bumper assembly.

I'm guessing that many manufacturers have opted to put these radar control modules into the bumpers for a cost issue, because if the body of the vehicle is compromised within a few degrees, then it would render an entire body panel as inadequate and not allow the tolerance for that "close enough" factor. The important factor to know is that if the radar assembly is mounted on the body of the vehicle, a strategy must be in place to put the vehicle on level ground and actually use a bubble gauge to make sure the module housing is vertically and horizontally correct. It would not be a bad idea to check the right and left sides of the rear body to compare your results. The last thing you need would be to remove a whole bumper assembly again if there were issues with the Blind Spot mounting system.

| MaxiSys | | VEHICLE DIAGNOSTIC REPORT | | AUTO |
|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--|------|
| RFH -- Radio frequency hub | 1 | Fault | | |
| ESM -- Electronic shifter | 0 | Pass | | |
| MSM -- Memory seat/Memory heated seat | 0 | Pass | | |
| PLGM -- Power liftgate module | 0 | Pass | | |
| RBSS -- Right blind spot sensor | 0 | Pass | | |
| LBSS -- Left blind spot sensor | 0 | Pass | | |

1. RFH -- Radio frequency hub — (1)

1.1. B259B01 Right front door handle sense - general electrical failure Stored





I decided to take the car for a ride to see if I could experience what the customer was complaining about because everything at the shop was checking out. The customer has a right to make sure their car is put back the way it was before the accident and that the vehicle functions the correct way. I started driving the vehicle on a local highway near the shop, and I noticed that the Blind Spot indicators in the mirrors would go off randomly with no vehicle on either side of me. It was as if the system was not calibrated properly, but I know on this vehicle, unlike a few other manufacturers, that these modules will self-calibrate as you drive. Some manufacturers will offer a static or dynamic procedure for calibration while others may only offer a static procedure, and if these calibrations are not performed, you will have a trouble code in the radar control modules or a message on the dashboard to alert you. The system will not operate until the calibrations are successfully performed.

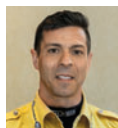
I now needed to head back to the shop to make sure the radar control modules were not loose in the bumper or had a harness that was rubbing and shorting out the indicator circuits without setting trouble codes. I got back to the shop and instructed the body shop installer to pull the bumper so we could look over the wiring and components (Figure 5). I could not see anything damaged, and both control modules seemed properly secured into the bumper housing. I removed the left rear control module to check it for structural damage and could not see any cracks or loose connections (Figure 6). When I was placing it back where it was mounted, I noticed that the module could fit facing in either direction. Then it dawned on me! These modules were both facing the wrong direction and were picking up the vehicle's quarter panel as the obstruction.

The flat metal part of the housing had to be facing towards the vehicle body and the plastic side had to be facing the bumper. This was a VERY easy mistake for anybody to make and it's more the manufacturer's fault to allow a dual positioning possibility. I was very surprised that the manufacturer would not



simply have a marking that said "This Side Facing Out." I positioned the left radar module in the proper direction (Figure 7) and secured the other module in the proper direction as well. I then instructed the body assembler to put the bumper back on and that I would go for another ride to make sure all was well before the car was released back to the customer.

The bumper was quickly installed, and I went back to the highway. It was like night and day. The Blind Spot system was now working as designed and it was no longer blind-sided by the vehicle body while driving down the road. What a roller coaster ride this vehicle turned out to be. It was nothing real technical, but rather a "thinking outside of the box" moment. These are the type of jobs that a normal textbook is not going to find because this car entered the "Twilight Zone" where nothing could apply to its fix. It is always good to keep an open mind and be very visual in your diagnostic interrogation process. I just hope this story will hit home with a lot of you body techs out there and help you to understand how critical it is for radar module installation procedures. 📡



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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Workplace happiness leads to a motivated staff

Learn the first four of eight lessons to helping ensure worker satisfaction

As business owners, we all want our collision repair business to succeed, but sometimes we struggle with knowing how to accomplish this. When you strip away all the layers, you ultimately have a core consisting of a team of happy, hard-working and motivated employees and leaders. The other day I came across a TED talk with HR consultant Patty McCord. In this talk, she broke down happiness within a company into eight simple lessons that can give us an excellent guide to follow in the collision repair industry.

Lesson 1: Your employees are adults.

Employees, managers, owners, insurer personnel, jobbers, etc. all are just adults trying to make ends meet. We all have our own set of joys and struggles. We need to treat each other with this in mind. This also means treating them like they are capable of functioning and making decisions as adults. We should not micromanage them so closely that they feel like they are back in childhood with so many rules that they cannot make smart, creative decisions on their own. You would be surprised what a little freedom within a company can do to employee morale.

Lesson 2: The job of management isn't to control people, it's to build great teams.

As a manager, I am looking to build my team into one where communication and motivation to accomplish work happens among the workers and not just from me telling them what to do. Every month we try to provide lunch for the team. During this time, I can tell them any changes that are happening within the shop and upcoming expectations. It is also a time where the whole team can get together and socialize. This sense of community leads to great teams and one that is better at all the intangibles that customers look for in a collision repair facility. This is key to a strong business. As McCord states, "Customers are really happy and those are the metrics that really matter." My goal when my shop provides customer service is not just to



I AM LOOKING TO BUILD A TEAM WHERE COMMUNICATION AND MOTIVATION HAPPENS AMONG THE WORKERS, AND NOT JUST FROM ME TELLING THEM WHAT TO DO.

be good, but we strive to be great every time. Our customers know that we do not settle for anything less. This reminds me of the current AT&T TV commercials when "OK just isn't enough." We need to plaster this everywhere in our shops, because OK just isn't enough! It all starts with great teams.

Lesson 3: People want to do work that means something.

The collision repair industry has a problem. The gap between experienced technicians and new technicians is growing increasingly larger. I feel like our trade is not shown enough respect. Children growing up don't hear the words, "Oh, you should go into the collision repair industry." They hear about the professions of doctors, lawyers and teachers. While these are wonderful professions, we need to reach into the community and let the future trades people know that jobs such as ours are meaningful, too. We make customers happy by restoring their personal property that they worked hard for. When a new technician is hired by our shop, we need to be the type of collision repair facility that not just offers a job, we offer an experience into the ever-changing and exciting world of collision repair. This can make our industry great!

Lesson 4: Everyone in your company should understand the business.

As managers and owners, we need to make sure everyone knows the goal of your company. After all, it is the cornerstone of your success. I feel this point is missed a lot. We focus too much on the how, what and who. We forget the why. This lesson is very important because as a team we need to be on the same page. If we are all on the same page about the "why," then we are going in the same direction to be successful. Continue reading next month. 📖

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

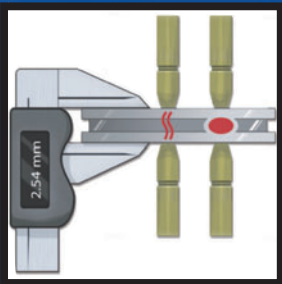


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