



HOW MUCH WOULD YOU CHARGE FOR THIS?

BY TIM KELLY

If I see that question in the headline on one more Facebook group my head will explode. If you do not know how much to charge, you should not be repairing vehicles. It's as simple as that.

If you are, and doing it without knowing what to charge, then how can you grumble about "lack of profit" or "the demise of the repair industry"? You certainly won't have much potential for running a sustainable business. I will also guarantee that those asking this question, do not know the operational cost of running a business.

I would guess that 90% of the time, the question is asked by people operating as a sole trader rather than a limited company. They see anything that costs them money, as being money from their own pocket, and "it is too expensive".

I can certainly see this as being the case for the small trader and the larger, more established estimating tools, but have you ever researched what other tools are out there?

Some traders will happily buy a paint gun for £500 or another tool that's the "in thing", but they won't invest the time to research and identify the most important tools that actually make them a profit.

These are estimating tools, of course. I

actually hate the term "estimating tools"; I much prefer "costing tools", or "blueprints of repair".

The other crucial investment you need to be making is in you, the user of these tools. I see a lot of "fear" and "reluctance to change" in the industry. Some might think I am being negative or overly harsh on repairers, but to put it frankly, they need a kick up the arse.

I decided to look at two options that will cover pretty much every aspect of costing a job and I had them demonstrate these tools to show what benefits they offer along with the associated cost.

To see the full demonstrations of both tools, scan the QR code or visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l86Krvze0x0>

First up is the Smart Estimator App – Your body repair business in your pocket.

Smart Estimator App was founded by Tom Hunt who created a tool designed for sole traders, smart repairers, restoration specialists, who do not do the volume to justify the cost of the more expensive estimating systems. It is easy to use and has a host of benefits. Find out more and get a free=14-day trial here: www.smartestimatorapp.com.

After researching the tool, speaking with Hunt, and watching it being

demonstrated, I believe this tool would be a cracking asset in any bodyshop, not just the smaller businesses. It provides an overview of your incoming cost, outgoing cost, invoices, operating profit and projections, as well as creating estimates.

More importantly, it builds profit into your business, with no contract and no upfront payment, on a very cost-effective basis at the point of use. I was very impressed with this tool. It does far more than I can convey here, so watch the video above.

THE INCUMBENT AND THE INDUSTRY

The main incumbent tool that is used by virtually every insurer is Audatex. Others exist, including GT Motive, Motex EasiEst and Glass's Repair Estimate (formerly GlassMatix), but why would the insurance industry not use the data generated as a result of the work done by Thatcham Research which is funded largely by the insurance industry?

Firstly, Audatex is a very good tool. Secondly, it does things through the collection of data, use of API links, that allow it to work with the insurer. Because of that, it has become the "go-to" estimating tool. But there are some very good alternatives out there.

The second tool I investigated is GT Motive's GT Estimate, with a demonstration provided by Martin Rowley. Again, watch the video and for a free 14-day trial visit:

<https://gtmotive.co.uk/>.

Having been an Audatex user for many years, I found using GT Motive very similar and intuitive. It did not take me long to get my head around it. Data is driven by manufacturer repair times, it use's graphics from 2023 rather than the 1980s, and is in lot of ways more user friendly. If you have never used an estimating tool before, you will soon get to grips with it.

It also blew me away with what else it can do beside estimating – the parts data and part numbers can save a lot of time for the bodyshop. The cost is £12.50 per assessment with no hidden costs.

In my opinion, both tools are fantastic and are well worth further investigation by you.



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DEMONSTRATIONS