

Gauging Customer Satisfaction (CSI)



**ABAC Rebuttal:
Who is YOUR Real Customer?**

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ABAC President's Message

Bob Amendola

Quality Control



Simply put, quality control is a management position.

It is one of the most important components of our day-to-day operations. There must be a stopgap between the repairer and the customer.

While quality control occurs throughout the entire repair process, the post-repair final inspection and road test are of the utmost importance.

Aside from obvious reasons, I truly think that multiple eyes on a vehicle significantly decrease the chance of missing something and a check list can also help alleviate that risk. A checklist should include: testing that all lights are working properly, pre-

repair scans, post-repair scans, doors and windows functioning properly, battery cable secured, wheels and tires, etc.

The more thorough the quality inspection, the less "comebacks" and therefore more customer reviews and testimonials as well as an overall stronger CSI (Customer Satisfaction Index) rating.

With the growing complexity of today's vehicles, attention to detail has never been more necessary. I believe that we are repairing at levels of importance that parallel the aircraft industry. Therefore, we must make sure we are operating with an abundance of caution, providing continuous training and enforcing a system of checks and balances, so to speak. The stakes are too high not to.

Now, we all know that the aforementioned processes take time as well as cost money and resources to perform. Remember, you do not need to work for free. Operations like repair procedure research and post-repair road tests are chargeable operations. You are entitled to be compensated for the work you do.

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Remember that as the repairer, it is our sole responsibility to repair vehicles properly and safely. We bear the liability, not the insurance company. It is up to us as the "quality controllers" to make sure that we are actually researching the proper repair methods and performing all of the necessary safety inspections.

We must guide our technicians and coach them. Use the moments when a correction is needed as a teaching moment. It starts and ends with us.

I'd like to remind everyone that on Tuesday November 9th, 2021, we are returning to LIVE meetings. Please join us at Seasons, 990 Foxon Rd in East Haven for our Quarterly Membership meeting. (Yes, the place with the TERRIFIC Hors D'Oeuvres!) Watch your email for more information. To reserve your seats contact Heather at 203-767-5731 or email her at abacadmin.heather@gmail.com.

Thank you for your continued partnership and I look forward to meeting with you very soon.

All the best,

Bob

Bob Amendola
Autoworks of Westville - New Haven
President - Auto Body Association of Connecticut



**Unity is Strength
Knowledge is Power
Attitude is Everything**

ReButtal: Who Is YOUR Real Customer

Recently, there was an article that appeared in **Body Shop Business (July 2021)** that was written by California Collision Shop Owner Lee Amaradio Jr. who is the president and founder of Faith Quality Auto Body Inc. in Murrieta, California. The title of the article is ***"Who is the real 'customer' in the auto body shop?"***

In his article the writer says *"California law states that my customer is the vehicle owner, and the entire collision industry says the same thing. The vehicle owner is my customer, yes? But I'm about to not only question that statement but disagree with it completely."*

He goes on to give his interpretation of who the customer is, in his opinion.

The Auto Body Association of Connecticut doesn't agree with Amaradio's position and reached out to ABAC and industry friend, Tony Lombardozi, President of The CCRE and Co-Founder at Superare Marketing + Advertising for his valued opinion. The following is Mr. Lombardozi's rebuttal to that article.



When I was first approached by the ABAC and asked if I might comment on this article, I must admit that at first, I thought not, but then I realized that the topic of this article was an important issue that needs to be thoroughly understood by our industry. ***The following is my opinion:***

In most states, the customer is defined as the vehicle owner or his/her authorized representative. Once that person signs a repair contract with a repair facility, he/she becomes your customer and, as such, is the only one that will negotiate with the shop owner as to what repairs will or will not be performed. Now, I know that everyone will tell you that's great, but

what happens when you are pressured by an insurer who is unwilling to allot enough money to your customer to pay your completed bill that is based upon documented information? This is time to get your customer involved in the process and you might assist them in explaining what must be done to discuss the unpaid amount with their insurer. I know that this is difficult to understand, but it is not your battle to fight. You must understand that two contracts are at issue here. The contract of insurance between your customer and their insurer and the contract of repair between you and your customer. These two contracts are like parallel lines, they are separate and should never intermingle. When you involve yourself with the insurer, you muddy the waters, and the outcome is usually not in your favor. More on this in another article.

THE DRP ISSUE

Many shops today have direct repair contracts with insurers and believe that the insurer is their customer. All may be well and good, but there are many issues with these types of relationships. First and foremost is the well-known fact that ***you can't serve two masters.***

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In many instances, when a DRP shop and an insurer compromise on a repair plan the vehicle owner is left out of the discussion on what has taken place. Most consumer issues stem from the fact that they assumed the DRP shop was working on their behalf, when, in essence, that was not the case, and the consumer was left out of the picture. Also, in some states, it is considered the **unauthorized practice of law** for a repairer to negotiate a settlement on behalf of the vehicle owner. Many of the critical issues in our industry are caused by the DRP relationships with repairers.

CAN YOU STILL MAINTAIN YOUR CUSTOMER DATABASE?

I believe that you can. Maintaining it may be a little different than what it was in the past, but it is still possible to keep most of your database. A major change is having to market to your customers more frequently and not just when they need your services. Keeping in touch with them more often and educating them as to why they should use your facility as they did in the past, and what to do if an insurer might try to steer them elsewhere. You worked hard the first time to get them to choose your shop, so make sure you stay in touch and help guarantee they will return to you when necessary.

LIABILITY FOR REPAIRS

The repair shops are ultimately responsible for all repairs they perform, so why should they allow a third party to force them into compromising repair quality, safety, or monetary value? If I, as a shop owner, must assume one hundred percent of the liability, then I should make one hundred percent of all the decisions concerning a proper, safe, and profitable repair.

EDUCATION

Many of you believe it is impossible to overcome the pressure insurers place on repairers, but I will tell you, from my experience, it can be done. It is not easy, but it is ethical and rewarding when accomplished. Participating in seminars and meetings that are hosted by your local ABAC can help you solve these issues. Learning to remove the insurer from the repair transaction is difficult but very rewarding when accomplished. If you want to solve these industry problems, you must be both **involved** and **committed**.

The next time you are having a ham and egg breakfast, remember that the chicken was involved, but the pig was committed.

AS A SIDE NOTE

In 2008 there was a legal case involving Jim's Auto Body and the DMV which was to determine if the insurer was the customer and was able to file a complaint against the shop with the DMV. The determination in that instance was that the insurer was the customer for the purpose of filing a complaint. Attorney John Parese wrote an article previously in the ABAC News about this case. Always check with an attorney on what types of documents or contracts are necessary to run your business properly. Remember, your contract of repair is between you and the vehicle owner ("your only real customer").

As you probably know, the debate of this topic could continue in great depth. This rebuttal just touches the surface of what we need to know. Who knows, maybe we can continue this discussion in another issue of the ABAC News. Continue reading this publication and maybe more discussion of this topic will be addressed soon.

Tony

On the Minds of Members

Customer Satisfaction

This is another in a series of interviews that will be appearing in the ABAC News going forward. We will be contacting ABAC Members and Directors each edition for their input on many topics that can assist and help ABAC Members in their businesses.

We spoke with Tony Ferraiolo - A&R Auto Specialty; Ashley Burzenski - Autoworks of Westville, John Saturno - Skrip's Auto Body and Kevin Clavette - Ace Auto Body on the subject of Customer Appreciation as well as other customer related questions.

How do you gauge your Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI)

Tony: Currently we have our Mitchell System provide CSI Scoring through our OEM Certification Programs. Mitchell contacts our customers randomly to gauge their satisfaction with our facility. Unfortunately, Mitchell does not provide us with any of this feedback as they only use this information for Certification Programs. So, we are on our own to gauge our CSI. Here in my operation, we send out a follow-up letter to each customer at the end of the month thanking them for choosing our facility, and asking the basic questions about our service, the quality of the repair, the cleanliness of their vehicle, etc. and ask them to contact us if there were any issues. We are in the process of discussing using an outside independent company that will gauge our customer satisfaction or adding another individual in our shop to make follow-up calls and speak directly with our customers. This option (adding a person) in my opinion, would probably be the best avenue for us since they, as an employee, would have A&R's best interest in mind when having a conversation with our customer. This employee would contact the customer after a couple of weeks to engage in a conversation about their experience with my shop. I also think the "personal touch" would be more appreciated by the customer than a random, scripted phone call.

Ashley: We gauge our CSI in-house. We have a conversation with our customer to measure their satisfaction. We ask them if we've fixed their car to their satisfaction, are there any questions you may have, was their vehicle repaired in a timely manner; just engage the customer and try to keep an open dialogue. At this point we ask the customer that, if they are satisfied to please leave a Google Review about Autoworks of Westville, online. We also send out a survey, after we close out their file, basically asking the same questions and again, if they are happy to please share their experience on our Facebook page or leave a Google Review. As most of you know, we have a strong presence on Social Media so we like to hear from our customers which, in turn, is of value to other potential NEW customers.

John: We use CSI through CCC1 estimating system to gauge satisfaction. They send a couple updates about the repair process and sends the customer a survey upon completion. We do our best to keep the customer updated with any delays such as parts and supplement inspections.

Kevin: We gauge customer satisfaction by sending out an email after the repairs are completed. In the email we thank them for their business and ask them if there are any ways that we can improve on our service. If they don't have any issues I ask them to leave a review on one of our social media platforms.

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How do you retain customers?

Tony: I believe that the first step in keeping customers is educating them. Let them know their rights and make sure that insurance companies aren't steering them. Performing proper and safe repairs and satisfying your customers is going to bring them back if they ever need your services in the future. Retaining customers is all about your relationship with them also. A customer who feels confident that they are dealing with an honest and ethical business will most always be loyal. Since we don't use much social media, "word of mouth" advertising goes a long way in keeping customers happy and having them recommend us to a friend or family member. That is the best compliment we could ask for. Most of our customers are referrals from satisfied customers. We're very proud that we still do it the old-fashioned way. This is how I built my business; this is how I have run my business. Being fair and honest with my customers. Our online presence is minimal. So, to me, it seems the best way to retain my customer is to give them a quality product at a reasonably fair price.

Ashley: Post-repair, we place a brochure in our customer's car glove box, reinforcing the quality of repairs that we do, a little history of our shop and who we are, other service that we provide, how to contact us and most importantly, what to do in case of another accident. One of the key things we do while interacting with the customer is to make sure that they know we value them as a customer. They are not just another repair customer. A strong rapport with your customer will go a long way to making them remember you and how you treated them like "family" which is what we stress to them.

John: The dialogue throughout the repair helps retain the customer. The quality and the attention to detail retains the customer as well. Customer satisfaction is a job well done right? When they pick up, we are sure to thank them and treat them like they're number one.

Kevin: To retain our customers we simply send out Holiday cards. But I also put a final bill folder with all of our contact information, and "what to do if you get into an accident" in the customers glove box. This way if they do get into an accident again, when they go into their glove box to get their insurance info, my company info is there as well.

How do you handle Customer Appreciation?

Tony: I think giving our customers "added value" services such as, cleaning their cars, inspecting for any other damage, maybe applying a bit of touch up paint to some nicks on their vehicle. We like to do whatever we can especially for our customers who have referred other customers to us. Again, I like to call it "added value" service. We recently held our 30th Anniversary Celebration where we invited all of our customers to stop by for refreshments and enjoy the car show that was there. A couple of ideas we are tossing around is a Car Care Clinic where we could perhaps show the customer how to take care of the outside of their car, what to use to keep the outside of it clean and protected. Another is a Car Wash where we could offer free car washes and inspection to possibly upsell some work. One other thing that we do is we send out Christmas Cards to all our customers. Our database goes back 30 years. 2 years ago, we mailed out over 4500 Christmas Cards! It's a massive task and adds up to a lot of postage but to this day, we still get customers who stop in and thank is for remembering them at the holidays! It really makes a difference.

Ashley: Thank you cards. It is a tried-and-true method. Customers appreciate when you recognize that they allowed you to fix their vehicle. Let's not forget that our customers TRUST that we will repair their vehicle correctly. We need to thank them for their business.

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John: Back in the day we did air fresheners, key tags, paint protection literature. Not sure if all that works. We do give out calendars at Christmas.

Who do you consider YOUR customer?

Tony: Our customer is the registered vehicle owner. PERIOD. Even if the customer is a referral, they are still YOUR customer. For anyone who says that the insurance company is their customer is wrong. **Insurance companies DO NOT REPAIR VEHICLES!** Insurance companies just indemnify customers. And, as ABAC members, we are supplied with professionally legal documents such as Customer Repair Contracts and to this date, an insurance company has never signed one in my shop!

Ashley: There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the owner of the vehicle is THE customer. There is no doubt. It is their vehicle. They own it, which means it is their choice of how it's fixed and ultimately also their choice of who and where they have their vehicle repaired. The insurance company is indemnifying them for the loss. The insurance company is NOT our customer. The insurance company does not care about our best interests so I'm not sure why someone would be working for them and not worrying about the vehicle owner. The insurance company is not concerned with the quality and workmanship that goes into repairing a vehicle. The insurance company only cares about one thing; keep the loss low! I've yet to see an insurance company sign a Repair Contract for any of the vehicle we've repaired to date!

Submitted by Don Cushing

Responding to customer complaints is an art, opportunity

By apologizing for not meeting a customer's expectations, you are not admitting guilt or agreeing to any particular remedy.

It's the notice no shop owner likes to see: An alert from your customer service indexing (CSI) provider letting you know a customer voiced a complaint. What's your best course of action to respond?

At my business, I would begin by calling the customer to apologize that we didn't meet their expectations. That wording was chosen very carefully. I never apologize for them being unhappy.

In business, your job is to make someone satisfied, not happy. If that customer is going through a divorce, their kids are acting up, they lost their job or had a death in the family, they aren't likely to be happy. Remember, they just had a car accident. Your goal is to make them satisfied.

By apologizing for not meeting their expectations, you also are not admitting guilt or agreeing to any particular remedy.

My next question to the customer: What can I do to re-earn your trust? Keep in mind that the most important thing consumers look for when they choose a shop is someone they can trust. You may have lost their trust if they are complaining about their experience. So, I suggest simply asking, "Mr. Jones, what can I do to re-earn your trust?" I have found most of the time what Mr. Jones asks for is pretty reasonable.

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I also suggest almost never agreeing to a particular resolution until you have seen the vehicle in person.

We used a simple “complaint resolution” form at my business to help us track complaints and ensure we followed up. Send me an email for a copy of the form. Essentially it asks for the customer and vehicle information, the repair order number and the technicians that worked on the vehicle. The form has a place to explain the basics of the complaint, as well as a place to track what contact was made with the customer and what actions are being taken.

The person filling out the form has to answer if the complaint was resolved to the customer’s expectations, and if the customer would refer others to us in the future.

It is the bottom portion of the form that is most important, however. There, the employee completing the form could describe what action the shop could take to prevent the same type of complaint from happening again, including if any coaching of the employees involved was needed and completed.

The “five whys” can sometimes help with this process. Getting to the root of a problem sometimes requires asking “why” five times:

Why was Mr. Jones not satisfied with our service? Because his car wasn’t ready until a day later than we promised.

Why was his car delivered a day late? Because we were waiting for a part.

Why wasn’t the part here? It didn’t get ordered until the car was ready to go.

Why didn’t it get ordered sooner? It was, but we didn’t know until then that we actually had the wrong part.

Why didn’t we know we had the wrong one? Because we didn’t mirror-match when it arrived.

However you address the issue internally, letting the customer know you are doing so can be helpful. Many customers like the idea that not only was their problem resolved, but as a result you also are making an effort to correct what led to that problem.

When I was exchanging emails on this topic with some colleagues in the industry, Robert Rick of Gates Business Solutions brought up a good point. He said that some shops use a CSI service that sends a survey form to the customer, only following up by phone if the survey isn’t returned within a certain period. Although this is a good system, one problem is the insurer may contact that customer before the shop has heard about and resolved the customer’s complaint. Robert pointed out that getting your CSI provider to the customer more quickly can help your shop avoid this situation.

While no one likes getting customer complaints, they do offer you an opportunity to improve your operation. If handled well, you can turn these customers into some of your shop’s biggest fans and spokespersons.

Mike Anderson, a former shop owner, currently operates COLLISIONADVICE.COM, a training and consulting firm. He also acts as a facilitator for DuPont Performance Services’ Business Council 20-groups.

Texting: A Major Timesaver & Customer Service Booster

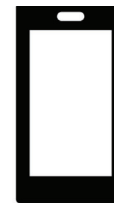


ABAC Vice-President - Ashley Burzenski

In an effort to save time and increase communication with our customers, we recently started offering our customers the option to communicate by text. We spent quite awhile researching and comparing our options. Some programs seemed to be too extensive with a higher price tag while others would require us to add another phone line. Ultimately, we landed on a service called Zipwhip. The basic plan seemed to be enough to get us started and was budget-friendly at around \$30 per month. Our comcast phone number was compatible, and after a quick automated verification call over the phone, we were up and running. The service is used through their app

which we downloaded to both our computers and phones. The aesthetic of the program mirrors what a standard text message thread and inbox looks like so it is very simple and user friendly. Within the app, you can quickly save and label the contacts as you text new numbers. One of the biggest reasons why we're loving this is that our own personal phone numbers remain confidential because we are texting through the app from our business line.

As a way to ask (and keep track) of a customer's preferred method of communication, we added a 1-page sheet to our check-in process. It seems to go a long way with customers to create a simple, seamless repair process. Many have selected texting as their preferred method of communication while some prefer a phone call. Using the sheets in each file as a point of reference has been very helpful during this transition to make sure we are considerate of their request.



Communication Preference

In an effort to provide added convenience, our phone number is now textable.

Please indicate your preferred method of communication regarding **repair status updates, drop-off/pickup etc.** below by checking off your selection:

- ☐ Text _____
- ☐ Call _____
- ☐ Email _____

From an efficiency standpoint, our team has also been loving this new option. We've found that utilizing texts and emails to provide quick updates, has helped increase efficiency and has saved so much time that would be otherwise be spent on the phone, leaving voicemails and waiting for a return call.

If you're interested in getting started texting, feel free to email or call me (or text me!) and I'd be happy to show you how to get started.

All the best,

Ashley

**Ashley Burzenski can be reached at
autoworksofwestville@gmail.com**

Name: _____

New Study Reveals How Consumers Choose an Auto Body Shop



Running an auto body repair shop is a very competitive business and the hardest part of marketing a shop is often getting customers to walk through the door to talk with you. Why? Because more and more customers are doing their research online.

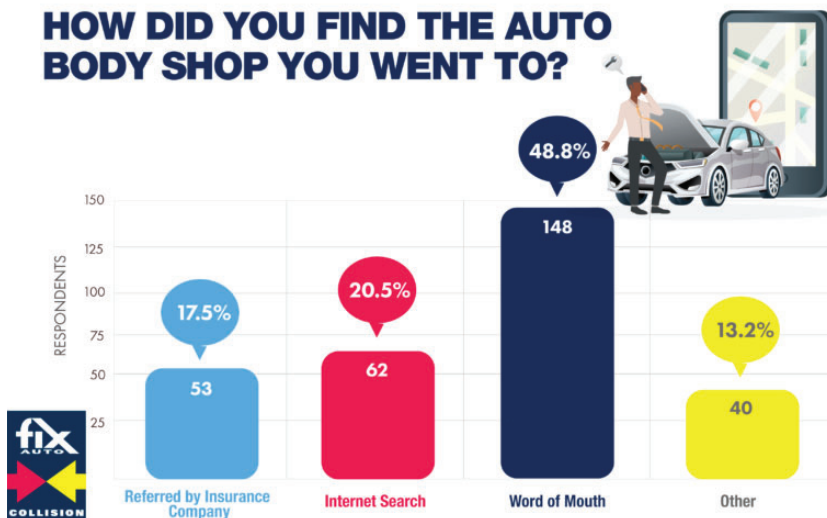
Internet and social media have a big impact on how auto body customers choose a shop. Hence, we surveyed over 300 customers who got their car repaired within the last six months. At Fix Auto USA, we wanted to learn more about how auto body customers make those decisions. What they do online when looking for an auto body shop and why they do it.

Tools and technologies aren't the only things changing in the auto body industry – so are our customers and how they select a shop after they get into an accident. This white paper discusses six of the most significant findings from the survey and how they can help an auto body business grow. We believe that the more we know about our customers, the more we can do a better job of meeting their needs.

1. How Customers Find Your Business

Most people don't think about auto body repair until they need it. That's why one of the biggest marketing challenges with body shops is getting people to think of your business first when the time comes. Our survey indicated three primary ways people find body shops.

HOW DID YOU FIND THE AUTO BODY SHOP YOU WENT TO?



Word of mouth.

Nearly half (49%) of the customers we surveyed found their body shop via word of mouth. In other words, a friend, colleague, or someone they trust recommended the shop. The key point here is that people don't recommend a business unless they have a great experience with it. If your shop isn't getting referrals, it could be worth digging into the overall customer experience your shop delivers.

A great customer experience starts with quality repair work. But, that's only one aspect of a customer's total experience with your shop. Customers also consider how they were treated by everyone they came in contact with at your business. Was your staff friendly and personable? Did you answer all their questions in a timely manner that they understood? Was your shop clean and professional? Did you complete the repairs when you said you would?

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Keep in mind that people are more likely to remember a bad experience than a good one. If something goes wrong, take responsibility for it and strive to make it right on behalf of your customers. Also, take a look at how you measure customer satisfaction. Are you automating feedback methods? Are you paying attention to your Yelp or Google reviews? Are you doing anything offline? When it comes to marketing, feedback – whether good or bad – is the breakfast of champions.

Internet search.

About one in five (21%) of survey participants found their body shop through an internet search. This brings up two key points, starting with the online presence of your body shop. Where do you show up on the major search engines? According to [various studies](#), the first position on Google gets about 33% of available traffic. At least 75% of clicks go to the first page of search results. If you're not at least on the first page, the odds of people visiting your site aren't good. Organic (unpaid) search techniques can help improve your search ranking, but you may want to consider paid ads to get the highest ranking and quicker results.

The second point has to do with trust. If people are searching the internet for an auto body shop they probably don't have a recommendation, or they're performing their own research. This means you need to build trust with them via your web site. To build trust, post content that provides real value to site visitors and positions you as an expert in your field. Customer-focused content can include blogs, articles, white papers, pictures, and videos. Every piece should include a call to action to motivate readers to contact your shop, but the content should help people feel they can trust you to provide quality repairs on their car.

Insurer referrals.

18% of survey respondents found their body shop through an insurance referral. Insurance companies only recommend shops they know and trust, so if you're not getting many of these referrals, evaluate your relationship with local insurance companies to see how you can improve them. Are you engaging the insurance community in meaningful conversation? Are you responsive to their needs as well as the needs of your vehicle owner customers? Are you consistently delivering the top-quality work that insurance companies are looking for?

2. The Importance of Making a Good First Impression

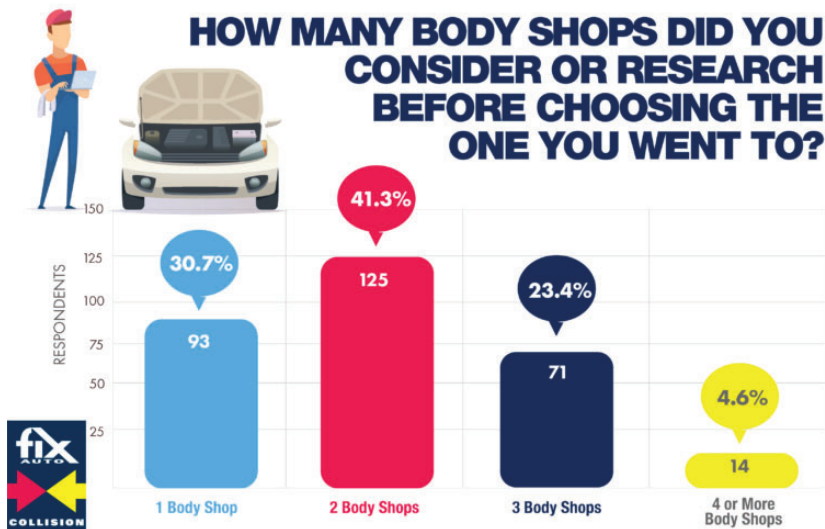
Selecting a body shop is an important decision, so one might think that people would consider several different shops before making a decision. Somewhat surprisingly, our survey showed the opposite. 41% of respondents only considered two body shops before making a decision, while 31% only considered one. 23% considered three total shops. This reinforces the importance of getting in front of customers right away and how much people trust word of mouth recommendations.

Our survey results suggest that if you don't make the customer's "short list," you won't get the business because they're not going to look anywhere else; or at least it's a lot tougher. That's why your business needs to show up high in the search engine rankings, have a web site that builds trust, and have a strong social media presence. When you become one of the two or three shops under consideration, making a strong first impression with the customer can often make the difference.

When someone only considers one body shop before making a decision, chances are they were recommended to the shop by a trusted friend – another reason why shops need to focus on giving customers an experience so good they will tell others about it.

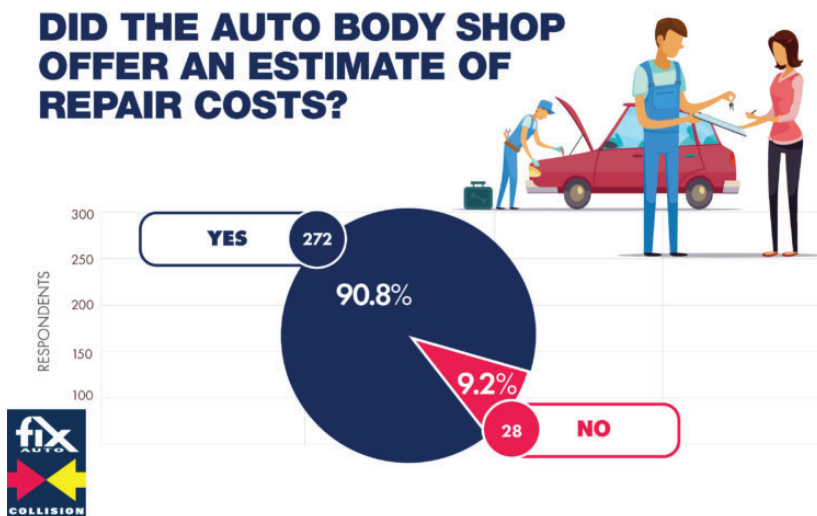
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3. Why Customers Choose an Auto Body Shop

Customers evaluate many criteria when choosing an auto body shop, including location, reviews, pricing, reputation, services offered, and more. In our survey, 25% identified estimated pricing as the most important factor in their decision. This suggests that giving a bad estimating experience will drive one out of four potential customers to a competitor.



What causes a bad estimating experience? In many cases, it's a lack of communication, an indifferent attitude, or both. In our survey, nine percent of participants said they didn't receive an estimate of repair costs, while 10% said the shop failed to clearly communicate the repair costs. To deliver a satisfactory estimating experience:

Provide a thorough, accurate, and written estimate

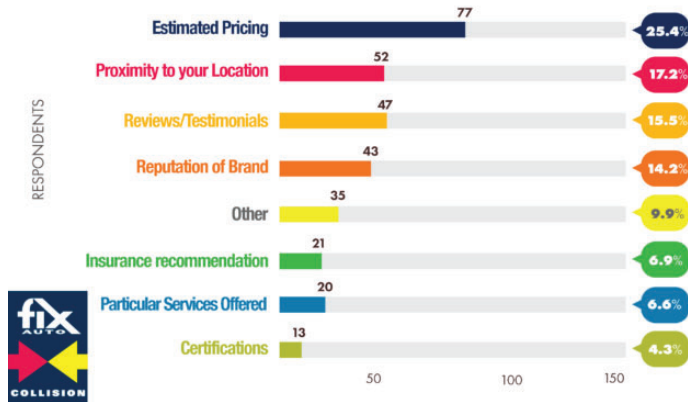
- List all repairs that are needed and why
- Welcome customer questions and answer them promptly
- Make sure customers fully understand the estimate before proceeding with the repairs

The second most frequent decision factor was proximity to the customer (17%). This was followed by reviews and testimonials (15%) and your brand reputation (14%). To motivate customers to choose your business, make it easy to find your shop on your website and different platforms such as Google and Yelp. Encourage customers to review your shop on Yelp, Facebook, and other review web sites.

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OUT OF THESE FACTORS, WHICH WAS MOST IMPORTANT WHEN SELECTING A BODY SHOP?



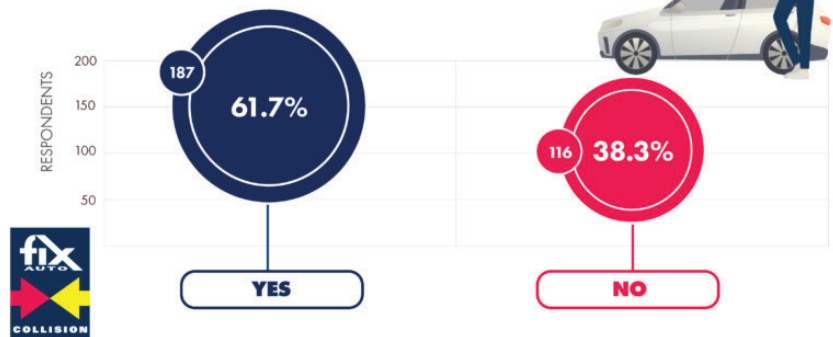
Also, focus your marketing on the area around your shop, especially if you are in a large city. If you struggle to get customer reviews, you may want to consider using a [customer interaction service provider](#).

Finally, make sure your web site is optimized for use on mobile devices, so people can access it when searching on their phones or tablets.

4. Why Great Reviews Outweigh Proximity

As previously noted, proximity of the shop slightly edged positive reviews and testimonials as the second most important decision criterion. However, 62% of respondents also said they would travel further to a different body shop if it had great online reviews. This supports the need to have a strong online presence while delivering a great customer experience.

WOULD YOU TRAVEL FURTHER TO A DIFFERENT BODY SHOP IF THEY HAD GREAT ONLINE REVIEWS?



Never underestimate the importance of customer service, as it is the foundation for a memorable customer experience. Coach everyone on your staff how to give great service, including your repair technicians. They may not have much interaction with customers, but it only takes one bad interaction to create a negative opinion of your shop.

To create a positive experience, treat customers like you would want to be treated. Greet customers with a smile as soon as they come into your reception area. If you're busy with a customer, welcome the new customer and let them know you will be with them shortly. Answer the phone within a couple of rings. When you can't, have a pleasant on-hold message and return the call as soon as possible.

Communicate from start to finish. Having their car repaired is an inconvenient and stressful process for most people. To put a customer's mind at ease, explain what repairs their vehicle needs and why, how much it will cost, and how long the repairs will take. Talk to customers in a manner that's easy to understand. Use language they know while avoiding technical terms when possible.

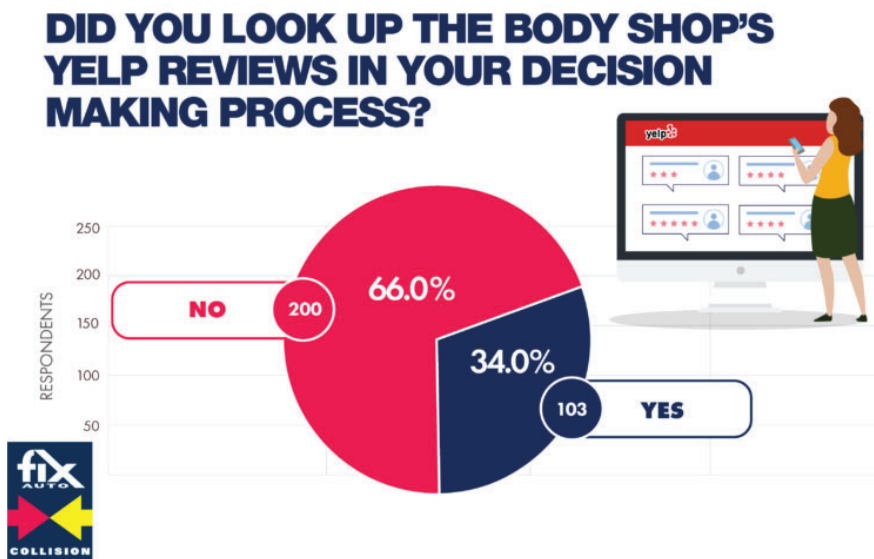
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5. Don't Underestimate the Power of Yelp Reviews

If you think customer reviews are overrated, consider this: 34% of our survey participants said they considered Yelp reviews when deciding on an auto body shop.

We've talked about the importance of positive shop reviews and testimonials. This finding points to Yelp as an area of focus.



Place a Yelp badge on your website that tells people how many Yelp reviews you have. Badges are available from the Yelp web site and will automatically link to your Yelp page. Put a "Find us on Yelp" sign in your place of business. You can make your own using Yelps [brand assets](#) or request one by [via this form](#).

Adding a link to the business listing in your email signature provides a subtle way to encourage Yelp reviews. Be sure to remind people to "Check us out on Yelp." Share your 'People Love Us on Yelp' recipient status. If you receive a Yelp letter of commendation, display it in a prominent place in your shop so customers can easily see it.

Share your Yelp reviews on Facebook and Twitter to increase the number of people who see them. (This requires logging into your Yelp business owner account and clicking the "Reviews" tab.) You can also share Yelp reviews in your marketing materials as long as you follow the guidelines:

- Only use Yelp's recommended reviews
- Don't make any changes to the review
- Get permission from the review and provide attribution
- Cite Yelp as the source using one of their branded logos

It takes some time to manage Yelp reviews, but the payoff can be well worth it.

6. Have a Strong Facebook Profile

Many social media marketing experts recommend building a strong Yelp profile to attract customers. For auto body shops, our survey results suggest otherwise.

59% of respondents said they never looked at any of the social media profiles of body shops. However, of those who did look up a profile (4 out of 10), 31% did it on Facebook. Of all the social platforms available today, Facebook is the one where you should have an optimized profile with good reviews. Here's why:

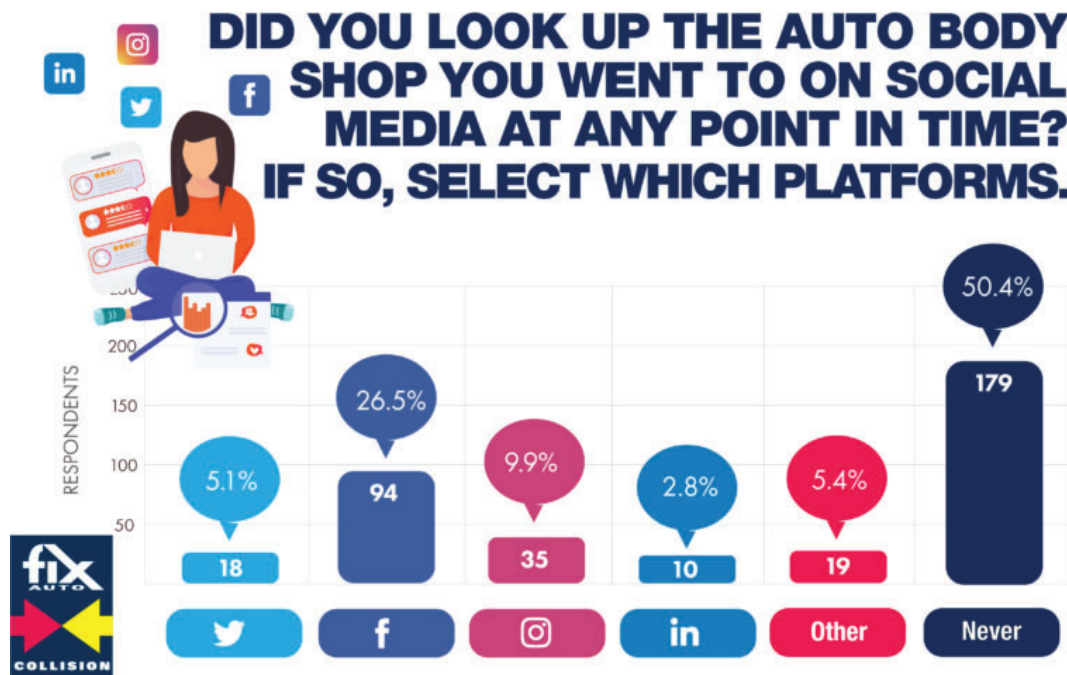
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More than 600 million Facebook users visit business pages every day. Facebook highlights maps and directions at the top of local business pages, making it easy for people to find your shop. Search results are more robust and complete than with the major search engines. To ensure your shop is found on Facebook:

- Complete your profile
- Verify that location and contact information is accurate
- Add business categories that further describe your business
- Activate the Facebook call-to-click and appointment scheduling buttons

A good Facebook profile can attract local searchers in your area while positioning your shop as a legitimate and trustworthy business.



7. Getting More Visitors to Your Site

If you're not getting enough hits on your web site or social media profile, it may be time to rethink your social media marketing strategy. Which platforms are you currently using? How much effort are you putting into generating referrals and customer reviews? Does your web site provide value to visitors? Do you work hard to create a strong first impression with prospective customers? Are you using local search tools, to augment your SEO standing on the major search engines? Using the right social media tools with precision and focus can drive more customers to your shop and keep your auto body business healthy and growing.

Source: <https://fixautousa.com>

Rethinking attitude toward customer bring-backs, redos might help with CSI, PRI



A collision repair industry analyst and post-repair inspectors this month offered auto body shops some interesting considerations about redos — an issue CCC data finds could arise for about a tenth of your customers.

CCC's recently released 2021 "Crash Course" reports that direct repair program facilities during the year ending Sept. 30, 2020, saw customers bring back 10.1 percent of vehicles to the shop on average.

Even body work costing as little as \$0-\$500 resulted in customers returning the vehicles 4.9 percent of the time, according to CCC. That's 1 out of every 20 vehicles fixed.

That number rises to 9.1 percent when repairs fall between \$2,000.01 and \$3,000 and to 10.7 percent when \$3,000.01-\$4,000 in bodywork had been completed. The latter price range contains what CCC found to be the average repairable vehicle claim (\$3,421).

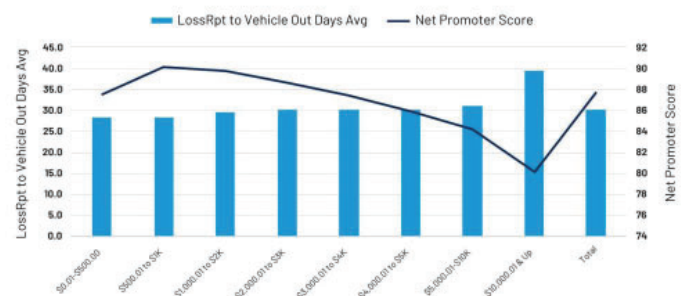
When repairs exceeded \$10,000, consumers were bringing back their cars 22.2 percent of the time, or every fifth customer. These findings are fairly similar to the 2020 "Crash Course" results for the year ending Sept. 30, 2019.

"This should include any reason," CCC director and "Crash Course" author Susanna Gotsch said of returns captured in the research. She used her own experience as an example of what this might entail; out of four vehicles she's had repaired, she had to return three for reasons including ADAS dash lights and over-spray.

The 2021 "Crash Course" data also found that higher-dollar repairs led to a slightly lower proportion of customers reporting they felt the shop kept them informed. "If anything, it should be going up," Gotsch observed of that percentage. If the scope of the repair or its technology produces a "pretty high likelihood" the customer will have to return the vehicle to the shop, then "setting that expectation up front I think would be important," she said.

Figure 55 / DRP Repairs Q4'19-Q3'20 Repair Satisfaction and Cycle Time by Repair Cost Range

SOURCE: CCC INFORMATION SERVICES INC., CCC NATIONAL INDUSTRY



	LossRpt to Vehicle Out Days Avg	Vehicle In to Vehicle Out Days Avg	Net Promoter Score	Repair Satisfaction %	Survey % of Vehicles Returned	Rep't Informed %	Avg Service Score	Avg Recommended Shop Score	Avg Insured Handle Claim Score	Avg Recommended Insurer Score
\$0.01-\$500.00	28.3	2.8	88	96.3%	4.9%	95.7%	9.7	9.6	9.4	9.2
\$500.01 to \$1K	28.3	3.9	90	97.0%	5.6%	96.3%	9.7	9.7	9.4	9.2
\$1,000.01 to \$2K	29.5	5.9	90	96.8%	7.0%	96.3%	9.7	9.6	9.5	9.3
\$2,000.01 to \$3K	30.2	8.4	89	96.5%	9.1%	95.9%	9.7	9.6	9.5	9.3
\$3,000.01 to \$4K	30.2	10.6	87	96.0%	10.7%	95.8%	9.7	9.6	9.5	9.4
\$4,000.01 to \$5K	30.3	12.8	86	95.4%	12.5%	95.4%	9.6	9.5	9.5	9.4
\$5,000.01-\$10K	31.2	17.5	84	94.8%	15.3%	95.0%	9.6	9.5	9.4	9.3
\$10,000.01 & Up	39.4	29.9	80	92.9%	22.2%	94.1%	9.5	9.3	9.3	9.2
Total	30.2	10.0	88	96.1%	10.1%	95.8%	9.7	9.6	9.5	9.3

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This does seem critical, for a different analysis in CCC’s 2020 “Crash Course” shows how much a shop can hurt its reputation with a redo.

CCC found that first-quarter 2019 DRP repairs of vehicles with a front collision impact posted a 98.3 percent repair satisfaction rate — so long as the work didn’t result in a bring-back. If the customer had to return the vehicle, satisfaction plummeted to 68.4 percent. The average recommended shop score fell from 9.7 to 8.1.

Better quality control protocols might help the industry improve this bring-back rate. But some mistakes are going to be inevitable, even at a shop which beats the industry average. If the law of averages hold that a certain percentage of your customers are destined to return, then it might behoove you to have a plan in place ahead of time to preserve the relationship with those clients.

Gotsch proposed that in a situation where the shop informed the customer they might need to return the vehicle and then delivered an “absolutely amazing experience” upon that return, the customer’s outlook on the repair would have changed.

“It seems like that would be a pretty important thing for them to focus on ... to use those like an opportunity to awe the customer,” Gotsch said.

She gave the example of sending food back in a restaurant. “Nobody wants to do it,” Gotsch said. You’re worried the staff will do something negative to your food in punishment.

But if instead, “they’re kind about it, and they try to make up for it” instead of griping, “you have a whole different perspective about that kitchen.” As a customer, you think, ““They don’t accept anything but the best.””

Gotsch pointed out that some bring-backs might be unavoidable, such as an outlier scenario which the shop didn’t catch with a test drive.

Customer Satisfaction Metric Comparison: Vehicles Returned Post Vehicle Pick-up versus Vehicles Not Returned (FIGURE 91) | SOURCE: CCC INFORMATION SERVICES INC., CCC NATIONAL INDUSTRY
NOTE: COMPARISON CONDUCTED OF Q1 CY2019 DRP REPAIRS WITH COLLISION FRONT IMPACT RETURNED/NOT RETURNED

	Not Returned	Returned
Survey % of On Time Delivery	89.6%	71.2%
Repair Satisfaction %	98.3%	68.4%
Kept Informed %	96.2%	86.4%
Avg Recommend Shop Score	9.7	8.1
Ave Recommend Insurer Score	9.5	9.0
Avg Quality Score	9.8	8.3
Avg Service Score	9.8	8.7
Avg Cleanliness Score	9.9	8.8
Avg Insurer Handle Claim Score	9.6	8.9
Vehicle Out to Survey Response Days Ave	6.4	8.6

Gotsch advised the shop “set the expectation up front.” If the customer returns, take an approach like ““Thank you so much for bringing it back”” rather than groaning and declaring the shop can fit the customer in “tomorrow.””

“Those seem like opportunities to really focus on” for shops seeking to improve CSI and repair satisfaction, Gotsch said.

Tip of the iceberg

Post-repair inspectors on Monday offered other considerations for shops and insurers dealing with bring-backs.

If a customer brings the car back for a minor problem, watch out. There might be an even bigger shop screwup lurking beneath the surface.

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Vehicle Collision Experts CEO Mark Olson during a Collision Hub “World Fair” broadcast Monday showed a Honda CR-V for which he had conducted a post-repair inspection.

The customer’s original body shop replaced a bumper cover, a bumper reinforcement beam, the liftgate, and a rear body panel.

The customer’s largest complaint was visible damage to the hydraulic apparatus opening the liftgate, Olson said.

He characterized the shop’s response as ““That’s not part of the accident,”” and ““Have a nice life.””

Another issue involved a brown cargo net clip replaced with a black one, something easily noticeable. The shop took the stance: ““We’ll buy you another clip, and that’s not related.””

“And that’s what starts almost every single PRI,” P&L Consultants co-owner Larry Montanez said on the show. It’s something minor, such as a misaligned bumper, a door which opens and shuts differently than before or a missing piece of trim, according to Montanez.

Olson agreed, estimating that PRIs arise after “really a small thing to start with ... 95 percent of the time.”

“This is the ant in the kitchen,” Olson said: Notice one, and you can expect others are also present.

Collision Hub CEO Kristen Felder advised shops against responding to a complaint with a declaration it was unrelated to the accident. She said many post-repair inspections begin with ““It’s not part of the accident.””

Instead, “pull the car immediately in and look at the whole thing again,” Felder said. Even if the complaint is a speck of dust, “pull that sucker in and go through it.”

Olson said his CR-V inspection found issues including a liftgate which failed to line up correctly, inadequate welds, the use of forbidden copper weld-through primer and frame rail issues.

The CR-V was deemed to actually need a new rear body panel, both rear frame rails, and both quarter panel outers and inners, according to a slide. It was ultimately totaled.

Olson said he had pre-teardown advised the shop to buy the vehicle after observing a frame rail’s state. He said the response had been, ““Yeah, right.””

“This is a highly educated, plaque-on-the-wall type of shop,” Olson said. The facility was Honda-certified and a member of multiple direct repair programs, he said.

The Collision Hub show also offered another consideration on redos: A customer might not want to let you perform one.

Olson said the customer refused to return to the original shop because of its errors.

Felder acknowledged a shop feels it’s trying to do right by a customer by offering an in-house redo, but she argued that a customer would be justified not to let a vehicle conduct a re-repair. She told MSOs or insurers who think it’s realistic to ask the customer to use the same site to “stop saying that.” “If you went to a doctor and they cut off the wrong leg, would you go back to that same doctor for the next surgery?” she said.

Source: www.RepairerDrivenNews.com

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