

Engineering more profit for your bodyshop

Bodyshop Magazine

James Clifford VDA ATA MIMI from ARC Support Services provides his top tips for improving the accuracy of your repair assessments to deliver a better return for your bodyshop.

In terms of time, the smallest unit of measurement in a repair assessment is one work unit (1WU). In a decimal hour, that 1WU equates to six minutes, and at £30 per hour that six minutes is worth £3. Finding 1WU missed from a repair assessment is a simple task, but the compounding effects of missing that tiny unit of time, could be worth a staggering £5,520 over the course of a working year.

Now I'm not suggesting 1WU is missed from every job, but I can guarantee that it's rarely just 1WU. I regularly see evidence of eye-watering excessive amounts missed from straightforward, every-day repair assessments, and the compounding effect of losses at that level doesn't bear thinking about.

So, what can a repairer do to improve the accuracy of their assessments and increase profits? Start with these top tips from ARC Support Services:

1. ROUTINE: Establish a systematically structured routine for the appraisal of all damaged vehicles. If you establish a routine that is modular in its format, then you are less likely to miss vital repair information, tasks, components and/or controlled materials, required to reinstate the target vehicle. Avoid, at all costs,

the "Point Snap Click Print" approach to assessing damaged vehicles.

2. DOCUMENTATION: Use a well-defined and thoughtfully laid out appraisal document that supports your routine. One that allows you to effortlessly move through the stations of your "at vehicle" appraisal process will promote accuracy, efficiency and the effectiveness of your outcomes.

3. INTERFACE: Your handwritten appraisal document is a working document. It is the interface between the damaged vehicle and your chosen piece of calculation software. Ensure that the data you record on it is accurate, detailed and legible. Never underestimate the value or the potential to promote accuracy of your assessments by using this document.

4. INSPECTION: Spend your time at the vehicle, detailing your handwritten repair specification. Attention to detail here promotes accuracy, ultimately saving you time and ensuring you do not have to retrace your steps, rewrite your specs and resubmit supplementary costings due to incorrect information. This element will reduce cost and conflict, both internal (department to department) and external, (VDA to





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engineer), and is an essential part of building confidence, and good relationships with your production team and the company's work providers.

5. PROCEDURE: Adopting "first and last" undamaged panel during your appraisal inspection will reveal the scope of the repair (the length, breadth and depth of the physical repair). The first (or last) undamaged panel may be one that has no damage whatsoever, but due to refinishing requirements it may need to be blended. Or it may be a panel that has a chip or a dent caused by secondary impact from an adjacent panel – either way this approach adds structure to your appraisal process.

6. TECHNIQUE: Detailing all of the required actions on your interface document, one panel at a time using a process known as Core Task and Supporting Operations, will increase the accuracy of your handwritten repair specification ensuring that your attention to detail captures those work units.

7. METHODS: You cannot define the cost of a repair before you have defined the method by which it will be repaired. The method will always come first. Researching

published methods prior to loading your information on to your preferred piece of calculation software will highlight tasks that may have been overlooked or perhaps were not apparent or obvious during the appraisal stage.

8. SLAs: Ensure you have up-to-date copies of the relevant work provider's service level agreement. Regularly reviewing these will ensure that you understand precisely what is permitted under the terms of each contract and will mean you don't miss important and potentially costly elements of the agreement, possibly omitting them from your subsequent assessment. It's not just the menu pricing items either – there's gold in the text.

9. CALCULATION: Understanding your chosen estimating platform and how it varies from alternatives is vital. What's included in an action, or a task, can and does differ from platform to platform, so it is vital to understand and know how to utilise that information. The inputting of repair data is a complex element of estimating and careful consideration is required, but bear in mind that complex means it has many elements and complicated refers to a level of difficulty.

10. IMAGES: Photos are a vital part of the job role for the VDA. In the first and most important instance, the images you provide should support your repair specification through broadcasting specific, vital data to the receiving image engineer. This is a very powerful media by which to support your repair specification. Clear, concise and well-annotated images are vital to achieving the required result.

This advice is just the beginning. Experience has taught us that it's almost effortless to overvalue the significance of a given moment, but it's unforgivable to undervalue the importance of making small improvements on a daily basis.

Far too often in business, we convince ourselves that incredible successes require remarkable strategies. We place ourselves under tremendous pressure, believing that we need to make some earth-shattering improvement. But the reality is that simple, good habits in the processes and routines of our damage assessments are the compounding interest of self-improvement. The same way that money multiplies in a bank through interest, the good habits of your assessing process multiply each time you use them.