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EXPAND YOUR BRAND INTERNATIONALLY: NO INVESTMENT, ALL REWARD

Bonnier Corp. is hosting an automotive festival – called the Riyadh Car Show – featuring hundreds of leading brands in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Nov. 21-26, 2019.

Hear now from Jonathan Moore, SVP Events, Bonnier Events, as he explains the show and the no-strings-attached way the companies you buy tools and equipment from can exhibit.

As part of the Saudi Arabian kingdom's Vision 2030, the Riyadh Car Show aims to bring the aftermarket and specialty industry to citizens as well as new business for global brands. Learn more now.

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ABRN (USPS 437970) (Print ISSN: 2166-0751, Digital ISSN: 2166-2533) is published monthly, 12 times per year by UBM LLC 325 W 1st Street, STE 300 Duluth, MN 55802. Periodicals Postage paid at Duluth, MN 55806 and at additional mailing offices. Subscription prices: U.S. one year, \$66; U.S. two year, \$99; one year Canada, \$74; two year Canada, \$148; one year international, \$104; two year international, \$208. For information, call (888) 527-7008 or (218) 729-9477. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ABRN, P.O. Box 6018, Duluth, MN 55806-6018. Please address subscription mail to ABRN, P.O. Box 6018, Duluth, MN 55806-6018. Canadian G.S.T. number: R-124213133RT001. PRINTED IN U.S.A.

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INDUSTRY EVENTS

EFFORTS MADE TO AUTOMATE OEM PROCEDURE RESEARCH

JOHN YOSWICK // Contributing Editor

Attendees at the recent Collision Industry Electronic Commerce Association (CIECA) “Connex” conference heard about efforts to automate research of OEM repair information, watched a live vehicle crash test at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), and were told that some technology automakers are adding to vehicles actually may be adding to driver distraction.

The conference location in Charlottesville, Va., allowed for an afternoon tour of IIHS’ nearby facility, where CIECA attendees witnessed a 37-mph side impact crash test of a 2019 Toyota Camry.

Speaking at the conference the next day, Kim Hazelbaker of the Highway Loss Data Institute said some Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems (ADAS) are proving to reduce the number or severity of some accidents. But he also said that automakers and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration are at odds about the growing amount of “electronic content” vehicle makers want to deliver to drivers via the center dashboard screen. The NHTSA views such content as likely to increase driver distraction.



KIM HAZELBAKER

“That is fundamentally exactly what the regulators do not want to happen,” Hazelbaker said. “The manufacturers are convinced ‘there’s money in them thar hills,’ and I think they’re right, but from a safety perspective, it’s the wrong message. So we’ll see how that plays out. I might have had a different opinion [of what might happen] if we had a different administration, but there’s not going to be regulation about this at this point. It’s a problem.”

Hazelbaker said nothing state lawmakers have done, such as banning use

>> CIECA CONTINUES ON PAGE 8

BREAKING NEWS

DONATION

WAKE TECH FACILITY RECEIVES \$1 MILLION FROM HENDRICK

Automotive service and collision repair students in North Carolina’s Research Triangle region will soon be able to learn the latest practices in a state-of-the-art facility. Wake Technical Community College, in Raleigh recently announced the start of construction on its \$41.8 million, 105,000-square-foot next-generation Automotive Systems Technology and Collision Repair facility. Planned for a fall 2021 opening on the Scott Northern Wake Campus, the new facility will more than double the number of students in its Automotive Systems Technology program, and it will add a new degree program in Collision Repair.

Developed in collaboration with industry leaders, the new facility has been designed to accommodate current and future needs of automotive experts. During its Sept. 16 unveiling ceremony, the first of what is hoped to be multiple partnerships from area dealerships and aftermarket professionals was announced. Hendrick Automotive

>> WAKE CONTINUES ON PAGE 10

TRENDING

I-CAR MAKES PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS

I-CAR launched enhancements to its core education and recognition programs following an extensive multi-year journey to evaluate and update existing curriculum and recognition offerings.

ABRN.COM/ENHANCE

COLLISION WORKS MAKES EIGHT-LOCATION ACQUISITION

Collision Works has acquired Auto Craft Collision Repair’s eight locations including facilities in Wichita, Andover and Junction City, Kansas, and Tulsa, Oklahoma.

ABRN.COM/AUTCRAFT

GENSTAR CAPITAL BUYS OECONNECTION

OEConnection LLC, the leading global automotive technology provider for OEM distribution networks, and Genstar Capital, announced a deal for Genstar to acquire a majority stake in OEC.

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T.A.R.A. TO HOST SPRING MEETING

The Truck Frame & Axle Repair Association (T.A.R.A.) will host its spring meeting Feb. 24-27, 2020 in Atlanta, Ga., in conjunction with the Technology & Maintenance Council’s TMC 20.

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A FRANCHISING BUSINESS TEMPLATE

This podcast features Servando Orozco, CEO and founder of Orozco’s Auto Service, who shares his goals on his franchise model and how it can create a pathway for succession for owners.

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>> CIECA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

of hand-held cell phones while driving, has helped reduce distracted driving.

"We have compared [those] states to all the states around them that didn't change anything in their regulations, and we can't find that passing a state law makes any difference," he said. "That's because nobody pays any attention. You're putting a law on the books that's essentially unenforceable for the policing agencies."

Hazelbaker said insurance companies and his organization continue to seek solutions to distracted driving.

"We're not giving up, but I think it's going to get worse," he said.

Also during the conference, Pete Tagliapietra of NuGen IT offered a demonstration of a system his company is developing that he said will help automate OEM repair information based on estimate line items. A 50-line estimate, including some structural repair, for a 2018 Subaru Outback was exported into the system that is linked to Subaru's electronic service information. It compiled the specific information for estimated repair items on that vehicle, such as sectioning information for the quarter panel, along with related safety precautions, position statements and calibration information.

"It's filtered down to exactly what the collision repair shop needs, and only the



PETE TAGLIAPIETRA

information that it needs, so they don't have to go perform additional searches," Tagliapietra said. "It's all provided and served up for them."

OEM information that has been added or changed within the past 30 days is highlighted.

"Procedures are constantly changing, so what procedures were used when a collision shop repaired a car is important to memorialize," Tagliapietra said.

The compiled information could be printed or saved as electronic documentation not only to help shops save time in researching the needed information, but also to document for insurers, customers and automakers what was called for on the vehicle. Tagliapietra said he hopes to

be working to expand and refine the system with a Top 5 automaker later this year.

Another speaker at the event, Sean Guthrie, director of operations for the seven Car Crafters Collision Centers in Albuquerque, N.M., said OEM procedure research is time-consuming because the automakers each organize their information differently.

"When you replace a rail, for instance, it will tell you everything you need to do to replace that rail, but all the diagrams will have the engine out," Guthrie said. "So you need to go to the mechanical section to find out how to take the engine out. And then you may need to go somewhere else to figure out how to take all the electrical components off."

That seems like a tough challenge for the NuGen IT system to overcome, Guthrie said, but it would be "awesome" if it does.

"I'm sure Pete would say it's not there yet, but his thinking is what is going to get us there someday, so I commend Pete and his company for doing that," Guthrie said.

Attendees at the CIECA conference also had an opportunity to attend a "Recycled Rides" presentation in which the National Auto Body Council gave a refurbished vehicle to a "Gold Star" family in Charlottesville, a presentation that received news coverage by the local NBC and CBS television affiliates. 📺

ASA LAUNCHES NEW WEEKLY PODCAST SERIES — WHAT'S NOW, WHAT'S NEW AND WHAT'S NEXT

ASA announced the launch of a new weekly podcast series hosted by industry veteran Tony Molla, ASA's vice president of Industry Relations.

The tagline of the new ASA Podcast defines the content as keeping ASA members and the industry at large abreast of "What's Now, What's New and What's Next" in the business of automotive service and collision repair.

"We've been listening to our members and asked for their feedback on what they liked and felt would improve their association," said Ray Fisher, ASA's executive director. "One message that came through loud and clear was a desire to hear more about what ASA is doing to advance the service and repair industry.

"I've heard podcasting is the new blogging," Molla said. "I have been a commu-

nicator my entire career. Having worked with both print and electronic media, the ASA Podcast is the natural evolution of what's next in our outreach efforts.

Fisher said Molla is already coordinating with ASA's Washington, D.C. representative Bob Redding about using the ASA Podcast to deliver timely, legislative news and information to ASA members and aid our advocacy efforts at the state and national levels.

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>> WAKE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Group has pledged \$1 million to Wake Tech for the newly named Hendrick Automotive Center for Automotive Excellence.

Rick Hendrick, chairman of the group, based in Charlotte, N.C., said his company has 500 openings for technicians, and he anticipates that number to grow.

"There is a major demand for auto service technicians throughout our industry," he said in a Wake Tech press release. "With so many opportunities out there, it's important that we find partners like Wake Tech. They care about their students and teaching advanced skills."

The new facility represents the state's commitment to its citizens, "from cradle to career," Gov. Roy Cooper said.

"We're fortunate to have the best community college system in the country, led by Wake Tech," he said.

Hendrick, who is also owner of NASCAR's Hendrick Motorsports, joined Wake Tech President Dr. Scott Ralls, Gov. Cooper, U.S. Rep. David Price and Wake County Board of Commissioners Chair Jessica Holmes in unveiling a NASCAR race car bearing the Wake Tech and Hendrick Center for Automotive Excellence names.

"Industry partnerships such as this are vital to keeping our programs relevant and our community's economic engine humming," Ralls said.

There are a number of other sponsorship opportunities available to industry partners, said advisory board member Rick Guirlinger, president of Bourke Services LLC in Raleigh. As an example of some of the sponsorships available, automotive and collision shop opportunities are \$500,000 each, engine and transmission classrooms are \$12,000 each, and the welding suite is \$15,000.

"The specific equipment, tools, etc., are a work in progress, with some brands and models being determined



THIS ARCHITECT RENDERING SHOWS the layout of the automotive shop, which includes observation rooms outside on the upper level.



WITH A \$1M GIFT FROM HENDRICK AUTOMOTIVE GROUP, Wake Tech kicked off construction of its new facility, the Hendrick Automotive Center for Automotive Excellence.

to see what, if any, industry partners will be interested in providing support with gifts-in-kind," Guirlinger said. "This, along with other strategic investors similar to Hendrick Auto Group, is an ongoing initiative, and is in-process with various individuals and companies. The objective is to provide opportunities to any and all industry partners willing to be a part of this incredible facility."

Programs will expand at new facility

Wake Tech began its Collision Repair program in 2017 at the Vernon Malone College and Career Academy for high

school students.

"We've been offering some classes for adult learners at night, but due to space limitations, we have not been able to fully offer the program to adult students," said Laurie Clowers, vice president of communications and marketing at Wake Tech. "The Hendrick Center for Automotive Excellence will satisfy the instructional needs of collision repair to offer certificate, diploma and degree options. When the Center for Automotive Excellence opens, the program will move from Vernon Malone to the Northern Wake Campus."


>> CONTINUES ON PAGE 12

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>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

The Automotive Systems Technology program will move from the Southern Wake Campus to the new facility on the Northern Wake Campus, boosting its enrollment from 90 to 200, and 40 students will be added for the new Collision Repair program.

The Automotive Systems Technology program is accredited by the ASE Education Foundation, and when the new building opens, I-CAR curriculum will be in place for the Collision Repair program.

Lora Eddington, dean of Applied Engineering and Technologies, said that decisions on the design and capabilities of the facility were driven by industry. Advanced materials, including aluminum and carbon fiber, are taught in Collision Repair and engine and transmission dyno labs can be found in the Auto-

motive Systems Technology side.

“We’re looking at being a fully operational facility for the industry, and that’s quite a rainbow of colors,” she said.

Additionally, she said, the building is designed to easily accommodate future training needs as automotive systems evolve.

“This is a 30-year building. You kind of look at the trends of where the industry is going and you make your best guess, but the building is flexible enough to change with whatever the changing environment is going to be.”

The Automotive Systems Technology degree program includes training for alternative fuels, advanced diagnostics, brakes, climate control, diesel fuel systems, electrical/electronic systems, engine performance, steering/suspension, and transmissions, including manual drivetrains. Collision Repair

includes nonstructural and structural repair, refinishing (including for special finishes), automotive plastics and adhesives identification and repair, automotive detailing, body shop operations and estimating.

Apprenticeships in development for automotive and collision repair

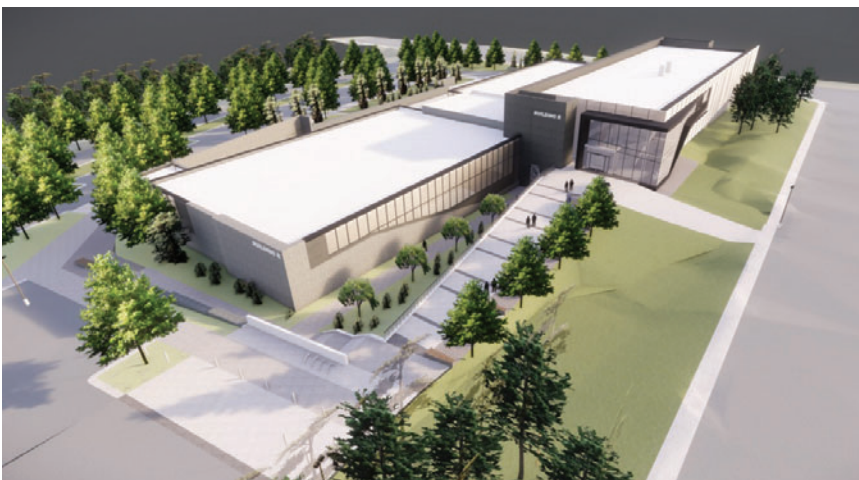
Eddington said apprenticeships have been successful in other Wake Tech programs in increasing career opportunities and growth potential, and the college is developing an apprenticeship program for the automotive and collision repair programs. Any business in the industry can set up an apprenticeship program through the North Carolina Community College System, she said, and then the program is administered by Wake Tech.

Facility draws in community with ‘wow factor’

Because a residential neighborhood is behind the building, the homeowners association worked with Wake Tech to ensure it would not be disruptive to the neighborhood, including some design considerations to reduce noise, Eddington said. The building’s swoopy exterior calls to mind a modern interpretation of the fins on ‘50s cars.

“The idea was to kind of say, ‘This is a futuristic automotive program, and when you walk into this, you’re walking into this automotive community. It’s a nice community of learning, and that’s the environment we’re trying to portray when you look at this building,’” she said.

“This new facility will change the face of technical education,” Ralls said. “Similar to when athletes have a sense of awe stepping into a brand-new locker room or running out onto the field of a new stadium, the Hendrick Center for Automotive Excellence will have that ‘wow factor’ that will instill a sense of pride in students who’ve chosen this entire path.”



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CONTEST

WINNERS OF INAUGURAL TOP TECH MENTOR/MENTEE COMPETITION ANNOUNCED

The Collision Repair Education Foundation announced the winning teams at the inaugural Top Tech Mentor/Mentee Competition that was held Saturday, September 28 at Ranken Technical College in St. Louis, Mo. The goal of the competition was 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. Mentor and mentee teams performed and were tested on competencies the industry has deemed necessary for an entry-level technician.

The first place team included Bradford Amison, mentee technician and Frank Allen, mentor, from Service King in Leander, Texas. Amison, who graduated from WyoTech in Laramie, Wyo., has been a mentee for two years. Allen, who has been mentoring young technicians for over 20 years, feels strongly that with a good mentoring program we are able to encourage individuals to enter and become skilled in the trade.

The first-place team will receive \$2,500 for each team member and the sponsoring business will receive a Chief PNP90 riveting tool valued at \$8,000.

The second place team included John Gault, mentee technician, and Bryan Parnell, mentor, from Caliber Collision Centers in Mt. Moriah, Tenn. Gault, nicknamed "Ritter," graduated from Mid Florida Tech and has been a mentee for almost a year. Parnell, who has been with Caliber for over six years, has been mentoring technicians for a year and a half. "Mentoring is important because quality body repair is a dying art that we must pass along to the younger generation," said Parnell.

The third place team included Ian Chambers, mentee technician, and Ralph Gonzales, from Service King in Dallas, Texas. Chambers is currently attending Collin College and has been a

mentee for just under one year. Gonzales has been working with Service King for approximately 20 years and has been a mentor for the last four years. "I believe it is important to me to show the next generation how to complete a quality repair," said Gonzales. "It also gives me an opportunity to change a person's life for the better."

The second place team members will each receive \$1,000 and third-place team members will receive \$500. Both the second and third place teams' sponsoring business will receive a Chief MultiMig 190 welder.

Additional competitors at the inaugural event included:

- Marcus Edwards, mentee and Alex Joiner, mentor from Gerber Collision
- Alex Rodgers, mentee, and Ken Strickland, mentor from Gerber Collision
- Kyle Ray, mentee, and Joseph Baker, mentor from Metropolitan Community College.
- Robert Burkett, mentee, and Todd Kinzel, mentor from CARSTAR.
- Alex Rodriguez, mentee and Miguel, mentor from Fix Auto.

"Mentored training is critical to developing our future technicians," said Ivan Albright, Technician Development Program Manager at Gerber Collision. "When industry and schools work together, we will enable entry level trainees to build the skills and proficiency required to become journey level technicians."

"I am proud to lead a program that allows newer entrants to the collision repair workforce to provide high quality repairs through a structured mentor training program. A critical foundation for our success is working with these schools that provide the most current education," Albright continued.


"I want to congratulate all the teams that competed in the Top Tech Men-

tor/Mentee competition," said Christen Battaglia, director of strategic partnerships for the Collision Repair Education Foundation. "Their energy and expertise is a shining example of how collision industry mentoring programs help new technicians succeed."

I would also like to thank the sponsors of the event," said Battaglia. "Without their generous support we would not have been able to celebrate the success of these talented technicians and their mentors.

"Having a strong pipeline of skilled collision repair technicians is critical to the long-term growth of the automotive industry," said Troy Weaver, Axalta VP of Global Refinish. "Axalta is proud to be a part of the solution by supporting the young men and women who receive training from the CREF and who compete in their skills tests. The skills they are learning today will be invaluable assets for the collision repair industry tomorrow."

"Saint Gobain Abrasives is proud to be a sponsor of the first annual 'Top Tech,' Mentor-Mentee Competition, hosted by the Collision Repair Education Foundation. The competition's goals of improving technician retention, and promoting a culture of mentorship at the shop level, are consistent with our vision for the collision repair industry. Congratulations to the competition winners, and thank you to all participants and their sponsoring companies!" said Kevin Creegan, from Saint Gobain Abrasives.

Sponsors for the event included Axalta Coating Systems, Gerber Collision & Glass, Chief Automotive Technologies, Norton/Saint Gobain, Service King Collision Repair Centers, Caliber Collision, Ranken Technical College, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Polyvance, SAS Safety Corp, Automotive Technology, Inc. and SP/2. 

RESEARCH

GROWING NUMBER OF SHOPS BILLING, BEING PAID FEES FOR TOTAL LOSSES

ABRN WIRE REPORTS //

An increasing number of shops over the past several years have begun charging and being paid for the administrative tasks involved in processing total losses, according to the findings of a recent "Who Pays for What?" survey. The survey of more than 650 shops nationwide found that although some shops say they have never charged administrative fees to process total losses, that number has been dropping steadily over the past five years.

"Certainly, shops may agree to waive any such fees as part of a direct repair agreement," said Mike Anderson of Collision Advice, who conducts the quarterly "Who Pays for What?" surveys in conjunction with CRASH Network. "But the process has continued to become more complex. It can involve more tear-down, more research of OEM procedures, unloading or loading the vehicle to and from a tow truck, etc., and more and more shops cannot afford to perform all these tasks for free."


Data from the "Who Pays for What?" survey this past summer shows that the percentage of shops that say they "never" charge to process total losses has steadily declined from 30 percent in 2015 to just 19 percent this year. The percentage of shops at least negotiating to be paid a fee to process these vehicles surpassed 80 percent for the first time this year, up from just under 70 percent in 2015. Of those negotiating to be paid, 63 percent report being paid "always" or "most of the time" by the nation's eight largest insurers; that's up from less than half (46 percent) in 2015.

Survey participants receive a report with complete survey findings at no charge, broken down by region, insurer and DRP vs. non-DRP. The report also includes analysis and resources to help shops better understand and use the information presented.

Anderson said the survey, which will

take about 15-25 minutes, can be completed by anyone in a shop familiar with the shop's billing practices and the payment practices of at least some of the largest national insurers. Each shop's individual

responses are held in the strictest confidence; only aggregated data is released.

The results of previous surveys are also available online (<https://www.crash-network.com/collisionadvice>). 



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When does it make sense to bring in outside expertise?

How to know the right time to work with a consultant in your business

As someone who has consulted with collision repair shops for decades, I have seen the transformational power it can have on a business. I'm not saying that to tout my own success. I mean it more generally about the process of working with a consultant. I have seen the same level of business transformation in shops that have worked with many other excellent consultants in this industry. And it's the leaders of those businesses, not us as consultants, who really made the transformations happen. But the key was bringing in outside expertise to help inspire or guide the change.

So really my goal in this and the next several columns is not to convince you to call me for a consultation. It's simply to convey the power that working with any good consultant can give you to improve any or all aspects of your business. I will work here to answer three primary questions:

- When and why should I seek a consultant?
- How can I select the right consultant?
- What leads to a successful shop-consultant relationship?

Let's start with the when and why. Almost every client I've worked with has told me they probably waited too long to seek outside help, thinking that they didn't need it. That's the No. 1 barrier I see to hiring the right consultant: Getting past the idea that your business couldn't be improved by a set of fresh eyes bringing in new perspectives and ideas.

I also see a lot of shops hiring a consultant only when their business is showing significant signs of poor performance. I equate it to waiting to check the oil in your vehicle until the engine is running poorly, and only then discovering you're down two or three quarts. Isn't that a little too late? Shouldn't you be checking the oil on a regular basis to maintain the performance and extend the life of the engine?

It's the same thing in business. Getting a "business health check-up" can help prevent small problems from becoming major ones. Working with someone once a year, or every other year, can help you develop a relationship with a consultant you



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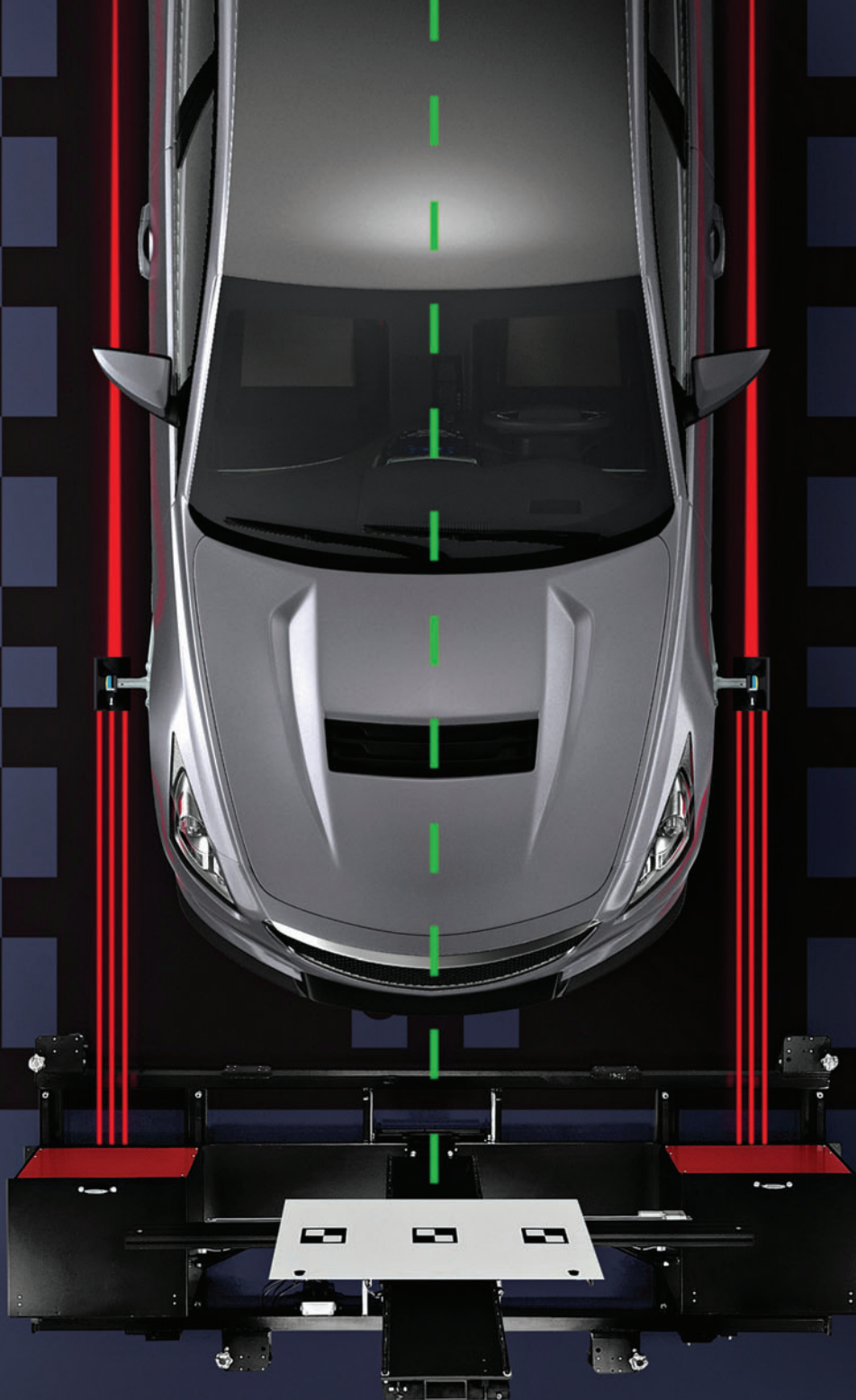
trust, who gets to know and understand your business, and who can offer insights that give your business advantages your competitors might not have.

A good consultant, for example, can bring you a broader industry perspective than you can gain while working every day within the four walls of your business. A good consultant travels around the industry, talking with and learning from other shops, automakers, insurance companies, paint and equipment manufacturers and other industry vendors. They are spotting trends, exploring alternative business models, learning about future changes and seeing how collision repair businesses can evolve to stay ahead of the curve.

They also can look into what I call the "dirty corners" of your business that you might overlook or be purposely avoiding. The shops that call me generally have the big things in business nailed down. They're doing a lot of the right things. But a good consultant is an expert at checking out the "business corners," the ignored or overlooked aspects of your business that could be holding you back in terms of production, profits, quality or customer satisfaction. They look for the "dusty details" that offer opportunities for improvement.

Lastly, a good consultant may help you better attract and retain those younger workers this industry so desperately needs. I don't buy that Millennials don't want to work. They just don't want to work for business using outdated management methods. These younger workers want to play a role in improving the business as "thinkers," not just "doers." Remember, they can Google "management techniques" or "how to identify the best boss" in a nano-second. So a consultant can offer management training and skills that many shop owners, through no fault of their own, may not have picked up as a former technician or as a second-generation owner. ■

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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MILLENNIALS AND COLLISION REPAIR

As the workforce changes, so must our approach to recruitment and retention

MIKE LANZA // Contributing Editor

With every new generation that enters the automotive repair industry comes a new set of motivations, expectations, work habits and values. The new ideas and perspectives new generations provide determine the vibrancy of our industry, while the

experience and leadership of previous generations determine our industry's trustworthiness and longevity.

Over the past few years, I've seen a growing sense of urgency from managers during shop visits regarding the attraction and retention of millennials as the generation settles into the workforce.

Most — if not all — dealership-based shop managers are struggling to manage millennials and are lost on how to recruit them.

With the millennial generation set to become upwards of 75 percent of the total workforce by 2025, we need to develop a plan. Our way of thinking needs



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to change drastically and immediately.

The common understanding of characteristics and work preferences of millennials represent a challenge within the context of our industry. Millennials tend to avoid professions that call for 9-5 schedules, yet that is a structural reality of collision repair that simply is not going to change. Millennials steer away from jobs that perform repetitive tasks. Again, that is a basic reality when it comes to collision repair.

However, there are other values millennials bring into the workplace that are just as important, and well suited to collision repair. Millennials value relationships and experiences far more than climbing the corporate ladder. Millennials are also comfortable taking initiative to contribute to decision making and are not content to be simply instructed on what the company feels is best or important. These attributes are characteristics of engaged, accountable employees.

Over the last several years, as I've worked with dealership-based collision centers, I've encouraged owners and managers to have them include their entire staff in the process of developing current and future strategies for moving the business forward. This is not new. In fact, this is one of the core principles of Lean. No one knows the job better than those who do it!

I encourage my shops to support what we at Sherwin-Williams call a PRIDE Meeting. PRIDE stands for Personal Responsibility In Delivering Excellence. This is a weekly stand-up meeting where everyone can have a say and make combined decisions about what is best in moving the business forward. This type of culture is what the most talented Millennials are attracted to. They want to help drive the bus and learn along the way. The idea of riding along just for a paycheck just won't cut it anymore.

Managers of dealership, independent or MSO collision operations should recognize the potential of those looking to

actively participate in shaping the industry and capitalize on the recruitment benefits of embracing this culture.

Recruiting millennials and considering compensation

At the end of 2018, outstanding student loan debt reached almost \$1.5 trillion, nearly doubling itself in less than 10 years. According to *Bloomberg*, more than 2.7 billion borrowers owe in excess of \$100,000.

With this trend showing no sign of slowing, and tuition growing higher each year, more young people are choosing to explore blue-collar career options compared to previous generations. The benefits are clear: Blue-collar fields often pay better and are less saturated than the roles typically marketed to high school students.

Recruiting the most talented millennials requires a slightly different approach. Traditional methods such as online ads and even LinkedIn carry less resonance today. Millennials are more likely to learn about opportunities via mobile search. According to a survey from the Pew Research Center, 78 percent of Millennials used mobile devices to find jobs as of 2016. This trend is not limited to Millennials. The same study showed 73 percent of Gen Xers search for work on mobile devices, and 57.2 percent Baby Boomers engage in mobile job searching, up from just 51.2 percent in 2014. This means that along with traditional methods of posting, mobile-friendly platforms are a must for employment notices.

Another key consideration is setting accurate expectations through clear job descriptions. Collision centers must develop job descriptions in order to understand who they have and what needs are to be filled. No longer can shops hire people, put them in a position, give them no training and expect them to succeed. It's imperative that businesses understand their weaknesses and needs in order to successfully hire.

Attractive compensation for millen-

nials also requires a slightly different approach. No longer is compensation simply about pay. Today compensation strategies are focused on creatively developing talent and motivating individuals for results. As employers, we have a valuable advantage for right-sizing our cultures for millennials: Thanks to numerous studies and a large volume of research, we know a great deal about what millennials want and expect out of the workplace.

Ultimately, an effective compensation strategy for Millennials contains four requirements. The strategy must:

- Fit the financial reality of the business
- Encourage and reward the right individual behaviors
- Inspire and reward teamwork
- Provide a clear picture for individual opportunity

Clearly, training and growth is extremely important to this generation. We've already seen that talented millennials will not stay in a position that doesn't offer input, training and growth potential. They get bored easily, and have no problem changing jobs as often as they like if not happy.

Our industry will miss out on the best potential future leaders if we don't build cultures that speak to the "what matters" that drive them. Millennials are like no other generation we've seen before, but that could be said for each generation. The challenge is to responsibly make the right adjustments to accommodate the best of what the new generation has to offer, while preserving what has sustained the collision repair industry for decades. ■



MIKE LANZA is manager — business consulting services for Sherwin-Williams Automotive Finishes.

He has over 30 years of automotive industry experience managing collision centers, independents and MSOs. He is a proven leader, with expertise in business center expansion through Lean and process-driven operations, and is also a Lean Six-Sigma Green Belt.

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Performing required safety checks a necessity

When following OEM procedures in a repair, these cannot be overlooked

There's a former shop owner in the Midwest who has talked openly at industry events about the five-year legal process that was a factor in his decision to sell his multi-shop business back in 2015. A vehicle his company repaired was subsequently involved in a high-speed crash that left two of the car's four occupants paraplegic. The automaker of the vehicle was dropped from the resulting lawsuit because, the shop owner acknowledges, it was able to show there were "repair requirements that I as a repairer did not follow" in the previous repair.

Those specific requirements: Safety inspections of more than a dozen items. A process that, for that vehicle, required more than 15 hours of labor, including pulling the dash and steering column to check every module, sensor and wiring connection. "We did not perform those operations," the shop owner said, acknowledging that he wasn't aware of them.

There's been more discussion in the industry lately about these safety inspections. More shops, particularly those certified by automakers, are realizing that virtually every automaker calls for such inspections, which vary by make and model and the type of hit the vehicle sustained.

But just as the industry "discovered" the need for scanning a few years ago, it wasn't that scanning hadn't been called for in the OEM procedures for years. The same is true with these safety inspections. I recall an industry trainer giving a presentation about them in the 1990s at the NORTHEAST trade show. The eighth unit of I-CAR's "Collision Repair 2000" course talked about them. Even the generation of I-CAR curriculum prior to that referred to them. If you, or the insurance adjuster you're working with on a claim, have a certificate showing you took even those long-ago I-CAR classes, the automaker's required safety inspections shouldn't be something "new" to you.

The only thing that is new is a broader realization within the industry that shops should be doing these inspections. Montana shop owner Bruce Halcro and Oregon shop owner Ron Reichen gave a presentation at a recent Society of Collision Repair Special-



SAFETY INSPECTIONS SHOULDN'T BE SOMETHING NEW. THE ONLY THING NEW IS THE BROADER REALIZATION THAT THEY MUST BE DONE.

ists' meeting on the safety inspections that Subaru calls for after one of its vehicles has been in a collision. They talked about doing disassembly to visually inspect the cage nut seatbelt anchors to look for stretching or stress points. They talked about visually inspecting wiring harnesses that may have been pulled or crimped in such a way that, even if it doesn't result in a diagnostic trouble code now, could lead to failure with future road vibration. They talked about pulling the dash to check the safety beam and visually inspecting airbags.

Like the shop owner in the Midwest, Bruce and Ron acknowledged these safety inspections can take 15 or 20 labor hours. And though they were showing Subaru checklist requirements, those aren't all that different from those required by General Motors, Fiat Chrysler, Nissan and most other automakers.

Will you get paid to do this work? The Midwest shop owner said he was told by insurers that they would pay for safety inspections but that his business wouldn't likely remain on those insurers' direct repair programs. It certainly will require good documentation: printing off the automaker checklists, signing off on each item as you do it, taking images to

document each step that you can.

This can easily add \$750 or \$1,000 or more to the cost of a repair. But it's not like these steps are optional. Doing this and documenting it is part of what I call building that "bulletproof file." It's required to make sure your repairs don't contribute to someone's injury in a subsequent accident and you end up like that shop owner in the Midwest — or worse. His business' insurance company chose to settle the lawsuit, but the process stretched out over years, changing his life, and factoring into his decision to sell the business.

"It was a devastating thing to go through that I wouldn't wish on anybody," he said. 📌

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

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DIGITAL MARKETING SOLUTIONS FOR THE SHOP

Why these are critical in today's market

TINA NELLES // Contributing Editor

Accidents can happen. A customer failing to choose your business for repairs is an accident you can easily avoid.

No matter where we are today, we're always connected. That connectivity has led to an evolved consumer. That evolved consumer is changing the ways we as collision repairers market our services.

While word-of-mouth is still the most effective form of advertising for collision repair, many have failed to grasp that word-of-mouth is now online. The recom-

mendations and reviews of the interconnected internet drive customer research and, ultimately, the final repair decision.

Digital marketing solutions for today's market are critical to ensuring your business has the best chance possible of being found and standing out among the long list of shops competing for attention in online searches. The standards for having a strong digital presence are constantly changing, and reputable companies who offer these services stay up to date on trends that explain what people are searching for

on Google, how they are using social media to find out more about a business and how they are responding to what they find. There is a lot more that goes into a shop's digital presence than simply having a website.

One important focus of a digital campaign is called PPC or pay-per-click. When a business runs a PPC campaign, they enter a bid for their ad to appear in one of the top spots on Google's search result pages when a user enters a keyword into the search box that might have something to do with their busi-

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ness. If their ad shows up in one of those top, sponsored spots and a user clicks on it, the business pays Google a small fee. For example, it may cost the shop \$2 if a user clicks on one of their sponsored ads, but if the click results in a new customer choosing to bring their vehicle to that shop, the click has paid for itself.

The agency handling the campaign for the body shop looks at three main characteristics that impact ads submitted for PPC campaigns: ad relevancy, ad copy and estimated CTR, or click-through rate. This is the analysis of how many clicks each PPC ad receives after it has been displayed in Google's top search results a certain number of times. If adjustments need to be made to improve the CTR, the agency steps in and makes changes that will yield better results and get the most out of the campaign budget set aside by the business.

SEO, or search engine optimization, is another key factor in a successful digital marketing campaign. Each online search engine "crawls," or scans, each website to assign it a place in a list of search results. A well-designed website will have a strong architecture (minimal white space, clean code), back-linking (links to off-site reviews, business pages and directory listings) and fresh content including keywords that provide a closer match to a user's search term. Reputable digital marketing agencies implement SEO best practices to make sure the shop's website gets the best visibility across all search engines.

A shop can also gain better visibility by using social media to gather more leads, generate more website traffic, improve SEO rankings and strengthen their reputation. Engaging with users on social media demonstrates the desire and ability to utilize modern methods of advertising and networking, appealing to a generation of users who use social media just as much or more than Google for finding out more about

a business. Part of a digital marketing campaign includes posting regularly on the shop's behalf across all relevant platforms and using the advertising feature to increase their brand exposure.

Landon Horst from Lichty Brothers, a collision center located in East Earl, Pa., has seen the difference a clean, modern website has made for their business:

"The average customer that ends up on your website has been researching different businesses and is afraid of being taken advantage of and trying to avoid additional pain. We partnered with a solution provider to build us a website that was easy to use and contained all of the relevant info customers needed to see that would make them feel comfortable with us as a business. We have had customers bring us a car to repair solely because we have a similar make/model repair shown on our website. I have also had customers specifically reference the look and feel of our website when explaining the main reason they chose our shop."

Horst goes on to talk about why it is important for a business to keep their website updated with relevant content and images.

"It is crucial to make your website fluid," he explains. "Never design it and then walk away. It can be a challenge to keep it updated, but so important. What will people think if you have cars, blog posts and business descriptions that have not been updated since 2006? They will wonder, 'What other areas of the business aren't kept current?' or 'Are you properly equipped to repair my new car?'"

A body shop can get started by researching digital marketing companies and their offerings, particularly ones who specialize in the automotive industry. Looking for a professional group with an automotive background can give a shop an extra competitive edge because their campaign will be driven by individuals who understand

the market and audience better than others. Shops should also have an idea of how much they want to spend going into it based on their market, something an agency can also help with if they aren't sure. Growth targets and the desire to maintain or expand are also factors to consider when deciding on an appropriate budget.

At first, investing in a digital marketing plan may sound expensive and risky. It may seem like something that is not needed because there is a perception that traditional methods, such as being referred to by word-of-mouth or strategically-placed signage, for example, seem to be working well. Then there are scenarios like Anna's. She focused on shops with a prominent digital presence, shops that competed to win her attention while she did her research online. There may have been other shops in her neighborhood that could have done a good job repairing her car, but without a strong digital presence (or one at all), they would inevitably be overlooked.

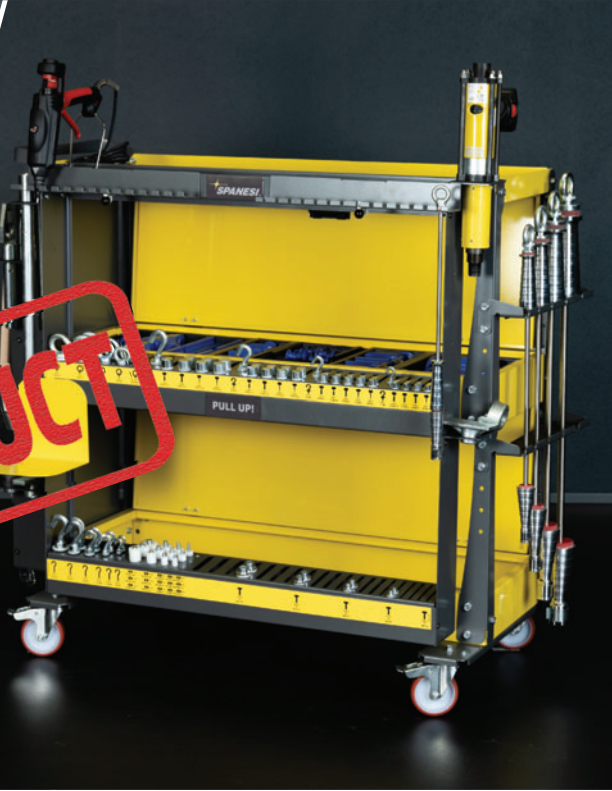
An investment in a solid digital marketing strategy will secure a business from flying under the radar and missing out on opportunities to expand their customer base and remain visible as modern ways of choosing a business continue to center around the ease of shopping around and sharing information with others online. Digitalization has defined our future, and businesses who make the choice now to begin networking and reaching customers through the channels discussed in this article will gain a competitive edge in the market over those who do not. 📱



TINA NELLES has spent 15 years working for BASF in various customer-facing roles including customer care, consulting and marketing communications,

with her most recent experience being in the collision repair industry for the last five years.

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Review of consent decree highlights need for reforms

Policymakers should focus on small business and consumers

The U.S. Department of Justice is reviewing a proposed termination of a judgement in *United States v. Association of Casualty and Surety Companies*, American Mutual Insurance Alliance and the National Association of Mutual Casualty Companies from 1963, more than 50 years ago. In recent years, this has been referred to as the 1963 Consent Decree and the focus was an Independent Appraisal Plan or Automotive Damage Appraisal Plan, which many view as a precursor to today's direct repair agreements (DRPs).

The Automotive Service Association (ASA) saw some correlation with this 1963 decision and a subsequent, new insurer program proposal in the mid-1990s. ASA leaders met with the top litigators at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to discuss the issue. DOJ was not encouraging as to the applicability of the 1963 Consent Decree to DRPs. ASA followed with multiple discussions with the antitrust policy chief at DOJ with similar results.

In an effort to exhaust the issue, ASA held public discussions in Washington, D.C. and during NACE in Chicago. Important for these public meetings, ASA included antitrust counsel from the U.S. House Judiciary Committee, consumer group representation, outside antitrust counsel and others to discuss and answer questions relative to the applicability of the 1963 Consent Decree to insurer-repairer issues of the day.

ASA has recently discussed DOJ's Consent Decree review with the leadership of the U.S. Senate, who has contacted DOJ about the issue. DOJ has not made a final decision on whether to terminate the judgement or not.

Whatever the outcome of the DOJ review, several observations are important for collision repairers. First, if the decision is to keep the judgement in place, what happens next? Several previous reviews by democratic administrations demonstrated no encouragement for the Consent Decree resolving collision industry issues. Will this change in a republican administration? Finally,



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and most importantly, none of this addresses the insurer-repairer-consumer issues of today.

There are numerous collision repairer concerns that can be resolved today by policymakers who desire to help small businesses and consumers, including the elimination of Most Favored Nation clauses in direct repair agreements, mandating the use and payment for OEM repair procedures, and others. These are real issues that impact collision repairers and consumers each day and are issues that can be resolved via industry dialogue or legislation. Legislation continued to struggle during the 2019 state sessions with the passage of New Hampshire House Bill 664, set to lead the way for OEM repair procedure legislation, only to have New Hampshire's Governor Chris Sununu veto the bill. Although the legislature came close to a veto override, at the end of the day they fell short. The Governor's veto message included the following: "This bill would increase the cost of auto insurance premiums by limiting the ability of insurers to negotiate what is reasonable in the repair process. The requirements outlined in this bill would introduce a significant disadvantage for smaller independent repair shops and could limit their ability to compete. This limits consumer choice and raises insurance rates without the corresponding increase in safety for our citizens."

There are several messages in the Governor's statement, i.e. limitations on insurers' negotiating position; impact on smaller shops for making recommended, safe repairs; limitations on consumer choice; and insurance rates rising. All of these are indicative of the policy gap between consumers, repairers and policymakers as well as the amount of work necessary to bring these issues to resolution. As industry leaders, ASA and coalition partners will continue to strive to resolve today's issues impacting collision repairers and consumers. 📧

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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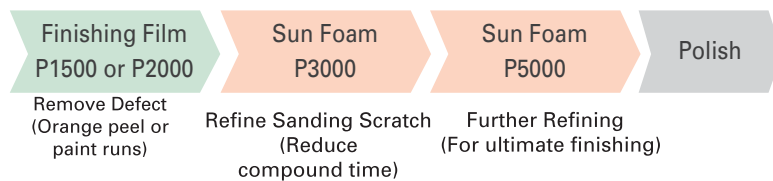
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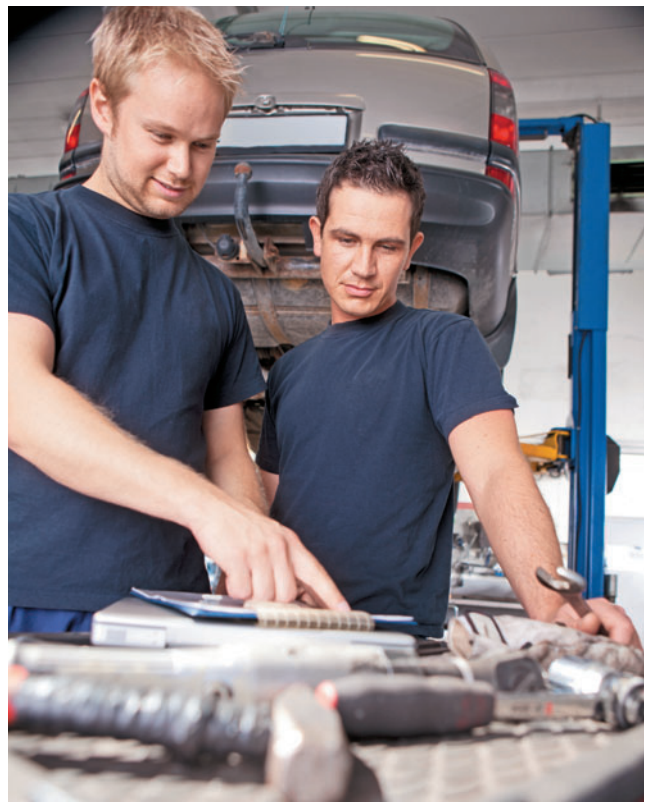
Waiting until the end of a repair does not truly validate it has been completed

JOHN SHOEMAKER // Contributing Editor

One of my favorite things to do when I visit a shop is enter the paint area, pull a damage appraisal off the dash and start checking over the vehicle. What I find reminds me that there is tremendous value behind in-process quality control (QC) checks. I have discovered repairs on damage appraisals not accomplished, repairs accomplished that were not on the damage appraisal and missed refinishing operations, all of which spell out the need. Repairs not accomplished that are on the damage appraisal opens a liability door in regard to vehicle safety, and repairs accomplished originally not on the appraisal results in lost shop revenue.

Each repair phase should have an in-process QC check to validate that all the repairs identified on the damage appraisal are accomplished prior to moving to the next phase. These should be designated fixed stops with everyone in the process understanding that the repair cannot move forward until each check is accomplished. Some think they can bring the same value by using an end-of-repair quality check, but I disagree. I do not believe you can validate that a repair is accomplished as identified on the damage appraisal unless you perform the check while the repair is in process.

For example, you cannot validate corrosion protection was applied correctly, or even at all, without looking at the repair prior to any reassembly. Nor can you inspect weld points or panel seams after the vehicle has been reassembled. The person performing the in-process QC check validates that the repair is ready to move to the next customer. Each in-process QC check should be as thorough as the repair is complex. There are several forms available to



accomplish this, many of which are available on select estimating software programs as digital versions (there is also a great sample on I-CAR's website). Regardless of which version you prefer to use, always make sure it properly documents the check.

As the check is performed, OEM procedures should be validated, structural measurements reviewed, repair-generated



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calibrations verified and workmanship inspected. The QC check validates what the next technician is “buying,” meaning the technician should be able to sell the repair accomplished in their phase to the technician — or “customer” — handling the next phase. One of the goals of the in-process QC check is to prevent the need for a repair to return to a preceding phase due to a defect found during a subsequent repair process. This is because any time a repair goes backwards, production on multiple repairs is jeopardized. Such an unfortunate scenario makes catching a discrepancy during the process an absolute must for this type of prevention.

As we see systems on vehicles becoming more and more complex, the need for in-process QC checks becomes even more important. Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems (ADAS) require specific

calibrations, some of which need to be performed during the repair process as well as when the vehicle is completed. Additionally, restraint systems require testing during repair inspections and in-process scan procedures. The only way to verify these procedures are indeed accomplished is through in-process QC checks.

Now that I have convinced you that in-process QC checks are necessary, you may be asking who should perform them. The answer to this can vary depending on the staffing of your shop. I have seen the production manager perform the checks prior to taking the repair paperwork to the next repair phase. I have also seen the person receiving the repair perform the check. In other shops, it was the person who wrote the damage appraisal while others require the manager to carry the responsibility. It could be several people;

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you must pick the person or persons that have the skillset necessary to best validate the repair completed in that particular phase. The only person who should never be chosen is the technician who performed the repair. If you allow him or her to accomplish these checks, it usually becomes a box-checking exercise with nothing else accomplished.

In summary, I’ll use this quote from Niklaus Wirth to drive this topic home: “But quality of work can be expected only through personal satisfaction, dedication and enjoyment. In our profession, precision and perfection are not a dispensible luxury, but a simple necessity.” With the continuously growing complexity of today’s vehicles, we have the utmost responsibility of guaranteeing precision and perfection in the repairs we perform, which can only be validated through in-process quality control. By implementing this system in your shop, you can remain successful and customer-focused in the rapidly evolving collision repair industry. 📧



JOHN SHOEMAKER is a business development manager for BASF North America Automotive Refinish Division and the former

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QUALITY CONTROL SYSTEMS FAIL WITHOUT ENFORCEMENT FROM MANAGEMENT

MARK OLSON // Contributing Editor

In the decades that I've been working with collision repair businesses, I have seen (and in some cases, helped develop) some excellent quality control programs.

Too often, however, it isn't the lack of such a program that comes back to haunt a collision repair business. It's the failure to FOLLOW the program the shop has developed.

It's not just me who has seen this. I was speaking with someone in senior management at a large collision repair business (not one of my clients) and told him his company has a really excellent quality control system.

"Yeah," he replied, "but nobody uses it."

That's why I believe that quality in today's collision repair industry is a management problem, not a technician problem. It's not an issue of technicians failing to conduct repairs properly; it's an issue of management not using a system to enable and ensure that they do.

Almost every vehicle check-in sheet I see, for example, has a place for radio reset codes to be entered. But all too often they aren't. At a minimum, there should be an "n/a" entered to indicate the codes won't be necessary for that particular job. But I tell shops if you're not going to mandate that every box be filled on a form, don't include that box on the form. This helps teach your staff that every box requires input on every job.

I was in a shop recently where a technician was repairing a fairly new BMW. He had installed a new quarter panel on it, and it looked beautiful. The welds were awesome. When I asked the technician if he'd had the OEM procedure, he could produce it immediately from his toolbox. All is good, right?

That is until I really read the OEM procedure and confirmed my suspicion: BMW calls for that quarter panel to be bonded and riveted, not welded. I even noticed the technician had a package of rivets on top of his tool box for that job, so clearly the estimator had pulled the OEM information for the job and had known to order the rivets.



PHOTO: ADAM GAULT / GETTYIMAGES.COM

So what caused the failure? The technician didn't fully understand some of the symbols in the OEM procedure. He'd welded the panel in the exact places shown in the diagram — only the diagram was indicating where the rivets were to be placed. He said he'd thought the rivets would be used later to secure another part to the vehicle.

The bottom line was the shop had just bought itself a BMW. The estimator had followed the shop's quality control system, but it wasn't followed from that point on, by the technician, the production manager and the paint department, all of which could have prevented the problem by following the shop's quality control system.

The lesson here is to first build a good quality control system. In terms of OEM procedures, for example, the estimator should be required to download them as they prepare the estimate; the technician should be required to sign that he or she read the procedures and will follow them; and the production manager is to sign off that those procedures were followed. That all ends up in the job file.

If a technician will be welding, he or she should first conduct test welds, destruct those test welds, photograph the destructed welds and upload that documentation to the job file. Similarly, images of the completed welds on the vehicle also should be uploaded to the file.

That's all part of a great system. But management's job doesn't end after building such a system. It has to ensure that system is being consistently followed.

Dedicated to ADAS

Shop stands out with location solely for ADAS service and calibration

ROBERT BRAVENDER // Contributing Editor

➔ Whether reading *ABRN* or *Motor Age*, ADAS shows up in a lot of articles. While some Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems have actually been around quite a while — anti-lock brakes, air bags, traction control, collision mitigation — they’re now being integrated with increasingly intricate sensor systems as the technology evolves toward self-driving cars. And with repair costs and complexity going up, the shop sector watches and wonders about the future.

Some, however, are taking a more proactive approach. For instance, Advanced Tire & Auto Centers recently changed their name to Advanced ADAS Calibration Centers (AACC) to reflect their new business model. Founded in 1995 by Jason and Janet Bigelow, the original shop in Keyport, NJ, still handles traditional services along with ADAS calibration, while their second facility in nearby Old Bridge is strictly calibration, filling a growing void in the market.

“We’re unique in New Jersey because we’re the first one,” says Jason Bigelow. “The next closest dedicated ADAS calibration center is North Carolina.”

As the Bigelows noted in a press release, “today’s cameras, radar and other sensors require careful calibration to keep them working properly, and demand continues to grow for the specialized ADAS training, expertise and diagnostic technology...”

“For example,” offers Bigelow, “if I’m off one millimeter calibrating a radar unit on a Honda, it will affect that vehicle’s emergency braking by up to 75 feet. That’s why it’s important to stay on factory tools and have certified people who specialize in this to do the job.”

With demand for these skills and technology primarily coming from local insurance companies and body shops, the Bigelows have essentially switched from one industry to another.

“We ended up migrating more toward the collision industry from about 2012 on,” Bigelow explains. “Last year there was a 44 percent increase in what we were doing; by the end of that year it was up to 68 percent in ADAS assistance. We opened a second location to just service our collision industry. We’re expecting by this time next year to experience another 40 percent to 45 percent increase in calibration.

“Probably the most defining moment was when we started taking lifts out of the building,” he recalls. “That just goes against all logic of the repair business. But because of what’s involved with these 360-degree camera systems and the ADAS calibra-



ADVANCED ADAS CALIBRATION CENTERS

Keyport, New Jersey // www.advancedadas.com

Jason & Janet Bigelow

Owners

2

No. of shops

14

Years in business

tions, I need a very strict environment: non-reflective paint, non-reflective walls, special LED lighting placed in various locations. I also need 30 feet on each side of the car and up to 60 feet front and back to calibrate the camera systems correctly.”

This impetus for precision was present from the very start. “When we opened in 1995, our primary focus was to diagnose vehicles correctly,” Bigelow states. “Back then the average car had two computers; today most cars have up to 200. Through different techniques, whether oscilloscopes or lab scopes, we approached the cars analytically like we were repairing computers, so we had to change our focus and turn more into IT professionals.”

To that end they accumulated 21 factory scan tools, an “exorbitant investment...in the industry,” he notes. “To help offset the cost of what we were spending, upwards of a million dollars to purchase just the software and equipment, it was just a natural transition to what we were already doing. Once we partnered

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age calibration is two hours, and they can go up to four hours. Between the ADAS calibrations and the collision analytics, in one month we did 132 vehicles.”

The name change also heralded a push to build awareness. “We have customers who have brand new cars with ADAS problems,” notes Bigelow. “Unfortunately, what happens is they turn these systems off because their dash will beep or buzz, which becomes very annoying. I have vehicles with 50 miles, 100 miles on them involved in heavy collisions, heavy losses, and the ADAS were never given the opportunity to do what they were designed to do.

“In many cases it’s as simple as someone placing a bumper sticker over a blind spot module. So we’re trying to educate customers that ADAS does work. While we’re still quite a ways from the fully autonomous vehicle, the manufacturers need these consumers to make this work.”

They’ve certainly got their work cut out for them, although Bigelow contends “that this is ultimately what we’ve always done. As cars became more advanced, so did we. We’ve always made our living staying five years head of the curve. The motto that’s painted on all of the shop walls and printed on our shirts is ‘continued education in the pursuit of excellence.’ And we hold true to that today.”



ROBERT BRAVENDER

graduated from the University of Memphis with a bachelor’s degree in film and video production. He has edited magazines and produced shows for numerous channels, including “Motorhead Garage” with longtime how-to guys Sam Memmolo and Dave Bowman. rbravender@comcast.net



with the collision industry, we became the front of the ADAS revolution. We’re now seeing cars with 30 miles on them, 200 miles; we’re solving problems at an engineering level that even the manufacturers haven’t seen.

“If you’ve ever (parallel) parked in a city, other cars tap your bumpers getting in and out,” says Bigelow. “[Some] systems get uncalibrated just by minor impacts, and the customers are getting collision mitigation warnings on the dashboard. This requires recalibrating the radar; there’s a targeting system which checks it at different distances.”

At the other end of the spectrum, AACC also provides body shops and insurance companies collision analytics. “If a vehicle’s involved in a crash or a loss, we

go in with our factory equipment and do a pre-repair analysis to determine what the car needs to be put back to a pre-loss condition,” he outlines.

“Then there’s a post-repair analysis to make sure none of the systems were affected during the repair process,” Bigelow continues. “For instance, if a car is put into a heated paint booth, (some ADAS) systems can only go to a certain temperature before they’re affected. Or were any systems disturbed while the car was being welded on? Was the battery ever disconnected so the camera lost its calibration?”

“Once repairs are made, we then calibrate the radars, the blind spot, collision mitigation, eyesight, lane departure, infrared and night vision systems. An aver-

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I-CAR launches enhancements to education, recognition programs

THE RESULT IS AN “EVEN BETTER I-CAR” FOR THOSE IN THE INDUSTRY

ABRN WIRE REPORTS //

I-CAR is excited to announce the launch of the enhancements to its core education and recognition programs following an extensive multiyear journey to evaluate, update and augment its existing curriculum and recognition offerings.

The result is an “Even Better I-CAR,” featuring enhanced courses and programs, an improved student experience, plus better and more flexible pricing options, and a series of program updates that will help ensure that repair technicians possess the right knowledge and skill level to repair cars right. These changes reflect I-CAR’s ongoing commitment to providing relevant and state-of-the-art training solutions for the collision repair industry, an industry that is adapting to rapid changes in both automotive and repair method technologies.

Changes to I-CAR’s core course offerings have been implemented based on extensive feedback and recommendations from customers and other Inter-Industry subject matter experts, including collision repairers, OEMs and insurers, all of whom have embraced the program enhancements. I-CAR’s new courses are designed to address the increasing complexity of vehicle repairs resulting from the ongoing introduction of new structural materials and in-vehicle technologies.

“Our enhanced core education and recognition programs are designed to equip collision shop owners and tech-

nicians with the most advanced knowledge and tools they need to conduct complete, safe and quality repairs in the face of the “Technical Tsunami,” said Van Alstyne. “The use of new technologies, including advanced-driver assistance systems (ADAS) and highly engineered structural materials, is quickly changing the approach to collision repair from the way technicians work with materials to the equipment and methods they must now apply. With our new course offerings, we’re utilizing technology to our advantage by incorporating significant upgrades to the myI-CAR® learning portal to streamline the training experience and enable technicians to access web-based course content on demand.”

I-CAR’s technology updates extend to its new website and myI-CAR portal interface, which launched simultaneously with all of the program enhancements. They offer visitors a more effective and efficient user experience to deliver content faster. The functionality is designed to streamline the user experience and track progress for Gold Class planning and Platinum™ progress, as well as complete financial transactions more quickly and efficiently.

Some of the most notable core education and recognition program enhancements include:

More than 275 courses are now offered by I-CAR, including a portfolio of Vehicle and Technology Specific Training™ courses, new Hands-On Skills Development™ courses, Weld-

ing courses and 128 new and updated Core Curriculum™ courses delivered live (in classroom), online and virtually (instructor-led, web-based)

- Gold Class and Platinum requirements that raise the knowledge and skills training bar

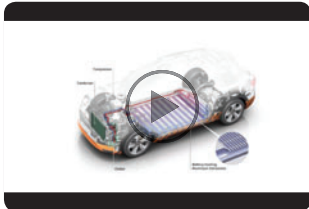
- New training subscription that provides unlimited live, online and virtual training for technicians and all employees at Gold Class shops

- The recertification period for welding moves from five to three years to help maintain technicians’ welding skills, and no longer requires full course completion; rather, just skill reverification; thus recertification will now feature a lower price

- With the launch of the Even Better I-CAR, all processing fees to redeem I-CAR credit for approved Industry Training Alliance® courses have been eliminated, thanks to the Sustaining Partner™ program in which Alliance partners now participate. In addition, training record credit is automatically applied via direct data feeds from Alliance partners

“All of these enhancements and technology upgrades to our learning management system make our courses even more accessible for the collision repair community,” said Van Alstyne. “We are proud to continue elevating the training experience for our customers as we continue to address the ever-changing collision repair landscape with relevant training.” 

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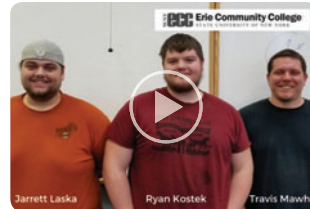
Current industry trends

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Test drive, road test and dynamic calibrations

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Automotive students speak out on their future

ABRN.COM/AutoStudents

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VEHICLE:

2008 Lincoln Navigator, 2WD, V8-5.4L, Automatic Transmission

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89,766

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This Navigator came because the auto climate control with rear A/C stopped working.

DETAILS:

When checked, the compressor was not coming on – even when the defrosters were activated. All the fuses were good and there were no diagnostic trouble codes in any modules.

The Tech-Assist consultant suggested connecting a scan tool to make sure there was a “YES” or “ON” for the A/C Request PID when the system was activated. If so, he asked the tech to make sure there is power at the A/C relay and ground control from the PCM. If the refrigerant charge is full and everything checks out good, he would suspect a failed clutch coil.

CONFIRMED REPAIR:

All the suggested tests proved out good, so the technician tested the compressor clutch coil. It was OPEN. He replaced the compressor/clutch assembly, and the Lincoln was fixed.

This tech tip and others come from ALLDATA Tech-Assist, a diagnostic hotline of ASE-certified Master Technicians. Learn more at ALLDATA.com.

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NOVEMBER 5

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

NOVEMBER 5-8

**SEMA 2019
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas, Nevada**

DECEMBER 3-6

**Automechanika Shanghai
National Exhibition & Convention Center
Shanghai, China**

JANUARY 15-16, 2020

**Collision Industry Conference
Hilton Palm Springs
Palm Springs, California**

JANUARY 27-30, 2020

**Heavy Duty Aftermarket Week
The Gaylord Texan Resort
Grapevine, Texas**

FEBRUARY 24-27, 2020

**The Truck Frame & Axle Repair
Association Spring Meeting
Georgia World Congress Center
Atlanta, Georgia**

MAY 3-6, 2020

**ACPN Knowledge Exchange Conference
Hyatt Regency Seattle
Seattle, Washington**



TAKE NOTE FROM THE AVIATION INDUSTRY

HOW IS IT THAT THE MOST DIFFICULT FORM OF TRAVEL IS THE LEAST DANGEROUS?

SEAN GUTHRIE // Contributing Editor

The question is often asked: What is the leading cause of death in an automobile? The answer in its most rudimentary response is simple: crashing. The leading cause of death is simply being involved in an accident. If we eliminate crashing, we virtually eliminate car-related deaths. Such a statement is rather elementary, and yet substantially more time has been spent trying to counteract the result of a crash than trying to eliminate the crash all together.

Compare the history of flight to that of the automobile in terms of technology progression in an effort to improve safety. Throughout the short history of the airplane, the goal to prevent deaths was not to make crashing safer, but to improve technology in order to avoid crashing. In 1903 the Wright Brothers flew their Wright Flyer for the first documented flight in history. It thus began the race to create airplanes that could do more than float the

short 12 seconds of flight that Orville took on that December day, and soon sights were set on trans-Atlantic and “around-the-world” flights. In 1927, we saw another monumental day for flying as the world celebrated Charles Lindbergh’s non-stop flight from New York to Paris, the first flight without stops over the Atlantic. During these early years, the airplane was crude and very dangerous. Flying was so dangerous that the deadliest profession was an air mail pilot, and the pilots aptly named themselves “The Suicide Club.” During that time, the goal for all aircraft was not to survive a crash — it was to avoid a crash.

Of course, there is an inherent difference between planes and cars in terms of crashing; you simply cannot engineer airbags, crumple zones or seatbelts to make falling from the sky, at any significant altitude, a safe event. The biggest cause of death in the early days of aviation was weather. Even today, flying into a cloud or fog without instrumentation will disorient even the best, most experienced

pilots. The other causes of typical aviation crashes were simply lack of training or mechanical failure. Mechanical failures naturally improved as engine design and plane structure improved, and regulations improved, making safety a forethought. However, weather continued to pose massive problems. At the time there were no instruments to gauge altitude above ground, plane orientation or plane location, thus leading to tragic accidents. There was a massive push to rectify these problems and drastically improve safety.

Not only did those in the aviation industry work to solve the problem and find solutions, but also those within other industries. The military (Army and Navy both had Air Corps, as the Air Force had yet to be founded), aircraft manufacturers, engine manufacturer, and pilots themselves all collaborated to find solutions. Watchmakers aided the new instrument companies with their ability to work with small precise equipment. Lastly, hotels, oil companies and many other wealthy

businesses and individuals put up significant funds to promote the advancement of technology. In 1929, just 26 years after the first flight, Jimmy Doolittle successfully completed a flight using instruments alone to guide him from takeoff to landing underneath a cloak completely blind to the outside. The instruments were crude, but they proved their effectiveness in aiding a pilot and making a flight significantly safer.

The Great Depression of the 1930s saw a pause in advancement, but World War II saw aircraft take on a new role and become essential to the war effort. The war continued the frenzied rate of advancement to the aircraft, and in the 1950s there was suddenly a drastic rise in commercial air travel. While air travel gained popularity between the '50s and '70s, it was still far from safe. Pilot error accounted for the majority of crashes, and while flying was dramatically safer than prior to WWII, it still was precarious to fly. Automation entered the game and really began to evolve and take effect during this time. Autopilots had existed in the early years to keep the planes flying level; however, taking off, landing and navigating were all done manually. During the mid-'70s into the '80s, the amount of automation increased, thus decreasing the number of crashes caused by pilot error. Fast forward to the modern era and we have seen incredible advancements in regards to safety. In 2017, it was estimated 37 million flights occurred with only 10 accidents (most while taxiing), resulting in a small total of only 44 deaths worldwide. In 2018, Boeing had issues with the 737 Max. This caused a spike of over 500 deaths, but in regards to the massive number of flights that took place, the death toll remained at an incredibly low percentage. Even with the sudden spike in 2018, air travel was and is the safest form of traveling.

How is it that the most difficult form of travel is the least dangerous? In air travel, you must control all three dimensions, and any crash means almost certain death. The fact is that everyone in the aircraft industry responds to the risk of crashing by aiming

to prevent it rather than to negate its effect. The auto industry does the opposite by continuing to attempt to negate the effect of a crash rather than avoid one. This isn't necessarily a bad thing; the automobile is substantially safer today than ever before, technology has advanced dramatically, and the number of deaths has been on a steady decline. However, the most survivable crash is still the one that simply doesn't happen. In the U.S. alone, more than 100 automobile deaths occur every day, and globally that number is in the thousands. This doesn't include the thousands upon thousands more that are injured and have their lives disrupted with a crash.

Cars today are beginning to be equipped with measures to avoid an accident altogether. We are seeing a rise in the use of instruments to assist drivers, such as automatic emergency braking, lane departure warnings, blind spot monitors and some level of autonomy. There of course is now the problem of implementing the technology, using it, and repairing it.

My wife and I were purchasing a new car. We went to the dealer and test drove the model that we wanted and confirmed it met our wants. We then began searching for the exact car we wanted. We wanted a car with all the modern safety features, which of course includes all the driver assistance features. To my amazement, the dealership did not have a single model with the package installed. This shocked me and the salesman said, "We don't stock them because most of our customers are asking how to turn the features off. The majority simply do not want any aids, and therefore the dealership doesn't stock cars that have them." I thought surely this was a local market decision, but searching the internet I struggled to find anything in the region.

Again, to the aircraft industry, pilots in the "Golden Age" of aviation started flying with zero instruments. The mentality by pilots was: they survived and were still flying, so they must be capable of flying without any assistance. Pilots trusted their instinct more than the instruments

and continued to crash. Ironically enough, the government managed to put an end to this notion by pure coincidence. The mail delivery was being contracted out to commercial airlines in the '20s and early '30s. The contracted pilots were trained in instrumentation and the planes were properly equipped. In February 1934, President Roosevelt suspended all of the contracts and put the air mail delivery service back into government control and planes without instrumentation were back in mail service. Many distinguished pilots (Lindbergh being the most boisterous) spoke out that it was a grave mistake. It was, and after a disastrous month filled with crashes and pilot deaths, President Roosevelt was forced to reverse his decision, and new contracts were immediately drawn to return the mail to the commercial airlines. The problem was simply that the military pilots and planes were ill-equipped for bad weather flying, which was calamitous to on-time time mail delivery. The result was a nationwide push for planes with the most advanced safety aids and instruments available at the time.

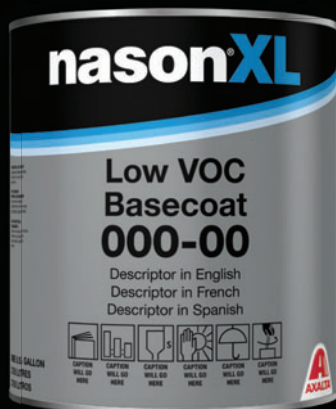
What will create the movement to greater number of driving aids and automation acceptance in the car industry? At the present time I do not believe anyone can forecast the answer. Yet, it is hard to refute the need, as accident-related deaths remain a top 10 cause of death in the U.S. The push for safety in vehicles is ever present, and the technology to create advancements to assist drivers is there — it just needs momentum to gain acceptance. Once each form of automation is accepted, the next step is creating the systems and — as crucially important — the ability to service the systems. It's a chicken-before-the-egg situation. Consumers have to accept in order for them to be installed; systems have to be installed in order for the consumer to accept. Lastly, the systems should be understood and have a buyable way to repair before they are integrated, and yet they have to be installed in order to be understood to be able to be repaired.

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Of course, things are not at a standstill. Systems are being produced; although not unanimously accepted, as my wife and I found out, they are being installed and implemented. They are being used by some who see the benefits, and they are having a positive effect on the number of crashes, injuries and deaths. The bottom line is, they are working! The problem is now getting more consumers to want more and for there to be easy and effective repair methods. As history showed with pilots who began to demand instrument improvements and additional support to flying after seeing the benefits. Consumers will do the same with cars, and once that occurs the technology will improve and advance twice as fast as it is now. Currently, automakers appear to be simply trying to one-up each other with these systems and see just what can be done. They aren't showcased in TV ads, they aren't used to try and sell cars, and yet they may require the most expensive research and development that have gone into cars in decades. Once consumers begin to demand them, they will be used to sell cars and the automakers will then push hard to be the best and showcase their abilities.

As a collective group we need to embrace these changes within the industry and work together for a solution to streamline implementation and repair. It will create monetary gains for some and financial difficulties for others; one guarantee is it will create a safer driving environment and experience for all. Focusing on the overall benefit to all of us will create opportunities for success rather than certain failure. 📶



SEAN GUTHRIE is the director of operations for Car Crafters Collision Centers in Albuquerque, NM. Sean oversees the seven locations handling their DRP and OEM relationships. Sean is I-CAR platinum, ASE certified, multiple OEM trained and sits on two advisory boards.
sean@carcrafters.com

WELD-THRU APPLICATION on the rear of the vehicle using Fusor® High-Definition Seam Sealers.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO ADHESIVES

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT BONDING, RIVETING AND WELDING

DOUGLAS CRAIG // Contributing Editor

As the collision repair industry increasingly embraces original equipment manufacturer (OEM) repair procedures as the proper way to fix vehicles, many are asking “why” — why are things done a particular way and why are specific products and fasteners used? Many of these questions can only be answered by the OEM and are based on firsthand experience and past research. With a marketplace full of options for adhesives, rivets and even tooling to install the fas-

teners, it’s not uncommon to get overwhelmed. So, let’s first try to understand some of the “whys.”

“Approved” vs. “Recommended” — which is it? This is one of the more confusing topics for body shops. To an OEM, “approval” is a lengthy process of adhesive testing in which bond strength is just the beginning. From there, they explore how various environmental conditions and time affect the strength. Humidity, temperature, corrosion and even ultraviolet (UV) light can all change

an adhesive’s strength or bond strength. This process is often called “spec testing” and follows a specific OEM standard, or standards, so it is repeatable and comparable data can be collected. These tests are a compilation that assist the OEM engineers in making a decision of equivalence. The entire approval testing process will generally take upwards of a year to complete, as some tests are lengthier.

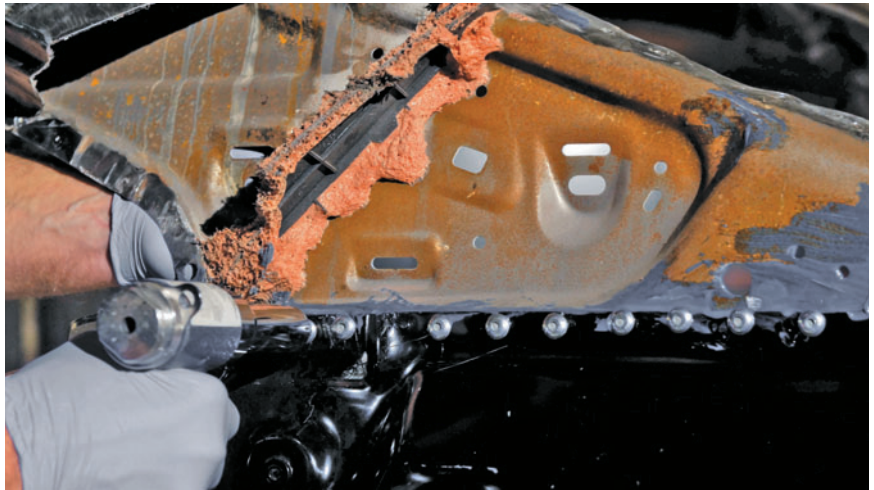
“Recommended” labels are much simpler and are usually based on engi-

neering judgment of “equivalence.” Typically, you’ll see recommendations where the product or application is non-critical, such as a seam sealer. However, a structural adhesive in a crash-critical area, like a rail or pillar, will always be highly tested before being referenced in a repair procedure — and never just recommended without testing and data.

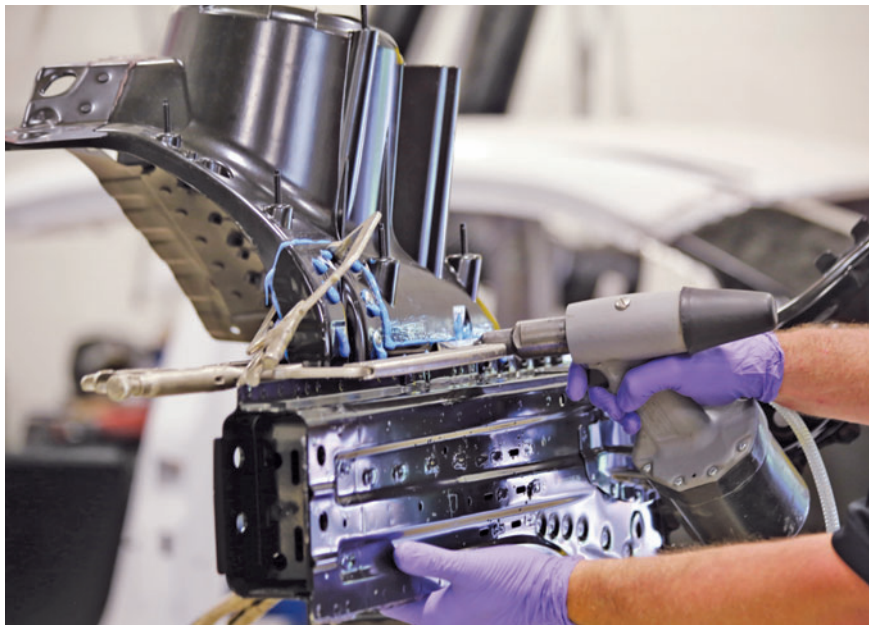
Weld bonding, the process of combining adhesives and welding, has been a long-time repair solution for about 20 years now. With the increased use of aluminum, and the great difficulty of actually resistance welding aluminum, we have seen a surge in automotive rivet applications at the OE part level and in field repairs. For many years now, rivets have been commonly used in other applications (construction, aerospace, over the road trailers, etc.), but are now dramatically increasing in collision repairs. Structural “pull rivets” are far from new in collision repair — they have been used in recalls and service repairs on many vehicles because they require a much-reduced technical capability, as opposed to welding, to achieve a consistent and robust repair, while also requiring “simple” tools.

With self-piercing and flow-form rivets, along with the more complicated and costly tooling, becoming the norm in collision repair, there is much discussion around one standard question: “Do I really need to use the OEM fastener?” The answer is yes. Trying to reengineer the repair by using alternative fasteners is a recipe for disaster. Always follow the OEM repair procedures while using the specified fasteners and tooling — even using a “similar” rivet could become a problem. Something as simple as the OEM-specified coating not being on the fastener may lead to issues down the road.

The No. 1 source for proper repair information is the OEM. While there are other sources for some OEM repair procedures, they all draw from the OEM — so why not just go directly to the expert?



RIVET BONDING APPLICATION with Fusor 208B panel bonding adhesive.



RIVET BONDING APPLICATION on ATS/CTS using Fusor 2098 Structural Adhesives.

OEM1STOP.com is the best starting point, as it’s a simple launch pad to all OEM service information websites. Yes, all the OEMs charge for access to their service publications, and each site is different in use and navigation, but this is a requirement to obtain the most accurate information. Keep in mind that the service publications are “live” and updated constantly, so information saved from the last repair might have changed. Save procedures to your job folder for backup documentation for future reference only, but not for future repairs.

The constant fluctuation of equipment, fasteners, adhesives and procedures can be challenging, and sometimes frustrating, but this is the norm now. Our field requires continuous learning and training. We must remain agile as we adapt to new methods, equipment and consumables. ■



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THINKING AHEAD: THE ADAS REVOLUTION

THE RISING TIDE OF SOPHISTICATED DRIVER ASSISTANCE TECHNOLOGY IS ALREADY IMPARTING REMARKABLE CHANGES ON THE CAR AS WE KNOW IT

HARRISON BOUDAKIN //

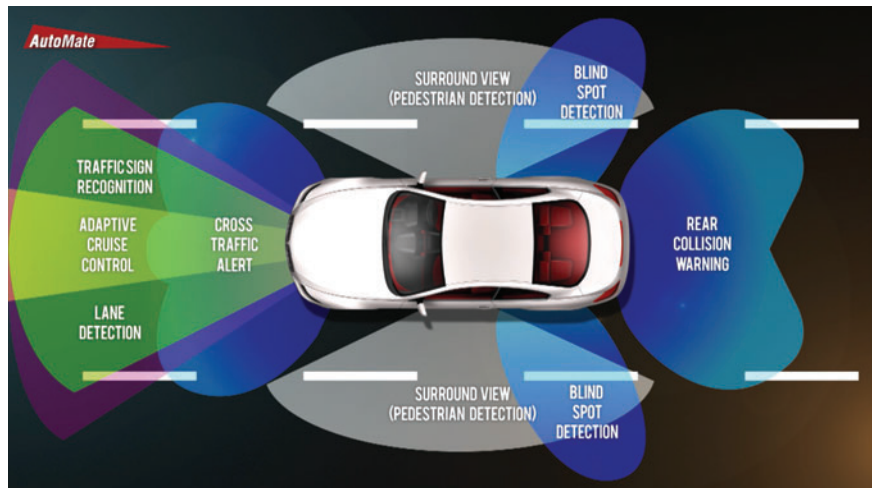
Contributing Editor

The transition from auto-motivity to auto-mobility is a journey whose significance we are only beginning to truly appreciate. After more than a century of life colored by the old motoring paintbrush, new frontiers of automated transportation are opening up, giving us — for the first time — a real chance to contemplate a cleaner, safer, more cost-effective future.

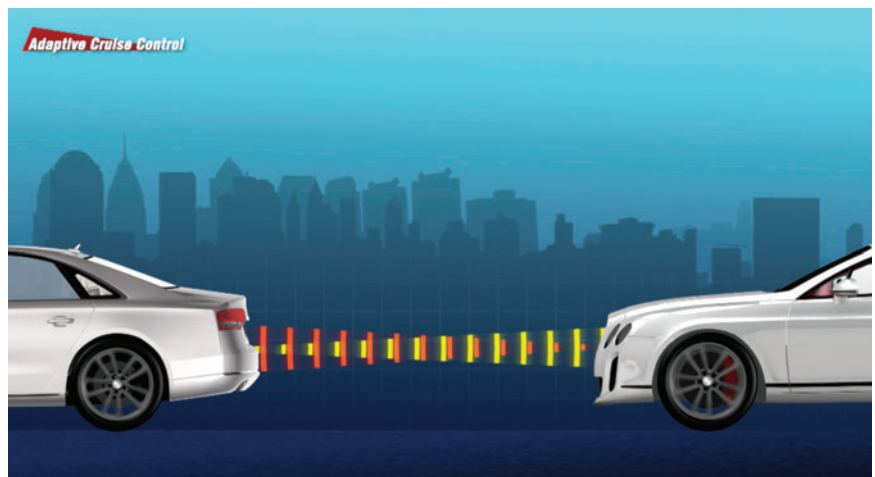
And to glance at the auto industry of 2019 is to see snippets of the radical rethinking that's going on behind closed doors to make it happen. The driverless future — while nearer than ever before — unquestionably represents a change not of degree, but of kind, demanding a long process of cutting-edge R&D from manufacturers more comfortable with gentle evolution.

Yet the magnitude of the task excuses no players, as many OEMs discovered with the arrival of upstart outsiders like Tesla on the automotive scene. Unconstrained by the old modes of creeping incrementalism, their approach to developing driverless systems in particular has acted like a kind of giant centrifuge for the rest of the automotive industry, compelling an enormous groundswell of interest and expectation around current semi-driverless technology.

The result is that in a relatively com-



IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME, we have seen the almost universal adoption of ADAS as a new kind of standard in the automotive mainstream.



AUTONOMOUS EMERGENCY BRAKING TECHNOLOGY, or AEB, is estimated to prevent more than 28,000 accidents and more than 12,000 injuries by 2025.

pressed period of time, we have seen the almost universal adoption of advanced driver-assist systems (ADAS) as a kind

of new standard in the automotive mainstream. Far from being the purview of expensive luxury cars, now even the most

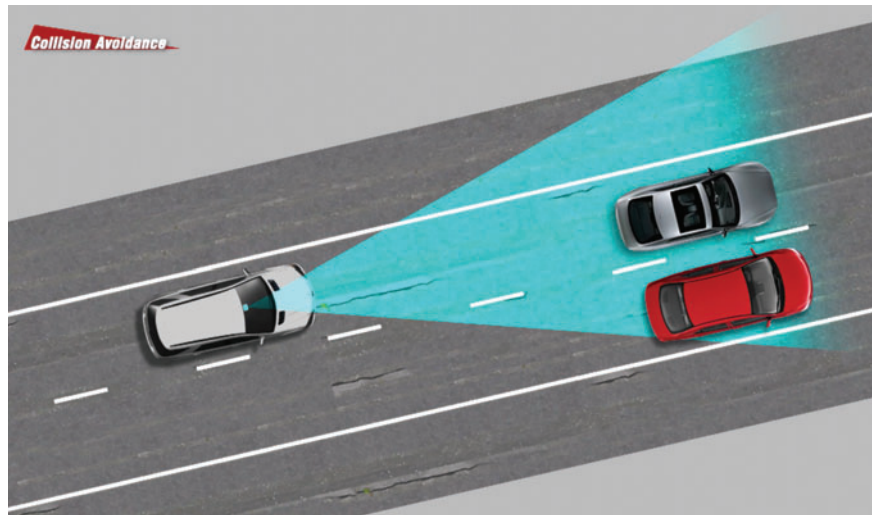
ordinary of vehicles feature technology that is designed to add a layer of supervisory protection to the driver's decision-making processes — and in some cases, intervene and override them when their instinct fails.

Consider that by 2022, automakers have committed to fitting almost every new vehicle in the U.S. market with Autonomous Emergency Braking technology, or AEB — a proposal that the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety estimates will prevent more than 28,000 accidents and more than 12,000 injuries by 2025.

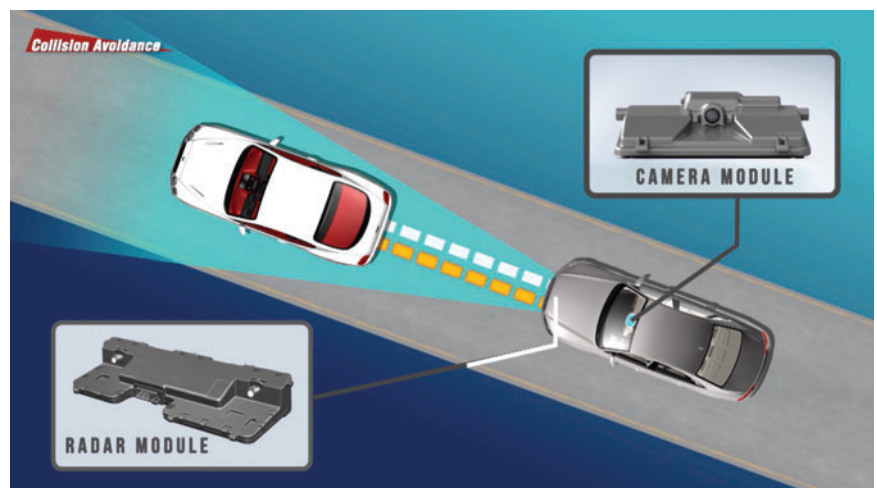
Introduced, unsurprisingly, by the safety kings at Volvo back in 2009, AEB represented an extension of the Radar Cruise Control concept, which had been around in the market since the late-1990s. Using a front-mounted LIDAR (light-detection and ranging) sensor, the Volvo City Safety system monitored the area 33 feet ahead of the car, at speeds between approximately 2 and 19 mph, noting other vehicles that might present the threat of collision. At under approximately 9 mph, Volvo claimed the system would be all but guaranteed to avoid an accident, while above that, damage and injuries were significantly reduced.

City Safety was a remarkable piece of technology, not simply because of what it could do, but also because of what it meant for the relationship between car and driver. For the first time, here was a system that would proactively “intervene” to prevent an accident, which was interpreted by some as a degree of control being removed from the driver. Yet, as Volvo's engineers explained, 80 percent of front-to-rear accidents are caused by driver inattention — and in half of those events, drivers didn't take any action to avoid the accident.

Since Volvo's initial foray into AEB, the potential and scope of this kind of technology has broadened dramatically, with AEB systems now capable of avoiding accidents at higher relative speeds, and with more than just other vehicles. For



SINCE VOLVO'S FORAY INTO AEB in 2009, the potential and scope of this kind of technology has broadened dramatically.



FOR TECHS, this technology revolution presents a major challenge in how to stay up to date.



TO THRIVE IN TODAY'S COMPLEX MARKET, technicians need ways to accumulate knowledge about the latest technology quickly, conveniently and at a low cost.

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THE AMOUNT OF MODERN SAFETY TECHNOLOGY in vehicles speaks volumes about the change in customer expectations.

instance, Volvo's more recent iterations of City Safety now include pedestrian and cyclist detection, both of which have spread throughout Volvo and other manufacturers' model ranges.

Even still, it's worth remembering that AEB is merely the tip of an enormous ADAS iceberg, comprising all manner of technologies and advancements designed — ostensibly — to further minimize the “mistake quotient” that is such a fundamental component of many accident statistics.

Just one glance at a bird's eye map of the modern vehicle's systems reveals a sort of force-field of protective devices: AEB, Radar Cruise, Lane Detection, Traffic Sign Recognition at the front, Blind Spot Detection, Lane Keep Assist and Surround View cameras looking out on the sides, and Rear Collision Warning sensors minding the rear. It's an astonishing spectacle that speaks volumes about the change in customer expectations around this technology and the extraordinary level of technological complexity it brings to the modern vehicle.

Put simply, never before has so much been offered to so many for so little. The choice of technology in the market, and its relative affordability, is unquestionably a boon for drivers and buyers — and means we can all look forward to a safer, more connected and more efficient automotive tomorrow.

For technicians, however, this revolution presents a major challenge — how to stay up to date with technology, when it seems to change so much faster than the traditional training methods we always relied on for currency. The reality is that the days of being trained once, and trained for life, are now finished — that party is over. To thrive in today's aftermarket, automotive technicians instead need ways to accumulate knowledge about the latest technology quickly, conveniently and at a low cost.

They need training that doesn't burden their time, that doesn't require long hours of travel to inconvenient locations, and that doesn't eat into their weekends or evenings. Most of all, they need training

that embraces the latest learning tools, to make new concepts as clear as crystal — not unnecessarily complex, but easy to understand and enjoyable to learn.

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The fact is the pace and tempo of automotive development is set on one course: onwards and upwards — so staying ahead of this trend is a must for every technician. If you're ready for a new way to train, jump onto www.connect.motoragetaining.com and find out just how great training for today and tomorrow's technology can be. 📺

HARRISON BOUDAKIN is operations manager at AutoMate Training, partner of *Motor Age* Training CONNECT.

GETTING APP TO SPEED

FIVE RULES TO GUIDE YOUR ENTRY INTO THE WIFI WORLD



WORKING WITH AN EXISTING APP like Body Shop Booster can boost your revenue \$10,000 or more in just the first month, if you adopt product recommendations like follow-up.

TIM SRAMCIK // Contributing Editor

Lakewood, Ohio, which sits just 15 minutes from *ABRN's* offices, recently passed an ordinance making cellphone use while driving a primary offense within its city limits. Using a cellphone while driving is a secondary offense under Ohio law, but now Lakewood police will be able to pull over drivers simply for using their cellphones.

Such are the steps many localities are taking to protect pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers. With data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration showing over 40,000 accidents a year (and 4,000 deaths) as the result of distracted driving, legislators are doing whatever they can to separate drivers from their phones.

Cellphones and driving don't mix,

obviously. But they do have their place in the automotive world, especially as communication hubs supplying directions and other information. In the repair world, smartphones are proving their worth as tools shops can leverage to build and improve their businesses. Mobile apps, in particular, are delivering both business and data repairers are turning into significant revenue.

APPS THAT IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY AND MAKE FOR A MORE EFFICIENT YOU

In this Remarkable Results podcast, Carm Capriotto speaks with Ryan Clo, owner of Dubwerx in Cincinnati, Ohio; Edwin Hazzard, mobile diagnostic tech, automotive instructor and currently, a contributing writer for *Motor Age* magazine; and Craig O'Neill with an integrator and trainer for Autotext.

Our desktops and smart devices give us tools to make us more efficient at what we do; they are not for everyone and some are just not right for how you operate. There are thousands of apps that do just about anything. In this episode, you'll discover what apps work for others and learn about some that may be just the right discipline for a more efficient you. Listen to the podcast at ABRN.com/apps.

Has your shop gotten into the app game yet? If your answer is "no," it's probably time to change course. Like any new technology being offered to you, apps require proper scrutiny. Knowing what they can offer and how is the key to deciding how to utilize them for maximum effect in your shop.

Use the following five app rules to guide the direction you take.

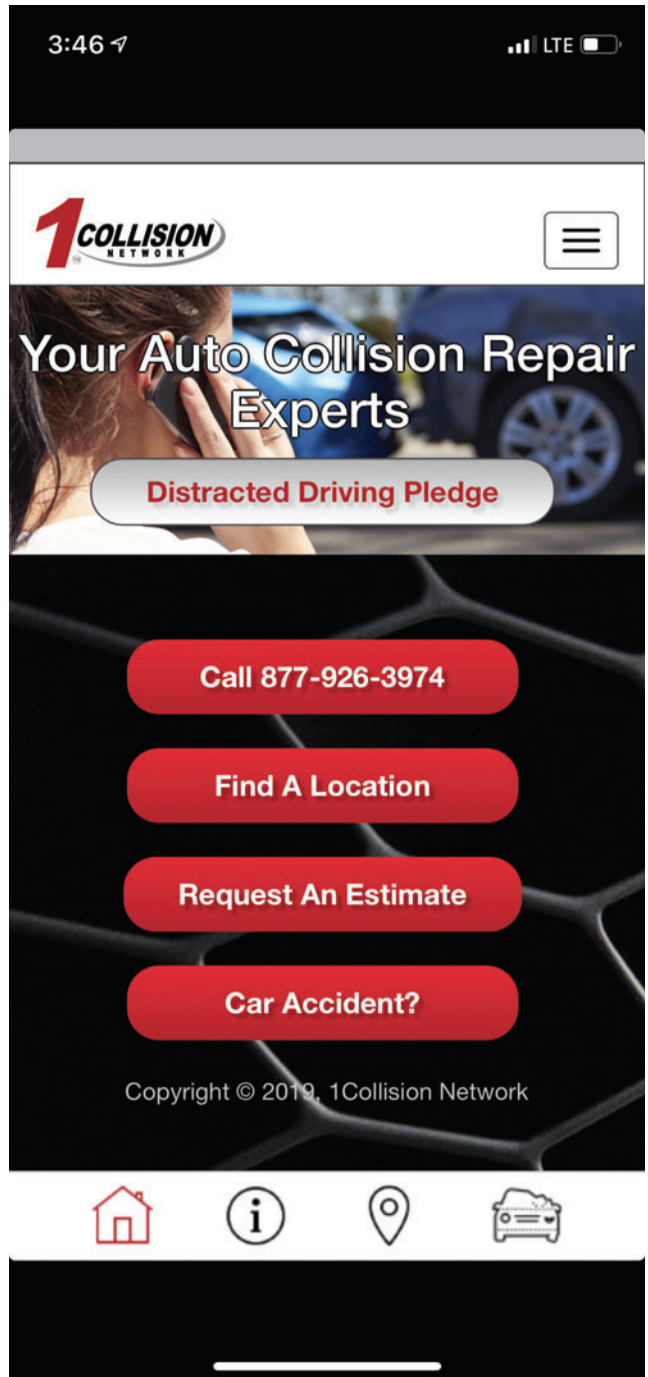
Apps and mobile websites: Knowing the difference

Before diving into the world of collision repair apps, gaining an in-depth understanding of how they function, work and differ from competing technologies like mobile websites is necessary.

Apps are, as their name indicates, mobile applications designed to work on devices like tablets and smartphones. They differ from mobile websites (which your shop likely already has) mainly because (1) they're designed to perform specific functions and use a more intuitive interface (2) they take advantage of available mobile features such as GPS, location and camera.

They're also superior to websites in many ways. They tend to operate faster and offer functionality for better customer engagement. For example, they usually allow users to set up preferences and can be updated and customized as needed. Further, they offer a better platform for transmitting tailored communication to users based on usage, behavior and more.

If all that weren't enough, apps have proven decidedly more popular with mobile users. Newzoo, a global analytics provider, released a study last year reporting the mobile app industry gener-



SHOPS LIKE 1COLLISION have built their own apps with features that encourage motorists to download the app before they're involved in an accident.

ated \$92.1 billion in global revenue with a forecast predicting that number will grow by 50 percent in just three years.

Rule 1: Apps empower businesses

Some of those billions of dollars already are driving revenue in collision repair. The most prevalent apps to first make their ap-

pearance in the collision repair industry were those created by insurance carriers. These were designed mainly to help motorists report claims and locate shops. Shops have since taken the initiative to create their own apps with similar functionality, though theirs effectively bypass insurers, giving shops first contact with prospective customers.

In short, they've reenergized shops to command the marketplace.

"Apps are a democratizing force in business," says Fredericka Barnes, a spokesperson for Marketscape Forecasts, a data analytics provider that assists small businesses, including shops, in using data to build apps and other technologies. Barnes says apps are becoming key tools for many repairers.

"They're helping shops grab more control of their markets because they're engineered for personalized customer engagement, something small businesses are better geared for than large corporations," she explains. "Apps possess the power to restore the one-to-one customer relationships many shops thought they had lost forever to the influence of insurance companies."

Ironically, these shop apps tend to work very similarly to those that insurers provided. Namely, they allow customers to send in photos of accident damage to help start the repair process. Insurers engineered their apps for a more efficient customer service experience focused mainly on moving paperwork. Shops have one-upped these efforts with apps that use photos of damage to produce quick estimates.

By providing a service aimed at delivering pricing, along with transmitting other information such as time to repair, shops provide customers with a lot more useful information, says Barnes. She adds, "Plus, customers have the benefit of dealing directly with a shop who wants to work with them. Studies show drivers are fearful of how their insurers will respond to an accident claim. With an app, driv-

ers can avoid what they see as a pitfall. Shops step in and quickly capture their business. It just makes sense."

Rule 2. The right app can significantly boost your revenue

Some apps are proving their worth in of-

fering just that kind of efficient jump in business. Body Shop Booster, arguably the best-known shop app raises revenues anywhere from \$10,000 the first month in use to the \$90,000 monthly leap experienced by Big Sky Collision in Billings, Mont., says CEO Ryan Taylor.

Taylor further notes that a shop in a

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PHOTO: 1COLLISION

SIMPLY CREATING OR ADOPTING AN APP isn't enough. 1Collision (staff pictured) and Body Shop Booster say marketing and customer care are keys to making this technology work for you.

balanced market (one with a combination of DRP, walk-in, fleet, etc. business) can expect to see an increase in the average capture rate of 56 percent to 65 percent. Taylor adds that these numbers are contingent upon, and can grow even further, with correct follow-up (more on that momentarily).

Considering the ROI Body Shop Booster can deliver, shops interested in an app would be wise to turn their attention there. But utilizing the app comes with some restrictions. The app is free to customers, but shops pay a fee to use it along with additional capture software used onsite. In addition, Taylor says his company limits the sale of the app to a specified number of shops in an area to reduce competition among its customers.

If a shop doesn't want to go with Body Shop Booster or similar apps, it also can create its own. That's what MSO 1Collision has done. President Jim Keller says his company went that direction because it wanted an app with features the company couldn't find elsewhere. Namely, it includes information on what to do in the event of an accident, which helps con-

vince customers to download it, and the app allows customers to find the nearest 1Collision shop using their location.

Keller says shops using the app (in combination with the business's website) write on average an additional three to four estimates a week. The potential to turn those opportunities into work should be attractive to any shop.

Also appealing are the money-saving features offered by both apps. Since shops can analyze the damage, along with information such as the vehicle model and year, they can notify interested customers that a vehicle is a total loss, simply too old to fix or beyond their financial means. Thus, they can head off wasteful damage analysis and in-shop estimates for work they either can't perform or customers won't purchase.

Notable here is the fact that many times customers will still need to bring a vehicle in if the shop believes there is significant hidden damage. Taylor says only 40 percent of customers transmitting photos get a quote. The other 60 percent have total losses, vehicles too old to repair, etc. or need a thorough damage analysis.

Still, these apps help capture this business since the shop can set up an appointment for this task to be performed. Since the customer already has contacted the shop, the repairer is in a prime position to get the work.

Rule 3. You'll have to have a marketing and customer service plan in place

Taylor says the follow up for these incidents or when an estimate is delivered through the app is the most important part of using the app. He notes, "I tell our customers, follow up will change your business." To help with this chore, Body Shop Booster provides shop software that handles follow-up emails, texts, calls and other chores. Because the software handles these tasks, shop personnel are freed up to perform other work.

Of course, none of this part of the process matters if customers don't have the app. This is one of the reasons Kelly's company wanted an app with other features, to convince customers to download it before an accident occurred. His company and Taylor's use a

variety of strategies to market their app, for example, by placing the app on a shop's website or informing customers who call for an estimate that the app can perform this task. Kelly's company also makes extensive use of social media and search engine optimization. Body Shop Booster white labels its app so a shop can personalize it with a logo and branding.

Rule 4. Apps have a role in your offices and work bays

Outside of bringing in work, apps also can find their ways into other parts of your operation. 3M now offers an app that provides process guides, user videos, SOPs and product information on its offerings. Mitchell and CCC have created apps for using their services remotely.

Down the road, apps have the potential to transform collision repair in other areas. Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, Australia and Tradiebot Industries (an Australian software, robotics and automated applications company) are partnering on a project that combines 3D printing, augmented reality and an app for the collision repair industry. The app will allow repairers to scan broken plastic parts and then generate a replacement. Someday soon, shops could be creating their own plastic parts using their smartphones or tablets. Imagine the other possibilities.

Rule 5. Apps appeal to customers of all ages

If you believe an app isn't right for your customer or employee demographic due to age, you may want to reconsider. Barnes says recent studies show apps are growing in appeal to people 40 and over (in other words, they're not just for millennials or Generation Z).

She points to a 2017 report from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) showing seven in 10 people over 60 now owning a smartphone. Numbers from the Pew Research Center note four in 10 people over 65 own

NEW SHOP MANAGER APP SIMPLIFIES DAY-TO-DAY REPAIR SHOP MANAGEMENT

Shop Manager App is a new software platform designed for automotive service shops to help run every aspect of business with ease. Created specifically for automotive businesses, it helps manage estimates, invoices, inventory, employees and it even integrates with QuickBooks.

Shop Manager App frees up many hours each week for shop owners and managers, by streamlining day-to-day processes. The software is available on a monthly subscription basis and comes in three tiers to match the needs of small or large businesses.

Shop Manager App is feature-rich and includes the ability to schedule customers; create and track production schedules; create estimates and invoices; manage inventory; track employee time and projects; and it even seamlessly integrates with QuickBooks Pro, Premier and Enterprise. It handles one or multiple locations and comes with a mobile app version for employees to track projects for more efficient operations.

The creators of Shop Manager App, the latest software platform from Venture Apps, evaluated existing solutions and found current software either lacking in features, or needlessly complex. They created a simple front end and tested it inside automotive installation businesses, with multiple locations and dozens of employees, for a year before releasing it now to the automotive industry.

"Shop Manager App is a significant step forward, helping owners run their businesses without purchasing expensive software or having to invest hours in training," said Scot Schroeder of Venture Apps. "We wanted to create a solution for shop owners with a high level of sophistication found in expensive software platforms, but with an intuitive and logical front end. And to ensure shop owners can get the most out of the platform, we provide the technical support to get up and running right away."

Shop Manager App is available starting at just \$199 per month, with a free one-month trial to qualified businesses.

For more information visit <https://ShopManagerApp.com>.

smartphones, more than doubling the number who did five years previously. Further, Barnes says shop apps provide the type of functionality most older users seek — they provide basic communications that produce real value.

Kelly says the convenience these apps offer, with most users keeping their phones on or near them at all times, should be irresistible for repair businesses. Considering an accident or need for collision repair work is one of the most inconvenient experiences a motorist can deal with, apps arguably have a natural place in

the repair industry. It's up to you to adopt and nurture the ones that could be helping you and your customers, including insurance companies and fleet owners.

Bringing together shops, insurers, DRPs, dealers and manufacturers — that's the power of the mighty mites you carry with you every day. 📱



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

COLLISION PRODUCT GUIDE

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Strategies to ensure you make the right hire

From your culture to referrals and role descriptions, all make a difference

For many years, my hiring process boiled down to who interviewed the best and produced the best resume. Using that method, I have made some unfortunate hiring decisions that were not good for the organization or the person I hired. There are several insights I've learned that I want to share with you.

Good cultural fit

First, when evaluating whom to hire, it is essential to look for those who will fit into your culture. Culture includes areas such as sharing the same values and similar behavior systems. The pace of your environment is another factor to consider. We operate in a fast-paced culture; therefore, a candidate who is talented but would not perform well in a fast-paced environment would not be a good fit. Do you have a collaborative teamwork environment, or is your culture more individual-based and competitive? A team member who wants to work alone most of the time will not thrive in a collaborative teamwork environment. Identify your culture and use that as a starting point to determine fit.

Create scorecards

In the book, *Who: The A Method For Hiring*, Geoff Smart and Randy Street introduce the concept of creating a scorecard for each position before starting the interview process. The scorecard is more than a job description. Instead, Smart and Street describe the scorecard as a document that outlines the outcomes and competencies that we desire from the position. So how do we create scorecards for every position? First, define what must be accomplished in each role. Subsequently, outline what it looks like to be successful in that position with clearly defined outcomes. For example, let's take a Customer Service Representative (CSR) position.

Why does the CSR position exist?

This position exists to create an exceptional experience for customers through effective communication, attention to detail and



LOOK FOR AN EXCELLENT CULTURAL FIT ALONG WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE SUCCESSFUL WITH THE OUTCOMES SET.


excellent follow-through. Next, we define what outcomes we expect for this position. The outcomes desired for a Customer Service role could include: maintain a 98-100 ranking in Kept Informed and Service scores through CSI reports; ensure Accounts Receivables collected within 45 days; have all estimates imported or keyed in the system before the repair started phase; and confirm all final paperwork documented before scheduling delivery appointments with customers.

The next area you need to define is what competencies a candidate should possess for this position. For the Customer Service role example, our potential skills could include patience, communication, attention to detail and teamwork. Once you have the scorecards completed, you are ready to start searching for the right candidate.

Getting the word out

The success we have seen in making good hires usually starts with a word-of-mouth referral. Running an ad for an open position may bring you that exceptional employee, but you have no reference point as those who come from word of mouth do, so be prepared to be exceptionally thorough in the process. We also share the opening within our organization, allowing existing team members to apply or refer someone they know for the job.

Interviews

Include the people — manager and colleagues — who will work with this person in the process. This could mean informal conversations before or after the interview meetings or inclusion in the formal interview. Ask the same set of questions to all potential hires, thus comparing each one consistently. Look for an excellent cultural fit along with someone who has the potential to be successful with the outcomes set. 

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

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