

MANAGEMENT RULES

A good management system will improve efficiency and profitability. James Simons reports.

Bodyshops of all sizes can benefit from an effective management system. Get it right and the burden of day-to-day business can be reduced significantly. Get it wrong and the system may be over stretched or over specified. To get the balance right it is essential to consider the individual requirements of the bodyshop before evaluating each system.

BodyMaster from EurotaxGlass's is designed to be user friendly. The system adopts a modular approach to cover key functions including a direct link to the Glassmatix estimating system. 'BodyMaster has been designed in a modular fashion to allow bodyshops to use as much, or as little, of the functionality that their business and processes require,' Iain Burkinshaw, Business Development Manager, said. 'Large sophisticated shops will use most, if not all, of the functionality – smaller shops may choose to use less of

the functionality. Our job is to ensure that it supports the business needs of all our users, both current and future.'

Upgrade

Concorde Informatics' AutoManagement system has recently carried out an analysis of Plymouth based bodyshop Rodgman and Williams. Concorde consultants set about upgrading the IT infrastructure and replacing the existing management system.

Managing Director Alan Williams explains the reasons behind his choice. 'Even though our previous system had been effective

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A good management system can reduce the repetitive, mundane paperwork, drive up efficiency and improve profitability

for many years, it was becoming obvious to us that it would not be able to support the business going forward. In particular it was getting overloaded with information and could not provide the level of monitoring and reporting that we needed to continue to grow. It also had a text-based interface as opposed to a graphical Windows solution which meant that it was not very intuitive to use for our staff.

'With the new system we can easily assess the status of all our jobs, whether pending or current and irrespective of location. This means that when a customer phones we can quickly determine when their job is due to be completed, rather than having to walk down to the workshop or ringing our other sites.'

Visibility

Reg Vardy Bodycare Centre in Leeds has also benefited from a better 'visibility' of resources. Over the last six months the 33,000 sq ft shop has reported a 20% increase in turnover, while reducing its fleet of courtesy cars by 10%. The reason for its success has largely been attributed to the installation of EMA Computer Solutions' PC based Bodyshop Manager. David Crowder, the site's Bodyshop Manager, said, 'At a glance the EMACS system tells us how many hours we have to sell. Plus, because the system refreshes every six minutes, it provides a near real-time view of all work in progress.'

In addition, the system has automated many of the site's administrative processes (freeing up personnel to do more productive tasks). For example, estimators export

estimates from Auda Enterprise into the EMACS tool, which then re-interprets the repair process into MET, Panel and Paint activities.

'Thanks to the EMACS systems, our average turnaround time for a repair is three days, whereas before it had been nearer six,' noted David. 'Our effective recovery rate is now more than £29 per hour but the EMACS system continues to show us where our process management could be further improved – and I want to get us up to £32 per hour by the end of the year.'

Alan Hargreaves, Director of EMA Computer Solutions added, 'EMACS tells you what you can do and when you can do it, whereas other systems tell you what you did and when you did it. You can't change history but you can influence the future.'

Support

When choosing a system the success of it depends on the training and support you receive. 'It's important to choose a system that is backed by professionals who understand your business,' said Jon Parker, Managing Director, Byteback Systems. 'AutoGenius offers all the usual features of an advanced bodyshop management system to help build profit for your business, coupled with our unique lifetime training and support solutions. Although a repairer may not use all of the functionality of the system in the beginning, there needs to be room

“It tells you what you can do and when you can do it, not what you did and when you did it. You can't change history but you can influence the future.”