

**Issue:
July
2023**



Wisconsin Collision Repair Professionals

The Body Shop Advocate

~ WE ALL DO BETTER TOGETHER ~



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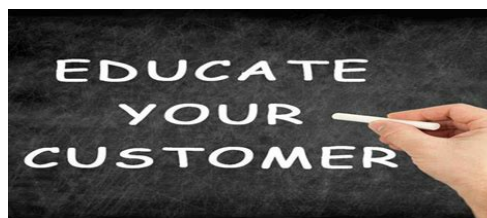
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FROM THE DESK OF OUR PRESIDENT

COMMUNICATION IS KEY!



In this month's Advocate we are focusing on communication. One of the most common areas of communication in our industry is keeping customers updated as to drop-off time, repair progress and pick-up time. Someone once told me that it is not possible to "over communicate," but the most sure-fire way to upset a customer (and lower your CSI) is under communicating. In this time of parts delays and all the other issues that we run into that delay a repair; it is critical to keep the customer updated. If you ever get a call asking, "will my car be ready by Friday as promised?" - then you have dropped the ball. Also, make sure you return voice mails (and e-mails) as quickly as possible, hopefully the same day. It's bad enough that a customer doesn't get an update on their vehicle, but when they call to ask about it and must leave a voice mail and it doesn't get returned, a bad image of your business just got dramatically worse. Put yourself in their shoes. How do you feel when you call a business needing an answer to something, only to get sent to voice mail and leaving a message that doesn't get a reply? How does that affect your perception of the dependability of that business?

Last month we discussed customer co-pays (see the poll results from last month's survey on this below). This is probably one of the most important areas where communication with the customer is critical. We must take the time to explain to them the changes that are going on in the insurance industry, and why a co-pay may be necessary. The key is to keep the lines of communication between you and the customer open!

For more tips on good communication, see the article below by Jason Wong from Body Shop Business, and also the Guest Editorial on communication with insurance adjusters.

Larry Terrien



Do you feel the refinish times are accurate for 3-stage refinishing in your estimating system?

Yes

Select

No

Select



We had 17 responses to last month's poll question of **Does your shop utilize customer co-pays?**

Yes-7

No-5

No but we plan to soon-5

MEET THE MEMBERS



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333 N Shawano St, New London

BODYSHOP BUSINESS

Good Communication Helps Ensure Happy Customers

Having a good customer communication plan helps ensure customers and insurers have an equal understanding of the repair process, what will and won't be covered and the outcome for their vehicle.

By [Jason Wong](#) / June 5, 2023



When it comes to delivering a high-quality repair, part of that process is the actual repair and part of it is how you communicate that process to the customer and insurance company. It's already an emotional situation for a customer – they've been in an accident, they may be recovering from injuries, there's the financial stress related to their second-biggest investment and they're dealing with a complex repair process involving their insurance company, a collision repair facility and other entities.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Nothing Changes, if Nothing Changes

The following is a reply received during a rate disagreement:



"Okay, I know we disagree on rates, just wondering about the rest. I'd like to be able to give the customer an idea about what his out of pocket will be. **Usually we can work around rates by adding other operations or increasing times** but you already had that covered pretty well. As far as the **blend procedure written as full refinish*** and saving the block style aftermarket nameplate, I don't think we're being unreasonable in any way. Please let me know what you come up with"

ABC Insurance, Field appraiser, motor vehicle physical damage claims.

Damn it! The above highlight illustrates the continuing problem facing labor rate increases. The insurance industry (upper room people) feel they're controlling costs, yet, in reality, they are causing their own staff and our industry to work around honest inflation via dubious methods. This type of cost shifting must be stopped. The services we provide are far too important to gloss over and shift about. Transparency and documentation should be our new calling.

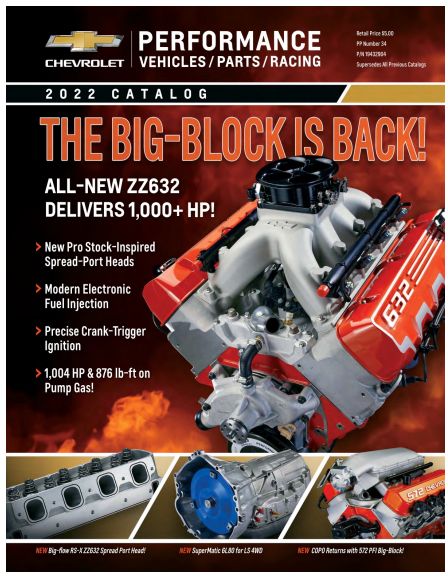
It all lies in what we continue to accept. Today's technician is in charge of repairing one of the the most sophisticated machines man has created to date. Yet, they function under outdated rates and allowances that have not been reviewed in decades. When do you suppose this will change?

It will only change when YOU initiate that change!

Farther below is a Worth Repeating re-post of an article from a past Advocate. It applies equally well today. The more shops demand compensation for honest increases, honest needs and required services, the sooner that change will occur.

I hope I'm still here.
Steve

***In this case, doing a blend vs. full refinish would have resulted in a loss of 1.5 refinish hours and materials. (see the [Blend Study](#) by SCRS)**



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Thriving in Chaos! During this Body Shop Management Tip of the Week, Dave explains why some shops thrive and some shops fail in a world full of chaos! Please like & share. [Click here for the video](#)

If you would like some complimentary assistance creating a plan for your future, book a call with Dave here <https://daveluehr.mykajabi.com/elite-consult>



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Mask for Primer

Mask labor and material cost for Primer application is a NON INCLUDED operation in all three estimating systems: Audatex, CCC and Mitchell.

[Continue reading here](#)

WORTH REPEATING

What is Our Fear of Taking a Stand, and Saying NO?!

Few people like to say NO, and even fewer like to hear it... A word that could ease a lot of the industry woes. A word that can be used in a professional tone.



NO. There's a lot of power in that little word...I encourage you to use it more! Some examples of how I've been utilizing it more lately:

- **NO**, I cannot concede to outdated labor rates.
- Sorry, but **NO**, used parts require 35% markup, not cost x .25.
- **NO**, that supplier is well outside my market area.
- This is a required part, procedure or service, so, **NO**, it's NOT included.
- **NO** we cannot utilize the blend operation as blend allowances have now been proven woefully short in time and materials. Full refinish is the standard practice of

this shop.

A **NO** to a lot of things will result in a **YES** to better things and certainly a better overall future.

It's amazing the credit you get when you finally stand your ground and just say **NO when you're justified**, thus the reason for knowing your true costs. I'm not advocating NO for arguments sake. **KNOW** your costs, **KNOW** your business, **KNOW** when you're in the right. Then you can negotiate from a position of confidence. That confidence will replace the emotions that inevitably surface at the wrong time. You pick what and when.

At some point the industry needs to redirect its path. Will we be initiating that change?

Steve

ESTIMATE TIPS



Which of the following are you giving away?

- 1) Welding consumables
- 2) EPA & solid waste disposal
- 3) Color sand & buff



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262-542-7707

E-mail: wcrpinfo@gmail.com

Website: www.WCRP.pro