

Imperial Autobody Gains Competitive Edge with CPN Certifications

Certification through the OEC Collision Performance Network (CPN) helps Imperial Autobody enhance repair quality, streamline operations, and attract more customers.



Located in Rockville, Maryland, near Washington D.C., Imperial Autobody has been a trusted name in collision repair since 2005. The shop, led by Vice President Anthony Poochikian, boasts a team of 27 dedicated employees and handles an average of 230 cars per month. As a top-performing shop, Imperial Autobody has leveraged OEC Collision Performance Network (CPN) certification to set itself apart in a competitive industry.

Challenges

Imperial Autobody initially built its business around a high-volume of drive-ins, averaging 20-30 cars per day, largely driven by its status as a top shop for a major insurance provider. Everything was done at the shop, from initial assessments to final repairs, which streamlined operations and contributed significantly to the business's growth.

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However, changes in the insurer's business model introduced a new service center where cars had to go first before being sent to Imperial Autobody. This shift meant that instead of receiving cars directly, Imperial had to send employees to pick up vehicles from the service center. The added steps resulted in a significant drop in volume and increased operational complexities. The need for extra manpower to handle the additional logistics, along with heightened liability concerns, disrupted the previously efficient workflow. Faced with these new challenges, Anthony realized that he needed a new way to attract customers.

Motivation for Certification

To attract new business and increase volume, Imperial Autobody decided to pursue certification through CPN. Seeking a way to differentiate itself and appeal directly to customers looking for certified, reliable repair services, the shop recognized the competitive edge certifications would provide. Certification not only serves as a mark of quality and trust, but also assures customers that the shop adheres to the highest industry standards and best practices required by the manufacturer.

Anthony explained, “The main motivator for getting certified was to set ourselves apart in the industry and cater to the customer. It keeps us honest and gives us confidence in our technician training.” He emphasized that certification ensures their technicians are up-to-date with the latest repair techniques and technologies, which is crucial in an industry that is constantly evolving.



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1. Enhanced training and confidence

Certification through CPN has had a significant impact on Imperial Autobody’s operations, particularly in employee training. Anthony noted the comprehensive nature of the training, emphasizing its depth and breadth. “The training required for certification keeps our employees honest and instills a sense of accomplishment,” he said. “It makes the repair process better with more confident employees, and our quality control process is much quicker and more efficient.”

The certification program helps ensure staff members are proficient in the latest repair techniques and familiar with up-to-date technology and tools. This continuous education not only enhances their technical skills but also bolsters their confidence in executing repairs to the highest standards. With a workforce that feels well-trained and assured, the overall quality of the repairs improved for Imperial Autobody, leading to a more efficient workflow.

As a result, Imperial Autobody saw a notable increase in customer referrals and positive reviews. Satisfied customers are more likely to recommend the shop to friends and family, creating a ripple effect that attracts new business. The reputation for high-quality repairs and exceptional service, bolstered by certification, has become a key driver of growth for Imperial Autobody.



2. Improved repair quality and customer satisfaction

Following OEM procedures has become a cornerstone of Imperial Autobody's commitment to quality. By following manufacturer guidelines, the shop helps ensure that every repair meets the highest standards. This meticulous approach not only supports safe and proper repairs, but also enhances the shop's reputation.

"Customers trust us more because we are certified," Anthony noted. "Insurers also find it easier to negotiate with us," as a result of the enhanced credibility that comes with being a certified shop. The team at Imperial also speaks with customers about the importance of using OEM procedures, reassuring them that their vehicles are being repaired correctly and safely, which has helped boost customer confidence. This trust is crucial in an industry where reliability and safety are key.



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3. Attracting new customers

The impact of trust extends beyond customer satisfaction. As Anthony highlighted, "The average sales ticket per car has gone up because of this trust." Customers are more willing to authorize comprehensive repairs and additional services when they are confident in the quality and authenticity of the work being performed. This increase in customer authorization not only boosts revenue per vehicle but also enhances overall business profitability.

A significant factor contributing to increased business opportunities is Imperial Autobody's visibility through OEM shop locators. Anthony emphasized the importance of being listed as a certified shop on these platforms. Customers can search for a "Hyundai certified shop" for example, or other manufacturer-certified facilities in their area, and Imperial Autobody consistently appears as a top option. This visibility is crucial for attracting new business from customers specifically seeking certified repair shops.

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“Being included in OEM shop locators has been a game-changer for us,” Anthony explained. “Customers often start their search for a repair shop on the manufacturer’s website. Knowing that we are certified by their vehicle’s manufacturer gives them immediate confidence in our capabilities.” This increased visibility brings in more customers who might not have previously known about the shop, driving new business and boosting revenue.



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Additionally, the presence on OEM websites and shop locators means that Imperial Autobody is recommended directly by the manufacturers. This endorsement is incredibly powerful in an industry where manufacturer approval signifies adherence to the highest standards of repair and service. Customers looking for certified, reliable repair services are more likely to choose Imperial Autobody over non-certified competitors.



4. Attracting and retaining employees

Certification not only brings in more customers, but also plays a crucial role in attracting and retaining top talent in the industry. Skilled technicians and employees are drawn to certified shops because they recognize the shop’s commitment to quality.

Anthony noted that technicians want to work where they know their skills will be valued and where they can continue to grow professionally. The continuous training and development opportunities provided by the CPN certifications ensure that employees are always up-to-date with the latest repair techniques and industry standards.



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Looking ahead

Imperial Autobody plans to continue leveraging certifications to grow its business. The shop is exploring ways to use its certifications for Search Engine Optimization and online advertising, aiming to attract more customers through targeted marketing efforts. Anthony advises other repair shops to get certified and “use it as a marketing tool to promote themselves.”

Imperial Autobody’s commitment to certifications has significantly elevated its position in the competitive collision repair market. Through the OEC Collision Performance Network, Imperial not only enhanced its repair quality and operational efficiency but also gained visibility through OEM shop locators, attracting a steady stream of new customers. The comprehensive training and adherence to OEM procedures strengthened the confidence of their technicians and increased customer trust, leading to higher revenue per vehicle. As Imperial continues to leverage these certifications, it stands as a model of how industry credentials can drive business growth, customer satisfaction, and operational excellence.



Want to learn more about certifications through CPN?

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