



## **CCIF Moncton Meeting Report**

**Canadian Collision Industry Forum  
Delta Beausejour Hotel, Moncton, NB  
Saturday, May 14, 2011**

### **Helping Small Businesses Grow**

***Mike Mallory (TEC Canada)***

CCIF is well known for the opportunities it provides to meet new contacts, develop relationships and mix with people whose experience and inspiration can be of help to your business. This tends to happen during the networking breaks in an informal way. In explaining the role of TEC Canada, Mike Mallory talked about a more formal way to harness external influence that will help take your business to the next level. TEC is a membership organisation that provides continuous learning for business owners and managers. It does this through local monthly meetings of peer groups (with participants only from non-competing businesses), through personal coaching and through education. One example of how group discussion helped a business owner was when he wanted to appoint a manager from outside the company, but was concerned at the potential negative reaction from the staff. He learned that another TEC member had solved a similar problem by getting his staff involved in the interviewing process. He did this and found it to be a useful tactic in getting their buy-in and their acceptance of the new manager.

"You are the #1 change agent in your business", said Mike, "and it can sometimes be a lonely and daunting prospect. However, by joining organizations such as TEC and participating in events like CCIF, it can help to reduce the sense of isolation, generate better solutions and increase the owner or manager's personal effectiveness.

### **A Conversation with Skills Canada Competition Winners**

Since 2008 the CCIF Skills Program has been raising awareness of career opportunities in collision repair at Skills Canada's provincial and national trade skills competitions. The Skills Competitions provide a showcase for the industry to thousands of visitors, while a number of talented young people are there to compete and demonstrate their skills at painting and auto body repair. CCIF was proud to congratulate and welcome the latest New Brunswick car painting champion, Brandon Belliveau, finalist Janice Taylor, and auto body champion, Dustin Goddard. CCIF Chairman, Tom Bissonnette, spoke with them to learn how they viewed the industry and the careers that they were aiming to follow.

Their view of the industry was positive and they were excited about the rate of technology change that was likely to keep their careers interesting and challenging. Indeed, their obvious passion for collision repair came from their love of addressing challenges and the constant testing of their problem solving skills. They accepted the fact that they would be starting at the bottom, but wanted to work for employers who would support the development of their skills and their careers. At the risk of sounding patronizing, it must be said that these composed, articulate young people displayed a level of maturity that amazed and delighted CCIF participants. They recognised the importance of commitment and passion, suggesting that anyone lacking these qualities would be unlikely to last long in the industry. Of course, that is equally true of employers and the young people understood that they should look for these qualities when deciding where they wanted to work. They suggested that if the industry is facing a shortage of young entrants, it must do more to raise awareness of the opportunities and show the path to follow in order to obtain the required skill levels. Indeed, a comment from the floor emphasised that the need was for young people with the skills and right attitude, not just any young people. For those like Janice, Dustin and Brandon there would surely always be opportunities for a satisfying and rewarding career in collision repair.

### **Ideas to Help Build a Distinct Brand**

***Laura McCallum (PropertyGuys.com)***

As business people or consumers, many will acknowledge the brand power developed by iconic enterprises like Apple. Such companies evoke strong emotions in customers, usually positive, sometimes negative, but rarely neutral. In fact, neutral customer emotion suggests a mediocre business not likely to prosper and grow. The power of the brand does not come from just a logo, a name, a tag line or advertisement, began Laura McCallum. It's a story embedded in the mind of its market and is developed by using a tangible process of creating signals that trigger feelings. It grows from the experience of its customers and is fluid as their experiences change. Businesses that simply display a "badge of ownership" may attract customers once or twice, but those that display a "badge of distinction" can inspire customers to buy for a lifetime.

Take a look at your business through your customers' eyes, suggested Laura. When do they need you? How do they find you? What do they see and experience? Who will they tell? What will they say? Of course, the need for collision repair by a vehicle owner may be infrequent, but when the need arises, it must be addressed promptly. The vehicle owner may find you by asking the insurer, through advertising, your web site, a towing company or friends/family/co-workers. They will see your signage, your people, your reception area, your work area, your estimating process, your shuttle service, your work completion, your thank you and your satisfaction survey. They may provide testimonials and referrals if their experience is strongly positive, but are more likely to spread the word with greater diligence and feeling if their experience is negative. The power of instant and widespread communication through social media makes the "what will they say about you" more critical than ever.

The growth of collision repair networks in recent years has highlighted the issue of branding. Network members should not just rely on their corporate offices to build the brand, but be active in living the brand values of the corporation and sharing the customer feedback that will continue to shape and evolve the brand. That is equally true of independent repairers, who must start the brand development process by listening to their customers and from their feedback, develop the identity and the story they wish to embed in their customers' minds. Laura concluded by recommending a good book on branding, "Nuts, Bolts and a Few Loose Screws" by Gair Maxwell.

### **I-CAR® Professional Development Program**

*(Andrew Shepherd, I-CAR Canada)*

With the highest level of training uptake in several years, I-CAR® is clearly back in growth mode again, but there is still a long way to go before the number of filled trainee seats surpasses the 22,000 achieved in 2000, said I-CAR® Canada manager, Andrew Shepherd. Feedback from the market is making it clear that collision repairers want training for their *profession* rather than training for points. The I-CAR® Professional Development Program will begin to satisfy that need when it is launched on July 1<sup>st</sup>. There will be a three year transition period for shops wanting to maintain their Gold Class status by having at least one I-CAR® Platinum Individual in each representative role. All other technicians and managers would need to take a minimum of six hours role-relevant training each year.

The training focus will be on developing the skills of individuals in their specific roles. For each of the seven designated roles there is a role description of the knowledge required at each of the three I-CAR® Pro levels for which training must be successfully completed for an individual to achieve Platinum status. An annual minimum of six hours role-relevant training would be required to maintain the Platinum level of recognition. Training delivery will be in the form of in-class sessions, Red Seal equivalency (currently to 25 required courses), on-line or by mail. Role selection, assessment of course requirements and tracking of the individual and shop will be available confidentially to users at [www.i-car.ca](http://www.i-car.ca) .

### **Apprenticeship & Certification**

*(Wendy Allen (Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification, NB))*

The focus of Wendy Allen's presentation was on potential developments in trade certification in New Brunswick, but the explanation of apprenticeship and the role of the apprentice, the employer and the government was of relevance for all. The implications in the statistics for apprentices vs current journeypersons was also of interest to all. Currently in the province there are 52 apprentices for Motor Vehicle Body Repairer (Body and Paint), none for Automotive Repairer (Body) and 5 for Automotive Painter. By contrast, the current number of journeypersons in the province *over the age of 55* are 464 of the 931 Motor Vehicle Body Repairers, 63 of the 104 Automotive Repairers and 83 of the 238 Automotive Painters.

Wendy explained the Partnership Agreement between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia on Regulation and the Economy and how it focuses on removing regulatory burdens and encouraging open trade, greater workforce mobility and efficient government service delivery. In the spirit of this Agreement,

New Brunswick is looking at possible compulsory certification of Motor Vehicle Body Repair in order to match the situation in Nova Scotia. Industry opinion is being sought on this through a survey and there will be additional consultation and research before any recommendations are made to the Minister regarding compulsory designation.

### **Digital Selling - Enhancing Communication Through Social Media** ***Paul Prochilo & Domenic Ieraci (Prochilo Brothers Auto Collision)***

At the last CCIF meeting it became clear that some industry stakeholders were learning how to harness social media as a resource that can be used to enhance communication and sales. However, many others, including CCIF itself, were still unsure about the capability and value of social media in the context of the collision repair industry....just as it took a while for some to grasp the usefulness of computers, email and Google. The purpose of this presentation, made by collision centre operators, Paul Prochilo and Domenic Ieraci, was to show how social media could increase engagement and interactivity between CCIF participants between meetings, providing them with a fast and easy method of communication. A next step would be to look at the practical applications that can grow sales and add value to a business through social networking.

If anyone doubted the usage levels of social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, Paul showed a live running counter of their use at <http://www.personalizemedia.com/garys-social-media-count/> . The rapidly increasing real time usage numbers are quite staggering to behold and make it clear that millions of interactions are being made very hour. Examples of the value for businesses can be seen in the launch of the latest Ford Explorer on Facebook and the Australian Government using Facebook to contact and motivate debtors to pay up, after all traditional means to reach them and get them to act have failed.

From a CCIF perspective, Domenic suggested how Facebook could be used to share videos of CCIF presentations with those unable to attend, how discussions could be held on topics for upcoming meetings and how opinions could be gathered on ideas and proposals. In the same way that Paul and Domenic had encouraged and helped CCIF become one of Facebook's 350 million users (search "Canadian Collision Industry Forum"), CCIF would now play a role in learning and sharing how to use social media for business purposes among its collision repair stakeholder community ("friends"). In terms of what social media can do for collision repairers, Domenic gave examples such as driving web site traffic, increasing awareness, customer retention, large scale promotion/advertising and creating a positive experience. He encouraged those CCIF participants not already exploring the use of social media to create their own Facebook page and join the CCIF group. An easy way to get started would be to go to YouTube.com and search "How to create a Facebook account."

In order to continue fulfilling its role of broker, catalyst and industry promoter, Mike Bryan hoped that many CCIF participants would join the CCIF Facebook group and help spread ideas on how the dynamic nature of social media can benefit individual businesses and the industry itself. There is much to learn, but the process can be accelerated by the use of CCIF's

Facebook group as a medium through which knowledge and ideas can be shared.

## **The Value of OEM Information - A "Must-Have" Tool for Your Business**

***Dan Espersen (Alldata)***

For many years there has been contention regarding correct repair procedures and the liability issues resulting from incorrect repair. The contention is compounded by increasing vehicle complexity, new materials/procedures and increased pressure on estimate accuracy. In addition, there are up to ten different ways in which collision repairers gather information on correct repair techniques. This is not an approach likely to guarantee consistency and accuracy, particularly since structural repair techniques are evolving all the time. Dan showed several types of repair in which, for example, the potential impact of not recognising the substrate or the effect of heat on a hybrid vehicle battery could be disastrous. It was, therefore, essential to have access to up to date OEM information at all times, in order to know how to replace each component and the procedures needed prior to replacing them.

Repair or replace, handling multiple restraint systems, new electronic monitoring systems, alternative substrates, special refinishing techniques; all these are challenges faced by the estimator and technician every day. By using software with the latest OEM recommendations and procedures, such as a program offered by Alldata, they are able to increase technician productivity and customer satisfaction, as well as reducing cycle times, sublet, returns and liability. Make yourself aware of the software options that can enhance your estimating systems, said Dan. Some may be nice to have, while others, such as those providing comprehensive factory-correct collision repair information are definitely in the need-to-have category.

CCIF would like to thank the following sponsors who made this meeting possible and whose support ensures the continuity of CCIF in bringing industry stakeholders together:

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