



A DIVE INTO MSO ADAS CALIBRATION WORK

A look at CIECA's committee efforts to create a process flow chart

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FIGHTING BACK AGAINST FRUSTRATION AND UNCERTAINTY

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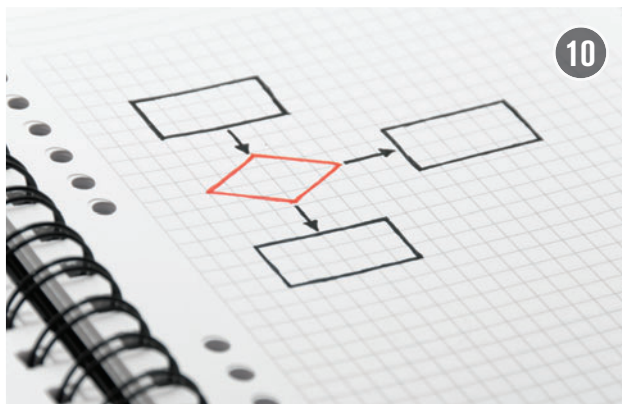


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FEATURED COLUMN

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Endeavor Business Media, LLC
1233 Janesville Avenue, Fort Atkinson, WI 53538.
Phone: 920-563-6388

EDITORIAL

KRISTA MCNAMARA

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

kmcnamara@endeavorb2b.com

CHELSEA FREY

SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR

cfrey@endeavorb2b.com

DAN WARD

ART DIRECTOR

STALIN ANNADURAI

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

CONTRIBUTORS

JOHN ANELLO

SHERYL DRIGGERS

STEVE FELTOVICH

JAMES E. GUYETTE

WILL LATUFF

MARK OLSON

PATRICK PORTER

JAY SIGHT

TIM SRAMCIC

JOHN YOSWICK

ENDEAVOR BUSINESS MEDIA

CEO — **CHRIS FERRELL**

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BUSINESS

REGGIE LAWRENCE

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VP/GROUP PUBLISHER

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

BREANNE WARD

MARKETING DIRECTOR

JILLENE WILLIAMS

SALES COORDINATOR

DOMESTIC SALES

MIDWEST & WESTERN STATES/

CLASSIFIED SALES

MICHAEL PARRA

mparra@endeavorb2b.com

(925) 307-8779

ILLINOIS, EASTERN & SOUTHERN STATES

PAUL ROPSKI

propski@endeavorb2b.com

(815) 255-4118

OHIO, MICHIGAN & CALIFORNIA

LISA MEND

lmend@endeavorb2b.com

(949) 259-5654

PRODUCTION & ADMINISTRATION

KAREN LENZEN

SENIOR PRODUCTION MANAGER

TRACY SKALLMAN

CIRCULATION MANAGER

REPRINT SERVICES

Article Reprints — **Brett Petillo**

Wright's Media 877-652-5295 ext. 118

bpetillo@wrightsmedia.com

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Fighting back against frustration and uncertainty

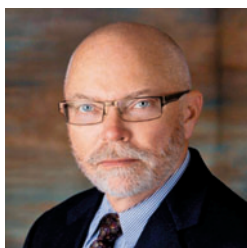
Don't confuse faith in prevailing with the discipline to confront your reality

We are all feeling the frustration and anxiety of our turbulent times. Having our economy partially shut down, COVID-19, death, shootings, riots, political unrest and weather events and more can make it all seem overwhelming. I've heard many people say that it seems the world is on fire. In some ways it reminds me of the turbulence of the late 1960s.

We see it and feel it within our businesses. A dealership owner friend of mine described how two customers were in his waiting area, sitting about 12 feet apart. One dropped his mask, allowing it to hang from one ear. The other harshly criticized him for being negligent and inconsiderate. Some of our employees express concern and fear when coworkers report flu symptoms or exposure to someone who tested positive for the virus. Customers are apprehensive, wondering if we are taking adequate safety precautions. I've heard several business operators report that customers are sometimes very critical when they perceive masks aren't being worn or other safety precautions aren't taken. I know one dealership that shut down part of a service aisle to accommodate social distancing. Some of the government directives seem to be helping the situation and some seem to be hurting.

Recently, I spent a day working with shop managers preparing for the possibility of looting. We moved all cars inside or to other shops. We barricaded doors and took electronic equipment out of the shops for the weekend. I never anticipated having such a concern as a collision repair shop manager, especially in the suburbs of Minneapolis/St. Paul. It's unsettling. Fortunately, only one building was damaged. Rocks were thrown through some glass, but there was no evidence of anyone entering the building.

I've wondered as we come through this virus experience how insurance company behavior will change. Obviously, claims have been dramatically reduced. Some have cut staff as they rely more on photo estimating and other technologies. I doubt that many policy holders are dropping or reducing coverage, especially



SOME OF OUR EMPLOYEES EXPRESS FEAR AND CONCERN. CUSTOMERS ARE APPREHENSIVE, WONDERING IF WE ARE TAKING ADEQUATE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS.


with all the government financial assistance out there. I suspect insurance company profits are up significantly. Will they have some compassion on the plight of repairers as we've seen dramatic reduction in sales? Will they be less inclined to audit and question estimate line items? Or will they use our reduction in sales as a way to increase pressure on pricing reductions as we all compete for fewer jobs?

How should we approach our frustration and other emotions? Consider the Stockdale Paradox from the book *Good to Great* by Jim Collins. Admiral Stockdale was the highest-ranking prisoner of war in North Vietnam. He led the rest of the men held prisoner and was the focus of the North Vietnamese effort to discredit the Americans. He was held for several years and brutally tortured. But he did survive.

Years later, Collins asked Stockdale, "Who didn't make it out?" "That's easy," he said, "The optimists." Stockdale explained that optimists often said things like "We're going to be out by Christmas." Christmas would come and go. Then they said the same thing about Easter, Thanksgiving and again

Christmas. The result was the same; they remained imprisoned. And they died of a broken heart.

"This is an important lesson. You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end — which you can never afford to lose — with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever that might be," Stockdale said.

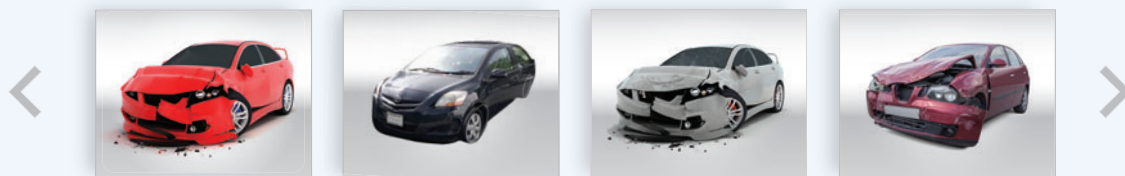
These are wise words that are exceedingly appropriate for our current situation. We must be optimistic and at the same time confront the needs and issues before us. It is a discipline. In history there have been many similar situations, and we must remind ourselves that those before us overcame them. 

DARRELL AMBERSON is the president of operations for LaMettry's Collision, which has eight locations in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area. He is a board member for the Automotive Service Association, and he has more than 40 years of collision industry experience. damberson@lamettrys.com



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THE ROAD AHEAD

Our annual MSO roundtable tackles industry challenges, changes and the future

JOHN YOSWICK // Contributing Editor

These are challenging times for MSOs trying to respond to pandemic-related requirements, declines in revenue and ever-changing technologies and insurer requirements. So once again this year, *ABRN* convened an “MSO Roundtable,” bringing together a panel (see sidebar, “Who Was At The Table?”) to discuss some of these topics. Here are highlights from the discussion.

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing your organization in the next 12-24 months?

Luke Salter: Ten years ago, when you put an ad out for a tech, you’d have 10-15 qualified applicants knocking on the door. When you put an ad out now, you get maybe two. Over the last year, I’ve been working with our local high school on starting a collision program. I’m working to make sure they have the proper equipment, the proper training schedule, and also trying to work with our local tech school so it will give the kids who go through the high school program some credits going into tech school.

Richard Fish: We realized years ago that if we weren’t part of the solution as it related to technicians, we were going



to be part of the problem. So at three of our locations we have a training team that consists of a lead tech, who is on salary, and two or three graduates from Universal Technical Institute or the local community college. The students will be in our program for as little as eight months or as long as three years depending on how quickly they evolve. We’ve graduated four technicians through that program. We do a ceremony, and I give them a \$2,000 loan for tools that gets forgiven after two years. That’s been a nice program and nowhere near the economic strain that

we thought given they produce some real work.

Michael Macaluso: The biggest challenge is bundled around uncertainty. We’re an industry that thrives in some sort of predictability, whether in terms of claims volume or the seasonal cyclical nature of our business. The uncertainty around four or five different areas of the business right now is one of the biggest challenges that we all face. Uncertainty around supply chains, the economy and political landscape, driving habits. But I also take the approach that any challenge presents



LUKE SALTER



RICHARD FISH



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opportunities. Although we recognize the challenges, we want to burn our calories on creating the right solutions, and capitalizing on the opportunity.

Talk about a change you've made in your business in the last year or two, maybe not even pandemic-related, such as a new technology you've implemented.

Tim Cockrell: We've invested in a lot of new equipment to do more in-house to expediate repairs and help margins. We're not making anything on sublet a



TIM COCKRELL

lot of the time. So we've invested in scan tools, and we've found that to be a pretty good marketing tool. We're pulling up other codes

for people while we're doing that. We'll let them know they have a bad oxygen sensor, for example. We're also doing some mobile estimating, letting them see up front the type of service we provide. The other thing we've done is get some OEM certifications. One of my shops is in an area with a lot of high-end vehicles. Those folks are more concerned with the certifications than they are with where their insurance company tells them to go, which I'm pleased with.

Phil O'Connor: I went to a conference last year and was introduced to Podium. We had the old stamp-and-postcard to receive feedback from customers. It worked okay, and we got a fair amount of them returned. But in this day and age, everybody is looking at online reviews. We really weren't doing well in terms of the number of those. So we tried Podium in a cou-



PHIL O'CONNOR

ple of the stores just to see how it would work. I've been happy with it. It makes it easy for them to do Google reviews, Facebook reviews, things like that.

Aaron Schulenburg: I'd be remiss to not talk about the technology solution we've released, the Blueprint Optimization Tool. It will essentially run your estimate through an audit tool to identify any potentially missed operations. The objective is to create consistency among different writers at your shop, or among your different stores. There are lot of other tools that exist out there that hold collision repair businesses accountable to some-



AARON SCHULENBURG

body else's metrics or rule sets. This is intended to allow a shop owner or network to establish what their own expectations are and hold their staff and locations accountable to their own internal rule sets, to make sure they're not unnecessarily leaving anything on the table.

Luke: Something we implemented since COVID: Every customer receives a flash drive that contains all the OEM documentation, the procedures we followed, along with all the photos that were taken throughout the course of the repair. It also includes the alignment specs, and it documents the test drive. Another thing we've implemented is BodyShop Booster. There's a lot of post-repair marketing that you can do with it, such as ringless voice-mail. Every customer who picks up their vehicle receives a ringless voice-mail from me the day after. Thirty days down the road, they receive one from my production manager. Then at one year, they receive one from my father, who is a co-owner of the shop. You can

WHO WAS AT THE TABLE?

Phil O'Connor has four POC Collision shops in Maine, with 68 employees and \$11 million in annual sales.

Richard Fish owns six Fix Auto USA franchises in southern California, with 115 employees and \$19 million in annual sales.

Tim Cockrell sold eight of his Cockrell Body Shop locations in Alabama and Northwest Florida in 2010, but continues to own and operate two locations.

Aaron Schulenburg is the executive director of the Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS).

Michael Macaluso is the president of Driven Brands' collision group, which includes CARSTAR, Maaco and Fix Auto USA.

Luke Salter is the operations officer at Trubilt Collision Center, which has two shops in Wisconsin.

set that up so you don't have to physically do anything.

If you had a chance to sit down to talk with a national claims manager at a Top 10 insurer, what is one thing you'd suggest to reduce costs and improve efficiency and customer service?

Tim: It would be better to have an annual meeting to let there be some ongoing dialogue. Rather than being coached, it seems like we're being pitted against each other. I'd like to be able to sit with whoever is in charge and have a question and answer session on an annual basis.

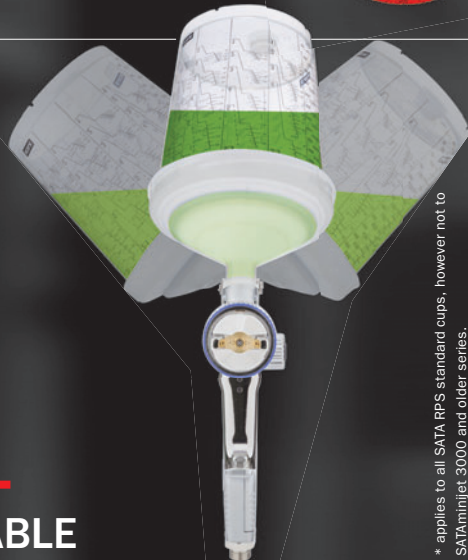
Aaron: The one thing I would like to get insurers to understand: Focus more on removing the waste and costs associated with micromanagement and unnecessary engagement in the process,

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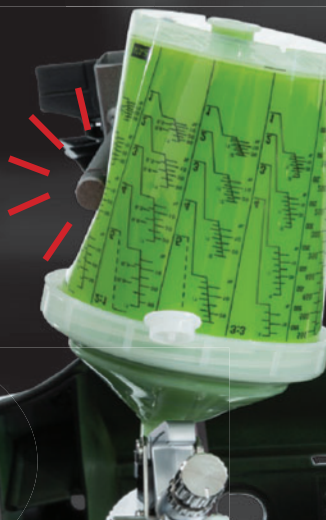
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rather than trying to mitigate costs by removal of legitimate operations and line items.

Michael: Aaron hit it perfectly. There is unfortunately still a lot of waste in our processes in our industry. Time, money, resources spent on duplication and back-and-forth. We all benefit the more we remove those wastes. Collaboration is a better way to get there. Everyone can win and benefit, most importantly the customer, who gets a better experience, and a quick, better repair.

Luke: “Required” versus “recommended” is a big issue. When you dive into repair procedures, some things say recommended, some say required. When presented to the insurance companies, we’re told, “It’s not competitive in your market. You don’t need to do that.” Our repair planners are fighting that with adjusters every day. Getting the insurance companies and the OEMs more on the same page about what is actually required to fix vehicles properly, while also keeping the cost of ownership down, is important.

Richard: I’m a believer in DRP as an effective way to do business. So I’m kind of blown away when a carrier doesn’t recognize what they are supposed to bring to the table. Many of them seem to be overzealously focused on having a robust [number of] access points for their customers. So much so that they bring almost no value to the body shop getting only three to five cars a month. If I was guiding a VP of claims, I’d say the carriers that deliver real volume are the ones that will get really active and motivated trading partners.

Phil: We have desk reviews by people who have zero knowledge of the industry, just [people who] know they’re supposed to chop this off and that. I have some of my employees training some of these desk reviewers on just basic necessities. “Why do you use anti-corrosive primer? You’re just fixing a dent.” That was actu-

ally something we heard.

What do you see as some of the longer-term changes in the industry from the pandemic and current economic situation?

Richard: Every time our industry has had a very significant “character-building moment” like this, there’s been a thinning of the herd, whether it’s dealership body shops abandoning the business, or just some of the weaker links not being able to survive. It’s not just the pandemic and the economic adversity that’s come from it. It’s also the technological obligations that body shops have to repair a vehicle the right way. It’s becoming more of a challenge, more expensive. It’s putting a bigger burden on training. You’re going to have people who say, “I can’t keep up and feel good about how I conduct my business.”

Phil: Shops will have an awakening. There’s a lot of shops that haven’t even looked at their balance sheets. They don’t know what kind of reserves they have for down the road. A lot of them got a PPP loan, but if they hadn’t, they probably would have been wiped out. I’ve looked at a lot of balance sheets for shops around the county, and a lot of them are not very healthy. People are going to start to pay more attention to that.

Aaron: Increased unemployment is going to provide more opportunities to fill the gaps in open positions within our industry. Like a lot of trades, our industry shined a bit through the pandemic because we remained going to work. If you’re a parent of a child finishing school, and you start thinking about where work really exists when things get tough, industries like ours and other trade professions rose to the top. That’s a potential positive outcome from this. But I have concerns about claims settlement practices like virtual appraisals, specifically around the quality of settlements that result from them. Not to mention that physical inspections provide better ability for

consumers to be notified of damage that should inhibit driving the vehicle due to safety concerns. While virtual claims technology may appear to create convenience and efficiencies in the initial claims settlement process...we believe it’s a detriment to consumers. It was a great stop-gap solution in a unique time of mandated quarantine measures, but we believe it will lead to lower appraisals and more friction between the industry segments.

Michael: We certainly feel consolidation will continue and likely accelerate. The bottom performing 15 percent of collision repair facilities will likely be gone, and it will yield lots of work for the top-performing facilities. This is why our networks work so hard on operational excellence and invest in training to stay ahead of industry advancements. Also, as customers change their buying habits throughout this pandemic to more of a digital experience, the contactless experience will only continue to grow. I do think the digitization in various forms throughout the claims process is, for the most part, here to stay. Only because that end-purchaser of our services and of insurance, in all other aspects of his or her life, is buying more digitally. I think as an industry we need to be prepared for that and adapt.

Tim: I foresee OEM certifications becoming a big force in the next five to 10 years. It will provide an opportunity to get rewarded for the investment you’re making in your business. I think you also will see shops looking for other things to incorporate in-house, like glass work, to try to offset the decline in driving and claims, to find other ways to still get tires into the shop. ■



JOHN YOSWICK is a freelance writer based in Portland, Ore., who has been writing about the automotive industry since 1988. info@crashnetwork.com

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A DIVE INTO MSO ADAS CALIBRATION WORK

A look into CIECA's committee efforts to create a process flow chart

DARRELL AMBERSON // Contributing Editor

The need for ADAS calibration work is significantly increasing with each vehicle model year. While there have been required calibrations on some systems for 15 years or so, those of us who frequently repair vehicles from the most recent years are seeing dramatic increases in the frequency.

Of course, I am assuming you as an MSO repairer are having staff research vehicle manufacturer repair procedures for all but the most simplistic repairs. If you are not, I highly recommend that you start immediately. The complexity of vehicles is increasing so quickly that you are at risk of improper and unsafe

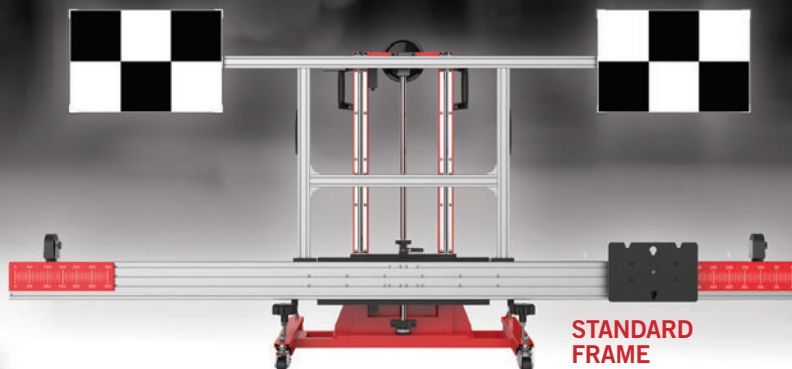
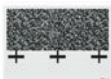
repairs if you're not using manufacturer procedures, not to mention potential litigation risk in severe cases. As repairers, we are the ones who would no doubt be held responsible. We must put the safety of our customers, as well as the protection of our businesses, first.

Thankfully, some in our industry are responding to the technology changes. The Collision Industry Electronic Commerce Association (CIECA) started looking at vehicle ADAS scanning a few years ago. CIECA develops and promotes electronic communication standards that allow the collision industry to be more efficient. It is the vision of CIECA to have an ecommerce-enabled collision indus-

try that allows all industry segments to communicate electronically, independent of platform or software used. At the beginning of 2019, a Calibration Committee was formed. The committee includes more than 70 people from virtually all major entities within our industry, including vehicle manufacturers, repairers, insurers, salvage parts, glass, information providers, tool and technology companies, and more. The goal was to establish a good flow chart and define the steps necessary to perform complete ADAS calibrations properly based on vehicle manufacturer repair procedures. The committee met on a weekly basis and recently completed the work. The

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CSC0605/01**Allows MA600 to perform blind
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Mazda Vehicles**RADAR CALIBRATION PLATE
CSC0602/02**Allows MA600 to perform front radar
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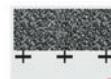
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OE sized target, reduces dynamic
calibration time for Honda vehicles**EXPAND COVERAGE FOR LDW CALIBRATIONS****SUBARU LDW 2**

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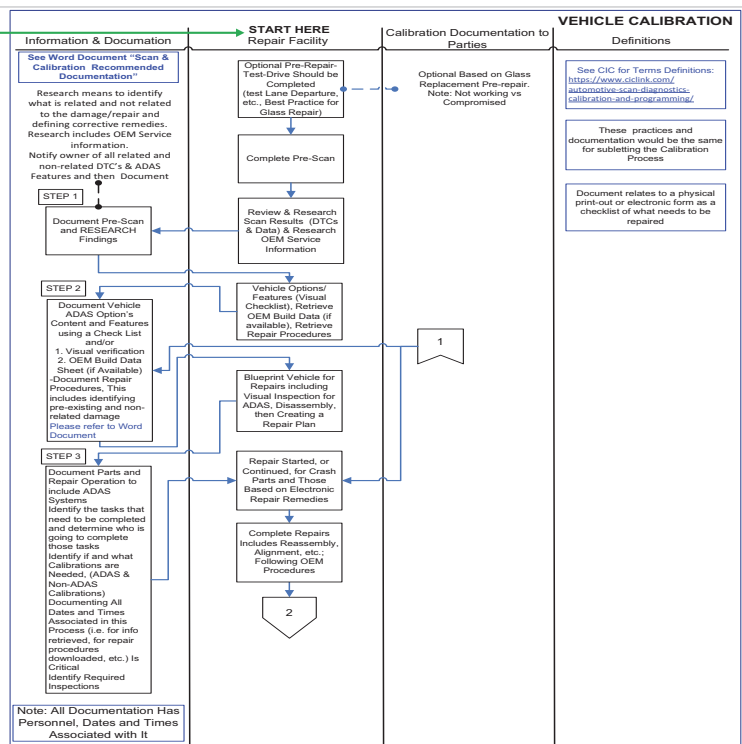
Workflow page 1

• STEP 2 –

- Document Vehicle ADAS Option's Content and Features using a Check List and/or
 - Visual verification
 - OEM Build Data Sheet (if Available)
 - Document Repair Procedures (If OEM Procedures are Available)
 - This includes identifying pre-existing and non-related damage
- This is critical information that is not easily captured.

• STEP 3 –

- Document Parts and Repair Operation to include ADAS Systems
- Identify the tasks that need to be completed and determine who is going to complete the work
- Identify if and what Calibrations are Needed, (ADAS & Non-ADAS Calibrations)
- Documenting All Dates and Times Associated in this Process (i.e. for info retrieved, for repair procedures downloaded, etc.) Is Critical
- Identify Required Inspections



committee's work was presented during the recent Collision Industry Conference (CIC). It has also been made public in other venues and is available for all in the industry. As chairman of the committee, I can personally testify to the high caliber of the committee members as well as to their hard work and dedication. I truly believe that the result is an excellent piece of work that will serve the industry well. It was the committee's desire that it interact with many industry entities with the goal of universal consistency of terms and procedures as much as possible. Especially with new technologies and procedures, the more consistent we can be among various industry entities the easier it is to educate and implement. We can be more effective if we can "speak the same language."

Above is the flow chart and some explanation of key points. On first glance, the chart looks complicated, but start by looking at the "Start here, repair facility" column at the top. Follow that column down then study the adjoining columns as you come upon the arrows going

back and forth.

The chart is one that could be used as a generic process that provides logic and a great deal of accountability. At its basis it requires the use of vehicle manufacturer repair procedures. It also provides a path for some troubleshooting in that if during part of the procedure a step was unsuccessful it directs you back to a point to address the issue.

The documentation steps are among the strengths of the chart. By following the steps to document, or prove, each step is of great value for a repairer when dealing with an insurer or vehicle manufacturer certification program. It requires the shop to prove they really looked up manufacturer repair procedures and that they used proper calibration targets and took steps to put them in the proper position. It requires proof of diagnostic trouble codes (DTCs) found and that they were cleared after certain steps. It requires proof that the scan tool acknowledges a successful calibration and that specific calibration data such as blind spot angle is docu-

mented when available.

An often-overlooked step is one of the first ones where the shop has a discussion with the consumer regarding their ADAS systems and any adjustments or disconnecting they may have done. This leads to among the last steps where a similar discussion takes place. The committee felt the best practice is to activate all the ADAS systems just as the selling dealership is to do before the consumer picks up the new vehicle. A discussion can take place informing the consumer that they again can adjust or disconnect systems as they prefer, but for safety reasons the shop has activated all systems.

CIECA is not so bold or arrogant to say that their processes are the only ones or that they must be mandated. They were originally formed to be an industry-driven entity to put together very good practices in terms of accommodating our industry's electronic commerce. Their various processes have been widely accepted and adopted by many of our industry's entities including information providers, insurers and repairers.

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KNOWING ALL ABOUT ADAS WILL MAKE YOU A SMARTER TECHNICIAN

In this Remarkable Results podcast with Carm Capriotto, he speaks to Ben Johnson, director, project management, with Mitchell 1.

As Johnson discusses ADAS following his presentation at a training event at Lincoln Tech earlier this year, he says almost every technician is working on an ADAS-equipped vehicle, even when they may not realize it.

"Remember: besides experience, the best tool for technicians in regards to ADAS is training," Capriotto says. And Johnson adds that knowing all about ADAS will make you a smarter technician.

"I get in front of a lot of groups of people, and still when I say, 'Who's heard of ADAS?' there are a lot of hands that don't go up. You should be worried about that," Johnson says. Learn more about the conversation between Johnson and Capriotto below.

"One thing that is interesting about ADAS to me is it is not a 'thing.' It is an industry-generated category that includes all these things that help us drive our car. If you go on to an information system and type 'ADAS' because you want to know about it, you'll get no return. But if you look up blind spot monitoring or adaptive cruise control, then you'll start getting information. Unlike other technologies like that, nobody is not working on ADAS," Johnson said.

"But I love your point there," Capriotto says. "I could be in my car coming down a hill in a winter snowstorm and the brakes start to pump. My wife says, 'The ABS system is working.' If the blind spot mirror comes on, she's not going to say, 'The ADAS system is working.' She doesn't know that. Is that good or bad? I don't know. But you have people in your class who don't know what ADAS is, but have worked on blind spot cameras. So we've got a communications issue here."

"And it gets worse than that because ADAS isn't a recognized category by the vehicle manufacturers. If you

look in General Motors service information and search blind spot, you'll get no return," Johnson says. "Each of these vehicle manufacturers has its own marketing team and they all say, 'Well, blind spot monitoring is a boring term, and I'm not going to sell any cars. But if I can call it Blind Zone Side Monitoring System or something like that, then you get the interest. And Ford calls theirs something else and Toyota calls theirs something else. In our company, we tried to solve that problem by creating an ADAS button that says, 'Look, we'll go search it out for you. You identify the vehicle, click this button and then we'll tell you what could have been on the car and how to calibrate it.'"

"So if the marketing teams hadn't gotten involved, all these systems would have the same name," Capriotto says. "We have to sell blind spot monitoring as something cool, and talk about confusing the world."

"So what happens is, whether we think we are working on them or not, we are. I used an example of a late-model Cadillac. So I said, 'OK, nobody's working on ADAS; are you working on air conditioning? So my example was a 2017 Cadillac with a condenser that had gotten hit with a rock. So while they are replacing a condenser, per the service information, step No. 7 is remove the black box that is in front of the condenser," Johnson said. "Well, that black box is the Ford radar system for the ADAS system for the adaptive cruise. And any of us, if we didn't know better would just say, 'OK, I put that out of the way; I got the old condenser out. I put the new condenser in. I'll put this back and bolt it back in place. I didn't replace the black box, so I don't need to calibrate it.' That's where the problem starts. Because just by virtue of removing it and installing it, we could have just shifted it slightly. It doesn't seem like a big deal, but 300, 400, 500 feet in front of the car, that slight shift could be big."

Listen to the entire conversation at ABRN.com/ADASTalk.

The CIECA Calibration Committee desired that there be interaction with other industry groups and that this work be assembled in a way that can be shared and adopted by others. While the committee knows it would be almost impossible to get complete standardization of terms and definitions and processes, it wanted to come as close as possible. This calibration work has been shared with CIC and presented during the July 2020 meeting. It is the commit-

tee's desire that CIC formally adopts it in the future. The CIECA committee utilized ADAS terms and definitions assembled by the CIC Emerging Technologies Committee. Both the CIECA and CIC committees also looked at and incorporated many ASE and specific vehicle manufacturer terms. They also reviewed terms and definitions from other sources. The feeling was that with this complex technology within our industry, the more we can simplify and

standardize the situation the better.

It should also be noted that the CIECA committee set some standards for the structure of this calibration work within computerized estimating systems. Various terms and labor categories were established. A notable part of this is that a new job category for techs who perform ADAS work was incorporated. It is safe to say that this is a rapidly growing aspect of our industry and that specialization is inevitable.

A close-up photograph of a dark-colored car's front end. The focus is on the front wheel with a detailed tread pattern and the adjacent headlight assembly. The car's body is highly reflective, showing highlights from the ambient light. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting with trees and possibly other vehicles.

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The practical application

So, what does this mean for a collision repair MSO business? No matter how the shop approaches calibration work, this flow chart can be a very valuable tool. Most shops either perform the work in-house or sublet to sources such as an independent ADAS repairer or to a dealership. If you are an MSO who sublets such work to any source, I highly recommend that you adopt the flow chart as your own standard. You can share it with your outside vendors and essentially say that this is the process you expect them to follow, including all the documentation aspects. At the collision business I work for, we have several close relationships with some dealerships. As part of that we often get collision repair business from them and often the dealer wants to perform whatever mechanical portions of the job that they can, including some ADAS work. Of course, our company understands that it is ultimately responsible for the quality of our work even if a portion is sent to a sublet source. We also understand that it is only prudent to have ample documentation to prove that manufacturer repair procedures were followed. We may have to prove this to an insurer for payment or to a manufacturer to prove compliance to a certification program requirement. In a worst-case scenario, we may have to prove it to a customer or in court if there is some significant issue or event after the repair.

In-house calibration

Some companies, such as the one I work for, have elected to develop their own ADAS business (perhaps a department) and in some cases done it in harmony with developing a mechanical business to address the needs of the mechanical aspects of collision repair including steering, suspension, dash work, etc. Some, including ours, have even elected to pursue some retail mechanical (service) work as well. There are numerous things

to consider and address when setting up a new business to work next to or within your existing business. I won't go into all of them, but there is a key consideration that I wish to bring attention to. It is essentially the relationship between the collision and mechanical departments. It is critical for all types of mechanical work, but when one starts performing calibrations, it becomes even more pronounced. Calibration work is relatively new and can add significant cost to a collision repair, and it can have a very noticeable effect on cycle time. It also brings to light some quality control issues. For example, in the past when a body tech repairs a lower rear portion of a quarter panel that is hidden by a bumper cover, they can typically achieve a similar to new appearance and shape when inspected visually and checked by the fit of a bumper cover. Now, if that vehicle has a blind spot monitor mounted on it, the panel must be absolutely the correct shape and the monitor mounting brackets must be shaped correctly.

Communication between the two departments is critical. Work must be carefully and accurately scheduled among the departments to minimize delays. Communication regarding components, like when bumper covers should be left on or off vehicles, is critical. What happens and who is responsible when there is a body quality issue such as a wiring or connection problem or when a bumper must again be removed for access?

At our company, we've set up a process where the mechanical people play a role in the blueprint process. In a perfect world, the blueprinting estimator identifies all the necessary ADAS requirements, including programming and calibration. In practicality, the repair information may be in sections other than the body panel ones and a typical estimator may struggle to identify all the needed steps. The mechanical department can help by lending expertise.

And then there are variables that can't be determined until the repairs are in process. For example, Audi requires a wheel alignment check on many models after a collision. In cases where an alignment adjustment is needed, they instruct the repairer to perform one or more ADAS calibrations, depending upon how the vehicle is equipped. A smart estimator will alert the customer and/or insurer of such a possibility early in the process then react accordingly. Of course, this presents possible issues for costs and cycle times.

Speaking from my own experience, I have found that getting the process right can be as challenging as the new technology — or more. As an industry, this is all so new to us. Once you get good, competent ADAS techs in place who are proficient with finding repair procedures and performing calibrations and documenting all the steps they can in many cases be relatively self-sufficient. And the best ones continue to learn through experience and independent research. Yet, getting multiple collision shops to follow new blueprinting procedures, sell and negotiate unfamiliar repair procedures, communicate these steps to the customer, schedule the work accurately and proficiently deal with the variables can feel like a large task. Again, communication and standard operating procedures and flexibility are the keys to success. Management must be persistent in striving to get it all working proficiently. I believe this will be an increasingly important and significant part of our collision repair business in the future. 📧



DARRELL AMBERSON

is the president of operations for LaMettry's Collision, which has eight locations in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area. He is a board member for the Automotive Service Association, and he has more than 40 years of collision industry experience.

damberson@lametrys.com

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