

## RECALIBRATING THE COLLISION REPAIR INDUSTRY

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Do you have the right equipment?

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Navigating the process may be a frustrating challenge for the average consumer

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Salvage parts continue to benefit, divide and confound the repair industry

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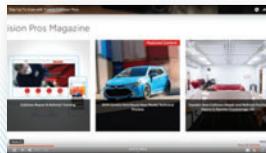
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## WEB EXCLUSIVES // ABRN.COM

### BUILDING A MEANINGFUL AND PRODUCTIVE APPRENTICE PROGRAM

Keith Manich, collision director with ATI, can help you get a head start on a new 2020 approach with Building a Meaningful and Productive Apprenticeship Program, now available exclusively through ABRN. Manich will identify the steps needed to create an apprenticeship program that when followed will provide excellent employees. He will explain how this starts by first describing and providing detail on job WIIFMs and how they can succeed as developing repair technicians and then walks through the developing of their collision repair skills through a step-by-step process that will improve their abilities month by month. Join Manich as he lays out what you should look for in your shop that lends itself to an SOP and steps to put these documents together.

[ABRN.COM/APPRENTICEATI](http://ABRN.COM/APPRENTICEATI)

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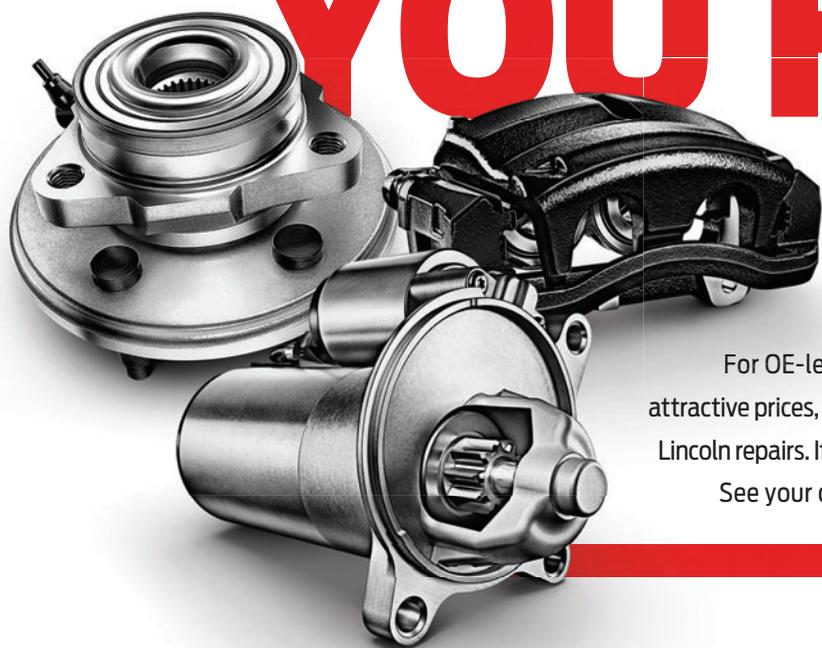
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ADAS REPAIRS

## TECHNOLOGY IMPROVES SPEED, ACCURACY OF RECALIBRATION

ABRN WIRE REPORTS //

➔ Chief Collision Technology, formerly known as Chief Automotive Technology and part of VSG and Dover, announced a partnership with Burke Porter Group to create Mosaic advanced diagnostic technology (ADT), the industry's first-ever automated advanced driver-assistance system (ADAS) calibration system. By 2022, the majority of all new vehicles on the market will have ADAS systems, such as automatic emergency braking, lane departure and blind

spot monitoring. Mosaic ADT will help customers navigate the complex future of collision repair.

"We want technicians to have the confidence to make accurate and error-free ADAS recalibrations through comprehensive understanding of new vehicle technologies," said Lee Daugherty, vice president of global collision sales for Chief Collision Technology. "As ADAS technology on vehicles is constantly changing, it was important for us when designing this product to partner with

>> CONTINUES ON PAGE 6

BREAKING NEWS

NEW PRODUCT

## SUN LAUNCHES NEW REPAIR INFORMATION RESOURCE

➔ SUN®, a brand of Snap-on Incorporated, launched a new repair information resource at SEMA 2019 that will benefit automotive repair facilities that perform collision work, which often includes mechanical repairs. SUN Collision Repair Information includes complete, accurate data to help shops repair virtually any vehicle, inside and outside, with maximum efficiency.

"We are thrilled to offer collision repair facilities a new comprehensive source of repair information that covers all types of repairs, both collision and mechanical," said Nicholas Blais, product manager for SUN Collision Repair Information. "SUN Collision builds on the long and respected heritage of the SUN Brand, giving technicians an invaluable tool to help them maximize efficiency in the shop."

As vehicle technology advances, the line between collision and mechanical repair work is blurring. When a collision occurs, any

>> CONTINUES ON PAGE 9

TRENDING

### NEW WATER-BASED COLOR SYSTEM RELEASED

Blucrom from Roberlo is a new water-based color system that stands out for its high performance and speed, providing secure application blending and great versatility.

[ABRN.COM/BLUCROM](http://ABRN.COM/BLUCROM)

### COUNT'S KUSTOMS' SEMA BUILD FEATURES NEW MATRIX SYSTEM

Count's Kustoms unveiled a jaw-dropping vehicle, a 1961 Cadillac, at SEMA in the Sherwin-Williams booth, and it featured custom colors mixed from the new Matrix Edge system.

[ABRN.COM/COUNTS](http://ABRN.COM/COUNTS)

### WIN SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM KICKS OFF

WIN (Women's Industry Network) has kicked off its 2020 sponsorship campaign, which will run through March 31, 2020. WIN supporters are recognized for encouraging industry development.

[ABRN.COM/SUPPORTWIN](http://ABRN.COM/SUPPORTWIN)

### CCC TOOL AIDS IN LEAD CAPTURES

CCC Information Services Inc. announced Engage Photo Estimate, a powerful new lead generation tool that enables repairers to receive and respond to digital estimate requests submitted by consumers.

[ABRN.COM/CCCTOOL](http://ABRN.COM/CCCTOOL)

### HELP CONSUMERS BY GRADING INSURER PERFORMANCE

Collision repairers can grade the performance of insurance companies in their state from "A+" to an "F" with the launch of CRASH Network's "Insurer Report Card."

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>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

someone like the Burke Porter Group, which has spent the last 30 years developing this same technology that OEMs use for end-of-line calibrations.”

### Why Mosaic ADT is different

Mosaic ADT’s state-of-the-art software uses the OEM repair procedures to accurately and efficiently guide technicians through the calibration process, ensuring that the most up-to-date information is used. Unlike other aftermarket systems that rely on centering, squaring and positioning targets by manually using tape measures, plumb bobs and chalk lines, Mosaic ADT does it automatically. It also verifies that the correct target is placed in front of the vehicle by sensing which target is hung and validating it against the OEM repair procedure. That means no manual measurements or adjustments are required, reducing the risk of human error. This is a key factor in improving the accuracy of calibration, lowers the risk of liability and greatly reduces the set-up time.

“Our strategic alliance with Chief combines their preeminent position in the aftermarket collision and repair in-

dustry with our advanced engineering and manufacturing expertise in OEM ADAS calibration systems,” said David DeBoer, CEO of Burke Porter Group. “Together, we are addressing a significant unmet need for safe and reliable calibrations as ADAS systems continue to quickly penetrate the market. Mosaic ADT offers a cost-effective aftermarket solution using factory-developed calibration technology to place vehicles on the road safely.”

Today’s vehicles are increasingly complex, requiring technicians with the technological expertise and training necessary to make ADAS repairs.

“When ADAS systems are damaged, recalibration is a critical part of the repair process,” added Daugherty. “That is why we require each technician using Mosaic ADT to go through specialized training and certification in order to operate the system, because it is imperative for technicians to understand how to properly repair, recalibrate and test a vehicle before sending it back out on the road.”

### How it works

A technician drives the vehicle in front of

the Mosaic ADT system and plugs into the ODBII port of the vehicle. The scan tool analyzes the vehicle and tells the technician if there are any major faults and which ADAS features are present.

Once the technician determines the necessary calibrations, the Mosaic ADT system will take them through the OEM repair procedures and identify the appropriate calibration target (which is verified by an RFID chip) for the vehicle. The system then centers and squares itself to the vehicle automatically, eliminating potential human error. This automation gives the shop enhanced liability protection and cuts the calibration set-up time drastically. Once positioned correctly, and OEM procedures are followed, an ASE-certified technician remotely connects to perform the calibration using an OEM scan tool.

Finally, the Mosaic ADT system captures and records the full calibration process and repair history of the vehicle to document that the OEM repair procedure was followed correctly. This report can be provided to the customer and is also stored electronically for future reference. ■

## ENDEAVOR BUSINESS MEDIA ACQUIRES AUTO GROUP

### ABRN WIRE REPORTS //

Endeavor Business Media, the publisher of vehicle services publications including *PTEN*, has purchased Informa’s Automotive Group — comprised of *ABRN*, *Motor Age* and *Aftermarket Business World*.

Informa’s Industry & Infrastructure group was also included in the acquisition.

With a committed focus on delivering exceptional content and business opportunities, these Informa brands will join Endeavor’s complementary portfolio of brands and events to create new multi-channel platforms for its audience and advertisers.

Endeavor’s Vehicle Services Group includes *PTEN*, *Fleet Maintenance*, *Professional Distributor* and *Vehicle-ServicePros.com*, all complimentary to the Informa Automotive Group’s titles.

“Endeavor is very excited about bringing the Industry & Infrastructure Intelligence and Auto Aftermarket media brands into the business to expand what we are already offering in these growing markets. We look forward to investing in these brands to take them to the next level for long-term sustainable success, leveraging Endeavor’s platform-wide strengths in print, digital, events and marketing solutions,” said Chris Ferrell,

CEO of Endeavor Business Media.

“We are confident that the alignment of Informa and Endeavor’s brands will provide greater scale and innovative new opportunities for clients and audiences alike. Endeavor’s culture and organizational structure based in a data-informed, customer-first philosophy will create a compelling market advantage and new opportunities for the whole portfolio. With Endeavor’s investment in new and cutting-edge products and services, this opportunity to bring aligned marketing services capabilities and talent from Informa to Endeavor will be a great fit for all,” commented Sue Boehlke, President at Informa Intelligence. ■



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# 2020 MATRIX MAVERICKS OF COLOR ANNOUNCED

## ABRN WIRE REPORTS //

Sherwin-Williams Automotive Finishes announced the new Matrix Automotive Finishes Mavericks of Color at the SEMA Show. Michael “Buck” Ramirez, Brandon Knowles and Chad Martin showcase the best in the business — custom and refinish work and will represent the brand in the new year and stand alongside such industry legends and Mavericks as Ryan Evans, from Las Vegas’s Count’s Kustoms, Justin Nichols from Nichols Paint & Fab in Watseka, Ill., and Joe Vincent from Vincent Dezigns in Prairieville, La.

“The Matrix brand really has a following,” says Rob Mowson, Vice President of Marketing, Sherwin-Williams Automotive Finishes, “a following that inspired this whole idea of a Maverick of Color. That was 2016, and now we have 12 true brand ambassadors — devout users who know the product line inside and out and speak to the brand’s performance every day in their business.”

“A Maverick to me is any painter that can create just as many problems as they solve,” says Ryan Evans, Lead Painter at Count’s Kustoms and a 2016 Matrix Maverick of Color. “It’s someone who doesn’t get it right out of the gate, but because of their experience, they can fix it at the drop of a hat.” Evans was one of the first Mavericks of Color in 2016, along with Cody Lumpkin from Dick Lumpkin’s Auto Body in Piqua, OH, and Automotive Services Inc.’s Shane Marchyshyn in Columbus, OH. In 2020, Ramirez, Knowles and Martin are front and center for the Matrix brand.

Michael Ramirez, who is better known as “Buck,” is an established custom painter and artist specializing in motorcycles and premium builds in his LA shop. Recognized by his peers for his gift with the brush, Buck is at the top by industry standards and a Maverick. In addition to sheer talent, he’s a teacher and

mentor representing not only Matrix to up-and-comers, but the custom industry at events like Brushmasters each year.

Chad Martin from Saluda, SC, burst on to the scene last year at SEMA with an over-the-top custom truck in the Sherwin-Williams Automotive Finishes booth. That truck has since racked up industry accolades across the country including a Winfield Select Six nod and a potential Hot Wheels Legend award at this year’s SEMA Show, putting Chad’s Custom Dreams, a small but mighty custom and refinish shop in the Deep South, on the map and solidifying Martin a Maverick spot in 2020.

Brandon Knowles has been working on cars since he can remember. A 4th generation shop owner, custom builder and refinisher, he has built Brand-X Customs from the ground up. Situated in Everett, WA, just outside of Seattle, Brand-X is recognized for its collision repair work as well as custom creations. In 2017, “Josephine”, a Ford Mustang Fastback by Knowles and his team at Brand-X captured the attention of not only car lovers at SEMA, but the Matrix brand team, and now, Knowles becomes a Maverick.

### 2017 Mavericks of Color: Joe Vincent, Justin Nichols and Gary “Boogie Man” Zborowski

Vincent is a U.S. Army veteran with 15 years of service. He is a true American hero and now a celebrated painter. A well-known figure in the industry with a following that equals that of Matrix, he’s been painting cars, bikes and everything in between for nearly 20 years in his Prairieville, LA, shop and creating some of the industry’s most unique and recognized work.

Model cars became real-life custom builds for Gary “Boogie Man” Zborowski. This Maverick truly takes us back to our roots – Detroit, where Matrix was founded and introduced to refinish-

ers more than 30 years ago. Today, in the Motor City at Boogie Man’s Custom Creations, Zaborowski brings old cars back to life for close friends and now referrals since retiring from General Motors.

Justin Nichols built his first hot rod at the age of seven with his dad — a Maverick in the making at an early age. It was a 1931 Ford pickup topped with what Justin describes as “grasshopper” green. It’s one of those builds that stays in the family; Justin’s son will someday be behind the wheel of that father-son build. Justin’s dad has since passed away; however, he remains a driving force and an inspiration in his son’s life and business.

### 2018 Mavericks of Color: Lonny Speer, Jason Vander Woude and Bull “Elvis” Stull

Originally a collision repair professional used to working on 11 cars a day, Lonny Speer says he fell in love with the attention to detail and time commitment of custom work after just three visits to Count’s Kustoms. Years later at Count’s, Lonny works alongside Lead Painter Ryan Evans, mixing Matrix colors to create the astonishing customizations that have made the shop famous.

Bill “Elvis” Stull has owned and operated Kuzin’s Kustom Body & Paint in Custer, WI, since 1992. Kuzin’s is a versatile shop performing everything from insurance work to restorations. At Kuzin’s, he helps customers put vehicles back together after an accident or simply out of the love of a classic and he relies on Matrix from start to finish.

Jason Vander Woude started in the business working out of a family shop at a young age. A budding entrepreneur, he began custom painting in his garage and quickly built enough business to do what he loves full-time at NSD Paintwerks in Lynwood, IL. He’s known for eye-catching, unique finishes and traditionally bright, brilliant colorations. ■

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

damage to the body and frame is very likely to also damage sensors, cameras and other mechanical components that must be repaired and/or recalibrated to return the vehicle to safe operating condition. SUN Collision delivers complete information for all types of repairs on light-duty vehicles, collision or mechanical. The ADAS-Driver Assist quick reference feature provides access

to consolidated repair and recalibration information for vehicles equipped with Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) features.

“With SUN Collision, auto body shops can take advantage of complete repair information available in a single resource to help them be prepared to perform mechanical work in-house rather than outsourcing those repairs,” added Blais.

Features in SUN Collision include:

- Materials, body and frame, paint and finish
- OEM collision repair information for all makes
- Repair information searchable by part number
- Real-world insights for mechanical repairs
- User-friendly graphical layout
- Mobile friendly. 

#### PHILANTHROPY

## 3M DONATES \$50,000 TO CREF DURING 2019 SEMA SHOW

3M Company announced that it donated \$50,000 to the Collision Repair Education Foundation (CREF). The donation represents 3M's ongoing commitment to CREF, which is dedicated to supporting collision repair educational programs, schools and students to create more qualified, entry-level employees. 3M delivered the contribution during CREF's annual reception at the 2019 SEMA Show in Las Vegas.

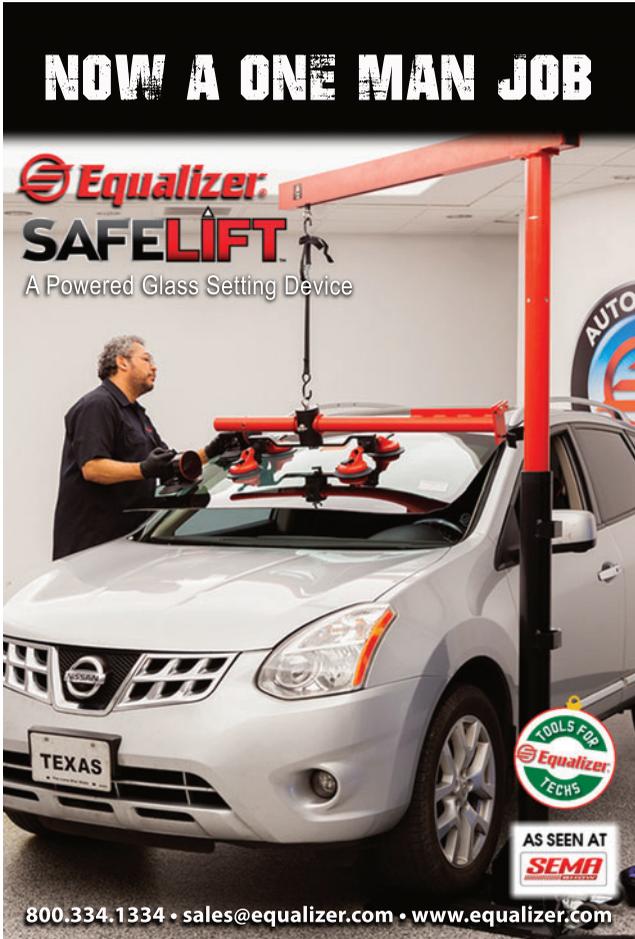
Since partnering in 2008, 3M has supported CREF's philanthropic mission with programs centered around in-kind product donations and grants. In 2013, CREF and 3M partnered to create the 3M Hire Our Heroes grant and scholarship program, which helps America's veterans train for rewarding careers in the collision repair industry. 3M has also contributed to CREF's educational programs with assistance from the 3M Collision Repair Academy. These courses are process-based, formal and structured, designed to help both apprentice and journeymen enhance and grow their skills.

“We are honored to have the opportunity to work alongside with CREF as they enhance our passion for creating experts in the collision repair industry,” said Lori Tempelis, Sales and Marketing Director, Automotive Aftermarket Division at 3M. “This donation solidifies our commitment and ongoing support for CREF's vision. It's a relationship we truly value and look forward to continue growing.”

In May 2019, 3M and CREF announced the establishment of the 3M and CREF Grant – Growing the Collision Education Programs of Tomorrow. The grant program, funded by 3M, provides two collision schools in markets where 3M has facilities with \$10,000 each to support the advancement of their programs. The local 3M community will also work to help the schools that receive the grant.

“Collision repair programs are some of the most costly for schools to run given the tremendous changes in vehicle

technology they train students to repair,” said Clark Plucinski, Executive Director of the Foundation. “I want to thank 3M for their continued support of the collision industry's pre-employment education system and the Foundation efforts to enhance these programs as they prepare students to enter the industry and succeed.” 



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# A VISION FOR CONSUMER SAFETY MADE VERIFACTS A PARTNER FOR SHOPS, INSURERS AND OEMS

ABRN WIRE REPORTS //

Some 20 years ago, the world of collision repair was one where the major partners operated in silos, with limited communication between them. Collision repair facility owners determined their own repair practices. Insurance estimators and claims managers had varying standards and processes. Vehicle manufacturers offered minimal guidance on collision repair standards, and vehicles had minimal on-board technology and advanced safety systems.

Farzam Afshar, an engineer by trade and collision shop owner in the late 1980s, had a vision of a future where all of these parties would want to work together, share data and create common repair standards to safety repair vehicles for years to come. From his vision, VeriFacts Automotive was born.

VeriFacts Automotive was founded nearly 20 years ago on the premise that insurers, vehicle manufacturers and collision repair professionals all needed to work collaboratively to deliver common repair processes to ensure consumer safety.

"I concluded there was a missing ingredient — was anyone taking on the interest of the consumers? How do we as an industry put that first?" said Afshar, CEO of VeriFacts, during a panel presentation during SEMA 2019 in Las Vegas. "We need to bring the repairers, insurers and OEMs together to go in the same direction and improve the safety for the consumer."

The vision was to align the industry to ensure the standards for collision repair processes were consistent, that repair standards were shared among all parties, that collision repair professionals were educated and verified upon achieving these standards, and that consumers and their safety were the first priority.

"Our mission is to ensure consumers

have the safest vehicle repair after an accident, one that protects them and their family on the road and preserves the value of their vehicle," said Afshar. "Every year, our team provides coaching, verification or OEM certification impacting several million vehicle repairs and thousands of collision repair technicians. We expect that to continue to grow as vehicle technology and repair complexity evolve."

Ensuring safe vehicle repairs starts with following OEM procedures. "It is very important that our Ford certified centers and the industry in general follow our repair procedures. The key here is proper and safe repairs utilizing the OE repair procedures," said Dean Bruce, Ford Motor Company Collision Marketing Manager, who also spoke during SEMA. "A safe and proper repair dictates long-term brand loyalty and is a very important piece of the process for Ford."

The importance of OEM certification continues to grow in the industry. "Technology is going to disrupt the way we do business today. And it is going to be very unrecognizable for most of us," Asfar said. "OEM certification is the new DRP"

Today, privately held VeriFacts is headquartered in Newport Beach, Calif., with corporate offices and a coaching facility. It employs nearly 75 team members, from corporate leadership to advanced technology analysts and skilled collision repair experts who provide coaching, verification and OEM certification services across North America.

"When a shop comes into our certification program, they want to see some value. So VeriFacts not only verifies a shop, but also provides repair process coaching," Bruce said. "They can look at any vehicle in the repair process and provide third-party expertise. They can point out what a shop is doing well and also opportunities for improvement."

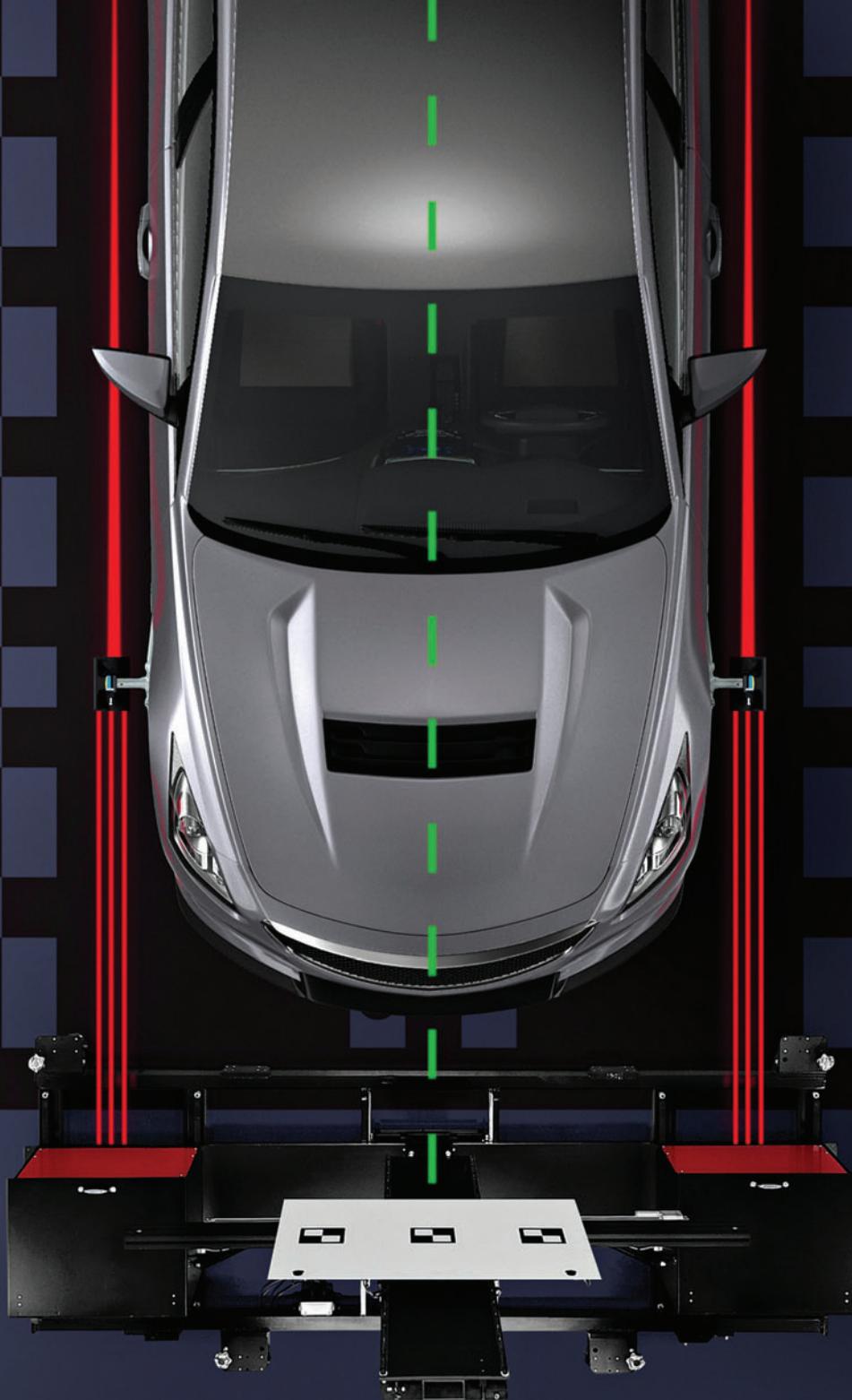
The VeriFacts business model is based on providing the highest level of collision repair business and technician coaching, evaluation and verification services and delivering OEM certifications to ensure collision repair facilities are prepared to deliver safe and reliable repairs. Today, VeriFacts has partnerships with the majority of leading MSOs and independent repair facilities, top vehicle manufacturers and top insurance carriers, among others.

VeriFacts continues its focus on collaboration through an annual VeriFacts Symposium, with the next one set for February 2020 in Newport Beach, Calif. The company also hosts a monthly Guild 21 call where stakeholders discuss issues and concerns and work together for the benefit of the consumer.

The collision repair facilities that meet VeriFacts's independent, third-party assessment levels can achieve VeriFacts Verified Quality (VQ) status, and the truly elite collision repair facilities can achieve VeriFacts VQ Medallion status. VeriFacts VQ status is recognized as a prerequisite for participation in many insurance DRP programs.

Burl's Collision Center in Henderson, Texas, earned VeriFacts VQ Medallion status last spring and became the first Ford-certified collision center in the United States under the OEM's new certification program.

"This gives my employees and me a good sense of accomplishment and a lot of pride," said Burl Richards, owner of Burl's Collision Center. "My guys really feed off knowing that we're among the best in the country. We started down the road to certification nearly five years ago, and it has been good for us, but it's been the best for our customers. Earning VeriFacts VQ Medallion status means a lot because it means we are in the top one percent of U.S. shops for quality." ■



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# How to choose the right consultant for you

Find the right outside expertise that best meets the needs of your business

Last month, I shared a few reasons why I see collision repairers benefiting from bringing in an outside consultant. But given the time and expense you will invest in working with a consultant, you want to make sure you choose the right one. Here's my advice for doing just that.

**Build a list of candidates.** Chances are, you can probably name at least one or two collision industry consultants. But check with your paint company or trade association for the names of others. Contact other successful collision repair businesses to ask if they have worked with a consultant.

**Check their credentials.** A good consultant can point you to other collision repair businesses they have helped. Ask those shops about their experience. Did the consultant listen to their needs? Was he or she responsive and helpful? What were the most instrumental things the consultant did for their business?

**Ask them about each other.** During your preliminary interaction with the consultants you are considering, ask them about the others on your list. At a minimum, you want to make sure the person you are choosing is known and respected by their colleagues.

**Look for broad perspective.** One of the key benefits a consultant can bring is knowledge gained from working with other collision repair businesses as well as other industry segments. Ask about their experience working with independent shops as well as dealerships, MSOs, perhaps even fleets. Do they have contacts with automakers and insurance companies? If a consultant doesn't have a broad portfolio of expertise, you should say, "Next."

**Seek out a good listener.** Especially early on in your interactions, a good consultant will do far more listening than speaking. Look for the 80-20 rule (listening 80 percent of the time, speaking only 20 percent). They should ask lots of questions. They should want to speak with ALL of your employees, because you as a shop owner or manager are only going to offer one view. A good consultant knows that employees know a lot about the business that management may not.



**IF A CONSULTANT DOESN'T HAVE A BROAD PORTFOLIO OF EXPERIENCE WITH OTHER SHOPS AND INDUSTRY SEGMENTS, YOU SHOULD SAY, "NEXT."**

**Look for expertise in collision industry numbers.** Not even the best consultant will be able to help you if they aren't knowledgeable about this industry's primary financial metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs). Even if you work with an outside accounting firm, a good consultant will drill down into your financial statement, dissect your chart of accounts and make sure everything is being put into the right buckets, so it's clear where your business is or isn't performing as well as it should. Building an accurate "dashboard" of your current financial position and other KPIs may be the first and most valuable project a consultant steeped in body shop financials can help you accomplish.

**Ask about their technical expertise.** A good consultant will take a holistic approach, spending as much time back in the production area of your shop as in the office. Many businesses are falling behind right now because of rapidly changing vehicle technology and increasingly complex repair methodologies. You want a consultant who can walk the shop floor and identify technical errors that could be costing your business and adding to your liability.

You want a consultant who can see what you're lacking in tools and equipment necessary for today's collision repair work.

Look for someone who is responsive to your needs. Often when a shop first calls me, they report a business "symptom" they are experiencing, but may not be sure of the cause. As we dig into it, we may find other, perhaps more important fixes the business needs that may or may not address that initial symptom. I always suggest to shops that they be upfront with any consultant about what they really want to do and fix. A good consultant can and should point to other things they believe you should address. But no one wins if you don't communicate that those aren't things you're willing to do and fix, and that means months later you've made no progress. 📧

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**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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**JIM COMPTON** // Contributing Editor

I am asked several times a month about industry averages or percentages, as it relates to a shop's KPIS or other measurements. In other words, how does my shop operation compare to the industry?

While I always try my best to answer the question with some statistic or known data point, sometimes part of me wants to respond: Do industry averages really matter?

First off, we need to understand what average actually means: a number ex-

pressing the central or typical value in a set of data, in particular the mode, median or (most commonly) the mean, which is calculated by dividing the sum of the values in the set by their number.

Median is a value in an ordered set of values below and above which there is an equal number of values or which is the arithmetic mean of the two middle values if there is no one middle number. This is often used when we do a ranking or percentile where we make a statement such as "50 percent of shops do..."

See the final paragraph of this article for more on this.

What is an industry average? It often depends on who you ask. It is a natural human trait to recall and use those facts or figures that support our beliefs. If you were to ask your insurance agent what the average shop pays for garage keepers' insurance compared to what you are paying, their answer may be that you are paying less (better) than most. This might be accurate, it might not be. Does the person you are asking "have a dog in

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the fight” and if so, could this influence which average they share?

So how do you know if you have a valid industry average to compare your businesses to? One simple answer is to know the source of the industry number that you are inquiring about. Is that data pertinent to your situation? Does the figure come from your peer group? This is where 20 group-generated KPIs have a distinct advantage, as 20 group members look across the room, they see other businesspeople running similar businesses or, in other words, they are part of your peer group. Most 20 groups are set up with similar types and sizes of businesses.

Not all industry averages are created equal. The polling size can have a significant impact. Take a simple number, such as paint and materials reimbursement rate, generally stated as X dollars per refinish hour. Seems simple — ask a bunch of shops and calculate the average, right? Maybe. Calculated from six or 12 shops in your hometown may be a good number to compare to your own rate, while 100 shops across the nation would probably not be a good average to compare to. This rate can differ significantly regionally.

Back to the original question. Do industry averages matter? What industry averages or KPIs or comparisons should I focus on? Food for thought:

1. Is it actionable? Can I use the information to make improvements?
2. Is it pertinent, is it derived from my peer group?
3. Can I relate this to my situation, my team, our culture?
4. Can I get my staff to use this as a comparison or goal that we can all get behind?

### Is it actionable?

Some industry averages are fine to look at and understand, but they may not translate into actionable items in your day-to-day operations. One example is gross sales per square foot; it is simple

to calculate with only two inputs and division. For discussion, let's just say this calculation yields a result of \$1,000 per sq. ft. per month.

To improve this number, you need to either increase sales (this will improve many KPIs and industry averages) or reduce the square footage (which may not be practical, especially if you own the building). So, I rate this not very actionable in day-to-day operations. This may be helpful when searching for new building or sites for new locations.

### Is this derived from my peer group?

Touch time is probably one of a select group of industry averages that can be good measures for all, provided that the polling or sampling group is valid. Alternatively stated, is your shop's culture and facility set up and poised to maximize efficiency?

### Can I relate this to my situation?

There are many KPIs that are great for an owner or manager (such as sales per sq. ft. mentioned above) that do not translate into day-to-day motivators for staff. As discussed in a prior article, picking three KPIs to focus on likely works best for that vast majority of your staff, with more than that things can get lost in translation. Send a clear, concise message with three bullet points so your staff can easily identify their contribution to the goals and get behind improvements.

My personal favorite KPIs are based on labor hours. Not only are labor hours a very significant cost and revenue source for auto body shops, but they are also very relatable for the technicians working on the vehicles. Almost every technician I talk with (regardless of pay structure) can relate to labor hours — touch time, efficiency (clock-time verse flag-time) P&M costs per labor hour. Estimators can also readily identify with hours with an even broader spectrum including overall labor, repair, replace, refinish, etc.

### Can I get my staff to use this?

Probably the best industry average comparison for any shop to use is internal. In other words, how do we compare to what we did last month or last year? Are we making continuous improvements? We can safely assume that our competitors are trying to get better; if we are not getting measurably better, we will likely lose ground competitively.

Maybe the second-best industry average is really a regionally focused average.

Regional MSOs also have a significant advantage when comparing KPIs. These shops operating in the same marketplace with similar market pressures are excellent peer groups in themselves. For many shops, working with knowledgeable local jobbers can be a great source of qualified regional industry averages. Be sure to ask where the data comes from, and question is it pertinent, does it come from my peer group?

National industry averages can be helpful. They should be put into context and balanced with closer peer group data, such as MSO, 20 group and comparisons to your own prior results.

Another term for average is mediocre. There are many doing better and many doing less/worse. Do you really want to measure yourself against this average? Wouldn't you be better served having more information? For example, some KPIs are derived from large enough data sets that other rankings can be broken out into more refined sub-averages. For example, what industry averages do the top performers in the sampling group achieve, comparing not only a broad industry average of the overall sampling group, but also what do the top performing 10 percent of these shops average? Wouldn't that be a better goal for most? 📌



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# ARE PHOTO ESTIMATES A DOWNFALL?

Navigating the process may be a frustrating challenge for the average consumer

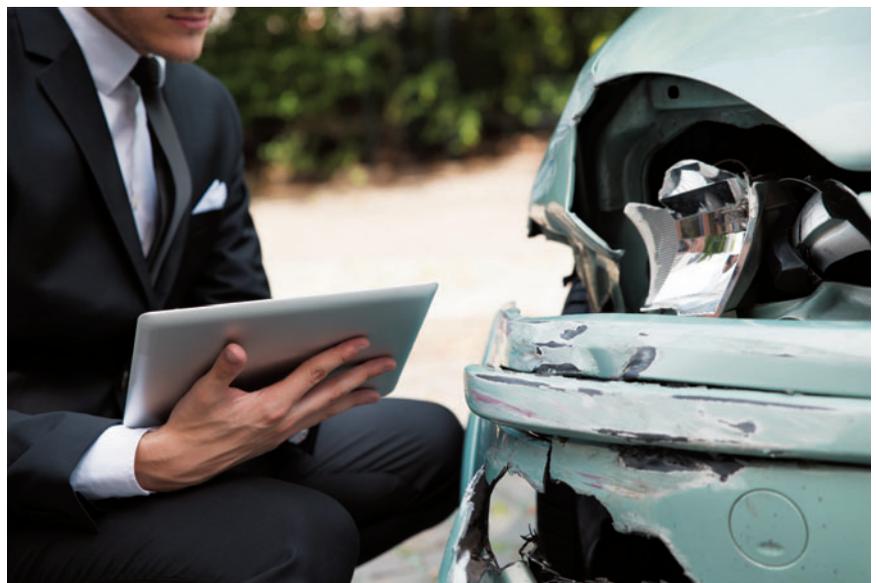
**JOHN SHOEMAKER //**  
Contributing Editor

I have heard a lot of discussion about photo estimates lately. People ask me what I think about them and how they will affect our industry. My first response is that you should treat them as any other field estimate you receive: as an outline to write your own damage assessment.

That was until I had to go through the process myself.

Someone hit my wife's car while it was parked and forgot to leave a note, so I had to process a claim on my policy. After going through the drill of answering all the usual questions and listening to a presentation about the program shops they have, I was sent a phone app to take photos of my car. My knowledge of the industry and the photo skills I possess were of little use in this instance. The app only allowed for a couple of photos and none of them could really capture the damage completely.

I received the estimate on my phone in less than 24 hours, and as I reviewed it, I found items that were clearly missed on the estimate. I'm not talking about labor time variances. I'm talking about moldings, emblems and pinstripes that are clearly visible in the photos but not on the estimate. I called the claims office, informed them of the things that were missed, asked for them to be added and



for a new estimate to be created. This is where things became exciting.

I was told by the claims office that if I intended to get my car repaired, I should take it to my shop of choice so they could write a supplement. I told them I intended to have my car repaired and would like a corrected estimate before I schedule the repair so the missing parts could be ordered in advance. The claims handler said it was not company policy to change a photo estimate until the car was inspected at a repair shop and a supplement submitted. When I questioned the policy, she said that it was up to the shop to decide if those items were actually needed. I was then again offered the opportunity to take it

to one of their program shops for complete satisfaction.

Conceding to the insurance company, I took my car to my shop of choice to begin the supplement process. I say "begin," because it took more than one attempt to get all the damage accounted for by the insurance company. When the final supplement was completed, the cost was 210 percent of the original photo estimate.

Now that I have gone through the process myself, my mindset has changed. I have always said photo estimates mislead the consumer, but this experience allowed me to see how much the consumers themselves are misled. My knowledge of the collision industry

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helped me work through the experience successfully, but what about the average consumer? If I took the original estimate at face value, cashed the check (which closes the claim) and decided to get my car repaired later when it was more convenient, how hard would it have been to get a supplement approved at a later date? How would the average consumer know the photo estimate did not define all the damage? This caused me to change how I advise shops when this subject comes up.

I still believe the shop needs to use any field estimate available as an outline to create their own damage assessment, but they need to have a different discussion with the consumer. I feel it is necessary for the shop to review the photo estimate with the customer at their vehicle, being sure to itemize the things clearly missed and explain that once these things are added, the estimate could easily double (like mine did). Without doing this, a naïve consumer could believe that the shop is the one doing the deceiving, not the insurance company.



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Not doing this could set the shop up for failure, as doubt would be developing in the consumer's mind throughout the repair process.

Yes, shop personnel will need to become educators of sorts. Photo estimates are not going away — in fact, some insurers are looking at artificial intelligence

to determine damage based on previous claims. They aren't bad, but they need to be handled differently. This is the future of damage estimating, so be sure to prepare yourself and educate your customers (in advance if you can), and accept photo estimates as another opportunity for your business. 📷

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# Is Cash for Clunkers 2.0 on the horizon?

## U.S. Senator Schumer proposes Clean Car Initiative

In a recent *New York Times* op-ed, U.S. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) revisited the latest version of “Cash for Clunkers,” previously known as the Car Allowance Rebate System (CARS), a vehicle retirement program implemented by the Obama Administration in June 2009. Originally sold to the public as an “eco-friendly stimulus” initiative whereby the government buys up older, high-polluting vehicles, post-clunker White House reports clearly indicated that the program was about selling vehicles and not necessarily related to improving the environment. More on this later — back to Sen. Schumer’s efforts.

Sen. Schumer has proposed “to rapidly phase out gas-powered vehicles and replace them with zero-emission, or “clean,” vehicles like electric cars. The goal of the plan, which also aims to spur a transformation in American manufacturing, is that by 2040 all vehicles on the road should be clean.” Sen. Schumer went further and described how this initiative would unite labor, automakers and environmental groups. Missing from this list, similar to their exclusion in the 2009 Obama ob-

jective, is the U.S. automotive aftermarket. By the Senator’s own estimates, this project will cost \$454 billion over 10 years.

Although legislation has not been introduced to date, U.S. Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY) countered with his own op-ed: “He wants to get every gas-powered car off the road and to resurrect President Barack Obama’s disastrous “Cash for Clunkers” program that wasted \$3 billion of taxpayer money giving subsidies. Even environmentalists admitted that it had “slim if any environmental benefits.” Mr. Schumer’s “new” plan is 100 times more expensive. He wants to spend \$392 billion of taxpayer money to subsidize cars only wealthy Americans can afford.

“The median price for electric vehicles is roughly \$20,000 more than the median price of gas-powered cars. Sold as stimulus, the first program was actually a drag on the economy. While the effect on taxpayers was significant, the effect on the air was minimal. Mr. Schumer’s plan doubles down on failure.”



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The concept of retiring older vehicles has been around for some time. Princeton University’s Dr. Allen Blinder profiled the issue in a 2008 *New York Times* editorial. Dr. Blinder described Cash for Clunkers as a trifecta: a cleaner environment, more equal income distribution, and an effective economic stimulus.

A less emphasized result of Dr. Blinder’s proposal was more new vehicle sales, which would impact an ailing automotive economy. What was left out was the automotive aftermarket. The 2009 Cash for Clunkers program cost independent repairers lost sales and fewer parts purchased for these older vehicles taken out of the marketplace, impacting both distributors and aftermarket manufacturers.

In the Obama Administration’s analysis of their Cash for Clunkers program, they focused on the increase in sales of new vehicles. According to the White House analysis, “Many of the CARS sales were to the kinds of thrifty people who can afford to buy a new car but normally wait until the old one is thoroughly worn out. Stimulating spending by such people is very nearly the best

possible countercyclical fiscal policy in an economy suffering from temporarily low aggregate demand.” Where was the analysis of the impact on the automotive aftermarket?

The Automotive Service Association opposes Cash for Clunkers, but does highlight options for the Administration to consider: include a vehicle repair option for consumers; programs should be administered by the states; vehicle participation should be tied to emissions and improving air quality; and repair cost allowances should be sufficient to address emissions repairs. Cash for Clunkers is a bad idea. It did not succeed during the Obama Administration and should not be considered by the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. 📧

**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](mailto:rredding@reddingfirm.com)



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# DISRUPTION PREPARATION

Learn how to win in the industry despite imminent change that is coming our way

**KRISTA MCNAMARA** // Contributing Editor

**F**or 100 years, the automotive industry hasn't changed much. The cars are better than the days of Model Ts, but drivers still press the gas pedal and turn the steering wheel. But the industry is on the precipice of major disruption.

"Auto Industry Disruption: Win Despite Change" was presented by Frank Terlep, an author, consultant and former Chief Technology Officer, during the Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS) 2019 Repairer Driven Education at SEMA 2019.

A disruption happens when new products and services create a new market, and in the process, significantly weaken, transform or destroy existing product categories, markets or industries. Terlep's session aimed to help attendees understand who and what is to be disrupted and provide insight with how to prepare and adjust for the future.

The classic disruption cycle has four steps: 1.) overconfidence; 2.) sudden collapse; 3.) too little too late; and 4.) ongoing decline. Those in the industry need to prepare now in order to avoid ongoing decline, Terlep said.

"We cannot look historically anymore to predict the future. What you are seeing is not just an automobile disruption, but a computer disruption, because cars are now computers on wheels," Terlep said. "The value of the car of the future will not be in the metal, but in the software."

## Driving disruption in the industry

Currently, there are three main challenges in the automotive aftermarket: a shortage of vehicle technicians, OEMs having a much larger influence on the repair process and insurers.

But who are the truly being disrupted and acting as the disrupter? "No one is immune. Everyone is going to feel disruption in one way or another," Terlep said.

Several factors are driving disruption, including the increased



need for improved safety. Approximately 1.3 million road traffic deaths occur every year, with more than 90 percent caused by human error. In the U.S. last year, 40,000 people died in automotive accidents, while 4.5 million people were injured.

There are also 33 megacities on earth with another six expected by 2030. Traffic is a major consideration.

The ever-growing presence of software, including IoT, hardware, broadband, high-def mapping, Blockchain, artificial intelligence, virtual reality and more, continues to change vehicles and disrupt the industry.

## Main forces of disruption

Terlep detailed the main forces of disruption, starting with the consumer, who buys vehicles and determines how they are

getting from point A to point B. The consumer has more transportation options than ever before, which may have an impact on the fact that the importance of ownership is also dropping and many consumers feel they can't afford a new car. Consumer sentiment is also mainly positive about autonomous vehicles and continued growth of hybrid and electric vehicles. And an alarming statistic for dealerships is that 82 percent of consumers are comfortable buying a vehicle online; however, they expect the vehicles they buy to be like a smartphone.

The digitization of the automobile is forcing shops to have to transition from generalist to specialist. It is too complicated to continue down the path of general vehicle repairs, Terlep said.

Mobile apps are also changing the repair process. Scan tools will change as we will not need to scan a vehicle; it will be able to send codes via mobile apps.

The continued growth of "industry electrocution" — or the number of electric and hybrid vehicles on the road — will change the vehicle landscape. Terlep anticipates that once battery prices go down and the range goes up, EVs and hybrids will dominate the roads. "And that will happen," Terlep said. Autonomous vehicles are also changing the vehicle landscape and how consumers will be interacting with their vehicles and others in the future.

Big data and software is changing the way dealers have access to vehicle owners, and is negatively impacting both service and collision repair industries as they can drive owners directly to their vehicle service and repair shops before a consumer can even reach out to an independent.

Mobility as a service is changing vehicle ownership attitudes. With 60 percent of trips in the United States coming in at five miles or less, there are more options on how consumers can get around. Flexible vehicle sharing models are also reducing the need to outright own a vehicle.

## Cybersecurity concerns

As the vehicles on the road toady become more complex and inundated with software, there are added risks for vehicle hacking.

So many vehicle manufacturers are trying to separate the safety systems from the infotainment systems to reduce the risk of being able to hack into a vehicle. But it is a growing concern that will only get worse, Terlep said.

## How to cope

OEMs need to transform from a vehicle manufacturer to data services companies and customer technology companies. They need to understand that connected cars are not a product, but a set of technologies that will change their business model. They need to be prepared to transition from ICE to EVs and realize that many new vehicle prices are too high for some consumers. Mobility as a service needs to be a focus, Terlep said.

New car dealers will be fighting a quick decline of operating profits, direct-to-consumer retailing and online vehicle purchasing. Mobility as a service, vehicle subscriptions and sharing models will all challenge the traditional vehicle ownership model. The growing transition from ICE to EVs will force changes in vehicle inventory, and an increase in ADAS and AV technologies will also have an impact.

To fight back, dealers must continue to focus on repair and collision services. They will need to consolidate to maintain profitability and continue to implement web, mobile and VR technology. The creation of centralized parts, service and collision locations instead of having them attached to dealerships will help to improve profitability. Virtual test drives and test tracks will also be important to differentiate, Terlep said.

Insurers face five major disruptions: new insurers, new insurance products and pricing, new insurance processes, new technologies, and new distribution models. There have been many

new entrants into the insurance market offering newer, more flexible insurance coverage plans. New insurance offerings include cyber security insurance, product liability insurance and infrastructure insurance, among others, and not all companies are on board. New pricing models are also entering the market, including do-it-yourself pricing, a la carte/package pricing, set your own price and peer pricing models. New processes include the use of mobile photo estimates in the claim process, despite some industry objection.

Insurers will need to establish more real-time, interactive relationships with their costumers and reinvent their marketing and distribution plans with more intuitive, interactive communications tools and channels. They will need to build expertise in big data and new business models, among others.

Collision repair shops will face at least five disruptions: the digitization of the automobile, the digitization of business, digital intermediaries, M&A and consolidation, and remote technician services. Shops are not being compared to other shops down the road; they are being compared to other companies using digital services, and they must be able to compete. Insurers, OEs, third-party websites and others all serve as intermediates between the consumer and shops and can be very disruptive.

Suppliers need to decide on their growth strategies and explore alternate sales, branding and pricing strategies. They need to develop additional sales channels, increase online presence and add second or third price lines and brands. "In my opinion, buy or sell," Terlep said. "Grow or go."

Suppliers need to determine either a growth or exit strategy, get digital, specialize, become part of something bigger, continue to invest in recruiting, training, tools and equipment, or get out, Terlep said. ■

# Quest to be the best

Nashville-area Maaco hitting all the right notes with ‘a network of relationships’

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

 Fresh out of body shop school, Derek Jameson walked into the nearest Maaco outlet — and he never left.

“I came to this Maaco, they hired me, I moved up the ladder, and I ended up buying the place,” says Jameson as he summarizes the ambition that has driven his 23-year career at the same franchised location, the Antioch, Tenn., Maaco branch just outside of Nashville. And his dedication does not go unnoticed; at the 2019 Maaco convention last month, Jameson was named the winner of the prestigious Syl Young Award for outstanding early performance indicative of continued chain leadership.

Originally from New England, following graduation from high school, “I loaded up the car and moved to Nashville to go to technical school.” The Nashville Auto/Diesel College was Jameson’s destination. “I’d gotten a post card in the mail” from the institution while still studying auto mechanics at his high school, an enjoyable class with prospects as a suitable occupational path.

Yet, for some reason, the college’s personal pitch to Jameson was geared around promoting its bodywork courses, “and I was like, ‘Say, I like making cars look pretty.’” Thus began a quest to become the best at collision repair, and joining the team at the Antioch Maaco further convinced Jameson of the value that can be obtained through thorough training.

Along with Maaco’s company-wide systems, augmented by Maaco University’s online curriculum, the shop utilizes instruction from I-CAR while actively pursuing sometimes-hard-to-get edification from suppliers and additional sources.

“Painters will come to the shop to introduce new products and procedures,” Jameson says, additionally disseminating the latest in adhesives and other repair techniques. Jobber Dave Martin at the Music City’s regional Sherwin-Williams distributorship is particularly adept at spreading the word: “They give you training whenever you ask.”

## Diversified revenue stream

An emphasis on instruction is consistently a top priority, beginning with the recruitment process. “I hire the right people who can do the work,” says Jameson. “I go after the educated and certified people, and I pay them accordingly to keep them.”

Turnover is low with steady staffing levels; positions are cross-trained whenever possible, and several members of the crew have been onboard for more than a dozen years.



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**Derek Jameson**  
Owner

**1**  
No. of shops

**23**  
Years in business

**15**  
No. of employees

**7,600**  
Total square footage of shop

**4**  
No. of bays

**7.5 days**  
Average cycle time

**\$1,286**  
Average repair order

**40**  
No. of customer vehicles per week

**\$50,385**  
Average weekly revenue

“Like all shops today, finding good technicians is always a challenge. We use our network of local jobbers and their relationships and knowledge of the marketplace to help us find good technicians and good people who may be looking for a change or are ready to leave their existing shop,” says Jameson.

“We look for qualified technicians, and once I find them I do what I can to make this a place they want to stay and grow,” he elaborates. “I treat all my employees like family.”

Paid time off and vacations are provided, and half of the staff’s health insurance premiums are covered. “There are life situations that come up, and I have helped employees financially to

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get through those situations.” The shop encourages and picks up the tab for continuing education.

Within the immediate marketing sphere are three large corporate-owned, multiple shop competitors doing a lot of DRP repairs. “What sets us apart is we have a diverse revenue stream,” Jameson reveals. There are DRP jobs, and self-paying customers, plus Maaco’s Driven Fleet program attracts a considerable amount of commercial accounts in the Nashville area.

“With the Maaco national footprint and national fleet partners, that helps us get our foot in the door so that we can service their painting and collision repair needs,” he says. “When it comes to the retail work, we have many customers that have liability insurance only or a high deductible, so it is advantageous for them to come to us for those repairs. A new paint job can also keep their car looking good when they just can’t afford a new car,” says Jameson.

“I see our business as a three-legged stool — retail, insurance and fleet,” he continues. “This business model helps to keep the shop in business year-round. If you have too many heavy hits, you may wait on parts. And if you have too much paint work it can cause a bottleneck at the paint booth. We strive for an even balance between those three revenue streams.”

Jameson says that one of his shop’s biggest strengths is their versatility and range of services. “We do everything, from affordable all-over paint jobs to collision repair on late model cars to restoration.”

Painting and detailing products are obtained through Maaco-designated suppliers while the shop chooses its own parts providers. “One advantage of being a part of the Maaco network is that we get much better pricing than we would as an independent shop,” according to Jameson.

“We have good relationships with our vendors. They get us the parts as soon as they can. They’ll jump in the car and bring it over to us, and we want to hang on to suppliers like that,” he points out.

“We work well with our vendors. We

work together side-by-side with them to work out any solutions if any issue does arise,” says Jameson. “Our mutual goal is to satisfy customers and get their cars repaired correctly, safely and back on the road.”

### Long-term strength

The Antioch outlet is one of the top performing shops in Maaco’s franchise system, having won several awards and recognition over the years. This year Jameson received the coveted Maaco Regional Cup Award for the South/Gulf Region in addition to the Syl Young Award previously mentioned.

Jameson’s shop is a Maaco Diamond Certified location, which means that it meets the chain’s top level of certification with the training and equipment needed to make collision repairs on today’s technologically complex vehicles.

“It was important to me to be Diamond Certified, and we were one of the first in the Maaco system to achieve that. My shop and technicians are also I-CAR Gold Certified, one of the requirements of being Diamond Certified,” he says.

“We have invested in the equipment needed to repair today’s cars properly, such as resistant spot welders and scanning tools. Part of the benefit of being Maaco Diamond certified is that we participate in eight DRPs and the Maaco Driven Fleet program, which helps bring additional business into the shop.”

When dealing with customers, “I’m straight forward and honest. I tell them exactly what they actually need and don’t try to upsell them anything more. My goal is to make a friend and lifetime customer. That is what keeps a business strong in the long term,” Jameson explains. “In the end, it’s all about having satisfied customers who come back and tell their friends and family of the good experience,” he says, citing a 4.9 out of 5 Google approval rating.

“Maaco is a household name, so that name recognition and the national advertising they provide definitely helps, as well as the Driven Fleet program that opens doors for us with fleet customers,”

Jameson notes. “We do some digital advertising locally as well. After 23 years, however, our most effective advertising is word-of-mouth. Our customer base is a lot of repeat customers as well as their friends and families. A good reputation is still the best advertising.”

Housed in a 7,600 sq. ft. metal building with 600 ft. of office space, the shop was built in 1992 by the previous owner — Robert “Scooty” White — as a Maaco Collision Repair and Auto Painting Center. In the early days, they mostly performed affordable paint jobs and light body work. After Jameson began working there they started doing more collision repairs.

In 1996, Jameson was hired as a sander just out of technical school. “Over the first few years I proved that I was capable of doing collision repair. He promoted me to the body shop, and I hit the ground running, enabling the business to take in larger collision jobs. I became head technician and worked my way to general manager in 2001.” Jameson purchased the business from White in 2016.

Believing in giving back to the community, the shop donates to support the local police and fire departments while also sponsoring several local Mustang, British and Classic-car clubs. A few years ago they had the opportunity to restore a car for the parents of a young woman who was killed in the Columbine shooting. “A Thompson Station Ministry had made a film about the school shooting in Littleton, Colo., and had the car in Tennessee,” Jameson recounts. “We were asked if we could do the restoration on the vehicle before returning it to Littleton. We decided to do the job for free. We donated parts and labor; the technician who did the work, Joey Dickens, donated his labor time, and we restored the car back to original condition before shipping it back to the young lady’s parents.” 📷



**JAMES E. GUYETTE** is a long-time contributing editor to *ABRN*, *Aftermarket Business World* and *Motor Age* magazines.  
[JimGuyette2004@yahoo.com](mailto:JimGuyette2004@yahoo.com)

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# SMART GLASSES SPEED REPAIRS



**PATRICK RIZKALLAH**, operations manager of Craftsman Collision Group, with more than 40 locations in Western Canada, uses the Mitchell XR smart glasses to help speed up repair planning. Several repair facilities are assisting Mitchell with its proof-of-concept testing.

## NEW TECHNOLOGY FROM MITCHELL GIVES HANDS-FREE ASSISTANCE TO COLLISION REPAIRERS AND ESTIMATORS

**JAY SICHT** // Contributing Editor

**T**echnology has a way of pervading our lives. Only a little more than a decade ago, the iPhone helped popularize the smartphone, now a constant companion for most of us.

Now, collision repair technicians and estimators may soon have a device that will become part of their daily routine. Mitchell's XR (extended reality) smart glasses are currently undergoing proof-of-concept testing with several collision repair shops in North America, and they're designed to access the resources needed for a proper and safe repair as they complete their tasks. (Extended reality is an

umbrella term describing augmented reality — as used with the smart glasses — mixed reality, and virtual reality.)

Jack Rozint, vice president of sales and service for Mitchell International, said the company predicts a number of uses for the glasses, which are powered by the Qualcomm Snapdragon XR software platform. Mitchell is an inaugural member of the Qualcomm XR Enterprise Program, in which the tech company invites innovation with XR technology to take advantage of an expansion of blazing-fast 5G speeds.

"You have the ability to review repair procedures while your hands are free and you're either working on a teardown and developing a repair plan or you're ac-

tually in the process of repairing the vehicle," he said. "They work really well for that, because once you've got your voice commands down, you can zoom in, page down, close the repair procedure and open a different one, all through voice commands, all with your hands free, and be able to simultaneously work on the vehicle while you're getting the additional information, as needed."

The second use is in allowing a remote expert to be able to see what the technician sees, in real time, to offer assistance through a two-way voice conversation. While they're collaborating on the repair, the expert can also display technical documents or a photo on the screen in the technician's glasses.



“If you think about the collision industry, that could take a number of different iterations,” he said.

One could be for a large MSO, in which a technician at one of the locations is an expert on a particular brand or is particularly skilled at aluminum repairs. Another possibility is a remote expert from an OEM-certified repair program or an equipment manufacturer — consider the possibility of a technician needing assistance in getting welder settings adjusted, for example.

“We’re looking at how to enable that through partnerships,” Rozint said, drawing parallels to how Mitchell has an agreement with Drew Technologies to provide remote technical diagnostic assistance throughout the country for Mitchell Diagnostics.

“Because whether it’s OEMs, I-CAR, welding equipment companies, or frame machine companies, just think about the complexity of the vehicles today and how many different configurations are rolling into a collision facility and how complicated they are to repair. It seems to me that there is going to be multiple sources of remote technical assistance needed in order for collision repairers to be able to handle all of that.”

Rozint said the glasses exemplify two of Mitchell’s “core value pillars.”

“One is we believe in partnering well,” he said. “We don’t believe we can be everything that everybody might need, in terms of information in today’s collision or auto claims world. So we look at what

we do and who are the other best-in-class providers in the industry that we can partner with in order to make our systems work well together and deliver solutions that help our customers.”

The other core value pillar is what the company considers its “true north,” he said.

“Three years ago, we looked at where the industry was, where Mitchell was, and where things were going, and we decided our true north was a proper and safe repair. As the vehicle technology continued to grow, delivering a proper and safe repair was going to be the most difficult challenge for the industry to solve. And when we say, ‘industry,’ we mean that goes for insurance adjusters, independent adjusters, repairers and everybody else in the ecosystem.”

### Time studies show sped-up procedures

Used as part of the check-in procedure by an estimator, the glasses can increase speed and impress the customer.

“The glasses work beautifully for that, because you can go out and have the conversation with the customer as you walk around the vehicle and capture all those pictures you need,” Rozint said.

Voice commands for a VIN scan and decoding, photographing the license plate, odometer reading and related and unrelated damage have shown to help cut the typical check-in process time from about 20 to 22 minutes to only eight minutes, he said.

“And it does wonders for the consumer who’s dropping off their vehicle. It really gives them the feeling that, ‘Wow, I’m leaving my vehicle with an organization that’s using state-of-the-art technology.’ And that goes a long way toward establishing that customer feeling of confidence in the repair facility.”

### Release date not set; glasses may be sign of the future

As of this writing, the Smart Glasses are in testing, and although a release date has not been set, it is hoped to be sometime in 2020, Rozint said. “We’ve gotten amazingly positive feedback in our proof-of-concept testing, our conference, and from people who’ve seen our news release about it. So I think the timing is right for the industry. We’re just looking at which use cases we’re going to implement first, and then we’ve got to get those scheduled into our development testing schedule.”

The design of the glasses/headwear has not yet been finalized. Mitchell is working with multiple manufacturers on its proof-of-concept as it gathers feedback from testers. The final design will provide room to wear safety glasses with it.

Rozint noted that at the mPower conference hosted by Mitchell in early October, a speaker from Qualcomm predicted that smart glasses or goggles could eventually replace smartphones in our daily lives, with the ability to browse the web and do other computing functions, and make phone calls while conveniently leaving hands free.

“With the advantages of many applications of augmented reality and virtual reality, versus looking back and forth between the real world and your phone, there are quite a few use cases where it’s much more convenient and even fun to do it on goggles or glasses. So that’s kind of an interesting way to think about this. It’s not just necessarily collision repair applications, but this may be something we’re all using.”



**JAY SICHT** has worked in a number of roles in the automotive aftermarket for more than 25 years. Based in Columbia, Mo., he has covered all industry

segments of the business as a writer and editor for 15 of those years.

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# CHOOSING A REFINISH PAINT SYSTEM

HOW TO FIGURE OUT WHAT IS BEST FOR YOU AND YOUR SHOP PROCESSES

JENNIFER BOROS // Contributing Editor

**C**ompetitive pressures are forcing collision centers to make repairs faster and more efficiently, without sacrificing quality. Add to that the introduction of more sophisticated OEM colors and refinish systems have to keep up — including meeting environmental legislation. But which one is right for your collision shop? That depends on a variety of factors including your spray booth, equipment and the type of business you operate. Let's take a closer look.

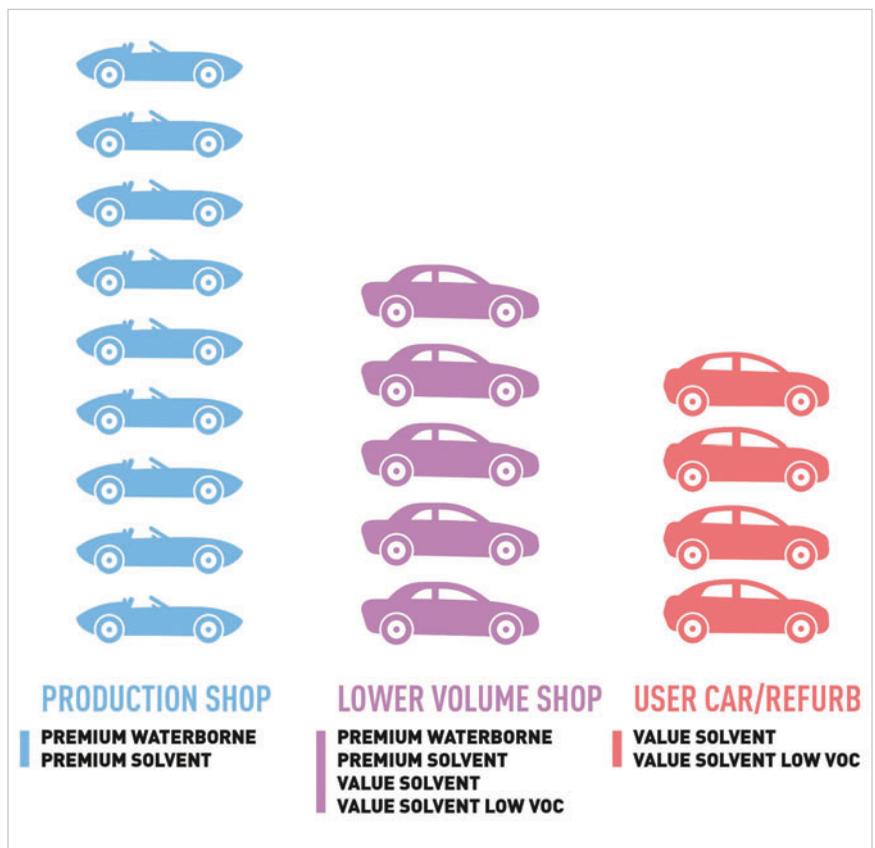
## The production shop

If your collision center outputs more than 10 cars per week, has DRP business, and monitors cycle time performance as part of your lean collision practices, a premium-quality refinish system capable of excellent color-matching and high production throughput is a must. This also applies if your business has OEM certifications or repairs luxury vehicles.

In National Rule regions (not governed by stricter VOC compliance regulations), production shops have a choice of premium refinish technology to consider: a waterborne or solvent-based system.

## The waterborne option

If you seek out the state of the art in re-



finish technology, there are many reasons to like waterborne basecoat. First, if you consider yourself environmentally progressive, making the move to waterborne basecoat can minimize paint odors and create a healthier workplace for your employees, without sacrificing performance. Thousands of high-production collision centers located in National Rule areas have moved to a waterborne system — often citing its color matching excellence

and process performance in addition to the environmental benefits.

Waterborne basecoat can provide extremely consistent color mixing by taking advantage of anti-settle toners.

Given that the majority of factory finishes utilize waterborne technology, waterborne basecoat for refinish is well suited for matching the ever-increasing number of translucent, highly chromatic colors offered by the OEMs. Painters can achieve excellent metallic

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control because latex toners can correctly orient the metallic flakes and provide the appropriate color travel from face to flop. Waterborne users also point out the ability to perform easy, “invisible” blend repairs with no halos or blotchiness.

In terms of cycle time performance, waterborne basecoat systems are more than capable of meeting or exceeding the throughput demands of the high-volume collision center as evidenced by their popularity with MSO enterprises.

The prerequisites for implementing a waterborne system must be considered when deciding whether or not to make the switch. Attention must be paid to your paint booth’s ability to deliver proper air movement and ample clean, dry air. That’s because airflow, temperature and humidity play roles in the basecoat’s evaporation rates. In essence, the basecoat dries from the bottom of the film up. Therefore, creating good airflow across the wet waterborne basecoat can significantly improve flash times and dramatically improve cycle time productivity.

If you have a modern downdraft booth that already has good airflow, upgrades can be minimal with several options to choose. The need for supplemental equipment depends on the type of spray booth and equipment already in place, average climate (humidity in particular) and the desired vehicle throughput per day.

Other equipment considerations may include waterborne spray guns, gun cleaner and a waste removal system.

It’s a good idea to enlist help from the waterborne paint supplier who can assess your current booth and equipment and provide recommendations for any upgrades that may be required.

If you’re concerned with the challenge of making the switch to waterborne, the training and assistance paint suppliers offer can smooth the transition. Many paint suppliers offer

programs that include shop assessment, product selection, technician training and onsite support.

Given the excellent color matching, easy blending and fast throughput potential of a waterborne system, it’s ideal for the high-production collision center looking to improve performance.

### The solvent-based option

Premium-quality, solvent-based systems remain popular in high-production shops for a variety of reasons — especially as manufacturers continue to upgrade their capability.

Regarding color-matching prowess, paint suppliers have continued to keep pace with OEM finishes by adding the latest metallics, pearls and special effects pigments to their toner mixing bank arsenals. Also, given the rich history of solvent basecoat technology, users of the solvent-based system can benefit from a very robust color database of variant formulas for finding the right match for any vehicle regardless of model year.

The introduction of fast, production-oriented undercoats and quick, air-dry clears have significantly improved the throughput capability of solvent basecoat systems.

Another benefit of the solvent system is familiarity. Most paint technicians are well schooled in its application and often cite the user friendliness and easy blending of premium-quality, solvent-based systems. Plus, if your business seeks out custom work in addition to collision repair, solvent is a popular system for taking advantage of certain special effect finishes.

As mentioned, choosing between a waterborne or solvent system for high production output is dependent on your shop’s business objectives, operating conditions and equipment. Working closely with your paint supplier is essential for gathering all the information needed to make an informed decision.

### The smaller-volume shop

For some smaller-volume collision shops, a premium paint system — solvent or waterborne — may not be the right option. Again, it depends on your business goals, facility and current equipment. You may want to consider a more price-conscious system with streamlined features. Value-priced, low-VOC solvent systems are also available if you are looking to create a more environmentally friendly work space for your employees.

Another point to consider is OEM certification. If your shop is not OEM certified and there are no plans to pursue certification, it boils down to a choice between the color-matching excellence of a premium system and a more price-conscious system with streamlined features. A value-priced solvent system may be the best option for shops primarily focused on refinishing older vehicles inexpensively, auction business and dealership touch-ups.

### Other considerations

Without a doubt, choosing a refinish system should not be based on the paint technology alone. Due diligence should also be spent on evaluating the color tools, training and support offered by the manufacturer.

Where does your shop fit in? We can’t tell you which system to choose or which system will work better for you. It’s up to you to decide what makes the most sense for your particular situation and business objectives. But rest assured that whichever way you go, there are quality products waiting for you. 📧



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

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

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# ADAS: RECALIBRATING THE COLLISION REPAIR INDUSTRY

FLUENCY IN PERFORMING THESE REPAIRS IS VITAL FOR THE INDUSTRY

MIKE CROKER // Contributing Editor

**T**he adoption of ADAS (advanced driver-assistance systems) in new vehicles is rapidly growing. There are close to 60 million vehicles in the U.S. that are equipped with some sort of ADAS features, like parking assistance, adaptive cruise control or collision-avoidance systems.

Three years ago, the collision industry as a whole wasn't talking much about ADAS — maybe a shop repaired a vehicle's backup camera, but that was about it. Now, it's expected that by 2022, the majority of all new vehicles on the market will have at least an automatic emergency braking system, and many OEMs say they plan to sell self-driving vehicles within the next five years.

What does this all mean for the collision industry? It means ADAS is something that shops can no longer ignore. It's not a matter of if they will have to repair a vehicle with ADAS, but a matter of when.

## Standardizing ADAS requirements

Currently, when it comes to how shops address ADAS repairs, it's a bit of the Wild West. Technology is constantly changing, and there's no standardiza-

tion of requirements around things like service documentation, accuracy requirements or training required to use ADAS recalibration systems.

Shops are left wondering how to prepare for the continued evolution of ADAS and autonomous vehicles, and their impact on the collision repair industry. When it comes to ADAS aftermarket systems, not all systems are created equal.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when it comes to ADAS recalibration systems.

## Accuracy is more important than cycle time

When a vehicle's ADAS are damaged, recalibration is a critical part of the repair process. It's imperative for technicians to understand what's at stake if they aren't repairing, recalibrating and testing vehicles correctly before sending them back out on the road. They could be risking not only the driver's safety, but also others' safety on the road.

Collision shops now need to be more concerned about accuracy when it comes to making repairs. With the growing prevalence of ADAS technology, collision shops should prioritize choosing an automatic ADAS recalibration system. Some products rely on

tape measures, plumb bobs, physically lining up targets manually and driving the vehicle to recalibrate it, which opens the shop to a greater chance of human error. And with these systems, being off even a few millimeters could have major implications. Imagine a vehicle's radar sensor is shooting a bit high and is off by a millimeter — now push that out 100 feet and suddenly the car's front end collision warning system is overlooking a small car in front of them and they're doing 60 miles an hour!

However, cycle times aren't going to go away as a means of measuring the productivity and profitability of a shop's business. Understanding the time it takes to do a recalibration on a particular system is important, too. While some of the manual systems require a few hours to recalibrate, more automated systems can do recalibrations in as little as 15 minutes.

## Having access to current OEM repair information matters

It's also important to understand what type of recalibrations are required to fix a vehicle. Does the repair require radar recalibrations? Does the OEM require the repair to be done via static or dynamic calibration? And if you don't know, do

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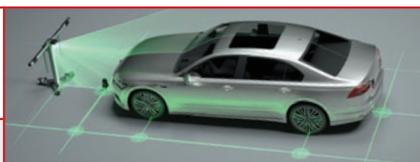
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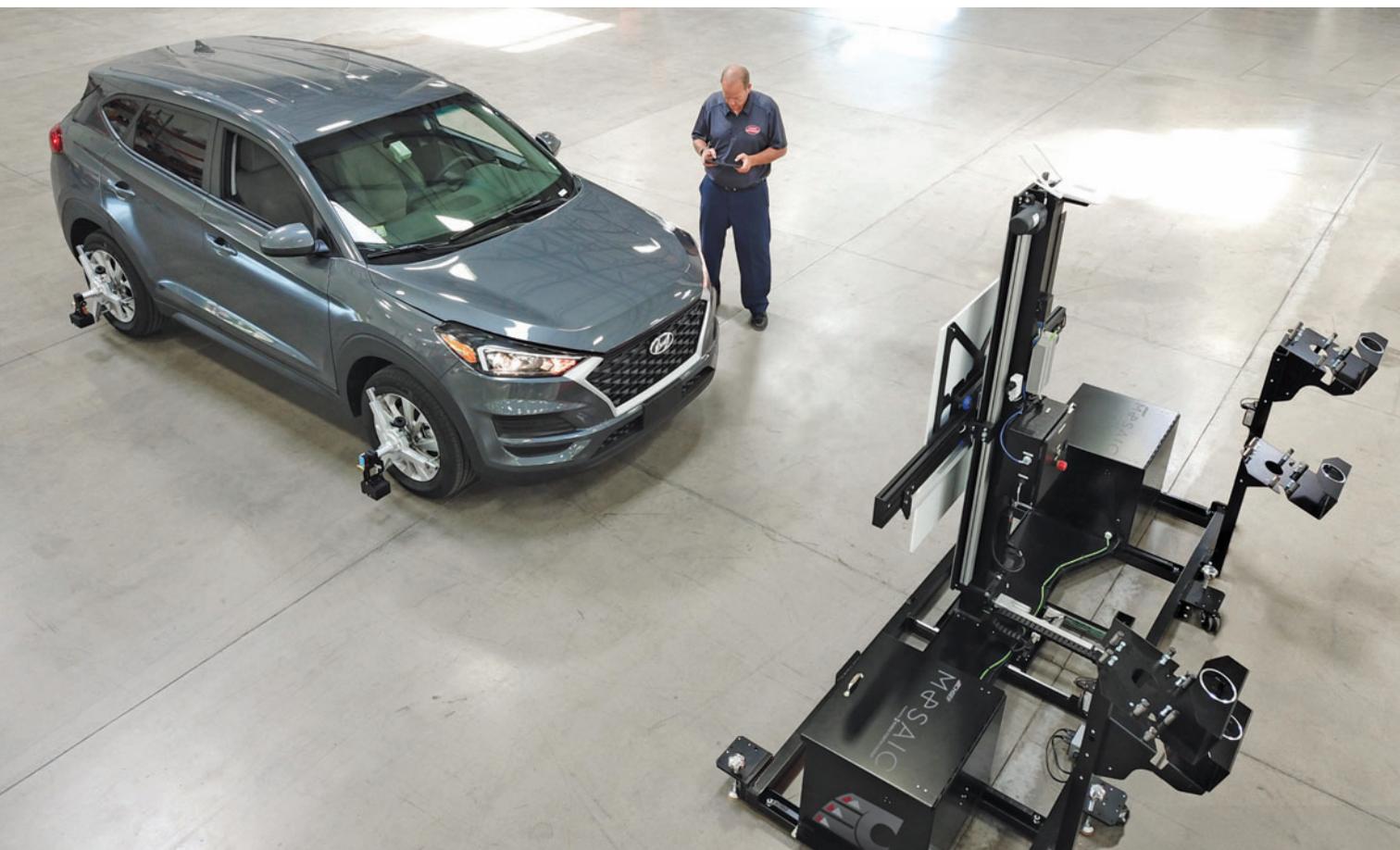
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you have access to up-to-date information to ensure you're doing the repair correctly and to OEM standards?

OEMs are continually making tweaks and adjustments to their vehicles coming off the line. As a result, it's important to look for an ADAS recalibration tool that has a direct connection to OEM data and is able to get real-time updates to the vehicle repair requirements as they become available. Having access to the most current requirements will help ensure the repairs are being done correctly and allow a shop to bring the vehicle back to factory settings. It should be noted that some aftermarket ADAS systems may not have the updated requirements for months or even a year after it was updated.

### Don't skimp on training or documenting the repair process

Training is one of the biggest challeng-

es the collision industry faces when it comes to accurate ADAS repairs. Some shops think the way they've always fixed vehicles will work. However, if shops aren't investing in the proper technician training today, they are opening themselves up to greater legal risk and increased expense down the road.

Today's technology requires technicians to be more tech savvy and understand the training requirements needed to work on a particular ADAS repair system. Are there certain training requirements that need to be met in order to use a system? Is there additional remote support provided if the technicians have questions?

As a repair shop, now is the time to seek out systems that require certified training, provide additional technical support during the repair process and document the repair to ensure it was followed and done correctly. That way,

if there's an issue down the road, you have something stating that you followed and met the repair requirements.

Shops need to make it a priority to get up to speed on requirements, testing and training needed for ADAS repair. Like any new equipment purchase, it's important to take the time to weigh and understand the options available. But don't take too long — ADAS-equipped vehicles are the future. And that future is already here. 



**MIKE COKER** joined Chief Automotive Technologies in 2014 as a Chief University instructor. He is a devoted advisor for various technical school organizations and a

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# SELLING MOBILITY AS A SERVICE: HOW WILL IT AFFECT AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR?

SOFTWARE COMPANY SYNCRON DISCUSSES HOW EMERGING TECHNOLOGY IS DRIVING WHAT SOME CALL THE 'FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION'

JAY SICHT // Contributing Editor

**A**utomotive care professionals know the value in preventive maintenance; a fluid change or leak fixed today can mean potentially avoiding a major failure down the road. But what if a vehicle could predict the future, in a sense telling you when a component is nearing failure and to allow service to be performed before that happens?

As more sensors are installed on all types of equipment and vehicles, it's not far-fetched to think of a time in the near future when a vehicle's self-diagnostics will advance to the point that the need for a major service or repair can be predicted, instead of waiting for a component to fail.

It's an evolution of the aftermarket, in which manufacturers have long had a "break/fix" business model, said Gary Brooks, chief marketing officer of Synchron. The company provides cloud-based after-sales software to OEMs in a number of industries, including but not limited to industrial equipment, warehousing and distribution, and automotive.

"They build a product, they typically sell it through a dealer, and at some point, there's high-margin parts and high-margin service that's sold into that piece of equipment," he said.



## A shift from selling vehicles to selling services as products is underway

Driving this shift to proactive maintenance and repair is what's known as "servitization," where service, and not the durable good itself, is the new product, and is what some have termed "the Fourth Industrial Revolution," Brooks said. The company explored the topic at Innovate 2019, a global leadership summit for OEMs from various industries exploring a shift to servitization, which was held last month in Stockholm, Sweden.

There are a variety of reasons, he said, why consumers are beginning to prefer to buy access to a piece of equipment (in this case, a vehicle) instead of buying it.

"I was talking with the president of aftermarket service for a large auto OEM a few weeks ago, and he said in the future, many OEMs will no longer sell cars. That's a pretty bold statement, and it's probably a decade away, but they will sell mobility as a service. There's even a new car manufacturer, Lynk & Co., that's a holding group out of China that's a new brand of vehicles that will never be sold; you can only subscribe to these vehicles."

More-common names, such as Cadillac — with its Book by Cadillac service — Care by Volvo, and Porsche Passport, currently allow a subscription for a monthly fee and access to a fleet of vehicles, delivered by concierge.

“So if I want a Panamera for the week and a 911 for the weekend, I just order up what I want. And as the subscriber, I’m no longer responsible for the maintenance of the vehicle, the tires, the wiper blades, the oil change and the insurance. I’m basically buying access to mobility.”

In fact, research by Frost & Sullivan notes that by 2025, up to 10 percent of all new and used vehicle sales — more than 16 million vehicles — will be by subscription, a number that is expected to continue to grow.

### Younger generation’s changing attitude is one factor

Demographics play a large part in the shift to products-as-service, Brooks said, with generations Y (millennials) and Z valuing access over possessions and experiences over ownership.

“It seems like they prefer to spend money on concerts, sports, wellness and restaurants, rather than caring for depreciating assets.”

The ability to quickly switch between vehicle types to support various activities: say, a pickup truck for towing a boat this weekend and a compact SUV to commute in next week, could be more economical for some buyers. And for others, it’s a desire to contribute to environmental sustainability.

### With servitization, upkeep costs shifts from operator to OEM

When products are sold as a service, the responsibility and costs associated with maintaining a vehicle shifts from the owner/operator to the OEM, which owns the asset and needs to minimize its downtime, Brooks said.

“I think we’ll see manufacturers become very creative and sophisticated in the way they maximize the uptime of that vehicle to which they’re selling access.”

Brooks said with increased computerization of durable equipment, there is now a larger number of sensors that can detect a number of parameters, including heat and vibration. Synchron Uptime collects that sensor data, and combining artificial intelligence with machine-learning, helps determine which part could be failing and then notifies the OEM so the part can be moved to a forward location. The flexibility in moving the part to where it’s needed “just in time” reduces the volume of parts needing to be stocked at the dealer, he said.

### The shift will not happen overnight

The shift from the break/fix service model will start gaining traction over the next decade, Brooks said, and most OEMs’ service networks will continue to offer traditional (to service older vehicles) and proactive maintenance service models.

Brooks drew parallels to how Netflix first entered the market, offering DVD rentals by mail while at the same time rolling out its streaming service. Brooks recalled a recent experience he had with Synchron colleagues in Tokyo.

“One night, as we’d always do, we ended up singing karaoke. And one of my colleagues requested a John Lennon song, ‘Imagine.’ There was a verse that said, ‘imagine no possessions. I wonder if you can?’ And afterward, we got into this dialogue: ‘You know, when John Lennon wrote that song, did he really have a vision of servitization, that we no longer purchase products that end up in the landfill, that we just purchase the output of these products? Did John Lennon have a vision in 1971, and it’s finally becoming reality?’”



GARY BROOKS

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**JAY SICHT** has worked in a number of roles in the automotive aftermarket for more than 25 years. Based in Columbia, Mo., he has covered all industry segments of the business as a writer and editor for 15 of those years.  
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**AFTER THIS WRECKED TOYOTA YARIS** arrived at an LKO facility, employees removed the door. Components that still function will be resold as salvage while the rest is recycled.

# POSITION ON PARTS

SALVAGE PARTS CONTINUE TO BENEFIT, DIVIDE AND CONFOUND THE REPAIR INDUSTRY

**TIM SRAMCIK** // Contributing Editor

**D**ave Farmer, owner of DAF Auto Body in Atlanta, Ga., says he still shakes his head when he recalls a “salvage trifecta” a customer and his shop experienced this summer. “This young man loved his car and was very particular how it was being fixed,” says Farmer. “When he saw the insurer wanted to use some salvage parts, he threw a fit.” Farmer says the customer equated salvage with “junk” and couldn’t believe he was paying his insurer steep monthly premiums to put used parts on a new car. After Farmer and the insurer explained how much the

salvage parts were saving on the cost of the repair (and that the customer would need to go into his own pocket to pay the difference for new parts), the customer accepted the decision.

The story took a new turn when some of the salvage parts arrived in poorer shape than advertised and needed extensive work, extending the time of the repair. Farmer blames this issue on mistakes by a new salvage yard. When the customer was informed of the delay, he again called into question the use of salvage parts. When the work was completed, he spent two hours with Farmer

and another employee going over every inch of the repair.

Two weeks later, the vehicle was towed back to the shop after the customer’s teenage brother demolished it in an accident. When the customer was informed of the total loss (and why), he took a completely different position on salvage parts. “He thought they could lower the cost enough so the insurer would repair it so he wanted them used throughout, even in areas the manufacturer specified they shouldn’t be,” says Farmer. “When we told him we wouldn’t do that work because of safety concerns,

he began calling around to other shops to see if they would, but with no luck.”

This story, in a nutshell, illustrates the relationship between the repair community and salvagers. On one hand, salvage parts are an important — sometimes vital — component in a repair since they lower costs and keep many vehicles in shops and on the road instead of being scrapped for parts themselves. On the other, repairers often must navigate a number of issues to get the best use out of them. Here are the five issues that arguably play the biggest part in the battle over salvage.

### Issue 1: Your colleagues are split on salvage parts use.

“We use salvage parts sometimes, but we try to avoid it. Maybe 10 percent of our repairs use salvage parts,” says Trace Coccimiglio, owner of Valet Auto Body in Draper, Utah and a national director for the Society of Collision Repair Specialists.

Domenic Nigro, owner of Nigro’s Auto Body in Philadelphia, shares a similar opinion, even going a bit further noting, “I really don’t want to ever use them.” Indeed, much of the industry would prefer to work exclusively with new parts, especially OEM parts.

The issue with salvage products typically is one of quality. Repairers say they are working with an unknown entity since a part could have experienced crash damage that could affect part quality. Also, there’s the matter of additional time needed to repair, prep and refinish these parts. But salvage still has its fans, including Farmer who says he relies on them to lower costs for his working-class customers. Outside of the issue he experienced with one salvage yard, he says he’s worked with others for years and built up trust with them.

Mitchell International reports that salvage parts account for 10-12 percent of parts used in the collision repair market. Financial analyst Tad Blancher argues that level could double if parts costs



**A SALVAGE PART IS CANNED** either to be inventoried or sent to a customer. The industry remains widely divided on the use of these parts.

dropped, but that won’t happen until usage increases.

Such is the puzzle the industry and salvagers are struggling to solve. Repairers need lower-priced option. Their resistance to salvaged parts makes them even less accessible. “Until shops, insurers and salvage companies can come to some sort of understanding on how to make these parts more attractive, we’re going to be stuck with the market we have for quite some time,” says Blancher.

### Issue 2: Insurers are helping to both push and restrict the use of salvage parts.

Shops typically order salvage parts when they show up on an estimate. When they do, a battle between the shop and insurers frequently breaks out over financial issues like profit margin.

“Generally, the shop’s margin is a key issue in preventing shops from purchasing more recycled parts,” says Terry Fortner, LKQ vice president Insurance, Sales and Marketing, North American Wholesale. “Historically, the margins allowed are lower and therefore this creates an issue.”

Following that issue, Fortner says collision repair facilities may not always be compensated fully for labor times including prepping and installing the recycled part.

Farmer has seen both issues in play for years. “I understand what they’re doing, but they [insurers] are probably just adding costs to themselves, ultimately. They make it difficult to use cheaper parts alternatives. That can’t be good for anyone.”

About making these parts harder to locate and use, Fortner notes a third issue that may be preventing recycled parts from being installed. “Oftentimes the salvage part does not show up in electronic databases or may not show in an accurate and useable manner,” he says. One solution to this issue is better and more effective interchange and mapping, the process of electronically mapping and communicating estimating data, specifically the correct parts information of the damaged vehicle on to the collision damage appraisal. He says information providers can assist by placing more focus and resources to address the problem. He encourages shops to reach out to LKQ for parts options. “If they will call, oftentimes we will have those components that do not show in the estimating databases. Our 1,800 highly qualified sales people are there to assist the insurance estimator and the collision repair facility,” he says.

### Issue 3: OEMs continue to limit salvage use.

Manufacturers like GM, Honda and Hyundai have issued statements rejecting the use of salvage parts to repair their vehicles. The language in GM’s statement is typical of others: “General Motors does not support the use of salvage or recycled parts due to the sensitive nature of the safety and performance of General Motors vehicles.” Further, the statement declares salvage parts pose potential risks such as:

- Compromised crush zones from previous repairs
- Additional layers of refinish materials affecting long-term durability and appearance of repair
- More complex repairs due to variations in how the assembly was stored, processed and shipped
- Exposure to use and storage conditions that have never been considered by the manufacturer.

Repairers like Nigro always check these statements and follow their recommendations. He says there are a number of salvage parts that should never be used, including any structural parts, reinforcements, roofs, quarter panels and suspensions. He also says many newer bumpers featuring crash and radar sensors can't be used, because sanding or DA work alters the tolerance, which means the sensors and critical systems like the SRS may not function as they should.

"We're also seeing a lot more windshields that can't be replaced with salvage because they're becoming structural parts," Nigro adds.

#### **Issue 4: Salvage companies are standing behind their products strongly.**

While some salvagers agree that some salvage parts may not be a repair option, Fortner says in his opinion, OEM position statements against the use of alternate parts are often generally driven by self-serving financial gain.

"How can a part be perfectly fine, as a car is being driven down the road, and two seconds later after an accident be unacceptable for use? Fortner asks.

If there are questions over parts quality, Fortner points to the confidence LKQ has in its products. "We warranty sheet metal crash parts for as long as the customer owns the vehicle."

Fortner adds, "We're the only distributor, including the OE manufacturer, that offers an expanded level of protection.



**DO SALVAGE PARTS HAVE A FUTURE** in the collision repair industry? Some analysts say the futures of both are tied together.

Please review our Promise of Protection and Promise of Calibration for our indemnification commitment to the collision repair industry."

#### **Issue 5: Salvage parts have a place in repairs, for now.**

Despite his preference to not use salvage parts, Nigro does at times and says they can have a place in the repair market. "Certain parts like hoods make sense," he says. "Use the salvage parts that you can use that make sense and don't change the integrity of the vehicle."

His main concern is customer safety, and he worries that in the rush to save money insurers and shops may be turning to solutions that endanger customers. "What is more important? Profitability? Making insurers happy? What matters most for us is protecting the customer," Nigro says.

Fortner remains firm that LKQ's salvage options do just that. Moreover, he says LKQ is "bullish" on salvage parts and says competition is an added benefit that helps both the collision repair industry and its customers.

While this part of the salvage debate continues, Blancher says there are other forces aligning that could spell doom

for much of the repair industry, including salvagers, or that could save both. As vehicles become more technologically sophisticated, with sensors and other critical, fragile electronics in increasing numbers of parts, fewer parts may be available for salvage use.

At the same time, the cost saving provided by salvage are also critical for the industry. Mixed in with all this is the fact that vehicles are quickly approaching a point where many are simply going to be too expensive to repair. "Who is going to pay \$30,000 - \$40,000 for a new vehicle that can't be repaired? That makes no sense for manufacturers, repairers, insurers or salvagers," says Blancher.

Blancher says the different groups must someday soon come together and work out a solution. "Either they're all going to win together or everyone will lose," he says.

The question is whether the industry will have any better luck finding a solution than Farmer's hard-luck customer. ❏



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

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As an owner or manager, it is important to step back and analyze your performance in order to ensure continued professional growth and success. The first step is to take pause from the day-to-day operations and examine how much time you are working after the posted closing time of the business. While a business may thrive due to the hours and amount of work the owner produces, it may not be a sustainable model if only the owner or manager is making this success possible. To grow, outperform and succeed in your business you must be able to achieve success through people. The barometer of success will be the amount of time you are spending after your posted closing time at work. Knowing whether you are staying 15 minutes, 1 hour or 3 hours after closing is key to gauging your effectiveness as a leader.

Once you know how much time is being worked after the posted closing time, it is time to analyze what type of work is being done after hours and why. This will provide great insight into where improvements are possible. There are two types of work performed after hours: working on the business and working in the business. Working on the business is staying after closing to refine SOPs, perform training or any other activity geared toward strengthening and growing the business. Working in the business is when you are staying late washing a car, writing an estimate, locking and securing the premises for the night or completing another coworker's task. Most often after-hours work can be



## ADDRESSING INEFFICIENCIES IN YOUR BUSINESS THAT ARE CAUSING YOU TO WORK LATE PAYS HUGE DIVIDENDS.

traced back to an inefficient upstream process that is delivering late or low-quality products.

Addressing inefficiencies in your business that are causing you to work late pays huge dividends. While many owners believe that doing whatever it takes to deliver a car on the day it is scheduled is a valiant effort and a winning scenario, it can actually burn out and disengage employees if the current process is causing them to work late as well. To enable efficient closing of the business at the posted closing time requires documented procedures that empower employees and drive efficiency and accountability. While creating the written procedures may take work, operating a business without written procedures takes far more work from fewer individuals. To enable on-time business closing requires on-time, high-quality products and communication by all upstream processes. It also requires certain closing operations be performed every day. Tasks

such as powering off equipment, setting thermostats, draining compressors, staging vehicles, securing the parking lot and turning off the lights are all procedures that can be documented and delegated to trusted employees. Depending on the task and the security level related to the business, roles can be split among different trusted employees. The results will be evidenced by the differential in the closing time on the front door and the actual closing time for the manager or owner.

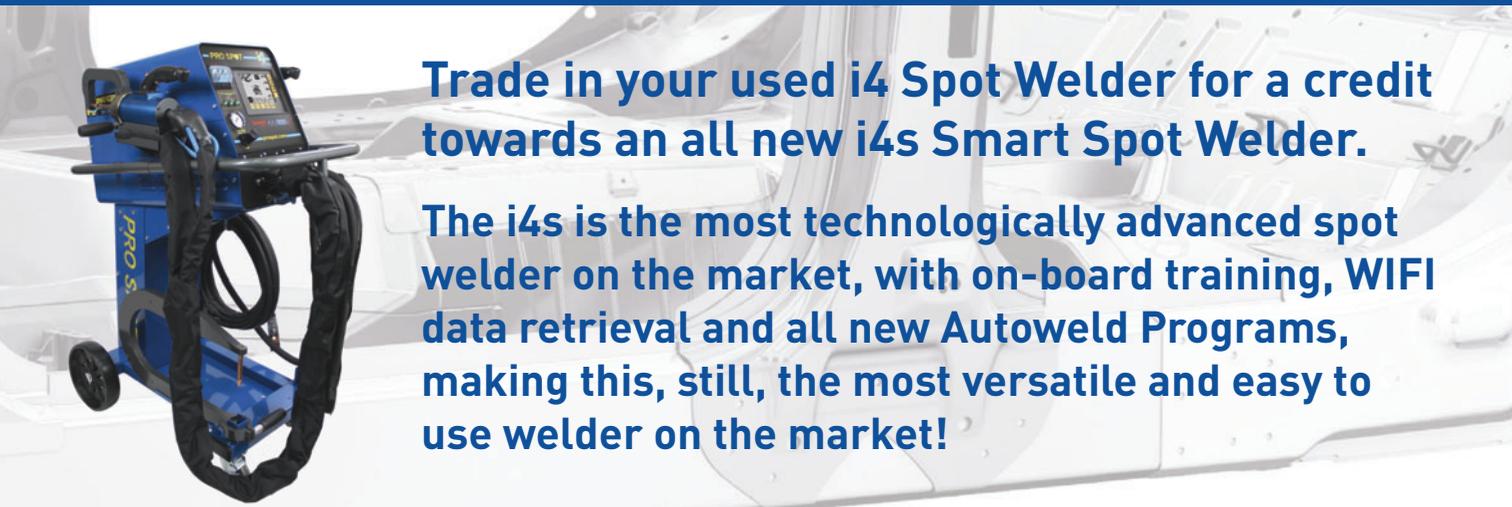
Analyzing, creating and streamlining your business's closing process can pay huge dividends. It can make your business operate more efficiently while it is open. It can create more time for you to spend working on the business to grow it when it is closed. It can create more time to spend in your personal life. Your success is only limited by your ability to achieve with your team. Creating written processes is a key step to letting your team know what you need from them and enabling you to operate more efficiently as an owner or manager. 📧

**WILL LATUFF** is a manager of Latuff Brothers Auto Body in St. Paul, Minn. He is an active member of AASP-MN, participating on the board of directors as well as serving as AASP-MN Collision Division director. [wlatuff@latuffbrothers.com](mailto:wlatuff@latuffbrothers.com)

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